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WIFE members discuss issues on Capitol Hill

By *Whitney Wankel*
Montana

While in Washington, D.C., for the Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE) Board of Directors meeting, members had the opportunity to attend a House of Representatives briefing involving personnel from several organizations and committees.

Mike Dunlop, House Subcommittee on Rural Development, Research, Biotechnology, and Foreign Agriculture, briefed members

on the work and the goals the Committee has been working on.

One of the main discussions was on pending trade agreements. The Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), which is an agreement between the U.S., Australia, Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam, is still being negotiated. Dunlop said that the TPP is moving very fast and is not a good agreement for agriculture.

Bob Dinneen, President and CEO of the Renewable

Fuels Association, briefed WIFE members on the state of the ethanol industry. Dinneen said that there are currently 203 ethanol plants producing 13 billion gallons of ethanol in the U.S., and of that, 395 million gallons are exported. Ten percent of the fuel supply in the U.S. is blended with ethanol, but finding fueling stations that offer blended fuel is a challenge.

Wet and dried distillers grains (DDGs) production totaled 36 billion tons last year, but over 25 percent of

DDGs is exported to Canada and China. Dinneen said that exports of DDGs to China has increased greatly because of China's large increase in poultry production. A question was asked if there is talk of creating feed standards on DDGs, and Mr. Dinneen believes there are ongoing discussions about the subject, but it is a very complicated one.

Jess Peterson and Kelly Fogerty of the U.S. Cattlemen's Association discussed priority issues that their leadership took to the Hill just the week before. Topics included beef checkoff reform, opposing regionalization of foreign countries with animal disease problems, having a permanent disaster title in the Farm Bill, more oversight and transparency in the Equal Access to Justice Act, amending the Antiquities Act of 1906 to require certain procedures for designating national monuments, and other purposes.

WIFE members appreciated those who took the time for the briefings and look forward to working with those individuals in the future.



WIFE members in Washington, D.C., were (front, from left) Mary Ann Murray, Whitney Wankel, Sheila Massey, Tammy Basel, Deb Dressler, Cathy Scherler; (back, from left) Kay Zeosky, Gwen Cassel, Diane McDonald, Pat Torgerson, Barbara Broberg, and Ruth Larabee.

President's Report



By Deb Dressler
North Dakota

WIFE members accomplish goals in Washington, D.C.

WIFE members from across the nation attended the National WIFE Legislative Board of Directors meeting recently held in Washington, D.C. Sunday morning the BOD meeting was held.

Ralph Galliano from Selous Foundation addressed the members. He focused on eminent domain and property rights. Mr. Galliano quoted Thomas Jefferson: "It is good to be distrustful, question with boldness" on policies pertaining to private property rights.

Billy Senter gave an update on the pizza party scheduled on Monday evening for agriculture aides and staffers. Mr. Senter was coordinator for WIFE activities while in D.C.

Monday morning, March 13, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) hosted WIFE members for informational speakers. Carolyn Cooksie, associate administrator of Farm Service Agency (FSA), spoke on the lack of funding for farm loans.

Anderson Neal, director of the Office of Advocacy and Outreach, explained his office and how to reach minorities for the USDA programs. Michael Alston, deputy administrator for Insurance Services Risk Management Agency (RMA), addressed the policy to pay farmers a premium who haven't had to file loss on the last five crop years. RMA pays 22.5 percent of premiums for producers and has put a cap on insurance agents' commissions.

Dudley Butler, administrator of the Grain Inspection, Packers and

Stockyards Administration, spoke on the 2012 Farm Bill. Question and answer sessions produced conversations with the speakers.

The senate briefing included Catie Lee, legislative assistant to Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Chairwoman on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, who gave some ideas about the 2012 Farm Bill. The idease included jobs, principles not programs, and a safety net for small family farms.

Jim Miller, senior policy advisor to Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND), addressed increasing domestic energy production to reduce dependency on foreign oil.

Jim Miller said, "The U.S. needs to finalize a budget and develop a long term plan to address the federal debt."

Jason C. Miller, professional staff member for the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, fielded questions on the southern U.S. border and its problems.

The house briefing began with Mike Dunlap of the House Subcommittee on Rural Development, Research, Biotechnology, and Foreign Agriculture, who said, "We have no food security until we have energy security."

Bob Dinneen, president of Renew-

able Fuels Association, spoke on renewable energy production.

Jess Peterson, United States Cattlemen's Association executive director, spoke on pertinent issues facing livestock producers. The pizza party culminated the day with WIFE ladies networking with agriculture aides and staffers.

On Tuesday, some WIFE members attended the Ag Day Coffee at the USDA Whitten Building. Each state did their respective Hill visits. WIFE ladies also attended the Ag Day Mix and Mingle Luncheon in the Capitol. Representative Frank D. Lucas (R-OK)

gave the keynote address. Orion Samuelson was the master of ceremonies. The luncheon event was a networking opportunity to meet and greet several agriculture associations from across the nation.

W I F E had a busy, productive

legislative meeting. I want to thank everyone for their generous assistance in making the legislative meeting a success. It is rewarding to be in production agriculture and to tell our story.

I hope the weather improves for those of you calving, lambing, and waiting for spring planting. Take time to appreciate spring with all the new life. Happy Trails 'til next month.



Deb Dressler visits with Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-MT) at the pizza party. (Photos courtesy of Cathy Scherler and Whitney Wankel.)

Washington, D.C. Report

Visit to Capitol includes Senate briefing

By Gwen Cassel
New York

At the WIFE Senate Briefing in Washington, D.C., Catie Lee, legislative assistant to Chairwoman Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) met with WIFE members and presented information on the upcoming 2012 Food and Farm Bill.

She explained that we should think of this bill more as a jobs bill than we have in the past. Lee highlighted the following as important to be considered: principles not programs, risk management, small business opportunity in farming, less paperwork, conservation, USDA and EPA partnership, strong rural communities, coalition building, and young and/or new farmer aid.

Lee pointed out that 70 percent of the bill was related to programs such as the Women, Infants and Children program (WIC), Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps), and Forestry programs.

She also reminded WIFE members that with current budget concerns, programs would receive a thorough review, and said that the

goal was to have this bill completed in 2012.

Jim Miller, senior policy advisor to Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND), presented a short list of priorities being considered including getting the fiscal house in order: passing a 2012 Food and Farm Bill in a timely manner, renewable energy, and flooding (especially in North Dakota). Miller discussed highlights of the 2008 bill: being fully paid for, the new average crop acre program, specialty crops, and support for farmers markets.

He did remind listeners that the bill was very complex and challenging and that the budget for the 2012 bill would be different. Miller said that until the Federal budget was finalized, the exact amount would not be known, and that the goal was for a long term plan covering several years.

Jason Miller, professional staff member for the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, spoke about the

country's borders. He stressed the three pillars of border control, including the need for operational control, detecting intrusion, and apprehending of violators.

Since a number of WIFE members are directly involved with the results of border issues, Miller advised members of a hearing that occurred Tuesday, March 15, in the Canon Building and invited those who could to attend this hearing. Information from this hearing is presented elsewhere in this *WIFeline*.



(Above) Jim Miller, senior policy advisor to Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND), addresses WIFE members. (Left) Bob Dinneen of the Renewable Fuels Association speaks. (Photos courtesy of Cathy Scherler and Whitney Wankel.)



(Left) Deb Dressler, Diane McDonald, and Sheila Massey take a quick break between meetings. (Right) Whitney Wankel visits with Rep. Rosa DeLauro's Ag Staff during the D.C. meeting.



Washington, D.C. Report

USDA officials inform WIFE about issues

By Barbara Broberg
Montana

WIFE members had an informative briefing at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) while in Washington, D.C.

Neal Anderson is the new deputy director, Office of Advocacy and Outreach. He works to utilize the programs. His first question is, "What is the timeline from implementation?" He likes to follow the direction of improving life in rural America.

Anderson came from Arkansas where he worked in Soil Conservation (on the ground and later in administration.) He is aware that 100,000 new farmers are suggested with the initiative to grow food near where people live. Fresh and local! His responsibilities have often included working to ensure that government programs are reaching all people in America.

Education is a main requirement, and he is quick to say he is proud to have married a schoolteacher. He added that school, farm, and military were three things that were OFF his to-do list in life. He and his five brothers all married teachers. He has worked in farm-related USDA jobs for 32 years and is a Lt. Col. in the Air National Guard with 26 years military service.

He had checked up on WIFE before the group arrived to hear him speak. He said that it took him a while during college to realize that growing up farming had been good for him and that he had learned how to pick up on what is important because of that background. WIFE appreciated the time he spent with the members.

Michael A. Alston, deputy administrator, Insurance Services, Risk Management Agency, was also a speaker. He said, "We all have a John Deere story, and fundamental values transcend any office."

Those involved in the Annie's Project classes might be interested to know the original Annie concept was brought forward by this agency. In Montana, the Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture (WSFFA) program has some sponsorship from the Risk Management Agency through their Outreach Program. I know I have learned much about government agencies, and insurance concepts through ANNIES and WSFFA. Mr. Alston was pleased to know the outreach had worked.

Today there are 16 companies that sell and service federal crop insurance. It used to be 35 companies. There have been ongoing insurance program tweaks. Members received a handout on "the latest" as of March 11, 2011. Kansas City corn weight is a "big storm" in the agency.

There is a new kickback program if you had no claim in 2008. Companies made \$6 billion because of high commodity prices, and insurance agents have been invited to get out of the cities and traditional corn and soybeans areas to improve services to other areas. More people are using crop insurance because they have to and because they want to.

The final comment in the Alston's handout was, "We will do our part to make sure that Federal crop insurance is a win-win-win program for producers, companies and their agents, consumers, and American taxpayers."

Another speaker at the briefing was Carolyn B. Cooksie, associate administrator for Operations and Management, FSA (Farm Service Agency). Cooksie has a background in FLP (Farm Loan Programs), so while Congress was working on whether to even fund government that day, she was observing to WIFE members that possible loans are up 40 percent because to many, USDA is the lender of last resort. She found the whole U.S. budget conflagration going on while WIFE was Washington, D.C., quite disturbing. "If anyone ran a home budget like this, they would go under," she said.

Cooksie said the disruption to program implementation is so distracting that her office had actually had to become involved with shutdown modeling just in case the budget extensions



(Left) Deb Dressler visits with Kathryn Hill at USDA. (Above) Jess Peterson and Kelly Fogerty of the United States Cattlemen's Association brief WIFE members. (Photos courtesy of Cathy Scherler and Whitney Wankel.)

Continued on Page 5

Washington, D.C. Report

Variety of topics discussed at Dept. of Ag

Continued from Page 4

were not affected (the three-week extension came March 18).

There are 2,400 FSA offices nationwide. "Anything and everything is capable of being cut out of the U.S. budget in an environment like this," Cooksie said. She wondered aloud if we had considered the implication of a government shutdown.

She said the government is in "every facet of everyday of our life. And a disruption to the farm loan program going into spring seeding impacts real people, real decisions." She urged members to think of the multiplier effect of people not being able to purchase seed, feed, fertilizer, and machinery.

She answered numerous questions from members, always coming back to dilemmas in budgeting. For instance, she addressed the need for computing improvement at the FSA agency while people are needed to implement programs and serve the American farmer where they live. Her comment was that things ground between a rock and a hard spot create gravel.

Mary Ann Murray, one of the WIFE members in attendance, said there was too much at stake NOT to man the FSA/NRCS offices. Cooksie

countered with "orange is not my color," kidding us that people go to jail for overspending their office. She said at the finish of the budget that each State Director would have final say in funding priority.

Another speaker of interest was J. Dudley Butler, administrator of GIPSA (Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration). The Congressional testimony given March 10, 2011, is of interest regarding this topic. There have been some amazing steps accomplished in the last 10 years. Butler mentioned fairness and transparency, which was put into the Farm Bill.

GIPSA desires bigger compliance. Rural America has 16 percent of the population and makes up 40 percent of the military. Regarding cattle, Butler likes black baldies. He is an attorney but has worked in cattle, timber, farming, and corrections. Arbitration has been a constant in his career.

Butler's advice to WIFE members

on working an issue, from one of his many wise mentors, was: Find your focus. Do all your work. Keep your focus; don't always talk about it all the time. Do due documentation over time on your focus. When you have enough: scream bloody murder. Now you may not have the money they do, but the you can match them scream for scream.



(Above) Tammy Basel visits the National Farmers Union. (Photos courtesy of Cathy Scherler and Whitney Wankel.)



WIFE members listen to a USDA official at the briefing they attended in Washington, D.C. (Photos courtesy of Cathy Scherler and Whitney Wankel.)

Washington, D.C. Report

WIFE members hear NAFTA corridor system briefing

By Pat Torgerson
Montana

WIFE members attending the Washington, D.C., meeting met Ralph Galliano of the Selous Foundation for Public Policy Research who answered questions about the NAFTA Superhighway Trade Corridor System. Galliano said, "The NAFTA Superhighway is NOT a myth. It is quietly and slowly taking shape."

WIFE agrees that the U.S. needs to update, improve, and add to its highway systems, but only when these changes are toll free, owned and controlled by the U.S.

Mr. Galliano talked at length about why Congressional representatives say they know nothing about the highway. It is because the highway has never been debated on the floors of Congress. The highway is a series of Acts.

The Supreme Court decision of June 23, 2005, *Kelo*, opened the gate for the seizure of private lands through eminent domain for this 1,200 foot wide corridor system consisting of highways, railways, and utility right of ways.

Galliano brought to our attention that as early as 1991, with the signing of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act (ISTEA), the idea of corridors was born. Governor Rick Perry (TX) signed the agreement with Cintra of Spain to begin the Trans-Texas Corridor on March 11, 2005. This corridor has been renamed "Innovative Connectivity in Texas (ICT) Jan. 6, 2009. New name, old plan.

WIFE members in the west have heard of the Ports-to-Plains Coalition, which part of the bigger picture for the NAFTA Corridor.

The Surface Transportation Au-

thorization Act (STAA), June 18, 2009, creates a National Infrastructure Bank, promotes Public Private Partnership financing and tolling of freeways, and would ultimately lead to the economic and political integration of North America. This is an Act, not a law, so Congress need not debate it.

Americans will willingly sacrifice for the good of all, but not for economic gain of some. WIFE members say: Not one inch of land for foreign ownership or toll roads. These 80 proposed roads are unconstitutional without debate on the floors of Congress.

Interstate 94 had Congressional blessings and was constructed with taxes okayed by Congress, not foreign money. Stop the NAFTA Superhighway;



Ralph Galliano of the Selous Foundation for Public Policy Research answers questions concerning the NAFTA Superhighway Trade Corridor System. (Photos courtesy of Cathy Scherler and Whitney Wankel.)

it is an eminent domain abuse Act.

All in all, it was a very informative presentation with great interaction between speaker and audience.



(Left) Whitney Wankel asks a question during a briefing. (Above) Members discuss agricultural and animal rights issues with Josh Balk (center) of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) over dinner in Washington, D.C., during the annual WIFE legislative meeting. (Photos courtesy of Cathy Scherler and Whitney Wankel.)





By Frances Rohla
Nebraska

Pork Report

National Pork Board announces new slogan

“Pork: Be Inspired” is the new slogan for pork, replacing “Pork: The Other White Meat.” The new slogan was announced by the National Pork Board (NPB) for the \$11 million campaign in March and April.

Ceci Snyder, the Des Moines, Iowa, based NPB’s vice president of marketing, said that pork producers invest 40 cents per \$100 value of hogs sold to fund research and promotion of pork, focusing on the estimated 82 million Americans who already eat pork.

The new marketing ends the advertising slogan launched in 1987 telling consumers that pork is healthy and has fewer calories than most people think.

Pork consumption remains behind beef and chicken, according to the USDA. Americans ate 61 pounds of beef per capita last year and 80 pounds of chicken. Pork consumption has remained flat. Pork sales totaled about \$117 per person in 2010. Consumption averages about 50 pounds per person.

Iowa is the nation’s top pork producer, followed by North Carolina and Minnesota.

The research shows that pork’s top consumers are looking for more than recipes. The new backyard barbecues for midweek meals want juicy, tender, flavorful pork meat, called comfort food.

In the state of Nebraska, Governor Dave Heineman said, “If they come to Nebraska, we’ll kick their butt. We will defeat them.” The usually soft spoken

governor was referring to the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) as he spoke at the Nebraska Pork Industry Day in February at the Cornhusker Marriot Hotel in Lincoln.

“Wayne Pacelle (HSUS CEO) has never had someone stand up to them. Pork producers care about their animals,” the governor stated, “while Pacelle sits in his office in Washington, D.C.”

The governor stated that agriculture is our number one industry. HSUS has stated it isn’t bringing its animal rights message to the state, but the governor doesn’t believe or trust HSUS.



*Be inspired*SM

Gov. Heineman also commended the state’s pork producers for the 50 years since the association’s first meeting at Pregner’s Restaurant in Norfolk, Nebraska.

Information from Lincoln Journal Star and Midwest Producer, March.

In Memory of Jaun Deitch

A longtime WIFE member, Jaun (Rowell) Lee Deitch, passed away March 15, 2011, at St. Luke’s Memorial Hospital. Jaun and her husband Paul owned and operated a farm (Green Meadow Farm) in Boonville, New York, for 39 years, retiring in 1997. They had three daughters and three sons. There are 18 grandchildren and 10 great-grand children. Her husband passed away in 1999.

Kay Zeosky is one of Juan’s four sisters, and as Kay tells it, Jaun got her to join WIFE. Jaun was an active member, going to Washington, D.C., and Albany, NY, to educate representatives and anyone who would listen about farm issues. She was past president for the New

York WIFE as well as Dairy Chairman and Area Director 111 for National WIFE.

She was a frequent speaker about farm matters on radio station WBRV. In 2004, she married Maurice Henry (Sonny) Deitch, who now resides with his son in the Seattle, Washington area. Jaun was an active member of Boonville United Methodist Church, taught Sunday school, and for 20 years served as pastor of the Hawkinsville United Methodist Church.

Jaun always had a smile on her face and a friendly hello to all. She will be sadly missed. Cards may be sent to her daughter, Linda Vicks, 3572 County Line Road, P.O. Box 304, Skaneateles, N.Y. 13152.



**By Marlene Kouba
North Dakota**

Energy Report

North Dakota oil boom brings benefits and consequences

In 2008, the biggest source of energy in the U.S. was petroleum, which supplied 37 percent of the nation's energy. Natural gas provided 25 percent, coal 22 percent, nuclear 9 percent, and renewables 8 percent.

The price of oil has been fluctuating around \$100 a barrel. The Japanese tri-tribbles, the Libyan fight, and EPA regulations are all having an effect on the prices at the pump.

Prior to the discovery of oil in 1951 in North Dakota, there were only 64 wells drilled since 1910. Since 1951, another 16,228 wells have been drilled. The state now ranks as the fourth largest oil producing state with an average of 218,455 barrels a day in 2009, or about 80 million barrels for the year. The deepest vertical well last year was 13,805 feet with the average depth at 17,035. The longest horizontal well drilled last year was 22,174 feet. Seventeen of the 53 counties in the state host commercial oil production. Each well costs about \$5 to \$7 million to drill.

North Dakota has about 5,300 producing oil wells, and about 2,000 of those are less than three years old. Nearly 95 percent of the rigs are now drilling into the new Bakken and Three Forks formations, with 99 percent of them hitting oil and being profitable. There is a projection of 2,000 wells per year with a final total of 21,000 to 49,000 wells in the next four to seven years.

North Dakota produced about 110 million barrels of oil in 2010 while mineral rights owners received \$559 million in lease and royalty payments. Every

dollar spent by the oil industry in 2009 generated \$158 in additional business activity. The state has two taxes related to oil: a 5 percent production tax and a 6.5 percent extraction tax that are generating \$1.4 billion this biennium.

Oil impact accounted for more than 25,000 full-time jobs and brought in about \$12.7 billion. Non-oil workers are in short supply. Every business in the western half of the state has 'Help Wanted' signs posted. Some towns in the heart of expansion have been hiring about 90 college students with passable English from Peru, Brazil, Argentina, and Columbia on a 90-day work visa program—mostly in fast-food restaurants. Colleges are offering more energy related classes. A refinery in Mandan is expanding to convert more oil into gasoline. About 1,420 of 20,000 miles of roads need to be updated at a cost of \$900 million since 2000 trips by heavy trucks carrying equipment, water, sand and other material take their toll. Available housing right now is zero. Crime has increased.

In 2010, the city of Dickinson in southwestern North Dakota issued 456 building permits valued at \$83,192,345 for 141 new single family homes and 70 multi-family housing, adding 175 units plus three new hotels which will add 250 rooms. There were 41 commercial permits and 45 remodeling projects. The city annexed more than 400 acres for industrial growth, and more is planned.

North Dakota produced 355,000 barrels of oil a day in November. The state's pipeline shipping capacity is about 337,000 barrels a day at a cost of about \$1 a barrel, while about 100,000 barrels can be shipped by train at double that cost.

Enbridge, a company in Calgary, Alberta, has been shipping "sour" crude (oil that is high in sulfur) but will quit this month to pipe more low or no-sulfur "sweet" crude to Clearbrook, Minnesota. Sour crude was coming from low producing wells, and the sweet is coming from the Bakken and Three Forks formations. They are planning to expand the network to 330,500 barrels a day.

TransCanada Corp. said the proposed Keystone pipeline to the Gulf of Mexico could see a price increase of at least \$3 a barrel, which is about 7 cents more for gasoline. They are focusing on 15 states where a sister Keystone pipeline is currently shipping about 400,000 barrels a day. Canadian crude brings about \$25 a barrel less than most oil on U.S. markets. It still didn't have a permit to cross the Canadian-U.S. border in late January but hopes to get it by midyear. It already has contracts to pipe 65,000 barrels a day from Montana and North Dakota to the Gulf, and the new pipeline could carry another 500,000 barrels a day.

The energy business in North Dakota is booming, but good and bad is coming with it!

Board of Directors Meeting Notice

The second yearly Board of Directors meeting will be held June 20, 2011, via conference call at 10:00 a.m. MDT. For more information, contact Deb Dressler at debdressler1@gmail.com.



By Ruth Larabee
New York

Trade Report

Trade with Japan affected by damage to international ports

The United States Department of Agriculture announced the 7.5 cents per hundredweight import assessments on dairy to take effect August 1, 2011. The rule was published March 18 in the Federal Register and, in accordance with the 2008 Farm Bill, also amends the term "United States" in the Dairy Production Stabilization Act on 1983, to mean all states, The District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Producers in these areas will be assessed 15 cents per hundredweight for all milk produced and marketed. Expansion of the 15 cent fee to the entire United States will take effect April 1, 2011.

The controversial dairy import assessment was blocked for approximately 10 years by committee report language requiring the import assessment to be consistent with United States International trade obligations. It is controversial because the ruling provides that imports are taxed only half of the domestic rate, and it allows refunds for importers only. It's reported that several Senators from dairy states are working on bills to require full assessment on imports and get rid of the refund provisions.

Others want to focus the assessment on imported Milk Protein Concentrates (MPC's), casein, and caseinates and remove the assessment from cheese products. Some foreign dairy processors and traders are talking about retaliating against the pending import assessment by raising their countries' own promotion fees and duties on United States dairy exports.

Japan, with major damage from earthquakes and the tsunami, has lost at least six seaports that handle international trade. The ports are not expected to be restored for several months. Japan is the fourth largest export market for United States products. Trade data shows United States exports of agricultural products to Japan totaled approximately \$11.1 billion in the year of 2009. Products included soybeans, red meats, wheat, and coarse grains.

In 2010, the United States exported to Japan 1.3 billion pounds of pork with an estimated value of \$1.65 billion. Japan's exports of agricultural products to the United States totaled \$507 million in 2009. The products included processed fruits and vegetables, chocolate, wine, beer and snack foods. Other two way trade between the U.S. and Japan includes organic chemicals, vehicles, services, and investments.

Japan's Prime Minister Naoto Kan had set June as a goal to make a decision about joining talks toward cutting "some of the world's highest agricultural duties including a 778 percent tariff on rice." It appears the Trans-Pacific Partnership talks will be on hold as officials focus on the nuclear crisis and the earthquake casualties.

Some members of Kan's ruling Democratic Party are voicing concern about going ahead with trade talks thinking of the political power of the country's 2.4 million "farming households." The damage that has happened in the rural areas is a concern to the Japanese people, and many say it's not the right time for talks. According to the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Japanese farmers receive 47 percent of their income on average from price

supports, subsidies, and restrictions on imports. The average is 24 percent for the European Union and 10 percent for the United States. The same report concluded that Japan's support for farmers in 2009 was \$45.5 billion, while the U.S. recorded \$30.6 billion in support for twice the population as Japan.

A three day meeting will be held in Jeju, a southern island of South Korea, by approximately 90 officials from China, Japan and South Korea. The agenda is to study the possibility of a three way trade agreement and to discuss the text of a joint report on commodity issues and trade relations between the countries. Several more meetings will be held in order to complete the study by 2012, when a three way summit conference will be held by the three countries top officials. Yu Jianhus, China's assistant commerce minister, said, "The ongoing economic integration has provided a rare opportunity for the establishment of the East Asia Free Trade Agreement (FTA)."

FAED Grant Deadline

The WIFE Foundation for Agricultural Education and Development (FAED) has 2 or 3 possible \$500 grants available for chapters or state. Please apply by May 1, 2011. Judging will be May 31. For more information, contact Grant Chair Barbara Broberg at bbbrogberg@juno.com; (406) 949-8800; 191 Ed Williams Rd., Cut Bank, MT 59427.



By Mary Ellen Cammack
South Dakota

Beef Report

Whole Foods Market launches animal welfare ranking system

Global Animal Partnership 5-Step Animal Welfare Rating Standards for Beef Cattle are:

dards manual is available on the websites www.globalanimalpartnership.org or www.wholefoodsmarket.com.

Whole Foods Market has begun using a rating system that ranks animal welfare practices and conditions in accordance with the Global Animal Partnership's (GAP) Animal Rating System. Color-coded signs and stickers identify the step ratings on the in-store products. A compilation of survey data supplied GAP insight to the way Americans view farm animals. Several of the results, listed on the GAP website, are as follows:

- 97 percent surveyed agree that animals deserve at least some protection from harm and exploitation, while only 3 percent say animals don't need protection "since they are just animals." (Gallup Poll conducted May 8-11, 2008)
- 95 percent say that how farm animals are cared for is important to them. ("Consumer Preferences for Farm Animal Welfare: Results of a Nationwide Telephone Survey," prepared by Jayson Lusk, F. Bailey Norwood, and Robert Prickett, Department of Agricultural Economics, Oklahoma State University, and conducted June to July 2007.
- 57 percent say they are willing to pay 1-10 percent more for "food that promises to be produced to higher ethical standards," and 12 percent are willing to pay more than 10 percent more. (Context Marketings "Ethical Food" report, released March 2010)

- Step 1: No crowding. This step prohibits cages and crates.
- Step 2: Enriched environment. Basically this requires environmental enrichment for indoor production systems.
- Step 4: Pasture centered. Requires outdoor access.
- Step 5: Animal centered. No physical alterations.
- Step 5+: Animal Centered. Entire life on same farm.

Each tier, or step, has its own requirements that must be met before certification to that particular Stop level can be assigned. This structure aims to encourage higher welfare practices and systems to benefit farmers, consumers, retailers and the animals. An independent, third-party certification is used to assess compliance of farms and ranches.

Currently there are three companies listed, EarthClaims LLC, IMI Global, Inc., and Steritech, and these companies hire individuals that have successfully completed GAP auditor training. For beef cattle, as of January 31, 2011, the following audited and certified operations were listed by GAP: Step 1- 72, Step 2-55, Step 4-190, Step 5-1, Step 5+-0.

Listed on the GAP "Our Standards" page is the following: "The GAP 5-step program is all about honesty, integrity and attention to detail. We are very proud to be a part of the first legitimate animal welfare certification program." Scott Sechler, Bell & Evans

The 26 page beef cattle GAP stan-

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



**By Donna Bolz
Nebraska**

Rural communities face challenge of fewer volunteers

The article this month is dedicated to my very good friend and WIFE member, Pauline Johnson. She was recently taken to the hospital via ambulance. When her family called 911, their call was sent to the county sheriff, who called the local rural fire department that operates the ambulance. They could not find enough people to come, so they called another fire department who came to take her to the hospital. She waited 40 minutes for the ambulance to come to take her to the hospital.

While the information I have below is about Montana and its struggles, I believe the above example shows things are not much different in many rural communities. When a cloud of smoke billows from a hillside, the first calls come in to county dispatch. Pagers buzz in pockets of volunteer firefighters, summoning them to their stations.

But there may be fewer firefighters on the trucks this year than there were last season. Most of those clambering out of the cab at the scene of the fire will be another year older and a little less agile. Like their counterparts from coast to coast, volunteer fire departments across Montana are struggling. They may have a garage full of vehicles and specialized equipment to handle every emergency, but are only able to raise two or three volunteers to answer a call.

Fewer people are joining volunteer departments, and in many departments, a majority of firefighters are in

the 40-60 age range. On one fire last summer, three firefighters showed up from a local department and spent three days on a wildland fire with only local ranchers for assistance. For other departments, there's just nobody. Then a call must be made to the neighboring department.

People just think when they dial 911, somebody shows up. Thanks to mutual aid agreements, firefighters from every nearby department will respond to assist a department in need of help. When a wildland fire exceeds the capacity of local and county departments, state and federal resources are available.

Fire departments in Montana come in every form and size. Most cities with more than a few thousand residents have paid fire departments with a crew on duty 24/7. Some communities have combination departments staffed with both career firefighters and volunteers. Some areas form tax-supported fire districts, while still others are non-profit departments that scramble to raise enough money to operate. There are roughly 11,000 firefighters in 400 departments in Montana; all but about 550 of them are volunteers. Without them, residents would either have to fend for themselves in emergencies or pay millions more for fire protection.

Montanans have always relied on

volunteer fire departments, and for many in rural communities across the state, it is natural that one generation would follow the next on the department rolls. The number of calls and variety of calls has increased, and so have training demands. Most departments meet twice a month — once to take care of planning and business, and once for training. Thirty hours of training a year is a standard, although there are no state-mandated requirements.

More calls and more training mean more time away from jobs and family. One of the biggest obstacles for younger firefighters answering the call is what to do with

their children. To deal with the problem, some are considering ways to provide a centralized daycare, possibly a drop-in arrangement with a local provider.

No one knows yet how to resolve challenges posed by shrinking numbers of volunteers, despite an ongoing conversation for the last 15 to 20 years. Some areas have created tax-supported fire districts. Others are consolidating with departments with more resources. A few will probably be deciding in the next few years if they can continue at all. There is no way most counties could collect enough money to pay firefighters.

Thank you to a recent article in the *Billings Gazette* for help with this article.

Fewer people are joining volunteer departments, and in many departments, a majority of firefighters are in the 40-60 age range. More calls and more training mean more time away from jobs and family.

Peas, Lentils, and Oilseeds Report



By Phyllis Howatt
North Dakota

Peas pack a nutritional punch

ditional dish is split pea soup. Pea soup is eaten in many other parts of the world, including northern Europe, parts of middle Europe, Russia, Iran, Iraq and India.

Peas are high in vitamin A, vitamin C, B vitamins and lutein. Dry weight is about one-quarter protein and one-quarter sugar. They have about 14 grams of carbohydrates.

Field peas are grown around the world on over 25 million acres. In 2001, 3.6 million acres of field peas were grown in Canada, while 100,000 acres were planted in North Dakota. Significant expansion has occurred in North Dakota and surrounding states in recent years, and this region is now the primary source of feed peas in the United States. In 2001, North Dakota produced nearly 40 percent of all field peas grown in the U.S.

Currently, about 30 percent of the domestic dry pea production is consumed in the food and feed markets

within the United States, and the remainder is exported. Field peas (test weight = 60 pounds per bushel) can be produced with conventional equipment and are easy to grow, handle, process, and feed. Seed color, green (preferred) or yellow, and seed size are two traits that impact acceptance in the human edible market. However, all field pea varieties may be considered feed grade peas.

Field pea yields compare favorably with spring wheat, and there are positive benefits to crop rotation. Field peas may also be grown as a forage crop, where they are typically planted as a mixture with cereal grains to enhance the protein concentration of the forage. Field peas intended for the feed market are handled like most other commodities. Markets are developing with increasing knowledge and realization of the nutritional value of peas. Some growers utilize peas in their own livestock enterprises.

A pea is most commonly the small spherical seed or the seedpod of the legume, *Pisum sativum*. Each pod contains several peas. Peapods are botanically a fruit, since they contain seeds developed from the ovary of a pea flower. However, peas are considered to be a vegetable in cooking.

The earliest archaeological finds of peas come from Neolithic Syria, Turkey, and Jordan. In Egypt, early finds date from ca. 4800–4400 BC in the Nile delta area, and from ca. 3800–3600 BC in upper Egypt. Peas are an annual plant with a life cycle of one year and maturity about 60 days after planting. It is a cool season crop grown in many parts of the world, and planting usually takes place in the spring.

The average pea weighs between 0.1 and 0.36 grams. As a vegetable they are used fresh, frozen, or canned. They are also grown to produce dry peas, like the split pea, which are typically called field peas. Peas have both low-growing and vining cultivars. Pea plants can self-pollinate. The seeds may be planted as soon as the soil temperature reaches 50°, with the plants growing best at temperatures of 55 to 64°. They do not do well in temperate and lowland tropical climates. Peas grow best in slightly acidic, well-drained soils.

Dried peas are often made into a soup or simply eaten on their own. In Japan, China, Taiwan and some Southeast Asian countries, including Thailand and Malaysia, peas are roasted and salted, and eaten as snacks. In the UK, dried yellow split peas are used to make pease pudding (or “pease porridge”), a traditional dish. In North America, a similarly tra-



By Jacquelyn Sistrunk
Alabama

Specialty Crops Report

High prices don't mean high profits

\$2 Cotton! \$6 Corn! \$13 Soybeans! High dollar wheat! Sounds like the year of the farmer. But is it really?

\$100 a ton fertilizer increase across the board, \$4 to \$5 per gallon gas, and La Nina weather is factored in while farmers decide what crops to plant in spring 2011.

Farmers cannot afford to park expensive equipment already paid for. Hurricanes can wipe out cotton, while drought resistant crops may need to be planted. Crop selection is driven by both economics and agronomics. Prices usually dictate what farmers will plant, both input and market.

Market provides incentives to plant “fencerow to fencerow,” but social unrest in the Middle East (oil), weather, (La Nina pattern), and very high equipment prices have caused input costs to rise so that high dollar crops will not increase acreage planting on average but 14 percent.

“Farmers need to hold out for correct price and reduce acres planted until they get it,” said Hal Williams, a South Alabama peanut producer.



By Dianna Reed
Kansas

Dairy Report

Dairy checkoff program shows effectiveness throughout industry

In 2010, America's dairy producers, through their investment in the dairy checkoff, unified industry partners and led collaborative efforts that drove sales and innovation. Industry-wide collaboration and engagement reached new heights through the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, which was founded by dairy producers in 2008 to address barriers to growth and identify

industry wide solutions to grow long term sales.

In 2010, the Innovation Center received financial and other help from more than 180 processors, manufacturers, and other businesses working together to develop and implement action plans that will lead to long term, sustained category sales in the areas of health and wellness, consumer confidence, globalization, sustainability, research and insights.

Paul Rovey, an Arizona producer, said, "When we come together for the common good of producers and the entire dairy industry, we see the power of teamwork and collaboration."

McDonald's has become a "dairy destination," thanks to insights and support from the checkoff. Dairy is more prominent than ever at the world's top restaurant chain. New offerings include frappes, smoothies, specialty coffees, Angus burgers, and Angus snack wraps.

Pizza cheese sales continue to grow. Domino's Pizza continues to work with the checkoff on revitalizing the pizza category by using and promoting cheese as the critical ingredient for taste and quality. Domino's also continued its aggressively priced cheese pizza carryout promotions, which required an additional 10 million pounds of milk for each week of the carryout promotion.

Exports have bounced back, and in 2010 they are expected to represent nearly 13 percent of milk solids production, up from 9 percent in 2009 and 11 percent in 2008. This year's record shipments were assisted through the producer-funded U.S. Dairy Export Council. Programs include efforts directed at Asian foodservice to increase cheese sales.

The checkoff's partnership with Domino's also led to the creation of Smart Slice, a tasty, kid-approved pizza that uses reduced-fat mozzarella cheese, among other ingredients, to meet increasingly stringent school nutrition guidelines. Smart Slice is now available in more than 1,000 schools across the country.

Dairy producers are partnering with HP Hood and its Lactaid® brand, the category leader with more than 80 percent of all lactose-free dairy sales, to help grow fluid milk sales.

If the millions of adult consumers who restrict or avoid dairy consumption due to real or perceived lactose intolerance could be brought back to dairy, it could mean increased sales of approximately 2 billion pounds of milk annually.

As part of the program, the dairy checkoff developed www.moovision.com, a social media effort to build awareness and provide dairy-first solution to those suffering from lactose intolerance.

The dairy checkoff continues to invest in programs that help protect and promote consumer confidence in dairy products. As part of this effort, nearly 2,000 dairy producers have participated in the "Telling Your Story" (TYS) communications training program. TYS provides producers with the resources and training to effectively share their story with the public. In addition, the checkoff recently updated the www.dairyfarmingtoday.org website, which offers insights and information about how producers care for their animals and the land while providing safe, wholesome and nutritious dairy products. These are just a few of the ways that our checkoff dollars are put to work.

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Transportation Report



By Pat Torgerson
Montana

Developing oil resources in U.S. would reduce foreign dependence

It's strange thinking on our part to depend on crude oil supplies from regions thousands of miles away, from people who ignore basic human rights, when we have lots of our own crude oil right here, right now. Why ask our young people to fight wars and die over oil in foreign countries when we have lots of oil waiting to be extracted from American soil?

Oilfields in western North Dakota, western South Dakota, and eastern Montana have the potential to eliminate American dependence on foreign oil. This sizable onshore oil field is the highest producing oilfield found in the past 56 years, according to the Pittsburgh Post Gazette. America has access of up to 500 billion barrels of sweet oil right here in America, and we wouldn't have the enormous cost of maintaining military troops overseas guarding it.

The Bakken Formation and Three Forks Formation oilfields are the largest oil discovery since Alaska's Prudhoe Bay field. Here are a few official estimates about the Bakken /Three Forks. It contains:

- Eight times as much oil as Saudi Arabia
- Eighteen times as much oil as Iraq
- Twenty-one times as much oil as Kuwait
- Twenty-two times as much oil as Iran
- Five hundred times as much oil as Yemen.

And it belongs to America. Why aren't we putting our unemployed to

work extracting it?

We need to encourage our colleges to develop new and faster ways to extract this oil. We've got more oil in this very compact area than the entire Middle East - more than two TRILLION barrels of untapped oil. That's more than all the proven oil reserves of crude oil in the world today, according to the Denver Post.

More than 600 horizontal wells

have been drilled in the 450 square mile of the Bakken and Three Forks oilfield, from which more than 200 million barrels of oil have been recovered. North Dakota now ranks fourth in the nation in oil production, behind California, Texas and Oklahoma.

Transportation of all goods and commodities depends on oil. We need a reliable

source of cheap crude oil. America has this source at its fingertips.

America has access of up to 500 billion barrels of sweet oil right here in America, and we wouldn't have the enormous cost of maintaining military troops overseas guarding it.

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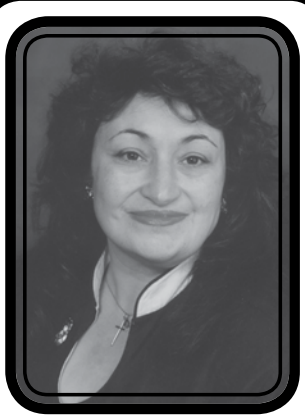
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By Klodette Stroh
Wyoming

Sugar Report

Producers turn attention to development of new Farm Bill

result in losing our independence. In 1787 Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to George Washington we should take his advice "Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness."

cheating. The third by agriculture, the only honest way, wherein man receives a real increase of the seed thrown into the ground, in a kind of continual miracle, wrought by the hand of God in his favor, as a reward for his innocent life and his virtuous industry."

Sugarbeet farmers received a word of relief on February 25. The good news is that the Ninth Circuit Court of appeals overturned an injunction that had ordered the destruction of sugarbeet stecklings or seedlings. The seedlings were genetically modified to tolerate labeled Roundup Ready sugarbeet seed. This means United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) is allowing Roundup Ready sugarbeets (RRSB) to be planted with outlined conditions for the root crop.

The RRSB seed being will be planted this year (2011) to produce seed for 2012 in Willamette Valley in Oregon. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), which publishes the 396 page guideline issued by USDA to satisfy Environmental Assessment, will govern the seed growing process.

Whether they are producing corn, barley, cotton, soybeans, tobacco, wheat, rice, sugar, or cattle, all American farmers and ranchers should stand united. We should not let any crop grown in America to be single out and destroyed.

This country cannot afford to lose its farmers. Losing U.S. agriculture will

Sugar Policy

The current sugar policy, which operates at no cost to taxpayers, supports more than 146,000 American jobs and plays an essential role in the nation's food security. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, sugar policy will continue at no-cost status over the next 10 years. It cannot get better than this to help U.S. to reduce its record high deficit.

As Benjamin Franklin wrote, "There seem to be but three ways for a nation to acquire wealth. The first is by war, as the Romans did, in plundering their conquered neighbors. This is robbery. The second by commerce, this is generally

News from Washington

This is a critical time for farmers and ranchers because of the 2012 Farm Bill. It is imperative that rural America's

top leaders fill positions where important decisions will be made. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) will be the chairman of Senate Agriculture Committee. She is a champion of U.S. agriculture and of rural America. Senator Stabenow

This is a critical time for farmers and ranchers because of the 2012 Farm Bill. It is imperative that rural America's top leaders fill positions where important decisions will be made.

is also a member of Senate Sweetener Caucus, a group of outspoken supporters of U.S. sugar industry.

We are lucky to have Senator Pat Roberts from Kansas as well. He has been a champion of a strong safety net and has dedicated almost 30 years in public office to maintaining economic stability in America's heartland. Senator Roberts served as Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee during the 1996 Farm Bill and was a key participant in the 2002 and 2008 Farm Bill debates.



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Please remember to pay your 2011 National WIFE dues if you have not already done so. The March issue of *WIFELine* will only be sent out to current members. If you have any questions, please contact:

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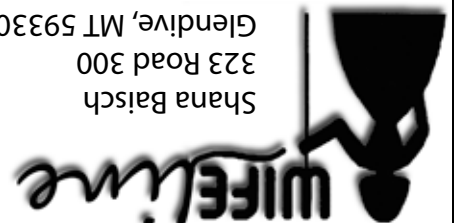
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