

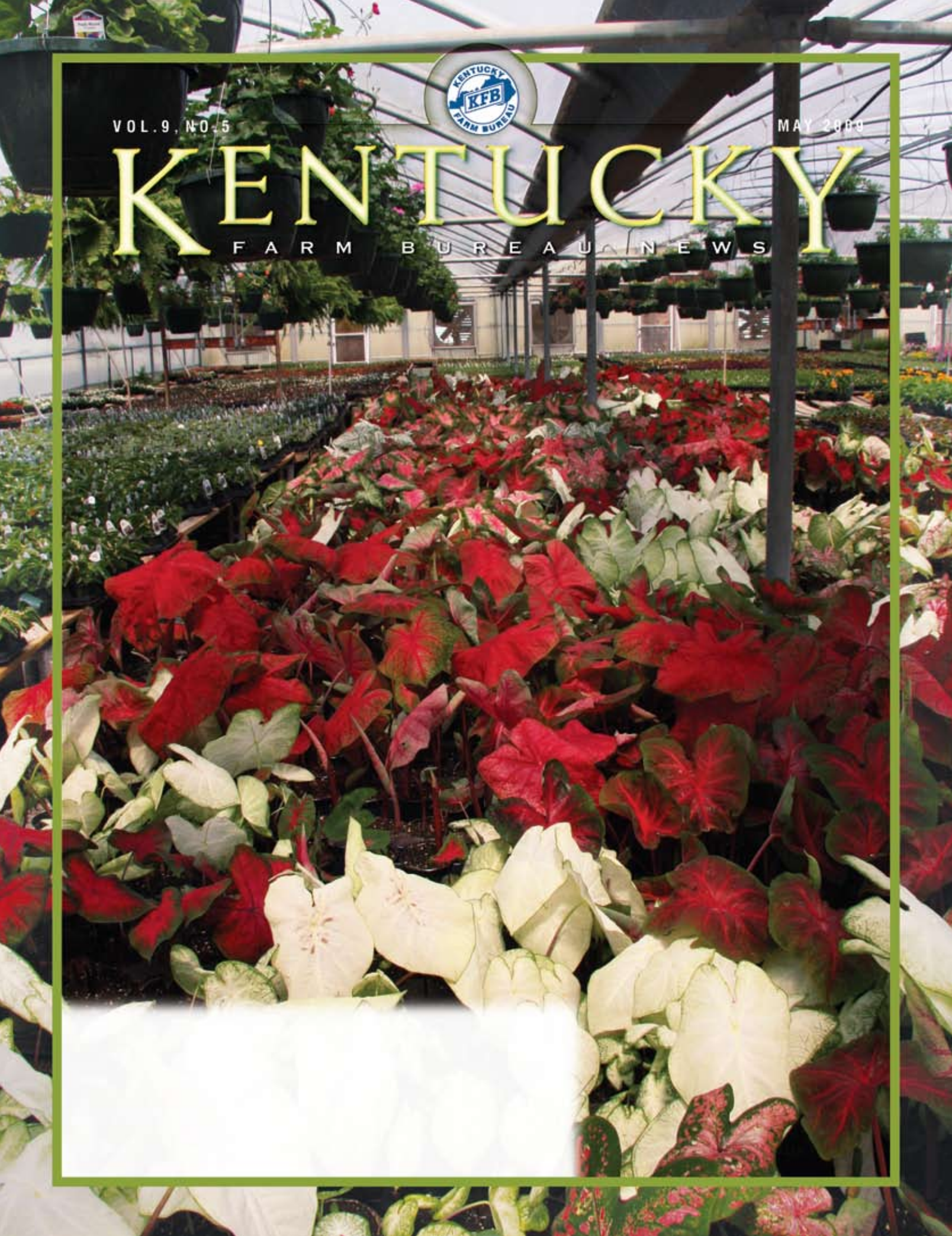
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MAY 2009

KENTUCKY

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



CBO report clears the air in ethanol/food price issue

A FBF President Bob Stallman said the latest government statistics prove ethanol played only a minimal role in last year's food price increases. During a call with reporters, Stallman said a Congressional Budget Office report proved that higher energy costs have a greater effect on food prices than the use of renewable ethanol fuel. Stallman was joined on the call by several other agriculture and energy organizations.

"These results of the CBO report came as no surprise to Farm Bureau," said Stallman. "With so many fingers in the till between the farmer and consumer, there are numerous factors responsible for higher food prices, including labor expenses, energy costs, financial

speculation, increased demand, weather production losses and the weak U.S. dollar."

According to the Agriculture Department, farmers receive less than two dimes out of every dollar spent for food in the United States. Eighty percent of the costs of food, including processing, transportation, packaging, distribution and retailing, are all added after the commodity leaves the farm.

"In order to find out what causes higher food prices, a close examination of all the components of the food price dollar is necessary," said Stallman, who said AFBF has called for hearings looking into all the reasons food prices increased last year. "It is disingenuous to only look at farm prices."

Stallman said the CBO report esti-

mates that from April 2007 to April 2008, food prices increased by about 5.1 percent. Corn prices from expanded ethanol production only contributed between 0.5 and 0.8 of a percentage point of that amount.

"Now, in spite of the tumbling price of oil and significant decreases in corn and other commodity prices, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the cost of food has still risen 4.3 percent during the last year," said Stallman.

Overall, Stallman said there are many benefits to using ethanol. Aside from cutting greenhouse gas emissions, the use of ethanol is replacing 11 billion gallons of gasoline, the equivalent of about seven percent of fuel use, thus reducing our dependence on foreign sources of oil.



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“COMMENT”

I was recently asked if I was a factory farmer or if I raised cattle sustainably. Who judges what's sustainable and what isn't? It seems that the word has been hijacked and is being used by people who are opposed to modern agriculture.

Sometimes you just have to shake your head when you hear the term. When I hear about sustainable wood, it always puzzles me. Are there some trees that don't grow back?

But in food production, we hear more and more that modern agriculture can't continue down the same path it's currently on. What exactly led to that false notion, and how would anyone possess the kind of knowledge needed to back up that sweeping statement?

Broadly, it is frequently true that so-called sustainable practices are those techniques used before the combustion engine was invented. Every industry has adapted and used technology to improve production methods and output. That includes agriculture.

From a farmer's perspective, there are two questions that should have to be answered before any agricultural practice can truly be considered sustainable. First, will the farm and ranch families implementing the practice be able to generate enough income to continue farming or ranching? Will those families be sustainable? And second, will the practice help producers increase food production to keep up with a growing population? If the answer to either of these questions is no, then, from my perspective, it should not be considered sustainable.

If farmers and ranchers can't make a living, they obviously won't be around very long. That's not what I would call a sustainable practice. Or if they are forced to use production methods that do not yield enough food for everyone, would you consider that sustainable? I wouldn't.

At the end of the day, agriculture has a single, yet vital, responsibility -- to provide food, fiber, fuel and other basics of life for an ever-growing world. The agriculture industry that some folks like to envision is better described as nostalgic rather than sustainable or even realistic. Our society wouldn't have developed into what it is today if 25 percent or more of our workforce was still required to grow food. For the past century, we have continually produced more food with less farm inputs. With the technologies available today, that trend will continue.



Troy Hadrick

**SOUTH DAKOTA RANCHER
AFBF YF&R COMMITTEE**

ON THE COVER:

PLANTS FILL ONE OF THE MANY GREENHOUSES AT BI-WATER FARM AND GREENHOUSE IN GEORGETOWN.
PHOTO BY ROGER NESBITT

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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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HEALTH CARE TASK FORCE VISITS AWARD-WINNING REGIONAL SERVICES CENTER

Developing policy recommendations for expanding health care services in rural areas is one of the key objectives of KFB's Health Care Task Force. The group got a close look at one successful innovation when it met last month at UK's Center for Excellence in Rural Health.

The UK Center is a nationally-acclaimed institution that meets a range of health care needs for a 22-county area of southeastern Kentucky. The KFB visitors, which included the Executive Committee, was so impressed that it departed Hazard with enthusiasm for the concept of regional centers throughout Kentucky.

Task Force Chairman and KFB First Vice President John Hendricks noted that the Center's role in bringing family physicians and other medical specialists to remote areas fills a void.

"We know there are areas (of the state) where our members are underserved; some have to travel great distances for specific services," he explained. "Anything we can do to improve that situation is worth looking at."

That's a key component of the Hazard facility, but the mission goes much further, to include medical and dental care plus research, social work and training in clinical leadership and management. Established in 1990 by a legislative mandate, the Center has won

national awards of excellence. Four years ago it moved into a 57,000-square-foot building adjacent to the Appalachian Regional Hospital.

The regional concept has gained momentum -- plans are underway for similar centers in Murray, Madisonville, Danville and Morehead, according to Center Director Dr. Baretta R. Casey.

Task Force member Sharon

cal professionals in rural areas.

Dr. Casey acknowledged an urgent need for doctors, social workers, physical therapists and other medical professionals in many rural areas of Kentucky. She proudly noted that 70 percent of 48 physicians who completed work at the center are now practicing in Appalachia. The center not only trains med school students, but has a "pipeline" program aimed at steering

7th and 8th graders toward careers in the medical field. The program advances to include three-week summer camps for high schoolers.

The Center depends on grants, endowments and special contractual arrangements for about 57 percent of its budget; state funding comprises the remaining 43 percent. About 60 percent of its patients are Medicare or Medicaid, with about 27 percent being uninsured, Dr. Baretta told the group.

The center also features two health care clinics in neighboring Knott

County, a mobile dental lab, a pharmacy, physical therapy and mental health services.

"Our mission is to improve the health of Appalachian people," Dr. Casey explained. "We want to work with every organization we can to improve health care in our community."

A former private physician in Pikeville, Dr. Casey has been honored with numerous awards for her work as an advocate for rural health programs and issues. She has served as President of the Kentucky Academy of Family



THE UK CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN RURAL HEALTH IS HOUSED IN A 57,000-SQUARE-FOOT FACILITY ON A HILLTOP IN HAZARD.

Furches is indirectly involved with that initiative as a director for Murray-Calloway County Hospital. She was unable to attend the Hazard meeting but sent information about a forthcoming rural medical program involving a partnership with area hospitals, the UK College of Medicine and Murray State University. The goal is to train and retain more physicians and other medi-



ABOVE: DR. BARETTA R. CASEY VISITED WITH KFB PRESIDENT MARK HANEY AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DAVID S. BECK.

BELOW: CENTER DIRECTOR DR. BARETTA R. CASEY TOOK THE GROUP ON A TOUR OF THE FACILITY. IN A CLASSROOM, SHE SPOKE WITH (FROM LEFT) PAST KFB PRESIDENT MARSHALL COYLE, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS EDDIE MELTON, JOHN HENDRICKS AND DAVID S. BECK AND TASK FORCE MEMBERS FRITZ GIESECKE AND MIKE STATON.

Physicians, is vice-chair of UK's Department of Family Medicine and is the only rural resident serving on the American Medical Association's Council on Medical Education.

The task force has met with Dr. Casey on two occasions to discuss issues. In Hazard, KFB President Mark Haney asked what she felt KFB should be doing to address the complex issue of health care reform. She offered two recommendations: (1) Work on the local level to engage community support for improving health services and (2) assist institutions like the UK Center with advocacy work.

Youth obesity was another issue that Dr. Casey insisted needed to be addressed. She recommended that KFB join other groups advocating mandatory physical education in the public schools. Without required "recess," many youngsters do not get any exercise, she said, adding that the result could be serious obesity-related health problems

(heart, diabetes, kidneys, etc.) at younger ages.

Dr. Casey warned that the health care system could be overwhelmed in the years ahead by the needs of a huge group of baby boomer era senior citizens coupled with this new "sedentary" generation that will be in the 30s or 40s.

In regard to the physical education issue, Hendricks said the task force would consider policy recommendations to forward to KFB's Education Advisory Committee.

KFB President Mark Haney said he agreed with Dr. Casey's suggestions about the organization's role in pursuing health care reforms.

"We want to improve care for our members and lower costs (for health insurance)," Haney explained. "We need to learn all we can about the situation and potential solutions, and we need to continue making allies that can join with us in pursuing solutions."

The 13-member committee was appointed last year by past President Marshall Coyle and has conducted a series of exploratory meetings, as well as a conference at KFB's annual meeting. The group plans to meet again in August.



A matter of trust . . .

CONSUMER ISSUES DOMINATE NIAA PROCEEDINGS

Increasing consumer concerns about the origin of food and how it is produced has warranted changes throughout the system. That scenario fueled the agenda for the annual meeting of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture, held last month in Louisville.

"The Changing Face of Animal Agriculture" was the theme, chosen, as the Bowling Green-based NIAA explained, because "the public perception of animal agriculture is an important component of the food production system . . . there is the utmost need to unite and take a proactive approach to foster consumer trust."

The agenda also stressed the importance of fostering trust with international trading partners who have become so vital to U.S. agriculture. Several of the presenters, including U.S. Meat Export Federation Board Chairman Jon Casper, said maintaining a safe, reliable supply of products is crucial to the future success of our livestock industry. To underscore that assertion, Casper offered a startling statistic: The 2003 incident of Mad Cow disease in the U.S. resulted in a more than \$10 billion loss in foreign trade for U.S. beef over the following three years.

The meat industry also is challenged by "a public opinion crisis" sparked by media reports about the mistreatment of animals at packing plants and other handling facilities, Casper said.

"How our customers view us has become critical," he added. "We need to manage the image of our industry better."

Concurring was Lisa Katic, president of a company that specializes in food policy and communications. In her presentation she gave an overview of how activist groups are trying to discredit the food industry. "There's a huge movement out there," she warned. "A lot of people are trying to draw a parallel between Big Tobacco and the food industry. Radical groups claim

agribusinesses are hurting our health."

Today's livestock producers face significant challenges in regard to animal welfare, food safety and environmental issues. Toss in trade and farm policy topics and the NIAA meeting had a full plate of business issues to discuss.

KFB is a member of NIAA, an advocacy group representing all segments of animal agriculture, including farmers involved with beef and dairy cattle, swine, poultry, equine, sheep and goats. KFB Director Fritz Giesecke, a Hart County cattle producer and chairman of KFB's Beef Cattle Advisory Committee, attended the annual meeting and described it as "outstanding." He said he was most taken with issues concerning export markets.

"Exports have become so important; we have to take steps to protect the markets we have and grow the ones that have so much potential," Giesecke said. "That's why the traceability issue cannot be ignored. If we have some type of (disease) outbreak or a biosecurity incident, we need a quick response . . . to be able to assure our customers that we have a handle on it."

KFB supports the federal animal identification program that is under development. Premise registration, which is a key component, has gone well in Kentucky but nationally, federal officials estimate that less than half have registered.

Food processors not only cite an urgent need for traceability, but they also want producers to embrace on-farm audits to assure compliance with

recommended production practices, said Dan Sutherland, procurement director for Johnsonville Foods.

Sutherland, whose company slaughters over 3,200 animals per day in the sausage-making business, cited "the new social cultures we have today pertaining to food safety, animal welfare, the environment . . .

"Today," he said, "the customer is interested in things like traceability, food safety, animal welfare, antibiotics. The bar has been raised."

Johnsonville has had to assure consumers of its concerns plus ask farmers to embrace that stance, Sutherland added.

"Animal welfare, the use of antibiotics - - these are not competitive issues in our industry; we need to all band together on them. We (Johnsonville) tell our competitors that."

Processors and farmers alike should accept increased auditing of their production practices, Sutherland said.

"There's an urgent need for traceability back to the farm. If there's a problem we need to go back there and help that producer find a solution. Set people up to succeed. Produce food, not livestock."

In a controversial issue, the National Renderers Association estimated a 26-to-41 percent decline in the number of cattle received

as a result of a proposed Food and Drug Administration regulation requiring removal of the brain and spinal cord before rendering. The new standard prompted a Kentucky company to stop picking up carcasses.

Today's livestock producers face significant challenges in regard to animal welfare, food safety and environmental issues. Toss in trade and farm policy topics and the NIAA meeting had a full plate of business issues to discuss.

CHANGES COMING TO “PHASE ONE” PROGRAM

Many programs of Kentucky’s agricultural development initiative (the so-called “Phase One” program) have been revised effective July 1 with the intent of making more resources available to farmers and improving the administration and accountability involved.

The Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy has been spreading that message throughout the state during a series of regional workshops. The meetings generally are to update and educate those involved with the county agricultural councils that administer the program on the local level, but are open to the public and attract farmers seeking information on potential sources of assistance.

During the workshop at the Shelby County Extension Office, GOAP project analyst Todd Harp told a group of about 40 people that a program audit conducted last year prompted the Kentucky Agricultural Development Council to initiate some significant changes.

In general, the board followed the audit report’s recommendation to expand opportunities for farmers to apply for financial assistance, to encourage more diversity on the county ag councils and to improve the system for providing accountability, Harp said.

Individual “model” programs on the county level have been renamed “investment areas” and now fall within a County Agriculture Investment Program (CAIP). Farmers have the opportunity to apply for funds in any of the investment areas that the CAIP includes.

Among dozens of changes to respective program guidelines, two may be of widespread interest: (1) Manure spreaders will be eligible for cost-share funding; (2) Labor costs no longer will be eligible for cost share.

NEW PROGRAM FOR DEAD ANIMAL DISPOSAL

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADB) approved a program to help counties implement plans for dead farm animal removal.

Utilizing County Agricultural Development Funds, counties may now apply for the Deceased Farm Animal Disposal Assistance Program that will serve as an interim measure to facilitate the coordination of environmentally sound and cost effective disposal. This program will cover expenditures incurred between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010 related to an acceptable disposal program.

“This program represents a necessary stop-gap measure to give counties time to develop longer term plans in dealing with the disposal of dead animals,” said Roger Thomas, Executive Director of the Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy. “We will continue to work with state, local, and federal officials to find a reasonable long-term solution to address this issue.”

The program was developed in partnership with the Kentucky Division of Conservation, as well as local and state stakeholders. KDOC is also offering a cost-share program to assist counties with related expenditures by utilizing a portion of their Environmental Stewardship Fund, which receives an annual appropriation from the Agricultural Development Fund.

AG COUNCILS WILL CHANGE

Governor Steve Beshear signed into law a revision of the Kentucky Revised Statutes that will increase the membership of the County Agricultural Development Councils or county councils and encourage diversity in membership on those councils.

Senate Bill 83 reorganizes and revitalizes Kentucky’s 120 county councils and includes four main provisions: an additional member, gender/race equity, term limits and staggered terms.

Starting July 1, 2010, county council members will be limited to two consecutive two-year terms. Those individuals rotating off the county council after two, two-year terms would be eligible to serve again after at least two years off the county council. Also beginning in 2010, each representative of an appointing authority, such as the Farm Service Agency (FSA), county conservation district or extension council, will serve staggered terms.

The county councils will add an at-large member for a total of nine members: two farmers selected by the FSA county committee; two members selected by the county conservation district; two members selected by the county extension council; and three at-large members. The three at-large members are selected by the six appointed members, and at least two of the three must be young farmers between the ages of 21 and 40. Additionally, at least one of the nine members shall represent a gender or race not represented at the time of selection.

The county councils are charged with the task of evaluating the needs of the local agricultural economy and devising a plan to address those needs. The county councils review requests for county agricultural development funds submitted to them and prioritize these requests based on their county plans. Their recommendations are submitted to the state Agricultural Development Board for final approval. For administrative purposes, the county councils are attached to the local Cooperative Extension Service.

Since its inception in 2001, the Phase One program has invested more than \$280 million into hundreds of state, regional and local projects to reshape the state’s farm economy. Harp said the KADB has approved about 77,000 transactions with farmers.

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Web Site: agpolicy.ky.gov



FARM PRODUCTION NEWS

SOYBEAN RUST MERITS ATTENTION

BY KATIE PRATT
UK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Since soybean rust was introduced in the fall of 2004 in the United States, Kentucky farmers have seen no yield loss as a result of the disease. However as soybean producers gear up for planting, they should be aware that the U.S. soybean rust distribution map looks significantly different from a year ago, said a UK plant pathologist.

"I'm not saying that soybean rust will be a problem this season, but the current location of soybean rust in the U.S. does merit our attention," said Don Hershman, UK extension plant pathologist.

Since 2005, soybean rust has been found in very low levels in the state toward the end of the growing season. By the time it developed, it was too late in the growing season and the state's soybean crop was mature enough that it was not affected by the disease.

However, for the first time, soybean rust has overwintered on kudzu without any break in detection in Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana.

This is an important development for two key reasons. First, these states have very large kudzu populations. Infected kudzu could serve as a springboard for movement of soybean rust to soybeans under the right weather conditions. Also, it is very common for

storm systems to originate in the central Gulf area. These storm systems commonly blow up the Mississippi River Valley and into Kentucky. When there is significant disease activity in the central Deep South, spores of the rust fungus commonly move in high numbers across a broad span of northern production areas. If this occurs early enough in the growing season, serious crop damage could ensue. Only time will tell what, if any, effects the overwintering has on soybean rust distribution or the 2009 soybean crop.

During the growing season, if a grower suspects soybean rust, they should contact their local extension office.

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FARM PRODUCTION NEWS

INPUT CHOICES CAN BE PUZZLING

BY KATIE PRATT
UK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Each year many new non-traditional crop and soil inputs are released into the market by companies with the hopes of attracting more business from farmers. With so many choices and claims, it can be difficult for growers to determine which, if any, is going to be effective in their particular crop situation.

Greg Schwab, extension soil management specialist in the UK College of Agriculture, said farmers should look for certain indicators to help them determine which product is the best fit.

"In this time of slim margins, it doesn't make sense or cents to use a product that has little chance to increase profitability," he said.

One of the indicators growers should look for is information on the studies that prove the product's effectiveness. Schwab said, typically, the most effective products will be tested by universities, which conduct non-biased studies. These studies should be repeated over several years.

"The university studies should be able to show some measure of statistical difference that traces the improvements directly back to use of the product," he said.

Growers should also consider the location of the studies when making a decision because different areas of the country have different soil properties. This means results will vary in other states or regions, and not all of the products will be applicable to Kentucky soils.

"For example, if there's a product that is designed to reduce sodium levels in the soil, it may be good in California, where levels are high. But

in Kentucky, our sodium levels are naturally low so it most likely would not have any effect on crops here," he said.

UK soil scientists test the effectiveness of several new and improved products each year. However, due to the high number of new products that come on the market, there's no way for all products to be tested by UK specialists.

However, in addition to UK studies, there are other avenues farmers can

explore to get solid, research-based information to aid in the decision-making process. One of them is a searchable database that was developed by agronomists in the North Central Region, of which Kentucky is a member. It contains university results from throughout the region on hundreds of new products. It can be accessed at <http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/compendium/index.aspx>.

County extension offices also have educational fact sheets on new products that have been proven to be effective. These fact sheets list the growing conditions where the product is mostly to produce the best results.

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“Rights” for livestock producers

Farmers should have an animal welfare checklist

BY JERRY R HARKE
AFBF STAFF

Farmers and ranchers often find themselves answering questions about the care they give to the animals they raise. And most of the time these questions arise after news stories or emotional television shows about an animal abuse incident.

What’s behind the drama? To be sure, there have been some cases of animal abuse and responsible farmers and ranchers everywhere denounce any kind of inappropriate treatment of farm animals.

At the heart of the matter are several activist groups that have long been



opposed to modern livestock production. While their direction and purpose generally disregards the need to feed an ever-increasing population, their presence and voice in the news media serves to disrupt that process and, in some cases, bring it to a complete halt.

What can farmers and ranchers do to counter the impact of such activities? Perhaps one of the most basic things is continuing to focus even more intently on “walking the walk.” That means doing the right thing on their farms and not leaving one inch of wiggle room that activist groups can use as a wedge issue.

Here’s a seven-step process for showing responsiveness to public concerns about animal care on farms and ranches.

First, you follow the latest scientific animal care standards established for the species you raise on your farm. That’s a good starting point. Also, when a dramatic incident of abuse surfaces that is clearly the result of shoddy treatment or outright abuse of animals, livestock producers must step forward to hold the responsible party accountable. Without the moral underpinning of humane animal care and doing the right thing at the farm level, sharing any story about positive animal care rings hollow.

Second, be active. Make sure you are active in general farm organizations, such as your state Farm Bureau, as well as your breed or species associations. Making industry connections will ensure you have the latest information on vital issues at your fingertips

for easy reference.

Third, make a commitment. Make communicating about your farm a formal part of your business plan. Communicating with consumers is just as important as following the markets and making production decisions. Consumers today not only want to know what you do, but why you do what you do. Set a communications goal and follow through. Start out slowly and build confidence.

Fourth, do your research. Take the time to find out through research on the Internet and elsewhere what critics of modern livestock farming practices are saying. Try to relate their critical observations to what you do on your farm or ranch.

Fifth, establish good neighbor relations. Reach out to your neighbors and non-farming residents nearby and build good relationships. Even if biosafety protocol does not allow visitors inside your barns, find a way to engage consumers, through a tour of other areas of your farm, a cookout, live video-feeds from the pens, a hayride, etc.

Sixth, meet and engage with the public on their turf. Tell your personal stories to local groups. This can include church groups, school meetings, local service organizations, your local chamber of commerce. Focus on your dedication to caring for your animal and providing a healthy product for consumers. Provide examples of your hands-on care. Leave plenty of time for Q&A.

Finally, number seven on the list is remembering social media. Engaging with the public takes many forms today. Face-to-face is absolutely the best way to tell your story, but also consider engaging consumers through opportunities offered by today’s social media, such as leaving comments on related Internet blogs, commenting from a high-road perspective on stories critical of agriculture, or starting a page about your farm on Facebook or producing a short video about your farm for YouTube.



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POSTER AND ESSAY WINNERS NAMED

Thousands of students throughout the state entered this year's Conservation Poster and Essay Contest sponsored by KFB, the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts and the Kentucky Division of Conservation. The writing contest is for grades 6-12 and the art contest is for grades 1-5. The state winners receive a \$500 savings bond; second place gets a \$300 bond. Area winners receive a \$100 bond.

Schools send their winning entries to district conservation offices for judging and the area winners compete for the state prizes. This year's topic was "Working Trees, Kentucky's Renewable Future."

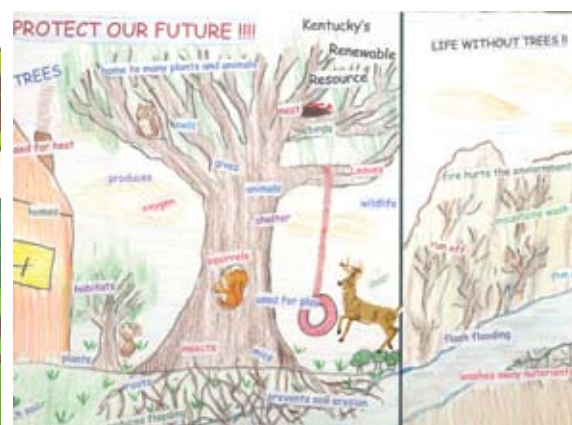
Shea Jennings of Manual High School in Louisville won the writing contest and runner-up was Ruth M. Myers of Sunlight Ridge Academy in Campbell County. Third place went to Natalie Orms of Boyle County High School.

The art contest champion was Reed Skelton of East Heights Elementary School in Henderson. Second place went to Casey Welch of Bourbon Central Elementary and third place went to Mikie Dillon of Johns Creek Middle School in Pike County.

Area winners in the writing contest were Shaquan Hayes of Mayfield Middle School, Jacob Abbott of Muhlenberg North Middle School, Elizabeth Hinton of Hardinsburg St. Romuald School, Joseph Snider of Spencer County High School, Austin Adams of St. Augustine School in Kenton County, Abby Teater of West Jessamine High School, Cameron Miller of Knox Central High School, Mikayla Estepp of Central Elementary School in Johnson County and Jeramiah Ford of Leslie County High School.

Area winners in the art contest were Jacob Cline of Southwest Calloway Elementary School, Davis Moore of Auburn

Elementary School in Logan County, Kenzie Bruce of Hardinsburg Elementary School, Lydia Kirk of Liberty Elementary School in Oldham County, Abby Humphries of Gallatin County Upper Elementary School, Hunter Jeffries of Stanford Elementary School, Jesse Stone of Sand Gap Elementary School in Jackson County, Dylan B. Simpkins of Louisa East Elementary School in Lawrence County and Colbi Johnson of Carr Creek Elementary School in Knott County.



THE TOP THREE POSTERS CAME FROM (TOP) REED SKELTON OF EAST HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY IN HENDERSON, (LEFT) CASEY WELCH OF BOURBON CENTRAL ELEMENTARY AND MIKIE DILLON OF JOHNS CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL IN PIKE COUNTY.

LOAN RATES HAVE FALLEN

USDA announced the 2009 county loan rates for wheat, feed grains and oilseeds. Although the national loan rates for 2009 crops are unchanged from the 2008 loan levels, all Kentucky counties have had one or more of their loan rates lowered. Fortunately, crop prices remain well above the loan rates.

The biggest rate change affects Kentucky's wheat producers. In every Kentucky county, the soft red winter (SRW) wheat loan rate is 39 cents per bushel lower than last year. For example, in Christian County, the SRW loan rate dropped from \$2.41 to \$2.02 per bushel. Loan rates range from \$1.91 to \$2.10. Also, the 2009 rates are 60 cents lower than the 2007 rates and 70 cents lower than 2006.

For 2009, the Kentucky corn loan rate is down two cents in the eastern half of the state and one cent in the western half. Loan rates range from \$1.99 in Hart County to \$2.12 in Calloway County.

Compared to 2008, the 2009-crop Kentucky soybean loan rate ranged from unchanged in the eastern part to two cents lower in the western areas. Rates now range from \$5.14 to \$5.23 per bushel.

RED MEAT PRODUCTION UP

Commercial red meat production in the U.S. totaled 4.14 billion pounds in March, up one percent from a year ago even as the number of cattle, hogs and sheep slaughtered declined. Beef production, at 2.14 billion pounds, was two percent above the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.73 million head, up slightly from March 2008. The average live weight of 1,305 pounds was up 29 pounds from last year. Pork production totaled 1.97 billion pounds, up slightly from the previous year. Hog marketings of 9.65 million head were down slightly from March 2008, but the average live weight was up one pound, to 272 pounds. Lamb and mutton production at 15.9 million pounds was down slightly from last March.

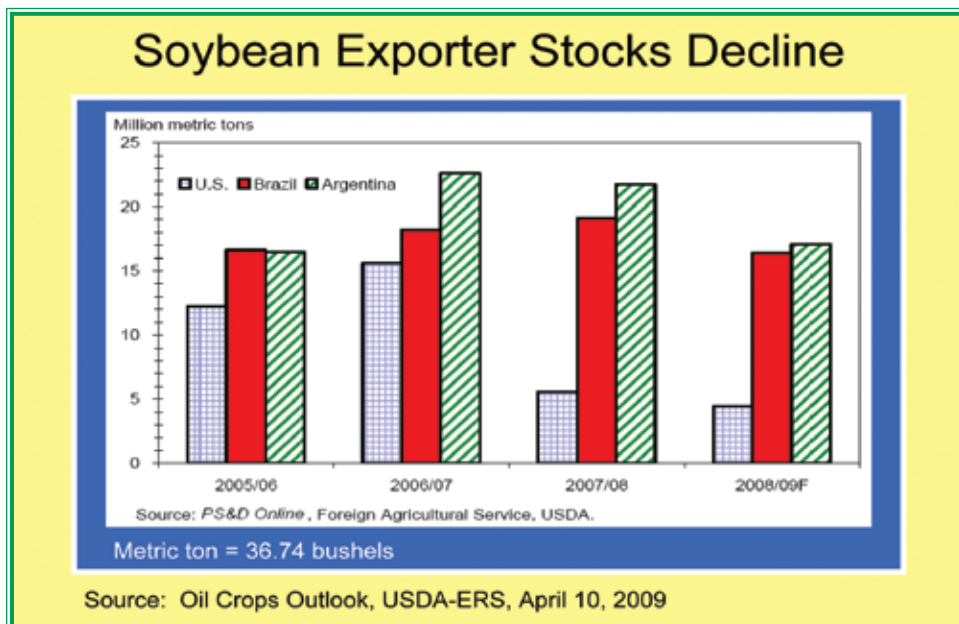
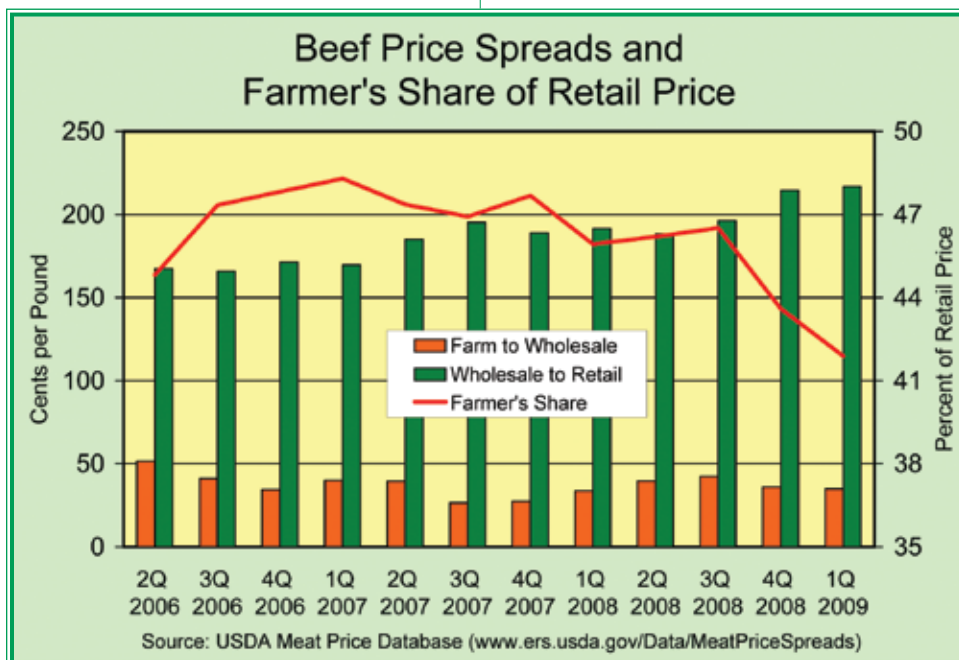
January to March 2009 red meat production was 12.1 billion pounds, down three percent from a year earlier.

RECORD SOYBEAN EXPORTS

According to the April Oil Crops Outlook report from USDA, U.S. export shipments of soybeans are at an all-time high. Although the normal seasonal decline in soybean exports began in March, 2008/09 sales are still running strongly. Soybean sales, particularly to China, have benefited from a worsening supply outlook in Argentina. USDA raised the forecast of 2008/09 soybean exports by 25 million bushels, to a record 1.21 billion. In contrast, the domestic market for soybeans is

still weak. Crushing for the first half of 2008/09 totaled 842.6 million bushels, down ten percent from a year ago.

USDA trimmed the annual crush forecast by five million bushels, to 1.635 billion. Nevertheless, soybean inventories have already declined quickly. USDA estimated March 1 soybean stocks at 1.302 billion bushels. The 978.6 million bushel reduction from December 1, 2008, reflects the largest quarterly use ever. Season-ending stocks for 2008/09 are expected to be drawn down by higher foreign demand to 165 million bushels.



Spring wing-ding

GEORGETOWN FARM MARKET CELEBRATES THE SEASON

Springtime means special events are popping up at farm markets throughout the state. One of the more innovative events is at Bi-Water Farm and Greenhouse in Georgetown. Over the course of two weekends, it has a “Festival of Flowers” with thousands of plants and seeds for sale plus seminars to show customers how to cultivate what they take home.

“We’ll go out of our way to educate our customers,” explained co-manager Steve Fister, “because we want them to enjoy what they purchase. If they have poor results, they likely won’t buy that item again.”

There are other innovations to this spring fling: Visitors are allowed to tour the greenhouses and assemble the contents for a flower basket; kids can plant something in their individualized pot and return weeks later to fetch it as a Mother’s Day gift.

An added touch to the festival is musical entertainment and free hot dogs.

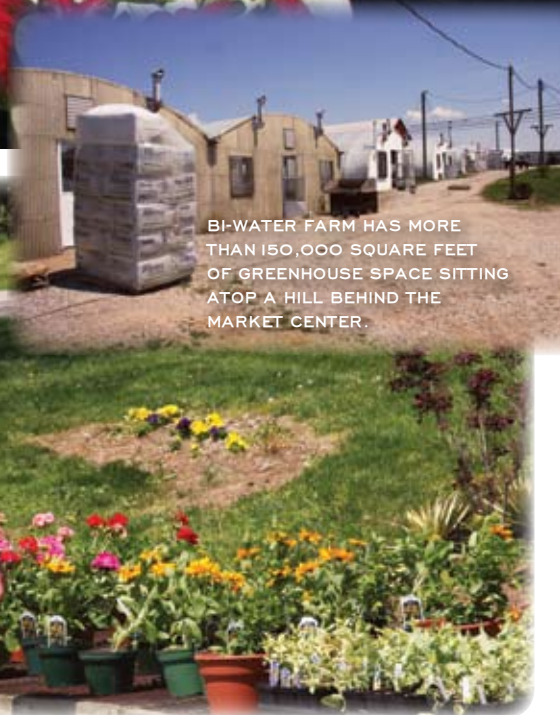
Established in 1959 by the late Carl Fister, Bi-Water enjoys a prime location on busy U.S. 25, about a mile north of downtown Georgetown. The “bi-water” comes because the property is bordered by Elkhorn Creek and one of its tributaries, Dry Run Creek. The latter flows into the Elkhorn just south of the main entrance to the farm.

Bi-Water is among the record 92 markets enrolled this year in KFB’s Certified Roadside Farm Markets program.

Carol and Bertha Fister purchased the farm in 1959 and raised their nine children on the 140-acre tract. They added 45 acres later. Steve Fister operates the farm along with brothers Len and Chris; with each assigned to specific aspects of the operation. (Steve handles promotions, advertising and some



STEVE FISTER HELPS A CUSTOMER DURING THE “FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS.”



BI-WATER FARM HAS MORE THAN 150,000 SQUARE FEET OF GREENHOUSE SPACE SITTING ATOP A HILL BEHIND THE MARKET CENTER.

of the greenhouse production)

Their father (Carl) and grandfather (John P. Fister) were vegetable and hog producers. In 1977 they installed greenhouses. The market facility, which sits on a hill overlooking a big bend in Elkhorn Creek, opened in 1995.

The business has swelled to a sizeable level: Steve estimates they have more than three million plants on hand. There’s 150,000 square feet of greenhouse space, more than 50 acres of vegetables, about 12,000 hanging baskets, 45 varieties of tomato plants, 50 types of herbs, etc.

Steve likes to note that after decades of standing as a unique vegetable farm in an area where tobacco and cattle were kings of agriculture, “we’re now the cool thing in agriculture.”

That’s evident, he added, by the increasing interest in gardening and landscaping.

“We’ve seen a big uptick with the vegetable plants,” he said. “More people are growing their own stuff and they want to know all they can about it. We like to open up the greenhouses and show them how we do it. We like to educate.”

And that includes youth. In the fall, close to 10,000 school children will visit the farm on organized tours. Thousands more will gobble up pumpkins, mums and other traditional seasonal items during their fall festival from mid-September thru October, Steve said.

This marks Bi-Water’s 50th anniversary. There may be many more, says Steve, because “we really enjoy this.”

BILL WOULD PROTECT TOBACCO GROWERS

AFBF supports a bill by North Carolina Senator Richard Burr on the regulation of tobacco products that provides more explicit protection for farmers from on-farm regulation and changes to production practices than a House bill that provides the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with broad regulatory authority over tobacco.

The Federal Tobacco Control Act of 2009 (S. 579), authored by Burr, provides greater assurances to U.S. tobacco farmers that additional regulation of tobacco products will not trickle down to the farm. The House-passed bill, H.R. 1256, the Family Smoking and Tobacco Control Act of 2009, could result in FDA regulation of tobacco farms, which AFBF firmly opposes.

AFBF President Bob Stallman wrote a letter to Burr, stressing Farm Bureau's support of the bill. Stallman praised the Burr bill because it includes language that expressly prohibits the federal government from requiring changes to traditional tobacco farming practices.

VOTE COMING ON GOAT, SHEEP CHECKOFFS

Kentucky's sheep and goat organizations have asked the Kentucky Board of Agriculture to conduct separate referenda on checkoffs for sheep and goat producers. The proposed referenda ask sheep and goat producers to assess themselves at the rate of one half of one percent (.50%) of the net market price. If the checkoff is approved, the Kentucky Sheep and Wool Producers Association and the Kentucky Goat Producers Association would administer the funds in the areas of promotion, consumer information, producer communication, industry information, and research. Although collection of checkoff funds would be mandatory, reimbursement of funds paid would be an option to the producer.

AFBF TOUTS RURAL BROADBAND SERVICE

AFBF has told two federal agencies that unserved and underserved rural areas should be the priority for more than \$7 billion in funding to implement new high-speed broadband Internet access. AFBF stated that broadband service would bolster rural communities and families by giving them enhanced access to health care, education and business opportunities.

The Agriculture Department's Rural Utilities Service and the Commerce

Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration requested comments on both allocation of the funding and implementation of new broadband services. In response, AFBF pointed out that the intent of Congress in recently-passed legislation was to provide broadband services to unserved and underserved areas of the nation. The letter noted that such areas are predominantly in rural America.

PESTICIDE PERMIT RULING DRAWS FIRE

AFBF has asked the full Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals to review a three-judge ruling that would require permits for pesticide uses even if they are applied in compliance with pesticide labeling laws. AFBF expressed disappointment that the Environmental Protection Agency is not seeking a rehearing of the matter.

In the case, National Cotton Council v. EPA, the panel reversed an EPA rule that would have clarified that Clean Water Act permits are not required for pesticides application near waters, so long as the application complies with pesticide labeling laws.

That decision could lead to additional needless regulations on the use of crop protection tools, according to AFBF. Because of the potential impacts, AFBF

expressed disappointment that the EPA has stated it will not seek a rehearing on the matter, requesting instead a delay of two years before the new permits for legal, label-approved applications would be required.

The AFBF petition, filed jointly with the American Forest & Paper Association, National Cotton Council, Croplife and other industry petitioners, asks the court to reverse, or clarify, the January decision that vacated a 2006 EPA rule exempting certain pesticide applications in, near or around water from Clean Water Act permit requirements.

EPA filed a motion asking the court to delay enforcement of the ruling for two years to provide the agency and state authorities time to develop and implement a permitting program.

STALLMAN CALLS FOR CROP INSURANCE CHANGES

The federal crop insurance program generally works well for most producers and is a popular risk management tool, but there is room for improvement in areas such as duplicate procedures, efficiency and integration with other federal agricultural programs, AFBF President Bob Stallman said in testimony before a House Agriculture subcommittee.

Stallman urged Congress to push the Agriculture Department to complete work on the Comprehensive Information Management System project. Once complete, that system would lead to more procedural efficiency for farmers and greater coordination among federal agriculture and crop insurance programs, he said.

"Participation in the program hovers at about 80 percent of eligible acres,"

Stallman said. "In addition, about 85 percent of the insured acreage is now covered by a buy-up policy rather than simply a catastrophic policy. Our farmers and ranchers are annually provided more than \$90 billion in risk management protection -- up from \$31 billion in protection just 10 years ago."

Stallman said the safety net works fairly well if a producer suffers a catastrophic crop loss because the producer doesn't have to pay expenses, and crop insurance covers the majority of the loss. However, he said improvements are needed in what are called "shallow loss" crop insurance provisions. He called for increased support so that producers who experience shallow losses on a fairly regular basis can still afford the premiums.

Red-letter Day



DISTRICT POLICY MEETINGS SET

July marks the beginning of the annual district policy development meetings. All members are urged to attend one of these meetings to review policy positions and proposals for consideration at this year's state convention.

District 1	July 13	7:00 p.m.	Calloway County FB
District 2	July 7	6:30 p.m.	Hopkins County Extension Office
District 3	July 16	6:30 p.m.	Rough River State Park
District 4	July 16	6:30 p.m.	Barren River State Park
District 5	July 16	7:00 p.m.	Stratton Community Center, Shelbyville
District 6	July 20	7:00 p.m.	Trimble County Extension Office
District 7	July 23	7:00 p.m.	Russell County High School
District 8	July 6	7:00 p.m.	Madison County Fairgrounds
District 9	July 7	6:30 p.m.	Blue Licks State Park
District 10	July 13	6:30 p.m.	Grayson Conference Center
District 11	July 20	7:00 p.m.	Harlan Country Club

AGENCY MANAGER PAUL KOVERDAN CUT THE RIBBON AT THE OPENING OF A NEW 2,300-SQUARE-FOOT OFFICE IN MCCracken COUNTY, OFF U.S. 60 ON THE WEST SIDE OF PADUCAH. AT LEFT OF KOVERDAN IS ELAINE SPALDING, PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, AND TO THE RIGHT IS HIS WIFE, JESSICA KOVERDAN, WHO IS AN AGENT AT THE OFFICE. HOLDING THE RIBBON WERE (LEFT) RICKY GREENWELL, AGENCY MANAGER AT THE OTHER MCCracken COUNTY OFFICE; AND COUNTY FARM BUREAU PRESIDENT J.W. GOODWIN.

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- Bi-Water Farm & Greenhouse**
Georgetown • (502) 863-3676
- Bray Orchard & Roadside Market**
Bedford • (502) 255-3607
- Boyd's Orchard**
Versailles • (859) 873-3097
- Cheek's Produce**
Taylorsville • (502) 477-1277

West

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Eddyville • (800) 841-2202
- D & M Produce**
Ledbetter • (270) 898-6312
- J Potts Nursery & Greenhouse**
Kirksey • (270) 293-6882
- Lost Valley Farm**
Bremen • (270) 525-9720
- Metcalfe Landscaping**
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- Poore's Nursery & Farm**
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- Stone Hill Honey Country Store**
Spottsville • (270) 826-2767
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- Turner Valley Produce**
Russellville • (270) 726-3983

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Taylorsville • (502) 252-1400
- Elk Creek Vineyards**
Owenton • (502) 484-0005
- Evans Orchard**
Georgetown • (502) 863-2255
- Fisherville Farms**
Fisherville • (502) 266-6077
- Foxhollow Farm Market**
Crestwood • (502) 241-6869
- Gallrein Farms**
Shelbyville • (502) 633-4849
- George Gagel Truck Farm**
Louisville • (502) 447-6809
- Interstate Greenhouse & Nursery**
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- Sunny Acres**
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- Double Hart Farm**
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- Haney's Appledale Farm**
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Science Hill • (606) 423-4668
- Hinton's Orchard & Farm Market**
Hodgenville • (270) 325-3854
- Jackson's Orchard & Nursery**
Bowling Green • (270) 781-5303
- Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese**
Austin • (270) 434-4124
- Lee's Garden Center**
Hodgenville • (270) 358-9897
- Mammoth Cave Transplants**
Brownsville • (270) 597-2533
- Maple Hill Manor Alpaca & Llama Fiber Farm & Studio**
Springfield • (859) 336-3075
- McQuerry's Family Farm Herbs-N-Heirlooms**
Paint Lick • (859) 792-8268
- Shell Farms Greenhouses**
Lancaster • (859) 792-3392

Sinking Valley Vineyard & Winery

Somerset • (606) 274-0223

- Stephens' Nursery & Fresh Produce**
Russell Springs (270) 343-2295
- Stonemeadow Farm Fresh**
Danville • (859) 239-8664
- Sunshine Alpacas of Kentucky & Flaggy Meadow Fiber Works**
Springfield • (859) 336-7272
- Three Springs Farm**
Elizabethtown • (270) 360-0644

East

- Alley Farms**
Louisa • (606) 483-1326
- Bennett's Mill Covered Bridge**
South Shore • (606) 932-3636
- Black Barn Produce, LLC**
River • (606) 297-2600
- Bramble Ridge Orchard**
Mt. Sterling • (859) 498-9123
- C2H2 Farm Market**
Irvine • (606) 723-7895
- Croppers Greenhouse & Nursery**
May's Lick • (606) 763-6589
- Fannin's Vegetables**
West Liberty • (606) 743-3343
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