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## 'Sunny Seeds' goes to school

"Sunny Seeds" was the title of the Ag in the Library presentation on sunflowers by Marlene Kouba as she spoke to the students in the Mott/Regent Public School on May 14, 2015. Students from Kindergarten through sixth grade watched the presentation and each teacher was presented with a bag of information and individual bags of sunflower seeds to share with their classes.

During the presentation, Kouba spoke about the early American Indians in Arizona and New Mexico who raised sunflowers around 3000 B.C. Kernels were used to make dyes for face and hair, and pounded into flour for bread and cereal; husks were used for feed and the stalks to build their dwellings. Spanish explorers took some seeds back to Asia and Russia where they flourished. Russia had over two million acres of the crop in the early 1900s and had increased their oil content. There are now two kinds of sunflowers—black, which are used for oil, and striped, which are used for eating.



Kouba stands in front of her "Sunny Seeds" display

Immigrants coming to America brought some of the seeds and now most are grown in North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Texas and California, in that order. Bismarck is home to the National Sunflower Association and produces a national magazine but Kansas is known as "The Sunflower State" because it has the most wild sunflowers. She noted that she often purchased "Russian peanuts" at the local drug store, as many were imported from that country at that time.

Just one ounce of sunflower seeds has 160 calories and are extremely nutritious with a long list of vitamins and minerals. They have no cholesterol and very few people are allergic to them.

Kouba presented the same information to residents in the Good Samaritan Nursing Home on May 18. Presenting agriculture to schools with a variety of topics, this is her 21st year of speaking on behalf of North Dakota WIFE Chapter #97.

# President's Report



By Linda Newman  
Montana

Hello All! Well, here it is July already—I thought summer would never get here and now it is flying by again! I know everyone is busy doing what they do, so this will be a short synopsis of a few things going on in WIFELand.

Just to let you know, the WIFE Farm Quilt is finished and is on its way to Lambert, MT to Pat Torgerson and Whitney Klasna as they are having a 4th of July celebration and wanted to display it to our get our quilt raffle started as a fundraiser for National WIFE. (Pat is a master of “fundraising”—and we are so thankful to have her as a WIFE member.)

So, in the near future, all of you who are National WIFE members will be receiving a book of raffle tickets in the mail. Each book has 6 tickets included and each ticket is \$5 each or the booklet of 6 can be sold for \$25 (by selling the booklet, you get one free ticket). We would really appreciate it if everyone could sell at least one booklet—and, of course, if you could sell more that would be “just peachy!” If you wish to receive more than one book, please let me know by Friday, July 10; either by email, [dlnewman@it-triangle.com](mailto:dlnewman@it-triangle.com), or by phone, (406) 323-8299. If I don't answer, please leave a message with how many you would like.

A couple of issues that are really on WIFE's radar right now is the issue of COOL (Country of Origin Labeling and TPA (Trade Promotion Authority) and TAA (Trade Assistance

## National Convention set for November 5-7 in Bismarck, ND

Authority). WIFE has sent out alerts to contact our congressmen on the trade issues and has signed on to letters with coalition members in support of COOL. Our Trade Chairman, Pam Pothoff, has kept us abreast on the latest updates with trade issues, and Jess Peterson with the U.S. Cattlemen's Association, keeps us informed on the COOL debacle. Many thanks to both of you for staying on top of these issues

for us!

I hope you all were able to listen in on the Senate Ag Committee Hearing on COOL last week and heard USCA's Leo McDonald's testimony—it was superb! He was very “up against it,” so to speak, but he laid out a very common sense argument in support of why the U.S. should be allowed to put a U.S. label on U.S. beef. I love it when he says, “Did you know that? Betcha didn't know that, did you?” It is very “Leo-esque.” Thanks, Leo, for all you do for “beef country!”

Thanks to all of you who participated in our June Board of Directors Conference Call meeting. It was a very productive meeting and so great to see so many of you were able to be on. I know it is a little challenging sometimes to do business via conference calls, but I feel this is one of our most important meetings, as it allows more of our WIFE members to participate when they are not able, for some reason or other, to get to Washington, D.C. or to the national convention meetings. So, again, thanks for your participation.

Please mark your calendars for the 2015 National WIFE Convention, November 5-7, 2015 in Bismarck, North Dakota. Area Director Diane McDonald and other North Dakota ladies are busy scheduling everything for us so kudos to all of you—it is no easy task. As details are set, look for further information on Facebook, the website, and in the next few issues of the WIFELine. We would love to see a bunch of you there!

As you can see, lots of things are happening. Please respond to alerts on Ag issues that you may receive and I hope you all have a great July!

### WIFE Supporting Members

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- Bayer CropScience

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- Renewable Fuels Association

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- American Council of Life Insurers
- Monsanto
- Florida, Texas, and Hawaii Sugarcane Growers
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#### In-Kind Contributors

- Miller/Coors
- Rauner & Associates



**By Klodette Stroh  
Wyoming**

# Sugar Report

## Free trade has downfalls

with cattle in the past and now with the sugar industry.

According to the American Sugar Alliance, the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) has granted standing to the Imperial Sugar Co. and American Cane Sugar, LLC in the antidumping and countervailing duty (AD/CVD) cases filed last year against Mexico's sugar industry. The American Sugar Alliance supports the governments' suspension of agreements according to their stockperson Phillip Hayes. The Department of Commerce's decision to continue investigating the Mexican sugar industry is disappointing since the vast majority of parties involved, including the U.S. and Mexican governments, had reached reasonable settlement.

With that being said, it is clear that Mexican sugar producers gained an unfair trading advantage through dumping

and subsidization and there is financial injury to the U.S. sugar producers and U.S. taxpayers. U.S. commodity prices have been bearish in 2014, mainly because of supply and demand factor. Crude oil prices have driven the cost of fertilizer, fuel, chemical, parts, and tires up and have remained at the same level since 2009. The Mexican sugar industry exported, dumped and subsidized sugar to the United States, and as a result, it will cause tremendous harm to a domestic industry that supports 142,000 jobs.

Farming was America's first industry. Today, this industry provides us with food, clothing, fuel for our energy, and employees. Agriculture has always been the cornerstone of our nation's way of life. Free trade agreements between the U.S. and foreign countries don't operate equally. American farmers compete against foreign treasuries, not farmers.

History is an excellent teacher. We all have to learn from past mistakes to make a better future for our country and ourselves. American lawmakers have to look back and realize that in the past the free trade agreement between countries has resulted in flooding the market in one country and financially breaking the other. Free trade agreements between the United States and foreign countries within the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) have been a threat to our nation's security. NAFTA has caused so many problems

# Rural Life Report

## Are you prepared?

Natural disasters such as snowstorms, tornadoes and hailstorms can take the normality out of our lives very suddenly. We also have events such as train derailments, plane crashes, terrorist attacks, chemical spills and animal disease breakouts. The best way to deal with these situations is to be prepared for the worst and hope for the best.

Planning ahead can make the difference between life and death. As farmers and ranchers, we know weather can raise havoc with our lifestyle. Power outages, contaminated water supplies and road closures can be crippling if you do not have a Plan B or even a Plan C, so let's gear up and organize for the unexpected.

The American Red Cross suggests

each person have at least two weeks supply of non-perishable food on hand at all times, including canned, dried and dehydrated food for emergency preparedness. Canned and powdered milk and other extended shelf-life foods are some examples. The Red Cross allots one gallon of water per person per day and suggests keeping two weeks supply of water available at all times. Water purification systems and water filtration products are also valuable tools.

A First Aid Kit is a must for all farms and ranches; items should be in an easy to care for case. A supply of firewood, a gas grill and fuel treatment items also are vital, but do not use the grill indoors and use only in a well ventilated area.



**By Mary Ann Unruh  
North Dakota**

Two way radios, solar powered AM/FM radios, jump-starter kits, cell phone chargers, candles, flashlights and LED lanterns also need to be available.

Electricity is relied on for light, heat, refrigeration and pumping water. PTO driven generators and automatic engine generators can be made available to get things up and running so do not be left in the dark. It is important to work with a reliable generator company to be sure the

*Rural Life: Continued on Page 5*



By Pam Potthoff  
Nebraska

# Trade Report

## Trade Promotion Authority signed into law

A special thanks to all who took the time to make calls to Congress concerning Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). After much scheming, plotting, threatening, bribing and pushing the rules to the limits, both passed Congress.

Following the approval of TPA legislation on June 24, the Senate passed a bill renewing TAA and tariff preferences for developing countries, and moved to initiate a conference with the House to reconcile differences over a customs and enforcement bill.

The approved legislation would renew TAA for six years, and provide training and assistance to workers whose jobs were displaced by trade regardless of whether it was from a Free Trade Agreement partner. However, it does not provide benefits to public sector workers and funds the program at \$450 million annually. Unions and their congressional allies had pushed for \$575 million.

The TAA-preferences package included a renewal of the Generalized System of Preferences until the end of 2017 and tariff preference programs for Haiti. The bill also includes provisions aimed at strengthening U.S. trade remedy law known as the Leveling the Playing Field Act.

Trade now moves its focus to the pending trade treaties, the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Many of the TPP countries said they were waiting for TPA to be passed before negotiations got down

to the small print. Now that it is done, some countries are predicting a rapid conclusion to negotiations. The TTIP is bogged down with protectionism, GMOs and Geographic Indicators.

Concerning tariffs and duties that could be removed by the TPP, the publication, *Politico*, pointed out that Vietnam charges duties of 70 percent on U.S. cars and machinery, 35 percent on U.S. chemicals, 30 percent on U.S. biscuits and baked goods and 25 percent of U.S. recording equipment. Japan “marks up our oranges 16 percent from June through November and 32 percent from December through May” and it marks up our beef exports 38.5 percent all year, *Politico* says.

Cars made in America face a 30 percent tariff in Malaysia but cars made in Japan and other Asian nations don't face any tariff in Malaysia. Motorcycles are marked up 50 percent there and plywood 35 percent. Even though these tariffs might come down with TPP, the border adjustment and/or value-added taxes would still not make the playing field level.

The WTO's appellate body ruled that India is discriminating against U.S. poultry, eggs and live pigs to protect its own domestic products. India had argued an outright ban on U.S. poultry meat, eggs and swine was needed to protect the country from avian influenza. The poultry industry maintains that U.S. farmers are missing out on at least \$300 million in poultry exports to India. The U. S. exported 20 percent of its poultry meat production, worth approximately \$6.5 billion, to more than 136 countries in 2014.

China and South Korea also have declared a ban on all poultry products from the U.S.

The USTR noted that the Obama

administration has brought 19 enforcement actions in the WTO since 2009 and won every single one decided thus far. The COOL rule defeat came from a legal challenge brought by Canada and Mexico.

**COOL UPDATE:** The House already has voted to repeal the COOL law for beef, pork and chicken, but the fate of a similar proposal in the Senate won't be known for a while because opposition to repeal is stronger in that chamber and there likely will be calls to rewrite, rather than repeal COOL. “We must avoid retaliation” is the mantra of those who wish to repeal.

Sixty other countries have labels. The European Union (EU) just implemented COOL for meat. The EU labeling rules require indication of the country of birth, fattening and slaughter. If a cow is born, raised and slaughtered in the same country, then that is the country of origin. Imported beef can be labeled as “non-EU” or if information is not available. For meats originating from countries where information about the animal may be unknown, the system allows for alternative claims of origin. So, why can't something similar be used in the U.S.?

Canada is dependent on the U.S. to purchase over 75 percent of its exported goods. About 4 percent of the cattle slaughtered in the U.S. come from Canada and about 3.6 percent from Mexico. Around 4.7 percent of all hogs slaughtered in the U.S. come from Canadian feeder pigs.

The U.S. is the world's second-largest oil importer. Legislation has been introduced in the Senate to repeal the 40-year-old ban on U.S. crude oil exports. Surging domestic oil production is cited as the reason to begin exporting oil.

# Feed Grains Report



By Donna Bolz  
Nebraska

## Looking outside the box can yield a-maze-ing results

Planting season in Southeast Nebraska has been a challenge. In the six weeks between May 1 and June 15, 18 inches or more of rain fell. It would rain, be dry for a couple of days and rain again. This has been a true adventure for the planting season.

When things don't go as planned, maybe it is time to think outside the box. Below is information on a creative way to make money with corn. This is a story about Stan Vaught's two sons, who made more money in a month by letting people walk through a maze carved from 10 acres of corn than he will raising cattle and soybeans on the other 190 acres of his family's farmland.

They built a corn maze. "For a lot of people who have these farms with a few hundred acres, it's an opportunity to make a living and not have to get rid of the farm or not be able to keep it up," said Mr. Vaught. Mazes may also include zip lines, live zombie scarecrows and corn cannons, which can shoot an ear of corn across a field. People will pay twenty dollars or more to enjoy a range of countryside entertainment.

Unlike farmers markets, which have a certain upscale appeal in urban markets, corn mazes are especially popular among people from the suburbs longing for a country experience many have only heard about. The Vaught boys, Jackson, 19, and Chandler, 16, who started building mazes eight years ago as a way to make some extra money, took in more than \$8,000 in one Saturday, they said. They usually create a patriotic pattern.

People like corn mazes because they

like to work puzzles. It has become as much a Halloween tradition as carving a pumpkin. There is also a draw to the country that makes thousands of people hand over money to wander through a corn maze. Chandler Vaught often runs the hayrides that are part of their maze experience. He laughs when he pulls the tractor past the family cows and people make him stop so they can take pictures. "It's like they are seeing animals at the zoo," he said.

The king of the American corn maze industry is Brett Herbst, who runs an elaborate maze in Lehi, Utah. He makes most of his money helping other people build corn mazes. He designed and helped cut more than 266 corn mazes this year. He's put mazes on fields in Poland, Canada and England, but they seem to be a mostly American phenomenon. His first was on some rented land in Utah in 1996, when he was just out of agricultural business school and no idea how to make a living. He read about one in Pennsylvania while he was flipping through a farming magazine.

Farmers pay Mr. Herbst \$3,000 to

### *Rural Life: Cont. from Page 3*

generator is installed properly. Equipment that is not hooked up properly can kill you. Electricity kills, and it is not for amateurs.

There are many new items and gadgets to fulfill your needs at a disastrous time. Take time to look around and see what meets your needs. It is also a good idea to have extra cash available for a situation that would cause banks to close or for impaired traveling conditions. If evacuation is necessary it is important that all items are stored in a bag or tote that can be accessed quickly. Mother Nature often shows its cruel side. Take some time to think about some emergency preparedness measures you can implement.

\$6,000 for the service. Mr. Herbst and his business partners grew the corn to its full size, then hacked out a path with a weedwacker equipped with a saw blade. It was stupid, hot work. They wised up. Now, computer-generated patterns are staked out when the corn is small enough to mow or till under. Or, as is the case in Milton, doused with a chemical that kills the corn, creating paths smooth enough for a baby stroller.

What has come to be called agritainment remains a niche market. For the people whose families hold 400 or 500 acres of farmland, mazes are an important piece of an economic formula that might include pick-your-own berry patches in the summer, Christmas trees in the winter and home landscaping plants in the spring. "The golden age of corn mazes as a stand-alone attraction peaked three or four years ago," said Mr. Herbst, whose own corn maze complex includes an elaborate children's playground, a live pumpkin princess and pig races. The maze itself also depicts the presidential candidates.

"Most of the guys who had stand-alones are out of business now," he said. "You can only ride a single wave for so long. You've got to constantly mix it up." And you have got to gauge complexity, too. Something too simple bores people. Something too challenging scares people away. "People don't want to be in a corn maze for two hours," Mr. Herbst said. But attention spans vary. People in more rural areas who are comfortable spending time in the country prefer a maze that takes about an hour and 15 minutes to complete, he said. "In a place close to New York City," he said, "probably 20 minutes is plenty for most people." As WIFE looks for ways to spread the word about agriculture, this could be an interesting and profitable way. Thanks to the Center for Rural Affairs for help with this report.

# Natural Resources Report



By Alice Parker  
Washington

## Sage grouse listing delayed

### CLEAN WATER ACT: WATERS OF THE U.S.

Recently the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) issued the "Final Rule" of the Waters of the United States (WOTUS). This rule is the new definition of waters of the U.S. for the Clean Water Act. This is the interpretation that became final, even though there were over a million comments received. It has gone to the Office of Management and Budget for their review and though they can take 90 days to review the rule, it does not mean they will necessarily take the full 90 days.

Most agriculture organizations are reporting this as being more confusing for farmers and ranchers, not less. It does not provide a clarity that is needed. There are no better stewards of the land than farmers and ranchers. They all

know that they must be good stewards. If not they are destroying the asset that is so vital to their ability to stay in business. The agencies are still saying that this rule does not affect farmers or ranchers but time will tell.

The House of Representatives have passed legislation that requires the EPA and USACE to withdraw the ruling. It is still waiting Senate action. Unfortunately the President says he will veto any such legislation. The appropriations process is considering preventing it from being implemented by cutting any funding for implementation. With the threat of a veto, there is discussion of attaching it to another appropriation bill that is thought to be necessary and that the president would sign.

If the implementation goes forth, the court docket could fill up with lawsuits pertaining to the rule.

### SAGE GROUSE LISTING

Recently, the House of Representatives passed a Defense bill which contained a provision that delays the listing of the Sage Grouse for 10 years. The Senate does not have the provision in their version of the Defense bill but amendments could be introduced on the floor when the bill is heard or when it goes to conference. Meanwhile, there are still efforts to make the Endangered Species Act transparent. As it now stands, it is not. When someone or some entity requests a listing, those who will be impacted are not informed or considered in the decision process to list or not to list.

# Beef Report



By Maggie Nutter  
Montana

## Opening border increases risks

The red meat industry and particularly beef have been facing big issues in the last month. While all food industries have problems arise, the beef industry not only struggles with outside forces but they also fight within the industry, adding to the turmoil.

Between Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) and the opening up for importation of meat from Brazil and Argentina, both countries with known Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), the beef industry and producers are stirred up to a frenzy.

While losing COOL may be a drawback to being able to promote U.S. beef, the importation of fresh chilled meat from Brazil and Argentina comes with

the risk of destroying the industry. As early as May 2015, the organization Food Watch was putting out warnings of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) attempt to sneak the approval of these countries imports past the public.

There are many factors contributing to this seemingly contrary move by the USDA, which are basically trade-based and related to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). If we want others to honor our zoning of diseased areas in the event of future disease outbreaks then we need to honor theirs now. What should terrify the beef industry is

would we survive a disease outbreak? The recent, May 2015, report from the United States Governmental Accountability Office, "Federal Veterinarians-Efforts Needed to Improve Workforce Planning" basically states the U.S. isn't ready for FMD.

"USDA participated in a government-wide study to estimate the veterinarians needed to respond to animal disease outbreaks, but because of limitations in the study, the estimates are not reliable

*Beef: Continued on Page 9*



By Barbara Broberg  
Montana

# Energy Report

## The squeaky wheel gets the grease

Grease: as in the squeaky wheel gets the grease. Grease is a lubricant. It can be a petroleum product or can come from animals. In fact, the older (1944 Webster's) dictionary centered the "grease" definition with regards to animals. The second definition related to grease was as a lubricant.

A lubricant is, of course, "that which lubricates, as an oil or grease" (again Webster circa 1944). And remember we were taught to NOT use the word to be defined, in the definition. In the 1994 Merriam Webster's Dictionary, a lubricant is "a substance (as grease) capable of reducing friction, heat, and wear when introduced as a film between solid surfaces".

Introduced is an interesting word here, the choice was made to apply something. Reducing friction, heat, and wear also reduces noise and breakdowns. Introductions of various ingredients are made into the grease formula; Molybdenum disulfide is used as a lubricant in grease--greasing up the grease. Rendered animal fat and soot also make a type of grease, just think about wagon wheels on cross country pioneer trips.

If your Hutterite neighbors clean out their basement and offer a pail or two of lye soap (crumbled up already), you say thanks and put it in one of your own out-buildings for another day. A few years later, a wringer washer comes into the homestead as well and one fine summer day, you decide to try washing up a load of those pink shop rags. Those rags come new, out of the package, pink. In no time they turn black

and greasy but all you do is take them out of the package and lay them on the machine shop workbench! Or so it seems--sometimes it is hard to find a clean (pink) one. This actually happened to me and it was the black greasy ones that went into the wringer washer. Normal laundry soap didn't make a dramatic color difference, so my mind eventually remembered the Hutterite lye soap crumbles.

My visiting nephew, the two dogs, and I trekked out to the storage building. Tripping through the clutter, a pail of the hard yellowed substance was pulled out, examined, smelled, and even eaten by one of the dogs. Lye is not good for you. This animal, however, was a Chocolate Labrador retriever, and my nephew did a quick search on the Internet while I made a call to the veterinarian...and the typical grinning countenance of the breed proved that lye soap may be able to turn black shop rags pink, but it is hard to upset the stomach of a Chocolate Lab.

That quick study on lye and lye soap was part of what drew interest in grease. That and on-going amazement of what grease accomplishes..

After the lye soap worked on the greasy rags, they turned pink again and there was a greasy "high-water" mark around the wringer washer's washtub that seemed indelible by just plain water. Amazing--no wonder someone recognized a use for it.

This energy article is all about home maintenance. Lighter versions of friction reduction include using silicone spray on the edges of your double hung windows for smooth sliding and household oil on the "oil here" spots on your screen/storm doors' closers. Pay attention to the various squeaks

around home and do something about them. Most websites for products will list the best lubricant to use. Even the olden day equipment has preferred lubricants with today's lubricants.

Some company engineers recently said a mechanic at a large farm equipment dealership was able to source a certain grade of gear oil for a transmission reservoir that had specifications in the tractor manual for something outdated.

Look for grease zerks on riding lawn mowers, trailers, fence post pounders and more. Zerks have the little ball face looking risers--just put the gun on and grease them. On newer equipment, there will be a "grease every \_\_\_ many hours" tag next to the zerk.

You probably already know now how to load a grease gun but have you tried the cordless grease guns?

For the human, there are "friction block" products to rub on your body where you might expect to get blisters. The first aid department at the drug store is a grease concept!

And one last thing...next fall when you are getting ready for winter, spray silicone spray on the weather stripping around your pickup truck and car doors (include the cargo doors, or the weather stripping around the trunk) and you won't have any more vehicle doors freeze shut from condensation.

This Energy Chair position will be termed out in January of 2016. Tell National WIFE if writing interests you. There may be other topics available too.





**By Marlene Kouba  
North Dakota**

# Homeland Security Report

## Immigration reform at a stalemate in Congress

The Obama administration is preparing to give illegal aliens a free pass when it comes to violating immigration laws. In a 100-page report, from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), it says “Decouple federal immigration enforcement from routine local policing for civil enforcement and non-serious crimes. The DHA should terminate the use of the state and local criminal justice system, including through detention, notification, and transfer requests, to enforce civil immigration laws against civil and non-serious criminal offenders.” Instead of arresting and detaining undocumented immigrants for crossing the border illegally, the report advises, “Law enforcement agencies should build relationships based on trust with immigrant communities.” This recommendation would effectively end immigration enforcement because it would leave the matter solely in the hands of the federal government. Obama created the task force in December by executive order, and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office, notes “The COPS Office will be supporting the implementation of Task Force recommendations.”

Immigration reform is at a stalemate in Congress. The president’s executive order in November provides limited benefit to agriculture. It fails to address the shortage in 12 states in the upper Midwest where producers require year-round seasonal labor. Even with one million workers, farmers face a 30 percent shortage.

The U.S. takes in more United Nations refugees than any other country at about 70,000 per year and most

have been Muslims rather than refugee Christians. There are 933 that have been placed in 70 different U.S. cities since 2011. About 11,000 Syrian Muslims are waiting to arrive. The U.N. has “asked” the U.S. to take 65,000 more by the end of Obama’s term.

About 70 percent of World Relief’s revenues last year came from government grants totaling \$41.2 million plus funding from foundations such as the Vanguard Charitable Foundation, Mustard Seed Foundation, Soros Fund Charitable Foundation, Pfizer Foundation and Global Impact for 9 community charities involving Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians and Jews.. But refugees are increasingly becoming politically active. Demands have been made in Minnesota where a group of Somali women demanded that the county commissioners of Hennepin County stock the local food pantry with halal meat in accordance with Islamic dietary laws. Somali refugees in Seattle demanded better access to government-subsidized housing.

The IRS has said illegal immigrants granted amnesty under immigration reform will be able to claim back tax refunds from years in which they never filed taxes. About 5 million illegal immigrants who could be granted amnesty under Obama’s plan will be eligible to take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit. Not only can an individual amend a prior year return to claim EITC, but an individual who did not file a prior year return may file a return and claim EITC. The illegal immigrants would be given work permits to those who receive amnesty. Those permits would then be used to create a Social Security number (SSN). The IRS determined that once a SSN is obtained, an individual could go ahead and file for a back tax return for

up to three years, including years when they were illegal workers earning money off the books.

The employees who kept the data systems humming in the vast Walt Disney fantasy in Orlando, Florida, did not suspect trouble when they were summoned to meetings with their boss in October. About 250 employees were told they would be laid off with their jobs transferred to immigrants on temporary (H-1B) visas for highly skilled technical workers, who were brought in by an outsourcing firm based in India. Employees were required to train their replacements to do the jobs they had lost. Executives said the layoffs were part of a reorganization, and that the company opened more positions than it eliminated. But the layoffs at Disney and at other companies are raising new questions about how businesses and outsourcing companies are using the temporary visas.

According to federal guidelines, the visas are intended for foreigners with advanced science or computer skills to fill positions when American workers with those skills cannot be found. Instead the visas are being used to bring in immigrants to do the work of Americans for less money. About 85,000 of the visas are granted each year. Technology giants like Microsoft, Facebook and Google repeatedly ask for increases in the annual quotas, saying there are not enough Americans with the skills they need. But most top recipients of the visas have been outsourcing or consulting firms based in India or subsidiaries which import workers to take over entire in-house technology units to cut costs. The immigrants are employees of the outsourcing companies. Former employees said many immigrants who arrived were younger technicians with limited data

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By Jean Wach  
Nebraska

# Cereal Grains Report

## North Dakota flourmill undergoes expansion; Oklahoma's shipping sits idle

Both North Dakota and Oklahoma have headlines this week involving cereal grains. North Dakota's state-owned flourmill in Grand Forks is undergoing a \$4.4 million expansion that will include nine new bulk storage bins. The state industrial commission approved the expansion last week to increase capacity at the mill. The new storage will reduce bulk loading crew labor costs, reduce mill downtime, and reduce bulk rail car leasing cost. Estimated cost savings as a result of the project are at \$656,000 annually. The project is slated to be completed next spring. The state-owned flourmill began operation in 1922.

Most of the mill's profits go into North Dakota's general fund, which finances a variety of state programs. The mill buys most of its wheat from North Dakota farmers. It processes the state's staple crop, hard red spring wheat into bakery flour, which is used to make breads; it also mills durum into semolina and durum flour to make pasta. Most of the mill's production is bulk to food makers. It markets 5 and 10 pound bags of flour sold in grocery, along with

packaged pancake flour and bread machine mixes.

North Dakota typically leads the nation in production of spring wheat and durum wheat. The mill cleans, processes and rolls more than 23 million bushels of spring and durum wheat every year.

While North Dakota is helping their transportation problem, heavy flow rates on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System have idled most of Oklahoma's commercial shipping since Memorial Day rains.

The rates have remained strong as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers drained reservoir storage. It may take 14 days for flow rates from continued drainage to reach levels allowing 24-hour barge traffic. The long-term outlook remains strong.

Initial reports of damaged downstream locks proved to be little more than accumulated logs but Verdigris traffic is still limited by water release schedules and potential silt buildups. It all leaves the three Oklahoma ports with little to no barge traffic for June. The good thing is the port has rail and truck so they do have ways of moving their end products to their customers and being able to maintain the raw product

they need.

Hard red winter wheat producers may suffer the worst from the slow-down. Farmers reaping that harvest will find few barges available for transit. One Port 33 tenant, Consolidated Grain and Barge, is considering bringing in trucks for the coming supply, which may have to lay on the ground until transports are available. The farmer is probably going to take the biggest overall direct hit because there's no place to take the winter wheat. Everybody assumes you just play busy barge catch-up but that doesn't happen; the tonnage is lost (Agweb.com).

### ***Beef: Continued from Page 6***

for purposes of effective emergency response planning. For example, the estimates were based on a USDA model that had not been verified or validated. Moreover, USDA has not developed a detailed plan to augment or train its workforce to respond to an economically devastating or highly contagious outbreak. Without reliable estimates of the veterinarians needed or how it will augment and train its workforce, USDA cannot ensure it will have enough veterinarians to adequately respond."

It is up to red meat producers to educate themselves. Disease outbreak control starts at the county level. Each producer should ensure that their county or area has some sort of plan and training. There should be a strong effort to ensure that your state is prepared, as there is no knight in shining armor coming to save our industry at this point. The responsibility to demand preparedness rests on our shoulders.

### ***Homeland Security: Continued from Page 8***

skills who did not speak English fluently and had to be instructed in the basics of the work.

In 2014, the U.S. Immigrations and Custom Enforcement (ICE) released 2,457 convicted criminal illegal aliens and 1,107 more as of May 9, 2015. Most of these aliens are from any of 12 countries – with 1,183 of them coming from Cuba. Now 122 homicides in the U.S. could have been avoided between 2010 and 2014 (the last one in June, 2015) had those aliens been returned instead of being released back into society where they could commit more crimes. (Sources: DHS, World News Daily, New York Times, Washington Post)

# WIFE Updates

## Convention resolutions due October 16

- Resolutions for the 2015 Convention, from the State Associations, are due to the Resolutions Chairman by October 16, 2015.
- Resolutions coming out of commodity caucuses are due as soon as possible, following your meetings.
- Resolutions may be emailed to Mary Ann Murray at [lige@midrivers.com](mailto:lige@midrivers.com) or mailed to 487 S Sand Creek Rd. Jordan, MT 59337.

JOIN US NOVEMBER 5-7  
IN BISMARCK, NORTH  
DAKOTA FOR THE 2015  
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CONVENTION!



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