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## Family Farm Alliance meeting addresses hot topics

*By Alice Parker  
National WIFE  
Natural Resource Chairman*

“Farm Water for the West: The Key Ingredient for Healthy Rural Communities” was the theme for the Family Farm Alliance Annual Meeting held in Las Vegas February 23-24.

The Family Farm Alliance (FFA) was founded over 10 years ago with one overriding ethic: Agriculture doesn't need another association, but it does need an effective, low cost grassroots group that can get the job done.

FFA believes that the only effective way to impact elected officials is to have them hear first-hand from farmers and ranchers. Patrick O'Toole from Savery, Wyo., is the current FFA President. He stated there is a need to move back to the original mission for reclamation.

One panel presentation was entitled, “Do you AGree that a longterm Vision of Agriculture Should Strive to Include Mutual Goals of Production and Conservation?” AGree, a new initiative to transform food and agriculture policy, has an advisory committee that will help shape and guide the direction of the initiative's strategy and objectives. AGree co-chairs are Former Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman; Jim Moseley, former deputy secretary of agriculture and a fourth generation Indiana farmer; Gary Hirschberg, chairman of Stonyfield Farm; and Emmy Simmons, former assistant administrator for economic growth, agriculture and trade—U.S. AID

Panelists were Pat O'Toole, AG Kawamura, and Carl Mattson, Montana Stockgrowers Association from Chester, Mont. The panel shared that worldwide there is a growing middle class with an expanding demand for goods and services. With the prediction of world population of 9 billion people by 2050, we need to be ready to meet the future demand for food, build communities, and improve nutrition and public health while conserving and enhancing water soil and habitat. Responding to a question about the makeup of the groups in AGree, it was stated “it is better to be at the table with them than to be on their menu.”

A panel on the Clean Water Act (CWA) rulemaking was presented.

Mandates versus best management practices are being looked at. Tom Donnelly of NWRA voiced that the target is on ag's back. A question is, “Why did the Administration replace the former guidelines?” Prior non-point pollution was addressed, but the guidelines and rules are now addressing point and non-point pollution. Under the 2008 guidelines, irrigation canals were not on the list for jurisdiction. Aggregation and isolated waters are the two big issues of the Clean Water Act. A new draft is being developed and is taking into account all comments made from FFA and others. EPA and USDA are collaborating for work on the ground.

Former Congressman Charlie Stenholm addressed the attendees. He said that producers of food and fiber need gas, fuel, oil, and energy to produce, but those who produce gas, fuel, oil and energy need

food and fiber in order to produce also. He stated that we need to carefully consider what is going to be good for everyone and not just our own immediate interests when we are opposing or endorsing an issue or project.

An Agriculture and Conservation Farm Bill Coalition has formed. Appearing on a panel discussing the issue were Russ Schnitzer, Trout Unlimited; Sean McMahon, the Nature Conservancy; and David Cook, National Cattlemen's Beef Association. These groups are working together to develop a plan to address conservation in the Farm Bill.

Staff from both the House and Senate Natural Resource Committee joined the conference via a video connection to talk about what is going on in Washington, D.C. Most of the discussion was regarding the Farm Bill and included discussion regarding earmarks. It was asked what terminology will replace the word earmarks so appropriations will continue for projects, but no clear answer was given.

Former Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, co-chair of AGree, joined the group by video conferencing. He was asked when the cost of producing will be addressed instead of always talking about how good commodity prices are. He stated that net income has been good for the past two years for ag producers.

The conference concluded with the Bureau of Reclamations regional directors giving an overview of what is happening in their regions, including projects both new and repairing existing infrastructure and water outlook predictions.

# President's Report



By Deb Dressler  
North Dakota

## Washington trip is inspiring

solution; agriculture doesn't need to go back to depression era laws. "Policy makers have to defend policy to stakeholders, taxpayers and to the world," said Miller. USDA Ag Outlook Forum has a complete listing of the event on their website.

Have a safe spring while doing the

work of providing a safe, abundant and reasonably priced food supply. Continue to ask for made in the USA, and remember our military who keep our country's freedoms intact. Tell your story and don't look back.

Happy Trails till next month.

Greetings from Washington, D.C. Hope all is well for the producers with the calving, lambing and foaling. Planting intentions are completed and farmers are anxiously waiting to seed. Production sales are in full swing with record setting averages and attendance.

Diane McDonald, Ruth Larabee and myself attended the Agriculture Outlook Forum in Washington, D.C., February 23-24. It was a once in a lifetime experience event that eight former Secretaries of Agriculture were on a plenary panel, Visions of the Future. It was a unique happening that all 2,000 in attendance will cherish. The forum was a first time for Diane, Ruth and myself. It was the 150th anniversary of USDA.

I attended cooperative extension on educating to build a better future, preventing disease from crossing the border, conservation and environmental markets, livestock and poultry outlooks, and global food security. The livestock and poultry luncheon was moderated by Acting Undersecretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, USDA Michael T. Scuse. Donnie Smith, President and CEO, Tyson Foods, Inc., forecasted high prices in the livestock and poultry markets due to increased demand for protein and low supplies worldwide.

The lunches and dinner were a chance to network with the attendees. I met people from Canada, England, Australia and South Africa. Thursday evening the speaker was Jim Miller, Senior Policy Adviser Senate Budget Committee. Miller was optimistic a Farm Bill will be passed this year once a middle ground is found. The alternative is worse than the



By Pat Torgerson  
Montana

## Transportation Report

### Oil shipping is inefficient

Fuel prices at the pumps continue to rise. My family and friends continue to try to think of ways to reduce their fuel bills and to use less fuel.

Supply of goods is supposed to drive the price, RIGHT? WRONG!! In November, the U.S. exported 753.4 million barrels of oil abroad, everything from gasoline to jet fuel. At the same time, the U.S. imported 689.4 million barrels of oil. This means the

U.S. exported more fuel than it imported.

Canada wants to build the Keystone XL Pipeline through the U.S. to refineries in the south. The jobs it will create are welcomed and needed. WHOA! Let's stop right there. Let's build American pipelines transporting American crude oil from Montana and North Dakota oil fields to new northern gas plants and refineries.

Present U.S. oil refineries are old and overworked and miles away from new oil fields. The newest U.S. refinery was built in 1975. Surely there is newer technology in the past 37 years to modernize and improve new plants and refineries.

The new Bakken Oil Fields and Three Forks Oil Fields in North Dakota and Montana are just beginning to be developed. North Dakota has 186 new rigs operating up from 155 in 2011. Montana has 19 new rigs versus eight new rigs in 2011. These are new and exciting American oil fields.

Natural gas from these new oil wells are often burned off by flares. This is a wasteful practice due to the lack of pipelines. The need for pipelines is being addressed by the building of the Garden Creek Facility in McKenzie County, North Dakota. Two additional processing facilities are slated to be completed within 18 months. The Garden Creek plant can process 100 million cubic feet of natural gas per day which will reduce the wasteful flaring. Natural gas is processed further after being cooled and condensed to separate gas from a liquid mix of propane, butane and gasoline. It is then piped to other facilities to be separated and further refined. These processes should be done in the northern states close to their new oil fields.

It was announced November 7, 2011, that the Bakken Oil Express LLC (BOE) with its first unit train loaded with American crude oil departed on the BNSF Railway headed for St. James, Louisiana. Louisiana is thousands of miles from the North Dakota and Montana Bakken oil fields. Why ship northern crude south only to refine it and reshipe it north for use? This is a crazy, wasteful, merry-go-round! Let's get off the oil dance and build plants and refineries in the north. EPA needs to become part of the energy solution and speed up the permit process.

# Washington, D.C. Reports

## Topic of rural water generates many ideas

By *Ruth Laribee*  
New York

The United States Department of Agriculture, celebrating 150 years, held the 2012 Agricultural Outlook Forum in Arlington, Virginia, February 23-24. There were 25 sessions and four commodity luncheon sessions concerning agriculture to choose from. One I went to was titled Rural Development Track, Why Every American Should Care About the Future of Rural Water. John Padalino, Chief of Staff, Rural Development, USDA, was the moderator for the four panelists. The statement in question form was, "What are the competing demands for water now and in the future? How will water trends affect agriculture and renewable energy development? What is the right balance between public and private development use of water?"

The first panelist, James Richardson, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University, College Station, spoke on water needs, now and in the future. Traditional water users were communi-

ties, livestock and agriculture and irrigation, but now there are new users of fresh water. Bio-fuels require 12.6 billion gallons of water and by 2022 will be up to 36 billion gallons of water. Dr. Richardson reported corn uses 4.7 gallons of water to make one gallon of ethanol, switch grass uses 9.8 gallons of water to make one gallon of ethanol, and soybeans use one gallon of water for one gallon of ethanol. Algae, the newest discovery, takes 600 gallons of water for one gallon of ethanol due to evaporation as it grows in the ponds or lagoons. The average citizen uses 69.3 gallons of water per day, or 25,294 gallons per year.

The second panelist, Sam Wade, Deputy CEO, National Water Association, Duncan, Oklahoma, stated rural America supports the nation. We get food, energy, and raw materials from rural America, which also protects the environment. There are 52,000 water supply sources. Many rural communities are partnering on infrastructure and services to keep the costs down, working together to apply for grants and low

interest rates on loans from USDA Rural Development and others.

Next to speak was Charles Hilton, General Manager, Breezy Hill Water and Sewer Company, Inc., Graniteville, South Carolina. They had 10,000 jobs within a two mile radius at a local textile plant. The plant wanted to expand, so the municipal board bought water from another municipality. Then problems arose in the textile industry, and many jobs were lost. Mr. Hilton reported the board was very aggressive and bought 1,000 acres for an industrial park, put together plans, and found their own water source with the help of USDA. A new buyer bought the textile plant (MTU) diesel. They now have a 45 acre, 1.2 billion dollar expansion of the Bridgestone/Firestone company. They had one day to make the decision. He stated he had many sleepless nights, but when there is infrastructure, companies are looking to build in rural America. Raising rates is not the answer. They also now have an influx of retirement people.

The fourth panelist was Dr. Robert Stewart, Executive Director, Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc., Washington, DC. He said rural water resources are important, don't pollute. Dr. Stewart spoke of seven challenges and seven opportunities. The challenges included a large investment, public health, compliance requirements, capitol improvements, aging workforce, increasing demands, and regional collaboration.

The opportunities were greater returns, supports jobs, improved health, spur investments, enlarge property tax base, attract other government funding, and cheaper now than later. He said other countries spend two to three times more than the U.S. on water and waste water infrastructure. A question was asked was how can we safeguard water with hydra fracturing? His answer was it needs allocation, its own protection, establishment of water rights, and bonding requirements.

## Past and present ag secretaries offer opinions

By *Diane McDonald*  
National WIFE Secretary

The opening session of the 2012 USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum was very interesting. This year celebrates 150 years of the USDA, which was put into place by President Abraham Lincoln. Even in 1862 the importance of agriculture to this country was recognized.

The panel at this session was led by current USDA Secretary Vilsak. He was joined by past Secretaries Ed Schaefer, Mike Johanns, Ann Venneman, Dan Glickman, Mike Espy, Clayton Yeutter, John Block, and John Knebel.

One of the questions asked was

about what they felt was the greatest challenge for agriculture. Many agreed that the growth of world population and the changing middle class in many of these countries offers many challenges and opportunities at the same time.

They agreed that agricultural research must be in the forefront. Increasing production while dealing with water and climate issues will be challenging. Mike Johanns believes food security is national security. Former Secretary Schaeffer believes that hungry people makes for an unstable government.

Overall they feel that ag is an ever growing very major part of our economy.

# Beef Report



By Sue Krentz  
Arizona

## Rural communities affected by forest management changes

Environmental groups are working to stop ranchers' rights to graze in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area in Arizona and New Mexico. Be ready to combat this problem of interference with ranchers' legitimate use of the land.

Laura Bryant Schneberger posted her concern regarding the areas where wolves share habitat with cattle and the people who live between them.

This is a typical example of the fights ranchers in the west are trying to resolve. Our goal is to raise cattle, produce beef, and be good stewards of the rangelands.

The Forest Service has changed their mission statement several times, from one supporting multiple use, moving to conservation or 'wise use' of the nation's resources, and then to the most recent being preservation or protecting the natural resources from the people by stopping all human use as a recurring pattern of scientific misconduct and authoritative overreach by federal agencies. This limited take on use of lease lands is finding its way into a plethora of new federal regulations that threatens established livestock grazing in the western U.S.

One can look the trend up on the Southern Arizona Cattlemen's Protection Association or SACPA's comments where these proposed new federal regulations were written by experienced field biologists. All are posted on the SACPA website at <http://www.sacpaaz.org/sacpa-actions>.

org/sacpa-actions.

These various changes make it difficult for those of us who have established permits on federal lands. The old role of the Forest Service was once promoted as being the world's leading science based land management agency, using thorough research and management strategies which provided resources for people while enhancing ecosystems' health.

The purpose of the Forest Service has now changed from one of support to a law enforcement role with the Forest Service creating and enforcing regulations such as the new planning rules. This new role places them in an elitist position above the people who are using the forest for productive endeavors.

The Forest Service is now the new 'Environmental Cop.' The new planning rules will allow the Forest Service to regulate the American people's use of this vital resource, and the 'chosen ones' and Forest Service employees will be able to force their vision of what natural habitat should be and how the forest lands should be managed.

The new forest planning rules are going to introduce junk science based on emotional decisions and not sound science based on physical evidence and best practices in range management.

The new rules with the most current environmental laws place the decision making process on an emotional level and a sympathetic vision of nature above the health, safety, and welfare of the American people.

The Forest Service has tried to update its planning rules since the 1980s and usually has been derailed in court by lawsuits from the environ-

mental groups. We need to challenge the current new planning regulations and point out who is really behind the whole agenda.

The environmental communities prefer that we focus on the agency and not their efforts. They continue to play the hero role looking like the good guys in the white hats. Ranchers are the true stewards of the lands, and we take the risks both financially and mentally. It is our culture and our customs that are being ignored.

Administrations tie up land use with these rules and regulations which destroy local communities, county budgets, and families. These regulations continue to put many people out of work. Jobs that cannot be replaced and the loss of income to the county and state budgets can be staggering in some areas. Arizona, celebrating 100 years of statehood today, is home to 920,000 head of cattle, producing almost 400 million pounds of beef annually, and we are proud of the fact we still produce enough beef to feed Arizona's 6.4 million people.

We in the livestock industry need to change our message that human beings and the natural ecosystems have coexisted on the earth for thousands of years and there is no real reason to start changing the relationship. The popular message and mission of many environmental groups will drive Americans back to the level of a third world country where people will do anything they can to survive.

In the end, we all will lose. Our welfare and the welfare of the livestock production industry does not need to be sacrificed to have a healthy ecosystem.



By Pam Potthoff  
Nebraska

# Trade Report

## Buying American products matters

WIFE is supportive of the Buy American movement. Here are some thoughts about why American made matters from the website, American-MadeMatters.com:

**OUR SAFETY MATTERS.** Based on data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, after years of being the world's top food producer, the U.S. is about to become the top food importer. Food safety depends on adequate inspection. The FDA has only two agents in China and is only able to inspect 11 percent of the factories.

**OUR JOBS MATTER.** Over 5.5 million manufacturing jobs have been lost in the U.S. in the last decade. This has a "rippling effect" of four to five other jobs lost.

Only about 11 million people still make things in the U.S., which is the lowest since 1941. American producers cannot compete on price but can still compete on quality, safety, service, durability and speed to market. American workers and companies recycle money back into our economy, and our consumers must realize this.

**OUR NATIONAL SECURITY MATTERS.** To protect its citizens, a government must be able to clothe and equip its military.

The U.S. is becoming increasingly dependent on other countries for technological innovations, technology components, military machines, supplies and equipment parts. This becomes a national security risk. The best way to restore our economy and keep the country safe from foreign threats is to bring research and development,

engineering and manufacturing back to U.S. shores.

**OUR PLANET MATTERS.** Manufacturing in the U.S., Canada, and most European countries is compliant with clean air, clean water, and solid waste disposal regulations as well as reducing ozone-depleting chemical use. In places like China, India, and South Africa, there is little to no enforcement to protect air, water and land.

Chinese companies produce three times the amount of carbon emissions per ton of steel. China has some strict environmental laws on the books, but the fines that may be levied to enforce the regulations are so insignificant that they are seen merely as a cost of doing business rather than a true deterrent.

While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency employs close to 17,000, China's State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) had only 300 – this to oversee environmental protection in a country with well over a billion people. Besides this, consider the fuel consumed to transport goods to U.S. markets.

**OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES MATTER.** Local businesses recycle money back into the local economy. Their taxes and the income taxes paid by their employees pay for government services, our military, and help repay the U.S. national deficit.

Local businesses and farms provide a "ripple effect" which impacts more American jobs. Local manufacturing creates four to five additional jobs for every one job.

**OUR INDEPENDENCE MATTERS.** America was founded by courageous men and women seeking freedom and independence. Immigrants from all over the world relocated here to find freedom, independence and a better life. However, America's reliance on foreign countries for products, tech-

nology, labor, and natural resources threatens our independence. The U.S. used to lead the world in engineering, research, and mechanical design, but since 2004, that title has been lost.

Long standing American manufacturing industries are dying out because they simply can't compete with subsidized foreign companies. This means more unemployed American workers, more sub-par quality products, and more dependence on other countries to grow and make what we need to survive. America will lose her independence without the ability to produce what we wear and consume.

**OUR ECONOMY MATTERS.** The U.S. budget deficit continues to grow, as does our trade deficit. The U.S. is not generating enough wealth to pay its mounting and massive debts. Cheap imports made in unsafe, low-wage factories overseas are not improving the fortunes of America's least fortunate, much less its middle class.

For every \$1 that U.S. manufacturers spend, another \$1.40 of economic activity is created. Without American citizens making products and companies and workers recycling the money back into our economy, the U.S. won't be able to pay its massive debts to other countries, much less meet the needs of its citizens.

As factories close, machines are scrapped or sent to low-cost producing countries. When this happens, the knowledge and skills that American manufacturers have refined throughout the years are lost. The effort and money required to start up new factories or re-open closed plants is difficult to justify, meaning these jobs might be lost forever.

**THE AMERICAN DREAM MATTERS.** Millions from dozens of coun-

*Continued on Page 9*



**By Alice Parker  
Washington**

## **Water storage vital to rural communities, economic growth**

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 7, 2012 - The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power held an oversight hearing today on "Water for Our Future and Job Creation: Examining Regulatory and Bureaucratic Barriers to New Surface Storage Infrastructure." The hearing highlighted the regulatory burdens that hinder vital water storage improvement projects that help create jobs, increase agriculture production, generate hydropower and grow the economy and common sense ways to overcome those hurdles.

Cumbersome environmental regulations have delayed critical water storage projects for years while urban growth, environmental litigation and age strain current water storage infrastructure. Rural communities, ranches and family farms across the country are dependent on a dependable water supply, which is directly linked to storage capacity. Current and new dams and reservoirs provide affordable emission-free electricity to millions of Americans, support the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands hard-working families and protect America's food security.

The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) has built more than 600 dams over the last century, however over 66% of their facilities were constructed over 50 years ago. A recent BOR study found nearly one hundred potential sites for new surface storage, yet due to environmental regulations and other factors it has been over a generation since BOR built multiple large scale water storage facilities.

"Regulations and associated litigation have hijacked these projects, to the point where their very purposes have

been compromised and the construction of new water storage to continue to meet the needs of these regions is nearly impossible to achieve," said Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings.

"Water users throughout the West have been forced to stand by and watch powerlessly as increasingly burdensome federal rules based on questionable science and never-ending litigation makes it more and more difficult to continue to receive the water they need."

"The legendary multi-purpose dams and reservoirs of the last generation turned deserts into farmlands, created vast new recreational areas, tamed the environmentally devastating cycle of floods and droughts, and produced clean and abundant hydropower that provided a foundation for unprecedented prosperity throughout the western United States," said Subcommittee Chairman Tom McClintock (CA-04). "This hearing will explore the bureaucratic obstacles that federal agencies have placed in the way of water development. Congress must make a concerted effort to identify and remove these obstacles that lead to increasingly expensive water and power and affect our prosperity as a nation."

"Prudent water storage can help aid agriculture, residential use, recreation, hydropower production and environmental protection. Water storage is a precursor for multiple use water management in arid regions such as Colorado's third Congressional district," said Rep. Scott Tipton (CO-03). "I am hopeful that this hearing will be a productive step in highlighting some of the shortcomings of the existing water storage regulatory framework, and how it can be streamlined to better support jobs and communities that depend on the availability of water."

"I commend the Subcommittee for

holding this hearing to address water storage concerns. In my district water is a vital resource to our livelihoods, and we must ensure we have a reliable storage and conveyance system in place in order to spur job growth. I introduced bi-partisan legislation, H.R. 1604, to eliminate duplicative environmental regulations in California and alleviate burdensome policies restricting job creation," said Rep. Jeff Denham (CA-19).

"Reducing the burdensome regulations that the federal government has imposed is critical to the vitality of our nation. The American people continue to be strapped by the bureaucratic layers of protocols and hindrances that continue to skyrocket our federal deficit," Congressman Raúl Labrador (ID-01) said.

Mr. Pat O'Toole, President of Family Farm Alliance, who represents family farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts, and allied industries in seventeen Western states, testified about the importance of increased storage to agriculture and food security.

"There must be more water stored and available to farms and cities. Maintaining the status quo simply isn't sustainable in the face of unstoppable population growth, diminishing snow pack, increased water consumption to support domestic energy, and increased environmental demands," said O'Toole.

"If we don't find a way to restore water supply reliability for irrigated agriculture...our country's ability to feed and clothe itself and the world will be jeopardized."

The Committee also heard testimony from Mr. Thad Bettner, Clenn-Coulsa Irrigation District; Mr. Norm Semanko, Idaho Water Users Association.

*Reprinted with permission from Natural Resources Committee Chair Doc Hastings' newsletter.*



**By Klodette Stroh  
Wyoming**

# Sugar Report

## Farm Bill needs to consider all segments of American agriculture

March 8 marks National Agriculture Day and falls during National Ag Week, March 4-10, 2012, a time when producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless others across America gather to recognize and celebrate the abundant production of commodities provided by United States' agriculture.

World population will reach 9 billion by 2050. There will be millions of new mouths to feed, many of whom rely on United States' food production to meet this need. According to 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, the United States agriculture has a positive balance in exports. We export \$43.5 billion in agriculture products and import \$26.4 billion in farm products, equaling to positive net trade balance of \$17.1 billion. This also means \$6 million-an-hour worth of U.S. agriculture exports, which is a positive income 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.

Roundup ready sugar beet seed are a good example of the biogenetics process. Biogenetics is simply another technology that helps in crop production. This is a feature that is implanted directly into the seed to protect the seed against certain herbicide or pests. United States' agriculture has been benefiting from this technology by having Roundup ready corn, soybeans, and as we know, sugar beet seed.

With modern methods, one acre of land in the U.S. (about the size of a football field) can produce: 42,000 pounds of strawberries or 11,000 heads of lettuce. One acre can also produce enough wheat to feed a family of four for 10 years. Though it may never cross the average person's mind, it is pretty amazing that one bushel of wheat (60 pounds) makes 72 loafs of bread.

In addition to the abundant production, United States' agriculture provides multiple employment opportunities in our country. A prime example of employment opportunities is America's sugar beet, sugar cane, and corn sweetener industry. United States' sugar industry provides 142,000 direct and indirect jobs with almost \$20 billion in economic impact in our nation, and it operates at no cost to our struggling government.

An issue that weighs heavy on my mind is our country's struggling economy and record high deficit. United States lawmakers are trying to cut back from budget to help reduce the U.S. deficit, but they have to be aware of policies like the Farm Bill which feeds our children in schools and shelters homeless Americans.

As we will celebrate Agriculture day in Washington, D.C., this year, the U.S. Congress will be working to write the 2012 Farm Bill. The Farm Bill has been designed to assist the American pub-

lic. Please bear in mind U.S. agriculture must be treated as one, united industry. We have to make sure all producers are treated fairly in upcoming Farm Bill.

The farm family was the basic unit shaping life in America. Alfalfa hay, barley, corn, cotton, cattle, dry beans, milk, rice, oats, sugar beet, sugar cane, soybeans and wheat are the body of America's agriculture. Some of our lawmakers have been trying to dismember this productive body, which I consider to be the backbone of my beloved country. American agriculture is our nation's most vital renewable industry.

As we celebrate the Agriculture Day in our nation this year, please let our lawmakers know dismembering a fruitful and dynamic working machine, as America's agriculture is, will not result in prosperity of this nation's economy.

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**By Marlene Kouba  
North Dakota**

# Energy Report

## Booming oil industry will continue to face challenges from regulations

General Motors is working on a fuel cell program. They now say all company cars must be Volts or buy their own.

Blender pumps using ethanol and gasoline are increasing. There are about 60 in Minnesota, 30 in South Dakota, and 68 in North Dakota with requests for 181 more. Minnesota has 21 ethanol plants. About 280 million barrels of gasoline were saved by using blender pumps between 2007 and 2009. Ethanol contributed about \$92 million to the gross domestic product in 2010.

Germanium is a semi-metal or metalloid that has electrical properties between those of a metal and those of an insulator. The semiconductor is used in the manufacturing of solar panels, fiber optics, infrared sensors, high speed electronics, and PET plastics. In the U.S., germanium is used primarily in infrared optics, fiber optics, and electronic and solar applications. Many of the solar applications are used in satellite applications.

The U.S. has consumed about 132,000 pound of germanium with 86 percent imported from Belgium, Germany, Russia, China and Canada. It is been discovered that North Dakota lignite coal ash contains some germanium, and a few of the mine areas are now being tested for it in western North Dakota.

Ener1 subsidiary EnerDel received a \$118 million stimulus grant from the Energy Department for a new battery plant in Indiana in 2009 but it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on

January 26, 2012. The company made lithium-ion batteries for electric cars such as the Chevrolet Volt. Ener1 is the third company to seek bankruptcy protection after receiving millions under the economic stimulus law.

California solar panel maker Solyndra Inc. received a \$528 million federal loan while Beacon Power, a Massachusetts energy-storage firm, got a \$43 million loan guarantee and then declared bankruptcy in 2011. The Obama administration praised Solyndra as a model for its clean energy program, and clean energy was brought up in the State of the Union address.

The Bakken, the biggest oil field discovered in the United States in four decades, covers 15,000 square miles in North Dakota, Montana, and Saskatchewan. In December 2011, early figures show North Dakota produced an all-time high of 535,000 barrels of oil a day. The state has now tied California in oil production. The state is now behind only Alaska and Texas.

North Dakota's booming oil fields produced a record 152.9 million barrels of sweet crude in 2011, up more than 35 percent from the previous record of 113 million set a year earlier. The Bakken is believed to have about 24 billion barrels of oil—regardless of erroneous emails you may have received about the estimated quantity.

In January 1989 the state had only nine rigs, but in October 2011 there were 197 rigs and 6,202 producing wells. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is looking at regulatory changes that could significantly impact the energy industry, and state leaders seem to be unified in their opposition to the EPA's intent.

The Bakken Oil Express Rail Hub

can take away 100,000 barrels of oil per day and is the first multi-shipper crude by rail unit train facility with 103 oil tank cars in North Dakota. It will receive oil by both truck and pipeline. The Keystone pipeline would have helped, but alternatives are being discussed.

Unemployment in the state is 3.4 percent. New building of housing and motels plus man camps can't keep up with the demand of incoming workers. Area cities are expected to double in five years, and airlines are increasing coverage for the area.

Kaolinite samples from clay and sandstone deposits in nine counties in western North Dakota are being collected and tested as a possible proppant to be used to keep fractures open in hydraulic fracturing.

Kaolinite contains high aluminum properties which is one of the main ingredients for proppant. Currently, ceramic proppants are being purchased from China and Russia.

Kitamaat Village, British Columbia, could be growing in a few short years. Canada is debating building a 731 mile oil pipeline costing \$5.5 billion to the West Coast where a port would be built to handle 220 tankers a year and 525,000 barrels of oil a day. However, they face the same environmental issues as the Keystone in the U.S., and it would cross sensitive native tribe territory.

About 97 percent of Canadian oil exports now come to the United States. Meanwhile, China's growing economy is hungry for Canadian oil, and some of their companies have invested \$16 billion in Canadian energy in the past two years. One is Sinopec and is sure to profit if the pipeline is built to the West.

# Rural Health, Farm Finance, and Communications **Report**



**By Donna Bolz  
Nebraska**

## Speaking up is a simple way to help rural communities survive

Small towns and ordinary rural people are receiving short shrift in federal policy according to a recent study conducted by the Center for Rural Affairs. They found that the USDA spent twice as much on subsidies to the 20 biggest farms in each of 13 leading farm states – 260 mega farms – as it spent on rural development programs to create strong communities and economic opportunity for millions of rural people in 260 struggling rural counties in those same 13 states.

The report goes on to say that Congress is over-subsidizing mega farms and under-investing in the small family farm for one simple reason. Mega farms are a well-organized constituency.

In many cases, rural leaders and family farmers who care about their communities are not well organized. It is time to change that.

As a first step stay, informed on issues of interest. Information can be found in a variety of places. The next thing to do is contact you elected officials. They can be local officials to the elected federal officials.

WIFE was founded by women who wanted things to improve for the family farmer and decided writing letters was the place to start. You don't have to spend lots of money to go to Washington, D.C. You need to stay informed and pass that information on.

The time is critical. In some cases it seems that Washington is not working for small towns, family farms and

ranches, small enterprise, or ordinary citizens, according to the CRA study. It's up to us to change that by making our voices heard and holding our elected official accountable.

This year or next, Congress will write a new Farm Bill governing rural development and agriculture programs. The first attempt at writing a Farm Bill was not very successful. That bill made even deeper cuts in funding for rural development, which had already been cut by one-third over the last eight years. It increased the share of farm program payments that go to mega farms. It cut beginning farmer programs and conservation programs

that reward farmers who protect the land and water.

We can do better, but only if more rural Americans join the debate and demand a Farm Bill that invests in our future. Get out your pen and paper, fire up that computer, and let your voice be heard. We can and do make a difference.

As I was writing this, I received a call from an organization I believe in asking me to contact my Senator about some Nebraska legislation. It took me less than five minutes to compose an email and send it on to my Senator. It doesn't have to take a long time, so get started now.

## Buying American helps economy

*Continued from Page 5*

tries have come to America for the opportunity to find work and benefit from the fruits of their labor. Today, that promise of a better life is threatened. Buying products which will not last long, will require more energy to transport to market, will offer less reliability and safety, and will send jobs and wealth elsewhere, is a losing proposition for consumers and the future of America.

Americans have always cherished the right to work for a living, to pursue the same American dream as our ancestors. The U.S. economic demand is more than 20 percent of the world's total, while our consumers account for nearly 30 percent of the world's consumer spending power. Buy American made products and restore the American dream.

Most of the above can also be

found in Manufacturing a Better Future for America by Richard McCormack.

I hope this information will help you convince others of the importance of buying American.

The South Korean-US Free Trade Agreement will take effect on March 15. Analysts forecast the pact will expand the \$90 billion two-way trade relationship by 10 percent within five years. It will be interesting to look back in five years and see if these forecasts are more accurate than the pipe dream predictions made before NAFTA went into effect.

On another note, WIFE is a member of the Coalition for a Prosperous America (CPA), and I serve on their Board of Directors. Many fine trade articles can be found on their website and at tradereform.org.

In the meantime, don't forget to BUY AMERICAN!



By Dianna Reed  
Kansas

# Dairy Report

## New trademark reassures consumers

all struggle to get any possible advantage at the retail level.

The 100% USA trademark will provide a needed win for dairy producers, a win for processors, and a win for consumers. Compare that to the alternative when imports are brought into the country and used in the processing of cheese by processors and manufacturers of dairy products allowing for the production of cheese that uses 30 percent less milk. This is a loss to producers.

The difference is made up by imported milk protein concentrates (MPCs) that are imported by processors. They are not required to identify to the consumer whether or not imported materials were inspected and regulated to the same standards re-

quired by U.S. producers and expected by U.S. consumers. Not only are they typically unregulated, but they are not even required to provide the consumer with the country of origin under current law. This results in a loss to consumers.

Using more U.S. milk helps the producers of milk, helps process a higher quality product that we can guarantee as safe for our children and grandchildren, and is a win for consumers. The consumers' willingness to pay the processor and the retailer a higher price for that quality and safety guarantee is a win for the processor and the retailers. It just makes sense to choose, use, and maintain the quality for which the 100% USA Milk trademark was created.

Consumers will be seeing a new trademark on items they purchase at their grocery stores. The National Dairy Producers Organization Inc. announced that the "100 % USA" trademark had been secured for the beef and orange industries as well as dairy. Efforts on behalf of dairy producers and all of agriculture stems from the effort of the National Dairy Producers Organization to restrict unregulated, and/or ingredients that are not inspected from being processed into the dairy products consumed by American citizens.

An aggressive marketing effort is underway to reach and inform processors, manufacturing companies, and businesses involved in the packaging of dairy products and other farm commodities and to capitalize on the outstanding response from consumers thus far.

100% USA LLC is a separate non-profit entity under the direction of the National Dairy Producers board. Many other commodities are being targeted by the producer group in order to capture the greatest possible benefit to both the producers of milk and the consumers of all milk and dairy products.

Surveys indicate that consumers not only prefer a product that has the 100% USA trademark on the package, but by an overwhelming margin they are willing to pay a higher price for assurance that what they are buying is indeed 100% USA. The willingness of consumers to pay more should have a significant impact on the decisions of processors and manufacturers as they



By Jacquelyn Sistrunk  
Alabama

## Specialty Crops Report

### Farmers wonder if high prices will last

25 percent from 2010-2011. We no longer have a shortage of either soybeans or corn.

Carryovers result in lower prices. But two years of significant declines in yield make for a 2012 yield increase. But if 94.5 million acres are planted as expected, and weather permitting harvested, prices will most probably decline.

Some farmers have been pinching themselves because of 2011 commodity prices. But are those high prices a onetime thing or a long-term trend? Farmers pray prosperity is here to stay. It may be unless derailed by a European recession.

Keep the price of any commodity too high for too long and people will use less of it. They will find something else to use or else produce more of the same so supply and demand will solve the problem.

The January 12 crop report showed soybean exports down 15 percent from last year. Corn exports for 2011-2012 are expected to be down 10 percent.

Carryover corn has declined

# Cereal Grains Report



By Lisa Goodheart  
Kansas

Buckwheat has been grown in America since colonial days and was once common on farms in northeastern and north central US. Crop production peaked in 1866 when it was a common livestock feed and in demand for making flour. By the 1960s, buckwheat acreage had declined to about 50,000 acres. Today, the leading buckwheat states are New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota.

In the 1970s, buckwheat exports to Japan for buckwheat noodles and the demand for prepared breakfast cereal increased the popularity of buckwheat. This increase in demand was due to the nutritional excellence of buckwheat making it superior to all cereals, including oats. Buckwheat protein is rich in the amino acid lysine. Most of the buckwheat grain utilized as human food is marketed in the form of flour. The flour is usually dark in color because the hull fragments are not removed during the milling process. Buckwheat flour is commonly marketed in the form of pancake mixes rather than as baking flour. The pancake mixes may contain buckwheat mixed with wheat, corn, rice or oat flours as well as a leavening agent.

Some buckwheat grain is utilized in the form of groats, which is that part

## Buckwheat is a traditional crop regaining market popularity

of the grain that is left after the hulls are removed from the kernels. This product may be marketed as whole groats, cracked groats, or as a coarse granular product. Groats may be used for breakfast food or porridge and as a thickening agent for soups, gravies and dressings. Buckwheat flour and groats must be used fresh because they have a high fat content and can soon become rancid. This makes buckwheat products difficult to handle in the summer. Buckwheat may also cause a skin rash on certain individuals, especially if it is eaten frequently or in large quantities.

Buckwheat is usually milled with steel rolls, but a few mills still use old-fashioned stone burs to produce buckwheat flour. Usually small particles of hull remain in the flour, which gives it its characteristic dark color. One hundred pounds of clean, dry buckwheat yields 60 to 75 pounds of flour, four to 18 pounds of middlings, and 18 to 26 pounds of hulls. Buckwheat more than one year old is reported to make flour inferior to that made from freshly harvested grain. The middlings, which are mostly the gem and inner covering of the grain just beneath the hull, are used for feed.

Buckwheat is also sometimes used as a honey crop. The honey is dark and has a strong flavor, highly favored by some consumers. Buckwheat may fill a special need for the beekeeper since the honey flow comes late in the season

when other nectar is scarce. However, because of the decline of buckwheat as a grain crop, the honey is now so uncommon that it may bring a higher price than almost any other honey.

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Notice: Proposed bylaws must be submitted by May 26 to Jenifer Felzien at [gjfelz@kci.net](mailto:gjfelz@kci.net) and Bobbie Massey at [bjmassey@vtc.net](mailto:bjmassey@vtc.net).

# WIFE Membership

*By Mary Ann Sheppard  
National Membership Chair*

Every morning I look forward to getting the daily newspaper. I also look forward to getting the WIFeline the first part of each month. I look forward to reading the commodity articles that educate me on what is going on in agriculture. The chairman of each commodity/issue is well informed on her subject. I also enjoy seeing the pictures and articles of our WIFE friends and what they are doing.

Your paper will stop this month if your dues are not paid now. I know some of you have just forgotten to mail your dues to the treasurer. Please sit down today and write that check to the National Treasurer for your dues which include the WIFeline.

This organization has worked hard for 35 years for our farmers. We must continue to do our job. There are more women farming today than ever. We have a job

to do to keep the story of agriculture before the public to those who buy the food that we produce.

Send your national membership dues to:  
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