

# CLEAN WATER ACT BEARS WATCHING

By Alice Parker, Past National WIFE President

Changes are being proposed to the Clean Water Restoration Act (CWA) to change the word “navigable” to all “waters of the United States”. The CWA was passed in 1972 and is a federal law that governs water pollution. Originally the act established goals of eliminating releases of high amounts of toxic substances, eliminating additional water pollution by 1985 and ensuring that surface waters would meet standards necessary for human sports and recreation by 1983.

Some water pollution sources from point source definition in the 1972 act was unclear on what sources were included. Agricultural storm water discharges and irrigation return flows were exempted from the permitting requirements.

S. 787, the CWA has been re-introduced by Senator Russell Feingold to clarify jurisdiction of “waters of the United States” and mandates all waters will be placed under regulatory control of the federal government, leaving property owners vulnerable to a potential federal land grab. They are asking that the CWA should adopt a definition of “waters of the United States” and delete the word “navigable” which would clarify the purpose of the law to protect the nation’s water from pollution and not just maintain navigability. Placing all waters under the regulatory control of the federal government goes way beyond the original intent of the CWA. If this law is changed and restrictions are placed on management of private lands, it will create problems on property rights and landowners ability to utilize their land in the way they see fit.

The ramifications of changing of the definition of “waters of the United States” can and may well be great for agriculture. Under this proposed definition and interpretation, irrigation systems including ditches, canals, and etc. will be included. It will include all wetlands whether natural or man-made by irrigation. If it rains or snows on farm ground, then runoff or standing water will become regulated by the federal government. The expansion of federal power over the na-



tion’s waterways will mean federal regulation of every water source from puddles to playas (the flat bottom of a desert basin).

The current legislation is complicated and there are court cases trying to determine the real definition of a water body. There is confusion over what the CWA jurisdiction has. When a permit is requested, applicants have a 12-page form that they must complete and the Corps of Engineers says it increases the time and up to three months to get a permit. If farmers have to get a permit to deal with stormwater then it will just lead to another regulation to burden farmers.

The irrigation districts here in Washington State are very concerned about this proposed legislation. The Endangered Species Act is having a huge impact on their ability to deliver water to farmers currently. If these changes to the CWA are approved, then it will be an added burden and extremely difficult to meet the standards that will be set. District personnel monitor irrigation water and return flows for pollution and temperature as they go back into the river on a regular basis. It is impossible to control temperature of irrigation water as it flows through miles and miles of open irrigation canals and ditches. The ESA’s concern is that salmon need cold water for survival but fifty feet out into the river the temperature of return flows cannot be detected as the volume is slight compared to the river flows. If regulators enforce the requirement that temperature of return flows must be as cold as river water to protect the endangered salmon species it will be extremely costly to farmers.

Lots of information can be obtained on this issue by googling “The Clean Water Act.” This is legislation that WIFE members and friends should carefully monitor and take action at the appropriate time.

Alice Parker lives in Washington and was national WIFE president during 1988-1989. She is also Executive Secretary of the Columbia Basin Development League.

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# TAMMY'S TOPICS

By Tammy Basel, SD  
National President



The New Year has arrived and it is now 2010. Where have the last ten years gone? I can remember all of the Y2K hype and the fear some people had of not knowing what was going to happen in the future. The concern of the time was that the computers would think that it was 1900 and not 2000. Some people were buying more than a years' worth of food because life as we know it was coming to an end, because everything has a computer and the computers would not work. For example, there would be no electricity because the power plant could not run without a computer and there would be no water because there was no electricity to run the pump--basically life would return to the way it was in 1900. When January 1, 2000 arrived, very little happened, but there may be a few good stories to tell the grandkids one day of what happened when the new century arrived. The people who had this fear were prepared to the best of their ability. Are you prepared for what 2010 has to offer?

The Senate passed their version of health care reform on the morning of Christmas Eve. Health care reform has a long way to go before it gets to President Obama's desk. If you have concerns over the proposed legislation, prepare yourself and let your voice be heard and let your congressmen know what you think.

Congress will probably be addressing some climate change legislation in the New Year. It is hard to say what will be decided on but it will be worth WIFE members' time to be aware of what is happening.

Droughts and blizzards are normal cycles of weather. During the years of drought in South Dakota, I was beginning to wonder if there would ever be another blizzard. Now the drought is over and we are having real winters again. Nebraska, North and South Dakota and parts of Minnesota had a record setting Christmas blizzard. It may have been a record blizzard for the date on the calendar but blizzards are a natural occurrence. I can remember how much fun it was as a kid to follow the drift up to the top of the barn and slide down but now that drift is not as much fun. Luckily we live in a time where the weatherman lets you know a blizzard is coming. We can be prepared for the blizzard and get the livestock in the best place, stock up the pantry, and so we can just wait it out.

2010 will be an exciting year and WIFE members will continue the important work that we do.  
Happy New Year!

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## WIFeline

A publication of  
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Published monthly except June & November

# DEADLIEST ROADS

By Donna Bolz, NE  
National Transportation Chair-  
man

Traveling over the river and through the woods is not the safest way to get to Grandmother's house. The roads traveled least are the nation's deadliest roads, according to federal highway data. More Americans die on rural highways than on urban streets and freeways. Does this statement surprise you? It did me. Last year, 56 percent of the nation's 37,261 traffic fatalities occurred in rural areas. Yet rural America has just 23 percent of the nation's population. In some states, more than 90 percent of highway deaths happen on rural roads.



These statistics provided, by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, also show that drivers on rural roads die at a rate 2.5 times higher rate per mile traveled than on urban highways. Urban drivers travel twice as many miles but suffer close to half the fatal accidents. Why does this happen? Highway safety officials and activists have plenty of explanations. People driving rural roads tend to drive faster. They drive without seat belts at higher rates. More of them drive and die drunk. When they're injured in accidents, they may not get timely emergency medical care given the remoteness of many rural roads. Deer, elk, moose and other wild animals are more likely to dart out into traffic on rural roads. Some experts note that the outdated design and layout of many rural highways are also factors. Driving errors that are manageable on urban roads become deadly on rural highways.

Victor Mendez, administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, notes that there is little room to recover if a driver makes a mistake on a rural highway. "That's simply because of the nature of rural highways," Mendez says. "The lanes are much more narrow. You look at trees and ditches. Chances are they're closer to the roadway than they would be on an interstate." So where is the most dangerous stretch of rural highway?

There may be no better example of the risks on rural roads than the 120-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 6 between Spanish Fork and Green River in Utah. The carnage on U.S. 6 earned it the distinction of being one of the most dangerous highways in America. At least, that's what Reader's Digest and the BBC declared 10 years ago. Since 1996, more than 150 people have died in more than 500 serious accidents on that central Utah portion of the road.

Nationwide, rural highway fatalities have dropped 20 percent in the past decade. But the death disparity between rural and urban highways remains.

## Legislative Seminar

The Legislative Seminar will be held at the Capital Hill Hilton on March 6-10 in Washington, DC. Get your plane reservations if you plan on attending it.

# TELL THE STORY

By Frances Rohla, NE  
National Pork Chairman

The Alliance for the Future of Agriculture of Nebraska (AFAN) can fit in any agricultural state. This is an opinion of three people who see how the world sees agriculture.

The first panelist said that all ag people should tell the story of animal (pig) agriculture to people who don't raise livestock. There is opposition to any livestock—hogs, cattle or poultry. Opposition does hurt the local economy. Livestock in any agricultural state is dependent on the social fabric of communities and is also the future of the sons and daughters of agricultural families.

The second panelist said, "It's important to educate all residents, including farmers, who bring in people from outside the area to work in the area."

The third panelist said that farmers don't like to talk about themselves. As there are fewer and fewer farmers then, we must take the opportunity in larger cities, such as Washington, DC or Chicago, to promote agriculture at bus stations or airports and share our beliefs, philosophies and concerns with others about the technology on the farm. The panelist said that people have no idea, or lack the knowledge, of agriculture today.

Did you know that a pork or beef roast, when taken out of the oven and set on a counter to rest, will keep on cooking? The temperature inside the roast will rise for 5-10 minutes after being taken out of the oven. While the meat is cooking in the oven, the roast experiences a moving "wave" of intense heat. At first, only the outermost smidgen of the roast is warmed. Then as it becomes hot and a smidgen more inside of the roast becomes warmed-and-so-on. Over a couple of hours, the wave of heat that started on the surface of the roast has penetrated into it, further and further and when you take it out of the oven, the roast keeps on cooking for a few minutes. I never thought about food this way.

Volatility in the corn and livestock markets has left producers with increased costs and falling revenues. To protect the cost of corn, producers should look into their costs of corn and inputs, and use futures, options and controls. First of all, producers must understand all of the above.

The Pork Check-off recommends flu vaccinations for all persons who have contact with pigs of all ages during the regular flu season and this includes the H1N1 flu strain. The typical flu season starts in October through May.

The U.S. Pork Producers (USPP) urged the National Newspaper Association and its community newspaper publishers and editors to use precise language when covering the flu pandemic. Cheryl Kaechele of the USPP said that the confusion from newspaper headlines that refer to H1N1 as "swine flu" has unfairly cast doubt upon the pork industry.

*(Sources: Successful Farming; Leader, Jewell County Record-Kansas; Nebraska Farmer.)*



# FLUSHING

By Jamie Spring, SD  
National Sheep and Goat Chairman

While most think of lambing as the most important phase during a sheep producer's year, the past 60 to 90 days have already had a great impact on profitability for the upcoming year. The ability of a producer to increase their upcoming lamb crop is a valuable tool, and is often achieved through a nutritional process called flushing.



Sheep are seasonal breeders and begin to cycle when the day length shortens. They have an average gestational period of 147 days or about five months. Flushing is typically most successful when instituted from 14 to 30 days prior to introducing rams and continued for the next 14 to 30 days. According to Dr. Susan Kerr, Washington State University Extension Director, flushing can lead to a 25 percent increase in ovulation rates in ewes, with an overall increase of 10 to 20 percent in lamb crop. Lamb crop (or lambing rate) is figured as the total number of lambs born divided by the total number of ewes exposed to rams, then multiplied by 100 to be expressed as a percentage. Kerr relates this increase in total lamb crop to an increase in twins born.

So what exactly is flushing? It is the process of increasing a ewe's nutritional plane, notably energy, to cause an increase in ovulation. It can be accomplished a number of different ways, be it with grain, high quality pasture, or high quality hay. If the producer chooses to increase the animal's protein intake this will also allow for an overall increase in the digestible energy available to the animal. In the typical ewe, flushing requires a one-kilogram dry matter increase per day, comparable to about one pound of grain per day. If using pasture, the key is to stay away from fresh legumes such as alfalfa or clover, as they may contain estrogen-like compounds that may interfere with the ewe's reproductive cycle. However, high quality legume hay no longer contains these compounds and works quite well.

While flushing is an important tool to the sheep producer, it does have its limits. It works better on mature ewes than ewe lambs as those lambs are typically already on a high nutritional plane for growth. It does not work as well on ewes that are already at an optimal body condition, but works exceptionally well on those that were stressed by high lactation or on poorer quality pasture. It is most pronounced during the beginning and end of the seasonal reproductive cycle and especially during off-season breeding. Yet even with these limitations, the producer can usually pencil out the additional cost and time of increased feeding as compared to increased lambing rate. Flushing seems to be viewed as a valuable management tool in operations across the board, and from coast to coast.

As this is my first article for the WIFEline, I would like to introduce myself to those I was not able to meet at the National WIFE Convention this past November. I am a native of northern Idaho and literally grew up 16 hands off the

ground riding and jumping horses. I also worked in a mixed-animal practice veterinary clinic, which led me to graduate from the University of Idaho in 2002 with a degree in Animal Science and Dairy Science. Upon graduating, I became a dairy herdsman on a progressive, registered Holstein dairy in Southern Idaho and loved it! Once I met my husband Lee, I moved to the western plains of South Dakota, where my husband is a fifth generation rancher. We have a beautiful daughter Emma who just turned two, and are expecting her sister to arrive the beginning of March. Lee's biggest hope is that she arrives before calving starts! We raise commercial beef cattle where we find that our cross of Limousin bulls on Angus and black baldy cattle finish well for us. I am the sole reason there are sheep on our ranch, but I really enjoy them. We currently have just a small flock, but with high hopes for expansion in the next few years. I also train and raise Border Collie stock dogs, as well as competing in sheepdog trials with them. As my flock is small, I take advantage of a great neighbor and our National WIFE president to work my dogs in large flock situations. Thanks, Tammy! I am looking forward to expanding my experiences and knowledge through WIFE, and thank you for the opportunity to be your National Sheep Chairman.

# PEANUT CROP

By Jacquelyn Sistrunk, AL  
National Peanut Chairman

The crop year of 2009 will go down as one of the most trying on record. Many areas of the peanut belt experienced poor harvest conditions. In November Hurricane Ida dumped excessive rainfall which delayed and in some cases eliminated harvest.



United States peanut producers were slammed by a large carry-over from 2008, a salmonella outbreak, and freaky weather thanks to El Nino. However, growers are facing the second largest average yield in United States history.

So hope you had a Merry Christmas and, God willing, a drier New Year!

## Membership Information:

Yes, send me information about becoming a member of WIFE. I am interested in the grassroots organization.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Send above form to the  
**National Membership Chairman**  
**Alice Fairfax - 27248 Goodwill Chapel Rd.**  
**Sedalia, MO 65301**

# TRADE ACTS

By Ruth Laribee, NY  
National Trade

The Senate as of December 1st introduced their bill, S 2821, on the Trade Reform, Accountability, Development, and Employment (TRADE) Act of 2009. The bill sponsored by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and six co-sponsors is the Senate version of the House bill, HR 3012. Both bills will vastly change trade negotiations and supervision that will pertain to existing and future policies. The Senate and House bills include transforming many positions of U.S. trade policy including food and product safety standards, labor and agriculture standards.



Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA) stated that Congress will at some time have to bring back to the President the authority of fast-track in order to negotiate agreements. Fast-track lets the President negotiate the deals and Congress can approve or disapprove them but they are not allowed to change any factors. Contracts or agreements have not been finalized, such as the one with Koreans, because of the impact on the U.S. auto industry. Sen. Grassley deems the U.S. is on the losing side as global partners will not wait while protectionist trends continue to keep trade in a dire situation.

Attending a forum in November of 2009, President Obama declared his interest in joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Members include New Zealand, Chile, Singapore and Brunei. The U.S. presently has a bilateral free trade agreement with Singapore and Australia in the region. Speaking to representatives in Washington, U.S. dairy organizations and producers are opposed to any New Zealand trade deal that involves dairy. It has been confirmed by sources on the Hill that other organizations and producers are privately opposed to the involvement of dairy in a deal but they are waiting and watching to see what evolves before speaking out.

The Senate version of the Milk Import Tariff Equity Act of 2009, S1542, sponsored by Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) is not strong enough, say dairy industry critics. There is a provision in the bill exempting Mexican imports of milk protein concentrates, casenates and casein from the proposed tariff rate quotas. They say the bill would allow milk proteins from third world countries to be trans-shipped through Mexico and then would have free entry into the United States. Rep. Peter Welch's (D-VT) House version, HR 3674, requires tariff rate quotas on milk protein imports from all countries including Mexico.

In 2008 the World Trade Organization decided that Brazil would be eligible for sanctions against the United States for discriminatory U.S. cotton subsidies. The actual ruling came in August 2009 with the amount to be set later. Because of Brazil's claims that the U.S. weakened global cotton prices, the WTO directive this December 2009 will permit Brazil to enforce an approximate amount of \$829.3 million in "retaliatory sanctions" against this country. Brazil's sanctions are not only on cotton but a listing of other U.S. imported products are included such as medicines, electronic items, oils,

and drinks and several others.

Climate talks in Copenhagen brought into play new terms such as "green trade war" and border adjustments. Border adjustments are import fees levied by carbon taxing countries on goods manufactured by non-carbon taxing countries. Now it's possible for climate and trade policies to be interlinked to those that resist in cutting greenhouse gasses and they would have restrictions called border adjustments. Negotiators from Singapore and Norway have been asked to study all the concerning issues.

# FARMERS HEALTH CO-OP

By Cynthia Thomsen, NE  
National Rural  
Health Chairman



In the fall of 2007, The Farmers Health Co-op was formed and they solicited members in the state of Wisconsin. Member's children who are still involved in farming remain covered past the age of 19.

To join the co-operative you must commit to three years and put up a deposit. The co-op started with 2,200 people. It has since grown about 18 percent. The economy has held back some growth.

A survey was done and about 80 percent of the members said either their premiums didn't increase or went down.

The co-op covers companies that support agriculture. Today Alpine Foods, a cranberry processor, uses the co-op to cover their 25 employees, albeit a plan with a high deductible. The company is big enough for conventional group coverage but they like the Co-op.

It is the same comparable insurance with fewer benefits so Alpine Foods continues to watch it.

In comparison, the Wisconsin Commissioner of Insurance reports the average health plan for a small business in Wisconsin saw increases of seven percent and 2.7 percent in the same two years that the health co-op existed. The catch is that individual plans which cover most members are often more expensive and don't cover pre-existing conditions.

The co-op offers insurance to individuals and firms who might otherwise go uninsured. The plans have seen some rate increase since it began.

Cathy Mahaffey, Farmers Health Co-op, said that members are eligible to get back the payment made at the beginning of the formation of the Co-op; the payment was to secure their commitment for three years. She said that since the premiums' increase has been in the single digits and that since the benefits and the satisfaction surveys show very high satisfaction, they feel they will keep a high percentage of the members.

In talking with doctors, they feel costs can be decreased if malpractice lawsuits had a limit and then a limit of 10 percent to the lawyers who file the lawsuit. This would lower the cost doctors have to pay for malpractice insurance and the savings could be passed on to patients.

# BEEF SYMPOSIUM

By Mary Ellen Cammack, SD  
National Beef Chairman

The Range Beef Cow Symposium, held biannually for the past 40 years, is dedicated to providing sound, production-based information for cow-calf producers in the western United States. This event is held every other year, with the first symposium held at Chadron, Nebraska, in 1969 and subsequent host states being Colorado, Wyoming and South Dakota. Organizers are the Cooperative Extension Service and Animal Science Departments from the University of Wyoming, South Dakota State University (SDSU), Colorado State University (CSU) and the University of Nebraska.



The Casper Events Center in Casper, Wyoming, was the location of the 21st symposium. This year's event featured over 37 speakers during the day sessions and evening "bull pen" sessions. The day speakers were available to answer producer's questions and debate the presented issues.

Day one topics addressed were: industry issues, including Cynthia Lummis with federal policy impacts on beef producers; Bernie Rollin, CSU, discussing animal welfare and public perception; developing and managing beef females; selecting the right genetics with the future in mind.

Day two sessions included an outlook for beef demand, enhancing selection decisions, and range management and monitoring.

Day three sessions covered management and nutrition including Ivan Rush, UNL, discussed digestive physiology for the rancher, and Julie Walker, SDSU, discussing bull management and nutrition; and covered the economic outlook including managing input costs, economic analysis of production systems and cattle outlook by a representative from Cattle-FAX.

Highlighted points included the fact that one-third of all corn production is now devoted to ethanol production. For decades the United States has been the world leader in corn-fed beef production, and now the days of cheap corn and grain may be over. Producers need to adjust and re-think the way they are producing and promoting their beef. Other countries are gaining in their understanding and ability to produce grain-fed beef.

The United States cow herd is the smallest since the early 1960's, though the production of pounds of beef is at record high levels due to increased efficiency in production. Additionally, consumer confidence must be at 90 percent and above for the United States economy to flourish but currently that rating is at 49 percent. The wholesale price that a restaurant pays for its steaks, whether that is \$9, \$6 or \$3 per pound does not matter, if the customer is not coming in the door to buy it!

## Thanks!

Thank you, for the lovely cards of good cheer. I was very pleasantly surprised and overjoyed with your thoughts and prayers.

--Louise Booth, New York

# WASHINGTON DAIRY

By Dianna Reed, KS  
National Dairy Chairman

2008 was a devastating year for dairymen from sea to sea but for dairy men and women in Washington State it was a year of two-fold devastation. At the beginning of 2008 Washington state dairies were hit with a devastating flood caused by rain, warmer temperatures and melting snow in the mountains which caused rivers to flood their banks and spill enough water to close I-5 for many days. Many dairy farmers and crop farmers were left with thousands of hours of cleanup while their source of livelihood was covered with debris and mud. Local, state and national organizations and governments came to their aid. There was a huge outpouring of support from the Washington State Dairy Federation (WSDF), Farm Bureau, Senator Patty Murray's (D-WA) office and from Congress as well as private individuals. Although the response was superb it was not enough.



At the end of October WSDF had received more than 250 donations from individuals and groups in at least seven different states. The Snohomish County Dairywomen gave the first and last donation to the organization. WSDF received a total of nearly \$163,000 in cash donations. They also received more than 250 tons of hay and 180 dairy animals. The Lewis County Conservation District (LCCD) gave assistance to 88 different farmers and landowners under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), which had funds allocated by the state and 54 others not included in the ECP. In the first year of their assistance, the LCCD helped in recovery, removal and repairs that amounted to more than \$768,000.

Even with all this effort, it wasn't enough for some dairy producers who gathered what they had left and put dairying in their past. Some farms struggled to make it through but were not able to, some decided early on not to get back in and some are still trying to get back up and running. Some cows are being milked on other farms until rebuilding of barns can be done. One family, living in a borrowed mobile home while trying to rebuild after being hit with the flood and then to face the price of milk, had some tough decisions to make.

Washington is known for rain and another flood hit southwestern Washington in the beginning of 2009, but it had a much smaller impact. Additional assistance was given to help those affected. Many groups are trying to lobby for flood control dams to prevent future flooding; however this is a long way out especially when "dam" is a four letter word to many environmentalists, according to one Washington producer.

I hope that 2010 is a better year for the American dairy producer.

[www.WIFeline.com](http://www.WIFeline.com)

# MEXICAN SUGAR

By Klodette Stroh, WY  
National Sugar Chairman

My mother's favorite fable was the peacock's appearance. In time of disappointment she reminded me to think of the peacock's beauty rather than his unattractive feet. Mom's advice has given me a positive perspective in gloomy situations. Seventy sugar beet farmers in my hometown of Powell lost a portion of their sugar beets due to the freezing temperatures this year in 2009. We have to look forward and keep working on 2010 crop year.



The future looks promising. I was so pleased to know sugar farmers will have a voice in the United States Senate. Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) will be the first woman to chair the Senate agriculture committee. According to the American Sugar Alliances (ASA), Senator Lincoln knows the importance of agriculture to the country's economy and understands how vital it is for America to maintain a safe, affordable, and abundant supply of homegrown commodities. While sugar is not produced in her state of Arkansas, the senator has been a strong supporter of sugar policy. Sugar farmers are looking forward to working with Senator Lincoln in the future.

Mexico has been exporting sugar during the financial crisis under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to raise cash to stabilize their economy. An unexpected amount of sugar to the United States early this year has given us an adequate stock. It is not fair for American sugar producers that Mexico uses a voluntary, rather than mandatory, status to report their sugar stocks. The reason behind my objection on this matter is that Mexico's government is selling sugar, that was produced to feed their own people, at a higher price to the United States and then turns around and imports cheaper sugar from Central and South America for Mexican people's consumption. Our country's laws mandate feeding our own citizens before exporting commodities and goods to foreign countries and it would benefit foreign countries to feed their own people before exporting their sugar surplus as well. Sugar prices fell last year because of this very obvious problem that has not been addressed in the NAFTA.

USDA officials have asked Mexican officials to shift from voluntary reporting to America's way of mandatory reporting. According to Barbara Fecso, a USDA Farm Service Agency employee who is in charge of the sugar program, all sugar cane refiners and beet processors must report their production. Should they fail to report and do not comply, they face heavy fines. Fecso said "Mandatory compliances have been suggested to Mexico but are not at the top of their list." American lawmakers should take a stand and implement a

fair way of commodity production reporting.

I wholeheartedly believe 2010 will be a productive year for all producers. Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 agricultural exports are forecast by USDA at \$98 billion, up \$1 billion from their August forecast and \$1.4 billion above final FY 2009. Exports are expected to be the second highest ever and U.S. agriculture is forecast to post yet another positive trade balance. American farmers are the backbone of this blessed country and we as citizens must take a stand to advocate and protect our backbone.

# STRIGA

By Lisa Goodheart, KS  
National Cereal Grains Chairman



Sorghum is a major food crop for more than 500 million people on the African continent. Sorghum is among the world's five principal cereal grains. The crop is as important to Africa as corn and soybeans are to the United States. The devastating effects of drought and Striga, a parasitic weed, on sorghum crops in Sudan and eastern and western Africa have been the focus of many years of research.

The drought-tolerant cultivar, Hageen Dura-1, the first commercial sorghum hybrid in Africa, was developed in the early 1980's. Hageen Dura-1 produced yields up to 150 percent higher than traditional sorghum cultivars. About one million acres of the drought-tolerant sorghum is grown in Sudan annually.

Striga, commonly known as witchweed, attacks nearby sorghum through the plant's root system. The almost microscopic Striga seeds germinate and then send out rootlets, which find sorghum roots and work their way into the host plant. Once inside, the parasitic weed removes valuable nutrients. Striga is especially troublesome because the weed's seeds can remain viable for up to twenty years. Striga-related losses of 40 percent are possible in non-resistant sorghum crops. The exudate, or chemical signal from sorghum that is picked up by Striga rootlets, has been identified, and a biological mechanism for interrupting the exudation process has been developed.

In 1994 eight tons of drought-tolerant and Striga-resistant sorghum seeds produced at a Purdue University agricultural research farm were distributed to Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Farmers reported yields of as much as four times larger than traditional sorghum crops.

## Openings

There are still some chairmanships open. They are Feed Grains, Oil Seeds and Energy. If any member is interested they should contact President Basel.



[www.WIFeline.com](http://www.WIFeline.com)

## Calendar of Events:

Deadline for WIFeline reports - January 25

Legislative Seminar - March 6 - 10, Washington, DC



WIFE members in Syracuse for 33rd National Convention



Colleen Deacon, Regional Director for Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York



Sally Santangelo represented Honorable Daniel B. Maffei.



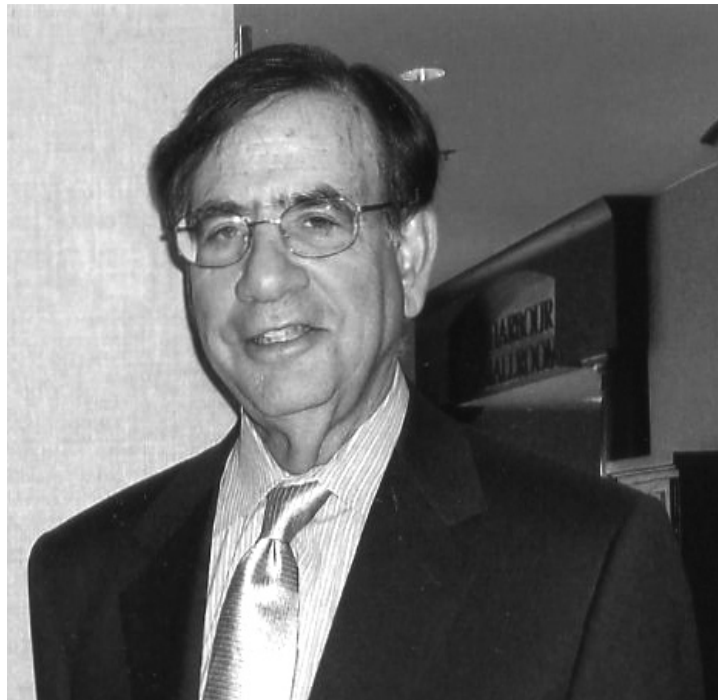
Mixing up the Raffle tickets - Deb Dressler, Shana Baisch, Dianna Reed, Mary Ann Sheppard

## Photos

There are many photos in this issue that didn't get into the last one. Some are the speakers we heard during the national convention.



A Korean veteran played Taps



Tom May, President of Trugman-Nash, Inc.



Bob Wellington, Senior Vice President for Agri-Mark, Inc., dairy cooperative



N.Y. State Senator Darrel J. Aubertine



Jerry Handlin, National Grid Energy Company, Watertown, New York



Jess Peterson, Executive Vice President of US Cattlemen's Association

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2010 officers: Tammy Basel, Deb Dressler, Mary Ann Murray, Shana Baisch, Alice Fairfax, Ruth Laribee