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2008 - Women on the move for Agriculture

“Stop the Fighting on the way to the Funeral Home”

by **Jolene Brown, CSP**

There are times I just wish I could use duct tape and a 2 x 4. The duct tape so farm families would listen. The 2 x 4 so they'd get the point.

As a farmer, professional speaker, and family business consultant, I've had the opportunity to work with families in agriculture for over 20 years. I've sat at their kitchen tables and met with them in their farm offices. They tell me their stories about working with family and transitioning a legacy. Many stories are filled with worry, anger, fear, disappointment and resentment. Other stories have the saddest of endings as family members no longer speak to each other or even acknowledge the other's existence. The fighting may even have started on the way to the funeral home!

Here's what I've learned from working with families in agriculture: crops and critters can be bought and sold and land can be managed by many, but it is the people on the land and in our heart that creates the greatest joys, or become the greatest sources of frustration and pain.

To transition a legacy, I think it's time to learn from others and respond to some important questions.

- “Do you really want this business to continue as a business? A family business?”
- Are the finances of the business strong enough to support all wanting to work in the business, and provide retirement security?
- Are there next generation family members who really want to work and lead this family business? Are they qualified?
- Do you have clearly defined common goals and mission?

Be very careful with your responses. They are life changing. If you say, “YES”, senior generation, you have just agreed to replace yourself. If you say, “YES”, next generation, you have just accepted the opportunity, risk and responsibility to build on the best of the past and make a business even better.

If you say “YES”, you have also agreed that you will:

- choose the next business leader based on qualifications of skills, character, attitude and commitment not age, gender or genetics;

- discuss plans with all family members and key employees in the business and share that information with family member not involved in the business;

- hold important meetings even though you “see each other every day”;

- “share the books” not “keep the books” so all might be financially informed;

- willingly pay professional advisors to create a legal structure which fosters the transition of responsibility and ownership, including a buy-sell agreement and discussed estate plan;

- have written guidelines or legal agreements for: job descriptions and standards; total compensation package; who hires, coaches and fires; how decisions will be made; how much money can be spent before it must be a group decision; role of the spouse and off-site family; ownership status; rental/lease/labor agreements; business plan; goals; a six part exit strategy; and more.

When you do these things well, you will have defined purpose, passion and progress, which will also include completing important paperwork.

At one of my seminars, “The Top Ten Stupid Things Families Do to Break Up Their Business,”™ we face realities, laugh and learn, open eyes and sometimes even wipe tears. We discover solutions and tools that give us choices to move our farm families from stupidity to intelligence. If not, I always have the duct tape and a 2 x 4 available.

By-Line: More information about Jolene's professional speaking work and to watch for her new release of the “Top Ten Stupid Things Families Do To Break Up Their Business”™ CD album, visit www.JoleneBrown.com or call 319-643-2429.



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OILSEEDS

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There are many products in our lives that contain petroleum as an ingredient, such as household cleaners, beauty products, synthetic plastics and more. Now think about replacing the petroleum with soy in each of these products. Each day scientists and soybean farmers are working to make this dream come true.

If you would ask most people they would think of soybeans as food for human consumption and feed for livestock. How many of us know that carpet can have a soy backing and that the ink used to print newspapers may contain soy?

In 1987 the first soy product, soy ink, hit the mainstream consumer. It underwent a lot of testing and proved to be non-toxic. It is now used in 90 percent of the nation's daily newspapers. The success of soy ink caused many industries to look for other ways to use soy. Companies like John Deere, Ford Motor Company, Dow Chemical and others started to realize the positives of soy and started using soy technology in products ranging from cosmetics to building insulation and even in seats in automobiles. Another plus for soy products is that the paint and graffiti removers and household cleansers are becoming more popular and less harmful to the environment and consumers.

The good news is soy products match or exceed the petroleum products in their abilities and exceed their performance in such areas as enhanced lubrication, sticker adhesives and more durable plastics. This just goes to show that soy can compete with petrochemicals in many markets.

Soybean oil is being used as a replacement for chemicals on concrete stains. One company called SoyCrete uses soybean oil to make an acid-free, nontoxic concrete stain that works for all interior and exterior surfaces such as concrete, masonry, brick, stucco, fiber cement and natural stone surfaces.

These examples are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to showing the advantages soy possesses over petroleum. For the growth to continue the Winter 2007 issue of *Soybeanbraska* states that farmers must take an active approach in promoting these products and urging the industry to consider soy in their processes. The next time you purchase a product in a hardware store or equipment farm dealership, ask if it contains soy. If it doesn't, ask why not? The consumer has a lot of power so let's use it. When you buy a product, check the label to see what is in it. You

FAED SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications for FAED's Marilyn Spiker \$500 Scholarships were due by April 1. Several were received and they are currently being judged to see which ones will be the overall winners. Best wishes to all who applied!



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High Plains Journal



PRESIDENTIAL POINTS

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Spring has arrived!! In farm and ranch country, spring is a time of renewed hope and enthusiasm. Spring brings newborn animals, challenging time schedules, promises of great crops and the end of cold, dreary weather. After a drab-colored winter, spring brings color to the environment, warmth to our bodies, and a reason for our existence. Add the promises and hope of Easter and everyone in agriculture should be eager to jump right into spring!

Spring should be a time of renewed hope for our organization, too. We have been seeing new memberships and increased enthusiasm from established members. We have completed a successful Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, and plans are underway for an interesting and challenging June meeting in Denver.

Please start making plans to be in Denver for the Board of Directors and Committee Meetings. The registration form and additional information can be found in this WIFeline. Your attendance is essential to fan the flames of hope and enthusiasm for WIFE! See you in Denver!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Spring Board of Directors Meeting will be in Denver on June 7 and 8 at the Courtyard by Marriott — Denver Airport, 6901 Tower Road. This is the same hotel we used last year.

Reservations can be made by calling 1-888-526-5504 or 303-371-0300 and asking for the special rate or online at <http://marriott.com/hotels/travel/denap-courtyard-denver-airport>. The cutoff date for the special WIFE rate at the Courtyard is May 9 at 5:00p.m.

There is a ten-minute free shuttle ride to the hotel from the airport. The registration price is \$50 and due to Treasurer Melinda Sorem by May 27. No cancellations will be accepted after June 4.

The Executive Committee will meet on Friday, June 6 at 4:30 p.m. MDT with all committees meeting that same day. The BOD will start at 8:00 a.m. MDT on Saturday and until 1:00 on Sunday afternoon. Please make your travel plans accordingly but do not plan to leave until after lunch on Sunday. The Friday evening BOD is being eliminated in order to allow more travel time and avoid an additional night at the hotel for some of the closer members.

All standing committees are expected to meet on June 6. Each chairman will contact her committee members and determine a time to meet. The May WIFeline will include a complete listing of times for committees to meet. If possible Education, Media Relations and National Convention committees could meet at 4:30 while the Executive Committee is meeting.

The Nominations Committee is composed of all state presidents and they will present a slate of officer nominees during the Denver meeting. Vernice Balsdon is the chairman of that committee.

NATURAL RESOURCES/ PROPERTY RIGHTS

By Stephanie Trask
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A recent lawsuit by the conservation group, WildEarth Guardians, filed in federal court in Washington, D.C. would force Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne to respond to an August 2007 petition to list the black-tailed prairie dog under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Black-tailed prairie dogs are currently considered rodent pests and as such are not classified under the ESA.

Yes, prairie dogs are cute. Small and furry with big eyes, they are fun to watch as they scamper around chirping and eating. However, with a gestation period of 28-32 days and an average litter size of five pups, prairie dogs are very prolific and can wear out their welcome in a hurry. Intolerant of tall vegetation, for reasons of predator awareness, prairie dogs thrive by keeping surrounding rangelands clipped to the ground. When surrounding grasses become scarce, the hardy rodents supplement their diets with seeds and roots, until the native stands are damaged if not wiped out entirely. This, combined with mound-building which prevents water from running down into their burrows, leads to severe erosion in heavily populated areas.

While prairie dog towns can provide food for species such as owls, badgers, fox, and coyotes, they are also ideal habitat for rattlesnakes. The uneven terrain of the towns is characterized by mounds and holes, making navigation precarious for livestock. Furthermore, the towns are an open spawning ground for diseases to which prairie dogs are susceptible. This includes Sylvatic plague (the rodent equivalent to Bubonic plague) which is 100 percent fatal to prairie dogs.

As cute as they are, prairie dogs, for all of the above reasons, have been and continue to be considered rodent pests.

The United States has an existing law (1931 Title 7 of the Laws Applicable to the United States Department of Agriculture Paragraph 426), strengthened in 2001 by Congress, which directs the Secretary of Agriculture to control or eradicate animals and plants listed by Congress as detrimental to "... agriculture, horticulture, forestry, animal husbandry, wild game animals, fur bearing animals, and birds, and for the protection of stock and other domestic animals."

As long as prairie dogs remain under the Department of Agriculture jurisdiction, their recognized classification as a pest to agriculture will allow for management and population control. The Department of Agriculture in all states must not give the species to the game departments of every state, making them a huntable species rather than a pest, and therefore eligible for control under the Endangered Species Act.

"The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance." -Thomas Jefferson

TRADE

By Ruth Laribee
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In the 1960s the European Union (EU) set up a rules and regulations paper called the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). It is a subsidy program that uses approximately forty percent of the EU's total yearly financial plan. At the time the guidelines were being proposed, "community preference" was put in place even though the European Court of Justice found it had no basis in EU law. Mariann Fisher Boel, EU's Agriculture Commissioner, has concerns that the term "community preference" has been used by the government of France and could mean the protection of European products. Boel reveals she is not in favor of protectionism as it could be risky and may well not be in the best interest for EU consumers. She said Europe is now the largest importer and exporter of agricultural products worldwide and to shut down their markets would be a loss to their consumers. Another concern Boel affirmed was that while access to their markets was needed, they would insist that imports have the same strict safety and health standards as put on the "27 nation bloc".

In June of 2008 France will take over the EU presidency via French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Becoming EU president, he has vowed to thoroughly examine the CAP program. He will bring to the table discussions on protecting farmland, greater production and maintaining food supplies. France is the leading agricultural producer and exporter in Europe and receives the largest portion of farm subsidies.

The European Union along with the United States and other wealthy countries are under strong urging of the World Trade Organization negotiations to approve the first mandated cuts in farm subsidies. Sarkozy, speaking to 600,000 attending the Paris agriculture fair, made known his thoughts on subsidy cuts. He declared Europe should be more determined to guard its interests, resolve not to hand over continuously more concessions and receive less thereby always losing without any gain. Sarkozy also pointed out that Europe should not "bow down to pressure from the WTO to cut farm subsidies" and has affirmed interest in a true system of "community preferences" but refutes the idea that it means protectionism. (Source-The Guardian, Bloomberg, Time, USTR)

The European Union has banned Brazilian beef over health concerns of mad cow disease and foot and mouth disease. According to the EU, Brazil does not have in place the ability to trace animals nor sufficient health rules and regulations. Russia and Japan have also banned Brazilian beef. According to Reuters and Dow Jones, the Brazilian meatpacking company JBS-SA (South America-Sao Paola, Brazil) has purchased Tasman Group of Australia, The United States Smithfield Beef Group and National Beef Packing for approximately \$1.3 billion. It does not include the Five Rivers Ranch live-cattle inventory which will be totally owned by

Smithfield when the deal goes through but they will have to pay JBS a fee for feeding them. According to the reports JBS already owns Swift Co. With all of the companies combined Brazil will be the largest beef processors in the nation.

Continued on page 5

DAIRY

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The price of milk in the grocery stores has soared over the last few months and there seems to be no relief in sight, but as you read this remember that the dairy farmer receives far below what is charged at your local super market. Dairy prices are expected to decrease slightly this year, but you are going to pay about as much for a gallon of milk as you do for a gallon of gasoline.

Several factors that fueled record milk prices in 2007, including soaring production costs and increased international demand, are still at play, according to local dairy industry officials. Some processing officials feel we will see the pricing come down to where it used to be. The spike has affected all dairy products including milk, cheese, butter and cottage cheese.

It seems that once we reach a plateau, it does not seem to back off and once it does reach this point, history has shown us that it stays there. Retail prices are forecast to decline in the second half of 2008 and wholesale dairy prices are expected to average lower as a result of larger supplies, according to a report released this week by the United States Department of Agriculture. Higher milk prices always spike over-production. We now have states that are dumping milk because they cannot find a home for it. The report indicates cheese prices will average \$1.63 to \$1.71 per pound and butter will average \$1.19 to \$1.29 per pound. The current average price for a gallon of whole milk is \$3.52. Prices for a gallon of milk could drop slightly but are expected to hold around \$2.90 to \$3 a gallon.

Supply usually drives prices down but increased production costs are one of the primary factors driving the jump in dairy prices. Dairy farmers have a lot of input costs. The cost of fuel and fertilizer in 2007 were much higher than previous years. Fuel costs were up 35 percent in 2007 compared to 2005. Two years ago it cost \$2.50 a day to feed a cow while today it costs \$5.00.

In addition, a severe drought in Australia last year raised worldwide demand for dairy products. Meanwhile dairy companies have been hampered by higher transportation costs. They drive millions of miles a year which has affected them tremendously. Farmers are also paying more to get their milk to market.

Dairy producers cannot pass their costs on to the market as they do not have the capabilities to do so. They are essentially the price takers.

BEEF

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With 29 cuts of beef meeting government guidelines for lean, you can explore a different 3-ounce cut every day of the month!

Did you know?

- One 3-ounce serving of lean beef is only 179 calories.
 - Lean beef is a naturally rich source of nine essential nutrients, including protein, zinc, vitamin B12, selenium, phosphorous, niacin, vitamin B6, iron and riboflavin.
- When shopping select beef last to ensure that beef stays cold as long as possible until you get home.
- Choose beef with a bright cherry-red color, without any grayish or brown blotches. A darker purplish-red color is typical of vacuum-packaged beef. Once exposed to oxygen, beef will turn from a darker red to bright red.
 - Fresh ground beef does go through a number of color changes during its shelf life. These color changes are normal, and the ground beef remains perfectly wholesome and safe to eat if purchased by the “sell by” date on the package label.
 - A package of ground beef may appear bright red on the surface, where it is exposed to oxygen through the permeable plastic wrapping, while the interior, where oxygen is absent, remains purplish-red. With extended exposure to oxygen, beef’s cherry-red color will take on a brown color.
 - Choose packages that are cold, tightly wrapped and have no tears or punctures. Be sure the packages do not contain excessive liquid, an indication of temperature abuse or excessive storage. For vacuum-packaged beef, be sure that the seal has not been broken and that the package is not leaking.
 - Choose steaks, roasts and pot roasts that are firm to the touch, not soft.
 - Purchase before or on the “sell by” date printed on the package label.

Like all perishable foods, beef must be handled and stored properly to avoid spoilage and food-borne illness. Follow these food-safe practices:

- Refrigerate or freeze beef as soon after purchasing as possible. (If it will take longer than 30 minutes to get it home, keep it cold in a cooler in your car.)
 - If refrigerating beef, place it in the meat compartment or in the coldest part of the refrigerator.
 - If purchased beef is wrapped in transparent film, it can be refrigerated without re-wrapping. It can also be frozen up to 2 weeks without rewrapping. For longer freezer storage, to prevent freezer burn, repackage in heavy-duty aluminum foil, freezer paper or plastic freezer bags, removing as much air as possible.
 - Label and date frozen beef packages, including weight and/or number of servings. Practice the FIFO inventory system — first in, first out.
 - Do not defrost frozen beef at room temperature.
- Defrost frozen beef in the refrigerator, to prevent bacterial growth.

Place package on a tray to catch any drippings and place

in refrigerator the day before it’s needed.

- Allow about 24 hours to defrost a 1 to 1-1/2-inch thick package of ground beef or beef pieces.
- Allow 12 hours to defrost 1/2 to 3/4-inch thick ground beef patties.
- Allow 12 to 24 hours to defrost steaks, depending on thickness.
- Allow 4 to 7 hours per pound to defrost large roasts or thick compact pot roasts.
- Allow 3 to 5 hours per pound to defrost small roasts or thin pot roasts.
- Cook ground beef as soon as possible after defrosting.
- Remember that ground beef, beef for stir-fry, beef for stew and beef for kabobs are more perishable than whole muscle cuts (roasts and steaks). During the grinding process for ground beef, any bacteria on the surface are mixed throughout. Cutting into strips or cubes exposes more surface area where bacteria can grow. Both processes result in shorter shelf life.
- Refrigerate leftovers promptly after serving, within 2 hours after cooking. To speed up the chilling, divide large quantities into smaller portions or spread food out in shallow container.

TRADE Continued from page 4

The Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer, speaking at the Department’s Agricultural Outlook Forum, projected U.S. agricultural exports to attain a record \$101 billion for the financial year of 2008. This is \$10 billion above the USDA’s prediction in November and an unprecedented \$19 billion higher than 2007. Increased prices on soybeans, wheat and coarse grain are the reasons for just over half of the adjustment since November. With the present market situation, oilseeds, cotton and bulk grains should climb \$13.2 billion and account for the overall increase of 70 percent in export value for 2008. Schafer stated that export volumes are generally higher but higher prices account for most of the increase.

According to an article by Pablo Bachelet, Brazil has increased its imports from China to a record \$8 billion in the last seven years. Brazil has also increased its imports from the United States six times more than from China. Many free trade agreements have been negotiated between Brazil and the U.S. The free trade “umbrella” now includes the Dominican Republic, Peru, Central America and Chile with Columbia and Panama waiting to come on board.

It is reported that Latin America’s perception is that they are being disregarded by the U.S. Not so, according to U.S. officials. Ethanol-promotion agreements have been made with Brazil. A “debt-relief package” has been realized of \$3.4 billion for five of the hemisphere’s poorest countries. If approved by Congress, there will be an anti-drug traffic aid package of \$1.2 billion for Central America and Mexico. In 2003, Latin America received \$1.2 billion in aid from the U.S. and there is a new budget request. If Congress approves it, the aid will reach \$2.7 billion 2009. (justf.org)

Bachelet reported that immigrants to the U.S. sent \$45 billion in payments to their families in 2007.

WIFE is concerned about any trade negotiations that do not adequately protect the American agricultural sector.

ENERGY

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While the farm bill is the foremost legislative concern among many farmers, the recently passed energy bill is more likely to have the bigger impact. The effect of energy needs on agriculture already has been huge.

In 2007, about 27 percent of the corn crop was used for ethanol production, providing nearly 6.5 billion gallons of fuel and 15.6 million tons of distiller's dried grain (DDG). In 2008, these numbers are expected to increase to more than 9 billion gallons of fuel and 22 million tons of DDG. Increased efficiencies in innovative feeding, transportation, storage, and handling of distillers grain need to be realized in order to be successful in the marketplace. To date there are no commercial DDG pellets available for livestock. Fish eat pelletized feed which contains fish meal--not DDGs. There are experiments testing the addition of soy and corn flour to DDGs to replace the fish meal. Workshops will be held in Fargo, North Dakota, in April and October to focus on pelleting of distillers grains alone and in combination with complimentary ingredients.

Starting in April 2008, Kyocera will successively install its solar power generating systems in 500 households in villages that do not currently have electricity in the three Tunisian governorates of Kef, Siliana and Beja. These systems will charge storage batteries using power generated during daylight hours and make the power available for residential lighting and other needs at night. Kyocera embarked on its solar energy business in 1975, and in 1982 became the first company to successfully mass-produce multicrystalline silicon solar cells - the most widely deployed photovoltaic technology to date. The company has continued to introduce high-quality products to the rapidly expanding markets of Europe, North America and Japan for more than 30 years. At the same time, Kyocera has been supplying solar power generating systems to villages without electricity in Asia and Africa. Such systems have been used in residential homes, schools, medical institutions, water pumping facilities and a wide range of other essential applications. Recent estimates indicate that about 25 percent of the global population, totaling approximately 1.6 billion people, remain without electricity. Solar cells, which offer a distributed power resource, can offer these hard-to-reach regions economic development with environmental preservation.

The first windmill to power lights was invented by Charles F. Brush in 1887. That machine had 144 blades and operated for 12 years. Cape Wind Associates wants to build 130 wind turbines, each more than 400 feet high, in shallow water about five miles south of Cape Cod. An old oil-fired plant currently provides the power for the area but the pollution affects many with asthma. An energy developer has spent more than \$30 million on the wind project and 80 percent of the state supports it. However opposers are holding up the



project as they are in many parts of the nation. Today less than 3 percent of the nation's electricity comes from wind. Some say the nation's Great Plains are the "Saudi Arabia of wind".

Wind manufacturing projects are moving to China because of the slow development in America. One company already has six factories there with none in the U.S. Denmark produces nearly 20 percent of its power from wind and plans to double it in the next few decades. Germany has 19,000 wind turbines that generate about 5 percent of its electricity. Britain hopes to build 7000—enough to power all the nation's houses by 2020.

A typical turbine in northeastern North Dakota requires 250 cubic yards of concrete 8 feet deep to form the foundation for each turbine. Each land owner will receive \$3900 for each turbine in the first year on his land. The rent increases two percent each year of the 25-year lease. Each site takes about 1 to 1.5 acres of land. The 260 foot towers come in three pieces—three 150-foot blades, the rotor and a 120,000 pound generator.

The media may be part of the reason that some people are turning against ethanol as a renewable fuel. It is often portrayed as a factor for increased food prices. However the Energy Department claims the nation produced 32 percent more ethanol in 2007 than in 2006. Production capacity is expected to grow another 4 billion gallons in 2008. Increases in the price of gas and diesel are a bigger part of the rise in prices of food along with the higher prices for grain.

China has restricted new construction of ethanol plants to plants that utilize non-food-producing feedstock. This will virtually kill China's plans to produce over 700 million gallons of fuel ethanol per year by 2010.

POET, formerly known as Broin, is a 20-year-old company with 21 ethanol production facilities in the U.S. with six more under construction. They produce 1.1 billion gallons of ethanol annually. They are now the largest in the nation with Archer Daniels Midland in second place.

An ethanol refinery near Underwood, North Dakota, is unique because it has no boiler. It uses excess steam from a nearby coal-fired electric facility to process 18 million bushels of corn into ethanol annually.

Several varieties of peanuts may be processed into biodiesel. Peanuts can produce 120 to 130 gallons of biodiesel per acre compared to 50 gallons per acre for soybeans.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 9** - Deadline to reserve room for BOD
- May 13** - Deadline for resolutions
- May 25** - No WIFeline in June
- May 27** - Early reservations are due
- June 4** - Deadline for cancellations
- June 6-8** - Spring BOD meeting
- June 6** - Committee meetings
- July 25** - Reports for WIFeline are due
- November** - National Convention, Nebraska

SUGAR

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The explosion in the Savannah sugar cane refinery on February 7 was disastrous for the sugar industry as it is the second largest refinery in the United States.

At the present time we have more than 200,000 tons of blocked stocks that can be made available to the market, if needed. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) shouldn't add more sugar to the market but should wait until the market sorts itself out.

Congress still has not finalized the 2007 farm bill. The House and Senate have passed their own versions and have been discussing the differences between the two. This agreement must occur before they can introduce the sugar program into the new farm bill.

For the 2008 crop year the Senate version of the bill is as follows: the refined beet sugar rate will be at 128.5 percent of the loan rate per pound of raw cane sugar for every year. The House version of the bill has set the loan rate for raw cane sugar at 18.0 cents per pound and then increases it by 0.25 cents per pound for each of the next four following years.

Sugar cane and sugar beet farmers have been providing sugar at a reasonable price for American consumers. The federal government has been involved in the sugar industry since the World War I. The law requires the Secretary of Agriculture to determine U.S. sugar consumption requirements each year. Then the USDA divides those requirements among domestic production areas. The allotment quota is divided between refined beet sugar at 54.35 percent and raw cane sugar at 45.65 percent.

Since 1985, sugar farmers have not received a cost-of-living adjustment while the mean household income has more than doubled. It is no wonder sugar prices have been stuck at 1980 levels. Food manufacturers currently are paying less for sugar than they did when Jimmy Carter was in the Oval Office. The United States sugar farmers can compete with foreign growers but cannot compete with their foreign treasuries.

Of the 64 countries that produce cane sugar, nearly two-thirds have higher production costs than U.S. cane growers. Currently America's sugar beet farmers have the third lowest production costs in the world due to their efficiency. America is the second largest net sugar importer in the world. Under the sugar program America imports sugar from 41 countries regardless of need. This program is fair.



PORK

By Frances Rohla

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SPAM....I am! Taking a break from a day full of meetings with the Nebraska Pork Producers Association on November 13, 2007, various committee members spent a few instructive hours touring the Hormel plant in Fremont, Nebraska. While a fair share of the tour engaged the group in the overall plant process, the primary focus was to experience the creation of SPAM, one of America's most iconic culinary phenomena.

SPAM, invented in 1937 by Jay Hormel, was developed as a way to package delicious pork shoulder meat so that the amazing flavor didn't go to waste. Many see SPAM as "mystery meat" but the recipe behind the legendary concoction is nothing more than ham, pork, salt, water, a little potato starch and a hint of sodium nitrate. The pork itself comes from the picnic, loin and ham trim.

Have you ever wondered exactly what SPAM stands for? Many producers on the November tour did. SPAM actually means "spiced ham" and was christened as such by a man named Ken. Ken entered a contest sponsored by Jay Hormel to discover a brand name for his distinctive meat innovation. Ken was crowned the official "namer" of SPAM and awarded a whopping \$100 prize.

Nearly 70 plus years later, the name has stuck and the product continues to thrive. Since 1937, six billion cans of SPAM have been sold with the seven billion mark not far behind. In fact, all of the SPAM for North America is made in Fremont, Nebraska, or Austin, Minnesota. Additionally, these two plants alone supply all of the SPAM for South America and Australia. The rest of the world gets their SPAM from Denmark, the Philippines or South Korea.

In the end, however, the proof is in the SPAM and taste is the ultimate determinant of a product's long-term success. The beauty of SPAM is that there are so many ways to enjoy it. Because it is cooked in the can, it is ready to eat as soon as you open it. You can fry it, grill it or zap it in the microwave. With 13 different varieties of SPAM from SPAM Garlic to SPAM Lite to SPAM Golden Honey Grail, the possibilities are nearly endless. While most folks simply make a SPAM sandwich on white bread, there are thousands of SPAM recipes available online at SPAM.com

An enlightening and educational afternoon was spent visiting the facility. It is these types of experiences that bring what pork farmers do everyday and for the pork industry full circle.



PRAIRIE DOGS

WIFE member Sue Krentz from Arizona is fighting a plan in Arizona to release Black Tailed Prairie Dogs into Cochise and Santa Cruz counties. Arizona does not have a black tailed prairie dog population at this time so they would be imported from the Gray Ranch of New Mexico. Sue is requesting comments from WIFE members in other states concerning the prairie dog problems and costs in those states. You can reach Sue at krentz.sue@gmail.com.

The supporting arguments for introducing them into Arizona are:

1. the prairie dogs will raise the water table;
2. the prairie dogs will make the grasses better;
3. the prairie dogs are a food base for other species that will improve the biodiversity of the area.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please make the following additions or address corrections in your policy books, brochures and/or directories:

First Vice President

Deb Dressler

8463 20th St SW

Richardton, ND 58652

701-938-4246

LEGISLATION

By Norma Hall

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The official 2007 Farm Bill Conference has yet to be convened because the conferees for the House have not been announced. Numerous farm bill discussions have been held informally and the Agriculture Committee staff has been meeting privately to discuss differences between the House and Senate Bills to identify common areas, differences and suggest ways to resolve them. The Senate Finance and the House Ways and Means Committee members have been reviewing non-controversial funding proposals that were suggested by the Administration or are clearly not considered tax increases as defined by the Administration. The question remains as to what programs will receive less money under the agreed upon amount. With all of this still unresolved, the current law has been extended to April 18, 2008. President Bush said he would approve the extension, but if a bill isn't concluded by the new deadline he wanted a one-year extension of current law.

There have been many bills introduced on food safety, immigration and estate tax reform. However, none have received much attention nor movement toward final legislation.

USDA Rural Development Under-Secretary Thomas Dorr announced that Open Range Communications, headquartered in Denver, Colorado, has been approved to receive a \$267 million loan from USDA Rural Development to provide broadband service to 518 rural communities in 17 states. The loan presents dual benefits to the residents of the communities to be served. Those without service will have access to broadband and other technologies for the first time. Residents in areas served by existing provider will benefit from mobile and portable broadband, lower prices, enhanced service and improved quality. The project will cover more than six million people and serve more than 447,000 households within five years. Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Wisconsin will benefit from this program.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted new methods for assessing broadband availability. The FCC has been criticized for classifying a zip code as having access to broadband if one resident in the area has broadband services. Among the changes announced, the FCC would begin collecting more detailed information related to the number of broadband users in an area and available connection speeds. Broadband users in several states have had difficulty getting speedy access outside of the urban areas.

H.R. 3541 has been introduced by Rep. Mike Doyle (D-PA) which would amend the Do-not-call Implementation Act. It would eliminate the automatic removal of telephone numbers registered on the Federal "do-not-call" registry

unless: (1) the number is invalid, disconnected, or reassigned; or (2) the individual to whom the number is assigned so requests. The bill requires the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to periodically check numbers on the registry and remove invalid, disconnected, or reassigned numbers. This amendment was passed and attached to the "Do-Not-Call" Implementation Act.

Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) introduced a bill to extend the Protect America Act of 2007 until July 1, 2009 as it expired in February, 2008. Related bills are H.R.5104, S.2541 and S.2556.

S.2214 was introduced by Senator James Inhofe (R-OK). It would establish the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as an independent agency in the executive branch. The President would appoint the director of FEMA and would designate the Director to serve as a Cabinet member in the event of specified disasters. There would be ten regional offices with an Administrator and a Regional Advisory Council. A National Operations center would be established. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs.

FEED GRAINS

By Lisa Goodheart

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You've all heard the term "going green", which means finding ways to be more environmentally friendly. Using corn heat has been suggested as one way to "go green".

Corn heat may be a solution for not only reducing the use of foreign fuels, but also as a way to lower home and business heating costs. Anyone can use corn for heat. The heating units are designed to generate heat from burning the corn kernels. The units are different than wood-burning stoves because they burn dry granular fuel. Some biomass stoves can burn other fuels in addition to corn, including pellets, nutshells, small wood chips, rye, wheat and barley.

By using this annually replenished fuel for heating purposes, we can help decrease our use of fossil fuels and other depleting energy sources. Corn units can be used for many different heating purposes. Corn can take the place of electricity, propane, heating oil, natural gas or wood. It would take approximately 250 bushels of corn per year to heat a 2,000 square foot home. It has been shown that, even with the higher corn prices, it is still cheaper to heat with corn than with electricity or propane.

Corn units are not only cost effective, but they are also environmentally-friendly. They are designed to burn under oxidizing conditions, which makes the resulting smoke nearly odorless and comprised of mostly carbon dioxide and steam. The carbon dioxide produced during corn burning does not add greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, unlike the combustion of fossil fuels.

U.S. corn production reached an all-time high in 2007, once again ensuring that there is enough corn for all of its many uses, including heating your home or business.

CEREAL GRAINS

By Phyllis Howatt
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The grain market continues to be the topic of concern around the country. People are complaining about the prices going up for flour, bread, other baked goods, cereal and pasta. Seed, machinery, fertilizer and land prices have been going up every year while grain prices have tripled in the last ten months. The farmers are getting the blame for the increase in the grocery store prices when they are just getting prices they have needed for a long time.

Global wheat stocks have hit a 30-year low following seven of eight years in which world consumption exceeded production. Federal projections show America's supplies at their lowest levels since the late 1940s. The wheat market has been pushed higher by a combination of agricultural, financial and energy issues. Poor wheat harvests in Australia and parts of Europe and the United States have caused China and other Asian countries to buy up more American crops which are especially attractive because of the weak U.S. dollar. At the same time, the American crop is shrinking because of federal incentives to grow corn for ethanol.

Rising fuel prices make it costlier to get wheat to market. The same pressures of high fuel have made it more expensive to supply feed grains for dairy and beef cattle and poultry--driving up costs throughout the grocery stores.

Many farmers who have not grown wheat for many years want to get in on the high price market but will find it very different from five or ten years ago. Finding the right varieties of wheat could be hard and also very expensive.

The Dakota Family Mill LLC company was started by three North Dakota couples two years ago when prices were low and the couples were looking for other income. They use hard white spring wheat-or albino-variety to make the flour. Their flour is homegrown, harvested, milled, tested and marketed. They make bread that looks fairly like white bread but has all the nutrients of wheat bread. Nothing is taken out and nothing is bleached. The bread doesn't dry out like 100 percent whole wheat bread. They sell three mixes--pizza crust, bun mix and chocolate chip oatmeal cookies. They will likely add more mixes after testing in the next few months. They are continually experimenting to find recipes that will work with the flour. The milling is done in a certified kitchen and they have two stone grinders.

They have experimented with three varieties of wheat. One of the challenges is finding those that are resistant to disease. They have had some good yields but, like any of the other wheat, it depends on weather conditions. The couples are not worried about running out of their products as they have 2400 acres of farm land in the Red River Valley.

ADDRESS CHANGE?

If there is a change in your address, please call or email the EDITOR rather than mailing it. - Ph. 701-563-4560 or email mmkouba@ndsupernet.com

RURAL HEALTH

By Cynthia Thomsen
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The United States has passed laws dealing with food, drugs and cosmetics to protect its citizens. Today, citizens expect other nations to also abide by such rules but they are not required to do so due to the international situation in which we find ourselves. More should be done to protect U.S. citizens concerning all of the billions of dollars of imported items.

The 1938 Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act prohibits the sale of adulterated foods and includes labeling standards. Early Food and Drug Administration inspectors and analysts were stationed in 17 districts in the United States. They made sanitary inspections at factories and warehouses and checked adequate processing controls. The number of districts has been reduced--not enlarged.

The Federal Meat Inspection Act of 1906 and the Poultry and Poultry Products Inspection Act of 1957 requires meats and poultry to be processed under the supervision of an inspector from the Department of Agriculture. Animal and poultry are inspected for disease before and after slaughter and must be processed under sanitary conditions and properly labeled and packaged. Other laws regulate the purity of imported meats and poultry.

Food safety is split with multiple, non-coordinated agencies that inspect only about one percent of the imports which make up a growing portion of the American diet. Our government promotes voluntary self-regulation, yet wages a court battle to prevent beef producers from testing all of their cattle for mad-cow disease.

Americans are still responsible for following the three "C" rules in dealing with food: 1. Clean. Wash hands and surfaces often. Always wash produce. 2. Cook to the proper temperature and 3. Chill. Refrigerate promptly.

BYLAW CHANGES

Any suggested bylaw changes are due to Bylaw Chairman Ardyth Anderson 25 days prior to the Denver meeting. Since the meeting officially starts June 7, then May 13 is the last day Ardyth will accept those changes. Ardyth will accept absolutely NO changes after that date. To make her job easier, please submit changes as early as possible.

Proposed amendments to the Bylaws may be submitted by an Association, the Board of Directors, a chapter or the Bylaws Committee.

You can reach Ardyth Anderson at 31260 Road 3, Clay Center, NE 68933-9714, 402-762-3293 or ardyth31260@dataacc.net.

RECOVERY

Artie Triplette sends word concerning shoulder surgery for her daughter. Nebraska WIFE member Jacque Triplette's surgery was more extensive than was expected. Jacque will be put into a machine every four hours for the next three weeks but the treatment can be done at home. Cards and encouragement can reach her at Jacque Triplette, 31395 RD 752, Venango, NE 69168. Please encourage Jacque with your cards and prayers.



WIFE Registration
Women Involved in Farm Economics
2008 Spring Board of Directors Meeting - June 6-8, 2008
Courtyard Denver – Airport -- 6901 Tower Road - Denver, CO 80249



HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Call the direct Hotel Phone at: 1-888-526-5504 or 303-371-0300
 Online at <http://marriott.com/hotels/travel/denap-courtyard-denver-airport>
 Room rate is \$92.00 plus tax for up to four per room
Deadline for reserving rooms at the negotiated rate is May 9th by 5:00 p.m. MST

Return to: Melinda Sorem
 26561 NW 208 Rd
 Jetmore, KS 67854
 Phone: 620-357-6346
 Fax: 620-357-6117
msorem@ucom.net

Registration: \$50.00
 After May 27: \$60.00
 Deadline: May 27, 2008
 After June 4: No cancellations

Make checks payable to: Women Involved in Farm Economics

Member Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

National Position: (specify) _____

Please Check All that Apply: State President () BOD Delegate () Member () Guest ()

Check if Roommate Needed () Special Diet Required: _____

WWW.WIFeline.com

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