

Stroh Family Honored



Members of the Rick and Klodette Stroh family of Powell, Wyoming, were on hand to accept the 2009 Gamma Sigma Delta Outstanding Agriculturalist Award during the organization's annual brunch in Laramie on February 28.

Pictured are, from left, Lynnet Mains, Rick Stroh Jr., Autourina Mains, Paul Mains, Kyrre Stroh, Rick and Klodette Stroh, Dave Pohl, and Karry Stroh.

Bolz Honored

Donna Bolz of Lincoln, Nebraska, is the recipient of Radio Station KFOR's Goodwill Grill Award. She was nominated by friends at St. Mark's United Methodist Church and coworkers at Immigration Naturalization Service (INS) in Lincoln, NE. She was commended for seemingly spending more hours volunteering for worthy projects than working at her full-time job. Some of her activities include Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE) on the state and national level, Fresh Start for homeless women and St. Mark's United Methodist Church as a leader for Bible Study and Joyfest for women.



Donna is a friend to everyone she meets. When Donna hears of a need in the community, she finds the time to volunteer and do her part to make things better. She likes to make people smile.



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Stimulus Bill Can Bring 21st Century Technology to Farming Economics

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

By Tammy Basel

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, better known as the economic "stimulus package" signed by President Obama this winter, contains over \$7 billion in funds, much of which could be used to bring high-speed Internet access to currently unserved rural areas. We all know that broadband Internet is changing the course of business and people's way of life all over the world, and it can bring real benefits to farming communities as well.

Bridging this "digital divide" in America's heartland is an important part of America's economic recovery for a number of reasons. First of all, building new broadband networks where they don't currently exist will create both immediate and long-term jobs — from construction to maintenance, to marketing, to customer service and beyond. Second, as agribusinesses already connected to the Internet will attest, broadband can help farmers cut back on the cost of everything from equipment and supplies to livestock by participating in online commerce portals like localharvest.com. High-speed internet connections can also increase sales by enabling agribusinesses to offer their products to a wider marketplace. And perhaps most exciting, broadband infrastructure will encourage entrepreneurs to set up their businesses in rural areas, creating even more jobs and allowing our young people to have career options



closer to home.

In order to make sure that these incredible benefits reach your area right away, there are steps you can take. We need to tell the Rural Utilities Service and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the two agencies charged with distributing broadband stimulus grants, to focus their efforts on "unserved" rural areas. Let them know that your area does not have any broadband options today, or that the existing options are too slow and too expensive. Let them know how you might use broadband to grow your business.

Here's how to get involved. If you have an Internet connection, visit <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/form.cfm> and fill out the comment form as indicated, or you can send

a regular letter to:
Bernadette McGuire-Rivera
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
U.S. Department of Commerce
Room 4812
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20230
In your letter, reference Docket Number 090309298-9299-01. **All letters are due April 13, 2009**, so be sure to make your voice heard as soon as possible!

www.WIFeline.com

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES

By Tammy Basel, SD

Modern technology can be wonderful! For example my cell phone works in the pasture and corrals where we are calving. So as not to miss any important calls I forward my home phone to my cell phone. The cell phone seems to ring at some of the most inopportune times. It really can distract a cow when your shirt pocket is ringing, or maybe it gives her a target to aim for, I am not sure which. For safety reasons it made sense to put the phone on vibrate, if you want to know what that feels like put a bumblebee in your pocket and try not to jump--just kidding. As your president I want to be able to be contacted.

On Friday afternoon I got a call and was invited to represent WIFE in Washington, DC, so the next Monday morning I was on a plane going to the nation's capitol. When Congress passed the stimulus package, seven billion dollars was directed to get broadband access to rural areas. Unserved and underserved areas will need to be identified. If you live in an area with only dial-up or satellite for a connection speed, stimulus money may be available. The intention would be that many rural regions of the United States would have access to a high speed internet connection at a reasonable price. Please watch for further information on how you can help bring high-speed internet connection to your area.

While in DC, I was able to attend the subcommittee hearing on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry to review animal identification systems. Representative David Scott (D-GA) is the chairman of the committee and Collin Peterson (D-MN) is an ex-officio member and the chairman of the whole House Agriculture Committee. It was very interesting and an eye-opening experience. WIFE has policy on page 12 #25 under Livestock "Animal identification may be a best management practice for an operation. WIFE opposes a mandated individual animal identification program like the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) or any other mandated program. Existing methods, such as the hot iron brand and Bangs vaccinations are now recorded data and could be more fully utilized. Any program to improve animal trace back for disease control should be under individual state veterinary jurisdiction. The burden of the cost should not be funded by producers. (2007)" More of these type hearings will be coming in the future and with a policy like this your leadership team will be at the table working for our dues paying membership.

Some points of interest at the hearing were Collin Peterson (D-MN) promised that if we do not have a National Animal Identification System in the United States and the U.S. gets a disease in our livestock, there will be no bail out or money to support the livestock producers. He has a good understanding of the confidentiality issues. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) has been good for the citizens of the U.S. There is nothing to protect livestock producers from having anyone petition



continued on page 3

WIFE SUPPORTING MEMBERS CONTRIBUTOR LEVELS

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High Plains Journal
Rauner & Associates



TRADE

By Ruth Larabee, NY

Trade Chairman

"Time" is what our U.S. congressmen asked for when Pascal Lamy, Director of the World Trade Organization, stressed the need to restart almost immediately negotiating talks on trade.

How much time? In several meetings representatives made known to Lamy that stopping the talks was not the issue. Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI) spoke of the benefits, necessity and significance of advancing the trade discussions. Levin said that because this is a new administration and many unsettled points need to be considered, the time could be "weeks or months".

Proposals put forth for last year's trade talks dealt with matters that neither the former administration nor Catherine Ashton, the European Trade Commissioner, approved. Ashton presented evidence of concerns to U.S. representatives while visiting the United States in March of 2009. According to a report from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, feelings at this point of President Obama's administration is the inequity of last years negotiations. Thoughts are that it gives other World Trade Organization associates "broad flexibilities" and the question of prospects for our U.S. ranchers, farmers, businesses and workers result in vague uncertainties. This is an opinion shared by several businesses and agricultural organizations. In a letter written to Obama the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Association of Manufacturers and the Coalition of Service Industries asked for an extensive re-evaluation in the U.S. process to the discussions. A part of the letter strongly stated, "Until all major participants recognize the round must provide reciprocity, balance and ambition, we do not see how there can be meaningful progress." While the business sectors want the deliberations to continue and definitely are looking for additional trade, they want it to "produce results".

Canada has united with the United States in putting together a transatlantic free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union. The EU and Canada have settled on areas in which they can facilitate trade. Canada is looking at an increased economy possibly near the \$12 billion mark. In examining all opportunities they selected approximately 14 issues to be topics of negotiations. They consist of customs regulation, competition policies, technical barriers and sustainable development to name a few. A report put out by Jerome Corsi of the World Net Daily describes "sustainable development" as a code word created by the "United Nations Agenda 21". Some critics have alleged that it is a plan of "globalist supporters" in which "wealth" is reallocated taking from the rich to give to the poor. They believe that wealth is amassed at the expense of the poor.

The Transatlantic Union was established by the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC), a deal signed in 2007 by the EU and the former administration. The TEC is a lasting organization that pledged the U.S. to a greater transatlantic



trade and industry "integration" without approval of the Senate as a treaty or passage by the Congress as law.

WIFE policy is fair trade for our US agricultural producers and consumers. (Sources: *International Trade, Daily Report for Executives, USTR, World Net Daily*)

FSA

By Marlene Kouba

Carolyn Cooksie has been with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) for 32 years. The stimulus bill is huge. The plan for upgrading the FSA system was taken out. They are trying to enact the Farm Bill. Already have regulations on payment limitations. Some CRP payments could go out in October. This administration wants to continue CRP. The loan program has had the ag program shut down. They obligated \$37 million in loans in 2007. In 2008 it was up to \$80 million in loans as other sources shut down. You can comment on the Federal Register by email, mail, or FAX, as long as you meet the deadlines. Some FSA offices may be closed.

David Lazarus said their priorities include: make progress, safe nutritious food supply, improve food quality, a farm safety net, energy independence, reduce carbon footprints, profitability for producers, programs presented fairly, and update FSA systems. No decision has been made on COOL. Canada and Mexico are our largest markets. They want a policy on animal ID system and there will be changes. He thinks a traceback is necessary for food safety and health issues.



David Lazarus & Carolyn Cooksie



MEMBERSHIPS

Please look at your mailing label.

If you have an 09 you are okay.

If you have an 08 it means

I do not have a membership listing for you.

This will be your last issue of WIFeline until I do get one.

-- Editor



WIFeline

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DEAD ANIMALS

By Dianna Reed, KS
Dairy Chairman

A new rule, which is to go in to effect on April 27, is causing problems for the handling of dead animals. Rendering plants and animal feed manufacturers will be required to remove the brain and spinal cord from cows 30 months or older.

The rule is intended to prevent central nervous system tissue of dead cattle from getting into animal feed, because it can cause bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease. The producer is now going to have to figure out how to dispose of dead cattle.

This rule for health safeguards carries a cost for rendering companies and farmers.

The Halfway Packing Co., which is located in Missouri and one of our largest beef producing states, has closed its doors. Their trucks blocking the driveway describe the company's operations, "Our business is dead." This is not only true of what the operation was but that they are no longer in business. Rendering companies turn animal waste such as eyes, hooves and intestines into a variety of products such as biofuels, gelatin, animal feed and various industrial chemicals.

There are four main options for disposing of dead livestock, burning, composting, burying and rendering. The average producer can burn a cow, maybe by putting it on a bale or brush but it takes a lot of brush to burn a cow. Composting means cutting the cow in to pieces but not many people want to undertake that job. They can be buried but when the ground is frozen that may prove to be a problem.

The Halfway Packing Co. charged \$20 per cow and used the meat to make canned pet food and sold the hides, unlike other renders that could use the waste from the animal, they could only use well preserved animals that were picked up. The trucks that picked up the animals covered a twenty county area and traveled more than a thousand miles a day picking up animals. The owner of Halfway Packing stated that if he were to continue in business he would have to charge the farmer more than \$100 per animal to pick them up.

The Missouri State Veterinarian said that there are not many good options left for farmers to dispose of carcasses on their own.

The regulation will have the most impact on the dairy industry, which accounts for about 300 farms and 60,000 cattle in Nebraska alone. Milk cows, which are more likely to reach old age, are most productive after 3 years of age and can continue to produce until they are 15 or older.

On our farm we are fortunate to be able to call a rendering truck to come to the farm to pick up an animal. At present he picks up beef for nothing, and at one time he charged \$50 to pick up a horse, but they will no longer pick up horses.

If dead animals are not disposed of properly they can cause a real health hazard but if the rendering companies cannot profitably pick up animals and are forced to close



their doors, such as the one in Missouri, where do we go with the animals?

CONSERVING ENERGY

By Sheila Massey, NM
Energy Chairman

As we go about our daily routines we take for granted the source of energy we have at our fingertips with the mere touch of a button or flip of a switch. In today's troubled economic times most folks are finding themselves trying to make each dollar stretch as far as possible in covering expenses. One way to help that process is to make a conscious effort to keep those expenses to a minimum.

Conserving energy around the home is the quickest and easiest way to reduce your monthly utility bill. A common-sense approach, such as turning off lights when leaving a room or turning off electronics when not in use, can be augmented by a practical plan to identify areas of high energy consumption or energy loss in the home.

Our New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperative publishes a monthly newspaper "Enchantment" in which a recent article covered "Room-By-Room Energy Efficiency Tips." Many of the tips provided we are already practicing in our home but there are a few we could improve on. I contacted "Enchantment" to ask them if I could share the tips they provided in their article with the readers of WIFEline and received their permission. So here are a few room-by-room energy saving tips that can help you save both energy and money.

Roof and Attic — properly placed ventilation allows excess moisture to escape; insulate attic floor, but don't cover vents; and insulate and weather strip attic access.

Bathroom — low-flow showerheads conserve water and decrease the electricity needed to heat water. Install compact fluorescent light bulbs in all lighting fixtures as they can last up to ten times longer than incandescent bulbs.

Living Room — set your thermostat to 68 degrees in winter and a comfortable, but reasonable, setting in summer. Keep in mind that programmable thermostats conserve energy; install weather stripping around the frame of exterior doors; keep in mind that solid or insulated doors work best; and replace heating and cooling system filters often, or at least every six months.

Laundry — clean out the lint filter in your dryer after every load; vents should vent air outdoors; wash clothes when you have a full load using hot water only when necessary and cold water for the rinse cycle.

Kitchen — do not preheat your oven as most meals can be baked successfully without preheating the oven and wait until your dishwasher is full before operating it.

Water Heater — insulate your old water heater, but leave openings around electrical connections, heating elements and drain valves; set the heater's thermostat to about 120 degrees.

Let us all make a concerted effort to conserve energy and make our homes more energy efficient by following some of the tips listed in this article.



PARLIAMENTARIAN

By Pam Potthoff

"Motions are 'adopted' not 'passed'" and "It is 'unfinished business' not 'OLD' business" are two parliamentary procedure facts that were often repeated to WIFE by Parliamentarian Nita Bramble.

At the 2008 WIFE National Convention in Nebraska City, Bramble announced she would be retiring from National WIFE after five years as the "voice of orderly procedures." Nita served as Parliamentarian under WIFE Presidents Ina Selfridge, Barb Bonhorst and Pam Potthoff, starting with the Wichita National Convention. Nita's calm, efficient, friendly presence at the head table will be missed.

Nita has lived most of her life in Hastings, Nebraska. She met her husband, Dallas, when she was dipping up ice cream at the local ice cream parlor and he came in every night for ice cream. She must have decided if she had to feed him every night she might as well marry him as they have been married for sixty-five years.

Nita and Dallas have two children, Dallas Lee and David, who live in Hastings where Grandma Nita can keep tabs on her five grandchildren (three girls and two boys) and four great-grandchildren (one girl and three boys). The greats are into sports and other activities with one of the boys interested in pots and pans and cooking. He just might grow up to be a chef. He helped Grandma Great Nita clean up smoke damage in her kitchen the last day of 2008 as Nita put a skillet with grease on the stove and forgot about it.

Nita has been a parliamentarian for more than thirty years. She got interested in making order out of chaos after attending some meetings that needed some organization. Nita said, "Parliamentary law helps keep meetings running on time and in order. Everyone gets a fair chance to speak and to be a part of the proceedings."

Nita started her WIFE career with Nebraska WIFE and she will continue as their Parliamentarian. National WIFE was fortunate to have Nita keep their meetings running efficiently for five years.

Nita confesses she has learned plenty from WIFE and has expanded her horizons to include an interest in agricultural legislation and using COOL to help with her grocery purchases. She states, "You are a smart group of women. I have enjoyed my time with WIFE."

Nita is a quilt maker, having made at least one quilt for every member of her family. She also makes smaller quilts for underprivileged children going to camp each summer. These are called "fun quilts" as they are a nice size to drag around and play with. Nita prefers to work with blues and mauves. She is currently working on what just may be her favorite—the Underground Railroad Quilt. Every quilt design has a story and this one tells the story of black slaves escaping slavery by going North using the Underground Railroad. Nita has already made a wall hanging of her favorite blocks from this quilt. It is hanging in her church, the First Methodist in Hastings.

Nita also knits baby hats for newborns at Hastings hospital. Last year she made over 250 hats. Over her lifetime she has kept thousands of little heads warm!

Nita is looking forward to nice warm weather where she

can sit and knit and quilt.

WIFE expresses their thanks to Nita for making their meetings more efficient and their business more organized. It has been a real privilege to work with Nita.



President's Notes, continued from page 2

and get our personal information using FOIA if we were ever to get NAIS. Peterson is fully prepared to use his influence to protect producer's information. For NAIS to be implemented it may never have to see the light of Congress. The Secretary of Agriculture can issue the rule and make NAIS mandatory. If he were to do this it would be about two years of USDA taking comments on the Federal Register and through other channels.

Dr. John Clifford, Deputy Administrator of Veterinary Services, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, was the first to give testimony. Some of the questions he was asked concern human's ability to contract airborne diseases from livestock by walking down the street. Yes, it is true, humans can get diseases from livestock but you must be in close proximity. Dr. Clifford was very careful not to speak for the Secretary of Agriculture, but he personally believes in a mandatory animal identification system. An example he cited as a need for NAIS is that in 2008, 84 percent of the cattle testing positive for bovine tuberculosis did not have a way to trace back to where the animal contracted the disease. The investigation took an average of 199 days to trace what could be found.

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Collin Peterson (D-MN) and Subcommittee Chairman David Scott (D-GA) all want NAIS. They do not need Congress to get it done through rule-making and it is going to be very hard to stop a mandatory program.

On a positive note no matter what Congress does, we can all enjoy the first robin of the spring. I am truly a fortunate person because work on the ranch is like a vacation every day. My wish is that everyone who has ever had cattle would take time to watch the calves hold their tails up in the air and have little calf races saying "look at me--I am the winner". In reality, we are the winners, because we get to do what we love every day as the American Farmers and Ranchers!

BEEF COUNCIL

By Mary Ellen Cammack, SD
Beef Chairman



The Beef Industry Food Safety Council brings together representatives from all segments of the beef industry with goals of developing industry-wide, science-based strategies to solve the issue of e.coli 0157:H7 and other food borne pathogens in beef. A 32-page paper titled "Reduction of E. coli 0157 in Beef Cattle using direct-fed Microbials" (an 8-year research study) is available at http://www.bifsc.org/uDocs/directfedmicrobial_brashears881.pdf

The Beef Industry Food Safety Council focuses on a collaborative effort of every segment from farm-to-table to find and develop new ways to bring each consumer the safest product available. Beef safety is more than an expectation and more than the effort of one single entity—it is the sum of the entire beef production system, from farm to table. That is the phrase used by the Beef Industry Food Safety Council.

The sixth annual Beef Industry Safety Summit was held in San Diego during the first part of March, 2009. Results of a national survey were released indicating that consumers are confident in the safety of their ground beef, steaks, and roasts despite a rise in their overall concern about food safety in recent months. Eight in ten of the respondents agreed that the entire beef industry is working together to ensure safe and wholesome food.

More than two-thirds of the consumers in the survey said they believe the number of food recalls and food-borne illnesses is on the rise, especially with the recent recall of peanut products. Only 49 percent of consumers answered in the same way in November 2008. The national survey of 1,023 Americans had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percent and was funded by the Beef Check-off.

James O. Reagan, Ph.D., chairman of the Beef Industry Food Safety Council and senior vice president of research, stated "This survey confirms food safety is on consumers' minds and we want them to know it's on our minds as well. That's why leaders from all segments of beef production gather every year at the Beef Industry Safety Summit to share the latest research, improve safety best practices and set a course for the future." Over 160 representatives from every sector of the beef industry from farm to table attended the 2009 Summit.

The Beef Industry Food Safety Council shows the following membership: AB Foods, LLC; American Foodservice Corp.; American Feed Industry Association; American Meat Institute; Bioniche-Food Safety Division; Canadian Cattlemen's Association; Chad Company; Coleman Natural Foods; Colorado State University; Food Safety Net Services; HEB; IEH Laboratories; International Center for Food Safety Excellence; Intervet, Inc.; Ivy Animal Health; Jack in the Box; John Soules Foods; Keystone Foods; L&H Packing Company; Meat Industry Suppliers Alliance; National Beef Packing Company; National Cattlemen's Beef Association; National Meat Association; National Renderers Association; North American Meat Processors Association; Nutrition Physiologi

ogy Corp.; Omaha Steaks; San Angelo Packing; Smithfield Beef Group; Southwest Meat Association; Standard Meat; Texas A&M University; Tyson Foods; United Food Group LLC; Wolf-tec; XL Four Star Beef.

SUGAR TRADE

By Klodette Stroh, WY
Sugar Chairmen



Sugar farmers are facing another round of defending their position in the free trade arena. In a January 28 letter to the U.S. Trade Representative and the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Mexico's Secretary of the Economy Gerardo Ruiz Mateos warned, "Exports to the U.S. market are expected to reach around 750,000 to 800,000 tons this year, much higher than USDA projections (571,000 tons)."

In its recent market outlook, the USDA increased the country's surplus sugar ratio to nearly 10 percent, up from 4.6 percent in September. The increased surplus projection does not even take into account the additional sugar imports cited by Mexican officials.

American sugar officials believe that candy companies are pushing for additional imports, not because there is any shortage of sugar, but because they are looking to depress sugar prices. Mr. Jack Roney, a spokes person and economist with the American Sugar Alliance said, "In fact, the sugar companies in America have plenty of sugar to sell and are actively looking for buyers." Roney noted that with surpluses growing the biggest challenge has been the sugar price that farmers are receiving. "Raw sugar prices have plunged 13 percent since September and are now below break-even levels," he said. Refined sugar prices have also started to decline, which Roney says is a clear indication of supply outstripping demand.

USDA should hold tight and not cave in to the candy makers. Sugar farmers cannot take another decrease in sugar price.

Bear in mind sugar farmers provide 146,000 jobs and generate \$10 billion dollars in economic benefits annually. The sugar program operates at no cost to American taxpayers. We have to support our sugar farmers.

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

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____

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

PORK ETHICS

By Frances Rohla, NE
Pork Chairman



During the first part of March, Smithfield announced that they would cut 1,800 jobs. Closing six plants as part of a restructuring because of a slump in the meat industry, they will expand in packaging the meat part of business instead of low-margin business.

Smithfield employs 3,000 people in Nebraska. So far, the plants being closed are John Morrell of Great Bend, Kansas, which employs 275 people, and Armour-Eckrich at Hastings, Nebraska, which employs 370 people, and both will close in July. After restructuring and the plants to be closed were announced, their stock rose up 34 percent.

Animal agriculture was given a blow after Proposition 2 was passed in California. It prohibits confining or tethering farm animals and poultry all day. Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey are not far behind and are watching for "dirt" in animal agriculture.

The people (watchdogs) behind this are Farm Sanctuary, the Humane Society of the United States and the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

There was an ethics complaint against Iowa Rep. Dolores Mertz, head of the House Agriculture Committee as her family has a 4,000 head hog operation. The ethics committee feels she has opened the door for factory hog farms and killed a bill that would study air quality of hog confinement operations.

As I report about the problems that the hog industry has, we must not forget all the good things that the hog industry does for our country. The meat is of the highest quality and we get many medical items such as pig skins for burns and heart valves. (Source: *Midwest Ag Journal, Lincoln Star, Midwest Producer*)

JUNE MEETING

The June Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 4-6 in the Courtyard by Marriot Hotel near the Denver Airport (same place as last year). Phone is 1-888-526-5505 or 303-371-0300.

June 4 will be a travel day, some committee meetings and a meeting of the Executive Board. The Board of Directors will meet on June 5 with speakers on immigration, health care, sheep price reporting and animal welfare by Steve Kopperud. There are a lot of proposals in DC concerning "cap and trade" so we will have some information about how some of these proposals might help or hurt agriculture.

On June 5 is a TASTE OF WIFE so please bring local food specialties from your home area for this reception. This is a first for this meeting.

There will be a WIFE focus group meeting on June 6. Watch for more details next month.

LEGISLATION

By Jenifer Felzien, CO
Legislative Chairman



There is a bill being introduced concerning food safety that WIFE needs to study: H.R. 875 was sponsored by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) with 41 co-sponsors and introduced on February 4, 2009. It would establish the Food and Safety Administration, within the Department of Health and Human Services, to protect public health by preventing food born illness ensuring the safety of food, improving research on contaminants leading to food borne illness, and improving security of food from intentional contamination, and other purposes. The bill has been referred to the proper committees for consideration. Committees: House Energy & Commerce and House Agriculture.

H.R. 1609 was sponsored by Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) with one co-sponsor on March 19, 2009. It would amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to require the Administration of the Internal Revenue Service to verify income for purpose of determining the eligibility of persons for certain Department of Agriculture payments and benefits and for all purposes. Committees: House Agriculture and House Ways and Means.

Under the stimulus act, the Natural Resources Conservation Service will be allocated additional funds for "Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations" of \$ 290,000,000 and a \$145,000,000 is to be used for necessary expenses to purchase and restore floodplain easements as authorized in the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978. There is money also allocated for watershed rehabilitation programs.

Rural Utilities have been allotted additional funds for the direct cost of loan and grants for rural water, waste water, and waste disposal programs that are authorized in the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.

Distance learning, telemedicine and broad band programs for rural areas without sufficient access to high speed broadband service will be served by a project receiving funds from grants, loans or loan guarantees to facilitate rural economic development. The development comes under the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Thanks to those who have already notified me of their address change. It is much appreciated and changes are recorded.

Some of you have new 911 addresses so would you please send the updates to Nancy Spiegel and Marlene Kouba? If you don't, you may no longer get the WIFeline as it is returned when the address is incorrect. Also please notify Marlene if you are going to be away for more than a few weeks as the WIFeline gets returned when you are gone. Every returned WIFeline costs 50 cents plus the wasted postage, which doesn't sound like much, but it counts up at the end of the year.

CANOLA OIL

By Vernice Balsdon, ND
Oilseeds Chairman

Sheri Coleman, association director of the Northern Canola Growers Association, explained and demonstrated the uses of four different types of canola oil.

Canola oil is beneficial because of its low saturated fat. It contains only seven percent saturated fat, less than half of olive oil. It has high levels of mono-unsaturated fats which help to lower cholesterol and has omega 3 with a number of health benefits. It is also high in Vitamin E, is trans fat and cholesterol free.

While all types can be used for baking or cooking they have special uses. High stability canola oil is hardest to find as most restaurants, fast food places and theaters have changed to this type of oil. This kind of oil can remain stable at higher temperatures and lasts longer which is cost beneficial. It has a buttery taste that is light and airy.

Classic canola oil is the kind most often used in our homes. It is used for both cooking and baking and can be substituted for solid fat at a rate of one cup solid fat to three-fourths cup canola oil.

Expeller pressed oil is a hot-pressed oil and should be stored in a cool, dark place. This oil is perfect for dipping your breads and is also used in salad dressings. It has a buttery and full flavor taste.

Cold pressed oil is often compared to extra virgin olive oil. It has the shortest shelf life and should be stored in your refrigerator. This type of oil has a taste that resembles a roasted nut and is also very good for bread dipping or to drizzle on salads.

When Coleman's demonstration was done she distributed recipes for a salad, a dessert, an appetizer and a main dish. But, as usual, mine never turned out as beautiful as hers did. As long as the taste and health benefits are there, that is what really counts.



AGRICULTURE IS PART OF YOUR LIFE:

Products we use in our everyday lives come from plant and animal by-products produced by America's farmers and ranchers: Health care—pharmaceuticals, surgical sutures, ointments, latex gloves, X-ray film, gelatin for capsules and heart valves; Construction—lumber, paints, brushes, tar paper, dry wall and tool handles; Transportation—fuel, lubricants, antifreeze, car bodies, tires and upholstery; Manufacturing—adhesives, solvents, lubricants and detergents; Printing—paper, ink and film; Personal care products—shampoo, cosmetics, lotions, soaps, finger nail polish, brushes and toothpaste; Education—crayons, textbooks, chalk, desks, pencils and paper; Clothing—most of your clothing and accessories, including billfolds, purses and shoes; Sports—uniforms, baseball bats, leather equipment and shoes; plus all of your food and drinks. Thank a farmer or rancher today.

MILEAGE TAX

By Donna Bolz,
NE Transportation Chairman

Congress likely will take up the idea of a tax on the number of miles driven each year. The White House opposes the idea. Why has Congress decided to look at this option for a tax? The Congress is searching for alternatives to the federal gasoline tax which isn't indexed to inflation and hasn't been raised since 1993.

Those who support it say a mileage tax would be a more reliable source of funding for the upkeep of roads and bridges. Many environmentalists like it saying it would lead to less driving and less pollution.

Those who oppose it say this raises privacy concerns, especially if GPS, global positioning systems, devices were to monitor mileage. Also, many feel that people do not need a new tax, particularly in the middle of a recession. Others say it would disproportionately impact states with long commutes to work or where the closest towns are miles away.

A bipartisan commission created by Congress stated that lawmakers should increase the gasoline tax by 10 cents per gallon and begin shifting to a mileage tax. Robert Atkinson, the chairman of the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission said, "With the expected shift to more fuel-efficient vehicles, it will be increasingly difficult to rely on the gas tax to raise the funds needed to improve—let alone maintain our nation's surface transportation infrastructure."

This is not a new idea in Congress. At a hearing last year Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) stated the mileage tax was a brilliant idea. After the White House recently said it would oppose such a tax, Rep. James Oberstar (D-MN) stated that the new administration should be open to new ideas. There are still many questions to be answered. Do we want Big Brother tracking your every move? Maybe the best way is to rely on an honor system in which drivers would simply certify the number of miles they drive each year.



CONDOLENCES

Melinda Sorem's father, Clarence Irsik, passed away on March 23. To view Mr. Irsik's obituary, you can go online to www.Burkhart-Ziegler.com. Diana Selfridge's son-in-law Clarence (Butch) Jr. is Melinda's brother. Please keep all of the Sorem and Irsik families in your prayers. I'm sure they will appreciate hearing from their WIFE family during this sad time in their lives. Send cards and letters to Dick and Melinda Sorem and Family, 26561 NW 208 Rd., Jetmore, KS 67854.



WIFE is an independent grassroots organization.

BANKS

By Marlene Kouba



Ken Auer & Seaver Sowers

During the February Legislative Seminar in Washington, DC, Seaver Sowers of the American Bankers Association stated that we were at the economic situation twenty years ago that banks are now. They are a member-driven organization. Their committee of ag lenders meet three times a year. Banks are open for business, doing fine, willing to work with patrons and to lend to farmers. Your money is secure and 98 percent of over 8400 banks are well capitalized. Money in the bank is safe. Much of today's money problems come from non-money lenders. They are non-regulated finance companies. Local banks depend on local deposits so they are safe. Bank capital is to reserve against loans. Banks are maintaining a level of loans. Banks are 30 percent credit. The other 70 percent includes insurance, businesses (such as car dealers that do their own lending), etc. Non-banking mortgage debt level of funding went down. Non-banking consumer credit includes college credit. Farmer's debt is going down dramatically. Farmers own 90 percent of their businesses free and clear. Countrywide is now owned by Bank of America.

FARM CREDIT

By Marlene Kouba

Ken Auer of the Farm Credit Council said their entire loan volume last year was \$158 billion and their commitment to AIG was \$153 billion. They have no line of credit to the Treasury. Banks are turning into government-sponsored-enterprises (GSEs). Last October some countries, such as China, have stopped investing in our country and are shifting their money. Long term paper is now hard to sell. Marketplace is coming back to normal. A government policy is changing structure. John Deere and other businesses are giving loans. The next proposal is unknown. Their focus is agriculture and additional lending. Their capital is invested in loans and they give back in patronage dividends. Turning the Farm Credit Council into a bank is not a good idea. His board of directors is 23 farmers so they understand the stress.

CORRECTION

Please make the following changes for Virginia Bittner, Walsh, CO, on page 49-50 of your policy book. It should be 719-324-5628 and kvbittner@centurytel.net Kimmi Lewis' phone is 719-384-4034 and email is muddyvalleyranch@hughes.net

CORN GLUTEN

By Lisa Goodheart, KS
Feed Grains Chairman

Corn wet milling plants produce corn products for dairy and beef cattle called "corn gluten feed". Corn gluten feed is a co-product of the wet milling industry and begins with separation of the corn grain. Corn kernels are soaked in water and sulfur dioxide to swell the kernels in a process called "steeping." As this happens, nutrients leech into the water creating "steep liquor", which is drawn off and concentrated. The corn germ is separated from the kernel and processed to remove the oil. The remaining portion of the kernel is screened and the bran (the hull of the kernel) is removed. The steep liquor is mixed with the corn bran and is sold as wet corn gluten feed (WCGF). If the water is removed, the mixture is sold as dry corn gluten feed (DCGF). If further dried and processed into a kernel or pellet, 12 to 13 pounds of dry corn gluten feed (DCGF) is produced per bushel of corn. The germ is then marketed for oil and the starch is processed into fructose syrup.

DCGF is processed into flakes or pellets, which are nutritionally identical, but the density of the pellet form allows for reduced transportation costs. DCGF can be stored in any structure that will accommodate pellets, but there are problems with some gravity flow operations. If it comes into contact with moisture, there can be metal corrosion due to its acidic nature from steeping in water with sulfur dioxide.

WCGF should be placed in a sealed environment to control spoilage. The texture is similar to oatmeal, which makes handling difficult. Mixing the WCGF with other feed and blowing it into an upright silo obtains the best result. Mixing corn silage with WCGF results in a mix that is high in energy and contains about fifteen percent crude protein on a dry matter basis. Another excellent means of storing WCGF is by packing it into silo bags. The feed has a low pH which allows for little fermentation and freezing temperatures actually extend the storage life of WCGF. However, higher temperatures in the summer means the freshness only lasts three to four days and, as freshness declines, feed refusal increases.

Corn gluten feed is moderately high in protein (20 to 25 percent), low in starch (20 percent), high in digestible fiber and low in oil. Even though it has a high portion of fiber, it is still an energy source. DCGF has a slightly lower protein degradability than WCGF and fiber in WCGF is more digestible than DCGF which allows for greater intake of wet versus dry corn gluten feed.

THANK YOU!

Geraldine Reuter says a big THANK YOU to those who attended her birthday party and to those who sent her cards. There were about 50 at her party and she enjoyed hearing from all who wrote to her. She enjoyed the article and wondered why Marlene was taking pictures of her during the convention!



WHEAT CONDITIONS

By Phyllis Howatt, ND
Cereal Grains Chairman

A gene that could protect commercially important wheat varieties from stripe rust, a disease that causes severe crop losses in the United States and other wheat-growing regions, has been identified by an international team of researchers. The newly identified resistance gene was first discovered in wild emmer wheat, a low-yielding wheat that grows wild in Israel. The gene is absent from modern wheat varieties used for making bread and pasta.



Stripe rust affects millions of acres of wheat every year. Virulent forms of the fungus have appeared in the past decade, overcoming known disease-resistance genes in wheat and causing large yield losses. The fungus and resulting stripe rust are spread by the wind and are most damaging to crops in areas with mild winters and wet falls and springs. Identification of this new gene will give breeders the ability to enhance new wheat varieties with resistance to stripe rust.

The USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service and the U. S. — Israel Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund funded the research that discovered the gene.

North American winter wheat conditions vary widely. Adequate subsoil moisture in Kansas and Nebraska has improved crop conditions over the same time last year. Kansas has 59 percent of the crop rated as good to excellent compared to 42 percent at this time last year but moisture is badly needed in most of the state. Texas winter wheat conditions are the worst among the states with 64 percent of the crop rated poor to very poor. Conditions in Oklahoma are slightly worse than last year with 36 percent of the crop rated poor to very poor.

In the Middle East, following severe region-wide drought last season, autumn precipitation showed improvement in Iraq and western Iran compared to the previous season. Planting in Turkey, Syria, and eastern Iran suffered the second year of below-normal precipitation. Unseasonably warm weather over most of the growing region has forestalled adequate snow cover leaving winter grains susceptible to late season cold.

China, the world's largest wheat producer, is experiencing what the government calls its worst drought in 50 years in the central and northern regions that produce 80 percent of the country's winter wheat. Chinese officials report that half of China's 22 million wheat hectares have had little rain or snow since last November. Dry winter conditions are normal in China and the officials say damage should be minimal due to early irrigation and better regional planning. However they project yields to decline 11.5 percent in affected areas and potentially reduce winter wheat production by 5 percent to 100 million metric tons. (Source: *Kansas Wheat*)

RURAL ECONOMY

By Stephanie Trask, SD
Property Rights Chairman

The plummeting economy hit rural America in December 2008 with the month ending in the loss of over 282,000 jobs in rural counties. According to the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, urban counties lost 858,000 jobs in December and exurban counties (populated areas with a high percentage of residents who live in rural areas) lost 119,000. Half of all the jobs lost in the U.S in the last 13 months and more than 9 out of 10 jobs lost in rural areas were lost in the month of December.



The rural unemployment rate was lowest in Wyoming, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and New Hampshire. Michigan, California, Oregon, and South Carolina had soaring unemployment rates in their rural and exurban counties. Texas, Kansas, and Illinois actually had decreases in unemployment in some rural counties in December.

Great Plains states have seen the largest percentage increases in unemployment. According to an article in *dailyyonder.com*, the December unemployment report hints of troubles ahead for states that currently have low unemployment rates. In Iowa, a state with a 5.3 percent unemployment rate in rural and exurban counties, the number of jobless rose over 21 percent. North Dakota, with the second lowest rural unemployment rate, had a 20 percent increase in unemployment in December.

PEANUT RECALL

By Jacque Sistrunk, AL
Peanut Chairman

According to the National Peanut Board (which is paid for by the peanut grower's national checkoff), the salmonella outbreak in peanuts was caused by bad manufacturing practices and irresponsible actions by one rogue company.

Rep. Daina DeGetta (D-GA) used that recall to accelerate her longtime call for nation-wide food safety legislation. She stated that the recall demonstrates the need for FDA and USDA to have mandatory recall authority. DeGetta's proposed bills include the SAFER Act (Safe and Fair Enforcement and Recall) which would give FDA the authority to force a mandatory recall of contaminated foods and the TRACE Act (Tracing and Recalling Agricultural Contamination Everywhere). This Act would require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a product tracing system for all food products from origin to market enabling faster recall in the event of contamination.

However, Marie Fenn, the National Peanut Board's president, has been spreading the information that peanut butter is very beneficial to one's diet and has been able to keep peanut butter on menus at major universities and the nation's top restaurants and food services. The peanut farmer's check-off dollars have been at work successfully.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH

By Cynthia Thomsen, NE
Rural Health Chairman

Doctors will now see you electronically. A new low-cost service has appeared on the Internet to provide basic health-care consultations cheaper and easily.

In January, America Well, Inc. went live with a web service that allows patients to speak with their doctors by online video chat or phone. Doctors can view patients, their personal health records through Microsoft Corp. HealthVault and even prescribe medicine. The service is only available in Hawaii through their Medical Service and their Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance. Insured patients pay \$10 for a 10-minute visit. Non-insured pay \$45 for a visit.

In November, SwiftMD Inc. began a similar service in New York and New Jersey. There is a one time \$18 registration fee and, for \$9 a month, users can make appointments to speak with a doctor over the phone or on an on-line video chat. Doctors try to connect within one half hour of the time patients make an appointment. Consultations cost \$59.

SwiftMD lists a number of ailments it treats, such as allergies and rashes, fevers and flu. They will only treat people in the ages between 3 and 69. This service can not be used for pregnancy or severe psychiatric disorders. Some illness is better treated by a personal visit with a doctor.

To get started on a site, people register with a user-name and password. Next, they enter their credit card information and answer basic questions about their medical history. Folks will need a standard, Internet-connected PC with a Web cam to connect via video.

In Dallas, Texas a similar service called TelaDoc is operating. (Source: *Wall Street Journal March 5, 2009*)

Rural America has unique challenges in its health care system. People in these areas have less access to health networks, greater rates of disability and chronic diseases plus pay higher rates for insurance for self-employment and small businesses. Rural Americans have lower rates of employer-provided benefits and are more likely to be underinsured or uninsured for longer periods of time.

Health care can also be a barrier to economic development that would provide a great opportunity to reduce poverty. For this to occur the health care system needs to be reformed to help both small business owners and their employees. Health care reform promises to be a long-term debate. (Source: www.cfra.org)

HIV and AIDS control in Cuba. Cuba has the lowest percent of its population infected with Human Immunodeficiency (HIV) in the western hemisphere. Considering the limited means of its health system how did they do it?

In 1983 before the National Commission on Aids had identified any Cuban Nationals with HIV or AIDS, Jorge Perez, M.D., an infectious disease expert, was suspicious of international blood products. Perez ordered all foreign-derived blood products be destroyed. Two years later Cuba had its



first diagnosed HIV/AIDS case, a soldier returning from Mozambique, Africa.

Large scale testing of the human population began in 1986. Like Cuba had done in epidemics since 1900, they instituted public health measures. In the late 1980s and 90s a vigilant quarantine of HIV-positive patients was conducted. In addition, all HIV positive inmates at penal institutions were transferred to other institutions. There are no HIV/AIDS patients in prison in Cuba. They are not handcuffed to beds or otherwise restrained.

Cuba has a detailed confidential data base that allows meticulous identification of every HIV-positive individual that allows tracking back to the "source" whether in Cuba or overseas.

The provincial sanatorium system placed many locations around Cuba so patients can receive treatments and their families can be close to them. The quarantine system was relaxed. Sanatoriums were designed to provide proper nutrition, shelter and medication dispensation. There is no charge to the patients for their care. This has evolved into a patient, local public and international education resource. The patients have acted responsibly and were able to return to work, school and live with their families and be treated as outpatients. Many patients volunteer to work at the sanatoriums to help their country prevent and control HIV nation wide.

Cuba now produces sufficient quantities of seven anti-viral medications-AZT, D4T, DDI, DDC 3TC, nevirapine and indinavir-domestically for use with its patients.

About 75 percent of HIV/AIDS patients are male. But the female population is increasing. AZT (500 mg twice daily) is given to all expectant females from 14 weeks gestation until delivery by Caesarean section at 38-40 weeks. Vaginal delivery is not allowed; therefore vertical transmission of HIV from mother to child is nonexistent. Intravenous drug abuse as a mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS in Cuba is virtually unknown. Transmission of the disease is only sexual which makes it unique in the HIV/AIDS world.

Calendar of Events:

April 25 - Reports are due
May 10 - Resolutions are due
June 4-6 - BOD Meeting, Denver, CO
November - National Convention, NY

RESOLUTIONS

If you desire any changes or additions to the Bylaws, get your resolutions to Ardyth Anderson by May 10.

WIFE promotes all agricultural commodities