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# table

of CONTENTS

Ag Commissioner  
Candidate forum

6

Centennial Farm

9

Ag Feature

10

Marksbury Farm

12

Markets

16

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Kentucky



roduction agriculture continues to power Kentucky's rural economy but for many farm families, the ability to stay on the farm depends on an off-farm job.

With most Kentucky farmers drawing income from other sources, rural development is an issue that goes beyond creating jobs and renewing communities - it's also relevant to preserving our valued agrarian culture. Rural development not only needs attention from the government, but from rural residents, as well.

Today's rural development challenges are wide-ranging. Maintaining and improving infrastructure to keep communities competitive has become a struggle. Retaining professionals in rural areas is another challenge, as we in Kentucky have experienced with large animal veterinarians and medical professionals. Assuring access to basic services is another hurdle.

We all know that rural Kentucky deserves more infrastructure upgrades, improved services, modern medical facilities and better access to the Internet. But how can we achieve this in today's economic climate, and with governments at all levels strapped for resources?

These and other issues of importance to farm families and rural communities will be discussed at American Farm Bureau's annual Rural Development Conference on May 10-13 in Louisville. We at KFB are excited about the opportunity to explore how our organization, on both the state and county levels, can play a role in stimulating business growth. And we are pleased to join our colleagues from Indiana Farm Bureau in playing host to the conference.

A few years back, AFBF added this conference to its annual program of work out of the realization that our organization needs to engage in rural development initiatives. What's good for the farmer is good for the rural community, and vice versa.

It's really that simple.



MARK HANEY

PRESIDENT  
KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU



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**H**ave you ever wanted to have a picnic in a vineyard and see how wine is made? What about trying your hand at milking a cow? Or picking your own strawberries?

Farm experiences like these are not out of your reach. In fact, they are available across Kentucky at one of the KFB Certified Roadside Farm Markets.

Today, most people are far removed from the agricultural experience, even in rural areas. Consumers want to learn more about how their food and fiber are produced. This interest in local foods and finding one's agrarian roots has given Roadside Farm Market owners a chance to be more than just farmers; they are ambassadors for agriculture.

From school groups that visit the farm to families that make the farm a weekly destination to learn about agriculture, many farmers have discovered that making the public aware of the important role agriculture plays in their daily life is an important role. It isn't just the educational experience or the fresh local products that brings the people to the farm; it is the array of entertainment that these venues offer.

Hay rides, picking your own fruit, festivals, and corn mazes are activities found at many Roadside Farm Markets in the state. If you are a little more adventurous enjoy a farm stay and help work on the farm to learn more about the daily operations.

Whether it is an afternoon or a weekend getaway, enjoy an adventure at one of the KFB Certified Roadside Farm Markets. It's a great way to learn about our most important industry. And it's a great way to support a local farm family. A list of these markets is on page 13.



**KARA KEETON**

**COORDINATOR**

**KFB ROADSIDE MARKETS PROGRAM**

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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## CANDIDATES FOR AG COMMISSIONER MEET WITH KFB'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Prior to the meeting the candidates met with KFB's Executive Committee to discuss guidelines and draw for the speaking order. From the left are Bob Farmer, James Comer, B.D. Wilson, Rob Rothenburger, Stewart Gritton, KFB Executive Vice President David S. Beck, John Lackey and KFB President Mark Haney.

**P**arty nominees for Agriculture Commissioner will be decided in the May 17 primary election with five Democrats and two Republicans on the ballot. KFB President Mark Haney says it's an election that farm interests should take very seriously.

"The Commissioner plays a key role in the promotion of Kentucky agriculture plus oversees the Department of Agriculture, which administers a wide variety of programs beneficial to farm families and consumers," Haney said. "Farm Bureau has a longstanding policy supporting adequate funding and effective administration of the department. We understand and appreciate the department's mission. They work in tandem with Farm Bureau, the extension service, FSA and many other agencies in service to our agriculture industry."

Last month, KFB's Board of Directors held a "Measure the Candidate" meeting with the candidates to discuss positions on issues affecting the state's agriculture industry. Democrats Bob Farmer, Stewart Gritton, John Lackey and B.D. Wilson and Republicans James R. Comer and Rob Rothenburger fielded questions from the KFB leaders and explained their priorities during the meeting.

The candidates gave opening and closing statements plus responded to three questions relative to their vision for the

Department of Agriculture and Kentucky agriculture. Following are capsules from their statements to the KFB Directors, along with some biographical information.

### **JAMES COMER**

Comer is no stranger to Farm Bureau. He was involved with Monroe County FB programs as a teenager, placing runner-up in both the state discussion meet and outstanding youth contests. He served as State FFA President following his senior year in high school. He graduated from Western Kentucky University in 1993 and returned home to farm with family. That operation consists of cattle, managed timber and hay.

Comer also started up insurance and food businesses. He is serving his sixth term as State Representative and has been a strong ally of agriculture in the General Assembly. He served as a Monroe County FB Director prior to his election.

"I'm a legitimate farmer," he said. "I believe in the future of agriculture."

He cites four priorities for the commissioner's post: (1) expanding markets; (2) enhancing rural development; (3) budget transparency; and (4) expanding the "Kentucky Proud" program.

He stressed that he would put the department's fiscal records on the internet to boost the trust of both the public

and of the state legislature. He said he would be willing to meet with every member of the General Assembly to discuss department programs and funding issues. He also mentioned expanding the department's animal health programs to work in tandem with the new Kentucky Livestock Care Standards Commission.

"It's an exciting time to be in agriculture," he said. "I can be a well-spoken advocate."

For more information on James Comer go to [www.jamescomer.com](http://www.jamescomer.com).

### **BOB FARMER**

The Louisville businessman said "this is not about who's the best farmer -- but who's the best for the farmers." He cited his experience in marketing for a Louisville bank and as owner of an advertising agency, along with 11 years as the national spokesperson for the Farmer's Almanac. Promising to make advocacy his top priority, Farmer said: "I think I'm the best person to tell agriculture's story. I will be the chief spokesman for agriculture."

Farmer is a Louisville native and a 1972 University of Kentucky graduate. He served as marketing director for a Louisville bank before starting an advertising and public relations firm which he operated for years. He has business interests in real estate and sports marketing.

He's also a country humorist who has appeared on the Grand Ole Opry. He frequently speaks to agriculture and other groups throughout the nation, working through a Nashville-based agent. He was a featured speaker at KFB's annual meeting several years ago.

Farmer emphasized that his main interest in the post was to serve as a spokesperson for Kentucky agriculture and focus on marketing initiatives.

Farmer said he believes the department has sufficient funds and manpower to fulfill its statutory mission. He said he'd take a close look at the department's regulatory programs to ensure that they were not burdening farmers with unnecessary requirements. "I don't like government regulations . . . unless they're absolutely necessary to protect the public," he said.

**For more information on Bob Farmer go to [www.farmerforkentucky.com](http://www.farmerforkentucky.com).**

### STEWART GRITTON

Gritton also is no stranger to Farm Bureau, having served on the Anderson County FB board for a number of years. He was raised on an Anderson County dairy and tobacco farm and operated a dairy for 22 years. He continues to farm there. He joined KDA's Division of Shows and Fairs under Commissioner Ed Logsdon and also worked under Billy Ray Smith. During those years he coordinated livestock shows and worked with the County Fairs program which was expanded during his tenure.

Gritton emphasizes the importance of marketing and advocacy on behalf of Kentucky agriculture. While acknowledging the importance of the department's many regulatory programs, he said "the part I think is the most important is marketing."

He vows to work closely with Farm Bureau. As one would expect, he's promising strong support for the livestock show and county fairs initiatives.

"I truly believe we need to elect a commissioner who has experience on the farm and in the department," he said. "You need to elect a commissioner who is accessible; who will roll sleeves up and work for you every day." He said that if elected, he'd more likely be seen working in the show rings rather than "simply showing up to present an award and get a photo op."

Gritton said he understood the budget problems in state government and would

seek to streamline the department's budget to maximize efficiency.

**For more information on Stewart Gritton go to [www.stewartgritton.com](http://www.stewartgritton.com).**

### JOHN LACKEY

The Madison County attorney and farmer said his approach to the job would be to focus on "a lot of little areas where we can fine-tune things .. find a niche." He informed the KFB leaders that he operates a 572-acre cattle farm and is a 43-year member of Farm Bureau. He said he'd like to strengthen partnerships between farmers and agribusinesses and strongly favors cooperative efforts. He began his final remarks by describing himself as "a little bit different" with a straight-talking, non-nonsense approach. "You need an articulate, hard-driving person," he said.

Lackey was raised on a Madison County farm. He's a graduate of the UK Law School and holds a Masters from Yale University. He's also an ordained minister in the Christian church.

He has practiced law in Richmond for many years and farmed in Madison County. He served a term as State Senator in the 1970s but chose not to seek reelection.

He noted that he had worked closely with KFB during his term in the state legislature, including on a rural preservation bill he described as "the best bill I had."

Lackey says he's interested in promoting cooperative agribusiness ventures and closer ties between farmers and agribusinesses. He described himself as a fiscal conservative.

**For more information on John Lackey go to [www.lackey2011.com](http://www.lackey2011.com).**

### ROB ROTHENBURGER

Rothenburger also has extensive Farm Bureau ties; his father was president of Shelby County FB plus he and other family members have served at the county level. "I'm a very well-rounded individual for this job," he said of the ag commissioner post. Among the priorities he cited were consumer education and "bridging the gap between rural and urban citizens."

He was raised on a Jefferson County dairy farm but the family relocated to a Shelby County farm when the Snyder Freeway took some of their property. He has degrees in Emergency Medical Care

and Fire Safety Engineering from Eastern Kentucky University. He has served as a paramedic and as Shelbyville's fire chief. He said those experiences would enable him to boost farm safety initiatives.

He has been Shelby County Judge-Executive since 2002 and was not opposed in his last election. He continues to farm, with a cow-calf operation on 94 acres.

He stresses his executive experience.

"I have the strong agriculture background and the executive experience from being county judge-executive," he said. "I want to be an advocate for agriculture."

Rothenburger also pledges to seek new sources of federal funding and grants for the department.

**For more information on Rob Rothenburger go to [www.robrothenburger.com](http://www.robrothenburger.com).**

### B.D. WILSON

Wilson, who formerly farmed in Montgomery County and served 14 years as Montgomery County Judge-Executive, said he was the best man for the job due to more than 25 years in farming and extensive experience with government. He served three years in the Transportation Cabinet prior to launching his campaign. Top priority, he said, would be to make agriculture "the economic engine" of the state. He said he had extensive plans to create jobs in agriculture, particularly through the energy segment. He also voiced strong support for the equine industry, saying "it's our number one industry .. but it's dying a slow death."

Wilson was raised on a Montgomery County farm and was the fourth generation in his family to operate a farm. He attended Morehead State University and has had several business interests, including a stockyard. Governor Steve Beshear appointed Wilson to Commissioner of the Transportation Cabinet's Department of Rural and Municipal Aid. He resigned that position to launch his campaign.

"I think my resume speaks for itself," he said of his qualifications for the post. "I am an innovator - I have started new programs. I have run a local government successfully. I know agriculture."

He also pledged to work closely with KFB.

**For more information on B.D. Wilson go to [www.bdwilsonagky.com](http://www.bdwilsonagky.com).**



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# Living(ston) legacy

## Workman Farm in Livingston County dates back to mid-1880s

**H**ampton Road is a six-mile stretch of KY Highway 838 that connects the tiny communities of Hampton and Lola in northern Livingston County. The narrow country lane winds through farmland in a scene common to many areas of Kentucky. But for Don Workman, it's a very special place: Five generations of his family have made a living off this land, beginning in the mid-1800s.

Don, 63, is the fourth generation to operate the family farm that encompasses 380 acres at two sites along Hampton Road. His son, Denny Workman, 36, represents the fifth generation.

Workman Farms is among several Kentucky farms nominated for recognition in a new Century Farms program administered by the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. The University of Kentucky also is recognizing the farm as part of a report on the rural heritage of Livingston County.

Today, the Workmans are raising row crops, hay and cattle on more than 2,000 acres on numerous plots in their area, including a 244-acre farm where Denny lives that's been in the family for over 60 years. That farm is less than a mile down the road from the main 240-acre farm where Don lives.

Don has farmed all his life, building an operation to a level that can support both he and his son. Like most farmers, he's a workaholic, rarely taking any significant time away from the farm to do anything else.

"His vacation is a couple days at the State Fair," says Denny, who described his father as "the hardest worker I know."

Don, however, has paused to reflect on his farm's rich heritage. He'd like to receive some sort of recognition for the family's devotion to that land.

"We are the type of family that just goes about our business; we don't brag about what we've done or anything like that," said Denny, "but we think it would be nice to have the farm recognized as a historic family farm. There's a lot of history here for our family."

Don plans to search for the original deed, but is certain that his great-grandfather, John M. Workman, purchased the farm not long after he was married in 1854. His grandfather, Alexander Workman, and father, Denny Workman, subsequently inherited the farm.

Don's brother, Harold Workman, is well known within Kentucky agriculture for his work as President of the Kentucky State Fair Board.



Don Workman's farm includes a 240-acre tract where he built a home in 1991 to replace a 100-year-old structure. The family has had the property since the mid-1800s.

Although Denny Workman has a Master's Degree in Agriculture from Murray State University, he intends to continue to farm fulltime for a career.

"I never really wanted to do anything else," he said.

"I never asked him to come back and farm," said Don, "but I'm sure glad he did."

Don says that despite the economic ups-and-downs involved with farming, the family has never been in danger of losing the farm. "We've always done things slow; been very conservative," he explained. "We don't buy things just to have them."

In 1991 the Workmans built a modern home just a few hundred feet from the structure that was the original farmhouse. The old house was removed a year later.

While the main farm has a sandstone base, there's a fault line nearby which separates into a limestone base that usually produces higher yields. The Workmans have had 200-bushel corn and 60-bushel soybeans, according to Don.

Denny has helped his father implement technological changes that have boosted efficiency and productivity. Livingston County Extension Agent Darryl Jones, who's also president of the County Farm Bureau, said the Workmans' combination of Don's experience and Denny's education works well.

"They do a really good job with their operation; they're extremely committed to what they do," said Jones. "They have a great heritage. It's a good story to tell."

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# Food fad

THERE'S A GROWING MOVEMENT TO "BUY LOCAL"

Article and Photos by Walt Reichert

ABOVE: Linda Johnson and Bruce Wornall of Green Acres Farm in Bourbon County offer samples to Lucinda and Madalyn White at the Lexington Farmer's Market off Southland Drive.

Susan Miller breeds, feeds and milks 36 dairy goats on her Lexington farm. When the farm chores are done, she heads to the kitchen where she turns the milk into three kinds of soft cheese she sells under the farm label, Bleugrass Chevre. Then on weekends, she heads to the Lexington Farmers Market to sell her products, offering samples to hundreds of passersby on any given Saturday or Sunday.

"Yeah, I'm pretty much a one-man show," Miller said.

Miller's Bleugrass Chevre goat cheese represents just one of about 75 farmers who choose to sell their products directly to consumers through the Lexington Farmers Market.

As consumer demand for local and fresh food has grown along with a desire to support local farmers, the Lexington market has burgeoned from a few farmers who set up pickup trucks on downtown streets in 1975 to a self-financed and

regulated cooperative of farmers from about 20 central Kentucky counties who sell everything from beef, pork, chicken and lamb to cheese to vegetables, eggs, honey, and dozens of value-added products four days a week from three locations. On a good Saturday during the April through December season the Saturday market will attract up to 10,000 customers, said the Lexington Farmers Market Executive Director Jeff Dabbelt.

"We ask consumers to shop us first," Dabbelt said. "Then they can go to the box stores if they can't find what they need here."

Lucinda White and her daughter, Madalyn, said they just recently started coming to the Southland Drive location..

"We're vegetarians and the food here is better, fresher," Madalyn said.

In Louisville, several farmers markets have sprung up in the last decade. The granddaddy of them all, and still the most popular, is the Bardstown Road Farmers



BELOW: The location on Southland Drive has 500 to 1,000 visitors on a typical Sunday, according to Jeff Dabbelt, executive director of the market.



Market. This year the market celebrates its 20th anniversary. In the parking lot of the Bardstown Road Presbyterian Church, 25 farmers sell locally grown fruits, vegetables, beef, pork, chicken, plants and flowers.

"When we got married we bought most of our flowers from the (Bardstown Road) farmers market," said Matt Thompson,

system that will spur economic growth, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer recently announced the forming of a Food Policy Advisory Council. He appointed 20 people to the council, who represent the food industry, government, consumers and farmers.

Fischer also announced plans to create

products, such as coffee, may not be grown nearby, but have significant value added locally.

Producers bring the products to Grasshoppers' warehouse on Portland Ave. where it is distributed to 11 drop-off points in Jefferson County to clients who have signed on for the locally-grown products. Grasshoppers' clients are asked to spend at least \$18 a week buying from Grasshoppers, McGeeney said. Customers can also buy extra food beyond what they contract for weekly, in effect, using Grasshoppers for their grocery shopping.

"In my own family we've reached 70 percent of consumption of local products," McGeeney said. "I say my goal is to reach consumer consumption of 25



ELLEN MCGEENEY

who is the market's manager.

The market, which is open year-round, will attract as many as 1,000 visitors on a Saturday morning (from 8 a.m. until noon April through December with reduced hours in the winter), Thompson said.

"They come here because they are concerned about the way the food is grown, many want to support local farmers, and some make it a social event," Thompson said. "But the fact is, they wouldn't keep coming back if the food didn't taste good."

While the farmers markets appear to be thriving – and increasing in number both in large cities and small towns across the state – efforts are also underway to open up the traditional food marketing chain – from farmer to distributor to institution and consumer – to Kentucky farmers and farm products. The goal is threefold: to offer city dwellers access to better, fresher, locally-grown food; to support Kentucky farmers; and to increase jobs in the food sector.

KFB contributes to the movement with its Certified Roadside Farm Markets program, which this year includes nearly a hundred markets throughout the state.

### Local food initiatives

To identify and propose solutions and policies toward creating a healthy food

one or more special enterprise zones in Louisville to help bring in more locally-grown food from farm to table. Businesses would receive financial incentives to locate in the "Life Zone," which would be tailored to attract food-related businesses and organizations. In addition to businesses, the zones may include backyard gardens, community gardens and farmettes.

Ellen McGeeney, executive director of Grasshoppers Distribution, is one of Fisher's appointees to the Food Policy Advisory Council. Grasshoppers, founded in 2005, is a sort of hybrid of the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model crossed with a food distribution business with a little bit of local grocery store thrown in for good measure.

Grasshoppers contracts with about 60 farmers and producers from 22 counties in Kentucky and southern Indiana who supply everything from meats, produce, eggs, fish and value-added products, including coffee, wine and breads. Grasshoppers has hired a farmer who visits its producers to ensure they are meeting the company's standards of growing food in sustainable, healthy ways, McGeeney said. The company's rules also allow for including producers whose

percent locally-grown."

McGeeney said her role on the Food Policy Advisory Council will be to "speak for the farmers and the consumers."

"I can also talk about distribution and the gaps we're going to need to work on," McGeeney said. "The council needs to discuss how to address food access in a way that is sustainable for farmers and folks who don't have access to fresh, local food."

### Farm to table

Another Louisville-based effort to bring farmers and city consumers together is Louisville Farm to Table.

The organization grew out of a Local Food Economy workshop involving political leaders from counties in the Louisville region, extension agents and people in the private sector who were looking for ways to bolster the local food economy and help the region's farmers at the same time. Following a study of the food economy, the workshop set up the Louisville Farm to Table organization and charged it with the task of increasing the access of the state's farmers to food distribution networks and local food-consuming institutions and, at the same time, increasing local jobs in the food industry. Funds for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



# “Meat” a farmer

## Marksbury Farm connecting with consumers

Marksbury Farm Market currently is off KY 34 near Lake Herrington, but eventually will move to the site of the processing plant about a mile east off the new U.S. 27. Marksbury Farm has a variety of high-quality meat and poultry products under its label.

The local foods movement has given rise to a unique meat processing business in a rural setting in Garrard County.

Marksbury Farm Market is processing and selling locally-raised beef, pork, poultry and other meat products under rigid production guidelines for both the plant and the farmers raising the animals. The business opened last August with a \$3.5 million, 12,000-square-foot, USDA-inspected processing plant plus a nearby retail store, just a stone's throw from Lake Herrington off KY. 34.

Among the four partners in this venture is John-Mark Hack, who as Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy played a key role in establishing the state's agricultural development initiative some 10 years ago. He's promoting this concept with same enthusiasm as the agricultural development fund he helped to administer, describing it as a vital infrastructure for a potential boom in local meat processing.

"I can't think of anything else for agriculture that could accrue greater benefits,"

he said. "When we started the (ag development) fund there was a call for a mega processing facility; that seemed logical in light of our high number of cattle. But that didn't prove to be feasible. I believe this is. Maybe what we need is three or four more of these around the state.

"It's a market for producers, it's a product that more and more people are wanting. We are not positioning ourselves to compete with the commodity market. This is a niche market. And it's viable."

Marksbury Farm (named after the local voting precinct) currently is dealing with around 25 area producers of cattle, hogs or chickens. Those producers have signed an agreement to feed a natural diet, have no added hormones, provide a sanitary environment and always handle the animals in a humane fashion. The suppliers also are asked to be accessible to company representatives and customers.

Preston Correll is the Marksbury Farm partner responsible for producer relations.

"I'm excited about the option we provide for local farmers," said Correll, who

formerly sold chickens off his farm in Lincoln County. "What we're selling to our customers is a connection to the product; we're not necessarily claiming to be better, but we're providing that connection between the consumers and the farmers. We take traceability very seriously. Every package has an ID number."

The company offers a variety of meats under the Marksbury Farm brand, plus sausages, cold cuts and cured meats. They've not only developed a brisk retail business, but are also selling direct to several popular Louisville restaurants and are pursuing institutional sales.

But for now, they are seeking more product to process.

"We want producers to know we are here and offer this outlet for direct sale," Correll explained.

Hack said the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association has indicated that a number of their members are interested in direct marketing opportunities.

For information call (859) 548-2853 or go to [Marksburyfarm.com](http://Marksburyfarm.com).



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# Hardin County FB helps animal shelter



Posing with part of the load of cat and dog food bound for the local animal shelter were (from left) Hardin County FB Director Chuck Crutcher, County Extension Agent Doug Shepherd, Penny Edwards of the Animal Refuge Center, Ken Adams of the Hardin County Cattlemen's Association, Mike Buckman of Farm Credit Services, Hardin County FB President Ray Allan Mackey and James Nichols, manager of the Southern States store in Elizabethtown.

**F**arm Bureau organizations throughout the nation are taking action to affirm a commitment to the proper care of animals. Last year, Hardin County FB was among the first to take the initiative by forging an alliance with a local animal shelter. That relationship has continued as a coalition of Hardin County FB, the Hardin County Cattlemen's Association, the local Farm Credit Services office and the Southern States store recently donated 500 pounds of dog and cat food to the county's Animal Refuge Center.

County President Ray Allan Mackey, Director Chuck Crutcher and County Extension Agent Doug Shepherd were among a small group that loaded bags of the feed onto a trailer at the Southern States store. Penny Edwards, director of the refuge center in Vine Grove, was there to accept the gift.

"This is one way that farmers in our area can show that we care about animal welfare," Mackey explained. "It's a goodwill gesture and a good public relations tool to show our concern."

Crutcher said publicity about last year's donation sparked action in other circles.

"Other counties have stepped forward to do things for their shelters," he said, "and a family from the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association set up a grants program for shelters."

The local Farm Bureau leaders also noted that Bill Gossett, a cattle producer near Rineyville, donated 500 pounds of feed after hearing about the program.

Such efforts are in response to mounting public concern about animal welfare. Much of this concern has sprouted from the misinformation campaigns by radical "animal rights" groups.

Ms. Edwards thanked the group, saying the feed was much needed.

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the organization come from a U. S. Department of Labor grant, Kentucky Agriculture Development funds and Louisville Metro funds.

Former Courier-Journal food editor Sarah Fritschner, who heads Louisville Farm to Table, said the group has already had some successes. The organization has a verbal commitment from a food distributor who wants locally-grown food to distribute to hospitals and other institutions, Fritschner said. She said another food company that may locate in Louisville is interested in acquiring organic produce.

"Another monumentally wonderful piece of news is that the Jefferson County schools have committed to buying local and have committed to buying seven food items locally," Fritschner said. "Farmers who have the contracts will now know how much they will get paid, similar to the contracts they may have had with tobacco."

While she is working to attract food businesses to the city, Fritschner said she is also working with farmers.

"We're working to help those farmers

understand that we want their food," Fritschner said. "And they have to get into the wholesale system. Farmers markets, as worthy as they are, represent only a fraction of food farmers will sell to consumers; 99 percent of food in this country is sold wholesale."

### KDAid

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture, through its Kentucky Proud program, is also actively promoting the movement of Kentucky-grown farm products into the food distribution networks, said Mac Stone, executive director of the Office of Agriculture Marketing and Product Promotion.

He cited as an example the Restaurant Rewards program that offers restaurants a 20 percent rebate on foods they buy from local farmers.

"It helps the restaurants because the local food may be more expensive or more of a hassle to deal with," Stone said.

The KDA also has an official who works with commercial growers in the state find ways to tap into the distributorship network, Stone said.

Stone acknowledges there are still bar-

riers to Kentucky farmers getting locally-grown food into the commercial channels that supply grocery stores, hospitals, schools and other institutions.

"Certainly, Kentucky doesn't have the infrastructure – the coolers, for example, and the boxes have to come from somewhere else," Stone said. "And Kentucky farmers have to deal with weather that can be unpredictable and increase disease pressure."

But he said the department has had success overcoming those barriers and bringing producers, consumers, wholesalers and distributors to the table.

"So much of what happens goes on behind the scenes," Stone said. "We spend most of our time bringing people together."

Fritschner, whose job it is to also get growers and institutions to talk, said it is often just a matter of getting people to listen to each other.

"The restaurant people may say 'Oh, it's going to be more expensive,' or 'Oh, it's going to be too much trouble,' but we just say 'Let's start at the beginning and just talk,'" Fritschner said. "They want to use Kentucky produce. We just have to change perceptions and get the discussion started."

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## Crop loan rates are adjusted

USDA announced the 2011 county loan rates for wheat, feed grains and oilseeds. While U.S. loan rates for 2011 corn, wheat and soybeans are unchanged from 2010, all Kentucky counties had one or more loan rates adjusted. However, current crop prices are far above the loan rate.

For 2011, Kentucky corn loan rates are up one cent in the eastern half of the state, but unchanged in the western half. This reverses the changes made in 2010. Loan rates range from \$1.99 to \$2.12. USDA also reversed the 2010 changes made to soybean loan rates by dropping rates one cent in western Kentucky. Loan rates range from \$5.14 to \$5.23 per bushel.

Although the U.S. wheat loan rate of \$2.94 is unchanged from 2011, USDA raised Kentucky's county loan rates by 39 cents. This increase recovers the 39-cent decrease received in 2009, which was followed by a 12-cent drop in 2010. Kentucky's 2011 wheat loan rates, ranging from \$2.18 to \$2.37, are 43 cents lower than the 2006 rates.

## Milk production increases

Milk production in the 23 major States during March totaled 15.8 billion pounds, up 2.4 percent from March 2010. Production per cow averaged 1,872 pounds, 24 pounds above March 2010. The number of milk cows on farms in the 23 states was 8.42 million head, 93,000 head more than March 2010, and 17,000 head more than February 2011. Through March, U.S. milk production totaled 48.4 billion pounds, up 2.2 percent from a year ago.

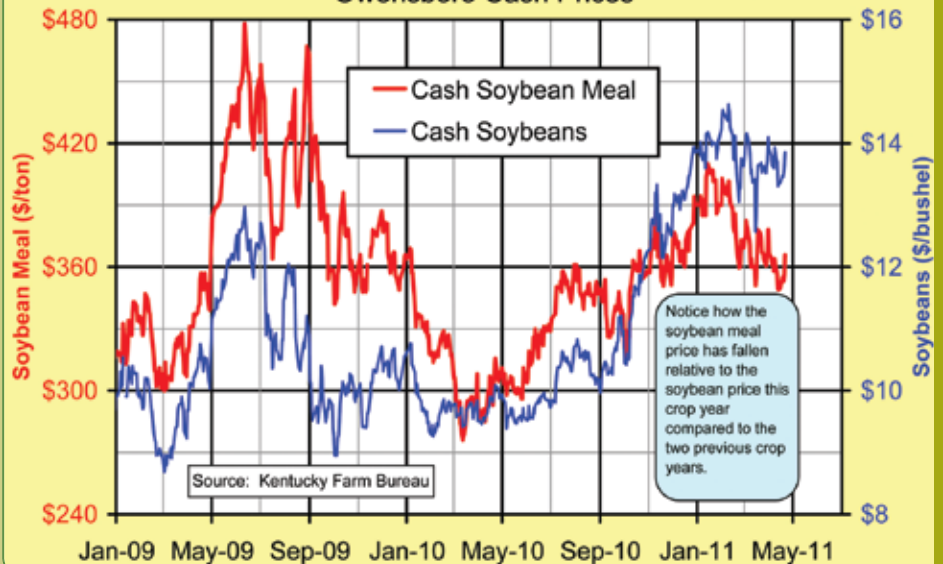
## Broilers: Steady output, rising prices

USDA forecast first-quarter 2011 broiler meat production at 9.2 billion pounds, up 5.3 percent from a year earlier. A majority of the increase resulted from higher average slaughter weights. The year-over-year increase in production has been declining each month. USDA expects during the remaining three quarters of 2011, broiler meat production will average about even with a year earlier as production adjusts to sharp feed cost increases.

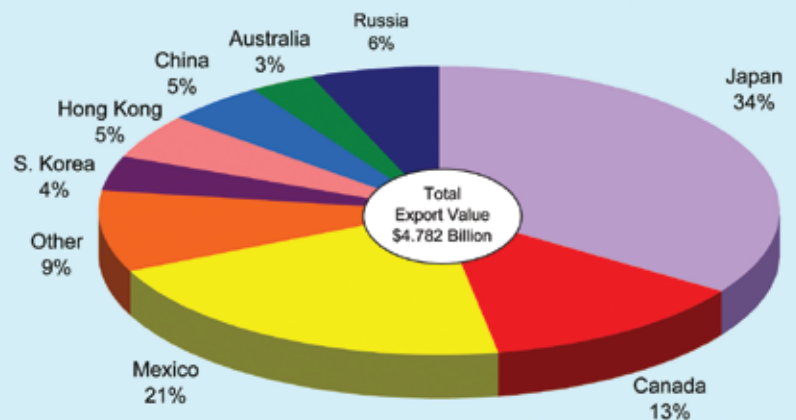
In first-quarter 2011, the 12-City price for whole broilers averaged 77.9 cents per pound, down 5.3 percent from the previous year. But whole bird prices have started moving higher; the March price averaged 82 cents -- due in part to higher prices for leg meat products. Broiler prices are expected to strengthen due to slower placement of chicks for growout and to strong prices for both beef and pork products. USDA prices forecasts are 82-86 cents for the second quarter, 84-90 cents for the third quarter, and 84-92 cents for the fourth quarter.

### Soybean & Soybean Meal Comparison

Owensboro Cash Prices



### U.S. Pork Plus Pork Variety Meat Export Market Share January-December 2010



Source: U.S. Meat Export Federation and USDA





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Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2011



## Website will honor "Century Farms"

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture has launched a new interactive website, "Agriculture's Lasting Heritage," that will recognize the value of Century Farms while aiming to increase the public's understanding of American agriculture. The new website is sponsored by Bayer CropScience.

"We recognize and appreciate the contribution that Century Farmers, those with agriculture operations in business for over 100 years, make to our American heritage, and we are excited to showcase these agriculturists through a comprehensive nationwide resource. This site will feature video profiles, as well as written profiles of Century Farmers across the nation," explained Curtis Miller, director of education for the foundation.

In addition, the website includes a link to individual states' Century/Centennial Farm websites.

## May is National Beef Month

May is National Beef Month and the Kentucky Beef Council and the Holland Grill Company will celebrate with a "Get Your Grill On" media tour May 16-27. Representatives of the Beef Council will put on promotional and media events throughout the state to promote lean beef. Consumers can register to win an Epic Holland Grill valued at more than \$799 and other prizes. Check [www.kybeef.com](http://www.kybeef.com) for a "Get Your Grill On" event in your area, and try one of the delicious, easy-to-make beef recipes on the Beef Council website.

## GOAP holding eight forums

The Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy will hold a series of forums to gain input in the future use of the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund (KADF). The series will kick off at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 19 at the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort. These regional venues will provide a way to offer new and innovative ideas and share KADF successes in each region. Broad topics for each of the forums include: regional challenges and solutions, leveraging resources, county collaboration, area trends and continued KADF support. Audience participation is what will make these events successful, with all concepts and comments being compiled into a report.

"I am excited about receiving input from our agriculture leaders, local and state officials, educators, economic development professionals and others with a vested interest in the goals and objectives of the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund," stated GOAP Executive Director Roger Thomas. "No two forums will be alike, because no two regions in the state are identical. However, our commonality is the opportunity to take our KADF investments to the next level."

The following is a listing of dates and locations. All meetings will be held from 7 - 8:30 p.m. local time.

**May 19,** Kentucky History Center, Brown Forman Room, Frankfort

**May 24,** Maysville Community & Technical College, Auditorium, Maysville

**June 1,** The Center for Rural Development, Somerset

**June 7,** MSU Regional Enterprise Center, West Liberty

**June 14,** Sloan Convention Center, Room 1 & 2, Bowling Green

**June 15,** Pritchard Community Center, The Oak Room, Elizabethtown

**June 21,** Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park, Conference Center, Gilbertsville

**June 22,** Daviess County Extension Office, Owensboro

For more information contact Angela Blank, director of public affairs, at (502) 564-4627 or [angelag.blank@ky.gov](mailto:angelag.blank@ky.gov).

## UK receives USDA bioenergy research grant

The University of Kentucky received one of 42 research grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to spur production of bioenergy and biobased products for the purpose of developing sustainable regional systems and creating jobs. The grant of \$985,147 will fund research to engineer optimized production of long, branched-chain hydrocarbon biosynthesis, which can be distilled into combustible fuels or used to synthesize plastics, nylons, paints, and other oil-derived products.

The research projects, which were selected through a highly competitive process, are intended to implement sustainable regional systems that materially deliver liquid transportation biofuels to help meet the Energy Independence and Security Act goal of 36 billion gallons of biofuels per year by 2022, USDA said in a news release.



*Kirk Swigert, Louisville, Kentucky*



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Kirk Swigert grew up on a Shelby County dairy. He went to UK, then Auburn, and became a veterinarian. He came back to Kentucky and built a very successful business in Louisville. But in his heart, he never left the farm. So, he's now farming on the side. And when it came time to explain his dreams and get financing, Kirk found Farm Credit Services of Mid-America. "They understood, so we immediately got down to the financial aspect of the relationship. I like that. My goal is to move back to the farm environment and farm full time after I retire. I'm hoping that Farm Credit will be there by my side." And we will be, as we have been for Kentucky farmers of all backgrounds and sizes, for nearly 100 years.



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