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WEATHER WREAKS HAVOC ON LEGISLATIVE VISITS

by Marlene Kouba

Delegates from across the country met in our nation's Capitol, March 3-5. A routine meeting was held on the first night. The members met with speakers from the House and Senate Agriculture committees in the Capitol's Visiting Center on Wednesday morning. We had lunch with Honorary WIFE member Katherine Hill in the Agriculture Department's dining room and while there, Edmond Bonjour, Director of the Oklahoma Agricultural Leadership Program (OALP) at Oklahoma State University, asked if one of our members would speak to their group of 73 young people about our organization as Katherine had praised us as "one of her groups" while with them. President Linda Newman and Montana WIFE President, Whitney Klasna, visited with them and answered their questions. Later that day, various speakers came to us. That night, WIFE sponsored a pizza party for aides in the agriculture committees in one of the Senate buildings. There was a good turn out and about 26 large pizzas were consumed along with a variety of drinks. Thursday was our day to spend on the Hill with our elected men and women in Congress but it was a disaster. The city received up to eight inches of rain, which turned to ice and snow so the federal government and all schools were closed. There were a few aides in the offices and the Montana delegates did make their visits but the rest of us did not attempt it. Because of the snow, cab drivers charged an extra \$15 per trip, no matter where you went. Flights were cancelled or delayed as planes were de-iced and runways were cleared of snow. A group from Pennsylvania in the hotel took the train to get home. It was an unusual experience but members bonded while stranded.



Members presented Katherine Hill, head of USDA's Office of Communications and honorary WIFE member, with a WIFE apron.

Look for more updates from the Legislative Seminar in Washington, D.C. throughout this issue!



The dome of the U.S. Capitol is made of iron; because of rust and decay, it is currently being restored and repainted.

President's Report



By Linda Newman
Montana

Food handling tips come in handy for barbecuing season

Wow, I believe spring is officially here! March in Montana with most days in the 60's (and predicting 70's this next week) isn't really the norm, but we will take it--and hope for rain instead of snow in April and May. It sure makes calving a lot more pleasant, especially for all of those producers that are experiencing twins--triplets--and even quadruplets! What is up with that?

National WIFE had a very productive legislative trip to Washington, DC, March 3-5--everything went as planned, except the weather. I think all of the attendees were affected in some fashion or another, either coming or going. (We may rethink the issue of when to go to D.C. next time.) We found out that being on the East Coast in a snowstorm is really not where you want to be!

My experiences included taking a 25-mile taxi ride (because the Metro Bus quit running) from the end of the Metro Green Line to the Thurgood Marshall Airport in Baltimore. Picture this--about four inches of wet snow and slushy roads, while

the taxi driver was driving in the passing lane at about 75 mph, passing everything in sight. So, needless to say, I got there in plenty of time! Then boarded the plane to Seattle, sat on the runway to get de-iced, made the trek across country only to land in Seattle 10 minutes after my connecting flight to Billings left!! So, my first experience of sitting in an airport from midnight to noon the next day!! (Amazingly, I had lots of company--think most of the people on that plane missed their connecting flights!)

Several of our Montana WIFE members just attended a "Food Handlers Safety Class" this month as we help prepare and serve several large events in Montana. I have been cooking and serving food for "nigh on 50 years" and tend to think I know it all, but, was surprised to find out that maybe I am not doing some things up to par--imagine that! Luckily, I don't think anyone has passed due to my cooking (at least that I know of).

So, I will enlighten you on some of the practices that I probably knew at one time, but have conveniently forgotten since:

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food--20 seconds is a long time! (The suggestion was to sing the Happy

Birthday song to gauge the time as it takes that long for soap to kill any germs present!)

2. It is suggested to use paper towels to wipe and disinfect counter tops instead of cloth dishcloths and towels, but if using cloth ones, they need to be changed out everyday and washed often in your washing machine using the "hot" cycle.

3. Prevent cross-contamination by keeping raw food--especially raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs away from ready-to-eat foods in shopping carts, grocery bags and refrigerators. Always store raw food below any other food so there is no danger of dripping juices from them.

4. Clean that can opener often.

5. When cooking, always use a food thermometer to test internal cooking temperatures to 165 degrees for most ground meat mixtures and all poultry; 145 degrees for fresh beef, pork, veal, lamb and fish; and 165 degrees for leftovers and casseroles.

6. Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs, seafood and other perishables within two hours of cooking or purchasing. Refrigerate within one hour if the temperature outside is 90 degrees.

7. Divide large portions of leftovers in small containers for faster cooling before putting in refrigerator or freezer. Do not put hot foods directly into the refrigerator or freezer as it will heat up the temperature and possibly allow food already stored to be affected.

These were some of the the things that I have been a little too lax on when preparing and storing food, so I thought they were worth mentioning in case our readers may need a little "tune up" in this department! And, if you want to get fully enlightened, go to www.fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/consumers/ucm255180.htm#chart.

I hope you all are having a great spring--getting all of the newborns on the ground, greasing the farm equipment, getting the garden seeds started, tightening the lawn mower belt, and whatever else needs to be done to prepare for summer. So, until next time, don't work too hard!

Legislative Seminar: SKYLAR SOWDER



Skylar Sowder, Legislative Assistant for Chairman K. Michael Conaway (R-TX) of the Agriculture Committee, discussed crop insurance. She said the Farm Service Agency (FSA) wants to update acres and you can use their website. If a county shows the acres being less than yours, you can take yours out. There are many changes in conservation programs. The bill for the Waters of the United States was scheduled for March 5 but the federal government was shut down that day due to 8 inches of snow. FSA doesn't want to open up the Farm Bill as they have already made cuts. Some want the nutrition sector separated from the Farm Bill yet

farmers provide the food in nutrition. Risk Management is set up in units or section lines so it helps in North Dakota but not all states.

Cereal Grains Report



By Jean Wach
Nebraska

Kansas State researchers develop heat tolerant wheat

To make the new wheat more heat-tolerant, researchers at Kansas State University are adding genetic material from rice because it is a tropical plant that is grown at higher temperatures, it has a grain that fills out and is genetically similar to wheat. It's a gene therapy for hot temperatures and yield.

Kansas State has filed a patent to protect their technology. However, patent approvals can take several years. The researchers are hoping a company or other entity will become a sponsor for the genetically-engineered wheat

and pay for the extensive regulatory process that has to be done to ensure the product is safe before it can be commercialized and planted by Kansas farmers. The process can cost tens to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Howard Trick, a professor at Kansas State, in the Department of Plant Pathology, says they want the technology in hand and validated so that when genetically-modified wheat is allowed to be grown, the product is there for companies who see its value. Their research is backed by the Kansas Wheat Commission and funded by Kansas farmers through the wheat check-off, which supports research and market development.

If temperatures in Kansas are too high during a period in May and June when wheat heads normally begin to fill, the kernels shrivel. Grains do best when temperatures are between 60 and 65 degrees. With every two to three degree temperature rise, a three to four percent yield loss can potentially occur.

Rural Life Report

Farming still a dangerous job

Are you exhausted today? Are you on pills for energy to get you through the day? Is there enough time for rest in the busy spring season of planting, calving and other duties on the farm?

According to information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, farming is among the 10 most dangerous occupations. Plenty of rest and staying alert is essential to get us through the long hours, especially when weather conditions cause farmers to rush and unknowingly take chances because they are on "overload."

In 2012, 373 farmers and farmworkers were killed, with 167 ag workers hurt each day according to government statistics. Farms are getting bigger and more farm workers have limited ag background, increasing the need to practice and review farm safety on a daily basis. Big



By Mary Ann Unruh
North Dakota

equipment is one of the biggest threats as well as driving equipment and vehicles on highways.

Safety is one of the most important things. Workers need to be reminded to check that signal lights are working and they must be made aware of power lines above the area they work in. First aid kits need to be available in vehicles as well as information on what to do when accidents arise.

Always remember that agriculture's top priority--today, tomorrow and forever--is the safety of the people involved in it. Slow down and LIVE!

Legislative Seminar: ERIN MOSSER



Erin Mosser (right), Assistant Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service is the director of COOL (Country of Origin Labeling). They cover all major grocery stores. They go into a store and study labeling. In 2014, meat labeling was changed. All covered commodities have been included since 2009. They have tried to visit all stores to check on compliance. They collect data, not trends for 2015, and they will target stores for trace-back audit. Fruits and vegetables, some nuts, fish and meats are included. They do outreach, have webinars and are preparing a store packet containing posters, brochures, etc. COOL was passed but the World Trade Organization (WTO) says we are not in compliance. New rules were issued. WTO says some adjustments are still needed. The Geneva talks will make the final determination. If the United States loses the appeal it is up to Congress to step in. WTO has been involved since 2009. It is a long process as they have to write regulations according to statutes of laws.



By Maggie Nutter
Montana

Beef Report

Cancer research agency to evaluate effects of red meat

Why should we care about the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)? Because they are about to evaluate red meat.

It is possible that after October of 2015, beef and pork will come with a warning label on the side and only be sold to those over 18 years of age. Perhaps you would get carded at McDonald's and have to smuggle the Happy Meal to your car in a plain brown wrapper so people wouldn't know you were feeding burgers to your children.

Okay, I don't really think that people will totally stop eating red meat if IARC gives it a certain rating but it will affect policy, policies such as the Dietary Guidelines and laws in the State of California, which love to ban any and every sort of food. Most people do not read the Dietary Guidelines everyday and try to follow them but the Guidelines are certainly used to formulate

school lunches, military meals, and any other federally subsidized food program menu.

IARC is an arm or special research agency of the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO is the health branch of the United Nations. WHO, through IARC, tries to identify current and emerging cancer threats worldwide. IARC looks at food, chemicals, herbs, any and all "stuff" that may affect humans.

They try to clarify the role the environment and lifestyle, mixed in with human genetics plays in causing cancer. IARC promotes the theory that most cancers are linked to environmental factors and therefore preventable. Their goal is to find all the factors or mixes of factors that could cause cancer, seek out early detection methods and determine possible prevention strategies.

So how is this all done? The procedure starts when IARC puts out a notice that they will be evaluating a substance, which in this case is red meat and processed meat. Then

they call for scientists to apply to be on the panel. The call for "experts" has already been put out and was closed February 6, 2015.

When certain industry groups found out that they were going to evaluate red and processed meats, they encouraged certain research scientists they thought would have a good knowledge to apply. Hopefully some beef industry experts were selected for the panel.

Next, IARC calls for Data. So again, industry groups are encouraging research to be sent in and encouraging those who have research that needs published and peer reviewed to get it published and reviewed. The closing date for data will be September, 2015.

There is also another closing date, which is the "Request for Observer Status." What this does is allows individual with interest and sufficient scientific credentials to apply to attend and hear the proceedings. Observers are not allowed to give input or try to influence the outcome of the panel by contacting the selected experts prior to or during the meeting. IARC selects the observers to try to get a balance of different views.

There is no public comment period. The merits of red meat will not be considered. The fact that it is dense nutrition with lots of iron and B12 will not be part of the decision-making process. What they decide is what they decide.

So, industry groups are trying to be proactive and find out what research is out there. Do we need to be concerned? If red meat is rated into one of IARC categories, how will we handle it? They are trying to find positive messages that the industry can stand unified in and promote. What is being said is they do not want a replay of the headlines like when the Dietary Guidelines Committee report came out. The more the industry was indignant, the more the headlines shouted things like "Less beef recommended" and "Beef is bad for the environment."

The goal is to be proactive for the industry and not reactive. Keep your ears to the ground on this one.

Legislative Seminar: GRANT COLVIN, KATIE BERGH & JOEL LEFTWICH



Grant Colvin, Policy Analyst, and Katie Bergh, Legislative Correspondent for the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry under Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), stated that in mandatory price supporting they are trying to find what helps all. They will continue to offer crop insurance for fruits and vegetables. Trade is a big topic right now. Cuba offers big opportunities. The livestock forage program helped many ranchers. Trade works for agriculture. She supports the current sugar program.

Sugar quota will play into future policy. The Senator is a vanquard of ideas regarding COOL (Country of Origin Labeling). Africa cannot have much agriculture without genetically modified crops because of their poor soils. Opponents are loud but have little facts. The United States needs immigrant workers and we need to find a way to allow them to work in America but it is an emotional issue. Most offices in Congress prefer emails over letters which have to go off site to be screened.

Joel Leftwich, Staff Director for Chairman Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS) started to work in D.C. 15 years ago. (Sen. Roberts started Rural Health Care and he is the first to chair agricultural committees in both the House and the Senate.) Without agriculture, we would be in a world of hurt. Agriculture needs to be involved in national debates. Kansas has 105 counties and he visits all of them every two years. His priority is to be the voice of agriculture. They want to work with farmers. One item of importance is the WIC program. School lunches should be left up to schools. Crop insurance is needed in many cases but in others it is not. Subsidies are usually some of what you paid in premiums. Prices are less now but premiums are still high. He doesn't foresee much change in Country of Origin Labeling (COOL).



Feed Grains Report



By Donna Bolz
Nebraska

As I looked through a list of the workshops at a conference I recently attended, I found one called “GMO’s—How Do We Explain Them to Consumers?” I realized that I probably couldn’t explain (in much detail) what a GMO product was so I attended the workshop. The content of the workshop was provided by the Center for Food Integrity. Below is some of the most interesting information:

We started with the definition of GMO. I found that the simple explanation of a Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) is an organism whose genetic makeup has been altered. When a plant is genetically modified, usually a gene has been added to the plant to produce a beneficial trait, such as improving its nutritional value or drought tolerance without fundamentally changing the plant. It is like downloading an app to your cell phone.

There are eight crops in the U.S. that are genetically modified commercially: corn (field and sweet), soybeans, cotton, canola, alfalfa, sugar beets, papaya and squash. All were created by humans, none by nature.

GMOs have been studied for more than 20 years and the overwhelming view of the scientific community around the world is that GM foods do not pose a risk to consumers. GMOs have been more thoroughly tested than any product produced in the history of agriculture. In all the tests there hasn’t been an instance where there was a health risk associated with a GMO product.

Since the Food and Drug Administration maintains that GMO food is basically the same as other food and poses no safety risk, there is no need to label it differently. If one is interested in purchasing foods that are not GMOs, it was suggested they purchase certified organic products because

GMOs allow for safe, nutritious and affordable food

they cannot contain GMO material.

Before any food is put on the market it goes through mandatory allergy testing. In the past 15-plus years that the GMO crops have been in the U.S. food system, there has not been a case of allergies confirmed due to genetic modification.

Another plus is that between 1996 and 2009, pesticide use in the U.S. was reduced by 379 million pounds, thanks to GMOs, which has saved farmers time and money. There is no concern from feeding GMOs to livestock as the digestive tracts of animals break down genes whether they are from GMOs or conventional feed. Science tells us that it is physiologically impossible for them to move into food products.

So how are GMOs regulated? On the average, it takes 10 years for GMOs to be approved because no single statute or regulation covers them. The regulation of GMO crops and animals falls to three federal agencies: the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture

(USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

One problem that has come up is that of “superweeds.” They really aren’t super, but they are survivors. Any use of the same weed-control method for any length of time, whether it is chemical, mechanical or GMO, is going to allow weeds to adapt. Soon there will be more high-value crop technologies becoming available once they receive regulatory approvals and are commercialized.

I wondered why we need GMOs and found the demand for food is growing rapidly around the world. There will be another two billion people added to the planet by the year 2050. GMOs are a way to increase food production without increasing the impact on the environment. GMO seeds allow more safe, nutritious and affordable food using the same amount of land and fewer pesticides and other chemicals. I found this to be interesting. I would like to hear from you on your thoughts about this information. My email is donnab6519@windstream.net.

Legislative Seminar: SCOTT LINSKY & KARIS GUTTER



Scott Linsky (right), Chief of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness said much of their division is security. USDA makes sure everything is working in disasters, such as loan payments, etc. Some employees can set up on any other site to act as headquarters if necessary. They spend much time in preparing others for disaster. Farmers are more resilient than most people. How prepared are you for personal disaster? Be involved in community activities that can help. National Preparedness Day is April 30.

Karis Gutter, Deputy Under Secretary of Farm and Foreign Agriculture Service, explained the Department of Homeland Security. There are 2,048 counties with 125,000 offices. There has always been a crisis in agriculture--in the 1930s there was the ASCS and the dust bowl. In 1935, the Rural Electrification Administration was created by executive order and in 1936 there was a conservation bill and World War II. In the 1940s, the first crop insurance and a food bill took place. In 2008, there was the housing market crash. The agriculture department shared in a \$50 billion budget reduction. Direct payments cost \$5 billion a year and have been eliminated but the money will go elsewhere. There was \$4 to \$5 billion paid in disaster payments after the Farm Bill was passed. Dairy has had no safety net in the past but does now. Mr. Gutter is the first person to be in charge of all 17 agencies under the department which can now all be accessed from one website. Los Angeles has 17 representatives in Congress so it takes several states to match that for impact. Only about 600,000 farmers participate in the Farm Bill so they need the FSA (Farm Service Agency), which they hope to combine with the Risk Management Agency to share data.





By Marlene Kouba
North Dakota

Homeland Security Report

Labor unions look to increase membership numbers

In the first six years of Obama's term in office, the U.S. government has issued 5.46 million new work permits to immigrants, including nearly 1 million to illegal aliens in addition to the 1.1 million legal immigrants and 700,000 guest workers admitted to the country each year. Work permits are gateway documents to driver's licenses and other benefits. Data reveals that about 1.8 million new work permits, or Employment Authorization Documents, were issued to illegal immigrants with temporary visas or those who entered under the Visa Waiver Program. This includes about 1.2 million who had a visa status for which employment is not authorized by law such as, 470,028 work permits were issued to aliens on tourist visas and 531,691 to foreign students.

About 982,000 new work permits were issued during the Obama administration to illegal aliens or those unqualified for admission, including 957,000 illegal immigrants who crossed the border illegally and were listed as "Entered Without Inspection." About 12,000 permits were issued to illegal immigrants who were denied asylum, were suspected of using fraudulent documents, were stowaways, or were refused at a port of entry. This drastic expansion of foreign workers, which includes many illegal workers, undermines jobs and incomes for all residents, including recent immigrants.

Labor unions are hoping to expand their dwindling ranks by recruiting millions of illegal workers who will have new work permits. They are promoting themselves with a website. The unions are down to about 14.5 million members nationwide.

The Senate Judiciary Committee recently held a hearing into abuses of the H-1B skilled guest worker visa program. Lawmakers heard experts describe how the

use of foreign workers or younger employees has come to dominate the IT industry, with many tech giants using the program to fire well-paid current workers and replace them with workers from abroad at significantly lower pay. The H-1B program has become a cheap labor program.

The companies also force its American workers to train their H-1B replacements as a condition of receiving their severance packages and are required to sign non-disparagement agreements as a condition of their severance. They are told that if they do not agree to remain silent, they will be terminated with no severance pay or other benefits and will face an even tougher search for a new job and a continued career. The federal government is expressly giving a special permit to foreign workers in order to displace American workers (U.S. Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL)).

By law, a person must have a Social Security number to work in the United States but now the IRS provides workers with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number. They pay taxes using these numbers and the IRS does not report them to the immigration authorities. Now they are eligible for most federal programs and even federal tax breaks if they file tax forms.

New executive orders will offer Social Security numbers to about four million immigrants who will then be able to file amended tax returns to get tax credits for up to three years after they were due. Now Mexico's 50 consulates are able to get access to data maintained by regional governments in Mexico and print birth certificates which will give them access to passports, more protection and benefits.

Many companies in the Houston area are "misclassifying" their employees as "independent subcontractors" to avoid paying minimum wage or overtime, no benefits like medical insurance, vacations or paid holidays. More than 60,000 workers in that area were misclassified in 2013. If any such workers are discovered, they are simply terminated but not deported.

Many Cubans are avoiding the cross-

ing to Florida by flying to Mexico and then coming across the southern border to get into America. (Houston Chronicle).

Texas was the first state in the nation to offer in-state tuition to students who have completed more than three years of schooling in the state but don't have legal residency. In Texas about 20,000 students enrolled in the so-called DREAM ACT in 2012. Research shows that in-state tuition is associated with a 30 percent enrollment increase among non-citizens. Since then, 18 states have followed suit. A new federal program gives some immigrants a visa for immigrant victims of crime (Houston Chronicle).

Kansas and co-plaintiff Arizona, in trying to remove ineligible voters from the voter rolls, are central to the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), the 1993 law that created the standard federal registration form. Noncitizen voting is growing at the same rate as the illegal immigrant population in the United States and as more states give driver's licenses to illegal aliens and the 7 million beneficiaries and become eligible for these and other federal ID documents, voter fraud is likely due for a big increase over the next few cycles. Right now, the only required verification is that would-be voters must sign an oath on the federal registration form stating that they are U.S. citizens.

About 39 percent of Americans think our elections are unfair and only 20 percent believe proof of citizenship shouldn't be required for voter registration. In just the past two years, over 70 elections in Ohio have been tied or decided by a single vote.

It is estimated that nearly 100,000 noncitizens voted in the 2008 and 2010 federal elections as hundreds of thousands of cases of noncitizen voting have been found in Florida, California, and Illinois, states with some of the highest illegal alien and foreign-born populations. The large majority of noncitizens and illegal aliens are Hispanic, and have reliably voted Democrat, with a ratio of two-to-one, since 1980 (National Review).

Natural Resources Report



HR 1029 passes House, would hold EPA accountable

CLEAN WATER ACT

The debate continues regarding the proposed change to the definition of the Water of the US (WOTUS) by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) to the Clean Water Act (CWA). The House of Representatives held a public hearing recently to review the definition and the proposed rule and its impact on rural America.

A recent press release from the House Agriculture Committee's Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee stated that the CWA established a federal-state government partnership to better regulate and manage the nation's water through a range of pollution and control programs. The CWA states it is the "policy of the Congress to recognize, preserve, and protect the primary responsibilities and rights of State to prevent, reduce, eliminate pollution, to plan the development and use (including restoration, preservation and enhancement) of land and water resource, and to consult with the EPA Administrator in the exercise of his authority under this Act." Members of the House Subcommittee on Agriculture have said the Administration has acted on its own without considering the approximately 1 million comments received from the states and stakeholders. The proposed rule broadens the scope of the CWA. On March 16, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said the proposed rule would soon be sent to the Office of Management and Budget, while speaking to the National Farmers Union conference.

H.R. 1029

The House has passed HR 1029, the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2015. The legislation "will hold the EPA accountable when creating laws that will seriously impact families and small business around the country." Americans' priority is "the environment" for not only

those here today but for those who come after us. Regulations are being created behind closed doors with very little concern for the financial burden being placed on people. The EPA Science Advisory Board ensures that uncertainties in scientific conclusions are clearly communicated and allows the expert panel to focus on the science rather than partisan policy debates. It also recognizes the important role science should play in policy debates and provides safeguards to give the public confidence in science. (Press Release of

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers).

FOREST SERVICE—PROPOSED DIRECTIVE ON GROUNDWATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

A review of comments received on its Proposed Directive on Groundwater Resource Management (Groundwater Directive) is currently being considered. The Directive would require the agency to consider effects of activities on Forest Service land on groundwater. The Forest Service manages 155 national forests and 20 grasslands on nearly 193 million acres in 44 states. The Directive states that the United States Forest Service (USFS) will work to regulate groundwater associated with USFS land impacts and the proposal also discusses permitting requirements for water supply infrastructure on USFS lands. This proposal generally addresses USFS lands, but several sections reference adjacent (nonfederal) lands as well. The Directive will expand the agency's jurisdiction over ground water, which could be construed to assert Forest Service ownership of state groundwater. The Western Governors Association and the National Water Resource Association have concerns about the Directive and sent a letter voicing that the long standing USFS policy has largely respected the role of the states in groundwater. The Forest Service has been widely criticized for the Directive and has been considering put it on hold. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell confirmed the Directive was being placed on hold at the Forest Service Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Hearing on February 26 (Water Strategies).

WIFE Supporting Members

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- Bayer CropScience

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- Renewable Fuels Association

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- American Bankers Association
- American Council of Life Insurers
- Monsanto
- Florida, Texas, and Hawaii Sugarcane Growers
- U.S. Beet Sugar Association

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Membership

- American Sugarbeet Grower's Association
- North Bridge Communications
- Western Skies Strategies
- AT&T

In-Kind Contributors

- Miller/Coors
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By Klodette Stroh
Wyoming

Sugar Report

Agriculture export market holds its own in U.S. economy

I would like to give a huge “thank you” to Women Involved In Farm Economics (WIFE) members who walked through the halls of the U.S. Congress representing American farmers like my husband Rick and me. We have a story to tell; our ladies made sure to deliver it.

The world population will reach nine billion by the year 2050. There will be millions of new mouths to feed, many of whom rely on the United States’ food production to meet this need. According to the Agriculture Council of America (ACA), one-fourth of the world’s beef and nearly one-fifth of the world’s grain, milk and eggs are produced by American farmers. One

farmer produces enough food for 144 people.

In these difficult economic times, awakening the United States agriculture creates a positive balance in exports. We export \$43.5 billion in agricultural products and import \$26.4 billion in farm products, equaling a positive net trade balance of \$17.1 billion. This also means that \$6 million an hour worth of the U.S. agriculture export market, which is a positive income, is helping our depressed economy.

As farmers, Rick and I are always eager to keep up with new techniques to improve our farming practices. Using modern technology has boosted our crop yields and has reduced waste. Farmers use satellite maps and computers to match seed, fertilizer and crop protection applications to local soil conditions. Sophisticated Global

Positioning Systems can be specifically designed for spraying herbicides and pesticides.

You may not believe it, but actually, two out of three bushels of corn in the world originate in the United States. In 2001, 45 percent of the world’s soybeans were produced in the United States. Cotton is by the far most dominant fiber produced and it is used for clothing and home fabrics, as well as manufacturing uses.

According to the American Sugar Alliances (ASA), which is a national coalition of growers, processors, and refiners of sugar beets and sugar cane, 146,000 jobs are provided by the strong U.S. sugar industry. The important part is that sugar policy operates at no cost to the United States government and generates \$10 billion of economic activity in 18 states each year.

More than 1,400,000 acres of sugar beets are grown in Minnesota, Michigan, Colorado, California, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, which are responsible for over 88,000 jobs. The cane sugar industry creates nearly 72,000 jobs by having seven cane refineries and 22 mills in Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana and Texas.

We pray the problem with imported sugar from foreign countries like Mexico gets solved. Over the last two years, the U.S. sugar price has dropped to a record low. American sugar cane and sugar beet farmers are part of the hand that feeds America’s people.

As WIFE is educating members of our Congress and the citizens of this great country, we have to let our lawmakers know that dismembering a fruitful and dynamic working machine like America’s agriculture will fail the prosperity of this nation’s economy.

WIFE 2015 Commodity & Topic Chairs

Beef

Maggie Nutter

Cereal Grains

Jean Wach

Energy

Barbara Broberg

Feed Grains

Donna Bolz

Homeland Security

Marlene Kouba

**Natural Resources/Private
Property/Water/Endangered
Species**

Alice Parker

**Rural Life/Farm Finance
Communication/Tax/Health**

Mary Ann Unruh

Sheep & Goats

Tammy Basel

Sugar

Klodette Stroh

Trade

Darcy Dressler

Transportation

Pat Torgerson



**By Barbara Broberg
Montana**

Energy Report

Resources available to help increase energy efficiency

If you are getting interested in trying some other kind of power generation and are unsure how to proceed, there is help—financial help, technical help and business savvy help. Some of the following may seem repetitive, but it is important to the agencies to discuss these talking points, as the agencies are very clear to tell you there is a structure that must be followed to make “homegrown” energy work.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been active with their Rural Development money. In Montana, there are energy workshops with USDA Rural Development and other small business development agencies. I attended one of these energy workshops at the Electric Cooperative that my farm gets electricity through. The Co-op’s main power source is hydroelectricity. Two wind farms and a power line from Canada have caused this cooperative and the adjacent electric cooperative to learn more about the electric grid, sharing transmission, and in general, get tuned up in all things electric.

For connecting to the electric grid, there are two options---net metering, which is for your own use or the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), where electricity will be sold and an agreement is made with the purchaser. It was a benefit to hear the words in context. A speaker from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (non-regulatory) with 30 years of experience told us some interesting tidbits of information: a farm or small business will use small wind or medium-size wind; wind is very site specific and test towers must do their preliminary “feel;” small turbines are more affected by turbulence; there are probably some local ordinances to be aware of. They also told us that wind doesn’t blow all the time, so there will need to be other sources of power; there are lots of manufacturers so do your research, find a date on the equipment, and know your supplier; Make sure the equipment has a way to deal with too much wind

like a cut-off mechanism.

At one point in the workshop, the moderator said, “OK, let’s pull it all together... where do you need to save? What do you want to make more efficient?” The electric co-op person said to start with energy efficiencies and energy conservation practices many electric co-ops have energy efficiency rebates. From there, think what might work for renewable energy with your business practices and your businesses assets.

When looking into applying some of these ideas to your business, the speakers stressed, “Don’t go it alone!” The agency representatives then described technical and financial help, whole systems for helping you through feasibility studies. There are all kinds of resources if you’re interested. This is a true story: the Great Falls Development Authority speaker said she gets giddy about cash flow projections.

Another pointer was to get involved in a development agency--their benchmarks and requirements will keep you moving. A measurable structure will help keep focus on the project. Funding help will be more available when your data meets professional standards. Small Business Development Councils can help with market research data; to get more information go to <https://www.sba.gov>.

In the current Farm Bill, there is a lot of emphasis on energy projects so that is another resource to look in to. Some grants/ loans have timelines, others have anytime applications. If you don’t get assistance the first time around, their advice was to apply again. To look into these options, <http://www.rd.usda.gov/> is the USDA Rural Development website and from there, REAP is the Rural Energy for America program which will be of interest.

To start, make a list of “someday,” “we should,” or “we have GOT to do something” and think about that list occasionally. Draw up some thoughts on the project to see if you want to get involved in this way. Some people’s projects are qualified, but they choose not to do the programs. The agencies represented at this seminar are actively looking for useful and interesting places to solve problems.

Always talk to your utility companies early in the process and find out what the utility interconnection will be. There are revolving loans, grants, utility incentives, tax credits, and loans. Government programs like REAP have energy loan guarantees. You will likely be working with your lender, or possibly work with a different lending source.

Several agencies offered financial literacy programs. One program was for entrepreneurs to help them think BIGGER. There are other programs to help local artists strut their stuff. Artists benefit as well through energy efficiencies and business sense-- this particular program happened to be a tribal economic development program, which can be found at www.nacdcfinancialservices.org. This was brought up because it was positively amazing how many ways there are to use energy more wisely.

Montana has quite a few communal Hutterite Colonies with about 80-120 people. Banks have commented that the diversity on these farms allow their pigs, turkeys, grain, dairy, to balance the portfolio of business enterprise units but the size of any project is somewhat magnified because of the amount of animals on the place. So, colonies have been ripe places for working out manure issues relating to water and neighbors.

During this workshop, the speakers gave an example of a farrow-to-finish hog unit, where an improvement in their hot water system was needed. The technical side of fuel saving, to heat the water was explained. The monetary savings from making the system more efficient was massive, 25-50 percent less dollars. It used to take two to two and a half hours to warm up the boiler water but with the new system (neat and clean, painted, labeled, gauges, insulation, shut-offs), they said the hot water is nearly instantaneous and is on-demand at any time. Notably beautiful to be able to do to your job!!!

Again and again throughout this program it was clear that energy efficiency through lighting, warming, heating water, reduction of waste into benign substances, cooling, and more, feeds the interest in using it back into a loop to create power with previously “wasted” temperature differences.

WIFE Updates

Don't forget to pay your national WIFE dues...just fill this in, cut it out and throw it in the mail!

2015 NATIONAL WIFE MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$60

MAIL TO:

Women Involved in Farm Economics
Attention: Shana Baisch, Treasurer
323 Road 300
Glendive, MT 59330
jsbaisch@midrivers.com

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

E-MAIL: _____

2015 DATES TO REMEMBER:

✓ **May 27**--Proposed bylaw changes must be in to Jennifer Folzein at gjfelz@KCI.net

✓ **June 17**--Board of Directors conference call scheduled for 6 PM, MDT



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