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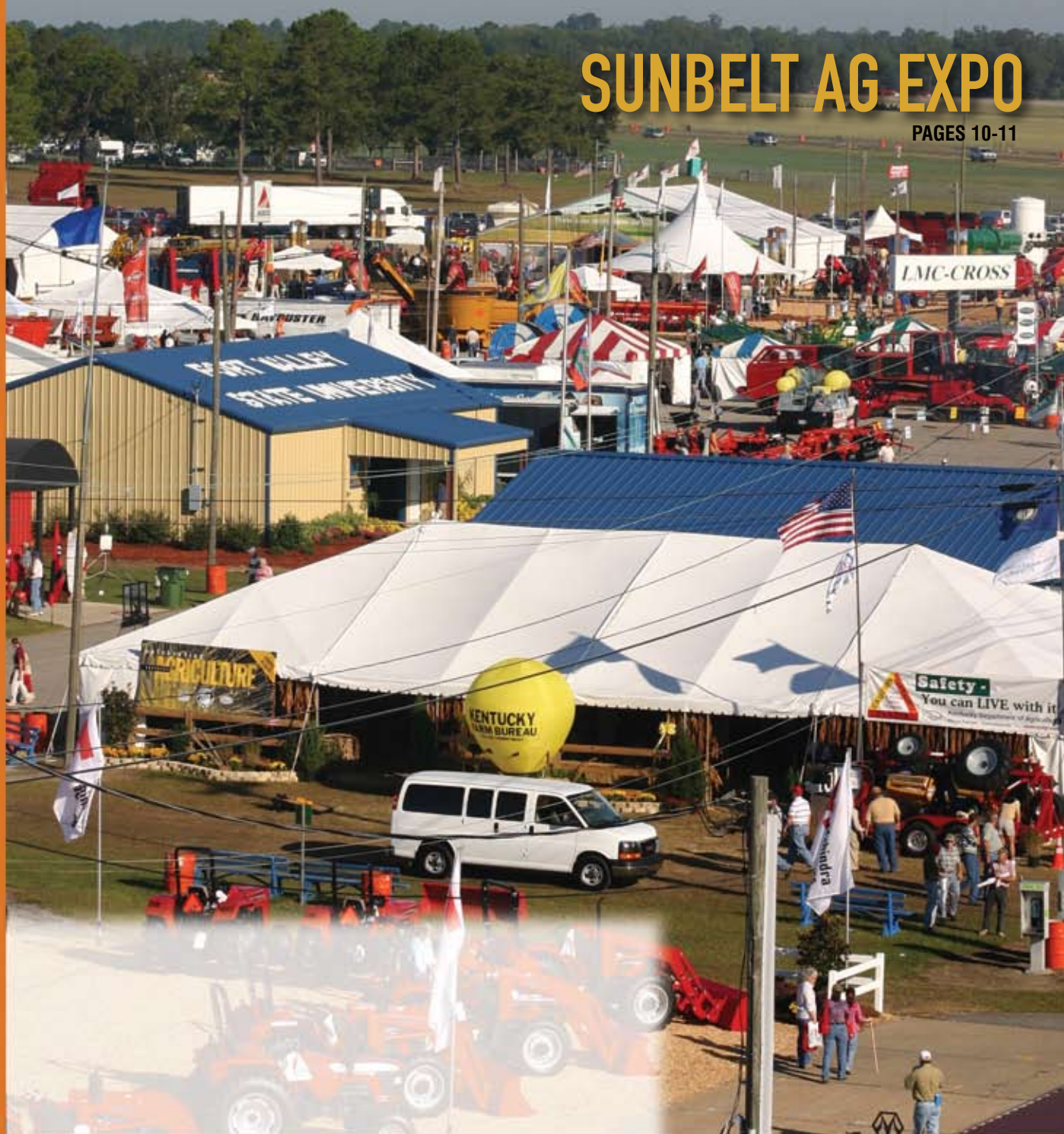
NOVEMBER 2008

KENTUCKY

FARM BUREAU NEWS

SUNBELT AG EXPO

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“COMMENT”

Although USDA says agriculture is in good financial health at the farm level, the financial crisis is impacting global demand for U.S. farm products, plus worsening the price situation for both our commodities and many of our inputs. USDA is predicting record gross and net farm income for 2008; the latter despite the fact that expenses are rising by an estimated 16 percent this year.

The most encouraging number I've seen from USDA is a 10 percent debt-to-asset ratio, which is the lowest in many years and a good indication that most farmers have been cautious during this period of out-of-control lending.

While the situation has been described as the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, bailouts are not uncommon. Agriculture certainly can remember the government bailout of the Farm Credit System in the 1980s. This was almost the same situation as land values became over-inflated just as home values skyrocketed in advance of this current crisis. When investments grinded to a crawl, the Farm Credit System was left with too much bad debt. This led not only to a bailout, but to what proved to be a successful restructuring of the Farm Credit System. Agriculture can take pride in that the \$1.26 billion in guaranteed loans was repaid with interest ahead of schedule.

The bailout legislation contains some tax provisions favorable to agriculture and supported by Farm Bureau. They include long-term extensions of both the renewable energy production tax credit and the alternative minimum tax exemption. The expansion of credits for renewable fuels will help us transition to cleaner sources while stimulating economic growth and opportunities for agriculture.

Economic experts say this government intervention will revitalize the credit market, boost housing values, stabilize markets and restore faith in the system. These are steps that are vital to all businesses, especially agriculture.



Marshall Coyle

**PRESIDENT
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU**

ON THE COVER:

KFB'S "SPOTLIGHT STATE" EXHIBIT HAD A PRIME SPOT AT THE SUNBELT AG EXPO. PHOTO BY ED McQUEEN.

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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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Editor	Roger Nesbitt
Production Asst.	Melissa LaRoche
Graphic Designer	Donia Simmons
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ANNUAL MEETING BEGINS DECEMBER 3

The election of a new president and a special conference to examine health care issues will be among the highlights of KFB's 89th annual meeting December 3-6 at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville. Other priorities will include setting policy goals for the 2009 state legislative session and establishing a wish list for Congressional action next year.

KFB President Marshall Coyle has announced his retirement after three years in that post and will deliver his farewell speech on the morning of December 5. His successor will be decided by a vote of delegates during the following day's business session.

Governor Steve Beshear will be the keynote speaker at the popular December 4 commodity luncheon.

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 health care conference is part of the December 4 lineup of conferences which also focus on beef cattle, forages, tobacco, horticulture, feed grains, wheat, soybeans, natural resources, forestry, dairy and farm labor. The new conference was recommended by a KFB health care issues task force that is developing policy recommendations in consultation with industry officials. The task force, which includes KFB's Executive Committee, has had three meetings thus far.

To further underscore KFB's concern about the health care situation, State Representative Tommy Thompson of Owensboro, a leader in pursuit of reforms, will be the keynote speaker at the Public Affairs breakfast on December 6. Representative Thompson is chairman of the House Banking and Insurance Committee and has sponsored several bills to bring relief to farm families and small businesses.

The tobacco conference will focus on a proposal to establish an export promotion program funded by a producer checkoff. Coyle and North Carolina FB President Larry Wooten, who are co-chairs of a committee exploring that issue, will lead the discussion.

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 5, advances to the national contest at the AFBF annual meeting in January.

The delegates will set policy at the business sessions on the last two days of the convention.

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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.

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1: Randall Heath, 1600 State Rt. 483, Hickory

DISTRICT

2: Kelly Thurman, 643 Barrett Hill Road, Livermore

DISTRICT

3: Pat Henderson, 2261 Hwy. 2202, Irvington
J. Fritz Giesecke, 3948 S. Jackson Hwy., Horse Cave

DISTRICT

4: Russell Poore, 168 Keeton Road, Russellville

DISTRICT

5: Paul Hornback, 6102 Cropper Road, Shelbyville

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7: Danny Wilkinson, 191 Johnson Cemetery Road, Columbia
Kim McCoy, 6707 Salt Lick Road, Burkesville

DISTRICT

8: David Campbell, 2745 Ky. Hwy. 78, Stanford

DISTRICT

10: Carroll Amyx, 1710 Sandfield Road, Campton
Berkley Mark, 5399 Paris Pike, Mount Sterling

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

*K*FB's Advisory Committees have been meeting in recent weeks to gain information, review issues and make recommendations to the State Resolutions Committee. Following are summaries:

BEEF CATTLE

This committee met at Morehead State University's Derrickson Agricultural Complex and toured the facility following the meeting.

KFB Director of Commodities Jeff Harper was the opening speaker, reporting on the work of the drought mitigation task force plus the status of the new Country of Origin Labeling law (COOL).

State Veterinarian Dr. Robert Stout discussed the tie between COOL and the National Animal Identification System. He gave an update on the spread of tuberculosis and brucellosis in some states, noting that Kentucky is always vulnerable to a spread because of the interstate transport of cattle. Dr. Stout also addressed concerns about the shortage of large animal veterinarians in the state.

Bill Barrows of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture reviewed several projects, including a beef grading system, a feasibility study on processing culled cows and a trial on utilization of smaller-frame cattle.

Dr. Robert Harmon of the UK College of Agriculture talked about the college's role with the Kentucky Beef Network, noting progress with an advanced master cattleman program and a master grazing program. He thanked KFB for its support of funding for renovating UK's Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center.

Dave Maples, Executive Director of the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association, reported that KCA is working to develop a monetary incentive fund for young veterinarians who commit to practicing in underserved areas of the state.

During review of policy, the committee voted to delete language stating: "We support Country of Origin Labeling only for livestock that enters the USA."

KFB Second Vice President John C. Hendricks of Clark County is chairman

of the Beef Cattle Advisory Committee.

DAIRY

This committee, chaired by KFB Director Kelly Thurman of McLean County, met at Chaney's Dairy Barn in Bowling Green, a family business that participates in KFB's Roadside Farm Markets program.

Maury Cox of the Kentucky Dairy Development Council gave an overview of a legislative proposal to create a Kentucky Milk Commission. The commission would study industry issues in the state to include pricing, marketing and processing. The proposal does not address how the commission would be funded and no recommendation has surfaced, Cox said.

The committee suggested that KDDC continue to explore options and work with KFB's public affairs specialists to develop ideas.

Kathy Belcher of Southeast United Dairy Industry Association gave an update on activities, as did Chris Thompson, who works with the Regulatory Services Division at the UK College of Agriculture. That agency does milk testing for producers.

Eunice Schlappi, dairy industry specialist at the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, spoke about KDA's involvement in the World Dairy Expo. State Veterinarian Dr. Robert Stout addressed the funding situation for Johnes disease prevention.

Bruce Pratt of Eastern Kentucky University's Agriculture Department reported on the effort to combine the dairy farms at ECU and UK.

UK dairy specialist Jack McAllister reviewed the Kentucky Dairy Partners meeting and spoke of plans for the next year's meeting in Cave City.

Committee member Evans Wright talked about the National Dairy Shrine, emphasizing a scholarship program available for dairy families.

Turning to policy, the group approved language calling for "adequate funding" for university research projects aimed at alleviating health concerns.

EDUCATION

Helen W. Mountjoy, Secretary of the Education and Workforce

Development Cabinet, was the first speaker. She discussed challenges the school systems are facing with budget issues and stressed the need for high quality early education programs.

Bob Sexton, Executive Director of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, spoke about his committee's goals. He noted significant progress in the percentage of students scoring well on advanced placement exams. It is hoped, he said, that Kentucky will rank among the top 20 states by the year 2020.

Elizabeth McNulty, an education specialist at the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, gave updates on Project Food, Land and People and use of the mobile science lab.

In policy, the committee made a number of recommendations. In regard to the CATS Testing System, the group proposes exploration of an alternative way of calculating special need students that stays within parameters of the federal "No Child Left Behind" program. Another policy proposal voices support for the "10X15" initiative and new programs for communities not served by ag education programs and FFA. The language also endorses increased federal funding.

Another recommendation, for both state and federal policy, states: "We oppose colleges and universities denying students the full value of scholarships earned and there be no caps on reimbursements from scholarships."

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

ECONOMIC & MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Tod Griffin, Executive Director of the Agribusiness Association of Kentucky, gave an overview of the crop input industry. Because of high costs, farmers have become even more efficient in the use of crop nutrients, he said.

The next speaker was Jim Fugitte, CEO of Wind Energy Corporation. He spoke about the company's unique vertical-axis helical wind turbine, an alternative energy system being utilized by businesses. He encouraged KFB to educate the public about such technologies.

Roger Thomas, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Agricultural

Policy, gave an update on programs. He noted that in response to the 2007 weather-related disasters, \$8.1 million had been made available to farmers in 118 counties under the Kentucky Agricultural Relief Effort initiative. He also mentioned progress with the Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation's low-interest loan program.

During policy consideration, the group recommended language endorsing the Commerce Cabinet providing support for agritourism activities. Under "Water Resources," the committee recommends policy urging the Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet to assist local governments in implementation of water and sewer resource plans. Another suggestion states "we support the Kentucky Department of Agriculture be primarily financed by dedicated sources of revenue."

KFB Director Sam Moore of Butler County is chairman of the Economic and Market Development Committee.

ENERGY & TRANSPORTATION

This meeting began with Leslie Gannon, a Lieutenant Colonel with the State Police, reporting on the merger with Kentucky Vehicle Enforcement, which has become a division of the Kentucky State Police. (that division is of great interest to farmers because it enforces truck weight laws)

Dr. Len Peters, Secretary of the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, gave an update on the cabinet's reorganization and reviewed the current situation in the state with gasoline prices and supply. Dr. Peters then discussed the administration's energy policies. He said he felt the state's ethanol and biodiesel production will focus more on biomass than on grains.

KFB staffer L. Joe Cain then gave an overview of pending energy legislation in the U.S. Congress.

Turning to state policy, the group recommends a statement that all county roads be a minimum of 18 feet wide when feasible.

KFB Director David Campbell of Lincoln County is chairman of this committee.

HORTICULTURE

This committee, chaired by KFB Director Russell Poore of Logan County, met at the state office. KFB's Jeff Harper reported on KFB's Certified Roadside Farm Market program, which

he said had 83 members. He announced that Kara Keeton was employed under a contract to manage the program for the ensuing 12 months.

Mac Stone gave a briefing on the Good Agricultural Practices Program developed by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky Department of Public Health and UK College of Agriculture. About 1,000 producers have been certified under the program, Stone said.

Later in the meeting Stone reported on other KDA activities, including horticultural marketing, organic product certification, an agritourism website and the "Kentucky Proud" program which has grown to more than 1,300 members.

KFB staffer Bryan Alvey addressed labor issues, noting that Congress is not expected to resume action on immigration reform legislation until next year.

UK horticulture specialist Dr. Dewayne Ingram reviewed the college's program staffing and enrollment. He said the department has created a new section on certified organics and is promoting locally-grown products.

Turning to policy, the committee recommends a statement in support of strengthening labeling and policing of organic products at the retail level.

EQUINE

This group, chaired by Jim Mahan of Fayette County, met at the Kentucky Horse Park, with Executive Director John Nicholson reporting on preparations for the 2010 World Equestrian Games. He thanked KFB for its support of that prestigious event.

Dr. Robert Coleman of UK's Equine Department reported that UK's Equine Science and Management degree remains in the approval process, with several faculty members hired for the program. He also gave an update on the youth program.

Executive Director Ginny Grulke reported on the activities of the Kentucky Horse Council. She said the council was concentrating on trail development, adventure tourism, safety and education. In regard to animal welfare issues, the council is developing standards for care, she said.

The committee then had a lengthy discussion about the issue of abandoned horses. State Veterinarian Dr. Robert Stout said that state laws relating to abandoned or abused animals needed to be updated.

Frank Penn Jr. reported on the work of the Kentucky Equine

Education Project, stressing the state's breeder's incentives program and KEEP's support of 4-H shows and other initiatives promoting the industry.

David Switzer, Executive Director of the Kentucky Thoroughbred Association, reported on the economic climate of the breeding industry. He also mentioned a study on a method to convert muck into an energy source.

In policy, the committee recommends support for establishing an industry-wide task force to review all statutes relating to equine health and welfare, and to address issues of authority, accountability and enforcement.

FORESTRY

The Forestry Committee met at Bernheim Forest in Bullitt County. KFB Director Bige Hensley of Clay County is chairman of the committee.

Rick Caldwell of the Bernheim Forest staff welcomed the group and gave an overview of the facility, which is a 14,000-acre national forest. Leah MacSwords of the Kentucky Division of Forestry reported on state programs and discussed issues regarding the production and sale of firewood. She thanked KFB for its support in the 2008 legislative session of funding for its two nurseries.

Jim Corum of the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association spoke about his group's activities, noting the promotion of good management practices. Dr. Steve Bullard then reported on UK's forestry program, touching on topics including a streamside management zone study, staffing levels, budget and curriculum.

Thad Norris spoke about local forestry organizations. He said there are now seven in the state.

Policy recommendations included supporting efforts to require the use of best management practices when harvesting or removing of trees and woody debris for commercial energy production; plus encouraging local prosecutors to recognize theft of lumber as a criminal activity to be prosecuted under theft laws.

The group also discussed potential topics for the forestry conference at KFB's annual meeting.

SWINE

This committee met at the Daviess County FB office and toured a composting facility following the meeting.

Warren Beeler of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture began the presentations by reporting on department activities in service to the swine

industry. He noted that the manure-to-dry compost facility that the group would visit is a unique project and could help swine producers obtain waste discharge permits more easily.

Mike Ovesen, Executive Director of the Kentucky Pork Producers Association, discussed the industry's economic condition, noting tight margins due to soaring input costs. He predicted a modified pricing structure in the future.

State Veterinarian Dr. Robert Stout reported on the activities of the feral swine working group. He said there had been confirmed sightings in 13 counties with unconfirmed sightings in 19 other counties. He said the problem needs to be addressed immediately.

Dr. Richard Coffey, a swine production specialist at UK, discussed issues tied to permitting and nutrient management plans.

The committee also discussed potential funding sources for dead animal disposal services. It recommended policy opposing any reduction in state funding for dead animal disposal programs, plus a statement encouraging cooperation in dealing with the issue.

KFB Director Danny Wilkinson of Adair County is chairman of the swine committee.

SHEEP AND GOATS

The sheep and goat advisory committee met in Lancaster and toured the Bluegrass Lamb and Goat processing facility there. Ray Bowman of the Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development office reported on that organization's activities.

KDA's Tess Caudill, who works with the sheep and goat industries, distributed copies of a record book for producers and discussed market conditions. She predicted market prices would remain strong through 2008.

State Veterinarian Dr. Robert Stout spoke about the COOL program's requirements for sheep and goats. Richard Van Sickle of the Kentucky Sheep and Wool Producers Association gave an update on a possible state checkoff program. He said plans currently are idle because the national program had to be renewed.

Bowman reported that a state law allows for a goat checkoff program if producers choose to have one.

EMERGING AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Shirley West of KFB Insurance gave an overview of insurance options for agribusinesses. Dr. Larry Snell of

the Kentucky Center for Ag and Rural Development reviewed his agency's mission and services. He stressed that the state needs to develop an infrastructure for organic producers plus provide more funding assistance programs for non-traditional enterprises.

Kentucky State University staffers Dr. Robert Barney and Dr. Michael Bomford spoke about some KSU initiatives. Dr. Barney said KSU is in the process of establishing a college of agriculture. Dr. Bomford, who works in organic production and research, gave an update on that segment's growth and status.

Among a number of policy recommendations, this committee voiced support for removing the total ban on cervid imports into the state while restoring imports that are in line with state chronic wasting disease guidelines. Another recommendation states: "We support legislation that clearly defines the right of farmers to transport their products to market by the most economically-feasible method." The group also calls for providing KDA with sufficient resources to fund increased enforcement of organic standards.

Chairman of this committee is KFB Director Kim McCoy of Cumberland County.

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LEAN TIMES?

BEEF CONFERENCE EXPLORES TODAY'S RISKS

High feed costs, a troubled economy and volatile market conditions have driven up the risks for beef cattle producers, warranting some serious reflection on future management decisions. That was the predominate message from industry observers who addressed some 200 Kentucky cattle producers at the annual Kentucky Beef Conference co-sponsored by KFB.

The annual event hosted by the UK College of Agriculture is aimed at providing producers with information and

perspectives to plan for the months ahead. This year's theme focused on current marketing trends and how producers can manage the higher feed costs.

Returning as a keynote speaker was Randy Blach, a highly-respected markets analyst who is Executive Vice President of Cattle-FAX and CF Resources Inc. As always, he left his audience with plenty of food for thought.

After predicting that cash markets would continue to decline, Blach advised: "Understand how the cash market impacts you and figure out where you fit." That was a reference to respective types of operations – cow-calf, stockers, branded products, etc.

Blach gave separate presentations on marketing overview/long term trends and marketing strategies for 2009. After a lengthy overview, he said producers would be well-advised to develop a risk management plan and then "follow it, regardless of the market conditions."

Cattlemen should consider how small changes in their operations could create the biggest impact, he added.

"Ask yourself if you're making the right decisions," Blach advised. "Are there production decisions you can make that are good for you? When you're in this high-cost environment, it's time to look at everything closely."

His presentation was not all gloom-and-doom: He predicted that feeder cattle prices (the most important number for most Kentucky cattlemen) would rebound by next spring, again surpassing \$1 per pound. But he warned that markets are highly volatile because of a slumping world economy.

"We better fight like heck to maintain free trade; we can't consume all the protein we produce in this country," Blach said in reference to the importance of exports. He noted that the U.S.

exported 10 billion pounds of beef, pork and poultry last year, and that global meat consumption is rising rapidly.

UK crop marketing specialist Dr. Cory Waters gave the feed grain outlook, predicting rising corn prices as a result of low stocks. "We're going into one of the lowest stocks-to-use ratios we've ever seen," Waters said.

Animal Sciences Extension Specialist Dr. Jeff Lehmkuhler offered perspectives for feeding strategies this winter. "Identify effective, economical strategies for reducing hay needs," he said. "You need to really think about this hay and whether you should be buying it rather than making it. Assign value to hay. Look at alternative feed prices. Look at whether straight hay feeding is the best strategy."

The day-long program also featured an "animal welfare" issues briefing from KFB Commodities Director Jeff Harper, who pointed out how so-called "animal rights" groups like the U.S. Humane Society are pushing a radical agenda in a number of states. He warned that that group wants Kentucky's legislature to adopt a bill setting standards for the care of horses.

"The last thing we need is the U.S. Humane Society telling farmers how to raise their animals," Harper said. "They do not care about your livelihood."

Harper advised the farmers to be on guard for local "animal rights" ordinances that could impact their operations. The threat, he added, "is real; is not going away."

Among the attendees was Clark County cattleman John C. Hendricks, who is chairman of KFB's Beef Cattle Advisory Committee. He praised the conference for "providing producers with a good overview of current conditions and what we are facing in the months ahead."

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FARM PRODUCTION NEWS

HAY SUPPLIES ARE IMPROVED

BY KATIE PRATT
UK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Even though the majority of the state is in the midst of a drought, hay supplies are up from last year. However, some livestock producers will still need to find an additional hay source to get through the winter, said Tom Keene, hay marketing specialist with the UK College of Agriculture.

"Overall, we are in decent to fair shape on cattle hay going into the winter," he said. "Producers who use high quality hay to feed dairy cattle and horses will likely need to import additional quantities this year to have a suf-

ficient supply."

The wet spring rejuvenated pastures recovering from last year's drought. This much-needed moisture helped the forages develop and allowed producers to get in early first and second cuttings.

"With hay being so hard to come by last year, most farmers that had any hay went ahead and made it early to get as much quality hay as they could," Keene said. "This benefited cattle farmers."

Since hay supplies on high quality alfalfa grass mix are low, Keene encouraged producers that need this type of hay to go ahead and line up their sources. Hay prices are up nationwide and producers should be prepared

for sticker shock when looking to import hay from other states, he said.

For the second year in a row, livestock producers are dealing with the effects of a drought. Many already are feeding hay to their livestock or considering doing so.

"With some producers already feeding their cattle, it's going to be a long feeding period, he said. "Hay should be used judiciously to ensure supplies last through winter."

Keene said that since many farmers applied little to no nitrogen to their fields this past year, they should have their hay tested for quality before feeding it to livestock.

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KENTUCKY SHINES AT SUNBELT EXPO



MONROE COUNTY FARMER LORETTA LYONS, WHO REPRESENTED KENTUCKY IN THE SOUTHEASTERN FARMER OF THE YEAR CONTEST, CUT THE RIBBON TO OFFICIALLY "OPEN" KENTUCKY'S "SPOTLIGHT STATE" EXHIBIT AT THE SUNBELT AG EXPO. AT LEFT IS CHIP BLALOCK, THE EXPO'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; AND TO THE RIGHT IS ROGER THOMAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY. HOLDING THE RIBBON WERE KRISTEN BRANSCUM OF KDA (LEFT) AND JIMMY HENNING, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR EXTENSION AT THE UK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE.

KFB strives to put its best foot forward to promote the agriculture industry it so proudly serves. Last month, it took a giant leap – in the form of an eye-catching 40x100-foot exhibit -- to ensure that Kentucky agriculture would shine in the role of "Spotlight State" at the 31st annual Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie, Georgia.

The world's largest farm show with field demonstrations, the Sunbelt Expo features some 1,200 exhibitors on a 100-acre site adjacent to a 600-acre working farm used for the demos. Attendance exceeded 100,000 for the three days.

Three years ago, Kentucky became the 10th state involved in the festivities by joining the affiliated "Southeastern Farmer of the Year" contest sponsored by Swisher International. Kentucky then was invited to be the "Spotlight State" for 2008, meaning it would be given a huge amount of space and recognition.

To meet the challenge, KFB joined with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture and the Governor's Office of Agricultural

Policy to plan, construct and work the display. Jay McCants, who directs KFB's young farmer program and hails from south Georgia, was responsible for organizing the project. The team also included GOAP Executive Director Roger Thomas; Jimmy Henning, Associate Dean for Extension at the UK College of Agriculture; and Dale Dobson, KDA's farm safety specialist.

The agencies shared space inside and outside of a 40x80-foot tent. The group constructed a wooden plank fence (graciously donated by Shuck Fence Company of Shelbyville) across the front, bordered by some fancy landscaping with mums, shrubs and bluegrass sod. Dobson had KDA's award-winning rollover tractor display at one end; a huge banner with the theme "Celebrating Kentucky Agriculture" hung from the opposite end, just above the quarter scale pulling tractor from the UK Ag Engineering Department.

Inside, KFB, GOAP and KDA had multiple displays promoting Kentucky agriculture and the state's historic ag development initiative. UK had an exhibit for its equine initiative and ag engineering program. GOAP's mobile barn framed a TV showing episodes of KFB's award-winning "Bluegrass and Backroads" program.

The Kentucky contingent distributed thousands of bottles of water (with the KFB logo) iced in a converted tool wagon provided by KDA. Visitors also could play corn-hole or shoot free throws at a hoop to the side of the big tent. The prize for sharpshooters was a miniature Louisville Slugger bat.

Monroe County farmer Loretta Lyons, Kentucky's representative in the Southeastern Farmer-of-the-Year contest, officially opened the exhibit at a ribbon-cutting ceremony. That afternoon, Kentucky again was in the spotlight at the luncheon to announce the contest winner. Nearly 1,000 people were on hand for a program that included comments from Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue and U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss, a Moultrie native.

Thomas, a former Kentucky state representative who served as chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, spoke on behalf of the Kentucky contingent. He praised KFB for organizing the showcase exhibit, adding: "We have a great Farm Bureau in Kentucky."

Chip Blalock, the expo's executive director, described Kentucky's exhibit as "fantastic" and told Thomas: "You've truly made Kentucky proud."



MONROE COUNTY FARMER KEVIN LYONS (RIGHT) CHATTED WITH A VISITOR TO THE KFB EXHIBIT. HIS MOTHER, LORETTA, REPRESENTED KENTUCKY IN THE SOUTHEASTERN FARMER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM.



KENTUCKY'S "SPOTLIGHT" EXHIBIT WAS SITUATED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SPRAWLING EXPOSITION OF FARM IMPLEMENTS.

STATE'S HAY CROP IS LARGER

Despite another year of drought, all hay production in Kentucky is forecast by USDA at 5.25 million tons, up 27 percent from the freeze and drought-reduced 2007 crop. Alfalfa hay is forecast at 648,000 tons, 20 percent above last year. Yield is forecast at 2.7 tons per acre, 0.9 tons above the 2007 crop. Other hay production is forecast at 4.60 million tons, up 28 percent from a year earlier. Yield is estimated at two tons per acre, compared to 1.5 tons a year earlier. Persistent dry conditions reduced yield estimates from the August report.

U.S. all hay production for 2008 is forecast at 150.5 million tons, up 196,000 from 2007. The all-hay yield is expected to be 2.49 tons per acre, up from 2.44 tons per acre in 2007. Harvested acres are forecast at 60.4 million acres, down from 61.6 million last year. Production of alfalfa hay and alfalfa mixtures is forecast at 71.4 million tons, down two percent from last year. Based on October 1 conditions, yields are expected to average 3.44 tons per acre, up 0.09 tons from 2007. Harvested area is forecast at 20.8 million acres, down four percent from 2007. Other hay production is forecast at 79.1 million tons, up two percent from 2007, on an average yield of 1.99 tons per acre, up 0.04 tons from last year. Harvested area of 39.7 million acres is down one percent from a year ago.

GLOBAL SOYBEAN STOCKS RISING

Weaker-than-expected crush rates in 2007/08 for the United States, Argentina and Brazil have buoyed global soybean stocks. Although still well below the 2006/07 record of 62.6 million metric tons, 2007/08 world ending stocks are estimated at 50.9 million tons. 2008/09 soybean stocks are expected to edge up to 52.1 million tons. Global soybean exports are projected to decline one percent to 78.3 million tons. Larger global harvests of rapeseed and sunflower seed will provide export competition. Soybean import demand by China, the EU-27, Mexico and other countries is expected to decline slightly or stagnate. The outlook for 2008/09 trade in soybean oil will be tempered by bigger production gains for palm oil, rapeseed oil, and sunflower seed oil.

RED MEAT PRODUCTION AT HIGH

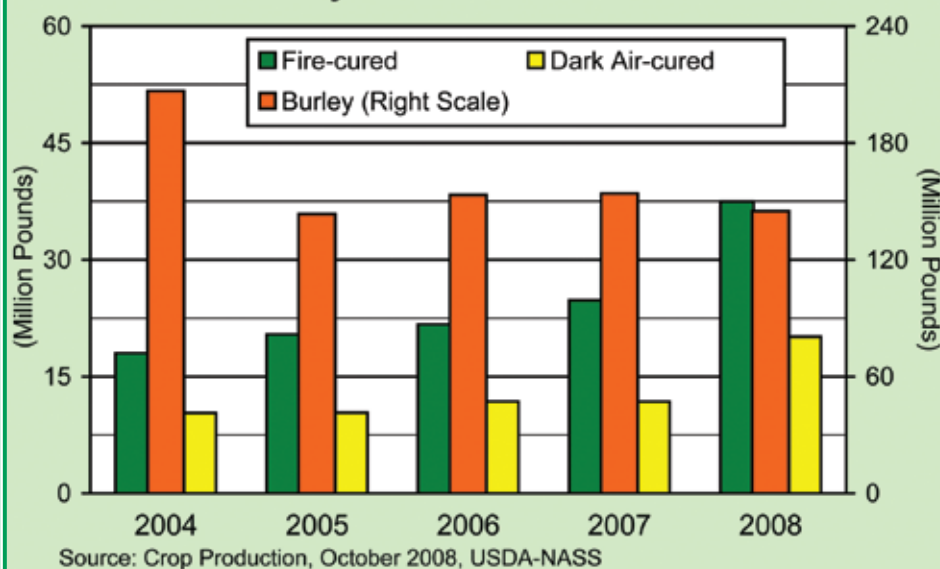
USDA's latest statistics show commercial red meat production in the U.S. totaled a record 4.27 billion pounds in September 2008, up 11 percent from a year earlier. September production shot up 13 percent from the previous year to 1.97 billion pounds. This resulted from 14 percent more hogs, as the average live weight of 266 pounds was unchanged from September 2007. Beef production, at 2.27 billion pounds, was

eight percent above a year earlier due to a similar gain in the number of cattle slaughtered. The average live weight increased eight pounds to 1,298 pounds.

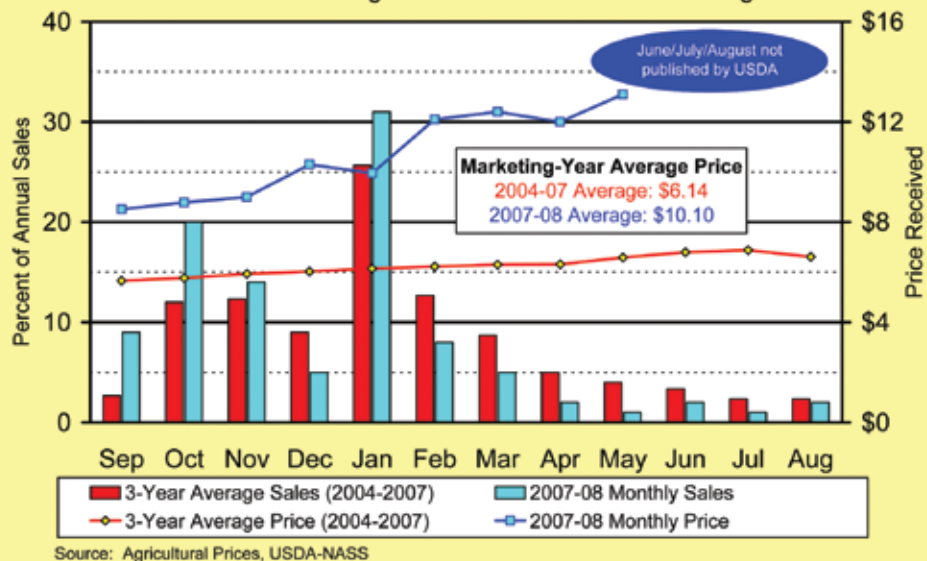
Other red meats, like veal, lamb and mutton, also increased during September, but their production volumes are less than 30 million pounds combined.

For the first nine months of 2008, commercial red meat production was 37.7 billion pounds, up five percent from 2007.

Kentucky Tobacco Production



Kentucky Monthly Soybean Marketings 2007-08 Marketing Year vs Previous 3-Year Average



FARMERS ARE “CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC”

By John Hart

AFBF Staff

Anyone close to American agriculture knows that “cautious optimism” is a job requirement for any farmer or rancher.

The phrase “cautiously optimistic” often is used by experts asked to predict the future in difficult times. Gary Stern, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, recently said he shared that sentiment regarding the federal government’s \$700 billion rescue plan of financial institutions. He said the move should prove effective, but not without some pain.

Any time the stock market makes gains in tumultuous times, the pundits will say Wall Street is cautiously optimistic about the financial outlook. Speakers at AFBF’s inaugural commodity outlook conference expressed cautious optimism for both the short-term and long-term future of American agriculture. A clear message was that agriculture is in good financial shape, but there are potential storm clouds building on the horizon.

By many measures, U.S. agriculture may be in the best financial shape ever. For 2008, farmers are expected to harvest a record net cash income of more than \$100 billion with strong corn, soybean and wheat prices earlier this year pump-

ing in more cash receipts to agriculture. For 2009, farm income will likely retreat from these levels due to lower cash receipts as well as higher input costs.

Terry Franci, AFBF’s senior economist, says most farmers should not have trouble securing credit for the 2009 crop, but they still will need to work closely with their lenders, carefully prepare their crop budgets and keep a particularly close watch on their costs in 2009.

Fertilizer costs are expected to continue to increase, but pesticide costs should remain stable due to the increasing role of biotechnology, which has reduced the cost for some products.

A saving grace for American agriculture is the up-tick in land values. Franci calls land values the “shock absorber” for farmers. Land values are generally high right now for agriculture, but just because they went up this year doesn’t mean they will continue to climb.

Bob Young, AFBF’s chief economist, says marketing will be more important than ever in the new crop year. Farmers will need to find new ways to market their crops in these challenging economic times, and they will have to look for risk-management tools beyond hedging.

Indicators also point to falling corn prices in 2009. When corn prices fall below \$4 per bushel, farmers face a real cost-price squeeze, Young cautions. However, the expected decline in corn prices should benefit livestock producers with lower feed costs, which is a must because the economic slowdown is expected to lower U.S. demand for beef, poultry and hogs.

AFBF’s inaugural commodity outlook conference earned high marks from the more than 50 economists and commodity specialists from 22 states on hand for the two-day meeting. Attendees gained a comprehensive overview of every sector of American agriculture -- from fruits and vegetables to dairy to cotton. Young said the conference was designed to bring state Farm Bureaus together to share ideas and information so that they can better work with the farmers they serve to market their crops in a very volatile environment.

Planning is already underway for the second annual AFBF commodity outlook conference, next October in Albuquerque, N.M. At that time a look back at 2008 will reveal if “cautious optimism” predictions for agriculture were spot on or way off the mark.

WORKSHOP EXPLORES “MESONET” POTENTIAL

Kentuckians who work in agriculture, natural resources management and energy were among those attending last month’s Kentucky Mesonet Workshop in Bowling Green. The “Kentucky Mesonet” is a network of automated weather and climate monitoring stations developed by the Kentucky Climate Center at Western Kentucky University, in cooperation with the National Weather Service. Purpose of the two-day workshop was to develop initiatives for expanding the mesonet.

Presenters from several industries, including agriculture, highlighted current uses and needs for weather and climate data. The agriculture presenters included Tim Hughes, senior policy analyst for the Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy; Bill Craddock, state soil scientist for the Natural Resource

and Conservation Service, and Eric Turley, an official with the Water Quality and Environmental Toxicology program at Kentucky State University.

Turley said a planned mesonet station at KSU’s farm will benefit the effort to find ways to reduce adverse environmental effects from agricultural production. The detailed data on soil temperature and moisture will enable researchers to do a better job planning irrigation systems and planting dates, Turley added.

Hughes, a former president of Logan County FB, said the agriculture industry is in constant need of climate data. The expansion of data – particularly in regard to soil moisture levels and soil temperatures – will aid planting and harvesting decisions. Weather data also is critical for deciding when to cut hay and spray crops, Hughes said.

Craddock concurred, noting that

“we have very little data on soil moisture readings and water tables. We look forward to obtaining this information.”

Kentucky has only two of the nation’s 150 stations in the Soil Scanning Analysis Network (SCAN) – at UK’s ag research station in Princeton and at Mammoth Cave National Park. The Kentucky Mesonet project is a SCAN cooperator, Craddock said, and it is hoped that an expansion will enhance the SCAN network.

The workshop agenda underscored how the Mesonet provides outreach to local communities and can be used to improve local forecasts and severe weather emergency response, as well as to enhance agricultural productivity and utility services. The project also aims to supply data for science and math education in grades K-12.

Mesonet officials will be developing proposals for increased use.

CRP INVOLVES 34.7 MILLION ACRES

USDA will distribute \$1.8 billion in Conservation Reserve Program rental payments to participants across the country for fiscal year 2009. For Kentucky, this involves 17,906 contracts on 9,866 farms encompassing 386,294 acres. Payments will total \$37.9 million.

Producers holding about 766,000 contracts on 430,000 farms will receive an average of \$50.93 per acre. The payments allow producers enrolled in the program to earn an average of \$4,105 per farm.

Included in the totals are 380,000 contracts (4.1 million acres) for the Conservation Reserve Program's (CRP) continuous sign-up and 386,000 contracts (30.6 million acres) for general sign-up. Under continuous sign-up, producers may enroll high priority conservation practices such as filter strips, riparian buffers, and wetland restorations at any time without competition.

Currently, enrollment stands at 34.7 million acres, making CRP the largest public-private partnership for conservation and wildlife habitat in the United States. This voluntary program helps agricultural producers safeguard environmentally-sensitive land. Producers enroll in CRP and plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve water quality, control soil erosion and enhance habitats for waterfowl and wildlife. In return, USDA provides producers with annual rental payments. CRP contract duration is from 10 to 15 years.

USDA issues other CRP payments throughout the year. These payments include a 50 percent expense reimbursement for establishing and managing cover as well as incentive payments for enrolling eligible high priority conservation practices.

KIM MCCOY NAMED TO AQUACULTURE GROUP

Governor Steve Beshear appointed KFB Director Kim McCoy of Cumberland County to the Kentucky Aquaculture Task Force. Among four other appointees was Roger Thomas, the former Warren County FB president and state legislator who now serves as executive director of the Governor's Office of

Agriculture Policy.

McCoy and his wife, Belinda, have a diversified farm operation along the Cumberland River south of Burkesville. He is chairman of KFB's Emerging Agricultural Enterprises Advisory Committee.

TRADE RESTRICTIONS COST CATTLE INDUSTRY

The International Trade Commission (ITC) released a report estimating that trade restrictions resulting from bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) cost the cattle industry \$11 billion from 2004 to 2007.

Sales of cattle and calves during the period between 2004 and 2007 are reported to be \$195.5 billion. This means the \$11 billion in losses estimated by the ITC translates to 5.6 percent of cattle producers' income. According to the

report, tariffs and tariff-rate quota (TRQ) restrictions cost the industry another \$6.3 billion from 2004 to 2007.

The report said, "As of May 2007, the United States has been recognized by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) as a controlled risk country with regard to BSE. However, certain countries impose restrictions on U.S. beef that are more stringent than the OIE guidelines for a controlled risk country."

SUIT FILED AGAINST BEEF PACKER MERGER

AFBF welcomed a move by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to file a civil anti-trust lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Chicago to block JBS-Swift & Co.'s proposed acquisition of National Beef Packing Company.

AFBF met with DOJ officials earlier this year, pointing out concerns with the acquisition. In a March 10 letter to Douglas Ross, DOJ's special counsel for agriculture, AFBF President Bob Stallman asked DOJ for a thorough review and analysis of the proposed acquisition. AFBF raised concerns that

the merger could potentially cause market manipulation and put downward pressure on prices received by producers.

In its lawsuit, DOJ contends that the combining of JBS-Swift and National Beef, the third and fourth largest U.S. beef packers, respectively, would result in lower prices paid to cattle suppliers and higher beef prices for consumers.

The attorneys general of Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming are joining the lawsuit.

U.S. CAN PURSUE EU SANCTIONS

The United States has been given the green light to continue imposing some \$125 million in trade sanctions against European Union (EU) imports in retaliation for the EU's ban on beef produced with growth promotants. A World Trade Organization (WTO) panel ruled that amendments made to the EU's anti-hormone rules in 2003 were not in themselves sufficient to warrant a lifting of the punitive damages that have been imposed by the United States since 1999. The split decision by the panel ruled that

the United States and Canada were justified in keeping the sanctions in response to the EU ban on imports of U.S. and Canadian beef.

U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab said the decision shows that the United States did not violate its WTO obligations by making additional duties on certain EU products after the EU claimed it had come into compliance by amending its ban on beef from animals treated with growth-producing hormones.



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