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No. 1

Interior department authorizes designation of "Wild Lands" without congressional approval

An order issued by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar the day before Congress adjourned for Christmas establishes a policy directing the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to designate areas with wilderness characteristics under its jurisdiction as "Wild Lands" and to manage them to protect their wilderness values.

Salazar said the order is based on the input of the public and local communities through its existing land management planning process.

"Americans love the wild places where they hunt, fish, hike, and get away from it all, and they expect these lands to be protected wisely on their behalf," said Salazar. "This policy ensures that the lands of the American public are protected for current and future generations to come."

BLM Director Bob Abbey said that Secretarial Order 3310 fills an important land management need for the public and the agency. "Wild Lands," which will be

designated through a public process, will be managed to protect wilderness characteristics unless or until such time as a new public planning process modifies the designation. Because the "Wild Lands" designation can be made and later modified through a public administrative process, it differs from "Wilderness Areas," which are designated by Congress and cannot be modified except by legislation, and "Wilderness Study Areas," which BLM typically must manage to protect wilderness characteristics until Congress determines whether to permanently protect them as Wilderness Areas or modify their management.

The BLM manages 245 million acres in the United States, including the National System of Public Lands, primarily located in 11 western states and Alaska. The bureau also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multi-

ple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes its mission by managing activities such as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

While environmental groups applauded the order, others are concerned that the creation of newly designated Wild Lands will result in protecting more land from drilling, mining, cattle grazing, and recreational activities.

Among those concerned is Western Congressional Caucus Chairman Rob Bishop.

"Secretary Salazar's decision to change the existing policy is a blatant attempt to usurp Congress' role over public land management. The Constitution gives exclusive control of the public

lands to Congress, and the only authority that the Executive branch agencies exercise over the federal lands is that which is delegated by Congress," said Bishop. "Make no mistake about it, this decision will seriously hinder domestic energy development and further contributes to the uncertainty and economic distress that continues to prevent the creation of new jobs in a region that has unduly suffered from this Administration's radical policies.

Ranchers are concerned that they may lose leased grazing for cattle, face restrictive management policies, and face the challenge of additional predators that will find additional habitat in the protected lands.

The energy industry has also voiced opposition to the order. Kathleen Sgamma, a director of the Western Energy Alliance, which represents 400 oil and natural-gas companies, said the new policy could block promising lands from drilling.

President's Report



By Deb Dressler
North Dakota

Happy New Year. Hope everyone was able to spend the holidays with family and friends. I am looking forward to serving as your National Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE) president for 2011.

I would like to thank all the members who stepped up to the challenge of officer, commodity and topic chairman, and those who agreed to standing committees.

WIFE membership will be a top priority for this year. If every member will acquire a new member, our membership would double. Priorities for this year include:

- Private Property: border security, endangered species, Antiquities Act of 1906-monuments, and navigable water.
- Livestock: Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Act, Federation of State Beef Councils, and Horse Slaughter.
- Farm Bill 2012: emphasis on food costs, subsidies, 1099 forms, and the MILC program.

WIFE members establish priorities at national convention

The Washington, D.C. Legislative BOD will be held on March 12-15, 2011, at the Holiday Inn Capitol. Saturday, March 12, will be a travel day with the Executive Committee meeting at 8 p.m. Sunday, March 13 will include BOD and WIFE business and tours yet to be determined. Monday, March 14, will include a visit to USDA as well as the Senate and House Agriculture hearing and the annual pizza party for ag aides. Tuesday, March 15, will be visits to the Hill. Wednesday is a travel day.

Room reservations are due by February 12, 2011, with block code of W3F. The hotel reserva-

tion phone number is (202) 479-4000. Plan on attending to support WIFE. The red WIFE coats are recognized as a viable voice for Agriculture on the hill.

My husband Russell and I have a cow calf operation in southwestern North Dakota with my husband's two brothers and their families. The Dressler Ranch will celebrate its 125th anniversary this summer. We have two grown children and five grandchildren. Raising a family in rural North Dakota is a gift that we are thankful for every day. Happy Trails until next month, and I hope to see you in Washington, D.C. in March.

WIFE Supporting Members

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**By Klodette Stroh
Wyoming**

Sugar Report

America's economic crisis will require ag income to recover

gan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, and Wyoming) and are processed in 22 sugarbeet factories. The industry creates 88,200 full time direct and indirect jobs for people across the nation.

Cane Sugar Industry

Eight cane refineries and 18 mills process sugar cane raised in four states: Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana and Texas. The production and processing of sugarcane creates 71,900 full time direct and indirect jobs.

Saves taxpayer dollars

Sugar producers do not receive government subsidy checks. In fact, sugar policy cost taxpayers \$0 in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. It is estimated to operate at no cost to taxpayers again in 2010.

Fair Trade

Current U.S. sugar policy allows efficient U.S. beet and cane growers and processors to compete against unfair foreign subsidies and trade practices. The program provides for reliable supplies of sugar at fair and stable prices for consumers and operates at minimal cost to the taxpayer.

World population is expected to

reach 7.9 billion by the year 2020; the demand for food will be increasing. How will the hungry people be fed? One thing is for sure; it can't be without American farmers. This country has fed Europe after the WWI and fed our soldiers throughout WWII, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, and the Middle Eastern situations. Our farmers are the backbone of this country.

Happy New Year to everyone! I wish you all a prosperous 2011.

The agriculture industry contributes over \$1 trillion to the United States economy. The farmers represent and preserve the value of our nation. Their hard work, risk-taking, and love of land are truly admirable. Agriculture is our nation's frame and the bone structure to balance the troubled economy to ensure our independence. United States' sugar beet, sugar cane, and corn sweeteners industry is a limb to this structure as well.

- America's sugar is produced in 14 states, so we don't have to depend on unreliable foreign countries for this vital ingredient.
- America's sugar farmers, processors, and refiners create 146,000 jobs and generate nearly \$10 billion a year for the U.S. economy.

Beet Sugar Industry

More than 1,100,000 acres of sugar beets are grown in 10 states (California, Colorado, Idaho, Michi-

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**By Frances Rohla
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Pork Report

Heritage breed makes a comeback in trendy restaurants

Businessman Marc Santucci of Traverse City, Mich., has discovered that slow-growing Mangalitsa (pronounced mahn-ga-LEET-suh) pigs are different than ordinary pigs, including the price of their meat. The price of meat is at least four or five times more than ordinary pork.

Santucci discovered the Mangalitsa piglets when he was looking for products for the Earthy Delights gourmet food business in which he is an investor. The piglets cost \$280 each compared to \$60 and \$80 for ordinary piglets, but when the piglets are big a year later, the meat brings \$6.95 per pound, compared to 85 cents to \$1 for regular pig meat.

A window of opportunity opened up for Santucci and investor Will Kohl of Okemos, Mich. They were able to bring in six piglets from Austria for \$27,000, including transportation and quarantine costs. The piglets will be used for breeding. The piglets are being raised on two different farms and will live to a ripe old age. Santucci's plan is to develop a breeding herd for sale to small farmers who



Unusual looking Mangalitsa pigs are valued for their flavorful meat.

would raise them for sale to chefs, charcuterie makers, and other processors. Earthy Delights will carry the pork, and Cherry Capital Foods will distribute it to restaurants in Traverse City.

Santucci and chef Brian Polcyn of the Forest Grill in Birmingham, Mich., plan to open a charcuterie company. Polcyn is a nationally known instructor at Pig-Stock, where Mangalitsas are to be butchered, prepared, and processed for charcuterie the European way.

Bill Perkins of Swartz Creek near Flint, Mich., raises Mangalitsa pigs. The

corpulent hog was developed in Hungary in the early 1800s. There were only 198 left 20 years ago as tastes changed and they fell from favor. A Spanish ham processor and a geneticist

began a breeding program to save them. Now there are thousands all over Europe. Mangalitsas are still rare in the U.S. Some other states that raise Mangalitsas are Washington, New Jersey, and California.

Mangalitsas is a rare heritage breed of Hungarian pig. The coat is wiry and woolly, which makes it look like a sheep. What sets it apart from U.S. lean pigs is its thick layer of flavorful fat. They are called lard pigs. They are bred because of the fat, so they make the best prosciuttos and salamis (a salted, spiced sausage) or charcuterie. Cured hams go for \$20 or more per pound. Mangalitsa dinners sell

out at trendy restaurants in San Francisco, New York, and Chicago, and demand for the meat is quickly rising.

(Information received from Marlene Kouba, Agweek paper.)

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By Mary Ellen Cammack
South Dakota

Beef Report

Department of Agriculture requests comments on brucellosis

Brucellosis is a contagious disease, caused by bacteria of the genus *Brucella*, that affects both animals and humans, thus designating it a zoonotic disease. *Brucella* spp have long been considered a potential biological weapon with renewed threats of biological warfare and agricultural terrorism. *B. abortus* is listed as a category B biothreat agent by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Strategic Planning Group.

It is important to note that ag terrorism is about crippling an economy, not destroying crops or animals.

The Danish veterinarian Bernhard L.F. Bang isolated the bacteria in cattle leading to brucellosis, and that is why many stockmen have referred to this disease as “Bangs.”

Cows infected with brucellosis often spontaneously abort during the third trimester of pregnancy. Calves, if born, may be weak at birth. Outside the animal, the afterbirth and aborted calves with the brucella bacteria are easily killed by sunlight, high temperatures, and drying. There is no economical cure for brucellosis infected animals.

During the past 75 years, only two strains of vaccine have been approved for use against Brucellosis in livestock. Strain-19 is a live vaccine that stimulates the immune system of the injected animal and thus produces antibodies against the disease. This vaccine could infect veterinarians and others if accidentally injected. Many false positives

were also a problem with Strain-19.

Approximately 13 years ago, Strain RB51 was approved for use, virtually eliminating adverse post-vaccination reactions in cattle, such as abortions and localized inflammation at the vaccine injection site. Strain RB51 does not stimulate the same type of antibodies that can be confused on standard diagnostic tests with those antibodies produced by actual infection.

These two vaccines are sometimes ineffective due to inconsistent potency, protection and safety across susceptible host species, thus showing there is still a need for an improved vaccine.

Brucellosis is covered under Homeland Security rules because it might be developed as a bioweapon.

This inclusion of brucella as a “select agent” under the Bioterror Act of 2002 is among the reasons it takes so long to license new vaccine. This classification also prohibits working with restricted brucella bacteria outdoors, and conducting required large-scale testing trials with big wild animals such as elk and bison is almost impossible to do indoors.

Homeland Security restrictions make it difficult to get brucellosis samples needed to test the effectiveness of vaccines, and another stumbling block is adequate funding. Efforts are underway to come up with a checklist of conditions that would allow larger outdoor biocontainment facilities to be built, but that is directly against the existing Bioterror Act law.

Human brucellosis is endemic in

many parts of the world such as the Mediterranean region, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. In the United States, approximately 100 human cases per year are reported with infection from ingesting unpasteurized dairy products. This is due to the United States maintaining strict food safety regulations.

The USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has reevaluated the practice of paying indemnity to livestock owners of herds

with identified brucellosis, providing a financial incentive to destroy an entire herd, rather than quarantine.

The recommendation is to eliminate destroying and offering pay-

ments, in part due to the public’s view of whole-herd depopulation as a less acceptable approach for disease management.

Changing social values concerning the care and well-being of livestock, the recognition of the environmental consequences of animal disposal, and the value of proteins derived from livestock also drive the need to develop new approaches to disease control. This can be found in the posted document on the Federal Register.

APHIS has posted the interim rule, effective December 27, 2010, and a request for comments due on or before February 25, 2011, on the Federal Register at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/2010-32371.htm>. This is to revise the current testing and certification requirements for Brucellosis.

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**By Phyllis Howatt
North Dakota**

Oilseeds Report

Farmers continue to increase flax acreage to meet rising demand

North Dakota (ND) planted about 390,000 acres of flax seed this year over 2009's 295,000 acres. Farmers across the entire country planted 410,000 acres. ND produces more than 95 percent of the nation's flax. ND farmers are expected to increase their flax acres in 2011.

Flax seed demand is rising, and health stores and processing facilities can attest to that. Stone Mill Inc., in Richardton, ND, processes brown and golden flax seeds, and the company doubled the size of its facility in 2008 to accommodate the food flax market. The facility takes the seed from farmers and removes dirt, stones, wheat, and anything that's not a flax seed.

It is then packaged for the bulk food industry. The Stone Mill facility added a color sorter to avoid mixing brown and gold flax seeds, resulting in a purer product.

Flax seed really became popular 15 years ago, and demand has grown. Flax is about 85 percent of Stone Mill's business. The increase of seeded flax acres is also because flax seed is a flexible crop that can be planted early or late.

Internationally, there is a strong demand for United States flax. Canada is another major supplier of flax, but they had trouble in the European market, and U.S. producers have stepped up to the plate. ND has the right topography, geography, and moisture levels to benefit the plant, and it is beneficial in rotation.

The health benefits of flax seed

include immunity, skin moisture, and hair strength. It also has great hormonal benefits for women. Besides the multiple uses in the health food industry, it is used in premium dog foods to enhance canines' coats and immunity. Flax is also used in the textile industry.

Whole seeds, ground seeds, capsules, and oil can be used as health enhancements on a daily basis. The seeds provide fiber in addition to essential

fatty acids. This helps with digestion and keeps the intestinal tract clean. Flax oil is good for joints, skin, and hair. Good digestion is so important to keep everything moving. Flax seed is high in omega-3, and many people are switching to it instead of fish oil.

Flax seed can be ground to put into shakes, and the whole seed can be used as an ingredient in bread mixes and pastas.

Former WIFeline editor has been an asset to the organization

By Phyllis Howatt

Marlene Kouba is a person who takes notes and more notes no matter what meeting she was attending. Not just scattered words—they are full sentences with punctuation. I have many of them filed, as she would share with us even if we weren't at the meeting. She has held many offices in WIFE since she joined in 1983, including North Dakota state WIFE president, secretary, treasurer, and editor of the North Dakota State WIFE Digest since 1985.

She has held many offices in National WIFE through the years. She coordinated the 1990 National Convention in Bismarck ND. As Vice President she chaired the national convention in Fargo ND in 2003 in absence of the president, Ina Selfridge. She has also been secretary, area director, and numerous other chairmanship offices. Marlene has taught Ag in the Classroom for 15 years. Most recently Marlene has been the national editor for WIFeline. Many times she has helped chairmen with their articles and filled

in with articles about WIFE meetings when the ones assigned to do it did not get them done. I am going to miss her help when I write my monthly report.

Marlene and her late husband Richard had nine children. Both had been raised on farms, and they moved to a farm two years after their marriage. They raised cattle and small grains. Richard belonged to state and national organizations, and Marlene also took leadership roles in them.

She was a 4-H leader for 20 years and judged county fairs in five counties for about 40 years. She was selected "Country Woman of the Year" covering four states in 1996.

She has been the president of her women's church group and taught religion classes for 15 years. She has also written some different books and compiled histories in a book for the 75th jubilee of her hometown and again in 2010 for the 100th anniversary.

When Marlene doesn't have a job to do she creates one, as she doesn't like to be idle. I want to thank Marlene for all her hard work for WIFE, and I am proud to say she is my friend.



By Pat Torgerson
Montana

Transportation Report

Captive shipping states pay transportation costs both ways

Transportation costs are crucial to the survival of Montana as a captive shipping state, as are many inland states. Captive shipping states pay transportation costs on all commodities, such as grain and livestock, that we sell. In addition, we

pay transportation costs on all items that we buy. Most consumers only pay transportation costs on items that they buy.

Watching world markets is very important to everyone. When I read that China is helping to build a railroad in Argentina, a light bulb in my head lit up. A bigger, better railroad means easier access to Argentina's grain markets.

This financial support for new rail line service from Argentina's interior farms to major river terminals means faster, cheaper, bigger grain sales to the growing market in China.

So where does that leave the U.S.'s grain sales to China? Think about it.

(Information from the Western Farmer Stockman, October 2010.)

Direct marketing idea would save transportation costs

An innovative transportation cost cutting idea was launched in Colorado recently. A seminar was held to discuss regulations and options for processing livestock with a mobile slaughter unit.

The unit brings a USDA slaughter operation to the slaughter site, allowing ranches to develop direct sales to consumers.

(Information from the Western Farmer Stockman, November 2010.)



By Gwen Cassel
New York

Sheep & Goats Report

Sheep prices near all time high

sonably inclusive and asks a number of questions that have not been completely explored in past surveys. This detailed survey has not been completed since 2001, occurring every 10 years.

There are a number of publications available on the 2001 NAHMS and also on the purpose of the 2011 survey at the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) website at: www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/content/printable_version/nahms_sheep_2011.pdf. An excellent overview of this project can be found at: www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/nahms/sheep/downloads/sheep11/Sheep11_is_Objectives.pdf.

At the same time there is a sheep and goat semi-annual survey taking place. This shorter survey must be completed by January 10. Conducted every two years, it is not as inclusive as the NAHMS survey but provides a good overview to those

involved with sheep and goats and for future planning.

Although not mandatory to participate in either of these surveys, producers can familiarize themselves with confidentiality promises and research any concerns at the noted websites. It is beneficial throughout the industry for those who bring sheep and lamb products to the industry to support business and organizations and to the producers to obtain an updated view of sheep in the U.S. This is an ever changing commodity.

The sale price of sheep, lamb and goats is almost at an all time high! Even after the holiday needs were met, demand is still high, and prices are above average for this time of year. Due to low prices in recent years and to various drought and other weather conditions around the U.S., available product is not keeping up with demand at this time.

To start off the New Year, I'll post an alert concerning two surveys of sheep producers that will occur early in 2011. I thank Mary Ellen Cammack, WIFE Beef Chairman, for this information gleaned in her position with NASS (National Animal Statistics Service).

The National Animal Health Monitoring Systems (NAHMS) General Sheep Management Questionnaire will be sent and completed with sheep producers by NASS (National Animal Statistical Service) personnel, January 1 through February 10, 2011. This questionnaire is rea-



By Marlene Kouba
North Dakota

Energy Report

Congress passes bill containing renewable energy provisions

In mid-December, the U.S. House voted 277-148 for a tax package containing incentives and funding mechanisms important to renewable energy markets. President Obama signed the bill into law on December 17. Principally aimed at extending Bush-era tax cuts, favorably modifying estate taxes and extending unemployment benefits, the measure contains a number of key renewable energy provisions.

The bill extends through 2011 the renewable energy grant-in-lieu-of-tax-credits, the Section 1603 program, which helps renewable energy developers in a shrunken equity market secure affordable financing to move forward with capital-intensive projects such as wind farms, including community wind projects, solar plants, geothermal facilities, and others.

The measure also extends through 2011 the 45-cent-per-gallon level ethanol blend credit, the 54-cent-per-gallon tariff on imported ethanol, and the 22.67-cent-per-gallon tariff on ethyl tertiary butyl ether. The \$1-per-gallon production tax credit for biodiesel and renewable diesel – a provision that expired at the end of last year, causing dozens of plants to close and thousands of jobs to be lost – would now be applied retroactively and extended through 2011.

Meanwhile, the Senate has reportedly dropped consideration of an omnibus spending measure aimed at funding government programs for fiscal 2011 and plans to adopt a continuing resolution that will maintain fiscal

2010 spending levels into next year.

Killed with the comprehensive spending plan for this fiscal year were proposals in the measure that would have removed funding for many of the 2008 Farm Bill energy programs. Programs marked for reductions in the now failed measure included the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (or BCAP, which may have been zeroed out), the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels, the Biorefinery Assistance Program, and the Rural Energy for America Program (better known as REAP).

Even though USDA has not yet issued a funding notice for FY 2011 REAP projects, it's not too early to submit applications to them. Contact your USDA Rural Development state energy coordinator now for additional information. Looking ahead, USDA is expected to release proposed new rules for REAP very soon. USDA needs to finalize those rules before releasing any REAP funding for next year. For the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), USDA's Farm Service Agency has finally released application and instruction forms for both project area proposals

and matching payments. It is recommended that project applications be submitted as soon as possible to ensure access to funding.

The future of investments in clean power projects over the next decade will be determined by the strength of policies adopted by G-20 countries and could lead to an investment of \$2.3 trillion in clean power assets over the next

10 years if clean energy policies are strengthened significantly.

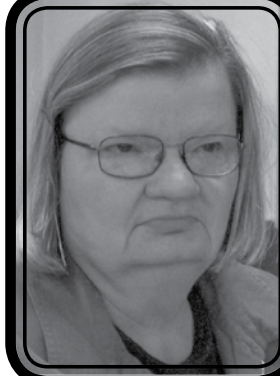
The growth in clean energy funding will offer companies and countries enormous opportunities to compete for investments, jobs and export markets. Under a "business as usual" scenario continuing current policies, however, cumulative investments would only

reach \$1.7 trillion, \$546 billion less than the amount that could be leveraged through stronger policies.

Under all scenarios, clean energy power investments shift to Asia, led by dramatic increases in China and India. All countries could stand to gain from adoption of enhanced clean energy policies. The United States is a case in point as one of the three countries (along with India and the United Kingdom) that have the most to gain from adoption of aggressive clean energy policies when enhanced policies are compared to current ones.

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Rural Health, Farm Finance, and Communications Report



By Donna Bolz
Nebraska

Regulating the Internet could affect how you access information

When we log onto the Internet, we take lots of things for granted. We assume that we'll be able to access whatever website we want whenever we want to go there. We assume that we can use any feature we like anytime we choose. We assume that we can attach devices like wireless routers, game controllers, or extra hard drives to make our online experience better.

What makes all these assumptions possible is "Network Neutrality," the principle that allows the free and open Internet. Net Neutrality means that Internet service providers may not discriminate between different kinds of content and applications online. It guarantees a level playing field for all websites and Internet technologies.

That could change since the biggest cable and telephone companies would like to charge money for access to websites, speed to run applications, and permission to plug in devices. These network giants believe they should be able to charge website operators, application providers and device manufacturers for the right to use the network. Those who don't make a deal and pay up will experience problems. Their sites won't load as quickly, and their applications and devices won't work as well.

Without legal protection, consumers could find that a network operator has blocked the website of a competitor or slowed it down so much that it's unusable. The network owners say they

want a "tiered" Internet. If you pay to get in the top tier, your site and your service will run fast. If you don't, you'll be in the slow lane.

The fundamental idea since the Internet's inception has been that every website, every feature and every service should be treated without discrimination. That's why when you use a search engine, you see a list of the sites that are the closest match to your request -- not those that paid the most to reach you.

Discrimination endangers our Internet freedoms. In the past, network owners have built a business by charging consumers for Internet access. Now they want to charge for access to the network, and then charge again for the things you do while you're online. They may not charge you directly via pay-per-view websites. They will charge all the service providers you use. These providers will then pass those costs along to you in the form of price hikes.

Net Neutrality ensures that innovators can start small and dream big about being the next eBay or Google without facing major hurdles. Unless we preserve Net Neutrality, startups and entrepreneurs will be pushed out of the marketplace by big corporations that pay for a top spot on the web.

On a tiered Internet controlled by the phone and cable companies, only their own content and services -- or those offered by corporate part-

ners that come up enough "protection money" -- will enjoy life in the fast lane. The free-flowing Internet as we know it could well become history. All of this means we could be headed toward a pay-per-view Internet where websites have fees. It means we may have to pay a network tax to run voice-over-the-Internet phones, use an advanced

search engine, or chat via Instant Messenger. The next generation of inventions will be shut out of the top-tier service level. Meanwhile, the network owners will bring in even greater profit.

The Federal Communications Commission passed its first-ever regulation of the Internet in a net neutrality compromise that saw its 3-2 vote split sharply along party lines. The full text of the new regulations will not be published until later, but some of the details are now known.

There will be two sets of regulations governing the way an Internet service provider is allowed to control your access, depending on whether you are accessing the Net wirelessly or via a landline. Broadband service providers will be forbidden from blocking access to any legal Internet sites and services from any "unreasonable" discrimination against data. What this means is ISPs will not be allowed to slow traffic on a website that competes with a service they offer.

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By Dianna Reed
Kansas

Dairy Report

Child nutrition act will allow for healthier meals in public schools

House passage of S. 3307, "The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act," also known as the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act, will have a resounding effect on school lunch programs. New funding in the amount of \$4.5 billion over 10 years will allow USDA the chance to make real reforms to the school lunch and breakfast programs for the first time in over 30 years by improving the critical nutrition and hunger safety net for millions of children.

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act includes upgrading nutritional standards for school meals by increasing the federal reimbursement rate for school lunches by 6 cents for districts who comply with federal nutrition standards. It allows improvement of nutritional quality of all food in schools by providing USDA with the authority to set nutritional standards for all foods sold in schools, including vending machines, the "a la carte" lunch lines, and school stores.

It increases the number of eligible children enrolled in the school meals programs by using Medicaid data to directly certify children who meet income requirements without requiring individual applications, connecting approximately 115,000 new students to school meals programs. It will enhance universal meal access for eligible children in high poverty communities by eliminating paper applications and using census data to determine school wide income eligibility.

The bill provides more meals for

at-risk children nationwide by allowing Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) providers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to be reimbursed for providing a meal to at-risk children after school, paving the way for an additional 21 million meals to children annually. It empowers parents by requiring schools to make information more readily available to parents about the nutritional quality of school meals, as will as the results of any audits.

The measure will improve the quality of foods supplied to schools by

building on and further advancing the work USDA has been doing to improve the nutritional quality of the commodities that schools get from USDA to use in their lunch and breakfast programs. Lastly, it will improve the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program by making it easier for children to get re-certified as eligible for the program, requiring greater use of EBT technology (debit cards), and expanding support for breastfeeding.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regards this as a huge victory for our nation's youngsters.

New regulations will change Internet use for consumers

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Providers will be allowed greater leeway in how to manage their networks. An example would be they will be allowed to charge websites more for faster access but will also be forced to disclose how they are handling the traffic on those networks. The Internet you reach on your smart phone will be a comparatively lawless -- but potentially less consumer friendly -- landscape. Wireless providers, subject to stricter bandwidth requirements than their broadband brethren, have been given more control over the data traffic on their networks. While the same rules against blocking websites apply to them, mobile providers will be allowed to block any applications they desire, except ones that provide voice and video service.

The lax regulations on mobile data have drawn fiery criticism from the left. As Minnesota Sen. Al Franken argued this weekend on the Senate floor, if the FCC passes this rule, Verizon will be able to cut off access to the Google Maps app on your phone and force you to use their own mapping program even if it is not as good. While President Barack Obama praised the new regulations, congressional Republicans have argued that they represent an expansion of the federal government's power. Rep. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas have separately introduced legislation to combat the new regulations.

Thanks to the web site www.savetheinternet.com for helping me to understand this topic. Stay tuned for more on this issue that is important to all who use the Internet for any reason.



By Ruth Larabee
New York

Trade Report

Brazil has high ag expectations

Bilateral talks were rescheduled for January 12 and 14 between Japan and the United States for the consideration of a Trans-Pacific free trade pact expansion. Following verification of Tokyo's intent on joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, the U.S. could present stipulations for Japan's participation. In order to join the TPP discussions, a country must obtain the approval of all nine of the countries currently involved through bilateral talks. The nine include Australia, Brunei, Vietnam, Chile, Singapore, Malaysia, Peru, New Zealand and the U.S. With Tokyo's involvement in the TPP negotiations, reports say there is anticipation of increased U.S. exports to Japan.

U.S. and Chinese officials held a two day meeting in Washington discussing ongoing complicated issues. Those attending included China's Vice Premier Wang Qishan, Commerce Minister Chen Deming and 100 Chinese representatives, U.S. Secretary Of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, and others. The U.S. officials charged Beijing of artificially keeping the Yuan low in order to make the country's exports cheaper and more competitive around the world. The next items brought up were the issue of intellectual property theft and concerns over the trade deficit. Minister Deming speculated if the volume of the U.S. trade surplus had been overestimated.

The Chinese officials called for the U.S. to relax its export controls in order for China to increase its imports. Those export controls include a variety of materials that are "dual use," meaning that the goods and or technology could be put to

military use and therefore are restricted by the U.S. At the end of the meeting, Vice Premier Qishan reported that both sides had a "candid exchange of views on China-U.S. economic cooperation."

Commerce Secretary Locke told of significant progress made on a number of issues, and U.S. Kirk stated that China agreed to crackdown on the problems of intellectual property theft, Internet piracy, and on landlords who rent space to counterfeiters. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Vilsack spoke of the "progress" of China being agreeable to open up dialogue over U.S. beef.

(Note: Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has said that by some estimates, the Chinese currency still remains about 40 percent under an "appropriate market value.") The Chinese central bank has had to raise interest rates because of what they call a red hot property market, inflation, and a rise in commodity prices.

China's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao and India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh have both put in place a telephone hotline agreeing to regular talks about vital issues and to advance cooperation. China and India have established a bilateral trade goal of one hundred billion by the year 2015. Both sides agreed to take action to promote larger exports from India to China. China is India's largest trade partner and took in a \$19 billion surplus last year, while India saw a \$24 billion deficit. The new agreements between the two countries to expand economic cooperation in mutual investments, environmental protection, project-contracting, and telecommunications could help trade deficits, frictions and differences. Both sides have agreed to increase cooperation between the China Banking Regulatory Commission and the Reserve Bank of India and also are giving permission for their banks to open representative offices and open branches in each others' countries.

Brazilian Senator Katia Abreu,

speaking at the Climate Conference of the United Nations, stated, "The hand of production is the same one preserving the environment." According to Senator Abreu, a partnership between the Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock and Embrapa, called the Biomes Project, will invest \$23 million over nine years, helping to sustain farmers and making them more efficient throughout Brazil. The government, scientists, and the productive sector are working together in the project. They are looking for farmers to triple beef production and double grain production quickly without cutting down the forests. The industry will have the extension of credit for the next 10 years to "make Brazil the leading agribusiness in the world," Abreu said. The agribusiness accounts for 42.5 percent of exports, 23.4 percent of Gross Domestic Product, and 37 percent of the jobs.

The United States Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agriculture Service last month announced a five year suspension of a key dairy import licensing rule that encourages excess imports when U.S. markets are weak. The five year suspension of Section 6.25(b) will also benefit U.S. dairy farmers and consumers by discouraging ant-competitive behavior by large dairy importers. The Dairy Trade Coalition, a network of grassroots dairy farmers and others, worked hard on this issue. The DTC has fought for farmers and trade issues and won many, such as the Goya Cheese battle, State Trading Enterprises, and many others.

Dallas based Deans Foods, a dairy processor, will pay \$30 million to settle allegations by a group of dairy farmers that it had monopolized the milk industry in the Northeast. This settlement does not include the other major dairy cooperative named in the same suit.

(Sources: CCTVnews, China Biz, Japan times, Economic times, Washington times, Stock and Land, Pete Hardin, Associated Press, Reuters,)

Registration



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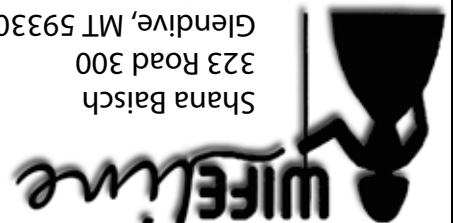
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