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KENTUCKY

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

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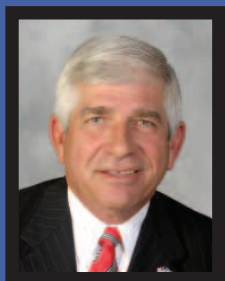


“COMMENT”

New beginnings are created, they do not just happen. We in agriculture are very familiar with the reality of “new beginnings.” Regardless of the type of farming operation in which we are involved, an annual “new beginning” is almost always worked toward and anticipated. Those involved in crop production, both traditional and specialty crops, look forward to a new growing season. It gives renewed hope for excellent crops and prices which reflect both cost of production and a reasonable return on investment. For farmers in animal agriculture production, the concept of “new beginnings” is no different. A new calf crop in a cow-calf beef operation; the birth of replacement heifers in a dairy operation; a new foal or foals on an equine farm; and the delivery of a new flock for poultry producers all signify a new start and potential opportunities for the future. The same is true for all segments of animal agriculture and all farms regardless of farm size.

We are collectively in the midst of a “new beginning” for Kentucky agriculture. With the election of Governor Steve Beshear, there is a new administration in place leading Kentucky. As a result of Governor Beshear’s success in last year’s campaign, I too have a “new beginning” as Executive Director of the Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy (GOAP). I look forward to working with Governor Beshear, Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer, the dedicated members of the Agricultural Development Board, policy makers at all levels of government, my co-workers at GOAP and everyone in the agriculture community across Kentucky. Collectively we will strive to achieve the goals of increasing net farm income and continuing to improve the quality of life for families and individuals who call rural Kentucky home.

While many of us are experiencing new beginnings, we can count on the steadfast commitment of Kentucky Farm Bureau. Both its members and employees continue to achieve the aforementioned goals and objectives for agriculture and rural Kentucky.



Roger Thomas

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
GOAP

ON THE COVER:

U.S. CAPITOL BUILDING
PHOTO BY L. JOE CAIN

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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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LEADING LARGELY

PRESIDENTS' CONFERENCE HAS RECORD ATTENDANCE

In closing remarks at last month's Presidents and Vice Presidents Leadership Conference, KFB President Marshall Coyle reasserted his belief that Kentucky has the strongest Farm Bureau organization of all the states.

The size of his audience certainly backed up that claim.

This year's conference attracted a record 350 participants, continuing a trend in recent years of large groups at all of the organization's major activities. As Coyle noted to the group, KFB led the nation last year in membership growth and is ahead of quota for this year.

"The strength of our organization," said Coyle, "lies with the county Farm Bureaus."

That perspective was echoed by the conference's keynote speaker, Dr. Charles Byers, a retired University of Kentucky professor of ag education. Byers, who was highly recognized for his teaching and leadership skills during a 38-year career at UK, described KFB as "the best spokesman agriculture has in the state of Kentucky" and then told the county leaders that "the fate of Farm Bureau is in your hands."

His address, "Lifting the Lid of Leadership," focused on what he feels are the key characteristics of effective leaders. He advises the following: (1) Set goals; (2) Develop strategies to accomplish goals; (3) Be willing to take intelligent risks; (4) Be honest, have ethics and integrity; (5) Be trust-

worthy; (6) Don't try to please everyone; (7) Seek advice but be careful with whom you obtain advice; (8) Enable others to succeed; (9) Do a lot

cess," he said.

Byers also gave a presentation on conducting effective meetings. He framed the discussion by stating: "Your local Farm Bureau needs to be known for things it is doing in the community – meetings enable you to plan those things."

His recommended "meeting strategies" included starting the meeting on time, having a written agenda, reporting on completed activities, plan for upcoming activities, make decisions by a group vote and get commitments for helping to reach objectives.

"The cost of planning is cheap," he noted.

Among other conference highlights:

- Leaders from Madison, LaRue and Scott counties conducted a session on local projects, explaining how coordinated plans resulted in significant achievements. Madison County's project involved working with businesses to establish a local member services program to supplement the KFB program. The services include discounts on farm chemicals, GM vehicles plus a county newsletter. LaRue County FB conducted a public information and advocacy initiative, centered on a petition drive that forced a referendum on a proposed property tax hike. (The organization objected to the school board's intention to impose the tax without a public vote.) Scott County FB, meanwhile, is spearheading a county farmland protection program.

- KFB staff gave reports on how priority issues were faring in Congress



DR. CHARLES BYERS SPOKE ABOUT EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

of complimenting; (10) Accept blame when deserved; (11) Be a good listener; (12) Be positive; (13) Be a role model; (14) Possess good communications skills.

"We have to work to develop ourselves as leaders," Byers said. "Leadership is a different animal to different people; there are many characteristics."

The most effective leaders, he added, are those who are "enablers" of others. "Let others succeed; receive your recognition through their suc-

and at the state legislative session.

- The executive director of the popular Sunbelt Agriculture Exposition explained how Kentucky agriculture would be featured at this year's event, October 14-16 in Moultrie, Georgia.

- KFB First Vice President Mark Haney gave an update on the development of the Kentucky Agriculture Heritage Center.



ABOVE: THE COUNTY LEADERS RECEIVED A LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM KFB STAFF MEMBERS (FROM LEFT) DAVID FINNEY, JEFF HARPER, DAVID S. BECK, LAURA KNOTH AND TONY SHOLAR, WHO REPRESENTS KFB ON A CONTRACT BASIS. COMBINED, THIS GROUP HAS NEARLY 100 YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS WORK IN FRANKFORT.

LEFT: MADISON COUNTY FB DIRECTORS (FROM LEFT) EDDIE WARREN, TIM BRANDENBURG AND KEVIN FIELDS GAVE A PRESENTATION ON A LOCAL MEMBER SERVICES PROGRAM.

BELOW: THE OPENING LUNCHEON HAD A FULL CROWD TO LISTEN TO KEYNOTE SPEAKER DR. CHARLES BYERS.



KFB contends with "intense" legislative session

Some key parts of KFB's state legislative agenda are pending the outcome of the budgetary process at the 2008 legislative session.

The best news for Kentucky farm interests is that the executive budget contains the 50 percent Master

Settlement Agreement funding level for the agricultural development fund, plus there's widespread support among lawmakers. Prospects also are good for the renovation of UK's Livestock Disease Diagnostic Lab and the merger of dairy farms at UK and Eastern.

But KFB's Public Affairs team is having to work hard in pursuit of funding for renovating the Breathitt Lab in Hopkinsville and the FFA Leadership Center in Hardinsburg. Additionally, money has not been budgeted for one key means of addressing the shortage of large animal veterinarians in the state – adding 10 more slots for Kentuckians in the vet schools at Auburn and Tuskegee Universities. That cost is approximately \$440,000.

Meanwhile, a couple of bills have been filed to improve the vet situation. One, which easily passed the House, updates the veterinarian practices act to make the use of technicians and technologists more feasible. Another bill would create a loan forgiveness program for those who return from school to Kentucky to establish a large and/or

mixed animal practice in an underserved area.

On the high priority issue of health insurance reforms, KFB is pushing for support of a measure (HB 533) that would make health insurance more affordable for small businesses, as well as a bill that would expand the cost-reporting requirements for providers – a move that could stabilize costs.

Public Affairs Director Laura Knoth describes this session as "very intense."

"The budget situation is as bad as you've heard," Ms. Knoth said to county leaders at last month's Presidents and Vice Presidents Conference. "There have been serious budget cuts from all levels of government. It's going to take an effort from every one of us to have a successful session with our agenda. It's time to start talking to your legislators. Point out that agriculture is an economic engine in this state; it's a good investment."

On the "defensive" side, KFB is strongly opposing a bill (HB 361) that would allow local governments to impose sales taxes without a public referendum.



GOVERNOR STEVE BESHEAR SPOKE TO KFB DIRECTORS AT A MEETING IN FRANKFORT. HERE HE IS GREETED BY KFB EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DAVID S. BECK.

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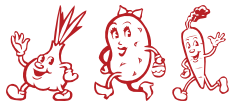
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Food Check-Out Week

County and state Farm Bureaus around the nation celebrated the efforts of farmers and the continued affordability of food during Food Check-Out Week, February 3-9. KFB staff promoted the event by distributing baskets of Kentucky food products to state legislators and other state officials. KFB Women's Committee Chairperson Frieda Heath presented the baskets to dozens of lawmakers at the Capitol Annex building, explaining the purpose of Food Check-Out Week.

On the local level, dozens of county Farm Bureaus marked the occasion with a wide range of activities. A few examples: In Pike County, women's committee members Dollie Burchett and Marquette Deskins, along with Area Program Coordinator Randy Thomas, worked a display at Williamson's Family Foods in the small community of Sidney. In Calloway County, Farm Bureau leaders went on a radio program to talk about the occasion and the county board collected canned goods for a local food pantry. Neighboring Fulton County also distributed food to the needy and distributed literature in local supermarkets. Graves County, meanwhile, made a publicized presentation to the County Judge-Executive and had a display at the local Ag Credit Association office. In Bath County, the women's committee donated food items to the Christian Social Service Center. Union County FB Directors Gilbert and Pat Rudd coordinated a food donation involving three supermarkets, with the products going to the Audubon Area Community Service.

According to the most recent statistics compiled by the Agriculture Department's Economic Research Service, American families and individuals spend, on average, just 9.9 percent of their disposable personal income for food. Applying the current statistic to the calendar year means the average U.S. household will have earned enough disposable income – the portion of income available for spending or saving after taxes are paid – to pay for its annual food supply by the first week

of February.

"America's food supply remains abundant and affordable, thanks to the hard-working farm and ranch families who produce it," said Terry Gilbert, a Boyle County farmer and chairperson of the AFBF Women's Leadership Committee.

On behalf of AFBF, Gilbert and the Women's Leadership Committee donated

\$2,500, as well as food and farm-related children's books, to the Ronald McDonald House of Columbia, South Carolina. They were joined at the event by representatives of the South Carolina FB Women's Leadership Committee. The donation also included farm toys donated by Case IH. The Ronald McDonald House provides a "home-away-from-home" for the families of seriously ill children receiving medical treatment at area hospitals. The donation will be used to help feed families staying at the House.

During Food Check-Out Week, it is appropriate for Americans to reflect on their ability to purchase food and how they might help those in need in their communities, Gilbert said.

"As food producers, we remain concerned that some Americans are not able to afford to buy the food they need, but we are proud of the part U.S. farmers play in ensuring our food supply is affordable overall," she said.

Gilbert acknowledged consumers may have noticed their food dollar stretched a little tighter lately, but noted it is due primarily to rising energy costs, which have led to higher expenses for processing, packing and transporting food for retail sale. According to USDA, food has been more affordable overall in recent years compared to several decades ago due to a widening gap between growth in per-capita incomes and the amount of money spent for food.

The Agriculture Department's latest statistic includes food and non-alcoholic beverages consumed at home and away from home. This includes food purchases from grocery stores and other retail outlets, including food purchases with food stamps and vouchers for the Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) program. The statistic also includes away-from-home meals and snacks purchased by families and individuals, as well as food furnished to employees.

In comparison to working 37 days to pay for food, Americans worked 77 days to pay their federal taxes, 62 days to pay for housing/household operation, and 52 days for health/medical care, according to The Tax Foundation.



TOP: IN BATH COUNTY (FROM LEFT), FEDERATION SECRETARY KIM BACH (LEFT) AND WOMEN'S COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON KAYE BUCKLER (RIGHT) PRESENTED FOOD ITEMS TO MARCELLE DOGGETT, DIRECTOR OF THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SERVICE CENTER.

BOTTOM: UNION COUNTY FB DIRECTORS PAT AND GILBERT RUDD COLLECTED FOOD ITEMS THAT WERE DONATED TO THE AUDUBON AREA COMMUNITY SERVICE. HERE, THEY DISPLAYED A TRUCKLOAD OF ITEMS AT ONE OF THREE LOCAL SUPERMARKETS WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFORT.



CAN YOU REDUCE NITROGEN USE?

BY LAURA SKILLMAN
UK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

With the high cost of nitrogen fertilizer, farmers need to get optimum use of the product. Reviewing their management plan and making needed changes can potentially save money without compromising yield.

Most recent research shows it takes about three quarters of a pound of nitrogen per bushel to reach corn's maximum yield potential, but some producers use much higher rates, said

John Grove, UK College of Agriculture soil and crop management specialist. With today's high cost of nitrogen, using it more efficiently, and thereby lowering rates, can have a major impact on profitability.

UK has been using corn-nitrogen trial data for more than 50 years to determine rates to recommend to Kentucky growers. As a result of these long term trials, Grove said UK researchers know that tillage, soil drainage, previous crop, winter field cover and timing of nitrogen applications make a difference in nitrogen need. There are other factors in individual fields that can affect a crop's ability to take up nitrogen, including stand problems, root development problems and water availability. Understanding these factors in their fields will help farmers determine their nitrogen needs.

Grove said, in his experience, 10 to 25 percent of farmers in any given area are using more nitrogen than necessary. That represents a serious opportunity for efficiency improvement, he said.

"I've actually heard producers say, 'I know that field has a problem so I'm going to give it an extra 25 units of nitrogen and snap it out of it.' Well, you're not," he said. "That nitrogen is not going to be able to snap that crop out of a compaction or soil structure problem. It's not going to help you when you're not in an optimal crop rotation. It's not going to make up for genetics or the fact that your plant population is above or below what that soil will support."

If drainage is a problem or there is substantial residue from a previous crop, then the farmer will want to look at ways to reduce loss of nitrogen into the air through denitrification or volatilization.

Placing nitrogen in the soil beside the rows can reduce the likelihood of

both volatilization and immobilization, therefore reducing the need to use higher nitrogen rates. Timing of the application also plays a role. The optimal timing depends on when the crop is planted, expected crop development and soil wetness.

Well drained soils offer the greatest flexibility but give the least response to delayed application or split applications, Grove said. Therefore, nitrogen can be applied prior to planting or via side dressing (placing it beside the row when corn is 4 to 8 inches tall) with little effect on yield.

Poorly and somewhat poorly drained soils offer the least flexibility because they give the most response to delayed and split applications. The nitrogen loss problem with these soils is denitrification, so applications prior to planting and at planting offer the greatest potential for this loss. Delaying application until the crop is growing offers the best chance of getting the nitrogen to the plant when it needs it. With pre-plant and at-plant applications, it is also important to consider using a product containing a nitrification inhibitor as these reduce denitrification loss potential on the wettest soils if side dressing is not possible, he said.

If you've got some wet fields you should be side dressing at least two-thirds of your nitrogen on these," Grove said. "If you do that you can reduce your total nitrogen rate by 35 pounds per acre. So, on your wettest 1,000 acres of corn ground, with a nitrogen cost of \$0.40 per pound, you'll save about \$14,000."



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WATER QUALITY PLANS ARE ESSENTIAL

BY KATIE PRATT
UK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

As the nation focuses on protecting the environment, agricultural producers can be at the forefront of the movement by running environmentally friendly and economically savvy operations, which include having an effective water quality plan, said Amanda Abnee Gumbert, UK College of Agriculture extension specialist for water quality.

There are a lot of things as individuals, farmers and land managers that we can do to protect the environment," Gumbert said. "Most of these practices ultimately result in improved water quality."

The majority of the state, with the exception of the far-reaching portions of western Kentucky, uses surface water as its primary source of drinking water. This water has to go through an extreme amount of treatment before it is safe for human consumption, Gumbert said. Improved water quality could help cut costs at treatment facilities because cleaner water will not need as many treatments before it can be consumed.

The Kentucky legislature passed the Agriculture Water Quality Act in 1994 and it was implemented in 2001. The

law requires all landowners who own 10 or more acres of land that is used for agriculture or silviculture operations to develop a water quality plan. However, this law has not been readily enforced, most likely because it was originally presented as voluntary measure to landowners, Gumbert said. She added that a water quality plan is necessary to protect the environment and participate in state and federal cost share programs.

Developing a water quality plan may seem like a lengthy, complicated task, but it is not as difficult as some may think. Gumbert said most of the items included in the plan are common sense practices and will save farmers money in future years. Many farmers already are using good water quality practices, such as rotational grazing, and do not realize it, she said.

"A water quality plan is about looking at what a farmer is currently doing and making necessary changes that will result in environmental benefits," Gumbert said. "These often lead to economical benefits too."

She said farmers can also avoid burning trash on their property to improve water quality because the chemicals released during the burning process can pollute the air, land and water. Farmers should also effectively

manage chemicals, which are used in some farming operations, to ensure they do not come in contact with waterways.

Ashley Osborne, UK extension associate for environmental and natural resource issues, said farmers can consider Best Management Practices, such as installing filter stripes, utilizing grassed waterways and creating stream buffers, when creating a water quality plan. These practices can decrease the amount of pollution entering ponds, streams and other water bodies.

To get help developing a water quality plan, speak with a county agriculture and natural resources extension agent or contact your local conservation district.

FORAGE SEED IN TIGHT SUPPLY

BY KATIE PRATT
UK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Due to last year's drought and the rising cost of nitrogen fertilizer, many types of forages are expected to be in high demand this year across the United States. In order for Kentucky producers to secure their preferred varieties, they should consider purchasing seed early, said Ray Smith, UK extension forage specialist.

Orchardgrass supplies are limited because of a fungal disease called "choke," which keeps the seed from developing. In the past two years, orchardgrass producers in the western

United States have lost at least 20 to 30 percent of their crops because of the disease. An economic fungicide treatment for the disease has not been discovered.

The tight supplies will cause a price increase for orchardgrass seed, and prices are not expected to decrease as the year unfolds. Producers wanting orchardgrass should act soon, even if it means paying higher prices, Smith said. Seed will likely sell out at many dealerships.

Producers should purchase other legumes, such as alfalfa and white clover, early to receive their choice of variety.

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KFB WORKING ON BURLEY GROWERS' CONCERNS



PHILIP MORRIS OFFICIALS HAL TEEGARDEN (SECOND FROM LEFT) AND CRAIG STARIHA (RIGHT) MET WITH KFB LEADERS TO DISCUSS GROWERS' CONCERNS. THE KFB CONTINGENT INCLUDED SECOND VICE PRESIDENT JOHN HENDRICKS (LEFT) AND PRESIDENT MARSHALL COYLE, A LONG-TIME GROWER AND FORMER CHAIRMAN OF KFB'S TOBACCO ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

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KFB has been working to resolve some issues that have burley tobacco growers fuming at their largest customer, Philip Morris.

David Chappell, an Owen County grower and KFB Director who chairs the organization's tobacco advisory committee, summed up the situation when he explained to committee members why they had been summoned for a special meeting last month.

"There are a lot of disgusted farmers," Chappell said. "A lot of farmers are just saying there's not enough money in it to do it this year. We need to see what we can do."

The concerns are so widespread that KFB Executive Committee members Marshall Coyle, Mark Haney, John Hendricks and David S. Beck attended the meeting and then followed up, along with Chappell, by meeting with Philip Morris officials Hal Teegarden and Craig Stariha to discuss the problems.

Growers generally are dissatisfied with the price levels on PM contracts this year and some are upset with delays in getting their 2007 crops sold at the receiving stations. Philip Morris, which is far and away the leading buyer of Kentucky burley, has five receiving stations in the state.

Several of the advisory committee

members were quick to voice their frustrations. And according to the comments made, the frustration is statewide, from the Purchase Region to the Appalachian foothills.

"We can't live with these prices with labor, chemical and barn costs rising like they are," said David Wimpy of Christian County. "Everybody's unhappy with burley."

Spencer County's Scott Travis said many were irate because they couldn't get their crop sold before Christmas, as is the norm. "It's disappointing that they would cut people off before Christmas when they know we have bills to pay," said Travis, who is a KFB Director.

The advisory committee agenda focused on: (1) Scheduling and advance announcing of sale dates; (2) Encouraging the companies to pay producers a reasonable return on their investment based on real costs of production; (3) Revamp the price incentives program to pay for quality and build producer loyalty; (4) The future of the cost-share program; (5) The possibility of a program to help offset rising production costs; (6) Improving the partnering program to encourage growers.

Coyle said the Philip Morris officials agreed to consider the recommendations for change and to continue discussions.

Congress hears testimony on shortage of veterinarians

The president of the nation's largest veterinary association appeared before a Congressional subcommittee and urged the United States Department of Agriculture to implement a longstanding, but dormant, program that would help address a critical shortage in the number of veterinarians who protect the country's food supply. **(Addressing a shortage of large animal vets in Kentucky is a KFB priority issue.)**

Dr. Gregory S. Hammer, president of the American Veterinary Medical Association, testified before the House Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry that the delay in implementing the National Veterinary Medical Service Act (NVMSA) puts U.S. economic and food safety at risk.

"The problems that NVMSA will address worsen each and every day the program remains nonfunctional," Hammer said. "This has all the makings of a crisis if we don't act now."

The vet medical service act, which

was signed into law by President George Bush in 2003 and received funding in fiscal 2006-2008, is a loan repayment program for veterinarians who pledge to practice in a variety of underserved areas of veterinary medicine, including food supply veterinary medicine.

With the average veterinary school graduate's debt climbing to \$106,000, the program is essential if more food supply veterinarians are going to be added to the workforce, Hammer said.

Recent studies indicate that the supply of veterinarians working in food safety will fall short by four to five percent annually through 2016.

"These food supply veterinarians are the guardians of our nation's food supply, and they will be the first medical professionals to diagnose and contain diseases in animals that may spread to humans," Hammer said.

Officials with the USDA testified during the hearing that they lack the capability to administer the loan repayment program, saying that "such pro-

grams have never been the function" of the agency. They also indicated that the law's language complicates the process by not allowing them to work with the nation's 28 colleges of veterinary medicine to coordinate the program.

Members of the subcommittee, however, questioned why USDA considers the law hard to implement.

"In crafting this Act in 2003, the Committee worked closely with USDA to ensure proper implementation of a simple and straightforward program that would allow USDA to offer incentives to large animal veterinarians to practice in underserved rural communities," said Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Leonard Boswell (D-Iowa). "It is frustrating that four years later, USDA is now bringing concerns to our attention."

Rep. Robin Hayes, a North Carolina Republican, said the current language is not a serious deterrent.

"If the problem is how the law is written, we can change that real quick," Hayes said.

H-2A reforms under review

America's farmers, ranchers and growers must have access to a stable supply of legal labor and AFBF said it is encouraged with the general direction of two proposals issued by the Bush administration.

AFBF President Bob Stallman said the organization is evaluating the more than 200 pages of proposed reforms to streamline the H-2A guest worker program that were unveiled by the departments of Labor and Homeland Security.

"Agricultural labor, the H-2A program in particular, is an extremely complicated system with numerous issues that need to be balanced," Stallman said. "We are encouraged by the effort to come up with changes that will help farmers secure a dependable workforce for American agriculture – a task that grows in importance with each passing day."

Stallman said that "with the overall lack of availability of an existing domestic workforce willing to tackle the hard work required by agriculture, as well as the crackdown on unauthorized workers, having a workable H-2A guest worker

program is more critical than ever."

Stallman said he was encouraged that the Department of Labor proposal "might move closer to a market-based wage for the program," instead of mandating the existing adverse effect wage rate.

"The adverse effect wage rate is a terrible disincentive to the current program, and one of its greatest impediments," Stallman said. "A farm labor wage that is more market-based could be a real plus."

Stallman pointed out that there still is room for improvement in the proposals. He said there is not much relief

included for the dairy sector because those operations do not qualify under existing H-2A rules.

"For some pretty wide segments of agriculture, where the work is more long-term, we still need a legislative solution," Stallman said. "Some of the elements of AgJOBS bill would go to the heart of that problem, which is why we've consistently tried to keep that legislation moving and improve it. If you married some of the H-2A reforms being proposed today with other elements in AgJOBS, I think we might have solved a lot of the problems we're facing."



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KY CATTLE HERD IS SMALLER

Kentucky's cattle and calf inventory for January 1 was estimated at 2.4 million head by USDA-NASS. Inventory was down 60,000 head from a year earlier due in large part to the hot, dry summer that reduced availability of pasture and winter hay supplies.

Beef cows and heifers that have calved were estimated at 1.16 million head, down four percent from January 1, 2007. The number of milk cows fell 2,000 head during 2007 to 91,000 head.

Beef replacement heifers at 185,000 head were down 5,000 from January 2007, dairy heifers at 45,000 were up 5,000 and other heifers at 110,000 were down 10,000 head. Bulls 500 lbs. and over numbered 80,000 head, unchanged from last year. Calves less than 500 lbs. were estimated at 490,000 head, a decrease of 20,000 from the 2007 estimate. The 2007 calf crop was estimated at 1.11 million calves, 20,000 less than the 2006 calf crop.

Nationally, the January 1 inventory of beef cows declined one percent to 32.55 million head and beef replacement heifers fell 3.5 percent, to 5.67 million head. In contrast, the number of milk cows and dairy heifers increased.

SOYBEAN OIL EXPORTS SURGE

A larger soybean crush and an above-average rate of oil extraction from the 2007 soybean crop will lead to a supply increase of more than 400 million pounds in 2007/08, according to USDA. However, the supply increase will lag growth in soybean oil demand. Sharply higher soybean oil prices have not curtailed exports. Current export sales commitments are 71 percent ahead of their amount a year ago. New U.S. sales accelerated in January, particularly for China and North Africa. USDA reacted by raising its 2007/08 export forecast for soybean oil from 1.65 billion to 1.95 billion pounds.

USDA PREDICTING RECORD EXPORTS

U.S. agricultural exports are forecast to reach a record \$101 billion for fiscal year 2008, up \$19 billion from 2007, USDA reported. Since 2004, exports have set new records each year. Higher wheat, coarse grain, and soybean prices account for just over half of the \$10 billion revision since November's report.

Current market conditions should result in bulk grains, oilseeds, and cotton exports rising \$13.2 billion to

account for 70 percent of the overall increase in export value for 2008. Higher prices account for most of this increase, but export volumes are also generally higher, especially in coarse grains, which are forecast to rise 10.9 million tons to 70 million tons.

Exports of animal and horticultural products are forecast to rise a combined \$3.5 billion in 2008 to record levels. With U.S. agricultural imports forecast at \$76.5 billion, USDA expects a \$24.5 billion trade surplus.

Global Soybean Trade Projections to 2017

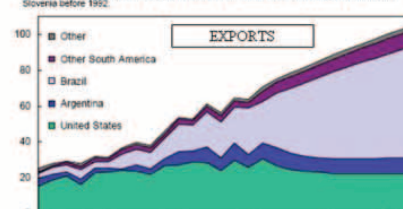
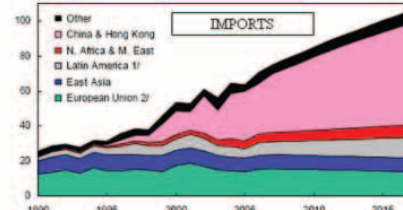
USDA Projections

* World soybean trade is projected to rise more than 27 million metric tons (35%).

* China accounts for 80 percent of the world's 27-million-ton growth in soybean imports.

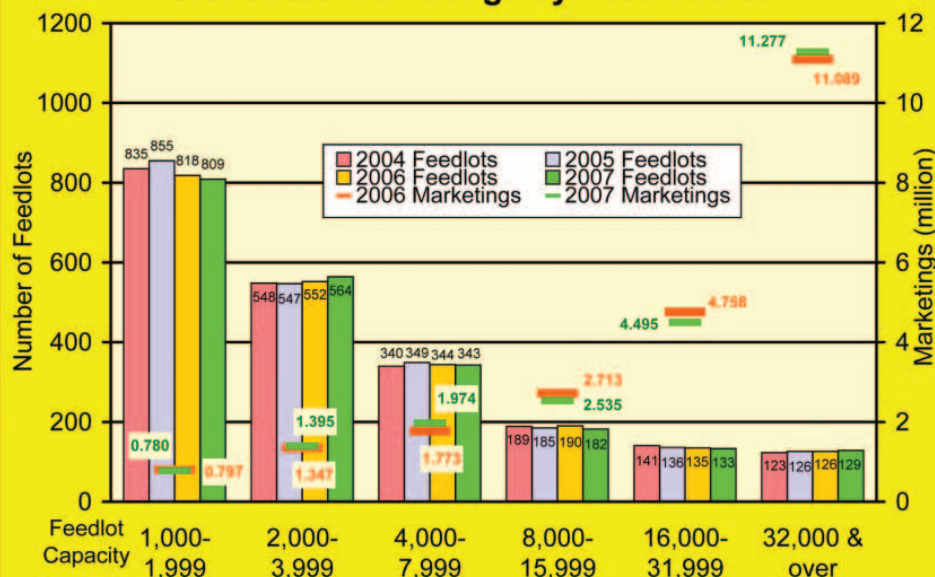
* The growth rate for Brazil's soybean planted area is projected to average nearly 3.5 percent a year, reaching about 31 million hectares by 2017. Soybean exports are projected to almost double.

* In the United States, reduced soybean acreage and increased domestic crush limit exportable supplies, but its competitiveness is aided by depreciation of the U.S. dollar.



Source: "USDA Agricultural Projections to 2017", USDA-Interagency Agricultural Projections Committee, February 2008

U.S. Cattle Marketings by Feedlot Size



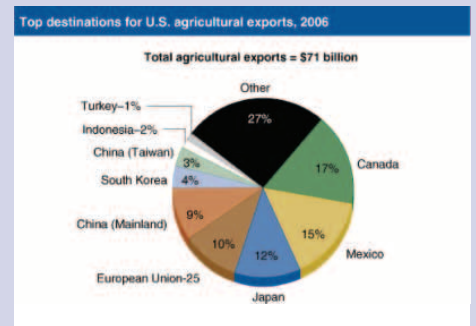
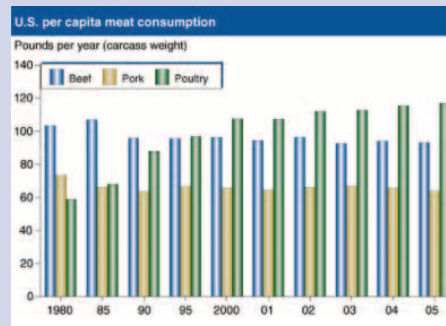
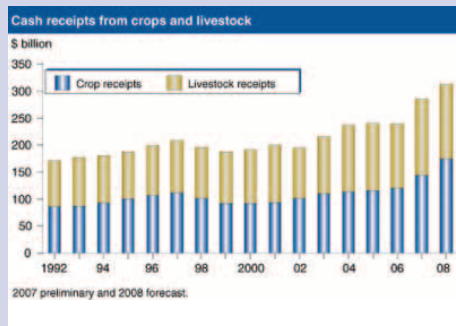
Farm, Rural, and Natural Resources Indicators

		Annual percent change							
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Cash receipts (\$ billion)	215.6	237.3	240.7	239.3	282.2f	10.1	1.4	-0.6	17.9
Crops	109.9	113.7	115.9	120.0	142.6f	3.5	1.9	3.5	18.8
Livestock	105.6	123.6	124.9	119.3	139.6f	17.0	1.1	-4.5	17.0
Direct government payments (\$ billion)	16.5	13.0	24.4	15.8	12.1f	-21.2	87.7	-35.2	-23.4
Gross cash income (\$ billion)	247.8	267.4	281.3	272.5	312.1f	7.9	5.2	-3.1	14.5
Net cash income (\$ billion)	70.2	82.2	85.8	67.9	85.7f	17.1	4.4	-20.9	26.2
Net value added (\$ billion)	100.0	127.8	121.4	104.4	136.2f	27.8	-5.0	-14.0	30.5
Farm equity (\$ billion)	1,203.6	1,401.9	1,576.1	1,771.8	2,007.5f	16.5	12.4	12.4	13.3
Farm debt-asset ratio	12.7	11.5	10.9	10.5	9.6f	-9.4	-5.2	-3.7	-7.6
Farm household income (\$/farm household)	68,597	81,596	81,599	77,654	83,622f	18.9	0.0	-4.8	7.7
Farm household income relative to average U.S. household income (%)	116.1	134.9	128.8	116.7	na	16.2	-4.5	-9.4	na
Nonmetro-metro difference in poverty rates (%points) ¹	2.1	na	2.3	3.4	na	na	na	na	na
Cropland harvested (million acres)	316	312	314p	304p	na	-1.3	0.6	-3.2	na
USDA Conservation Program expenditures (\$ bil.) ²	4.3	5.1	na	na	na	18.6	na	na	na

Food and Fiber Sector Indicators

		Annual percent change							
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
U.S. gross domestic product (\$ billion)	10,961	11,686	12,434	13,195	na	6.6	6.4	6.1	na
Share of GDP in agriculture and related industries (%) ¹	4.8	4.7	4.5	na	na	-2.1	-4.3	na	na
Share of GDP in agriculture (%) ¹	0.8	1.0	0.8	na	na	19.2	-16.3	na	na
Total agricultural imports (\$ billion) ²	45.7	52.7	57.7	64.0	70.0	15.3	9.5	10.9	9.4
Total agricultural exports (\$ billion) ²	56.0	62.4	62.5	68.7	81.9	11.4	0.2	9.9	19.2
Exports' share of the volume of U.S. agriculture production (%) ¹	21.8	21.3	21.7	22.3	23.0f	-2.3	1.9	2.8	3.1
CPI for food (1982-84=100)	180.0	186.2	190.7	195.3	202.9p	3.4	2.4	2.4	3.9
Share of U.S. disposable income spent on food (%)	9.8	9.7	9.8	9.9	na	-1.0	1.0	1.0	na
Share of total food expenditures for at-home consumption (%)	51.8	51.5	51.4	51.1	na	-0.6	-0.2	-0.6	na
Farm-to-retail price spread (1982-84=100)	225.6	232.1	239.2	246.0	na	2.9	3.1	2.8	na
Total USDA food and nutrition assistance spending (\$ billion) ²	41.8	46.2	50.9	53.1	54.3	10.5	10.2	4.3	2.3

f = Forecast. p = Preliminary. na = Not available. All dollar amounts are in current dollars. ¹ The methodology for computing these measures has changed. These statistics are not comparable to previously published statistics. Sources and computation methodology are available at: www.ers.usda.gov/amberwaves/indicatorsnotes.htm ² Based on October-September fiscal years ending with year indicated.



FARM FILE

83,000 FARMS IN KENTUCKY

Kentucky lost an estimated 1,000 farms in 2007 and now has about 83,000, according to a Kentucky Agricultural Statistics Service report released last month. Over the past 20 years the state has lost an estimated 16,000 farms, according to records.

Kentucky still ranks fourth among the states in farm numbers, trailing only Texas, Missouri and Iowa. And the state's agriculture landscape continues to be dominated by small farms, with those having less than \$10,000 in annual sales of farm commodities comprising over 60 percent of the farms. Conversely, only about 7,000 farms reported sales of \$100,000 and above.

The average size of a Kentucky farm is 165 acres, which is less than half of the national average (449 acres). Farmland represents 53.9 percent of Kentucky's 25.4 million acres of land, according to the report. One other interesting stat: About 200 farms added goats in 2007.

CORRECTIONS

An article in last month's issue incorrectly reported that the Kentucky Dairy Development Council was established by state law.

A chart in last month's issue had incorrect information on the upcoming District 5 and District 6 meetings. District 5 is March 20, 7 p.m. at the Marion County Fairgrounds – Floral Hall. District 6 is March 24, 7 p.m. at the Oldham County FB office.

KFB ACCEPTING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

The application period is open for special college scholarships administered through KFB's Education Foundation.

These scholarships include: The \$4,000 Sam Moore Scholarship to a student of a farm family attending a Kentucky school to major in animal health/veterinary technology or a related field; the \$3,000 Leadership in Agriculture Scholarship to two students from farm families attending a state school; the \$3,000 Paul D. Everman Scholarship to a non-traditional student

(at least 23 years old), the \$1,000 Louis F. Ison Scholarship to a fulltime graduate student at the UK College of Agriculture, the \$1,000 Young Farmer Scholarship and the \$1,500 Women's Educational Grant to a female non-traditional student. Application deadline for the women's grant is October 31; the other programs have a May 1 deadline.

For more information go to www.kyfb.com or contact Susie Tanner at (502) 495-5000, ext. 7240.

"GREEN" ENERGY WORKSHOPS ARE SET

"The Kentucky Green Energy Roadshow," a series of workshops on renewable energy, energy efficiency and green building, is scheduled for March 8 in Morehead, March 29 in London, April 5 in Owensboro and April 12 at Northern Kentucky University. Professionals will

be discussing topics such as green building design, energy efficiency and conservation in homes and businesses, renewable energy technologies and biomass. There also will be a panel discussion on state policies and incentives.

26 NEW SOY-BASED PRODUCTS DEVELOPED

In 2007, 26 new soy-based products saw commercialization, thanks in part to initial funding from the soybean check-off. The new products include soy foam innovations developed for use in the headrests of vehicles; a new solvent developed by Soy Technologies; soy glue developed by Purebond; and a new product called Durasoy, a multipurpose coating developed by ECO Products and New Century Coatings.

While China is the number one importer of U.S. soybeans, the United Soybean Board (USB) and soybean checkoff work to meet the needs of

important U.S. soybean customers to the north and south as well. To the south, Mexico is the second-largest importer of whole U.S. soybeans and the number one importer of U.S. soybean meal, using the majority of it for livestock feed. To the north, Canada is a major market for U.S. soybeans and soybean meal, with imports averaging \$369 million over the 2003-2006 period.

Meanwhile, Iowa has the most animal consumption of soybean meal, using more than 3.3 million tons each year. The other top consuming states are North Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia and Texas.

MODEL PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN CHANGED

The Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy announced the approval of Model Program Changes for 2008. These updates allow the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board to continue to increase net farm income across the state.

The Cattle Genetics Program now offers a heifer component, therefore creating a new lifetime maximum of \$10,000 (\$5,000 for bull/semen purchases and \$5,000 for heifer purchases). The Forage Improvement and Utilization Program includes the construction costs or hook-up

costs to a county/city water system.

The Hay, Straw, and Commodity Storage Program added Hay Handling to the guidelines. The On-Farm Water Enhancement Program has been changed from a 12-month contract to an 18-month contract and includes the construction costs or hook-up costs to a county/city water system.

The Technology Program now offers cost-share on any type of broadband service and the Pilot Satellite Broadband Cost-share Program has been discontinued.

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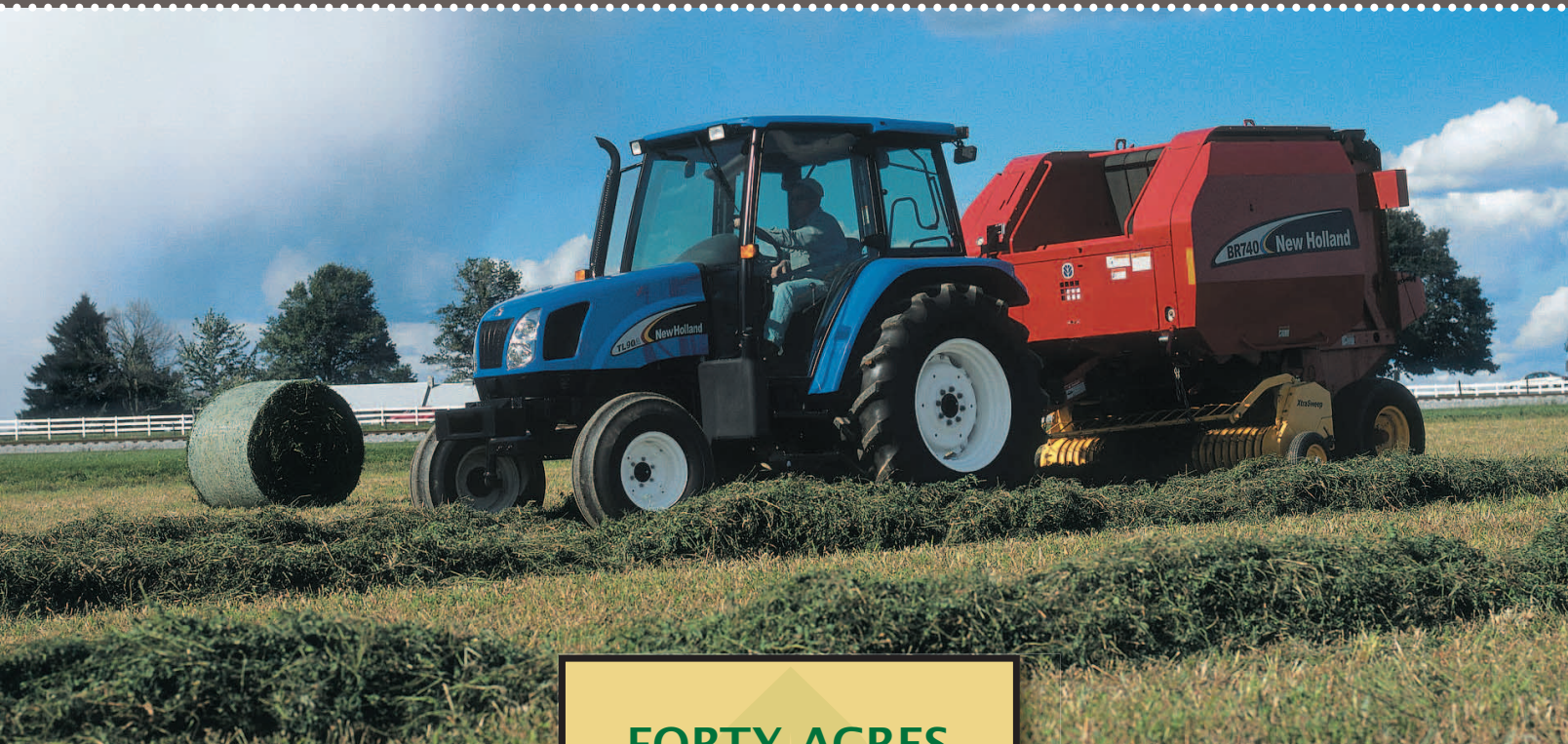
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