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WIFE joins American Task Force Argentina

*By Paul Cummins
for American Task Force Argentina*

On behalf of American Task Force Argentina (ATFA), I would like to thank the Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE) for becoming the newest member of ATFA.

ATFA is an alliance of organizations united to highlight Argentina's recent bad acts, as well as call for a just and fair reconciliation of the Argentine government's 2001 debt default. The organization is committed to standing up against Argentina to protect U.S. jobs, capital and the U.S. agricultural market.

Argentina filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO) against the United States and the European Union for restricting the imports of Argentine beef. This complaint was filed in hopes of Argentina gaining access to a part of the U.S. and EU trade markets despite the country's history with Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). FMD is an airborne disease that, if brought to the U.S., could destroy our beef industry and cost billions of dollars in damage to an important part of the U.S. economy---rural America.

In addition to Argentina's attempts to cut into and potentially destroy the U.S. beef industry, it has harmed other U.S. agricultural markets. Argentina has cut off imports of U.S. pork, chicken and turkey, none of which have scientific reasoning.

The United States is not the only

country that has markets that have been completely cut off by Argentina through its protectionist import restrictions that do not abide by WTO rules. On December 12, Panama filed a complaint against Argentina with the WTO regarding its import restrictions, which became the eighth WTO dispute involving Argentina since May. To give perspective, this number is equal to the total number of WTO disputes globally filed last year.

Not only has Argentina harmed the U.S. economy through agriculture and trade, it also refuses to repay U.S. investors that helped the country survive

economic collapse during its default earlier this decade, which was the largest debt default in history. These U.S. investors paid U.S. capital for bonds to help Argentina and the country is now refusing to pay them what they contractually agreed to pay, which is more than 3 billion dollars, even though more than 88 U.S. court judgments ruled that they need to pay.

ATFA is pleased to work with WIFE and other like-minded agricultural groups to stand up to Argentina to protect rural America and the U.S. economy as a whole.

WIFE 2013 Commodity & Topic Chairs

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Cereal Grains

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Alice Parker

Rural Life/Farm Finance Communication/Tax/Health

Donna Bolz

Trade

Pam Pothoff

Feed Grains

Janell Roe

Homeland Security

Marlene Kouba



By Ruth Laribee
New York

President's Report

Food labels and the Farm Bill continue to make headlines

Happy New Year to the members, families, friends, and associates of WIFE. May 2013 bring you health, happiness and prosperity.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of being your president. Thank you to each and every one of you for your strong support and guidance.

With a background in dairy and local government, agriculture and WIFE are very important parts of my life. WIFE is an organization comprised of people representing different commodities that bring about different issues, but working together we do make a difference. Together we have one main goal, and that is to better the life of our American farmers, ranchers and consumers.

Read your labels when shopping. A formal complaint has been filed with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection against firms owned by the Knaus family for the third time in two years by The Milkweed (Pete Hardin) for mislabeling and adulterated cheeses. The first abuse was selling processed products as natural cheese and selling imported cheese with a "Made in Wisconsin" label.

On the back of some of the cheese packages, which said it was a product of Holland, the ingredient list included cornstarch and wa-

ter. According to the Food and Drug Administration, those ingredients are not allowed. Gouda is one of the cheeses for which there is a standard of identity, meaning the cheese has a special list of ingredients by the FDA and changes cannot be made.

According to several articles, organizers are working toward getting food goods that may include ingredients resulting from genetically modified crops labeled. This was voted down in California, but there is a push to take on other states, and almost \$200,000 has been raised to continue their cause.

Will there be a Farm Bill? Some groups wanted a Farm Bill put into the agreement to circumvent the fiscal cliff; others want to put it off until next year, while others believe that an extension of the bill is the way to go. As we go to print a partial short term extension of the Farm Bill has been voted on by the Senate. It prevents the milk price increase and the automatic return of agriculture programs to the rules enacted in 1949. A return to the 1949 law could have doubled the milk price for consumers. The extension does not address energy, disaster assistance and other farm programs. And the debates will go on and on.

It's reported that Colin Peterson (D-MN), House Agriculture Committee ranking member, will contest an extension if the new dairy security provision is not included. Many groups feel if the Farm Bill is settled

later on, there will be less money to be had.

The WIFE Annual Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., will be held March 16-19, 2013.

The Annual Women Involved in Farm Economics Convention will be held in Colorado in November of 2013.

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By Kay Zeosky
New York

Dairy Report

Dairy industry is in state of confusion as Farm Bill is still stalled

Well, whoever thought we would have the entire dairy industry in one state--the state of confusion. By the time this goes to print I predict we will all find out that, "No, we aren't going to get \$38 per hundredweight for our milk, and the consumers aren't going to be paying \$6 per gallon of milk."

Everyone I meet asks whether they are going to have to pay that much for milk, and then most people add, "But if it's going to the farmers, it's alright with me."

My prediction is that Congress will make sure that farmers don't benefit from a "get rich quick" scheme, even if they certainly do deserve a big boost in pay. It would seem that most of our representatives would like to see the dairy bill enacted within the total Farm Bill so that it would be much more difficult to change. So, it seems as if a temporary rule will be in order until the whole Farm Bill is passed. In the past, whenever WIFE has asked for an adjustment to the dairy portion, our contacts in Washington, D.C., have said, "Well, we can't change anything now because it's part of the Farm Bill and that won't come up for another four years."

Cooperatives Working together (CWT) deserves to be congratulated. During 2012 they assisted cooperatives in exporting 123.4 million pounds of cheese, 72.4 million pounds of butter, 127,868 pounds of anhydrous milk fat, and 171,961 pounds of whole milk powder to 36 countries on four continents. It is funded by voluntary

contributions from dairy cooperatives and individual milk producers. Participants should be thanked for raising prices for every dairy farmer.

On January 15, 2013 an important antitrust case will begin in Greeneville, Tennessee. CEOs have made huge profits from deals they engineered. Woefully, the farmers are not reaping the profits but will be liable for any fines exacted.

Dairy farmers have no strength in price negotiations without the help of their cooperatives, but the members often lose control of the entity they have created. It takes a very strong member on the Board of Directors of these co-

operatives to remember that the CEO is working for them rather than the other way around. When I look at how hard our dairy farmers work, I am horrified at the amount of money paid to their cooperative executives.

Many huge truckloads of hay are leaving New York State farms and heading west. Even with the trucking involved, farmers are getting a very good price for their excess forage.

Farmers in some areas are testing their milk for aflatoxins. The fungus is apt to appear in corn that has been grown where water supplies were insufficient. If you're interested in buying a test kit, check the Internet.



By Deb Dressler
North Dakota

Legislative Report

USDA releases traceability rule

Happy New Year greetings to all of you involved in agriculture. Legislation is at a standstill in Washington, D.C., at the penning of this article. After several weeks of negotiations there is no apparent plan to pass a new Farm Bill or an extension of current farm policy. Hopefully the New Year will bring active movement on passage of a Farm Bill for those of us in the agricultural sector.

USDA released the National Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) final

rule in late December. The rule was to be published in the December 28th Federal Register, and it will become effective on February 26 in terms of implementation and compliance education. The enforcement phase will likely not be implemented for six to twelve months after the rule is implemented, which gives USDA time to work with states and tribes to develop its own policies and systems.

Under this plan, states and tribes will be able to design systems for tracing animals that best fit their needs. The plan does accept the use of brands, tattoos and brand registration as official identification when shipping and receiving livestock.



**By Marlene Kouba
North Dakota**

Energy Report

Ethanol facts may be surprising

indirect American jobs. Ethanol uses just 26 percent of the nation's corn crop. Ethanol yields 1.7 to 2.3 units of energy for every unit of energy used. A gallon of ethanol requires 19 times less oil to produce than a gallon of gasoline. Only 15 percent of all corn in the U.S. is irrigated. Since 2001, ethanol producers have lowered their water requirements by 47 percent.

Canada is the leading supplier of oil into the U.S. followed by Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Venezuela and Nigeria. Continental Resources now estimates there are between 27 and 45 billion barrels of recoverable oil in the Bakken and associated formations in North Dakota. It was only estimated at 4 billion in 2008, but now there are 67 drilling companies in the state.

At least 36 states impose some sort of severance tax on oil, gas, coal, timber and minerals, generating more than \$11 billion in revenue in 2010.

Of those, 31 states levy severance taxes only on the production of oil and gas. Alaska, Wyoming and New Mexico reserve a portion of the oil and gas production taxes for permanent funds.

General Motors Inc. and Ford said 2012 and 2013 model vehicles, respectively, can accept the 15 percent blend of ethanol in gasoline. This represents a win for the ethanol industry, which says the higher blends are needed to meet the federal Renewable Fuels Standard mandate that ultimately 36 billion gallons of ethanol be blended

into the nation's transportation fuel supply by 2022. The announcement comes despite claims from the American Petroleum Institute that automakers would not honor warranties for engine damage caused by ethanol blends higher than the widely used E10.

(Editor's Note: Newly appointed Energy Chairman Barbara Broberg will have her first report in the next issue of WIFeline.)

Oil wells need a lot of trucks and truck drivers. For each well, this includes 600 truck trips to haul water, 100 truck trips for hydraulic fracturing tanks, and 80 truckloads each of sand and gravel plus trucks to transport rig equipment, drilling mud, chemicals, cement and pipe.

One bushel of corn yields 2.8 gallons of ethanol and 17.5 pounds of livestock feed in a dry mill. Dry mill plants extracting corn oil also produce about 0.5 pounds of corn oil per bushel while wet mills produce 1.5 pounds of corn oil per bushel.

Ethanol production uses just two thirds of each bushel of corn while the remainder is fed to livestock. Beef gets about 48 percent, dairy 32 percent, swine 11 percent, poultry 8 percent and other 1 percent. Net corn use is as follows: feed—34 percent, ethanol feed—12 percent, ethanol—26 percent, export—12 percent, non-ethanol—10 percent, and ending stocks—6 percent.

There were 13.9 billion gallons of ethanol made in 2011 which created 90,200 direct jobs and 311,400

There were 13.9 billion gallons of ethanol made in 2011 which created 90,200 direct jobs and 311,400 indirect American jobs.

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- CropLife America
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- North Bridge Communications

In-Kind Contributors

- Eastern Arizona Ag Center
- Miller/Coors
- Rauner & Associates



By Pam Potthoff
Nebraska

Trade Report

Brazil creates competition for U.S.

Despite being a global economic powerhouse, China is still technically considered a developing nation. This puts the U.S. at a disadvantage in some situations.

Russia has a new zero-tolerance requirement for the feed additive ractopamine in meat shipments. As of December 7, all Canadian port exports destined for Russia are being tested to ensure they are free of ractopamine. Despite the fact that in the first 10 months of 2012 Russia imported 190,445 tons of U.S. pork valued at \$247.6 million and beef sales to Russia in October represented 11.5 percent of all U.S. beef shipments, ranking Russia the fourth biggest market by volume (data from the U.S. Meat Export Federation), the United States pork industry has not taken steps to meet Russian requirements, and the beef industry continues to push Russia to change their stance rather than taking steps to meet the requirement.

Congress has completed the process of terminating the old Jackson-Vanik amendment which restricted trade with Russia. Now the president can grant permanent normal trade relations to Russia and give the U.S. a new legal trade relationship with Russia in the World Trade Organization (WTO). Human rights provisions were added to the agreement and Russia is not too happy about that. To retaliate, Russia announced its own list of U.S. human rights abusers and says it will impose sanctions on them.

WIFE fought to give women equal status in the eyes of the USDA. Just since 2010 have women in Kenya been allowed to own and inherit the land they and their ancestors have farmed for centu-

ries. It is estimated only 5 percent of the land is now held by women. In Kenya 75 percent of the economy is tied to agriculture with women providing much of the labor. Interest rates are as much as 24 percent for farm operating loans. Kenya is beginning to meet the nutritional needs of their country and may emerge as a food exporting nation soon.

Brazil is fast becoming a major competitor for U.S. agricultural products, but Brazilian commodities have faced transportation problems when trying to reach export locations on the coast. Brazil will finish paving the BR163 highway through the Amazon in the next few years. The route connects Mato Grosso to the Santarem port. This will stimulate planting in the north. Deforestation of the Amazon is a big concern for environmentalists, global warming issues and competition for American farmers.

Brazil has been exporting beef and pork to the U.S. for a long time, but it has been precooked to prevent the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease virus (FMD). With the declaration of the Brazilian state of Santa Catarina as FMD-free, Brazil will begin exporting raw pork meat to the U.S. starting in March 2013 according to an announcement by the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, Thomas Shannon, Jr. Santa Catarina is the only Brazilian state authorized to export this product to the U.S. This appears to be the first step towards allowing beef from Brazil into the U.S.

WIFE has been concerned about the logistics of keeping livestock and meat from other Brazilian states out of the supply chain coming to the U.S.

I just read another article about trade, probably written by free traders

and their followers. It said, "U.S. goods exported to China reached a level of \$104 billion in 2011, up 542 percent since 2000." As normally found in articles discussing trade, no mention was made of the size of imports FROM China. No wonder the public is not concerned about our negative balance of trade with China; they never hear about it.

Delegates negotiating the TransPacific Partnership have voted to add Canada and Mexico to the talks.

The latest in a series of U.S. actions against imports from China is the setting of preliminary anti-dumping duties ranging from 54.25 percent to 76.53 percent on stainless steel sinks. The action came the same day that President Barack Obama blocked a privately owned Chinese company from building wind turbines close to a Navy military site in Oregon due to national security concerns. Since taking office in 2009, the Obama administration has imposed about 40 anti-

dumping and countervailing duties on Chinese goods.

USDA overseas inspections of meat and poultry plants whose products are destined for American consumers

have declined more than 60 percent since 2008. Around 17 percent of the U.S. food supply is now imported. The number of foreign countries audited started to decline significantly in 2009 to only 21 audits, but the in-country inspections that year still covered many of the major meat importers including Australia, Brazil, Canada and Mexico.

In 2010, FSIS only audited six countries – Brazil, China, Honduras, Korea, Spain, and Uruguay – a third of what the

Around 17 percent of the U.S. food supply is now imported.

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Feed Grains Report



By Janell Roe
Nebraska

Controversy over GMO labeling includes concern about costs

Approximately 60 percent of processed food in grocery stores has at least one genetically modified ingredient in it (Colorado State Extension, 2010). Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are extremely common in agriculture. In 2011, roughly 88 percent of corn and 94 percent of soybeans harvested in the United States were GMO. Other examples of GMOs include alfalfa, sugar beets, cotton, and canola (University of California San Francisco, 2012).

Last fall, controversy arose about GMOs due to Proposition 37 in California. Although Proposition 37 did not pass, this issue still remains at the forefront for consumers.

The main stronghold of Proposition 37 was that it would require labeling of GMO foods. Virtually any food, raw or processed, that contains animals or plants with genetic modifications would need to be labeled. In addition, this food would not be allowed to be labeled as natural (Time Magazine, 2012). The FDA already requires labeling of GMO products that have significantly different properties than the non-GMO product. They also label foods that contain allergens not evident in the GMO food or if large amounts of toxins are present (Colorado State University Extension, 2012).

Opponents of proposition 37 fear the effect labeling will have on consumers and demand for their products. GMO labels imply that there is a difference between genetically modified food and non-genetically modified food. No studies have shown that there is a major dif-

ference between the two.

Second, labeling will add cost to the consumers. The cost could be as much as \$400 per family per year as labeling could force processors to use non-GMO food, based on consumer demand, which usually costs more (CNN, 2012). For example, in the EU some retailers have taken genetically engineered labeled products off the shelves due to consumer distaste.

Third, consumers already have a choice between GMO and non-GMO food by choosing organic food already available at their local grocery store. Therefore, opponents stress that no label is needed.

Lastly, the U.S. food industry does not possess the logistics and infrastructure to keep GMO and non-GMO foods separate (Colorado State University Extension, 2010).

The supporters of proposition 37 believe that consumers have the right to know what they are eating. The labeling

of GMO products would allow consumers to stay away from products that might be problematic to their health. In addition, some consumers avoid foods based on their religion in which GMOs are prohibited. Proponents say that consumers may not be able to follow their religious beliefs if GMO foods are not labeled. Moreover, over 21 countries are already labeling these foods, and they feel that the U.S. should follow suit (Colorado State University Extension, 2010).

While both sides make valid points, I believe the real question at the heart of this topic is whether or not genetically modified organisms are harmful to our health. So far, there is no evidence that states GMO food is more harmful than eating non-GMO food. This is based on over 25 years of experiments and research. Many agencies like the World Health Organization and American Medical Association believe that genetically modified food is not hazardous to our health (Time Magazine, 2012).

Brazil emerges as U.S. competitor

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agency had done the year before.

By 2011, the number of countries audited by FSIS was down to just three: Australia, New Zealand and Poland. So far in 2012, the agency has completed 10 audits, but the agency began auditing Canada on Oct. 22, so presumably that brings the total to 11.

Patent infringement by companies outside the U.S. continues. An example is the Bionic Wrench, an award-winning, patented tool made in the U.S. and sold at Sears last winter. This winter Sears has replaced the American-made item with a very similar Craftsman tool called The Max Axess wrench, which is made in

China. A lawsuit is pending.

Reports emerging from the World Dairy Summit held in November in India predict India to become the biggest dairying nation within 10 years, according to the International Dairy Federation. Most of that dairy will go to feed the Indian population.

There is now wide expectation that Japan will soon move from its current 20-month age limit on U.S. imported beef to a more liberal 30-month protocol that in theory, at least, could spark much greater U.S. export activity next year.

WIFE has extensive policy on trade issues found on pages 32 through 36 of the 2012 Directory and Policy Summaries.



**By Marlene Kouba
North Dakota**

Homeland Security Report

House votes to extend practice of searching without warrants

more.

After President Richard Nixon was forced from office in 1974, congressional investigators discovered spying consisted of listening to telephone calls, opening mail, and using undercover agents to infiltrate political organizations and break into their offices under the guise of protection of national security. In 1978, Congress enacted the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). FISA provided that all domestic surveillance be subject to the search warrant requirement of the Fourth Amendment except for spying on foreign agents operating in the U.S. and not intended to be used in criminal prosecution.

The standard for all search warrants is probable cause of crime. FISA established a lesser standard, thus unconstitutional since Congress is bound by, and cannot change, the Constitution, of probable cause of status for an agent of a foreign power. Under FISA, the feds needed to demonstrate to a secret court only that a non-American physically present in the U.S. was really an agent of a foreign power, and the demonstration of that agency alone was sufficient to authorize a search warrant to listen to the agent's telephone calls or read his mail. Over time, the requirement was modified to status as a foreign person and that court has granted over 97 percent of applications. Thus, not only did FISA violate the privacy rights of foreigners, it violated the rights of those with whom they were communicating, American or non-American.

The USA PATRIOT Act was the primary legislative response to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. The title is actually an acronym that stands for Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism. This Act was

signed into law on October 26, 2001, by President George Bush. It permits federal agents to write their own search warrants in violation of the Fourth Amendment, actually amending FISA so as to eliminate the FISA-issued search warrant requirement when the foreign person is outside the U.S. This means that if you email or call your cousin in Europe or a business colleague in Asia, the feds are reading or listening, without a warrant, without suspicion, without records and without evidence of anything unlawful. It also permits the feds to use anything they see or hear while spying in a federal court. The amended FISA statute permitting these warrantless searches would have expired at the end of December, but the House quietly voted to extend this authority for another five years and the Senate will consider doing the same.

FISA gives the government unchecked authority to snoop on all Americans who communicate with any foreign person. Everyone in Congress has taken an oath to uphold the Constitution, but if we let Congress change the Constitution, then no one's liberty or property is safe, and freedom is dependent upon the political needs of those in power. The president and the leadership have claimed that foreigners and their American communicants are committed to destroying the country, and only the invasion of everyone's right to privacy will keep us safe. They are violating the privacy of us all to find the communications of a few.

U.S. Border Patrol agents will no longer serve as interpreters when local law enforcement agencies request language help, according to a new decree issued by DHS. The new guidance said agents should refer such requests to private services often used by government agencies. Seeking language help is a common prac-

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According to the government website for the federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS), its main topics are: Border Security, Citizenship and Immigration Services, Human Trafficking, Immigration Enforcement, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Disasters, Cyber-security, Economic Security, Homeland Security Jobs, International Engagement, Preventing Terrorism, Transportation Security, and Law Enforcement Partnerships in addition to many subtopics. DHS was started in 1984.

The DHS Urban Area Security Initiative is a grant program that stems from the 2001 terrorist attacks when the federal government pledged to help equip local governments to prevent future attacks and respond if they occurred. DHS has pumped billions to states over the past decade under the program that puts states in control of how the money is ultimately spent.

The security program is the department's most popular. The department has no way of tracking how the money is spent and has not produced adequate measures to gauge what states and communities actually need. Congress regularly complains about the lack of accountability of the grant programs, but lawmakers are happy to have the federal dollars spent in their districts. Among the most recent questionable projects are \$98,000 for an underwater robot in Columbus, Ohio, where there are no major rivers and few lakes nearby; \$24,000 for a "latrine on wheels" in Fort Worth, Texas; a "BearCat" armored vehicle bought with a \$285,933 grant in Keene, New Hampshire; \$250,000 for security upgrades at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis; and



By Klodette Stroh
Wyoming

Sugar Report

Fiscal cliff could affect Farm Bill

to our over \$16 trillion in debt, which is not an ideal circumstance for future generations. The United States is now on the edge of a fiscal cliff, a series of tax hikes and spending cuts which will automatically go into effect without intervention at the beginning of the New Year and may create uncertainty in our already fragile economy. President Barack Obama's proposal to Republicans is a \$35 billion cut in the new Farm Bill as budget offsets in a fiscal cliff package. GOP leaders have rejected his proposal, labeling it as "unbalanced and unreasonable." Democrats continue to push for raising taxes next year on capital gains and dividends, the investment income that forms an important share of the earnings for the wealthiest taxpayers. Increasing the top tax rate on long-term capital gains and dividends

from 15 percent to 20 percent would raise \$100 billion to \$120 billion over 10 years, according to White House estimates.

Meanwhile, some Republicans are reportedly requiring relief spending for Hurricane Sandy be matched by cuts elsewhere in the federal budget.

It doesn't look like our lawmakers are working together. Democrats and Republicans blame each other. Disaster stricken citizens and farmers that have lost crop production due to bad weather need help now.

The farmers represent and preserve the value of our nation. Their hard work, risk-taking, and love of land are truly admirable. Agriculture is our nation's framework and our backbone structure to balance a troubled economy to ensure our independence.

I wish you all a blessed Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2013 year. President Obama will lead this country four more years. Looking at election results, President Obama received 3.3 million votes more than Mr. Romney; the total tally was 120.8 million votes. The interesting point in this election is that we have 3,033 counties in the U.S., and the president won in fewer than 750 (24.7 percent) of the counties and Mr. Romney won more than 2,283 counties (75.3 percent). We know now that land does not vote.

America is a blessed country and we have to work together to keep this country united and strong. American farmers show their loyalty by taking risks and working hard to make sure Americans have plenty of food to eat. U.S. Agriculture is a pillar that has kept America strong to stand against economic roller-coasters throughout the history. Ag industry's annual contribution is well over trillion dollars.

The cost of crop production has gone up. Farmers have been paying an increase of more than 30 percent for fertilizer, fuel, seed, parts and equipment. We need reasonable crop prices to be able to repay our operating and equipment loans. The latest USDA market estimates, released December 11, show that the 2 million tons of excess sugar currently overhanging the market will remain in place for next year. The surplus was created by a combination of strong domestic production and excessive imports triggered by a controversial USDA decision to boost supplies earlier this year.

Every day, our country is adding

Warrantless searches may continue

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tice among law enforcement agencies. In 2007, the northern border had about 1,100 agents but now has more than 2,200. Along with providing language services, Border Patrol agents often assist local law agencies that are short on personnel and equipment. In addition, highway checkpoints have been implemented. On the southern U.S. border, the ability to speak Spanish is prevalent among local law enforcement agencies.

DHS has now paid over \$50 million to help police departments purchase automated license-plate scanners, and half of all U.S. law enforcement entities may soon have that capability. The Department of Transportation has proposed that electronic data recorders, known as "black boxes," be required in most cars starting in 2014. Your cell phones already serve as tracking devices, and the Justice Department tracked 37,616

calls in 2011. The practice of checking emails has gone up 371 percent in the past two years. The government knows where you are, what you are doing, and who you are talking to. A \$2 billion Utah Data Center will be used to intercept, decipher, analyze and store vast amounts of such data.

U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) employed an illegal immigrant as an unpaid intern in his Senate office who was a registered sex offender in 2010. The 18-year-old immigrant from Peru entered the country on a now-expired visitor visa from Peru and is facing deportation and remains in custody. ICE agents in New Jersey notified superiors at DHS because they considered it a potentially high profile arrest but were instructed not to arrest Sanchez until after the November election.

Sources: DHS and U.S. House websites, Patriot Act, Newsmax, Associated Press

Rural Life Report



By Donna Bolz
Nebraska

Groups assess the pros and cons of the Affordable Health Care Act

Deciding what do for my caucus at National Convention has always been a challenge. This year I decided to check with various groups to get their opinion on the Affordable Health Care Act. This sounded simple. I would contact the groups and report on their replies. I wanted organizations with a strong rural interest. I didn't want the Democrat or Republican view. I didn't want the Protestant or Catholic view. I asked the four organizations I contacted, "How does the Affordable Health Care act affect rural America?" I found out this wasn't as easy as it sounded.

The Patient Protection and Affordable care Act was signed into law on March 23, 2010. The Farmers Union and Center For Rural Affairs sent me pages of information on how it was a positive for Rural America. Their positives included in part:

- Young adults and health insurance coverage: Young adults have the highest rate of uninsured of any age group. About 30 percent of young adults are uninsured. Due to the Affordable Care Act, 2.5 million additional young adults now have health insurance coverage.
- Seniors and Medicare Preventive Services: The Affordable Care Act eliminated co-pays and other cost-sharing for preventive services for Medicare beneficiaries. It is estimated that 6.8 million rural seniors have received free preventive services.
- Rural Health Care Facilities and Jobs: As a result of funding and authorization in the Affordable Care Act, 350 new community health centers were

built across the nation in 2011. These new community health centers also created nearly 19,000 new jobs.

- Pre-existing medical conditions: The Act prohibits insurance companies from refusing coverage to or limiting benefits of children because of a pre-existing medical condition. In 2014, discriminating against all individuals who have pre-existing conditions will be prohibited.
- Health insurance exchanges: For those in rural American who purchase their own coverage or if you are a small business, starting in 2014 you will have access to more affordable health insurance options through exchanges.

The National Grange was neutral on the issue. They shared several concerns including the Health Insurance Tax (HIT) that is soon to be imposed on the net premiums of health insurance companies. They feel that the additional costs associated with this tax will be passed onto consumers who purchase their health insurance through the fully insured market. They believe that a rise in health insurance costs will be counterproductive to putting Americans back to work and getting the country on the road to economic success.

Another area of concern was the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) which was established by the passage of the Act. This board is charged with reducing Medicare costs; if the costs associated with operating Medicare exceed the rate of inflation this board is engaged. The Grange believes that the IPAB lacks democratic oversight. Powers given to IPAB far exceed any other federally established institution and is unchecked by any other branch of government.

The Farm Bureau was opposed to the Act. They believe that health care is primarily the responsibility of individuals and oppose compulsory national health insurance and any national health plan.

They favor instead direct government financial assistance for those unable to pay for their own health care. The primary concern is controlling costs. Any reform proposal must address the affordability of health insurance premiums and provide sustainable cost containment. They believe that current proposals do not address these two issues and will escalate insurance premiums. The Farm Bureau is concerned about the proposal to add a sugar-sweetened beverage excise tax to help fund health care reform. They oppose efforts to tax any agricultural commodity to fund health care programs.

If you would like more information, I can pass on my contacts to you. As I talk to people I find some are concerned about one or two provisions of the Act. As one person told me, this act is NOT perfect but it is a start. By some accounts there are 40 million plus individuals in the United States that don't have any health insurance and many more that are underinsured. I have also found much information that isn't correct or is something they were told by somebody who doesn't have all the facts. I believe that everyone should learn more about this important issue and keep an open mind. We can work to change the parts we don't like.

WIFE 2013 Area Directors

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WIFE Chapter Update

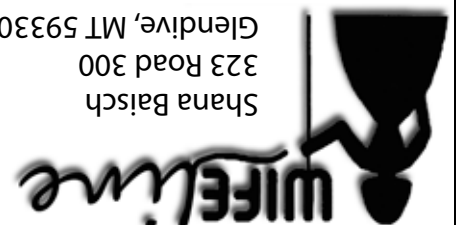
RBL Chapter disbands after more than 32 years

After 32 1/2 years of telling agriculture's side of America's economic story, RBL Chapter 26 of WIFE has decided to disband until some future date. RBL had a long, interesting run, and the following chronology provides a brief summary of topics and events that RBL tried to influence:

- April 26, 1977: Chapter organized
- First President: Betty Prevost, died 2008
- June 1977: Organized 13 trucks for eastern wing of the railway freight rate protest in Lewiston, ID
- Oct. 1977: Organized Gasohol Convoy to DC
- Aug. 1980: First mash (renewed grain) cookies taken to Richland County Fair and Glendive Fair
- Feb. 1981: Renewable grain flour goodies taken to DC and served to House of Representatives
- July 1982: Hosted Philippine Trade Team
- 1984-1996: Designed State WIFE placemats
- Sept. 1985: Hosted State WIFE convention in Glendive
- 1987-94, 2001-08: Chaired State Calendar Art Contest
- 1980-86, 1990-92: Had weekly radio show
- 1987: Coordinated State Ethanol Convoy to Denver
- 1990: Held town meetings for Farm Bill
- 1991: Bread Sack Awareness campaign; sugar beet carving contest; Ninja Turtle book protest campaign
- 1992-96: Grain playpen at Richland County Fair
- 1992-2008: Designed State WIFE Ag Activity Book
- 1993: Hung quilt in Rep. Marlenee's DC Office
- 1994-95: Wanda Zuroff becomes State WIFE president
- 1994-95 Designed seed pictures of Department of Agriculture and Wolf Point grain lab offices
- 1993-2011: MonDak Ag Day booth in Sidney
- 1998: Ethanol Awareness float and booth theme
- 1999: Wheat and Wheaties display at Ag Days
- 2000-2005: Country of Origin petition at MonDak Ag Days and GATE Show
- 2005: Pat Torgerson becomes State WIFE president
- 2005: Canadian border closure extended after March 2
- 2006: BNSF reduces freight rates
- 2006: Eminent Domain petition against Supreme Court ruling taking private land for economic gain
- 2007: NAFTA Super Highway petition
- 2008: Created National Activity Book
- 2008: 385 signatures against removal of word "navigable" from Clean Water Act
- 2008: Horse slaughter reform petition
- 2010: Montana wolves information distributed
- 2012: RBL disbands Nov. 18

Change Service Requested

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