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WIFE members meet with GIPSA administrator

By Mary Ann Murray

In WIFE's recent visit to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), we were privileged to meet with Larry Mitchell, Administrator of Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. Mr. Mitchell has been a friend of WIFE from the beginning. In 1976 when WIFE started, Larry Mitchell was starting the American Agricultural Movement at Texas Tech in Lubbock, Texas.

The purpose of GIPSA on a day-to-day basis is to make sure farmers and livestock producers get paid for the quality and quantity they deliver and this payment is made in a timely and fair manner. Another part of the mission of GIPSA is to ensure exported grain meets the highest standards of our international trading customers so that U.S. farmers receive the prices they deserve.

GIPSA was created in 1995 when the Federal Grain Inspection Service and the Packers and Stockyard Administration were combined into one agency. The two sides of the agency work somewhat independently of one another but share common support elements such as internet technology, civil rights and budget.

The Packer and Stockyards Program's mission is to protect fair trade practices, financial integrity, and competitive markets for livestock, meat and poultry. The administration and enforcement of the Packer and Stockyard Act involves coordination with the Department



WIFE President Ruth Larabee listens to Larry Mitchell, GIPSA administrator, in Washington, D.C.

of Justice on two issues: 1) Enforcement and 2) Merger and acquisition activity within the regulated industry.

According to Mr. Mitchell, there are some misconceptions about the Packers and Stockyards Act. Captive supply is a violation. By itself, the practice of packers owning their own livestock is not a violation of the Act. Section 202 prohibits packers from manipulating or controlling prices, and creating a monopoly. The Act also prohibits packers from engaging in unfair or deceptive practices. In cases where producers are not paid, GIPSA often attempts to settle without litigation in order to return money to unpaid producers.

All entities are treated equally under the Act. GIPSA can prevent mergers in

the livestock industry; however, GIPSA does not have merger review authority. Mergers and acquisitions are reviewed by the Department of Justice (DOJ). GIPSA often provides the DOJ with information to assist in its review.

GIPSA can prevent a packer from shutting down a slaughtering or processing plant if it is in the industry's best interest. GIPSA can require farmer/producers to pay timely for their livestock purchases. Producers are not subject to regulation under the Packers and Stockyards Act. The Act's jurisdiction covers dealers, market agencies, packers, swine contractors and live poultry dealers. If a producer buys livestock to feed on his or her own farm, that transaction is not covered by the Act.



By Ruth Larabee
New York

President's Report

WIFE members meet in D.C.

Beginning March 17, several Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE) members from across the states had an extremely busy few days. We had appointments with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) leaders, representatives on the Hill, and speakers from organizations that informed us about rural upcoming and possible rules and regulations that could become law. Undersecretary Ed Avalos of Marketing and Regulatory Programs stopped in our meeting room to visit with us. We had discussions with our agriculture partners with both sides putting forth ideas, working together, on how to keep our farmers and ranchers able to continue producing agriculture products here in America.

I believe the numerous specific articles written by the attending WIFE members on the topics of concern will give you additional insight of some of our Washington leaders and our meetings.

The WIFE Executive Committee has signed on to letters with our agriculture partners concerning issues that affect our farmers and ranchers.

1.) The 2008 Farm bill approved legislation for some agriculture products to have country of origin labels. (COOL) Soon after Canada and Mexico disputed the reasonable label at the World Trade Organization (WTO) saying the U.S. COOL law violated the global trade agreements. The WTO established that the existing COOL labels placed a mandatory charge to "imported livestock and meat" that surpass the "consumers benefit" because of unclear data on the

COOL labels. Putting factual and easy to read data on the labels could help the U.S. to meet the WTO global trade agreements. The U.S. has until late May, 2013 to meet the specifics of WTO.

WIFE signed on with Patrick Woodell, Food and Water Watch, and Jess Peterson, U.S. Cattlemen's Association.

2.) WIFE signed on to a thank you letter, "So God made A Farmer," with Paul Cummins, North Bridge Communications (NBC) and Jess Peterson, U.S. Cattlemen's Association.

3.) WIFE signed on to a letter with Jess Peterson, U.S. Cattlemen's Association, regarding Black Footed Ferrets. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was posted in the Federal Register Dec. 19, 2012, to launch a "reintroduction" of Black Footed Ferrets in two

countries, Canada and Mexico. A swath of twelve states from North Dakota to Texas was shown on the map that was proposed.

Also included were South Dakota, Nebraska, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma and Kansas.

4.) WIFE signed a letter with Paul Cummins (NBC) concerning the American Task Force Argentina. Here is a small summary. When Argentina affirmed one of the greatest debt failures in the past and present years, billions of dollars were given to Argentina from the U.S. taxpayers and businesses to help them survive a fiscal breakdown. Now Argentina, even though there are mega court cases, rejects paying the U.S. back. The U.S. could use some of those dollars now.

With Sincere Appreciation

To my WIFE family, I send my sincerest appreciation for the outpouring of love you have sent my way. I have received so many cards, phone calls and flowers. Words cannot begin to express my true appreciation or the messages in the cards I have received. I am included in prayer chains both here in the Animas community as well as throughout the country. The prayers are being answered but please continue to keep me in your thoughts and prayers.

I will give you a brief update about my health status. For those of you who may not know about my illness, I have cirrhosis of my liver caused by an autoimmune condition where my body attacked my liver for some unknown reason. All doctors have told me it was not caused by anything I did that it sometimes just happens. This all began back around 2004 and has gotten progressively worse. After months of working with our insurance company and a fantastic liver specialist I am now seeing, he was successful in convincing them that my liver condition is getting more dire with each passing week and that I will need a liver transplant. I have been accepted for review at the Banner Good Samaritan Medical Clinic in Phoenix, Arizona. My first appointment is scheduled for April 15. I will see a liver specialist there who will assess my condition and decisions will be made according to his findings. If I am accepted into the transplant program I do not know where a new liver will come from or how long the wait will be so this is going to be a true learning experience. Please continue to keep me in your prayers and pray for a new liver for me.

Once again thank you so much for being there for me through your beautiful cards, prayers and your love.

My love to all of you, Sheila Massey

Homeland Security Report



**By Marlene Kouba
North Dakota**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reportedly maintains a large stock of ammunition. In March 2012, DHS reportedly ordered 450 million rounds of .40 caliber ammunition, including hollow point bullets, from defense contractor ATK to be delivered over five years. Hollow-point tip bullets are rarely used in training exercises. In April 2012, DHS requested 750 million more rounds for a total of at least 1.2 billion bullets. The 750 million is more than 10 times what U.S. troops used in a full year of Iraqi combat. In 2009, manufacturer Winchester said it will deliver 200 million rounds to DHS over five years, serving as yet another order on top of others that may have already been partially fulfilled. DHS runs a large weapons training program at its Firearms Division complete with indoor and outdoor firing ranges, ammunition and weapons storage. (DHS)

A new instructional video from DHS that was posted on the agency's website is titled "Options for Consideration" advises that people who get caught in an "active shooter" situation should run away, hide under a desk or take cover out of the line of fire. Other survival strategies promoted include hiding "behind large items such as cabinets or desks. Remain quiet. Silence your cellphone or pager as even the vibration setting can give away a hiding position." So if scissors are all you've got, grab them by all means. The video is part of the administration's ongoing campaign to reduce firearm violence. The video was released to coincide with President Obama's sweeping proposals to curb gun violence in America. Security consultant Andrew Scott called the information in the video "adequate." He said that DHS was correct in recommending

Attorney general racks up travel costs

that people use scissors to attack a gunman but only in a "last, worst-case scenario." (DHS)

Across-the-board spending cuts will make the U. S. more vulnerable to a terror attack, DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano warned on February 25. Because the \$85 billion in cuts are spread among domestic and defense budgets, it would negatively affect the mission readiness and capabilities on our front lines. The department has begun to furlough Customs and Border Protection officers at ports of entry and the average wait time to customs will increase by as much as 50 percent. Air travelers could expect longer waits because of the cuts. The cuts will also affect the departments of Defense and Justice would reduce Coast Guard patrols by 25 percent and decrease the number of beds for immigration detentions. It would reduce the department's investigative activities and areas such as human smuggling and commercial trade fraud, reduce the disaster relief fund by nearly \$1 billion, potentially affecting survivors recovering from Hurricane Sandy, tornadoes and other major disasters across the country. (Foxnews.com)

The DHS, through the U.S. Army Forces Command, recently retrofitted 2,717 Mine-Resistant-Protected vehicles for service on the streets of the United States. The new DHS-sanctioned vehicles are built by Navistar Defense (NavistarDefense.com), a division within the Navistar organization. Under the Navistar umbrella are several other companies including International Trucks, IC Bus (they make school buses), Monaco RV (recreational vehicles), WorkHorse (they make chassis), MaxxForce (diesel engines), and Navistar Financial (the money arm of the company). Why do we need them? I don't know—do you? (Jim Holt)

A powerful improvised cannon was used to hurl packets of marijuana across a border fence into California, said police in the border city of Mexicali. The device was made up of a plastic pipe and a crude

metal tank that used compressed air from the engine of an old car. The cylinders were packed with drugs that weighed as much as 30 pounds. It was taken after U.S. officers said they had been confiscating a large number of drug packages that appeared to have been fired over the border. (Associated Press)

Texas ports in Laredo, Corpus Christi and San Antonio are expanding due to the new Eagle Ford shale oil and gas fields. However, around 10,000 to 12,000 trucks cross the border at Laredo, the nation's busiest inland port. What are they carrying? (Houston Chronicle)

What is amnesty? There were 3 million illegal immigrants when Reagan signed the 1986 law that was supposed to stop illegal immigration but now it is at least 11 million with no end in sight. It seems hundreds cross the border daily at many areas along, under and over the border.

Two high-tech luxury jets that the FBI convinced Congress were needed for the fight against global terrorism have instead been used to fly Attorney General Eric Holder and his predecessors, as well, according to a report by the General Accounting Office. The officials racked up nearly 700 "non-mission" trips between 2007 and 2011, at a cost of \$11.4 million. The cost attributed to attorney general travel was \$5.8 million while the FBI director's travel cost nearly as much with about 28 percent for personal reasons. The report points out that the government should be reimbursed for any personal travel at the full coach fare between cities which is less than the cost of operating a government aircraft. In November 2010, a personal trip taken by the attorney general to New York on the Gulfstream V had an estimated flight cost of \$15,894, but the reimbursement at the equivalent commercial fare was \$420.80. The attorney general paid total of \$47,000 for a total of 88 trips. The FBI director returned about \$4,500 for 10 trips. (Associated Press)

Feed Grains Report



By Janell Roe
Nebraska

Corn production depends on 10 states

As we move forward into corn planting season, there are 10 states that we should take note of and watch throughout the planting stage and into harvest. Some of these states will plant more corn acres while some will stay the same, and the change will lie within their yield potential. However, one thing is for sure: these 10 states have the power to change our corn production.

The first state up for consideration is not one that comes to mind in terms of corn acres. However, this year Arkansas is anticipating an increase in corn acres planted while maintaining their soybean acres. The majority of these extra corn acres will be taken from cotton and rice. Arkansas is expected to increase corn acres between 10-20 percent more than what was planted in 2012. The primary reason for the increase in corn acres is economics: high corn futures and strong basis numbers are enticing farmers to grow more corn and increase acres.

While Arkansas is increasing its acreage, our second state is planning on keeping its corn acreage constant. Colorado is looking at planting 1.4 million acres of corn again this year. However, the key issue with Colorado is its potential for water shortage. Currently the state is still suffering from drought conditions. They also have below-average water levels in their reservoirs and inadequate snowpack to

ease these conditions as we move towards warmer temperatures in spring. Planting is expected to proceed normally, but it could decrease up to 5 percent because of the tight water supply. In addition, the subsoil moisture is especially low in the dryland corn part of the state. Currently, we can expect to see consistent planting of corn acres with last year, but the total corn planted will depend largely on if the drought worsens.

Next is Indiana. Indiana is on the opposite end of the moisture spectrum from Colorado. Indiana has received enough precipitation to begin replenishing the moisture in their fields. Even with this improved moisture, Indiana's corn acreage is still set to remain constant with last year's acres. The drought last year decreased their corn yield by up to 39 percent and soybean yields by 10 percent.

While Indiana has received precipitation, farmers are still nervous that drought-like conditions could continue. Watching this state's precipitation will be a key factor in the upcoming months as it can drastically affect their yields.

Following Indiana is Iowa. Iowa is a large corn producing state. While Iowa has received snow and rain, the subsoil remains very dry. The moisture has only replenished the top five inches of soil. Typically Iowa has 10 inches of adequate soil moisture. Farmers will start planting this year with less subsoil moisture than last year. Most of the farm ground is still presently frozen making it unable to soak up much of the needed moisture. Because of the moisture deficits in the topsoil and increased issues with rootworms, there is a chance that we could see a slight decrease in corn acres planted this year. There is also the chance that corn acres

could lose to soybeans acres as soybean prices continue to be strong and soybeans are rootworm resistant.

Snow storms this winter have given the state of Minnesota reason to believe that they will have sufficient moisture and a good corn crop this year. While a majority of the foremost corn producing states was suffering from a drought last summer, Minnesota received rain and had one of the best corn-producing years on record. However, Minnesota is only expected to slightly increase their corn acreage. Concerns over continuous corn-on-corn planting and rootworm resistance are hampering Minnesota's chances for increasing corn acres.

Over the last several years Mississippi, predominately a soybean-producing state, has seen acres taken away from soybeans, cotton, and rice to be given to corn. In 2010, Mississippi planted 750,000 acres of corn. Last year that number had increased to 900,000 acres.

Experts in the state believe that this year they will reach the 1 million acre mark. Supporting ideas of increased corn acres, rice plantings have decreased by roughly 50 percent, and cotton acres have also decreased from 1.2 million acres in 2006 to only 580,000 acres in 2012. Soybeans have also seen a decrease in acres down from 2 million in 2012 to 1.75 million in 2012. Corn acres are likely to increase and be taken from rice and cotton; however, any increase in corn acres at the expense of soybean acres will largely depend on the weather and when farmers are able to get in the field.

Nebraska, a key corn producing state, is still suffering from worse

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By Kay Zeosky
New York

Dairy Report

MILC program to be discontinued

have no chance of maintaining the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program because it was too expensive, but that dairy farmers would be allowed to buy insurance against price drops on a voluntary basis.

The new bill will be named The Dairy Security Act. The insurance rates against price drops seem very high. It's questionable whether many farmers will choose to take part.

We found the Senate and House dairy bills to be extremely complicated. It may not be wise to try and digest them

after a full day of work. The Goodlatte – Scott Amendment is equally complex. At one point in our discussions with the people at USDA, it was mentioned that this will be the last Farm Bill. No one had a chance to get a further explanation of that statement.

The National Milk Producers Federation will continue to work on changes to the Federal Milk Marketing Order system outside the Farm Bill. I'm sure there are things that could be improved in setting the price of milk. Hopefully those changes will do no harm.

Visiting our legislators during WIFE's Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., was an eye opener. The people we spoke with who serve on the House and Senate agriculture committees seemed to have quite different ideas as to how dairy should be treated. They told us that dairy farmers

Corn production depends on 10 states

Continued from Page 4

drought conditions than any other state. The entire state of the Nebraska is experiencing drought conditions with 80 percent of the state in severe drought conditions, the highest level indicated on the Drought Monitor. Experts believe that this will not drastically affect corn acres; however, we may see some acres go to sorghum in dryland areas. Corn acres have been on the rise in Nebraska, planting 9.8 million acres in 2011 and 10.3 million acres in 2012. However, this state needs to see substantial precipitation, up to 12 inches in some areas, in order to reach a normal moisture level. Lack of moisture of this magnitude can have a devastating effect on yields if not acres.

Feed demand in Pennsylvania has put pressure on farmers to increase their crop acres. Corn acres have been increasing in this state from 1.35 million acres in 2010 to 1.44 million acres in 2012. Soybean acres have remained constant for the

most part at 500,000 acres for the past few years. Yet there is potential for soybeans to steal acres away from corn because of soybeans' higher prices. It is likely that besides corn acres increasing we will also see an increase in forage crops, wheat and oats, as more double-cropping is used to meet feed demand.

In the state of Tennessee we have seen relatively large swings in acres as farmers are more apt to chase profits here. For example, cotton acres increased by 27 percent in 2011 only to decrease by 15 percent in 2012. These decreases and increases in acres correspond with the price differences in cotton. Only corn acres have been on a continuous rise for the past few years. This makes experts believe that corn acres will increase at the expense of cotton acres as corn prices have continued to rise relative to cotton. However, with the price volatility inherent in both corn and cotton, that in the end will determine acres.

High corn prices have persuaded

Texas farmers to increase their corn and sorghum acres at the expense of soybeans and cotton. Experts believe that there will be an increase in grain sorghum planted instead of cotton due to prices. From 2011 to 2012 there was an increase in grain sorghum planted by 29 percent. Texas, like Nebraska, is still suffering from drought conditions. It looks like there will not be sufficient water this summer to meet the state's irrigation needs and water may run out for irrigators as soon as April or May. This lack of water will definitely influence the amount of corn acres planted.

There are many states to watch this year as we begin to see planting estimates come about, but the above 10 have the potential to be real game changers in terms of corn production. From issues of sufficient water to economic gain, each of these states has its own story to tell and reason for planting or not planting corn acres. However, their decisions will help determine our corn supply for the year to come.



By Pam Potthoff
Nebraska

Trade Report

Trade agreements affect many aspects of life and industry in U.S.

The White House has formally notified Congress of plans to begin trade talks with the European Union. Acting U.S. Trade Representative Demetrios Marantis said a high-standard comprehensive trade agreement with Europe will be enormously beneficial for the U.S. economy. Haven't we heard that somewhere before?

Delegates from over 100 countries (representing both public and private entities) gathered in Paris in March for the first ever Global Conference on the Use of Antimicrobials in Veterinary Medicine. The conference was organized by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The main topic was antibiotic resistance in humans. At this point cooperation with OIE standards is voluntary among the participating nations. This is a topic that could affect meat exports.

Is the horse meat scandal in Europe a good argument for COOL?

The U.S. trade deficit with Japan has increased steadily over the past four years, reaching \$79.9 billion in 2012, an increase of \$13.4 billion. In the meantime, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe says his party will not enter into negotiations on a Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement unless the other parties to the talks allow Japan to continue its high tariffs on a number of agricultural products. The Japanese government has identified so-called sensitive products it wants to protect with high tariffs, subsidies or both: rice, milk powder and butter, beef, sugar, wheat and barley. Does that seem like a good deal

for the U.S.?

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is actually NAFTA plus eight other countries. The outcome of these talks is relevant to the U.S. recovery.

Poorly negotiated trade treaties have cost us millions of jobs. The U.S. trade deficit has grown from a little more than \$70 billion in 1993 (the year before NAFTA) to nearly \$540 billion last year. The bigger the trade deficit, the more jobs we could have created in the United States but didn't.

But just as important is how trade agreements affect our domestic laws. When we sign we give up our ability to protect our vital industries, to raise tariffs on trading partners who harm us or overcharge us or supplement their indus-

tries. It is almost impossible to exit the agreement once we find it is bad for our economy and our job creation.

Trade rules affect rights in the workplace, the safety of our food and the purity of our water. They can determine how much content from an exporting country must actually come from that country to qualify for tariff benefits. Unfortunately, some trade treaties have made it easier and more beneficial for U.S. companies to move production out of the country to places where they can avoid Social Security taxes, health care and pension costs and where labor is cheap and environmental restrictions are virtually nonexistent.

President Obama wants to finish negotiating the TPP by October of this year.

House Ag Committee briefs WIFE

By Linda Newman
National WIFE Vice President

Obama wants a bill by April, so we will see.

Matt Schertz, subcommittee staff director to the Hon. Frank D. Lucas, Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, spoke to the WIFE group on Monday afternoon, March 18, on Capitol Hill.

He stated that writing the Farm Bill will be a lot tougher this year and that all the world is sensitive when it comes to agriculture. The budget has gone down considerably from 2002 to 2008, so there is a lot less money to work with and drafters of the Farm Bill will need to get very creative. And, of course, sequestration is still an unknown.

He stated that the 2011 payments are finally going out and the department has some flexibility.

He also said that President





By Barbara Broberg
Montana

Energy Report

China is largest energy user

Last month, as an alternate, I attended a conservation district supervisor “boot camp.” A variety of natural resource topics were discussed. One speaker talked about a two week flood in 2011 on the Musselshell River in Montana. It was the duration of the high water that did so much damage. The speaker mentioned that when a river is brim full there is a lot of damage too. The wear and tear on the river banks is brutal. The hydrology lesson is here: there is power in moving water. He went on to say a river channel moves around. He had slides to show the swings a river makes over time, particularly when there is high water.

Deb Dressler’s relative was in a river flood event, also a few years ago. Big river, big city in North Dakota. The description of the magnitude of the water damage was awesome. The disruption of the work routine was complete. The administrative interruption to normal systems was severe. There was government help to get things back on track. But hard work, and alternative energy was needed in the gap of time.

I’m visiting in Dayton, Ohio. March 2013 is the 100 year anniversary of a major flood event in the area. The river system flood at that time created a water shortcut through the most populated area which was also the area with the most structures. Three hundred sixty people and 1,400 horses died. Much damage and destruction occurred.

The community of Dayton rallied after the 1913 flood {www.daytonhistory.org Click on archives. Type in “1913 floods” (use quotation marks)}. Dayton was cleaned up. Then, in a timely way, the civic leaders had a planned system of levies and dams constructed along the rivers. The community had already experienced 10 damaging floods. The intent of the planning for larger structures was

to allow the water have a predictable place to flow. Most of the time a river flows in the normal river bed. The levy system has a wide shelf just above the normal river flow to use when there is more water than usual. The “shelf” fills with water when water rises. Still more water flows, and then the levy walls paralleling the river banks are there to continue to contain the river. The land, towns and buildings outside the levy have the height of the levy wall to protect them as the water level rises more, or even MORE. A system like this showcases civilization, civic involvement, and local government: It takes community “buy in,” labor to accomplish the task, and an entity to organize the accomplishment of the task.

Meanwhile, in China, 600 million people have been moved out of poverty by the “industrial revolution” that China is experiencing. China is now the largest energy user in the world. One half of the iron, steel, aluminum, and cement production in the world is being used in China. Corporations are opening daily. Ms. Xueman Wang is working on the Partnership for Market Readiness at the World Bank. She was one of four panelists discussing emission trading (ETS) at the Emission Trading Association Carbon Forum North America (www.eenews.net/tv/transcript/1581). She addressed the subject of the pollution that China is creating with their incredible economic growth. She stated that she had been present when top management at the Shanghai Ball Steel Company said that emission management is no longer a “why” question. It is a “how” question. And the momentum was to be forward to manage and reduce emissions. Just another situation to work with and to manage.

While there are obviously many layers to getting an emission trading scheme into a usable form in the world, it was a surprise to me that the discussion of carbon trading, and cap-and-trade was still out there. At the farm level, we had been told the ETS markets were not going to be

used, at least as far as a farmer thinking to sell into a carbon “offset,” which would be bought by a carbon polluting entity. The discussion at the forum maintained that the Pacific Rim countries were very much thinking that they must reduce pollution, to expect to have their emissions measurable, to have a way to off-set pollution, and to have their activities monitored enough to make them accountable for polluting emissions. The regulation would be their own industry or their government or even a worldly big brother. The four countries represented on the Forum panel were the Pacific Rim countries Australia, Japan, China, and South Korea.

I sit in “creature comfort” today. I am here due to generations of Americans seeking and striving to progress beyond subsistence. I want to remember to keep my work ethic in line with that of my sincere and hard working forefathers and mothers. We simply cannot rest on our past. There are whole countries of people striving to move their lives forward. We can do many things on our own, but there are entire projects that we sometimes hardly grasp that large organizations and governments are working toward. We in Women Involved in Farm Economics desire to work on our farms and ranches in freedom, in an environmental sustainable way, while profiting enough to move each of our agricultural holdings into the future. We need energy! We understand the need for energy policies. We need to take care of the resources on earth. And we believe the founding fathers and mothers in America got it right with our original Constitution.

Of course we do not know exactly how we will need our government to be involved in our life and energy because we don’t know the future. But we do want to be part of the fiber, food, feed, and fuel of the future. It is great for you to read these commodity topics each WIFeline. We want to keep bringing up topics as we hear about them. Thank you for each part you take in our organization.



**By Klodette Stroh
Wyoming**

Sugar Report

Sugar market is most volatile

Big Candy companies have launched a multi-million-dollar attack on U.S. family farmers, and the sugar industry is gravely concerned. Anti-farmer bills such as the Shaheen-Kirk (S. 345), and Pitts-Blumenauer (H.R. 693) are at the top of their wish list. I wonder, Senator Shaheen and Representative Pitts, are U.S. farmers or taxpayers in this country of any concern to you?

Bills such as these will devastate the American food supply and put our nation's security at risk. We must keep in mind that U.S. sugar prices are already low in comparison to other countries. We are in a free fall – down 5 percent over the last year and approaching a historic low, last seen in the 1980s and '90s. The lower sugar prices resulted in closure of 54 sugar factory and the loss of over 100,000 jobs since 1985. These bills effectively remove the only safety net sugar farmers have to cope with today's crippling oversupplies and low prices. This is directly jeopardizing the remaining 142,000 jobs, employing U.S. citizens found within the U.S. sugar industry.

The sugar market is the most volatile market in the world. American sugar beet and sugar cane farmers do not receive a red cent from government in the form

of subsidies. Countries like Brazil, for example, used subsidies and lax labor standards to gain an OPEC-like stranglehold on nearly half of all global exports while the Mexican government directly controls one-fifth of its sugar production.

American farmers cannot compete with foreign treasuries. It is a shame to see that our American lawmakers are selling out U.S. farmers. Farmers feed the world, a world which is still growing, placing an even greater demand on agriculture.

Benefits of Sugar Policy:

- The current U.S. sugar policy works for taxpayers, the consumer, farmers, and ensures America's food security.
- Our current sugar policy employees 146,000 U.S. citizens in 19 U.S. states
- To this point, our current sugar policy has not cost taxpayers a dime.

Cost of Production:

Cost of production for the U.S. sugar cane and sugar beet producers exceeds well over \$1,100 dollars per acre.

Absent a Sugar Policy:

Without the current U.S. sugar policy, America will struggle to produce sugar. A crucial ingredient, the U.S. Department of Commerce stated, is used in 70 percent of U.S. food manufacturing.

Today, however, we stand on the brink of a great time of hope. We are going to see significant changes in food production, driven by the growing wealth of developing countries, along with high market prices for farm commodities. China may prove to be a vital market for U.S.

agricultural producers.

As countries become richer, and their middle class continues to grow, the demands of the people will be those of better diets--three meals a day, with lots of calories.

Moreover, today's high crop prices will force a massive shift in how technologies develop. In the recent past, when prices fell lower, farmers continued to focus on keeping their costs down. With prices rising, new investment dollars will become available concentrated on boosting yields. A peaceful future lies in the hands of American farmers who till God's land and feed his people.

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Senate Ag Committee briefs WIFE

*By Deb Dressler
National WIFE Past President*

Cassie Bladow, legislative assistant for Senator John Hoeven (R-ND), coordinated the Senate briefings at the Capitol Visitor Center for the 2013 WIFE Legislative Conference held in Washington, D.C.

Bladow stated, "Senate Agriculture Committee is striving for a markup on the Farm Bill in April or early May." The Continuing Resolution and the Budget are the hot topics currently in the Senate. WIFE extends a thank you to Cassie Bladow for coordination the Senate briefing for the third year in a row.

Rural Life Report



By Donna Bolz
Nebraska

Three years ago, March 23, 2010, the Affordable Care Act was signed into law. Applying for benefits under the Affordable Care Act could be as complex as doing taxes. The government's draft application runs 15 pages for a three person family. An outline of the online version has 21 steps, some with additional questions.

Seven months before the October 1 start of enrollment season for millions of uninsured Americans, the idea that getting health insurance could be as easy as shopping online is starting to look like wishful thinking. At least three major federal agencies, including the IRS, will check applications. Checking identities, income and citizenship is supposed to happen

Health insurance is far from simple

in real time if applying online. That's just the first part of the process. Picking a health plan will require additional steps plus a basic understanding of insurance jargon.

The law says virtually all Americans must carry health insurance starting next year, although most will keep the coverage they now have through their jobs, Medicare or Medicaid. Some are concerned that a lot of uninsured people will be overwhelmed and simply give up.

Ron Pollack, executive director of Families USA, an advocacy group supporting the health care law is calling for the government to simplify the form and provide for an army of counselors to help uninsured people navigate the new system. It is unclear who would pay for these navigators.

Drafts of the paper application and a 60-page description of the online version were posted online by the Health and Human Services Department (HHS) seeking feedback from industry and consumer groups. Those materials, along with a recent HHS presentation to insurers, run counter to the vision of simplicity promoted by administration officials.

The government estimates its online application will take a half-hour to complete on average. The paper application is estimated to take an average of 45 minutes. The new coverage starts January 1, 2014.

Middle class people will be eligible for tax credits to help pay for private insurance plans while low-income people will be steered to safety-net programs such as Medicaid.

HHS spokeswoman Erin Shields Britt said in a statement the application is a work in progress and being

refined thanks to public input. It will help people make apples-to-apples comparisons of cost and coverage between insurance plans and learn whether they can get a break in costs.

WIFE Supporting Members

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- AT&T
- Bayer CropScience

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- Farm Credit of New Mexico
- Monsanto
- Renewable Fuels Association
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WIFE Activities

Members attend Women's Farm & Forestry Alliance meeting

*By Linda Newman, Montana
National WIFE Vice President*

WIFE members Tammy Basel and Linda Newman attended the Women's Farm & Forestry Alliance annual meeting March 11-12, 2013, at the St. Paul Hotel in Minnesota. The theme for the meeting was "Growing leadership and management skills for a better tomorrow: Strengthening women in Agriculture through web-based skills training."

We were welcomed by Gary Matteson, VP, Young, Beginning, Small Farmer Programs, Outreach, Farm Credit Council.

The Keynote Speaker was Janie Hipp, Director of Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, University of Arkansas, and an Agriculture Lawyer with Robert A. Leflar Law Center for the last 20 years. She stressed that the number of women in agriculture has increased dramatically in recent years. There are one million women farm operators in the U.S. today, and they make up over 30 percent of all farm operators. Over 300,000 women are primary managers operating 14 percent of all U.S. farms, and for 40 percent of these, farming is their primary occupation.

The average age of women farmers is 58.8 years as compared to their male counterparts being 56.8 years. The percentage of women producers under 45 is 15.9 percent, 45-64 is 50.3 percent, and 65 and older 33.8 percent.

Comparing average gross sales, she stated that female operated farms had an average gross of \$36,440 per year while male operators received \$150,671 average gross sales. Nearly one half of all women producers had gross sales of less than \$1,000, but over 15,000 women had sales of over \$100,000.

Janie noted that the importance of agriculture is a major national security issue! She stated that we need to pay attention to where we fit in together with everyone to be successful in ag and food production. There is a need to get back to the fundamentals and learn how to work together with others to make it successful.

She pointed out that women need to

be involved in all aspects of farming and ranching, saying, "Ladies, if you can't read a financial statement, you are in big trouble—you never know when you might be left with the farm due to accidents, illnesses or death!" She feels that women need to be involved in social media, engaging other women, and engage in some form of public speaking.

With all of the problems that we are facing in agriculture now with sequestration, farm bill, etc., women need to get organized because if we don't, someone else will and we won't have a voice and it will be detrimental to ag. We need to pool our resources and don't fragment—open arms to everyone; we can't blend in, and we have to SPEAK UP! We need to get the message out to everyone to make them understand by whatever means we have—social media, organizations, etc. No one owes us this way of life; we have to protect it.

She also stated that if you don't have a will or trust set up for your operation, immediately get a lawyer! She stated that in Indian country there are 60 million acres without any estate planning as well as many other U.S. farmers and ranchers. This is just narrowing the field by limiting ag land. Young farmers and ranchers need help—parents and grandparents need to turn over the reins of power and a substantial amount of the decision making earlier to younger heirs.

Indian country is getting excited as there are new programs out to help them by diversifying their ag land, and there are now 12,000 Native American FFA members and 60,000 Native America 4-H members.

Her ending quotes were:

1. Hunger in the U.S.— Half of all children will be insecure in our lifetime.
2. We need to figure out how to feed everyone.
3. If we can't feed ourselves, we will not be a sovereign nation.

Dr. Tamara Walkingstick, Associate Director of Arkansas Forest Resources Center, talked briefly on the importance of when you see a need, step up—either push

someone, or do it yourself and in doing so, always focus on the next generation.

Nancy Barcus, VP, Leadership/Organizational Services, Agriculture Future of America spoke about her organization which was started 16 years ago for college men and women choosing careers in agriculture and to help rural men and women stay on the farm, focusing on leadership, internship and finances. She says women are planners and we need to use our skills and take the time to better our businesses. We need to plan ahead so things don't get to be "urgent" after the "fact!"

Kevin Klair, Extension Economist, Center for Farm Financial Mgmt., University of MN, basically discussed what the focus of WFFA is in developing online learning pods to assist women in Agriculture. He discussed differences and challenges of online courses versus face-to-face workshops or conferences.

The format for the learning pods at www.wffalliance.org will be covering many different topics developed through the efforts of many different groups in the alliance identifying the needs that women have.

Gary Matteson, Farm Credit and Stephanie Hersheth-Sandlin, former SD Congresswoman, discussed the vision of WFFA and will act as an alliance to enhance other ag organizations in high caliber training that can be taken into local communities and be promoted by their local ag groups. They pointed out that women think differently and need to be included in all types of board rooms and not just because of the law that says a certain percent have to be!

Celeste Settrini, California Cattle Rancher and Produce Broker for Fresh Network, gave a quick social media training in the absence of Leigh Adcock, Executive Director, Women, Food and Agriculture Network, who couldn't get there from Iowa due to the blizzard. Celeste basically stated that we need to get out there and tell it like it is, not how they per-

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By Jean Wach
Nebraska

Cereal Grains Report

Drought threatens U.S. wheat crop

wheat system would have access to a lot of it. Wheat plants are normally self-pollinating, so the challenge is creating plants that have no pollen that can then be fertilized with pollen from another plant to create a hybrid of the two.

Hybrid wheat technology has been added as the first phase of a five-step research and development pipeline at DuPont's Pioneer seed unit. DuPont, Dow Chemical Co. and Monsanto Co. have previously announced efforts to boost wheat yields through genetic modifications, which may or may not involve creating hybrids.

Wheat is planted on more acres globally than any other crop but productivity improvements have lagged the other major crops. Protecting intellectual property in wheat would be easier with hybrids than the inbred varieties currently available, as hybrid seed saved from a prior harvest produce less grain.

Agriculture accounted for 30 percent of DuPont's sales. Monsanto is the largest seed company. Wheat was planted on 533.3 million acres globally last year, surpassing rice, corn and soybeans, according to data compiled by Bloomberg industries.

Drought persists, but another strong season is still possible for wheat. The U.S. drought monitor shows a softening drought footprint in areas of the U.S., but unfortunately much of the High Plains and other prime spring wheat production areas are still plagued with severe deficits.

Unfortunately, long-range forecasts do not anticipate much change and the lack of precipitation this winter threatens the Nebraska, Colorado, South Dakota, and Wyoming wheat crop. The forecast does not look promising for spring wheat growers in North Dakota, Minnesota or Montana where dry conditions to the east and south settled in this winter. So far, the weather has been kinder to spring and winter wheat growers in the Pacific Northwest and most of the eastern soft red winter production regions.

Extension specialists in the wheat belt are not overly concerned yet as a lot will depend on what precipitation comes in early spring. The 2012 drought did little to deter near-record yields in many wheat fields but it was achieved by taking out most of the moisture in the soil.

DuPont Co., the world's second largest seed company, said wheat yields would increase 15 percent to 20 percent if it can make a hybrid version of the world's most planted grain. These yield gains would occur with the first commercial product expected in a decade or so. The company is using conventional and biotechnology approaches to developing hybrid wheat. DuPont joins Basel-based Syngenta AG in pursuing ways to create wheat hybrids.

About 500 million acres of wheat are planted globally each year, and a hybrid

Members attend WFFA

Continued from Page 10

ceive it to be from others. In her keynote address, she told her story and how she got involved in blogs that lead her to public speaking. She says your story is extraordinary to other people because we are the experts in our own experiences! There are over one billion people on Facebook—farmers and ranchers need to get out there because HSUS has 1.5 million fans, so we definitely need to tell our side!

Laura Wood-Peterson, Director of Legislative Affairs, National Association of Conservation Districts and Pam Buus, Plant Manager Trainee for Cargill spoke on Strengthening Women in Agriculture—Steps along the Way.

Annette Pagan, Director, US Programs, Winrock International gave 4 important actions for women:

1. Utilize technical assistance and high quality training.
2. Hook up with a mentor.
3. Participate in a sector-specific association—if you don't participate, you won't have a voice.
4. Take lead in policy making.

We need to follow intuition, when you have a blink of an idea, need to act upon it. Keep on top of your game. Be a mentor as well as having one of your own. She also talked about the importance of

older women to tell their stories.

Sara Wyant, Editor-Publisher, Agri-Pulse talked about crisis communication/management-- offensive videos and how to combat them. She suggested telling good things about your operation and have positive media already in place and then if a crisis does occur, you already have some positive out there and you don't have to play catch-up after the fact. She also gave some tips on talking to reporters should they happen to call.

Whitey Lemon, Field Representative for Google, joined us by teleconference and talked about all of the features that Google has to offer to grow your business.

Vanessa Kummer, Former Chair, United Soybean Board, ad Jennifer Ozimkiewicz, VP of US Product Management, Monsanto, gave a closing Call to Action:

1. Be strategic, see the future, see the forest before the trees.
2. Pay attention to the bottom line—understand finances.
3. Value relationships—use all resources available for networking and developing ideas.
4. Show inner strength, courage, and confidence—speak out and share.
5. Engage with others and prepare for GROWTH!
6. Think about succession!

WIFE Notices

- **Proposed Bylaw** changes due to Jenifer Felzien (gjfelz@kci.net) by May 20, 2013. Jenifer Felzien, 2946 County Road 53, Sterling, CO 80751-8912.
- **Nominations**, including chapter and state endorsements for Officers, Commodity and Topic chairmen, due to Nominations Chair Klodette Stroh, 980 Road 5, Powell, WY 82435, strohfarms@tritnet.net, by May 20, 2013.
 - All officers are elected at the annual convention and serve a one year term or until their successors are elected. (President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary and Treasurer)
 - Area Directors are elected at the annual convention and serve a one year term or until their successors are elected. (Area I and Area II)
 - All Commodity and Topics of Interest Chairmen shall be elected at the convention and serve a one year term and can serve a maximum of three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms.
 - All candidates must have the endorsement of their Chapter and Association or the endorsements of 5 Regular members in good standing. Their Association must be current on WIFE Assessments. Nominations from the floor will be accepted if written endorsements are in the hands of the chairman.
- The current Commodity/Topic Chairmen are:
 - Beef
 - Cereal Grains (Wheat, Barley, Oats)
 - Dairy
 - Energy
 - Specialty Crops (Cotton, Peanuts, Rice, Tobacco)
 - Natural Resources, Private Property, Water and Endangered Species
 - Pork
 - Poultry
 - Rural Life (Farm Finance, Tax, Health, Communication)
 - Sheep/Goats
 - Sugar
 - Trade
 - Transportation
 - Grains (Dry Beans, Lentils, Feed Grain, Oil Seeds)
 - Homeland Security



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