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F A R M B U R E A U N E W S

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DROUGHT IMPACT IS “MIND-BOGGLING”

BY AIMEE NIELSON
UK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

There's not an area of Kentucky agriculture that the 2007 drought has not touched. UK Extension Livestock and Forage Economist Kenny Burdine said the variance of the drought's effects on grain production from county to county is great and averages don't tell the whole story.

“The difference in production levels across the state this year is mind boggling,” he said. “Even within individual counties, we are seeing wide differences in yields. Some areas that were blessed with timely rains are seeing pretty good yields, but there are also a lot of areas where state average yields would sound great.”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's October crop production report lowered Kentucky's estimated soybean yield by two more bushels, bringing it down to 28 bushels per acre – more than a 35 percent decrease from 2006. If the report is correct, Kentucky's 2007 soybean production would be down 50 percent from last year by combining lower yields and fewer harvested acres, Burdine said.

“It's true that Kentucky corn and soybean producers are enjoying stronger prices this year, but their yields have not been anywhere near last year's levels,” he said. “Also, let's not

CANDIDATES FOR KFB DIRECTOR



The following are seeking election to the KFB Board of Directors from the respective districts. This list includes only the candidates who have asked to be listed in this publication.

DISTRICT 1: Tripp Furches, 3390 State Rt. 94, Murray

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DISTRICT 4: Jay Coleman, 7218 Old Munfordville Road, Cave City

DISTRICT 5: Scott Travis, 1420 Max Rouse Road, Cox's Creek

DISTRICT 6: David Chappell, 2300 Gratz Road, Owenton

DISTRICT 8: Terry Gilbert, PO Box 451, Danville

forget the losses many of them saw on their wheat crop this past spring due to the late Easter freeze.”

The USDA increased Kentucky's average corn yield estimate from September to 124 bushels per acre. Actually, despite lower yield expectations than last year, Burdine said Kentucky corn production should be up by about 10 percent.

“This is of course due to massive increases in corn acreage in response to price signals sent earlier in the year,” he said. “Most of this increase in corn acreage came directly from soybeans, which explains the difference in the two projections.”

Burdine added that across the United States, soybean prices have strengthened since the middle of August, more so than corn during that same time period. He said that while many factors are at play, the major one has been that the soybean balance sheet for the upcoming marketing year looks tighter than the corn balance sheet.

“The bean market will probably try to buy back some acreage in 2008,” Burdine said. “At the same time, the wheat market is trying to buy some acres as well, because wheat supplies are also very tight. All this has made for a very unique fall and it appears to be setting up a very interesting 2008.”

Executive order waives hay transport guidelines

An executive order was signed by Governor Ernie Fletcher that will help Kentucky obtain hay. The order waives size and weight restrictions for vehicles transporting hay and other livestock forages through and into the state. The order waives permit fees for oversized or overweight vehicles carrying forages. Carriers are required to obtain all necessary permits for route verification.

Kentucky's hay crop is expected to be down as much as 50 percent from 2006 production of 6.3 million tons valued at nearly \$493 million. Five consecutive days of below-freezing temperatures in early April damaged this year's first cutting. The drought further limited hay and pasture growth. The hay shortfall has forced some farmers to feed crop residue, buy commercial feeds or sell livestock.

The Department has set up a Hay Hotline for producers with hay to sell or looking for hay to buy. To get on one of the lists, call toll-free 1-888-567-9589. The KDA also hosts a Hay Directory where hay for sale is listed by county. To view the Hay Directory, go to www.kyagr.com, click on “Programs” and click on “Hay for Sale (tested)”.

Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer and members of his senior staff worked with other state officials and representatives of KFB, the University of Kentucky, the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association, the Kentucky Dairy Development Council and other agricultural organizations to hammer out details of the executive order.

“COMMENT”

Politically-driven farming guidelines can be a problem if they are imposed by uninformed legislators or the general public through ballot initiatives. All too often we're finding that unrealistic standards are imposed as a result of good intentions but a lack of understanding.

It's important for farm interests to distinguish between market-driven changes and politically-driven changes and to pick and choose their battles carefully. For example, when two of the nation's top fast food restaurant companies demanded changes in how the eggs they buy are produced, farmers wisely made the changes. But when government entities attempt to ban sensible practices like gestation crates for sows or the humane slaughter of horses, it's time to mount a challenge.

The American Farm Bureau Federation is in the process of establishing a valuable tool with which to address attacks on animal agriculture. A new "agricultural challenges initiative," recently endorsed by the AFBF Board of Directors, will be a comprehensive public relations program to help livestock producers maintain practices threatened by legislation, regulation and activist-instigated ballot initiatives.

The program has short term and long term phases and will be implemented with a team approach involving state and national Farm Bureau public affairs and communications specialists, as well as help from public relations firms.

This project will include the recruitment and training of volunteer spokespersons, the development of effective messages, building coalitions, media outreach and program evaluation research. Much like our agriculture industry's response to the food safety "crisis" several years ago, the bottom line is a coordinated effort to distribute accurate and timely information in response to the various challenges we face with environmental and animal welfare issues.

For their own health and personal interest, a growing number of consumers want to know more about how their food is produced. There's also unprecedented interest in environmental and animal welfare issues.

This new Farm Bureau program could go a long way toward alleviating unfounded concerns and protecting our animal agriculture industry from unwarranted controls. We'll be better prepared to combat the special interest groups that have unrealistic expectations. Other battles will be fought indirectly through consumer education and a better link with our non-farm population.

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PO Box 20700
Louisville, Kentucky, 40250

Kentucky Farm Bureau is a voluntary organization of farm families and their allies dedicated to serving as the voice of agriculture by identifying problems, developing solutions and taking actions which will improve net farm income, achieve better economic opportunities and enhance the quality of life for all.

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Production Asst.	Melissa LaRoche
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Marshall Coyle

PRESIDENT
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

ON THE COVER:

GARY McGRUDER, A PAST PRESIDENT OF BULLITT COUNTY FB, RUNS A COMBINE THROUGH A SOYBEAN FIELD JUST SOUTH OF SHEPHERDSVILLE. PHOTO BY ROGER NESBITT

ANNUAL MEETING BEGINS DECEMBER 5



A special conference to examine issues affecting Kentucky's fast-growing livestock industry will be among the highlights of KFB's 88th annual meeting December 5-8 at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville. Priorities will include setting policy goals for the 2008 General Assembly session and establishing a wish list for Congressional action next year.

In other convention activities, the state's Outstanding Young Farm Family will be announced, awards will be given for county Farm Bureau achievements and top farm leaders will be recognized for distinguished service.

The livestock conference will conclude the December 6 array of commodity conferences, which also focus on forages, tobacco, horticulture, feed grains, wheat, soybeans, natural resources, forestry, dairy and farm labor.

The drought's impact on Kentucky's cattle industry will be a primary topic of discussion during the livestock conference. UK Extension Forage Specialist Garry Lacefield will

talk about restoring pastures and feeding programs while AFBF Livestock Economist Jim Sartwelle will give a presentation on the market outlook.

KFB Second Vice President John Hendricks, who also is chairman of KFB's Beef Cattle Advisory Committee, will discuss the pressing issue of a chronic shortage of large animal veterinarians in the state. The Clark County farmer heads up a committee developing recommendations on how to address the problem and will give an update on that group's work.

The vet issue and the drought-related concerns prompted meeting planners to place a special livestock conference on the agenda, said KFB President Marshall Coyle.

"We have a lot to talk about," said Coyle, who raises cattle in Bath County. "The large-animal vet situation is a serious concern that must be addressed. And because of the drought, producers face many tough decisions on managing their herds. We want to present all options."

Women's leadership activities are

showcased at a luncheon where top county leaders are presented gold star awards for outstanding county-level programs. Youth achievements are also given prominence, with college scholarships awaiting the winners of an Outstanding Farm Bureau Youth contest.

The discussion meet is a popular tradition, with young farmers debating selected agricultural issues. The state champion, which will be determined among the "final four" contestants during the evening program on December 7, advances to the national contest at the AFBF convention in January.

Coyle will present his annual address on the morning of the 7th, just prior to the announcement of this year's recipients of the distinguished service awards for Farm Bureau and Kentucky agriculture. The delegates will set policy at the business sessions on the last two days of the convention.

Some of the key issues include health insurance reform, maintaining funding for Kentucky's agricultural development initiative, tax policy and the farm bill.

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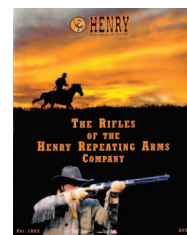
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ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

*K*FB's process for developing the policy of its members is in full swing as volunteer leaders have been meeting with representatives from government, industry and academia to examine the status of farm commodities, as well as other issues important to farm families.

These advisory committees make policy recommendations that are moved forward along with the recommendations that surface from the annual meetings of county Farm Bureaus. Following are summaries from some of the recent advisory committee meetings:

BEEF CATTLE

Chaired by KFB Second Vice President John Hendricks of Clark County, this committee met at UK's Animal Research Farm in Woodford County. KFB President Marshall Coyle welcomed the group, noting the fast growth of the beef industry in the state. He commented on the drought and actions being taken to get assistance to Kentucky's farmers.

Chairman Hendricks reported on the first meeting of the Large Animal Veterinarian Committee, which was attended by several members of the General Assembly. The legislators challenged the committee to present ideas to address the vet shortage in the 2008 session.

UK beef cattle specialist John Johns spoke about managing cattle under drought conditions. He reviewed options for the cheapest sources of nutrients, other than hay, such as corn silage. He discussed limiting feeding of corn rations versus hay, addressing both the production and economic benefits, as well as the risks that require increased management to counter balance. He also explained the importance of early weaning before winter, as well as restricting hay intake for nursing cows. He stated that looking for hay at this point is not economically sound, and other nutrient-dense feeds and/or feeding techniques should be considered to get cattle through the coming winter.

Michael Judge of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture discussed a collaborative effort on ways to find hay. Judge noted that he, too, has been trying to encourage the use of less expensive alternative forms of cattle feed. He

added that the Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee passed a motion to encourage the Agricultural Development Board to look for ways to use agricultural development funds to address the drought issue.

Chairman Hendricks asked for comments from the committee on the direction that should be taken. Johns noted that other states have put together contact sheets of commodity dealers and pricing information within certain areas (which can include more than one state), which is made available to all, so that decisions can be made with the best information possible. He also explained best management for grazing standing corn, noting that several producers across the state have started doing this.

Chairman Hendricks asked the committee to review current policy and see if changes should be recommended. KFB staffer Jeff Harper noted that water emergencies, as they relate to livestock, are covered in the Water Resources Section, although this does not address water treatment issues. Committee member Robert Amburgey cautioned about recommending ADB funds for water treatment, pointing out that there are those who want to take all of the money for water and sewer improvements.

Chairman Hendricks continued with review of policies to present any changes to the Resolutions Committee. A committee member inquired about the animal identification issue. State Veterinarian Dr. Robert Stout noted that the Department of Agriculture is still pursuing voluntary premise identification, but the direction being taken by the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) is still somewhat unclear.

One policy recommendation was approved, with language stating: "We recognize the right of producers to promote increased research, sales and consumption of the commodities they produce, and to work together as a group to promote Kentucky agriculture."

FORAGES

Mac Stone of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture reported on efforts to help farmers deal with the hay shortage. Information about sources of hay is disseminated through a website, a hay hotline, and e-mails to farmers. 73 percent of the 83 Kentucky

counties that responded to a survey are short on hay. These counties are estimated to need over 1.3 million tons of various types of hay, he said.

Nick Whobrey reported for the Governor's Office on Agricultural Policy, stating drought-related issues will be discussed by the Ag Development Board. He stated they currently have three forage programs — one for on-farm water enhancements, one for hay storage facilities and one general forage program that covers areas such as seeding and rotational grazing.

UK forage specialist Gary Lacefield addressed the committee. He reported that UK now has an advanced Master Cattleman program and a Master Grazer program. In terms of the drought, he stated Kentucky's pastures are in the worst shape he's ever seen, and that farmers must inventory the forages they have and use them efficiently. They must also be mindful of the nutrients contained in alternative feeds, he said.

KFB staff member Ed McQueen reported on efforts to help members alleviate the effects of the drought. Letters have been sent to Kentucky's Congressional delegation and USDA Secretary of Agriculture concerning disaster relief. Information from UK on the use of alternative feeds is being distributed in a variety of ways. In addition, a list of feed suppliers is being compiled on the KFB website. McQueen also reviewed the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). The purchase cut-off date for grasses and forages is next spring. To maintain eligibility for disaster assistance in the future, crop insurance and adequate record-keeping may be required, he said.

In policy suggestions, the committee approved the following statement: "We urge continued research and development on the use of forage crops for alternative fuels." The committee also recommends that the state agriculture department explore the possibility of harvesting forages from public lands.

Chairman of this committee is KFB Director Terry Rowlett of Henry County.

FORESTRY

Leah MacSwords, Kentucky Division of Forestry, reported on the redesign of the USDA Forest Service

States and Private Forestry Programs. She said the approach is to focus, prioritize and achieve desired outcomes. One goal is to conserve working forest land and protect it. USDA will perform state assessments and map all forests. States will then develop their response plans, she said.

In terms of resources, MacSwords stated the number of employees in the Division of Forestry has dropped from a cap of 240 in 2000 to 228 in 2007, making it difficult to provide a high level of service. They are also short of funds, she added.

MacSwords also discussed wild-land fire issues, including drought; lack of resources; reorganization of Forest Service programs; the lack of personnel for coordinated fire prevention/law enforcement programs; and the deterioration of Incident Command System teams. Because of this year's drought, there will be severe fire seasons in 2008 and 2009 as well, even with normal rain, she said.

Greg Kuhns of the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association spoke about Property Taxation and Forestry Fragmentation in Kentucky Watersheds. The purpose is to identify forest land assessment methods and determine how tax bills from various methods influence forest finances. Results have shown that forestry may not be a profitable land use under the current property tax assessment methods. Kuhns asked that committee members help in various ways.

Steve Bullard gave an update on the UK Forestry Program, outlining the 2007 Forestry Extension efforts and personnel levels. He emphasized that forest owners must remain aware of forest health threats, and that Kentucky is now facing many stresses not present in the region until recent years, such as sudden oak death syndrome, emerald ash borers and the hemlock woody adelgid. Bullard also reported on the best management practices research project at Robinson Station, which is experiencing some opposition from environmentalists, who do not understand the goals of the research.

Chairman Bige Hensley, a KFB Director from Clay County, addressed the committee about the benefits of forming Local Forestry Organizations.

Turning to state policy, the committee approved language encouraging the state legislature to establish a forest health task force. The group also encourages the formation of local

forestry organizations and equitable regional farmland and forest land tax assessments.

In national policy issues, the committee voiced opposition to repealing the Cooperative Forestry Research Act of 1962 and to moving those funds to a competitive grant system.

HORTICULTURE

Dewayne Ingram reported to the committee on the UK Horticulture Department. The department now has three undergraduate programs — the Horticultural Enterprise Management Program; the Horticulture Biotechnology Program; and the Sustainable Agriculture Program.

Ingram said the Horticulture Council was given another grant by the Ag Development Board that will provide funding through the 2009 crop year. The Council is heavily supported by UK through advertising cost sharing, research plots, on-farm demos and trials plus consulting. Horticulture in Kentucky is currently experiencing a growth rate of eight to 10 percent annually, he said.

Ingram also reported on the activities of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture on behalf of Mac Stone, who was not able to attend the meeting. KDA is applying for another USDA Block Grant for Specialty Crops, which will fund marketing, market research and market development. The Kentucky Proud program is doing well, with an 80 percent brand recognition rate in the Louisville area. The number of community farmers markets continues to increase annually, with 112 this year, Ingram said.

AFBF public policy specialist Mary Kay Thatcher updated the committee via conference call on the status of the farm bill as it relates to specialty crops. There was a major initiative to provide fruit and vegetable programs, with \$360 million per year for Specialty Crop Block Grants. There has also been an effort to provide money for the organic sector, as well as interest in expanding the farmers market program, including roadside stands. Funding has also been included for mechanization and conservation programs. Thatcher stated that she thinks fruit and vegetable producers will be pleased with the bill.

KFB's Jeff Harper reported on recent developments concerning HB 296, which exempts on-site farm markets from workers compensation

requirements. The Department of Labor is creating some difficulties with their interpretation of the intent of the language in the bill. KFB will be meeting with the Department of Labor to attempt to resolve these difficulties, Harper said.

Among several policy recommendations, the committee recommends that the state legislature provide permanent general fund money for education, research and marketing programs established by the Kentucky Horticulture Council. The group also advocates increased state funding to support the industry.

KFB Director Russell Poore of Logan County is chairman of the horticulture committee.

POULTRY

This committee met at the Ohio County extension office so the group could tour Perdue Farms' facilities in the area. The meeting began with Sue Blair of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture explaining the testing of flea market birds, with 10 active flea markets in Kentucky that sell poultry.

UK poultry specialist Tony Pescatore reported that through grants from the federal government, the two UK diagnostic labs have upgraded equipment to service the poultry industry. Within the next year every poultry farm will be on a GPS system that will be maintained by the Kentucky Poultry Federation, he said.

The committee discussed an indemnity fund, which would come from the federal government to members of the program. For small producers there is already an indemnity fund with each company putting up \$17,000, which is matched by the Agricultural Development Board. The fund balance is currently \$208,000.

The committee discussed the new CAFO regulations, which have a deadline of February 7, 2009. Agricultural Development Board grants of \$830,000 were approved in June 2007 to the Kentucky Poultry Federation for an educational program for poultry producers. The two program components are energy and producer education. Energy audits will be conducted on poultry houses to educate producers on energy efficiency. This research on energy efficiency will be subcontracted to UK, which will hire an extension associate to develop the statewide education website and to conduct the education program. A committee will be responsible

Continued on page 10



LOW-LINOLENIC SOYBEANS HAVE STRONG MARKET DEMAND

When the food industry recognized the need to replace hydrogenated oils with trans fat-free cooking oils, soybean farmers and industry began working together to ramp up supply to meet this new demand. Low-linolenic soybeans — entering their fourth year of commercialization in the 2008 season — have grown from 730,000 acres planted in 2006 to 1.9 million acres in 2007, with an estimated three to 3.5 million acres projected for 2008. “A lot of these varieties are already on par with commodity varieties where agronomics and yield are concerned,” said Don Latham, a QUALISOY board member and seed dealer from Alexander, Iowa. “They offer the disease resistance packages and other traits farmers want, and they bring even more profit through premiums.

“Another factor that appeals to

growers is that low-linolenic soybeans require only a “soft” identity preservation system, not the more rigorous “hard” system. In other words, material cleaning and separation guidelines are not as strict for low-linolenic soybeans as they are for some other soybeans.

“Next year, the market area for low-linolenic soybeans is expanding, which increases contracting opportunities for growers,” Latham added. “Your local seed dealer is usually your best source for discussing the opportunities in your area.”

Before discussing the profit opportunities with seed dealers, farmers are going to the Internet to try out the Low-Linolenic Locator tool at www.QUALISOY.com. This easy-to-use application lets users view a map of their area to see the location of elevators and processors who handle low-

linolenic soybeans, and view the approximate growing area around these locations. The Low-Linolenic Locator can give farmers some idea of where these enhanced-quality soybeans are grown, but seed dealers will know the most up-to-date details of what seed is available and what premiums are offered.

The closest elevators to Kentucky are in Cairo, Illinois (Bunge), Lafayette, Indiana (Cargill) and Frankfort, Indiana (ADM).

“Premiums are expected to remain the same or higher next year,” Latham said. “The performance is comparable to other soybeans, and your seed dealer can help you determine which varieties grow best in your area.”

Low-linolenic varieties are available from Monsanto, Pioneer and Asovia.

SLOW RELEASE FERTILIZER WORKS ON WET SOIL

**BY LAURA SKILLMAN
UK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE**

One of the biggest challenges wheat farmers face is the timely application of nitrogen fertilizer to wet soils. Recent advances in slow release nitrogen fertilizer may be the answer, based on recent studies by University of Kentucky College of Agriculture scientists.

In 2002, Greg Schwab and Lloyd Murdock, soil scientists and members of the UK Wheat Science Group, began working with the then-experimental polymer-coated nitrogen product and have conducted subsequent studies. The new fertilizer was designed to reduce nitrogen loss from soil in corn production, but the two UK extension specialists thought it also held promise in the state’s wheat fields.

“Timely nitrogen fertilizer applications on wheat are often difficult because of wet soil conditions in the early spring,” Schwab said. “By protecting the urea inside a high-tech plastic shell, it became possible to apply nitrogen to wheat in January without any significant reduction in yield or increased nitrogen loss compared to the common practice of applying two applications in the spring.”

The experimental product, manufactured by Agrium Inc., is now commercially available in the state on a limited basis as ESN (Smart Nitrogen). The plastic polymer controls the release of nitrogen, making it available as the crop needs it and reducing nitrogen loss to the environment through leaching, volatilization and denitrification. Schwab said Kentucky producers

quickly are adopting ESN, especially for wheat on wetter soils.

ESN usually costs about 10 cents more per pound of nitrogen. So, if a producer applies 100 pounds per acre, it would cost about \$10 more per acre. Depending on how the farmer normally fertilizes, there could be one less trip through the field, resulting in savings of about \$6 to \$7 per acre. In addition, the producer can generally cover more acres per day with a dry product like ESN.

“Wheat producers like ESN because it increases the nitrogen fertilizer application window making it easier to avoid soil wetness while reducing the number of trips through the field,” he said. “Because ESN limits environmental nitrogen loss and decreases the amount of fuel required to produce wheat, it is beneficial to everyone.”



EPA APPROVES SOIL FUMIGANT

Arysta LifeScience announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has granted commercial registration for one year to MIDAS®, a broad-spectrum soil fumigant that effectively controls a broad range of soil-borne diseases, nematodes, weed seeds and insects that threaten high-value crops such as ornamentals, strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, stone fruit, nuts and vines, as well as turf. MIDAS® is available through select fumigant distributors.

MIDAS® was developed to help growers with the phase out of methyl bromide under the Montreal Protocol. Worldwide, about 72,000 tons of methyl bromide are used each year, according to EPA data. North America uses about 27,000 tons annually, 85 percent of which is used for soil fumigation. Growers around the world have long relied on methyl bromide as their choice fumigant and the phase out has left growers with few effective broad-spectrum choices.

“MIDAS® is the fumigant answer for which many growers have been looking,” said Mike Allan, Global Product Manager for MIDAS®. “MIDAS® is the right foundation for success for growers because it provides broad-spectrum control of target pests and diseases and uses conventional application techniques and equipment. MIDAS® has been proven to be as effective as methyl bromide at lower application rates.”

MIDAS® is considered a foundation crop protection product because it is applied pre-plant to bare soil. MIDAS® provides broad-spectrum crop protection which can reduce the overall chemical need and helps establish a strong healthy crop that delivers high yields. In trials in the Southeast U.S., half of the growers who participated saw an increase in yield over their methyl bromide-treated acreage.



The remaining growers saw results similar to those achieved with methyl bromide.

“This registration, after many years of hard work on the part of the Arysta team, is further evidence of our company’s dedication to our grower partners,” said Bill Lewis, CEO of Arysta LifeScience North America Corporation. “Throughout the regulatory process, we have remained committed to our principles of partnership with the agriculture community.”

MIDAS® has been in use under an Experimental Use Permit (EUP) in Florida, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia since 2006. The EPA added test acreage in California in 2007. The company used these trials to evaluate efficacy, market yields and economic comparisons across several crops. Half of the growers who participated saw, on average, a 19 percent yield increase compared to methyl bromide on side-by-side trials on commercial acreage. The remaining growers saw results similar to those achieved

with methyl bromide. Crops raised under the EUP are approved for sale to the market.

MIDAS® is the first new soil fumigant to be registered by the EPA in 20 years. A comprehensive data package supports the product label. Arysta is committed to ensuring proper handling and application of MIDAS® through the Arysta Certified Applicator Training Program. In an effort to further ensure protection of workers and bystanders, the EPA has implemented buffer zones that are scalable based upon fumigant rate and number of acres applied. This will allow growers more control over their fumigant use. MIDAS® is approved for use on strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, ornamentals, stone fruits, nut crops, vine crops (including table and wine grapes), turf and nursery crops.

Arysta continues to build international support for MIDAS® with trials in many countries including Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, Morocco, South Africa, Israel, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Brazil, Mexico and Chile.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Continued from page 7

for developing additional areas of the educational program such as ventilation, farm safety, estate planning, etc.

In policy, the committee advocated research to investigate ammonia production and technology to reduce ammonia levels and emissions in poultry houses. It also approved the following language: "We support measures that would prohibit all levels of government to enact weight limits restrictions that would hamper the ability of agriculture to produce and deliver their products to market."

Chairman of this committee is KFB Director Randall Heath of Graves County.

SWINE

This committee, chaired by KFB Director Danny Wilkinson of Adair County, met at the Kentucky Pork Producers Association office in Elizabethtown. KFB staffer Jeff Harper reported on the farm bill and spoke about animal welfare issues. This issue has been fought on the national and state levels, and is now becoming local. Harper cautioned that farmers need to monitor their local governments for proposed changes to animal ordinances that could adversely affect agriculture.

Dr. Ed Hall and Tim Turney reported on activities in the State Veterinarian's office, including the premise registration program. To date, 12,400 premises have been registered, or about 22 percent. Turney also discussed the updated regulations recently submitted by the office of the state veterinarian. The discussion centered on Certificates of Veterinary Inspection, or CVI. The certificates have been required since the 1940s, but the requirement has not been enforced. Enforcement will be stepped up under the new regulations, especially when a change of ownership occurs, he said.

Chairman Wilkinson reported on the first meeting of the Large Animal Veterinarian Committee. Farmers in many areas of the state have no access to a large animal veterinarian. Additional spots at Auburn and Tuskegee may be made available to Kentucky students. The state of Kentucky pays approximately \$22,000 per year for each student to attend one of these vet schools, but there are no requirements on these students after they

graduate in terms of where they work or in what type of practice. Various ways of enticing the students to enter large animal practice in Kentucky were examined. It was also noted that competition for veterinary graduates is high because USDA needs regulatory vets and universities need researchers, Wilkinson said.

Katherine Wheatley discussed several of the Department of Agriculture's recent activities relevant to swine.

KPPA Executive Director Mike Ovesen discussed Agricultural Water Quality Plans and emphasized the need for farmers to update their plans. The committee requested that agricultural water quality plans be addressed during the livestock conference at KFB's annual meeting.

UK swine specialist Richard Coffey updated the group on the Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Plus program. PQA 3 no longer exists, but producers will remain certified under PQA 3 until the current certification expires. At that time, producers must re-certify in the PQA Plus program, Coffey said.

In policy action, the committee urges state agencies to work cooperatively to control or eliminate the feral hog population. Another recommendation calls for the state legislature to provide incentives to increase the number of large animal vets in the state.

SAFETY AND RURAL HEALTH

KFB Executive Vice President David Beck addressed the committee to explain the transfer of the organization's safety programs to the Communications Division. Several committee members voiced approval of the change and added that KFB should acquire a tabletop display to use at events. Members also suggested that KFB purchase videos and DVDs on safety issues that could be distributed to county Farm Bureaus.

Reports on various safety and health programs were given by Dale Dobson of KDA, Larry Piercy of UK, Terry Bunn of the Kentucky Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation Program and Ken Blum of Kentucky Life Line Screening. Committee members suggested that KFB consider sponsoring additional types of screenings.

Turning to policy, the group recommended language to strongly support enforcement of ATV laws plus warning signage on horse-drawn equipment. They also expressed support for tougher drug laws and more educational programs to curb drug abuse.

KFB Director Cathy Pleasants of Lincoln County is chairperson of this committee.

DAIRY

Donna Phillips, UK livestock nutrition specialist, spoke about utilizing non-traditional sources of feed and animal nutrition. Non-traditional forage and commodities can sometimes be used to feed cows but it is still important to make sure they have a balanced diet and chew their cud., she said.

Mick Henderson, general manager of the Commonwealth Agri-Energy (CAE) ethanol plant in Hopkinsville, addressed the committee. CAE was formed by farmers and produces ethanol, distilled grains, and CO₂. Henderson mentioned that food prices will continue to go up because energy is used in all food production. He also noted that milk prices are set by a formula that takes into account four different commodities. The price may affect the farmers' margin but it does not reflect the supermarket price, he noted.

Chris Thompson from the UK College of Agriculture's Regulatory Services Department gave the committee an update. He mentioned the different regulatory tests and non-regulatory tests. He also went through the different milk testing procedures.

Eunice Schlappi, dairy specialist for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, explained a producers' survey and announced the Young Dairy Producers Tour.

Roger Thomas, executive director of the Kentucky Dairy Development Council, gave an update on the organization's activities.

The committee, which is chaired by KFB Director Kelly Thurman of McLean County, had no policy recommendations.

EDUCATION

Rhonda Sims, director of the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Assessment Support, discussed the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). She described how the state reports to the federal government on the data collected by CATS.

House Education Committee Chairman Frank Rasche and Senate Education Committee Chairman Ken Winter discussed legislative issues. Representative Rasche said the House was planning to address construction, pupil growth and transportation issues. Senator Winters said he expected a bill

to be reintroduced addressing teacher and student performance incentives, as well as computer science programs.

The group had a lengthy discussion of policy issues. Among several policy proposals, the committee voiced support for more equitable access to career and technical education based on workforce needs and for the implementation of an advising system to provide career guidance and academic counseling for all students to ensure preparation for post-secondary education.

Another recommendation encourages the use of Kentucky-grown products in school food programs. The group also endorsed a resolution to support a student loan forgiveness program for Kentuckians returning to the state to work in a large animal veterinary practice, plus funding for additional slots in the state veterinary program that sends students to veterinary schools in Alabama under a contractual agreement.

KFB Director Terry Gilbert of Boyle County is chairperson of the Education Committee.

EMERGING AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Dr. Ronald Hustedde of UK spoke about the Kentucky Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute. The goal is to help isolated communities develop a climate friendly to entrepreneurship, and to move away from a culture of encouraging only industrial development, he explained.

Stephen Yates, Agritourism Director for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, reported that KDA is creating a website, called "Kentucky Farms are Fun," linking as many agritourism venues as possible. His colleague, Mac Stone, then discussed several issues concerning organic farming.

Stacia Alford spoke about the Kentucky Grape & Wine Council, whose purpose is to market and promote the grape and wine industry. Kentucky now has 46 wineries, compared to two in 1993. The Council has a marketing cost-share program and also provides funding to increase distribution of Kentucky wines, she said.

Dr. James Tidwell, an aquaculture specialist at Kentucky State University, gave an update on Kentucky's aquaculture industry. Farm prawn production is up significantly over the last year, and the KSU mobile processing unit is used as much for shrimp as for any other product, he said.

In the policy discussion, the committee recommends changing language

in the aquaculture section to express support of the industry "as an alternative farming method." Under the horticulture section, the group approved a recommendation that the extension service maintain a staff oenologist to work with the Kentucky Vineyard Society and the Kentucky Grape and Wine Council. Another recommendation calls for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to be the sole regulatory authority over alternative methods of farming.

KFB Director Kim McCoy of Cumberland County chairs this committee.

EQUINE

John Nicholson, executive director of the Kentucky Horse Park's, reported on preparations for the 2010 World Equestrian Games. He said construction is underway on a \$45 million indoor arena, a preliminary design has been developed for a new outside arena, and an announcement is expected shortly on a new hotel. He also expressed appreciation for KFB's support of the games.

Jim Sartwelle, AFBF livestock economist, spoke about the organization's work on slaughter and processing issues. Due to the ban on domestic horse slaughter, the number of horses exported for slaughter in Mexico has tripled in 2007, he said.

Jerry Hancock reported on the Trail Riding Equestrians in Kentucky. The goal is to be a united voice for non-racing equine interests, and to work with governmental entities on issues that affect trail riding. Current efforts include preventing the proposed closure of trails in the Daniel Boone National Forest and the creation of new trails at Mammoth Cave and the Daniel Boone National Forest, he said.

State Veterinarian Dr. Robert Stout reviewed several proposed revisions to current regulations which will have a positive impact on the horse industry. He stressed that these revisions do not implement the National Animal Identification System.

David Switzer of the Kentucky Thoroughbred Association reported that the thoroughbred market is strong and that KTA's marketing program has been a success. KTA intends to work with other organizations on several issues, including labor problems, equitable taxation, funding for the diagnostic labs and inclusion of equine in federal disaster relief programs, he said.

Gene Clabes of the Kentucky

Equine Education Project noted that KEEP is working on the sales tax issue and that the breeder incentive program for non-race breeds has been extremely successful.

Dr. Robert Coleman reported on UK's equine initiative. He reviewed current and future construction at the Main Chance Equine Campus for Equine Teaching and Research plus a new undergraduate degree in Equine Science and Management.

Turning to policy, the committee expressed support for developing existing and encouraging additional public horse riding trails on state lands and parks. Another proposal calls for supporting programs such as the Kentucky Horse Council that promotes the industry. The group also endorsed the addition of six more veterinary students at Auburn University under the state program.

Jim Mahan of Fayette County is chairman of the equine committee.

SHEEP AND GOATS

Via teleconference, the committee heard from Mitt Walker, Alabama Farmers Federation, about the Alabama sheep and goat checkoff program. He reviewed the history of Alabama's program and how the first referendum was conducted in 2004. Funds are collected by Alabama's Department of Agriculture, at fifty cents per head. It is a voluntary program and funds are used for promotion, education, and research, Walker said.

Ray Bowman of the Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development Office reviewed proposed legislation to implement a checkoff program in Kentucky.

Dr. Sue Billings reported for the State Veterinarian's office, reviewing some regulations they are developing. She also reported on several recent disease outbreaks, primarily EHD (Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease).

Warren Beeler also reported for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. The department, he said, is conducting graded sales training in several other states and is developing a Sheep and Goat Expo. He also informed the committee of the opening of Bluegrass Lamb and Goat, a newly opened processing facility in Paint Lick.

In the policy discussion, the committee proposed adding the Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development office to several policy statements relative to support of livestock, commodity promotion and assessing the state's sheep and goat industry.

WEAK DOLLAR BOOSTS SOY

USDA analysts say the soybean meal and soybean oil markets have benefited from a depreciation of the U.S. dollar against foreign currencies.

Since January 1, the exchange rates for many importing countries have appreciated between five and 15 percent. Thus, the improved purchasing power of importers enables them to bid more strongly for U.S. supplies. Early fall price strength led USDA to raise the expected average price ranges for 2007/08. For soybean meal, the expected price range was increased by \$15 to \$220-\$250 per short ton. The 2006/07 average price was \$205.44. The anticipated price range for soybean oil was increased 1.5 cents to 34.5-38.5 cents per pound, which would be well above any previous year's average. The 2006/07 average oil price was 31.02 cents.

According to USDA, the influence of exchange rates on foreign trade has already been seen. U.S. soybean meal exports for 2006/07 may finish near 8.85 million short tons, a 10 percent gain over the previous marketing year. For 2007/08, tighter availability of U.S. supplies and more foreign exports may cut soybean meal exports back to 8.25 million tons. USDA's 2006/07 export forecast for soybean oil was raised 50 million pounds to a four-year high of 1.9 billion pounds. The 2007/08 export forecast was increased to 1.45 billion pounds due to a higher anticipated supply.

BROILER EXPANSION ACCELERATES

The year-over-year growth of broiler production will accelerate in the fourth quarter of 2007, according to the October issue of "Livestock, Dairy, & Poultry Outlook." Estimated third quarter production is 9.025 billion pounds, up 1.6 percent from a year earlier. The rate of growth in fourth quarter broiler production is expected to accelerate to 2.8 percent and reach an estimated 9.05 billion pounds. The production increases in the last half of 2007 follow a year of falling production. Production growth is primarily the result of growers placing more chicks – over 2.5 percent more during September and October compared to a year ago.

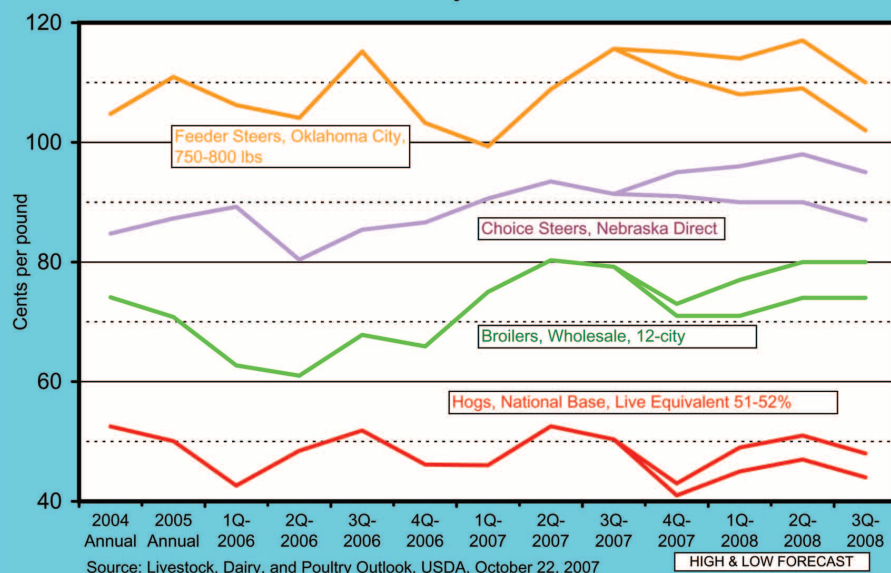
WHEAT EXPORTS UP SHARPLY

Because of poor wheat crops around the globe in 2007, U.S. wheat exports are up sharply. Wheat export shipments for June 1, 2007 through October 18 were 539.9 million bushels, up 69 percent from the previous year. Outstanding sales of 430 million bushels are just shy of a record level, and 3.4 times the level of outstanding

sales a year earlier. U.S. wheat exports will slow as the season progresses. 2007/08 exports are forecast at 1.15 billion bushels, up 26.5 percent from 2006/07.

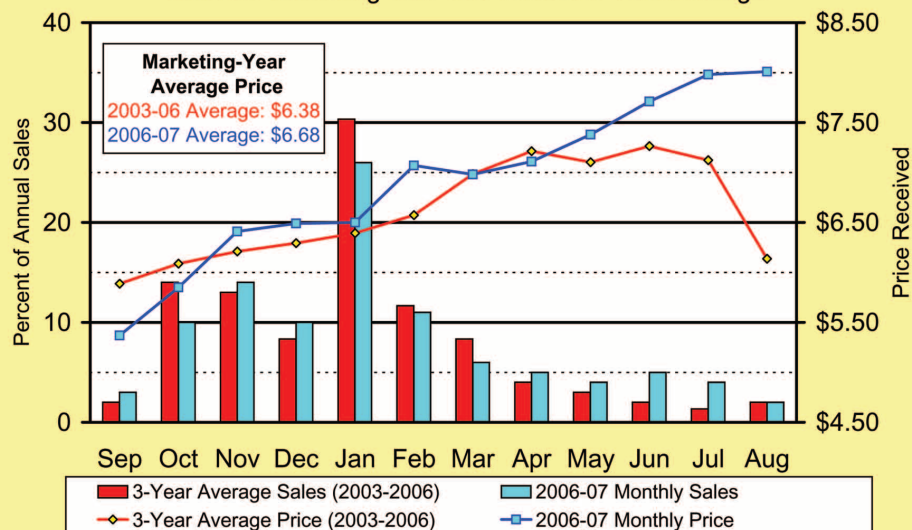
U.S. ending stocks for 2007/08 are projected at 307 million bushels, the lowest since 1948/49. The season-average farm price is projected at \$5.80 to \$6.40 per bushel, well above the record of \$4.55 per bushel in 1995/96.

U.S. Quarterly Animal Prices



Kentucky Monthly Soybean Marketings

2006-07 Marketing Year vs Previous 3-Year Average



Soybean exports are **BOOMING**

U.S. soybean farmers have had a record-setting year, thanks in part to their investment in soybean checkoff international marketing programs. Marketing year 2006-2007 ended August 31, 2007, with U.S. soybean exports totaling 1.11 billion bushels.

China retains its title from last year as the number one importer of U.S. soybeans, importing 420 million bushels during this past marketing year. This is up from just over 356 million bushels in the 2005-2006 marketing year. Mexico came in as the second-largest customer for U.S. soybean farmers, importing 141 million bushels, followed by Japan, which imported 116 million bushels.

"U.S. soybean farmers are listening and responding to the needs of international buyers," says Terry Ecker, USB International Marketing chair and soybean farmer from Elmo, Mo. "We realize that these customers are buying more than just soybeans, they are buying the protein and oil within the soybeans. It is important that we continue

to provide them with the quality soybeans they expect."

One way the checkoff is working to position U.S. soybean quality is by funding the annual crop-quality survey. The survey measures attributes of the current U.S. soybean crop, including protein and oil content, in soybeans throughout the country. This survey is widely used by international buyers as a measuring stick when making purchases from U.S. soybean farmers.

In addition to this year's success, the 2008 marketing year is looking promising. The year is starting with a record amount of export commitments — 297 million bushels of U.S. soybeans are committed to customers abroad. The checkoff is working to continue to grow new markets for soybeans through building demand for use in food and aquaculture.

Another innovation aiding in the growth of U.S. soybean exports is containerized shipping. Shipping soybeans in containers results in less handling, preserving the quality of U.S. soybeans during transit. Containerized shipping

also allows overseas buyers to order customizable amounts of soybeans instead of having to buy bulk shipments.

"It's a good feeling as a U.S. soybean farmer to know that the product you produce is desired all over the world," says Ecker. "Although this has been a year for the record books, the checkoff is already gearing up for next year in hopes of setting yet another record."

USB is made up of 64 farmer-directors who oversee the investments of the soybean checkoff on behalf of all U.S. soybean farmers. Checkoff funds are invested in the areas of animal utilization, human utilization, industrial utilization, industry relations, market access and supply. As stipulated in the Soybean Promotion, Research and Customer Information Act, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has oversight responsibilities for USB and the soybean checkoff.

KFB has been a strong supporter of commodity checkoff programs, providing that the enabling legislation gives producers the opportunity to request periodic referendums on the programs.

A MARKET MATTER . . .



GALLREIN'S MARKET IN SHELBY COUNTY WAS AMONG THE STOPS FOR THE RECENT FALL MARKETS TOUR HELD FOR PARTICIPANTS IN KFB'S CERTIFIED ROADSIDE FARM MARKETS PROGRAM. THE ONE-DAY TOUR ALSO FEATURED STOPS AT ELK CREEK VINEYARDS IN OWEN COUNTY AND WILSON LANDSCAPE NURSERY IN FRANKLIN COUNTY.

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AFBF RECEIVES AWARD FROM FOOD BANK

Thanks to the hard work and efforts led by the Young Farmers and Ranchers program, AFBF has been recognized as the 2007 Trade Organization of the Year by America's Second Harvest, the nation's largest food bank network. AFBF received the honor because of its many contributions through the organization's "Harvest for All" program, a partnership between Farm Bureau and America's Second Harvest spearheaded by the AFBF YF&R Committee. Since it was launched on Hunger Awareness Day in June of 2003, the program has contributed the equivalent of more than 10 million meals to the nation's hungry, including 4.5 million pounds of donated food, \$489,000 dollars raised and over 20,000 combined volunteer hours.

"Through this program, we are able to show that America's farmers and ranchers want to assure all Americans have access to the bounty we produce," said AFBF YF&R Chair Chris Chinn, a farmer from Missouri. "Harvest for All is an example of America's first-harvesters working to help America's Second Harvest. Working together, we want to end hunger in America."

Since 2003, young farmers and ranchers from across the country have volunteered their time helping out in soup kitchens and food banks. They have also donated food from their farms and ranches and worked together to raise funds.

Each year, the America's Second Harvest network honors a trade association with the Trade Organization of the Year award for demonstrating the highest level of commitment to the network through a hunger-relief program.

CORN GROWERS BEMOAN RAIL SERVICE

In testimony to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) told legislators the nation's railroad freight system is providing "deteriorating service" to agricultural shippers.

In written testimony, NCGA said "service predictability is a huge issue. Determining when rail equipment will arrive at origin for loading, when it will be furnished locomotive power and when it will reach destination are increasing uncertainties. It is common to hear reports from agricultural shippers who experience wait times for rail cars exceeding 30 days. In a world of 'just in time' delivery, a 30-day wait for your product to be picked up is often unacceptable to your customers."

Agricultural shippers also often pay higher prices and receive a lower service priority than other customers. NCGA pointed out that a Government Accountability Office study found that while railroad rates for coal, motor vehicles and other large shipments have

declined, rates for agricultural shippers have actually gone up.

The rising demand for ethanol could make matters worse. Rail is the primary method to transport ethanol and, NCGA testified, "ethanol production is centered in the Midwest, but 80 percent of the population, and therefore the ethanol demand, lives along the coastlines."

NCGA also discussed the Railroad Competition and Service Improvement Act of 2007 (H.R. 2125). The bill is an important step toward addressing many of the rail transportation problems facing agriculture. "This legislation will improve access to competitive rail service, protect those without competition from being subjected to unreasonable rates and/or practices and re-establish the reliability of rail service," NCGA said. "In particular, this legislation provides key improvements to issues important to agriculture including the removal of paper barriers and the use of final offer arbitration. We look forward to working with the Committee to see that this legislation moves quickly through the congressional process."

FARMERS SHOULD CONSIDER TESTING FORAGES

Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer reminds livestock producers that it's important to test forages, especially in a drought year like this one in which farmers are looking for ways to stretch their hay supplies.

"Nitrate poisoning can occur when feeding forages in which nitrates can accumulate, such as crop residue," Commissioner Farmer said. "Testing forages is simple and inexpensive, and it can save you a lot of headaches later."

Dr. Lucky Pittman, head of the Pathology Section at the Murray State University Breathitt Veterinary Center in Hopkinsville, said his facility has tested numerous corn stalk samples and has found some to be well in excess of the safe level of nitrates for feeding to livestock. Some forages from Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres that have been opened to haying and grazing have been found to have little or no nutritional content, Dr. Pittman said.

"Farmers should work with their veterinarian and their extension agent to decide what is the best, least-cost ration," Dr. Pittman said. "They need to know

what the nutritional content is and supplement accordingly. If they don't test, they don't know what they've got."

Farmers can have their forages tested at the Breathitt Center or the University of Kentucky Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center in Lexington. For more information, call the UK Center at (859) 253-0571 or the Breathitt Center at (270) 886-3959 or contact your county extension agent.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture tests forages for nutritional value. For a fee of \$10 per lot, KDA staff will take samples at the farm and analyze them in the department's Frankfort lab. For more information, call 1-800-248-4628 or go to www.kyagr.com, click on "Programs" and then "Forage Testing."

The Department has set up a Hay Hotline for producers with hay to sell or looking for hay to buy. To get on one of the lists, call toll-free 1-888-567-9589. The KDA also hosts a Hay Directory where hay for sale is listed by county. To view the Hay Directory, go to www.kyagr.com, click on "Programs" and click on "Hay for Sale (tested)".



BY BYRON BREWER

Editor's Note: Byron Brewer is a former managing editor of the Georgetown News-Graphic and communications specialist with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. This article is an excerpt from his weekly column for the Georgetown newspaper.

It was more than 20 years ago that Scott County extension agent Mark Reese and I were talking. We were in the midst of a drought and were discussing agriculture's future in Scott County, about two or three years before anyone had ever heard plans for a Toyota plant.

"There needs to be some new direction because the farmer is losing out," Reese said. "Even in good years, with good crops, he is losing out."

Mark went on to re-establish lambs in Scott County, to strengthen its beef industry and to pioneer this "new direction" many have taken that has added a branch to the state Department of Agriculture's site map.

Agritourism, or "agri-tainment" as Mark likes to call it, is the new darling of the farm world. For Scott County, the reality began at the legendary Double Stink Hog Farm of brothers Tom and Howard Fister.

"A person may come to this community because they've read in Southern Living magazine about the Pumpkinfest at Double Stink," said Tom Fister, who in 2006 decided to shut down the family-oriented fall festival after 22 years. "Then they come year after year, and they find other farm festivals, the local farmers' market. They make a weekend of it, visit downtown and the other tourism attractions Georgetown and Scott County have to offer.

"This community greatly benefits from agriculture, but tourism dollars coming because of agricultural wealth

is something we had never thought of. It was kind of a bonus."

To parlay that "bonus," especially during the autumn, Mark and his colleagues at the extension service began in 2003 sponsoring a day in Scott County where participants traveled from one farm to another and even to downtown Georgetown to get a taste of agritourism opportunities along what they called the Harvest Trail.

The Trail was an opportunity to highlight all the on-farm activities in our area and to shine the spotlight on our entire community as well. It promoted the fact that folks who want to experience on-farm activities could come to Scott County to do so.

As usual, Mark cooperated with many entities on the Trail project, including local farmers and businesses, the Tourism Office and the Georgetown Renaissance Program. There may have been others since its inception.

One person who also started early with agritourism was former tobacco producer, Kevan Evans. For him, it all started with an apple.

Where tobacco plants once stretched toward the summer sun, Kevan in 1991 began planting apple trees. Slowly he added other fruit trees - peach and pear - and eventually income from the fruits and vegetables outweighed tobacco money on his economic scale.

Word of his orchard several years ago brought so many people to his farm near Newtown that in 1998 he opened a small stand where his family could provide apples, pumpkins, mums and other goods by season.

Evans, a former president of the Central Kentucky Growers Association, has become a noted authority on apples in the Bluegrass area. Evans' Orchard and Cider Mill is today an agritourism destination for thousands of visitors each year. It has grown into a true local agritourism success story in Scott County.

Other places that have been crucial

to the agritourism economy of Scott County are Bi-Water Farm, where thousands of school children travel to see corn mazes and other autumn amaze-ments each year, along with Amerson Farm Market, Quest Farm and Finch Farm, where mums and other fresh fall products can be found.

Mark Reese, who has received many awards for his work, including KFB's annual award for promoting agriculture, must feel a great deal of satisfaction about this progress.



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A strong animal agriculture industry in Kentucky helps ensure a better living for soybean farmers and the entire rural community. By supporting livestock producers, we help ourselves.

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