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The photolane.com

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**f**ormer Texas Congressman and House Agriculture Committee Chairman Larry Combest recently wrote a column for Agri-Pulse that provides an excellent overview of farm policy issues. It is loaded with sound reasoning for policies that sustain growth.



The column begins by referencing a Federal Reserve Bank report which states that rural America was at the forefront of the economic rebound in 2010. Mr. Combest then writes that in order for that to continue, "U.S. farm policy needs to take a holistic approach that focuses on how Washington can create business certainty so producers can grow the economy and jobs while feeding, clothing and fueling the country and much of the world."

The remainder of the column details how proposals and developments in Washington threaten to stifle, rather than enhance, this rural economic growth. In addressing the regulatory climate, Mr. Combest says: "EPA is working to price American agriculture out of business. The agency has opened no fewer than 10 fronts against U.S. producers that would significantly drive up their costs, with each front taking environmental protection from the sublime to the ridiculous."

He goes on to cite potentially harmful policies and/or proposals on taxes, energy, trade, crop insurance and direct payments. He also takes on the special interest groups that continually attack agriculture, saying: "The radical environmental community's attempts to correlate modern agriculture with obesity and poor diet are as grounded in reality as Pop Tart fields."

In support of current farm policy, Mr. Combest points out that farm programs account for only one-fourth of one percent of the federal budget but provide an economic safety net for producers who, in 2010, spent \$250 billion to yield \$310 billion worth of production.

His words are further motivation for Farm Bureau leaders throughout the nation who are engaged in the debate on farm programs, environmental regulations, tax policies and trade agreements. Agriculture is indeed one of the few bright spots in our economy today. But as Mr. Combest writes: "Will Washington have the wisdom to pursue sound U.S. farm policies to keep it that way?"

(You can find the column at "www.Agri-Pulse.com" and by typing "Combest" under "Search Our Site.")

**MARK HANEY**  
PRESIDENT  
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

# 2011 NATIONAL PRIORITY ISSUES

## ENVIRONMENT

- Oppose EPA exceeding legislative authority in the implementation of the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act programs. (CAFO permitting, TMDL, Hypoxia, Animal Waste, Pesticides NPDES permits, Air Quality & particulate matter, etc.)
- Oppose climate change mandates, such as carbon taxes and cap and trade policies that adversely impact agriculture.
- Support improvements to soil and water quality being the highest priority when considering implementation of all conservation programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) with programs directed toward working lands.

## HEALTH CARE

- Support comprehensive, affordable health care for all U.S. citizens with reforms to present law that will address the rising costs of health care.
- Support changes in the health insurance industry that will stabilize the market, encourage competition and increase consumer choice.
- Support legislation allowing Association Health Plan provisions.
- Support containment of health care costs through tort reform which would limit excessive damage awards.

## NATIONAL FARM POLICY

- Support a continuation of current Farm Bill concepts and programs that maintains an effective safety net for U.S. farm production.
- Support allowing farmers to combine farms with less than 10 base acres for the purpose of government program eligibility.

## MARKET IMPROVEMENT

- Support continued focus on agricultural components of trade agreements that will enhance opportunities and increase demand for Kentucky-grown products.
  - Support continued emphasis on market opportunities that will generate profitable returns for producers.
- Support increased oversight of commodity markets to reduce manipulation of cash markets or artificial price swings.

## RENEWABLE FUELS/ ENERGY LEGISLATION

- Support continued emphasis on a comprehensive energy plan that includes research and development of agricultural-based renewable fuels.

- Support clean coal technology for energy production.

## FARM LABOR

- Support reform of the H-2A program to streamline the process making it more reliable, economical and simple for farmers to participate. Reforms should include moving from Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) to Ag Prevailing Wage.
- Support approval of joint contracts among farmers for the H-2A program by DOL.

## ANIMAL CARE

- Support the right of farmers to raise livestock and poultry in accordance with commonly accepted agricultural practices.

## PACKERS & STOCKYARDS ACT

- Recommend the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) review the bonding requirements for livestock dealers and packers to ensure it adequately reflects their volume and maximum financial exposure.

## TAXES

- Support permanent repeal of the Estate Tax.
- Support further reductions of capital gains taxes. Reductions should be made permanent.
- Support repeal of IRS form 1099 requirements as established under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.



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The House and Senate often assign the lowest bill numbers to their highest priorities. That is certainly true this year with House Bill 1, which has drawn more than 60 of the chamber's 100 members as co-sponsors.



If it passes the Senate, this legislation would give voters in November 2012 the ability to enshrine hunting and fishing rights in Kentucky's Constitution, a move that would have us join 15 other states. That includes Tennessee, Arkansas, and South Carolina, all three of which added the amendment with overwhelming support last November.

Kentucky needs this because it solidifies the will of the people in a way that the General Assembly cannot achieve alone. It would cover all three branches of government and local jurisdictions as well. This would ensure the right remains consistently applied from Pikeville to Paducah, avoiding situations where these sporting activities may be unfairly curtailed. It would have no effect on otherwise routine regulations such as hunting seasons, permits, or trespassing laws.

The goal is not to hammer mere tradition into our constitutional bedrock, but to give voters the chance to add these sporting activities to the list of rights that only they can change. I believe our timeless values need the strongest protection available and to serve as a guide to the laws that follow.

The amendment also emphasizes the role hunting and fishing play in maintaining healthy wildlife populations. This has proven to be the most effective way to keep these populations in check, and it does it in a way that provides a tremendous boost to our economy. Out-of-state hunters alone bring in more than \$100 million annually.

Last year, the legislature took a positive step forward to ensure that the care of livestock and horses is protected at the state level and not subject to local changes that could unfairly penalize farmers. This constitutional amendment, I believe, is the next logical step.

**GREG STUMBO**

**SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE**

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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# “GENERAL” ASSEMBLY

## 224 COUNTY LEADERS ATTEND CONFERENCE

County Farm Bureaus can play an important role in moving agriculture forward simply by having a strong presence in their respective communities, KFB President Mark Haney said in his keynote address at last month’s Presidents and Vice Presidents Conference.

The annual two-day conference in Louisville attracted 224 local leaders from 109 counties. The agenda had a wide range of topics ranging from federal and state legislative issues to utilizing the organization’s member service programs.

Haney wrapped up the proceedings by urging county organizations to take up the challenge of promoting agriculture in the face of continuing criticisms of the industry. The Pulaski County farmer noted that special interest groups and others have been effective in influencing public opinion by disseminating misinformation about agriculture production, particularly in regard to animal agriculture, food safety and environmental protection.

The situation continually threatens to shape public policy, he warned.

“Now is the time to focus on these issues,” Haney said. “More and more people are misinformed. And this includes people of influence. I challenge you to focus on programs and activities in your county that tell our story. Continue to sponsor programs with our allies. Things like school programs, farm tours, special community events that put a face on agriculture.

“We need to do whatever we can to tell agriculture’s story.”

To cite a recent example of the prob-

lem, Haney explained how a misleading newspaper editorial had stalled legislative action on a bill KFB was pushing.

Communications was a common thread throughout the conference. The opening day’s keynote address from famed motivation speaker Clebe McClary also included a call for effective communications. The decorated Marine veteran of the Viet Nam War outlined a number of traits for personal successes that include a positive attitude, appreciation for life, sincerity, faith, commitment, concern for others and good communications skills.

“If you’re going to be successful you have to learn how to communicate,” he said. “Say what you mean and mean what you say.”

McClary, who has addressed groups in all 50 states plus 30 foreign nations, recommended several books to the KFB leaders, including anything from John Maxwell, “Leading With The Heart” by Duke University basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski, “How to Win in Life” by former Washington Redskins Coach Joe Gibbs and “Tender Warrior” by Stu Weber.

“Try to read and exercise each day,” he suggested.

Much of the agenda had staff members giving presentations on various programs and services. The traditional segment on county activities spotlighted legislative appreciation events, with Muhlenberg County President Mary Kate Kordes and Robertson County President Keith Ellis speaking about events they had been involved with.

KFB’s legislative team provided updates on state and federal issues.





Famed motivational speaker Clebe McClary stressed the importance of good communication skills.

RIGHT: Steve Coleman, Director of the Division of Conservation, addressed the group as Pete Goodmann, assistant director of the Division of Water, awaited his turn at the podium.



BOTTOM LEFT: Oldham County's Kevin Jeffries posed a question during the session on environmental issues.

BOTTOM CENTER: KFB Second Vice President Fritz Giesecke presided over one of the sessions.

BOTTOM RIGHT: KFB Public Affairs Director Jeff Harper (right) and colleague Tony Sholar prepared for their presentation on the state legislative session.





## GOAP Annual Conference

**G**overnor Steve Beshear continues to voice a strong commitment to maintaining the funding level for the state's agricultural development initiative, but he's also calling for some new ideas for utilizing the program.

Speaking at the annual conference of the Governor's Office for Agricultural Policy (GOAP) last month in Bowling Green, Beshear said Kentucky agriculture is at a critical juncture, requiring innovation to enhance competitiveness in the world marketplace. "We must ask ourselves: 'Are we investing in projects that will move us forward?'" he said to a large group of agriculture interests from throughout the state.

The GOAP's annual meeting provided an opportunity for county agricultural council members and others involved or interested in the process to review progress and receive updates on changes in programs and policies. The agenda also

included keynote speakers, an awards ceremony for county leaders and projects plus a trade show. KFB had an exhibit promoting its member services.

Governor Beshear kicked off the proceedings by praising the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund (KADF) which was enacted by legislation in 2001, earmarking half of Kentucky's Tobacco Settlement Funds for agricultural development. Thus far KADF has provided more than \$71 million for almost 750 state, regional and county projects, according to GOAP.

"It's critical to keep those funds going to agriculture," Beshear said. He went on to issue a challenge relative to use of those funds, suggesting a broader approach that puts more emphasis on regional projects and cooperative initiatives.

"I'm inviting you to take a fresh look at how our agricultural development fund can increase competitiveness. We need to be thinking bigger. With a broader vision we can create a bigger impact," he said.

The award winners posed for a photo following the ceremony. The front row is comprised of county Farm Bureau leaders, from left: Steve Bach of Bath County, Rob McClanahan of Pendleton County, Eddie Warren of Madison County, Kelly Flanders of LaRue County, Neil Allen of Barren County and Clint Hardy of Daviess County, who received the extension agent award. The others won district awards for service to their respective county agriculture councils. In the back row from left are First Lady Jane Beshear, Doug Overhults and Mike Montross of UK, Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer, Mike Mullican of Independence Bank, Tim Hughes of the Division of Biofuels, Sam McNeil of UK, Stacy Marksberry of GOAP, Scott Shearer of UK, Dr. Melissa Lipps of Shelby County and John-Mark Hack and Richard McAlister of Marksbury Farm Foods.

The governor touted energy projects as “an area of great opportunity.”

First Lady Jane Beshear was the keynote speaker at the awards luncheon. She stressed the importance of local-foods projects and the Kentucky Proud promotional program for Kentucky farm products. She has been active with both initiatives.

Another featured speaker was Kathleen Merrigan, Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She commended Kentucky for its diversification efforts in response to tobacco’s decline, noting that she served as Administrator of the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service under President Bill Clinton and therefore was well aware of tobacco’s former dominance in the state’s farm economy.

Following her address at the opening session, Mrs. Merrigan met with a group of Kentucky agriculture officials that included KFB President Mark Haney, Second Vice President Fritz Giesecke, Farm Service Agency Executive Director John McCauley, UK Ag College Dean Scott Smith, GOAP Executive Director Roger Thomas and Tom Fern, State Director for USDA Rural Development. Mrs. Beshear also attended.

County Farm Bureau leaders were prominent among those receiving special recognition for service to the ag development initiative. Among those receiving district awards for outstanding service to county agriculture councils were Steven Bach of Bath County (who along with wife Richelle won KFB’s Outstanding Young Farm Family award), David Kash of Wolfe County, Rob McClanahan of Pendleton County (a county young farmer committee chairman and a member of KFB’s Resolutions Committee), Eddie Warren of Madison County (a county director and past president), Kelly Flanders of LaRue County (a county director) and Neil Allen of Barren County (a former KFB Director and county president). The extension agent award went to Clint Hardy of Daviess County, who serves on the county Farm Bureau board and is a past chairman of the county’s young farmer committee.

Shelby County FB Director Dr. Melissa Lipps received the Distinguished Agriculture Entrepreneur Award for her work with a veterinary clinic. Tim Hughes, a former chairman of KFB’s Young Farmer Committee and a county president in Logan County, received an “Excellence in Energy” award for his work as Director of the Kentucky Division of Biofuels.



TOP: GOAP Executive Director Roger Thomas and Governor Steve Beshear kicked off the conference with remarks to the large group. MIDDLE: KFB President Mark Haney enjoyed a light moment with USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan and First Lady Jane Beshear prior to a meeting with state ag officials. At right is GOAP Executive Director Roger Thomas. BOTTOM: The room was filled for the workshop on county programs. GOAP’s Jennifer Hudnall is the presenter in this photo.



# Barren – in name only

Huge cattle county beefed up through Ag Development Fund

Article and Photos by Walt Reichert

ABOVE: Barren County cattle producer Don Wilson designed his cattle handling facility and received cost-share assistance from the Ag Development Fund.

In mid-February, Barren County cattle producer Robert Siddons sold feeder calves for the highest price he's ever enjoyed. That's not only a reflection of the current market, but it's also a testimony to the improvements Kentucky farmers like Siddons have made in the quality of the calves they are sending on to feedlots around the country.

And they are improvements aided, in part, with Agriculture Development Funds distributed for the last 10 years by the Governor's Office of Agriculture Policy (GOAP).

Siddons is among hundreds of Barren County farmers to take advantage of the approximately \$4.4 million in ag development funds the county has received to improve and expand the beef herd. When Siddons and his father were raising tobacco, the beef herd numbered 30-40. Now Siddons keeps about 125 cattle in two herds

on farms he and his mother own. With cost-share dollars, Siddons has bought quality bulls to improve the genetics of the calves he produces. His latest purchase is a young Hereford bull bought because Siddons likes "black baldie" cattle and his herd was getting nearly solid black.

Also, Siddons has used cost-share money to build a handling facility that allows him to work cattle with less stress to people and animals. He has added cattle waterers between fences on the farm to increase his ability to rotational graze and to offer cattle cleaner, cooler water. He recently bought a GPS system for his truck that improves the efficiency of his fertilizer spreading by eliminating missed spots and over-spreading.

"If it saves three tons of fertilizer, it has paid for itself, Siddons said.

And Siddons has used cost-share ag development money for fencing that

keeps cattle out of Skagg Creek, which meanders around the farm.

“We try to do things right,” Siddons said. “But doing things right takes dollars and it (Agriculture Development Fund money) lets your dollars go farther.”

Siddons, who is president of the Barren County Cattlemen’s Association, is using cost-share dollars from the county’s portion of the Agriculture Development Fund exactly as it was intended – to improve the quality of Kentucky’s cattle herds.

For years, beef cattle production was largely a sideline for farmers whose primary efforts went to grow tobacco. Kentucky was, and is, the largest producer of beef cattle east of the Mississippi River, but it had a reputation for lower quality calves. But that was before the Master Settlement agreement with cigarette manufacturers in 1998, and the state’s decision to pour half of the proceeds into the state’s ag economy to help farmers find ways to replace their dependence upon tobacco. Since the inception of the Ag Development Fund, approximately \$340 million state-wide has gone to farmers to help fund efforts to diversify their operations. Improving the state’s beef herd became the number one priority, said Roger Thomas, executive director of GOAP.

“Eleven years ago, the folks who created the fund all agreed that the state’s beef industry was the number one target to take up the slack created by the decline of tobacco growing,” Thomas said. “Because of that, the beef cattle industry in Kentucky has grown by leaps and bounds.

Thomas said other success stories for the fund include the expansion of the state’s roadside and farmers’ markets and the agriculture education efforts directed at the state’s youth.

Because it was a leading tobacco county, Barren County has received the most Ag Development Fund dollars over the last decade. Barren County is the state’s largest beef and dairy producer, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). It was the number one tobacco-producing county in 2009, according to NASS, and also leads the state in the production of “other hay.” In both the 2002 and 2007 Census of Agriculture, Barren led the state in the number of farms. The county earned \$81.6 million in agriculture receipts in 2009, according to NASS.

County Extension Agent Gary Tilghman said Barren County has lost a number of

tobacco and dairy farmers over the last decade but those left have gotten larger. While dairy cow numbers have shrunk in the county by 500 head, Barren is still by far the largest dairy producer in the state, with 8,300 cows on local farms. The county had 96,000 cattle and calves, including beef and dairy, in 2009, according to NASS. That’s more cattle than in any other county east of the Mississippi.

It is no wonder, then, that the focus of Agriculture Development Fund money headed to Barren County over the last decade, went to cattle producers.



Barren County cattle producer Robert Siddons looks over his herd of mostly “black baldie” cattle.

According to GOAP, the breakdown of cost-share dollars to Barren County cattle producers is:

- \$601,000 for the cattle genetics improvement program
- \$674,000 for cattle handling facilities
- \$366,000 for dairy diversification
- \$1.5 million for forage improvement
- \$3,000 for deceased animal pickup

In addition, the county received \$795,000 in County Agriculture Investment Program (CAIP) funds that went to a wide range of agriculture enterprises and businesses, many of which assist cattle producers in marketing or adding value to their enterprises. Sheep and goat producers in the county also received \$63,000 in cost-share dollars.

Tilghman said some local farmers have started horticulture operations with Agriculture Development Fund money, especially small fruit and berry produc-

tion. The county has also seen expansion of its meat goat herd.

But the emphasis has been on cattle production, Tilghman said.

“They’re using cost-share dollars to buy better sires, improve facilities and safety for themselves, buying automatic waterers to improve water quality and to branch out into other enterprises, such as raising replacement heifers on dairies,” Tilghman said, “And it’s noticed in the marketplace.”

Don Wilson, a beef cattle producer in Barren County, near Cave City, didn’t start farming until he was 45 years old, but since

then he has done it with a passion. He has about 265 head of Charolais-Simmental-Angus cattle on eight farms totaling about 800 acres that he owns or leases.

Wilson has used Agriculture Development Fund money to buy fencing, waterers, seeds for pasture renovation, a waste management facility and fencing. But his pride and joy is a cattle handling facility he recently completed using cost-share dollars; it’s so new it hasn’t been baptized with manure yet.

Wilson designed the facility on grid paper before building it at the junction of fences that feed three fields and an alleyway. A Rubik’s cube of gates, chutes and paddocks, the facility allows Wilson to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

# YOUNG FARMER CONFERENCE



State Representative Ryan Quarles told the young farm families about his background with Farm Bureau.

Youngsters participated in an interactive nutrition education workshop conducted by Alison Smith, marketing director for the Kentucky Beef Council and a young farmer committee member in Scott County.

Ten years ago as a high school student, Ryan Quarles stood in front of a thousand people and delivered a two-minute speech about agriculture that was good enough to help him win KFB's annual "Outstanding Youth" competition.

Fast forward to February 2011 and Quarles, as a newly-elected State Representative, was a keynote speaker at KFB's Young Farmers Leadership Conference.

As one might suspect, the first event paved the way to the second one.

Quarles says he became involved with Farm Bureau - - and interested in politics - at a young age because his father, Roger Quarles, served on the Scott County FB

Board of Directors. Roger currently is president of the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association. Ryan, meanwhile, is serving in the General Assembly after notching an upset victory over a 14-year incumbent in the November election.

He's among three state legislators who are under 30 years old.

Quarles told the young farmers he decided to run for office because "I felt people deserved a choice on election day." He said he lost 15 pounds during a 13-month campaign in which he knocked on hundreds of doors. He won by a slim 221-vote margin with more than 18,000 votes cast.

"I got lucky cause people wanted change," he said, smiling.

A graduate of the UK College of Agriculture with a degree in Ag Economics, Quarles said he is elated to gain appointment to the House Agriculture Committee, and also pleased with selections to Banking and Insurance, and Education. Among many things for agriculture, he's a strong proponent of FFA and 4-H.

He urged the farmers to get to know their lawmakers and follow the issues that affect them. He had high praise for KFB, saying, "I'll tell you right now - Kentucky agriculture has no better friend in Frankfort than Farm Bureau."

He also advised the young farmers to embrace free trade policies. "Globalization is going to happen; we might as well be a part of it," he said.

The annual conference - - held this year at the Marriott Griffin Gate Resort in Lexington - - also featured a number of workshops and tours of local attractions. The agenda included things of interest to the many children who accompanied mom and dad.

The group also provided volunteers to visit Lexington Children's Hospital, the local Ronald McDonald House and several charities.

KFB President Mark Haney and VPs Eddie Melton and Fritz Giesecke addressed the group at various junctures.

# YOUNG FARM FAMILIES HELP LEXINGTON FOOD BANK



The KFB young farm family group at God's Pantry Food bank.

**Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the God's Pantry Food Bank web site.**

**W**hen we asked Jackson County resident Doug Wilson why he came out to volunteer with a group from Kentucky Farm Bureau's Young Farmers program, he turned the question right back around to us: "Where else could you go on a Saturday afternoon to bag, literally, a ton of granola and have good company while you do it?"

Indeed, when more than 40 of the Young Farmers volunteered at God's Pantry Food Bank as part of their annual leadership conference last month, half of the group repacked several thousand pounds of granola for easier distribution to member agencies and clients. The other half, including several very young Young Farmers, helped sort food drive donations for Fayette County's five emergency food pantries. Their goal, according to program director Jay McCants, was to "leave a footprint in Lexington" and they accomplished just that.

"Kentucky Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization and we're known for helping out farmers," said Spencer County resident Franklin Deutsch. "What better way to build leadership and give back to our community than to

volunteer at a food bank? It's one of the most charitable things we can do."

The volunteers from KFB represented numerous Kentucky counties, many of which are served by God's Pantry Food Bank. Jenny Wilson, also of Jackson County, said she "had no idea that [God's Pantry] covers more than just Lexington." Even those individuals living outside of God's Pantry's service area were surprised to learn that a total of seven food banks in the Feeding America network work together to serve every county in Kentucky.

Of particular interest to this group of volunteers, including 11-year-old Paige Brown of Logan County, is our Farms to Food Bank initiative which purchases food from Kentucky farmers that might otherwise be plowed under or thrown away. The goal is to provide fresh fruits and vegetables for those who can't afford relatively expensive produce. But the program helps keep Kentucky family farms going, too. "I think it's a great idea," Paige said.

Ultimately, Charlie Edgington of Fayette County most enjoyed working with other Farm Bureau members from across the state. "We were able to carry on a conversation while doing good work," he said.

Sounds like a great combination to us too, Charlie! We look forward to having this hardworking group of Young Farmers back again next year.

# KFB Director Pat Henderson honored for service to conservation association

**K**FB Director Pat Henderson received the 2010 Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of Conservation Districts during the group's annual convention. The Breckinridge County farmer has served on his county's Board of Supervisors for 30 years, including several years as chairman. In 1992 he was elected as an officer for the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts. He went on to serve as both Vice President and President, holding the latter position from 1999-2004.

Henderson is a veteran agriculture leader and a retired vocational agriculture teacher. Among many leadership positions, he has served two terms on the State Board of Agriculture and currently is on the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board. He also was elected to represent the southeast on the NACD Executive Board.

He was elected to the KFB Board of Directors in 2005. He is Vice-Chairman of KFB's Natural Resources Advisory Committee and past chairman of the Communications Advisory Committee.

KACD nominated Henderson for the prestigious award. The nomination form states that "today's conservation programs have been and will continue to be shaped and molded as the result of his diligent efforts. He has a genuine concern for the conservation districts and is committed to the wise use of our natural resources, starting with his own farming operation."

Henderson also was cited for his many efforts to secure adequate funding for conservation initiatives, particularly Kentucky's Agriculture Water Quality Cost-Share Fund. He has championed that initiative in Frankfort to protect the \$9 million funding level. According to the Division of Conservation, that program has assisted 14,000 landowners over the years with about \$113 million. And that does not include matching funds or other forms of assistance.

The nomination noted that "Pat has fought many battles for funding and stability for conservation districts. He was worked with Congressional members to encourage their continued support and funding of the national conservation partnership efforts and is considered a valuable advisor on agriculture and conservation issues."



Pat Henderson (left) receives the award from NACD President Steve Robinson.

## BIPARTISANSHIP NEEDED ON TRADE AGREEMENTS

BY JOHN HART  
AFBF STAFF

**S**ince members of the 112th Congress have signaled they are willing to work together, they can turn their symbolism into deeds by ratifying pending free trade agreements this year. Ratification of the U.S.-Korea, Colombia and Panama free trade agreements is critical for economic stability and job creation.

On the morning of January 25, when President Barack Obama delivered his State of the Union address, AFBF President Bob Stallman testified before the House Ways and Means Committee on the three pending trade agreements. Stallman's message to lawmakers: the inability of Congress to ratify the pacts is hurting economic growth, and lawmakers must take action to implement policy that creates jobs and doesn't take them away.

"These trade agreements are not only important to the bottom line of America's farmers and ranchers, but to the economic health of our rural communities and the overall U.S. economy," Stallman testified. "The Agriculture Department estimates that every billion dollars in agricultural exports creates 9,000 jobs. There is a long supply chain made up of American workers who get products from the farm gate to our foreign consumers. A decline in our exports means a decline in work for those who are part of that supply chain."

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# KFB checks in with “Check-Out” promotions

KFB Women’s Committee Chairperson Phyllis Amyx in Frankfort with the gift baskets that were distributed to legislators.



**K**FB members and staff used the annual “Food Check-Out Week” to remind consumers of how they benefit from the work of farmers.

“Food Check-Out Day” was initiated 15 years ago to put a spotlight on the low cost of food in the United States. While that remains the primary message, Farm Bureau also is stressing nutrition and value in the food supply.

KFB also uses the occasion to show appreciation to state lawmakers for their continuing support of our agriculture industry. KFB staff distributed gift baskets of Kentucky products to legislators and other state officials to signify Food Check-Out Week, which was February 20-26. KFB Women’s Committee Chairwoman Phyllis Amyx greeted the legislators and explained the purpose of the event.

Meanwhile, County Farm Bureaus held a variety of events such as distributing materials at supermarkets or schools, disseminating information through local media or providing food to charitable organizations. KFB staffer Scott Christmas, who coordinates Food Check-

Out Week activities for the organization, estimates that more than 50 counties participate in some fashion.

KFB President Mark Haney describes the occasion as “a good opportunity to remind everyone of how they benefit from our affordable food supply.”



On the national level AFBF promotes how consumers can learn to shop effectively to put nutritious meals on the table with lower costs. AFBF has developed and distributed materials dedicated to helping consumers make healthier food choices. It also has coordinated donations to Ronald McDonald Houses. KFB Director Terry Gilbert of Boyle County participates in the promotions in her role as chairperson of AFBF’s Women’s

Committee.

The most powerful message is that food remains a bargain, even during these tough economic times. USDA estimates that the average American spends about 10 percent of disposable income on food, which is far below the share for housing, health care and some other necessities. And while Americans can work about two months to earn enough money to pay their annual food bill, it takes twice as long to pay taxes for the year.

The combination of the incredible efficiency of American farm production and federal policies that protect the economic viability of our agriculture industry make food a bargain in the United States. As a result, Americans have more money to spend on other things, which boosts the overall economy and quality of life.

In Frankfort, the KFB contingent is quick to thank legislators for their continuing support of Kentucky’s agricultural development initiative. That 10-year-old project has utilized hundreds of millions of dollars in tobacco settlement funds to reshape the state’s farm economy in the face of tobacco’s decline. Kentucky’s farm income has risen as a result.

# THREE SELECTED FOR VET ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**T**ravis England of Hart County, Ellie Gripshover of Logan County and Luther Parker of Henry County are recipients of the 2011 Kentucky Large/Food Animal Veterinary Incentive Program. As winners of the annual incentive, each will be awarded with up to \$18,000 over three years for payment toward outstanding school loans.

All three are doctoral graduates of Auburn University and practicing as large-animal veterinarians in Kentucky.

England, of Hardyville, completed his undergraduate degree in Animal Science at Western Kentucky University. He currently works at Thomas Veterinary Services in Smiths Grove, specializing in large animal surgery and medicine, as well as helping operate a family dairy and tobacco farm. He also has worked at Hartland Animal Hospital in Horse Cave and Henry County Animal Clinic. He

served an externship at a vet clinic in California.

Gripshover, of Auburn, completed her undergraduate degree in Animal Science at the University of Kentucky. She currently works at Logan County Animal Clinic in Russellville, providing medical, surgical and consultative services for large animals. A native of Northern Kentucky, she graduated from Conner High School and worked on a Boone County farm. She also worked at Hebron Animal Hospital, Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital and a vet service in Iowa.

Parker, of Pleasureville, completed his undergraduate degree in Pre-Veterinary Medicine at the University of Kentucky. He currently works at the Henry County/Carroll County Animal Clinic in New Castle as a large animal veterinarian, as well as helping operate a family beef cattle farm. He was the 2002 valedictorian at Gallatin County High School. He has worked at UK's dairy farm and at the Woodford Veterinary Clinic. He also served two externships at vet clinics in California.

The program, funded by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund and supported by several key Kentucky agricultural organizations, was developed to help alleviate shortages in the state's large-animal medical workforce. Increasing the number of large-animal veterinarians, vet technicians and technologists within the Commonwealth is vitally important to the ongoing health of Kentucky's livestock population. As several areas of

Kentucky do not have a local veterinarian to attend to cattle, horses or other farm animals, this program was designed to encourage veterinary school graduates to pursue a career with large/food animals.

To qualify for the program, applicants must hold either a degree in veterinary medicine from an accredited college or university, or have completed an accredited two-year veterinary technician or four-year technologist program. All those considered for the incentive had to be in their first, second or third year of practice post-graduation and have chosen to pursue a veterinary career that devotes at least 50 percent of its time to large/food animals.

The Kentucky Farm Bureau Education Foundation administers this program on behalf of the Kentucky Cattlemen's Foundation, which launched the initiative after receiving a \$100,000 donation for the purpose of encouraging large-animal practice in the state. The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board later approved an additional \$1 million investment for the program.



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# NEW TAG REQUIREMENTS FOR SOME BREEDING CATTLE

BY AIMEE NIELSON

UK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

**M**ore than 150,000 breeding cattle 18 months and older pass through Kentucky's stockyards each year. Because of the need for traceability where disease is concerned, all these cattle must be identified with the state veterinarian's office.

"We have a need for traceability," said Michelle Arnold, extension veterinarian for the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture. "With classic diseases like brucellosis and tuberculosis, emerging diseases like bovine spongiform encephalitis and the potential for foreign animal diseases such as foot and mouth disease, we have to be able to follow cattle through the sale process back to the farm of origin."

The new requirements went into effect in mid-February and state that cattle must have official ear tags, which are available from the state veterinarian's office.

Staffs of the state veterinarian's office and the U.S. Department of Agriculture area veterinarian's office are working cooperatively with market veterinarians and stockyard management to implement the requirement. The state veterinarian's office acted in advance of federal traceability requirements for interstate movement of livestock that are expected to be published this spring.

"When disease is identified in Kentucky cattle, it is important to identify affected and exposed animals as quickly as possible and with a minimum of cost and inconvenience to producers," said Robert Stout, Kentucky's state veterinarian. "This requirement will make it easier for the Office of the State Veterinarian to pinpoint outbreaks and eradicate them while unaffected producers can carry on with business as usual."

Arnold said that the



requirement could actually be a benefit for producers and offer them better market access. Since Congress did not fund the National Animal Identification System, Kentucky's requirement fills a gap and ensures that breeding cattle older than 18 months will have a traceable identification number.

"Veterinarians, markets and producers will be able to obtain the tags," Arnold said. "If cattle arrive at the stockyards with official tags, those tags won't be removed and no new tags will be added. However, if cattle arrive at the stockyards without tags, they'll receive either the most commonly used metal ear tag

approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or an RFID tag in the 840 series or stamped with a USDA shield."

The tags will be scanned and the state veterinarian's office will hold all the scanned information and only access it to trace an animal for disease tracking purposes.

Arnold said plans are to develop a bidirectional link from the UK Veterinary Diagnostic Lab to the Office of the State Veterinarian via the KDA-USASHERDS database.

"Hopefully, as the program proves successful, it will gain more funding for technology updates and staff support," Arnold said.

## DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

(all times are local):

<b>District 1</b>	<b>March 14</b>	<b>7 p.m.</b>	<b>Sedalia Restuarant</b>
<b>District 2</b>	<b>March 8</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Ballard Conv. Center, Madisonville</b>
<b>District 3</b>	<b>March 24</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Rough River State Park Lodge</b>
<b>District 4</b>	<b>March 28</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Barren River State Park Lodge</b>
<b>District 5</b>	<b>March 17</b>	<b>7 p.m.</b>	<b>Tony's BBQ Barn, Lawrenceburg</b>
<b>District 6</b>	<b>March 29</b>	<b>7 p.m.</b>	<b>Franklin County Extension Office</b>
<b>District 7</b>	<b>March 15</b>	<b>6 p.m.</b>	<b>Russell County Auditorium</b>
<b>District 8</b>	<b>March 7</b>	<b>7 p.m.</b>	<b>Madison County Fairgrounds</b>
<b>District 9</b>	<b>March 16</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Blue Licks State Park Lodge</b>
<b>District 10</b>	<b>March 14</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Grayson Conference Center</b>
<b>District 11</b>	<b>March 29</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Robinson Station Farm, Jackson</b>

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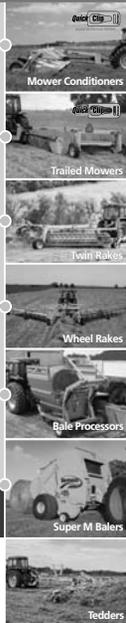
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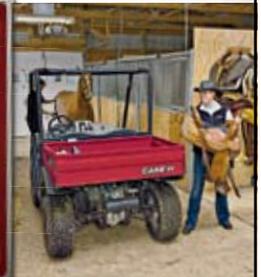
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## Beef imports to edge up

Beef imports into the United States for 2010 were just under 2.3 billion pounds and 13 percent below 2009 levels, according to USDA. Fourth-quarter shipments fell 21 percent from a year earlier. Total 2010 beef imports from Australia and New Zealand were 28 and nine percent below year-earlier levels. Imports of Brazilian beef were a fraction of typical levels because shipments to the U.S. ceased in the second half of 2010.

For 2011, modest growth is anticipated for U.S. beef imports; the forecast is 2.38 billion pounds, or up four percent year-over-year. Higher quantities of beef will be available for export from Oceania, compared with the beginning of 2010; however, a weak U.S. dollar relative to the Australian and New Zealand dollars could continue to limit processing beef moving to the U.S. 2011 beef production is forecast at 25.9 billion pounds, so beef imports add about nine percent to the supply before U.S. exports of 2.34 billion pounds are subtracted.

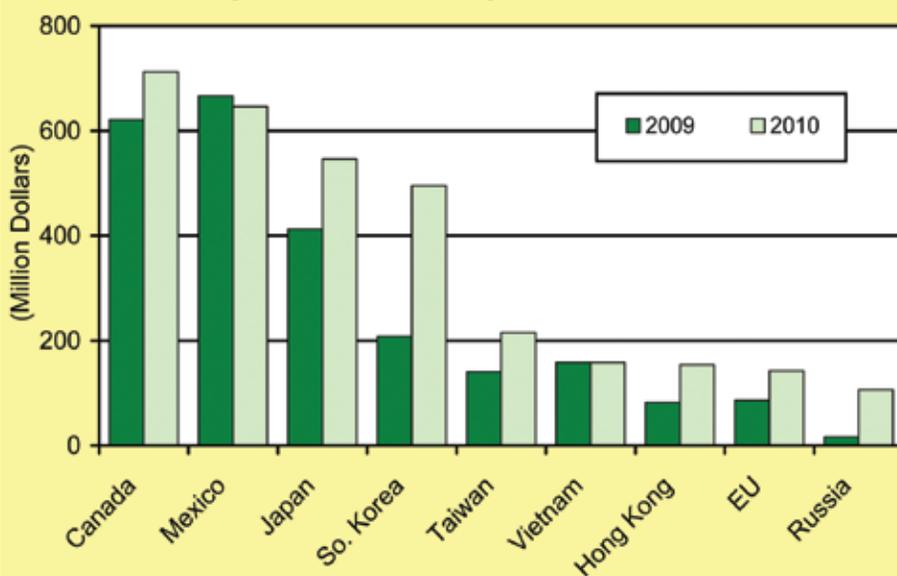
## Soybean Oil price nears record

In its recent Oil Crops Outlook, USDA indicated that the 2010/11 season average price of soybean oil could set a new record. Prices have started out quite a bit higher than they did in 2007/08 when the highest-ever monthly price for soybean oil of 62.4 cents per pound was paid in June 2008. Cash prices for soybean oil surged in January to a monthly average of 53.8 cents per pound, up from 51.5 cents in December. USDA raised its forecast of the 2010/11 average price by three cents this month to 51-55 cents per pound. Although December ending stocks were record large at 3.5 billion pounds, stocks are forecast to fall to 2.6 billion pounds by September 30 as a result of reduced crush and strong soybean oil exports of 2.8 billion pounds.

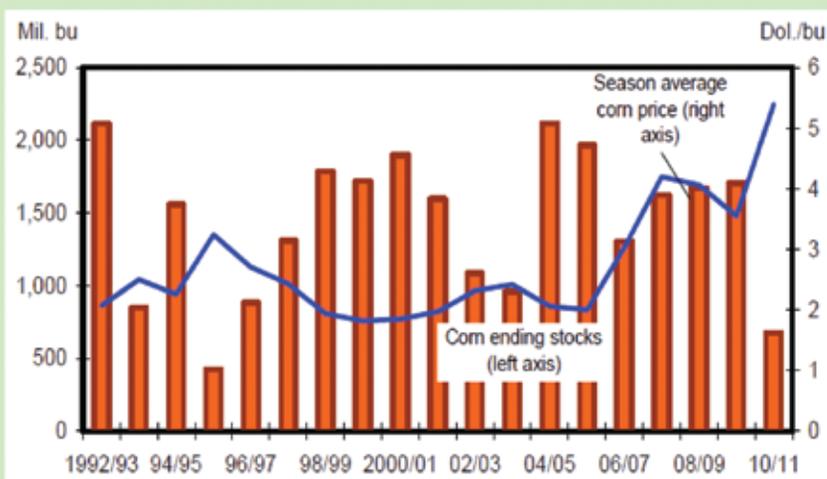
## USDA predicting record ag trade

Fiscal 2011 agricultural exports are forecast by USDA at a record \$135.5 billion, up \$26.8 billion from last year and \$20.6 billion above the previous record set in 2008. Fiscal 2011 agricultural imports are forecast up \$2.5 billion from the November forecast to a record \$88 billion. The agricultural trade surplus is forecast at a record \$47.5 billion, up almost \$12 billion from the previous record in 2008.

### Top U.S. Beef Export Customers



### Ending U.S. Corn Stocks and Season Average Price



Source: Feed Outlook, USDA-ERS, February 11, 2011

charts

vaccinate, castrate, dehorn and weigh cattle with the help of only one other worker.

Wilson designed dozens of little conveniences, such as a shelf for medicine, and safety measures, including escape gates for cattle and humans into the system.

"I'm an old man and I don't want to get hurt, Wilson said. "An old farmer once told me you have to be smarter than the cows."

After weighing, cattle can be sorted into "ready-for-market" and "go-back-to-the-field." Wilson markets cattle at about 750 pounds and can easily move the lighter-weight cattle into paddocks that will send them back to the fields for some more groceries before they board the truck bound for the feedlots.

"I can guess they're weight, but if I guess wrong, it can make the difference between me getting another \$100 a head for the cattle," Wilson said.

Tilghman predicts that Barren County's cattle industry, both beef and dairy, will continue to expand and improve. He said even if cost-share dollars go away some-

time in the future, the quality gains cattle producers such as Siddons and Wilson have made over the last decade will remain.

"You can't predict how it's going to turn out for each producer," Tilghman said. "But as farmers increase their ability to improve quality, we're hoping to see more expansion. They won't go backwards."



Barren County Cattlemen's Association President Robert Siddons with his handling equipment.

"They're using cost-share dollars to buy better sires, improve facilities and safety for themselves, buying automatic waterers to improve water quality and to branch out into other enterprises, such as raising replacement heifers on dairies. And it's noticed in the marketplace."

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## Sheep and goat producers coming off an eventful year

Kentucky's sheep and goat producers enjoyed a groundbreaking year in 2010. Farmers received record prices for all classes of sheep and goats throughout much of 2010, with year-end prices topping the \$2-per-pound mark for many kids and lambs.

The Kentucky Sheep and Goat Check-Off Program made its debut in January 2010. The check-off program collects one-half of one percent of the value of sheep and goats sold in Kentucky and places it in a fund used for the promotion of the industries.

"It's exciting to see such record-breaking prices for our sheep and goats," said Kathy Meyer, president of the Kentucky Sheep and Wool Producers Association. "However, these prices are the result of very tight supplies locally and nationally. It makes you worry if we will have enough lambs and kids to keep the packing houses open. Thanks to the check-off, we now have some promotional dollars to help us rebuild numbers."

The Kentucky Sheep and Goat Council is charged with overseeing the use of the check-off dollars, and it has been working on developing promotional programs. The council is made up of representatives from the Kentucky Goat Producers Association, Kentucky Sheep and Wool Producers Association, KFB and a representative appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture.

The council has identified two areas for current focus: the increased supply of sheep and goats in Kentucky, and the increased consumer demand for Kentucky-raised lamb and goat. Current projects under development include a young farmer recruitment program designed to assist young farmers in developing a sheep flock or goat herd and build future leaders of the sheep and goat industries.

## Alltech opens Algae facility in Winchester

Alltech cut the ribbon on a \$200 million Algae plant in Winchester. Alltech Algae is a state-of-the-art algae fermentation facility that was acquired in 2010 from Martek Bioscience Corporation for approximately \$14 million and has been renovated in the past few months to become one of the largest algae production sites in the world.

"For Alltech, algae fermentation presents the latest technological frontier from which we expect incredible opportunities in the areas of food, feed and fuel to arise," said Dr. Pearse Lyons, founder and president of Alltech. "We have already been working in this area for several years and see it playing a major role in both human and animal health and nutrition."

The primary focus of the facility will be the development of products derived from algae. The algae will be used for value-added feed products, algae-derived bio-fuel and the production of ethanol.

Algae capture CO<sub>2</sub> and release it as pure oxygen. It also creates 70% of our atmosphere's oxygen, more than all forests and fields combined. Algae are the fastest growing plants in nature and have the ability to convert large amounts of carbon dioxide into oxygen, a characteristic that makes it particularly interesting in today's environmentally conscious world.

## AFBF testifies on burdensome EPA proposals

America's farmers and ranchers will receive a "double economic jolt" from the Environmental Protection Agency's regulation of greenhouse gases, AFBF told a House subcommittee.

Philip Nelson, president of the Illinois Farm Bureau, testified on behalf of AFBF before the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Power.

"First, any costs incurred by utilities, refiners, manufacturers and other large emitters to comply with GHG regulatory requirements will be passed on to the consumers of those products, including farmers and ranchers," Nelson explained. "As a result, our nation's farmers and ranchers will have higher input costs, namely fuel and energy costs, to grow food, fiber and fuel for our nation and the world."

The Illinois farm leader said EPA's regulations could increase fertilizer prices for farmers because the rules outline a larger role for natural gas, replacing coal and other fossil fuels. Natural gas is a principal component in fertilizer production.

Nelson said the second "jolt" to agriculture will come when regulation is fully phased in under the EPA's "tailoring" approach, under which farms and ranches that emit, or have the potential to emit, more than 100 tons of greenhouse gases per year must obtain a Title V operating permit. Based on EPA's numbers, he said, just the expense of obtaining permits would cost agriculture more than \$866 million.

In his testimony, Nelson expressed Farm Bureau's support for the Energy Tax Prevention Act of 2011, one of several proposals to give Congress, rather than the EPA, the authority to address GHG regulation. AFBF opposes the regulation of greenhouse gases by the EPA under the Clean Air Act.

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## TOP FIVE CHALLENGE PARTICIPANTS



**Larry Holaday**  
Farmland, IN  
5354HXR™™  
280 Bu./A.



**Dan Deering**  
La Moille, IL  
5244wx  
279.7 Bu./A.



**Tim Lawyer**  
Modoc, IN  
6733HXR™™  
271 Bu./A.



**Jay Bosse**  
Bluffton, OH  
5454HXR™™  
267.7 Bu./A.



**Randy Bensman**  
Sidney, OH  
5779VT3  
266.1 Bu./A.



## OVERALL CHALLENGE SUMMARY

110 Challenges  
Average Yield of 221.90 Bu./A.  
32.90 Bu./A. Increase Over Historical Yields  
91% of Participants Experienced a Yield Increase

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