



VOL. 9, NO. 9

SEPTEMBER 2009

# KENTUCKY

F A R M   B U R E A U   N E W S



# C O U N T Y A N N U A L M E E T I N G S

## ADAIR COUNTY

Date: September 15, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Cramner Dining Hall, Lindsey Wilson

## ALLEN COUNTY

Date: October 1, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Bazzell Middle School

## ANDERSON COUNTY

Date: October 12, 5:30 p.m.  
Place: Eagle Lake Expo Center

## BATH COUNTY

Date: September 18, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Ag Marketing Center

## BELL COUNTY

Date: September 24, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau office

## BOURBON COUNTY

Date: October 8, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Legion Park

## BREATHITT COUNTY

Date: October 9, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: LBJ School

## BRECKINRIDGE COUNTY

Date: October 13, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: High School

## BOYD COUNTY

Date: October 9, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## BULLITT COUNTY

Date: September 19, 6 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## CAMPBELL COUNTY

Date: September 12, 5:30 p.m.  
Place: Alexandria Community Center

## CARROLL COUNTY

Date: September 14, 7 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau office

## CASEY COUNTY

Date: October 8, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Ag Expo Center

## CLAY COUNTY

Date: October 8, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: FB Office

## CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Date: October 2, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Veterans Memorial Bldg.

## EDMONSON COUNTY

Date: September 26, 4 p.m.  
Place: High School

## ELLIOTT COUNTY

Date: September 29, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Sandy Hook Elementary Cafeteria

## FAYETTE COUNTY

Date: October 2, 5:45 p.m.  
Place: Masterson Station Park

## FLOYD COUNTY

Date: October 9, 7:00 p.m.  
Place: May Lodge, Jenny Wiley SP

## FRANKLIN COUNTY

Date: October 6, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## GALLATIN COUNTY

Date: October 5, 7:00 p.m.  
Place: Fairgrounds

## GARRARD COUNTY

Date: September 17, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Forks of Dix River Baptist Church

## GRANT COUNTY

Date: September 12, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: FB Office

## GREEN COUNTY

Date: September 24, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: High School Concourse

## GREENUP COUNTY

Date: November 2, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau office

## HARDIN COUNTY

Date: September 18, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Central Hardin High School

## HARRISON COUNTY

Date: September 24, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## HENRY COUNTY

Date: October 8, 7:00 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau office

## JACKSON COUNTY

Date: September 21, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Jackson Energy Farm

## JEFFERSON COUNTY

Date: November 12, 7:30 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau Building

## KNOX COUNTY

Date: September 11, 5:30  
Place: Barbourville City Park

## LAUREL COUNTY

Date: October 20, 5:45 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau office

## LAWRENCE COUNTY

Date: October 20, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Front Porch Restaurant, Louisa

## LOGAN COUNTY

Date: September 12, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## LYON COUNTY

Date: September 18, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Eddyville United Methodist Church

## MAGOFFIN COUNTY

Date: October 5, 6 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## MASON COUNTY

Date: October 7, 7:30 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## MARION COUNTY

Date: October 12, 7:00 p.m.  
Place: Lebanon Masonic Hall

## McCREARY COUNTY

Date: September 17, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Ole Country Café

## MERCER COUNTY

Date: September 14, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## MENIFEE COUNTY

Date: September 16, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau office

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Date: October 1, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: High School Cafeteria

## MORGAN COUNTY

Date: October 1, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## NELSON COUNTY

Date: October 6, 7:00 p.m.  
Place: Civic Center

## OWEN COUNTY

Date: October 5, 6 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## PENDLETON COUNTY

Date: September 20, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau office

## PIKE COUNTY

Date: September 17, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Landmark Hotel

## PULASKI COUNTY

Date: October 1, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Pulaski County HS Cafeteria

## ROBERTSON COUNTY

Date: September 20, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Deming High School

## ROCKCASTLE COUNTY

Date: September 18, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Roundstone Elementary School

## ROWAN COUNTY

Date: October 6, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Farm Bureau office

## RUSSELL COUNTY

Date: September 11, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Veterans Fairgrounds

## SCOTT COUNTY

Date: September 22, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## SHELBY COUNTY

Date: October 1, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## SPENCER COUNTY

Date: September 28, 7:00 p.m.  
Place: Extension Office

## TAYLOR COUNTY

Date: October 12, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Taylor County HS cafeteria

## WAYNE COUNTY

Date: September 28, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Aspire Center

## WHITLEY COUNTY

Date: September 8, 7:00 p.m.  
Place: Brashear's Grocery

## WOLFE COUNTY

Date: September 17, 6:00 p.m.  
Place: Library

## WOODFORD COUNTY

Date: October 10, 6:30 p.m.  
Place: 1st Christian Church Family Life Center

# “COMMENT”

Climate change legislation currently being considered by Congress will have a devastating impact on family farms and agricultural production across the country. The House-passed bill (H.R. 2454), which is being examined by the Senate to serve as the potential basis for its climate change legislation, poses a real economic threat for the U.S. agricultural economy. It also places our nation at a competitive disadvantage with our trading partners and fails to provide viable alternative sources of energy to keep our economy strong and hold down costs. And, after all this, the measure would have little or no impact on the climate.

Farmers and ranchers are dependent on abundant and affordable energy not only for their vehicles, but also for the costs of fertilizers, irrigation and crop protection tools. Raising production costs while lowering farm income will affect all producers and all commodities. While offsets may help some farmers with these energy-related costs, it is not the complete answer. Even with a robust agricultural offset program, H.R. 2454 does not make economic sense for producers because a number of sectors will be unable to benefit.

Participating in an offset program will depend to a great degree on where the producer is located, what he or she grows and if his or her business can take advantage of the program. Not every dairy farmer can afford to capture methane. Not every farmer lives in a region where wind turbines are an option. Not every farmer can take advantage of no-till. And not every farmer has the land to set aside to plant trees.

Yet, these producers will incur the same increased fuel, fertilizer and energy costs as their counterparts who can benefit from the offsets market.

Our producers and the world depend on export markets. Unfortunately, H.R. 2454 doesn't allow U.S. producers to stand on equal footing with their global counterparts. The bill's cap-and-trade program would take effect whether or not competing nations like India and China adopt similar programs. The increased costs to U.S. producers will not be borne by competitive producers in other countries that do not have similar restrictions, putting our producers at a clear disadvantage.

H.R. 2454 provides no concrete alternative energy program, such as nuclear, to hold down energy costs. The bill creates a hole in our energy supply, leaving farmers, ranchers and others with either reduced sources of energy or energy that is too expensive.

Lastly, at the end of the day, there is no conclusive scientific data that all of these measures will have any significant impact on the climate.

It is imperative that Congress look at this issue closely, carefully and thoroughly. On a matter that will affect our nation for decades to come it would be the height of folly to rush to pass climate change legislation that threatens our economy and has little hope of changing the climate.

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Kentucky Farm Bureau is a voluntary organization of farm families and their allies dedicated to serving as the voice of agriculture by identifying problems, developing solutions and taking actions which will improve net farm income, achieve better economic opportunities and enhance the quality of life for all.

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**Bob Stallman**

PRESIDENT  
AFBF

### ON THE COVER:

A TOBACCO FIELD ON JERRY RANKIN'S FARM IN BOYLE COUNTY.

PHOTO BY L. JOE CAIN



AFTER SOME SPIRITED BIDDING, REPUBLIC BANK CHAIRMAN BERNARD TRAGER (LEFT) AND STEVE WILSON OF PROOF ON MAIN AGREED TO SHARE THE CHAMPION HAM FROM SCOTT HAMS, PAYING \$650,000 EACH. WILSON'S GRANDCHILDREN AVERY WILSON, 8; AND MAE WILSON, 3; MADE THE BIDS ON HIS BEHALF WHILE MISS KENTUCKY, MALLORY ERVIN OF UNION COUNTY, DISPLAYED THE HAM.

# CHAMPION HAM BRINGS \$1.3 MILLION!!!!

**F**arm Bureau Day at the Kentucky State Fair kicked off with the traditional County Ham Breakfast and the 46th rendition had the entire Kentucky Exposition Center buzzing after the champion ham fetched a staggering \$1.3 million bid.

After some long and lively bidding that captivated the crowd of more than 1,500, Republic Bank Chairman Bernard Trager and Louisville businessman Steve Wilson agreed to share the

champion 15.6 pound ham from Scott Hams of Greenville for a price of \$650,000 each. That smashed the previous record of \$500,000 set in 2006 by First Southern National Bank, which was among this year's bidders along with Brown Forman Corporation.

The money goes to the charity of the bidder's choice.

Republic Bank and Wilson both had previously purchased the grand champion ham at the popular event. Early on it became clear that both badly wanted to be the winner this year.

When the price reached \$400,000 both sides upped the bid by a thousand. Then it got red hot, sometimes jumping by \$25,000 on the call from auctioneer Ron Kirby Jr.

When it was Trager's turn to raise the bid from \$650,000, Wilson sent him a message, asking if he'd be willing to stop and be co-winners. Trager quickly agreed and the celebration began.

Featured speakers included Governor Steve Beshear, U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell, Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson and Agriculture

Commissioner Richie Farmer. Beshear and McConnell had high praise for KFB. Beshear said the organization “truly is the voice of Kentucky agriculture; you work hard to move agriculture forward.” McConnell said “there is no more influential organization in Kentucky.”

The lunch crowd was treated to a performance by the champion gospel quartet; Higher Call, from Russell County. Second place went to Southern Harmony of Pulaski County and third place went to Southern Harvest of Fayette County.

Laurel County got the “top county” award for sending the most people the most total miles.

Earlier, in the South Wing, an exhibit by Woodford County was judged best in the Pride of the Counties display sponsored by KFB Insurance. More than 60 exhibits from counties and/or communities throughout the state were involved in the Pride of the Counties section.

KFB Insurance Company was among a group that purchased the grand champion steer at the 4-H and FFA Sale of Champions. The steer was exhibited by Taylor Stevenson-Tolle of Spencer County 4-H.



ABOVE: GOVERNOR STEVE BESHEAR SAID KFB “TRULY IS THE VOICE OF KENTUCKY AGRICULTURE.”



ABOVE: THE CHAMPION GOSPEL QUARTET, HIGHER CALL, PERFORMED AT THE LUNCHEON. THEY ARE FROM RUSSELL COUNTY.



LEFT: KFB PRESIDENT MARK HANEY PRESENTED THE AWARD FOR BEST EXHIBIT AT THE PRIDE OF THE COUNTIES SECTION TO A HAPPY GROUP FROM WOODFORD COUNTY. TO THE RIGHT OF HANEY IS STEVE McCORMICK, VP OF OPERATIONS FOR KFB INSURANCE; AND BEHIND HIM IS BRAD SMITH, THE COMPANY CEO.

# HEALTH CARE TASK FORCE VISITS FACILITIES IN MURRAY



KEITH TRAVIS, THE HOSPITAL'S VICE PRESIDENT OF INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, SHOWED THE TASK FORCE THE DESIGN FOR A NEW HOSPICE CENTER.

Now a year old, KFB's Health Care Issues Task Force has crisscrossed the state in search of information, perspectives and ideas relative to the complex challenge of reforming a system that everyone agrees is broken. The problems are so broad that Task Force Chairman John Hendricks has become convinced the solutions must come in piecemeal fashion – “a bite at a time,” as he often remarks.

Last month's visit to the hospital and county health department in Murray shed more light on two issues looming large in rural Kentucky: (1) A shortage of doctors and nurses. (2) A low percentage of those with commercial health insurance, which is a driving force behind high health care costs.

In essence, the task force could compile a chart on what's ailing the health care and health insurance industries based on its meeting with the administrator,

chief financial officer and VP for Physician Recruitment at Murray-Calloway County Hospital. To wit:

- CEO Keith Bailey painted the big picture, explaining that Murray-Calloway County Hospital is doing well only because it has taken dramatic steps at a high cost to improve its facilities, recruit and retain physicians and form partnerships enabling it to pursue goals. He touched on the many factors making it more and more difficult for rural hospitals to thrive.

- Chief Financial Officer Brad Bloemer detailed why farm families and others are paying dearly for health insurance. The hospital, he said, loses money on the 60 percent of its patients under Medicare or Medicaid plus the 9 percent who have no insurance. That forces it to raise costs which commercial carriers, in effect, pass on to the 31 percent who have insurance. “That's why businesses have to pay so much for their employee insurance,” he said.

Another factor for the hospital's high costs, added Bloemer, is the complex billing and rating system for Medicare and Medicaid. “The government has made it extremely complicated; every year it's a struggle to obtain reimbursement,” he lamented.

- Keith Travis, Vice President of Institutional Development, opened his presentation with a profound statement alluding to the shortage of doctors and nurses. “We're going to have a medical tsunami,” he said. “The doctor shortage is upon us and will become worse. The nurse shortage is just as severe.” He went on to note that Kentucky's doctor-to-citizen ratio is 25 percent below the national average. Rural areas struggle to land family practitioners plus face an alarming shortage of some specialists, most notably orthopedic surgeons and physical therapists.

Murray's hospital is a public not-for-profit operation that is performing better than most because of a strong



DR. TONY BRANNON (HEAD OF TABLE) WELCOMED (FROM LEFT) DAVID S. BECK, MARK HANEY, JOHN HENDRICKS, TRIPP FURCHES AND EDDIE MELTON. BECK AND MELTON ARE MSU GRADUATES; FURCHES ATTENDED THE AG SCHOOL AND NOW IS A LARGE-SCALE ROW CROP FARMER A FEW MILES WEST OF CAMPUS.



## KFB LEADERS GO TO (AG) SCHOOL

While in Murray for the health care task force meeting, KFB's Executive Committee, along with Director Tripp Furches, met with Dr. Tony Brannon, Dean of the School of Agriculture at Murray State University.

"We just wanted to touch base and see how things were going," explained KFB Executive Vice President David S. Beck, a graduate of the MSU School of Agriculture.

Dr. Brannon told the group about the ag school's "fall on the farm" event scheduled for October 14-17. He then gave an update on the status of the proposed upgrade to the Breathitt Veterinarian Center in Hopkinsville (a project strongly supported by KFB).

A feasibility study is close to completion and will be presented to the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board and General Assembly. "We feel this study will support the need for a new facility (rather than an upgrade)," said Dr. Brannon.

It is hoped that the state legislature will fund the project during the 2010 session.

Dr. Brannon said this fall's enrollment in the ag school will be around 675, including 174 freshmen. He also touched on some building projects, including a new arboretum.

The plaque Dr. Brannon received for the 2009 KFB Distinguished Service to Agriculture award was sitting on the conference table when the group arrived. He was quick to note the significance, saying: "Your award is one of the highlights of my career. I was very honored."

support system from local governments and Murray State University. It has become a regional healthcare center and is in the process of a major expansion centered around a \$60 million physical plant expansion.

Strains on rural health care have forced the Murray hospital to ramp up its fund raising and physician-recruitment efforts. Board members, physicians and employees are major contributors to its charitable giving campaign – including Board Chairwoman Sharon Furches, a longtime leader in Calloway County FB whose husband, Tripp, serves on the KFB Board of Directors. A member of the task force, Mrs. Furches arranged for the visit to Murray, which kicked off with a dinner hosted by Calloway County FB at its county office.

Task force members were impressed by the broad, proactive approach to tackling the community's health care challenges; but also struck by the enormity of those challenges, said Hendricks, a Clark County farmer who is KFB's First Vice President.

"This was a very informative meeting," he said.

Following the hospital visit the group toured the nearby Calloway County Health Department housed in a bright, modern one-year-old facility. Linda Cavitt, director of nursing, led the tour, explaining the many services offered by the department. Those servic-



TOP: HOSPITAL CEO KEITH BAILEY (RIGHT) SPOKE WITH KFB EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DAVID S. BECK DURING A BREAK IN THE MEETING.

ABOVE: TASK FORCE MEMBER SHARON FURCHES (RIGHT) LISTENED TO THE PRESENTATION FROM LINDA CAVITT, THE DIRECTOR OF NURSING FOR THE CALLOWAY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT. MRS. FURCHES IS CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD FOR MURRAY-CALLOWAY COUNTY HOSPITAL. HER HUSBAND, TRIPP, IS A KFB DIRECTOR.

es range from prenatal care to inspections of restaurants and sewage systems.

KFB has had longstanding policy encouraging support for county health departments.

Next up for the task force is a joint meeting with KFB's Insurance Advisory Committee. On that occasion both groups will consider health care policy recommendations that can be forwarded to the Resolutions Committee.

"I've asked each (task force) member to closely review our policy and consider what we've learned and how that can be transformed into recommendations," Hendricks explained.

# ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The annual meetings of KFB's advisory committees are in full swing as the groups review the status of their respective areas of concern and consider policy recommendations to forward to the Resolutions Committee. Following are brief summaries from recent meetings:

## NATURAL RESOURCES

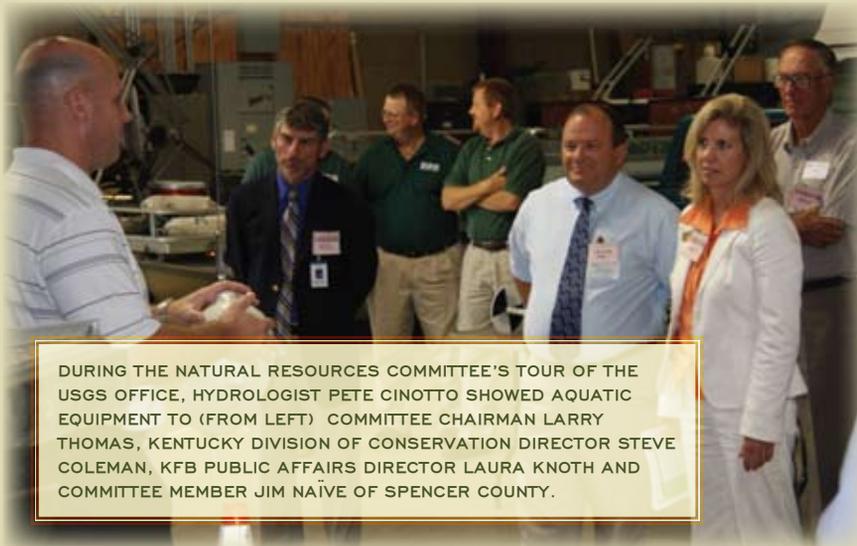
This meeting at the state office opened with a conference call to AFBF Public Affairs specialists Rick Krause and Don Parrish, who gave updates on climate change and clean water legislation. Pete Goodman, Acting Director of the Kentucky Division of Water, spoke about environmental protection programs and some proposed regulatory requirements for confined animal feeding operations.

The committee then toured the nearby state office of the U.S. Geological Survey. Bill Guertal, director of the Kentucky-Indiana Water Science Center, explained that USGS serves as a science arm of the Department of the Interior, with 44 water quality monitoring stations and 180 gauging stations in Kentucky. The agency also does sediment analysis work, he said.

Hydrologist Angie Crain said USGS serves agriculture by checking sediment samples for nutrients and pathogens and identifying streams that do not meet quality standards. The group then toured the USGS labs and examined testing equipment.

Returning to the state office the group received reports from Steve Coleman, director of the Division of Conservation; and Alan Kyle of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. State conservationist Tom Perrin also spoke to the group.

Turning to policy, the committee recommended language stating (1) "we support collaborative efforts to conduct water resource research, monitoring and educa-



DURING THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE'S TOUR OF THE USGS OFFICE, HYDROLOGIST PETE CINOTTO SHOWED AQUATIC EQUIPMENT TO (FROM LEFT) COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN LARRY THOMAS, KENTUCKY DIVISION OF CONSERVATION DIRECTOR STEVE COLEMAN, KFB PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR LAURA KNOTH AND COMMITTEE MEMBER JIM NAÏVE OF SPENCER COUNTY.

tion efforts by state and federal agencies and the universities; (2) we support finding common sense, least-cost alternatives for resolving hazardous dams classification issues. Also, proposed amendments to existing policy express opposition to the Division of Water setting total maximum daily limits with data more than three years old., plus mandatory air quality standards for greenhouse gases. Another suggestion endorses having at least one NRCS employee as a point of contact in each district.

KFB Director Larry Thomas of Hardin County is chairman of the Natural Resources Advisory Committee.

## TOBACCO

KFB Director Scott Travis of Spencer County is chairman of this committee, which met at the state office. The meeting began with participants giving crop condition reports from their respective areas. In a rarity for August, no one had a negative assessment of the general condition of corn, soybeans or tobacco. All said ample rain had been received.

Brian Furnish, General Manager of the Burley Co-op in Lexington, gave a report on a proposed risk management insurance program which he said would provide coverage of up to 95 percent of the price for the top five grades. This is being proposed as a five-year pilot project to be handled by the Risk Management Agency of Kansas City. Furnish described this as secondary

insurance to supplement APH policies which are based on yields. If all goes to plan, the program could start next year, Furnish said.

KFB President Mark Haney gave a status report on a tobacco export promotion program, which would require a grower referendum for enactment. He noted that KFB "was continuing to move forward with this but we are not carrying the banner or beating the drums." That was in

reference to a concern from one major tobacco group which is stopping short of endorsing the concept.

KFB National Affairs Director Joe Cain said a special committee had agreed on stipulations for the referendum language, including an oversight board, a refund provision and a 20-cent checkoff per hundredweight. The vote would be held at county extension offices.

Cain then gave a report on the FDA regulation of tobacco, stressing that the new law does not allow farm inspections. However, FDA now has the authority to regulate nitrosamine levels, which could impact burley varieties, Cain added.

He also gave an update on the H-2A farm labor situation, calling this "a very confusing year" because of conflicting regulations from the Bush and Obama administrations and some court rulings.

Turning to policy, the committee had a very lengthy discussion about the export promotion program. Finally the group recommended a resolution in support of a national checkoff program that will allow groups to access the funds to sell U.S. tobacco in foreign markets.

## POULTRY

This meeting took place at Western Kentucky University's Agriculture Expo Center so the group could tour the animal waste management research plots established under a cooperative agreement with USDA's Animal Research Service.

UK poultry production specialist Dr. Tony Pescatore gave a report on the

industry in Kentucky. He said poultry production is close to a \$1 billion business in Kentucky. Dr. Pescatore also reported on some energy and flock health issues, as well as some local zoning problems facing producers.

Dr. Sue Billings reported for the State Veterinarian's Office. She reviewed an incident in which the office had to implement its emergency response plan.

Warren Beeler of the Livestock Marketing Division of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture discussed some animal welfare issues. Committee Chairman Jay Coleman, a KFB Director from Barren County, then reported on the activities of KFB's Animal Care Issues Task Force.

The group had one policy recommendation: "We recognize the need for feed additives and medication . . . we favor careful use and withdrawal restrictions of feed additives and therapeutics, We oppose the banning of such additives and therapeutics without adequate proof of danger."

### FEED GRAINS, WHEAT AND SOYBEANS

This committee met at the Calloway County FB office before taking a tour of the Pullen Research and West Research Farms of Murray State University.

The first presenter was Todd Barlow, Government Relations Manager for Syngenta. He gave an overview of some pressing environmental issues facing row crop producers – most notably a federal court ruling on the Clean Water Act which could bring regulatory burdens on farm chemical use.

Brian Smith of Archer Daniel Midland offered a market analysis and Glenn Murphy of Monsanto spoke about the company's new Genuity SmartStax technologies. Dr. Cory Walters, an extension grain marketing specialist, discussed crop insurance programs. Mac Stone of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture spoke about the department's "Buy Local" promotional efforts plus food safety issues.

Allan Kyle of KDA's Division of Environmental Services encouraged the farmers to become involved with local watershed oversight groups and to update Ag Water Quality plans.

There was a lengthy discussion on animal welfare and foreign trade issues.

Turning to policy, the committee expressed support for the work of KFB's Animal Care Issues Task Force "to counter the misinformation used by vari-

ous groups."

Chairman of the Feed Grains and Wheat Committee is KFB Director Tripp Furches of Calloway County. KFB Director Randall Heath of Graves County is chairman of the Soybean Committee.

### FARM LABOR

First up was a conference call with Ron Gaskill, AFBF's senior director of Congressional Relations for Labor & Environment. He explained the current federal farm labor rules and then lamented the potential for immigration reforms this year. A compromise, Gaskill said, could include accepting an E-verify program.

Rick Alexander, Executive Director of the Agriculture Workforce

Management Association, gave an overview of the association's operations. He said AWM has been restructured as an association with shareholders and is on target to reach its goals for the year.

George Scott and Jeff Gatewood of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet gave an update on H-2A and H-2B programs in the state. They were followed by KFB's Joe Cain, who addressed several federal issues.

One policy recommendation was adopted: To express making H-2A standards fall more in line with H-2B standards with the exception of a cap on visas.

KFB Director David Chappell of Owen County chairs the Farm Labor Committee.

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# Summer Roadside Market Tour

**K**FB's Summer Roadside Market Tour headed east this year for a four day tour of markets in Kentucky, West Virginia and Virginia. The tour included the largest public market in Virginia, one of the most popular ones in West Virginia, an innovative farm winery and a remote market that specializes in "pastured" poultry.

"The Summer Roadside Market tour is a great opportunity for our market members to be together," said KFB President Mark Haney, who operates a certified market in Pulaski County. "Traveling on a tour bus learning from each other and seeing what other states are doing at their farm mar-

*"Traveling on a tour bus learning from each other and seeing what other states are doing at their farm market is of great value."*

ket is of great value."

First stop was Imel's Greenhouse, a KFB Certified Roadside Market member and a family farming and greenhouse operation located near Greenup. The operation was started over 30 years ago by owner Kenny Imel and has grown to meet the needs of customers in three states.

Kenny and the entire Imel staff and family were on hand to greet the group and give an overview and tour of the operation. Imel's Greenhouse carries a wide selection of spring bedding veg-

etable plants, spring bedding flower plants, hanging baskets, ferns, perennials, annuals, fall mums, pansies, and other flowering crops. Imel's is also an agritourism destination in Greenup County, offering school tours where



LEFT: FLANKED BY FELLOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS DAVID S. BECK, EDDIE MELTON AND JOHN HENDRICKS, KFB PRESIDENT MARK HANEY SPEAKS TO THE GROUP AT IMEL'S GREENHOUSE IN GREENUP COUNTY. THAT WAS THE FIRST STOP ON THE TOUR. OWNER KEN IMEL IS ADDRESSING THE GROUP IN THE MIDDLE PHOTO ON OPPOSITE PAGE. THE TOP PHOTO IS OF CHICKENS GRAZING AT MOUNTAIN RUN FARM IN SEDALIA, VIRGINIA AND THE BOTTOM PHOTO IS THE ROANOKE CITY MARKET. AT RIGHT IS THE GROUP AT DEPOT GRILLE.

students can see farm animals, learn about plants, and have fun at a unique play area.

The tour continued on into West Virginia and Virginia where the group had the opportunity to tour farmers' markets, orchards, nurseries, wineries, livestock operations, as well as a few historical locations including Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's home and plantation. The group was also joined by West Virginia and Virginia Farm Bureau and Department of Agriculture representatives on the tour stops to have a chance to learn more about the role these organizations are playing to help foster the growth of markets and value added processing in their states.

"This tour has been very diverse, we visited the largest orchard in Virginia, several on farm markets, and a grass fed beef operation selling directly to the consumer," said John Hendricks, a tour participant and KFB's First Vice President. "We have seen a lot of opportunities for our own farms, and it has also reinforced that what we are doing in Kentucky agriculture is moving us in the right direction."

The Summer Roadside Market tour is offered each year to give program participants a chance to visit markets in other states. These visits not only give the tour participants an opportunity to get new ideas for production and marketing

*"We have seen a lot of opportunities for our own farms..."*

to take home, it also is a chance to network and learn from their fellow Kentucky farmers.

"In the end the summer tour is another way we can help our members give a better farm experience to our consumers," said Haney. "Making that connection between the market and the consumers is what is really important."



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## LIVESTOCK NUMBERS ARE DOWN

USDA reported that the U.S. had fewer livestock on July 1, 2009, compared to a year earlier. All cattle and calves totaled 101.8 million head, one percent below the 103.3 million on July 1, 2008. Beef cows, estimated at 32.2 million, were down one percent. The number of milk cows dropped two percent to 9.2 million head. The 2009 calf crop may total 35.6 million, down one percent from 2008.

U.S. sheep and lamb inventory totaled 7.05 million head, down three percent from a year earlier. Both breeding stock and market lamb inventories were three percent lower at 4.28 million and 2.77 million, respectively.

The goat inventory totaled 3.71 million head, down two percent from July 1, 2008. Breeding stock numbers dropped two percent to 2.79 million head. All market goats and kids totaled 925,000 head, down two percent. The milk goat inventory increased four percent to 385,000 head.

On June 1, the U.S. had 66.1 million head of hogs and pigs, down two percent from a year earlier. Breeding inventory dropped three percent while market hog numbers fell two percent.

Compared to 2008, total red meat production will be down 2.4 percent in 2009.

## HAY CROP GROWS FOUR PERCENT

U.S. alfalfa hay production is forecast by USDA at 73 million tons, up five percent from 2008. Yields are expected to average 3.48 tons per acre compared to 3.32 tons last year. Kentucky's alfalfa crop is expected to yield 3.50 tons per acre, up 40 percent from 2008, for a total crop of 805,000 tons, compared to 600,000 tons in 2008.

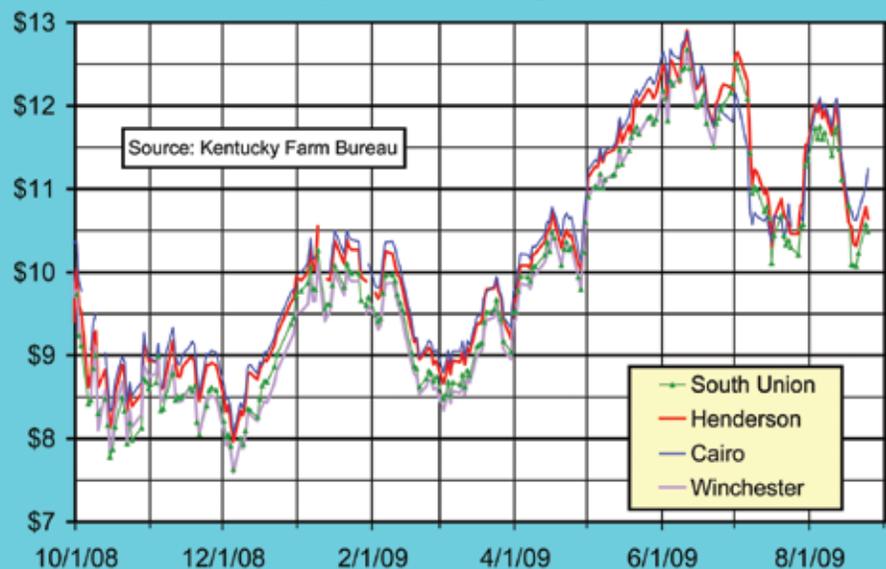
Other hay production in the U.S. is forecast at 79.0 million tons, up four percent from last year. Yields are expected to average 2.01 tons per acre, up 0.06 tons from last year. Harvested area, at 39.2 million acres, is up 113,000 acres from the previous year. The yield in Kentucky is forecast to increase to 2.40 tons per acre from 1.90 tons in 2008. The 2009 crop of 5.28 million tons is 16 percent greater than the 2008 crop.

## HUGE CORN CROP IS PREDICTED

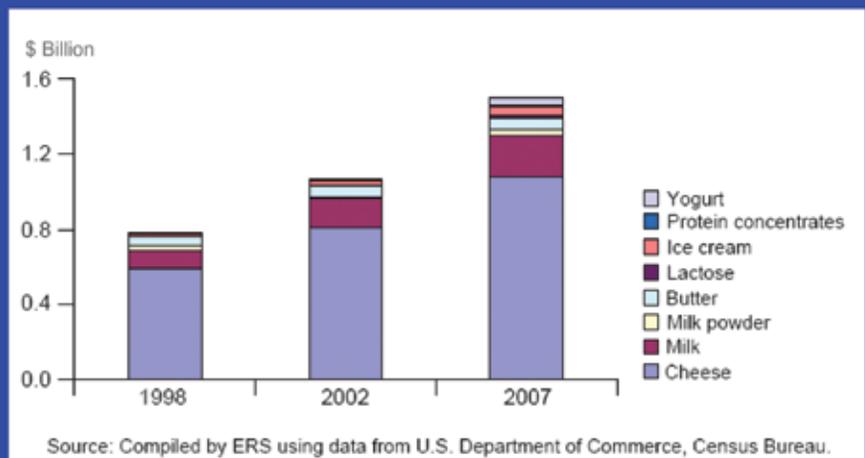
The USDA has forecast the U.S. to have its second highest corn yield and second largest corn crop this year based on August 1 crop conditions. An average yield of 159.5 bushels per acre compares to 153.9 bushels last year and the record 160.3 bushels in 2004. Corn production is forecast to total 12.76 billion bushels, two percent below the record 2007 crop.

The larger crop means a greater corn supply for 2009/10 of 14.5 billion bushels compared to 13.7 billion bushels in 2008/09. USDA analysts have raised 2009/10 use to 12.9 billion bushels versus 12.0 billion in 2008/09. Key areas of growth are ethanol use, up 15 percent to 4.2 billion bushels, and exports, up 14 percent to 2.1 billion. 2009/10 ending stocks of 1.6 billion is one billion less than 2008/09 ending stocks.

## Kentucky Cash Soybean Prices



## U.S. Dairy Product Imports, 1998-2007



Source: U.S. Food Import Patterns, 1998-2007, USDA-ERS, August 2009

Using fresh Kentucky produce as a backdrop, Walmart held a news conference at its Richmond supercenter to announce it would buy more produce from Kentucky growers.

Madison County FB had a contingent on hand for the event which included free product samples, an in-store farmers' market of Kentucky fruits and vegetables and a tractor provided by Wayne Supply Company. Rodger Bingham, Deputy Director of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, spoke on efforts to market local produce. Other speakers included Billy Gattton Jones, owner of WindStone Farms LLC, distributor of Kentucky Proud blackberries and jams throughout the south; and Jack Wilson, owner of Wilson's Cedar Point Farm, a Pulaski County farm with a variety of fruits and vegetables.

Jason Wetzel, Walmart's senior public affairs manager, noted that "buying local produce is becoming increasingly important to our customers."

WindStone Farms and Cedar Point are examples of the company's tie to local growers. Jones noted that during blackberry season his berries will reach Walmart stores within 36 hours of harvest. The award-winning jam, made from a recipe that originated in Bourbon County, is available in 700 stores throughout the mid-south.

Cedar Point has been working with Walmart since 2001 and has increased production from 1 1/2 to 30 acres, Wilson said.

Walmart estimates it purchases more than 70 percent of its produce from U.S. producers, making it the largest buyer of local produce. The company likes to highlight locally-grown produce in its stores because more and more consumers are expressing a preference for local products. Walmart also dedicates space on its web site to locally-grown produce and includes farmer profiles and recipes.

Madison County FB President Kevin Fields and

Vice President Tim Brandenburg attended the event along with director Chris Cooper, Area Program Director Lynn Parsons, Madison County FB Insurance Agency Managers David Mayo, Chris Hornsby and John Rader and agents Shawn Adkinson and Brent Wehunt.

## A "fresh" idea

Walmart expands commitment to local produce



BELOW: BILL GATTON JONES OF WINDSTONE FARMS SPOKE AT THE NEWS CONFERENCE, WITH LOCAL PRODUCE AS A BACKDROP. WINDSTONE SUPPLIES FRESH BLACKBERRIES AND ITS AWARD-WINNING BLACKBERRY JAM TO WALMART STORES.



MADISON COUNTY FB PRESIDENT KEVIN FIELDS (LEFT) AND VICE PRESIDENT TIM BRANDENBURG CHECKED OUT THE LOCAL PRODUCE DISPLAY AT THE RICHMOND WALMART.

# Field work

## CONGRESSMAN GUTHRIE HOLDS MEETING AT KFB DIRECTOR'S FARM

**K**FB Director Larry Thomas and his wife Becky played host to a public meeting with Second District Congressman Brett Guthrie at their Hardin County farm last month.

The weather was steamy and the issues were boiling hot as Guthrie, a freshman Republican from Bowling Green, addressed a crowd of about 50 at the Thomas farm a few miles southwest of Elizabethtown. Health care reform dominated the discussion, but minus any shouting matches from the audience of mostly rural residents.

That's because Guthrie quickly made it clear that he opposes the Obama administration's plan. Guthrie, who served in the Kentucky Senate for 10 years before succeeding the retired Ron Lewis in the U.S. Congress, also expressed regret for supporting the eco-



CONGRESSMAN BRETT GUTHRIE CHATTED WITH KFB DIRECTORS LARRY THOMAS (LEFT) AND PAT HENDERSON FOLLOWING THE MEETING AT THE THOMAS FARM IN HARDIN COUNTY.

nomic stimulus package.

"I was excited about the stimulus bill at first," he explained, "because of all the talk about improving the infrastructure. Now it turns out that of \$785 billion, only \$27 billion has gone for highways and bridges. That's very disappointing."

A fiscal conservative, Guthrie also decried the soaring federal debt, calling it "unsustainable." He noted he is a father of three teenagers and is "greatly concerned" that they eventually will have to pay for the current explosion in government spending.

"The government is going in the wrong direction . . . spending entirely too much money," he lamented.

Constituents have expressed a great need for reforming the health care system but are widely opposed to a public option, Guthrie said. "People won't go along with a government health insurance program. Certainly I'm for lowering costs and improving access. But I've already voted against this bill in committee."

Guthrie also joins Farm Bureau in opposition to the "cap and trade" energy legislation that has passed the House but has stalled in the Senate. He said the administration "is trying to invent technologies to make this happen."

Guthrie told the audience he also wanted to champion issues of importance to rural communities and do so in a non-partisan fashion. "I'm in office because people from both parties voted for me," he said. "I know the importance of bringing both sides together."

One frustration, he added, is that urban lawmakers dominate House leadership. "There's not a diversity of people running the House of Representatives," he said.

The audience included several county political leaders and KFB Director Pat Henderson of Breckinridge County.

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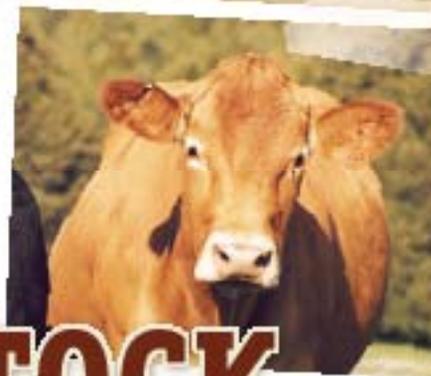
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