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By Pat Torgerson
Montana

Transportation Report

BNSF drops grain terminal, favoring oil fields

Another local grain terminal has bit the dust in the name of progress. Nortana Grain of the Lambert/Sidney area in Montana was informed on August 26 that Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) would no longer provide the 52-unit train rail service to the Sidney elevator. This is a service that local grain producers have depended on for the past 31 years.

How did this happen so fast and with the 2013 bumper crop still in the fields?

The Williston Bakken Basin Oil Pitch is the answer to that question. BNSF can make more money and faster money by renting its rails for transporting crude oil tankers and oil well fracking sand cars.

One part of the grain producer's

dilemmas is which resource should have the use of the rails? Both are willing to pay. One has deep pockets. The other is at the mercy of the elements.

Without rail services, local grain producers must drive 75 miles one way to either the Glendive or Wolf Point shuttle. Perhaps the 60-mile trip to Culbertson would be a better choice as it would save 30 miles and avoid congested oil tanker truck traffic.

Often grain producers can't be away from their operations for the amount of time such trips will take. The alternative will be to hire grain haulers. This will add a huge expense to their operations.

Another part of the grain producer's dilemma in not having access to rail service is that they will face nightmare traffic in eastern Montana communities caused by Bakken oil traffic. Then add small farm grain trucks or large semi-trucks pulling a pup trailer, loaded with grain to the scenario.

It is often said this is the price of progress, but those who make their living off the land say, "If the railroads no longer service communities, give back the land gifted to them by the U.S. government to settle and service the West."

This seems impossible. It would be, for instance, with the early land sold to settle the West, but not with the land kept by the railroad, which includes all of the land's mineral and water rights. Sure, railroads have consolidated, changed their names and have split their holdings into companies of timber, mining, coal, land, oil and others. These companies may not carry the BNSF name but they are subsidiaries of BNSF and have an obligation to give grain growers a reasonably priced service as promised years ago. Renting one rail car from BNSF today as offered, at a \$1.70 per bushel rate, isn't keeping the railroad's promise.

President's Report



By Ruth Larabee
New York

An enormous thank you goes out to the Colorado WIFE members for organizing the 37th Annual National WIFE Convention. This was no ordinary feat as the first hotel selected was flooded due to the terrible storm in Aurora. Cathy Scherler and Jenifer Felzien reserved the Crowne Plaza Denver International Airport Convention Center in Colorado where the staff support was 100 percent plus. In putting the plans together for the convention, the ladies made several trips of 200 miles one way. These ladies did an amazing job in a short amount of time!

Conferees and negotiators are talking about the Farm Bill even though the House and Senate have only been back in session for a short time. The question becomes--will they finally come to an agreement on the cuts to the nutrition program, the commodity title proposal that shuns linking payments to current year planted acres, restructuring farm subsidies or Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)--all of which seem to be taking a back seat in the talks?

If an agreement is not made there could be another extension but Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has previously said the Senate will not pass one. It is reported that because there wouldn't be any cuts to the food stamp (nutrition) program under an extension, some Republi-

Colorado WIFE makes national convention a success

cans would be opposed to an extension. A Farm Bill needs to get passed.

Information concerning COOL from Jess Peterson of the United States Cattleman's Association shows that some lawmakers would like to find a middle ground between a repeal of the law and the status quo. Those representing the meat packing companies and feedlot operators in opposition to COOL persist in their attempts for a complete repeal. Advocates for COOL say that to make legislative changes before the compliance procedures is untimely.

National Farmers Union chief lobbyist Chandler Goule stated, "it would set a bad precedent for the U.S. Congress to make further concessions before the World Trade Organization (WTO) has said that changes are needed."

Previously, Canada and Mexico filed a lawsuit against the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack as representative of the USDA, challenging the COOL rule.

The USDA COOL rule aspired to get the U.S. in compliance with the WTO, which requires meat labels to include information comprised of where the animal was born, raised and slaughtered; all of this information is already collected by meat packers under the law. This was an effort to speak to the WTO's complaint that the COOL measure imposed record keeping requirements that were not equal with the information it provided to the consumer and it was not applied "even handedly" (Inside U.S. Trade).

WIFE policy supports COOL.

WIFE 2013 Commodity & Topic Chairs

Beef

Sue Krentz

Cereal Grains

Jean Wach

Dairy

Kay Zeosky

Sheep & Goats

Gwen Cassel

Specialty Crops

Jacquelyn Sistrunk

Sugar

Klodette Stroh

Energy

Barbara Broberg

Natural Resources/Private Property/Water/Endangered Species

Alice Parker

Rural Life/Farm Finance Communication/Tax/Health

Donna Bolz

Trade

Pam Pothoff

Feed Grains

Janell Roe

Homeland Security

Marlene Kouba

Trade Report



By Pam Potthoff
Nebraska

Trade treaties would put U.S. economy at risk

Two major trade treaties are currently being negotiated--the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. The Trade Promotion Authority affects both. Here are some thoughts on both:

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is actually a partnership of the countries involved with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), plus eight others. It has been called "NAFTA on Steroids."

The outcome of these talks is relevant to the U.S. recovery though not always in a positive manner. The United States and 11 other countries (Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Australia and New Zealand) account for approximately 40 percent of the global economy. China is not included in the TPP at this time but there are indications they might join later, which would open up a whole can of worms if this treaty were not done carefully.

President Obama wants this treaty to lower tariffs and investment restrictions, improve labor rights, encourage environmental protection and reduce government favoritism of state-owned businesses. Notice that he did not include "decrease our trade deficit."

The U.S. already has trade agreements with most of the TPP countries. Even trade-oriented countries like the U.S., Japan and Canada have sectors that will fight hard to prevent the removal of protections.

- Here's what's wrong with the TPP:
- Disruption of Farm to Institution Initiatives--The TPP "Procurement Chapter" could gut our "Buy American" laws and our hard fought farm-to-school and farm-to-institution programs because foreign imports have to be treated equally to domestic production.
 - Food Safety--Because "trade facilitation" is the number one concern, the safety of food imports is severely reduced in favor of more food coming across the border with little or no inspection. Food safety "harmonization" would weaken strong U.S. food safety standards to the lowest common denominator of the trading parties.
 - Rules of origin--The TPP could blur Country of Origin labeling provisions that have been valiantly fought for by farm and food advocates.

A new study from the Center for Economic and Policy Research finds that the Trans-Pacific Partnership will depress wages and thus consumer purchasing power. Recent estimates of the U.S. economic gains that would result from the proposed TPP are very small — only 0.13 percent of GDP by 2025.

Taking into account the un-equalizing effect of trade on wages, this paper finds the median wage earner will probably lose as a result of any such agreement. In fact, most workers are likely to lose. Two exceptions may be some near the bottom quarter whose earnings are determined by the minimum wage and those with the highest wages who are more protected from international competition.

Rather, many top incomes will rise as a result of TPP expansion of the terms and enforcement of copyrights and pat-

ents. The long-term losses going forward over the same period (to 2025), have been some 25 times greater than the potential gains of the TPP, and more than five times as large as the possible gains resulting from a much broader trade agenda, all from the failure to restore full employment to the United States.

The Administration would like to have this deal finished by the end of the year. That will be difficult without Trade Promotion Authority (see item below).

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) held the second round of partnership negotiations beginning October 8 in Brussels, Belgium. They hope to conclude negotiations by the second half of 2014.

Using independent estimates of changes in two-way trade between the U.S. and the European Union (EU) under the agreement reveals that TTIP is projected to result in a growing U.S. trade deficit with the EU and the loss of at least 71,000 additional U.S. jobs.

A EU Centre study estimated the effects of the TTIP on exports of both the United States and the EU. In their "ambitious" scenario (most frequently cited by U.S. and EU officials), U.S. exports to the European Union increase by \$218 billion (at current exchange rates) in 2027, but EU exports to the United State increase by \$256 billion. As a result, the U.S. trade deficit with the EU would increase by \$38 billion.

In the meantime, the Administration and supporters in Congress continue to beat the drum for "increased US exports" instead of using "net imports". This is a technique that has been used for most of the recent trade agreements.

Another red flag for the TTIP is that EU is home to a large number of low wage countries such as Bulgaria,

Trade: Continued on Page 6

Energy Report

Building tools showcase innovation, sustainability

Two new interesting tools in building construction are LEED and BREEAM. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design while BREEAM is short for Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method.

On the surface they look like a class or plaque on the wall. They are, however more of an idea or concept--similar to a report card on how your building is saving energy or using the space it is built on. These tools can also show comparisons with other structures, which creates a framework of what is possible and probable in a similar factory, office or home.

There are other categories including one for having an idea that other craftsmen could work with and utilize all over the world and a new "best practice" category.

LEED, Green Globes (a less industrialized approach to BREEAM), and other programs are now familiar talking points in home construction, as well as commercial building projects. To get a better idea of what these concepts are about, think grass roofs, walls to keep the temperature inside pleasant and drainage to divert water onto a deserving tree. If you think of a 1910-era homestead shack, transfer that same thought of using your environment to live where you are planted. It is innovation. Living now but looking to improve and adapt. These ratings deal with measuring the features and creating a method to communicate what a building can do.

The rating programs encourage thinking by showing how to live within the world. The programs touch on the entire life of the building and the comfort and health of the people working or living inside.

There is always an extension for-

ward, though. People were always talked about living "inside".

Instead, consider patio living where nearly a full-sized kitchen has oozed out the door of the house or think about enclosing smokers into outdoor cubicles where fresh air flows away from non-smokers. Sometimes it seems to be too much--Grilling inside? Going outside to cook or shower? Having a sofa on the porch? The thought remains that each structure can give people the best of all experiences.

Healthy house and office plants are being extended to grow something "real" and usable. A few years ago some WIFE members talked about being in a restaurant that had an apiary on the roof where honey was a feature in the restaurant.

There is room in the LEED/BREAM/Green Globes concept to take on the new 'next thing'. Think about the expense of retrofitting all hotel rooms to have telephone lines for personal computers--now the phone jack is generally unneeded because of smartphones. A LEED/BREAM/Green Globes building may have a kind of crawl space for the future. Who knows what will be there.

The LEED/BREAM/Green Globes roof may have an herb garden for its restaurant, special material to augment energy production, or maybe superior insulating value within the windows. The walkways may be situated to catch the sun's rays in the winter. Or in warmer climates the entry might be where shade would make you feel good about the shelter the building invites. Re-purposing and re-using existing material can be a part of these designs. Reworking a building that has history and has a need to be updated can be quite an exciting project.

When these ratings are involved, there is a way to document both the old



and the new and it helps to fit the building into today's building codes. Press release or open houses can show investment teams a of the measurable data.

The web sites noted at the end of this article are good starting places to get up to speed on this type of building "scoring." They have a lot of interesting and fun stuff to read-- see how a skyscraper can be "green" or a renovated old brick building that no one could have afforded to heat as it was before but afterward is considered better than ever.

Some construction companies have ridden out the latest recession by showing prospective clients different ways to make buildings more energy efficient with better air inside and cleaner, happier occupants. These renovations can help pay for the new fixes by saving energy into the future.

For more information on LEED go to <http://www.usgbc.org/LEED> and to learn more about BREEAM look up <http://breem.org/>.

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Dairy Report

Farm Bill still on producer minds

The Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management (FARRM) Bill is more confusing than ever. Some are calling it the FAARM Bill when that is not the acronym.

Rep. Collin C. Peterson (D-MN) is very influential and serves as ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee. His proposal includes a supply management feature that doesn't sit well with all segments of the milk industry. Congressmen Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and David Scott (D-GA) were disappointed that their amendment failed in the Ag Committee. It would strike down the supply control portion of the bill.

Rep. Goodlatte doesn't think the government should be telling producers what the size of their herd should be and he thinks it smacks of Communism.

Years ago the dairy industry was promised if it could just cut out excess production, the milk prices would skyrocket. Previously, that might have worked. Now that U.S. borders are open, supply management will only raise the milk prices of competitors in other countries, who will take over the markets that have been developed and can no longer service or grow larger.

From the information provided, it looks as if the available insur-



By Kay Zeosky
New York

ance to prevent losses from a decreased milk price will be very expensive. Some of the dairy people in Washington, D.C. said this would be the last dairy bill they will write. One has to wonder what will happen after this bill has run its course.

To see a beautiful tribute to dairy farmers from McDonald's go to dairy-herdnetwork-mail.com.

A Spotlight on National Convention

by Pam Pothoff

WIFE held its national convention in Denver, CO, November 21-23. Women from Washington to New York and from New Mexico to North Dakota elected officers, established policy and heard informative speakers.

Ruth Larabee, New York, was elected to lead the group in 2014. Mrs. Larabee said, "I am honored to be the National President of WIFE. These women are dedicated to improving profitability in production agriculture and they are making a difference." Linda Newman of Montana will fill the number two seat.

WIFE is pushing for immediate passage of the Farm Bill so producers will not be in limbo as they make end-of-year decisions. Passage is a desire expressed by every speaker during the convention.

Todd Van Hoose, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs of CoBank, opened the convention as the keynote speaker. He holds recent redistricting responsible for negatively influencing Congress by skewing the political atmosphere in favor of one party or the other. He said Congress is dysfunctional and it is difficult to pass any legislation, especially the Farm Bill.

In his opening statement, Dr. George Beck, Professor of Weed Science at Colorado State University, agreed with Van Hoose, "The government is not broken—it's just hard to make it work." He reminded WIFE that humans caused the evolution of weeds. Weeds just took advantage of what humans did to the land. In other words, one person's use of his property influences the use of that property by the next person. Beck placed the cost of invasive species to America at \$120 billion annually and to the global world at \$1.4 trillion, which is 5 percent of the global economy.

Pam Shaddock, who represented Colorado Senator Mark Udall, urged WIFE to pressure Congress with one message, "Compromise, Compromise, Compromise." She shared the Colorado programs important to agriculture that are working: cable access in rural communities, ag innovators programs, venture capital for ag businesses and rural development.

Harriet M. Hageman, Attorney at Law from Cheyenne, Wyoming, discussed the practice of Congress passing bills and then allowing national agencies (such as EPA, USDA, BLM and DEQ) to write the regulations. She called this "regulation without representation." This allows Congress to blame the agencies for regulations that upset their constituents. In 2012, Congress passed only 127 bills but 3708 regulations were adopted by federal agencies. She called the regulatory agencies "The real governing class." She said the cost for the federal government to administer and police the regulatory enterprise is over \$61 billion per year. The number of federal employees is over 300,000. The states are losing their regulatory powers to the federal government.

Speaker Dr. John Stulp, Special Advisor to the Colorado Governor for Water, agreed with Hagemann on the long arm of regulations. New water projects in Colorado have problems getting through the regulatory process. It can take up to ten years to get a permit for a new water project. That will make it easier to take water away from agriculture than to initiate new projects. Stulp urged individual water conservation as it was one of the first steps in meeting the water needs of the future.



By Donna Bolz
Nebraska

Rural Life Report

Bumpy ride for health care act

The Affordable Health Care Act has been rolled out. The roll out was bumpy at best. A man in the insurance industry thinks the act is good for rural Nebraska because many rural people have insurance that didn't before. His major concern was how America will pay for it.

A recent article in the New York Times had some interesting information in it. It states that the health law fails to lower prices for all rural areas.

What it all boils down to is competition between the online exchanges. Of the roughly 2,500 counties served by the federal exchanges, more than half have plans offered by just one or two insurance carriers. In about 530 counties, only a single insurer is participating.

The hope that the plan would increase competition has unfolded unevenly in the early going. The Obama administration has

said that 95 percent of Americans live in areas where there are at least two insurers in the exchanges. The results of this seem to be mixed. In Wyoming, two insurers are offering plans at prices that are higher than in neighboring Montana, where there is a third carrier to keep prices lower.

The article says it is unclear how the online market places might evolve over time. Many large insurers are closely watching what happens in the first year to decide whether to more aggressively pursue new markets.

In the meantime, problems with the healthcare.gov web site are making it harder for the large companies to know whether the exchanges' slow start is the result of technical difficulties or more serious underlying problems.

Counties with one carrier are mostly concentrated in the south. The Obama administration, while not disputing the findings, responded to the analysis in a statement that the marketplaces "allow insurers to compete for customers based on price and quality."

It added that the tax-credit subsidies that will lower monthly payment for many consumers had also "brought more com-

panies to the market, resulting in increased options for consumers and lower-than-expected premiums."

One factor that makes it hard to create favorable exchanges for rural counties is how the development of relationships between doctors and hospitals can be costly where cities and towns are widely scattered and the pool of potential customers is small.

Tom Hirsig, Wyoming Insurance Commissioner, believes that insurers simply did not find his state with its population of fewer than 600,000 attractive. Bert Kelly, a spokesman for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Georgia, gives us another view. He says the higher premiums reflect the areas of higher medical costs and not a lack of competition.

It is also difficult to attract new insurers to areas where the general population has health problems. Only one carrier, Highmark Blue Cross, is offering coverage in West Virginia, which has high rates of obesity and chronic diseases like diabetes. Observers cautioned against drawing too many conclusions from the current landscape, noting that several major insurers were waiting to see what happens next. Clearly, this is a complicated issue.

Trade: Continued from Page 3

Croatia, The Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The TTIP would make many of these countries extremely attractive candidates for U.S. outsourcing.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Poorly negotiated trade treaties have cost the U.S. millions of jobs. The U.S. trade deficit has grown from around \$70 billion in 1993 (the year before NAFTA) to nearly \$540 billion last year. The bigger the trade deficit, the more jobs that could have been created in the U.S. but weren't.

Just as importantly, though, trade agreements affect this country's domestic laws. When the United States becomes a part of these agreements, it gives up the ability to protect its vital industries, raise tariffs on trading partners who harm, overcharge or supplement its industries and it is almost impossible to exit the agreement once realized it is bad for the economy and job creation.

Trade rules affect rights in the workplace, the safety of food and the purity of

water. They can determine how much content from an exporting country must actually come from that country to qualify for tariff benefits. Unfortunately, some trade treaties have made it easier and more beneficial for U.S. companies to move production out of the country to places where they can avoid Social Security taxes, health care and pension costs and where labor is cheap and environmental restrictions are virtually nonexistent.

Trade agreements look like a corporate Bill of Rights, full of protections for investors and global corporations, enforced by special courts or tribunals. These new agreements offer only lip service and vague promises to individuals and communities. NAFTA-style agreements grant formidable unchecked rights to corporations. Trade tribunals translate those unchecked investor rights and corporate values into action.

Trade tribunals seek maximum possible trade and maximum opportunities for investors. They are usually blind to public good or

public interest. When a trade tribunal overrules a domestic policy it can impose enormous economic penalties, putting an unbearable price tag on national or local policies designed to serve public interest.

Trade Promotion Authority (also called Fast Track) would transfer Congress' constitutional power over foreign commerce to President Obama. Under Fast Track, the executive branch can sign trade agreements before Congress has an opportunity to vote on them. Fast Track makes it hard to take out harmful provisions that damage food safety and family-based agriculture. As of November 4, two anti-Fast Track letters were circulating in Congress. The Democratic letter had over 100 signatures and the GOP letter had 25.

WIFE policy opposes Trade Promotion Authority on page 33, number 12: WIFE urges Congress to regain authority to ratify each item in trade treaties and place the interests of family farmers and ranchers as a priority in trade agreements."

Natural Resources Report



By Alice Parker
Washington

Forum meets to change, repair Endangered Species Act

On October 10 the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Congressional Working Group held a forum entitled "Reviewing 40 years of the Endangered Species Act and Seeking Improvement for People and Species." Representatives Doc Hastings (R-WA) and Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) led the forum.

Seventeen panelists from diverse groups and interests discussed ways in which the ESA could be strengthened and improved to better serve the needs of both species and people. Participants specifically highlighted the need to empower states, local government and private landowners to conserve species and avoid federal listing, and the need for balance within the law. It is important there be transparent data and science and the need to prevent the ESA from being used as a tool for lawsuits and closed-door settlements with litigious groups.

Representative Lummis stated "the forum was helpful in advancing the dialogue about how we can move beyond a 20th Century legal framework to a 21st Century conservation ethic. The participants represented everything from agriculture, to union labor, to business, to conservation groups and everything in between and all had something meaningful to offer."

There was widespread acknowledgement of the need to review the ESA, which has not been reauthorized by Congress in 25 years. Even Christy Plumer, director of the Federal Land

Programs for the Nature Conservancy, noted the law "could benefit from a review by Congress for the purpose of improving its effectiveness."

State Senator Tom Casperson from Michigan stated the ESA is "killing the timber industry" and his state needs help, needs relief, and needs it fast. Mike Wood, business agent for the Union Sawmill Workers of Plumas County, California, discussed the need for better balance in the law between species and people. "The lack of emphasis on the 'human element' causes a cascade of rules detrimental to California, recreational opportunities, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide emissions from fires, and imports of wood products from areas with less environmental constraints.

Dan Keppen, representing the Family Farm Alliance, stated "our farmers' national efforts to keep food affordable, while meeting increased global demands may all be threatened if we don't change how the ESA is implemented and soon."

Participants stressed the need to better engage state and local governments in conservation efforts to eliminate the need of a species to be listed by the federal government. The Director of City Environmental Issa Hamud of Logan, Utah, recommended that federal agencies "consult with state, local governments and property owners before new species are listed as threatened or endangered."

Participants discussed how litigation is standing in the way of recovery efforts and how decisions should be based on sound science and not court deadlines. Matthew Hite with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce noted that

"recent sue and settle arrangements have fueled fear that the rulemaking process itself is being subverted to serve the end of a few favored interest groups."

The public is encouraged to submit written comments, ideas and recommendation to the Endangered Species Act Working Group at <http://esaworkinggroup.hastings.house.gov/esa/contact.htm> and visit <http://esaworkinggroup.hastings.house.gov> to watch the archived video webcast from the listening forum.

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Sugar Report



By Klodette Stroh
Wyoming

U.S. agriculture sector needs Congress support

The International Monetary Fund appealed to Washington for more stable long-term management of the nation's finances. In the meantime on October 11, the House passed a bill to go to conference with the Senate on the farm bill.

Hopefully U.S. lawmakers make sure American people have a sensible Farm Bill to secure this nation's food supply. The sugar program will be on the table this year, mainly because of excess sugar imports under the North American Free Trade Agreement's (NAFTA) Mexico sugar

provision. Excess sugar coming into the U.S. breaks the 2008 Farm Bill provision of the sugar program. This means lower sugar prices for American farmers.

American sugar beet and sugar cane doesn't receive a subsidy from U.S. government. The sugar program was constructed by Congress to ensure an adequate supply of home-grown sugar and local jobs in rural areas. I am very proud of my America and I wish U.S. Congress would value our agriculture sector and sugar industry as Brazil's government does.

America is already more dependent on foreign suppliers than most would think. Trade deals have forced the United States to be the second biggest sugar importer in the world—imports account for approximately one-quarter of the market—and low prices in past years have forced 33 U.S. sugar facilities to close between 1996 and 2008.

Agriculture has been the steppingstone for this great country's fortune. America can easily overcome the huge budget deficit. We can easily payoff this nation's debt by following the wisdom of America's Founding Fathers. Presidents like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt knew the blessing of having good farmers in this new land.

The 2013 Congress needs to support the U.S. agriculture sector. History is a wise teacher and if we look back and learn from past mistakes we will prosper from this great teacher.

2013 has been a bad weather year for many farmers. Unusual snow storms and daily showers have pushed sugar beet, bean and corn harvest back in Montana and Wyoming. Everyone is praying for some dry weather to continue harvesting this year's crops.

An Old Persian saying is "it is very difficult to offer peace to a neighbor with an empty stomach." Neighbors will not be neighborly when they are hungry. There is a lot of merit in old proverbs.

Have you ever wondered how expensive Halloween candy or wheat bread would be if the U.S. depended on importing wheat, rice, cotton, corn or sugar from foreign countries to stock the shelves of our grocery stores? Assuredly, the price of foreign crude oil would be a bargain compared to what foreign commodity imports would be. It seems like U.S. agriculture is a cash cow that lawmakers are trying to take to slaughter.

The U.S. government was shut down for two weeks and just recently government employees went back to work. Congress approved the deal with only hours to go before the government reached its \$16.7 trillion debt limit. This deal only permits the Treasury to borrow through February 7 and funds government through January 15.

*Congratulations
to Klodette Stroh,
National WIFE
Sugar Chairman who
has been appointed
agriculture
advisor to Senator
Michael B. Enzi of
Wyoming!*

Homeland Security Report



By Marlene Kouba
North Dakota

Security against potential threats may become new focus

The Office of the Inspector General and the Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement are arms of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and have used different designations to categorize the use of excessive force and investigations against agents.

The Homeland Security Advisory Council, part of the executive office of the President, was formed by an executive order by President Bush in 2002.

President Obama plans to nominate Jeh (pronounced Jay) C. Johnson to fill the vacancy left by Janet Napolitano, who resigned in July to lead the University of California system.

Johnson was the Pentagon's top lawyer, a legal advisor to Obama during his first campaign and has little experience in border security and immigration. His job will be to help design a counter-terrorism policy as secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. The move may be a shift from immigration and border issues to focus more on security against possible attacks.

A federal judge in Washington has ruled that the U.S. government's "internet kill switch," a plan to deactivate wireless communications networks in a crisis, is not protected by secrecy laws and must be disclosed to the public. The ruling was on the Department of Homeland Security's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP 303). The ruling was made due to the order to the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC), which brought the Freedom of Information Act case within 30 days. EPIC explains that

the "kill switch" protocol was adopted by the National Communications System but never released to the public. In a 2006-2007 report, the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC) indicated that SOP 303 would be implemented under the coordination of the National Coordinating Center (NCC) of the NSTAC, while the decision to shut down service would be made by state Homeland Security Advisers or individuals at DHS.

EPIC documented when the procedure was used after the July 3, 2011 shooting by a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) officer in San Francisco of a homeless man, Charles Hill. At that time a protest was cut short after BART officials cut off all cellular service inside four transit stations for a period of three hours. This act prevented any individuals on the station platform from sending or receiving phone calls, messages or other data. That action set off a renewed interest in the government's power to shut down access to the internet and other communications services.

The Federal Communications Commission plans to implement policies governing the shutdown of communications traffic for the purpose of ensuring public safety. On July 6, 2012, the White House signed an Executive Order to ensure the continuity of government communications during a national crisis. As part of the Executive Order, DHS was granted the authority to seize private facilities when necessary, effectively shutting down or limiting civilian communications.

Some say arming the president with an internet "kill switch" easily could be misused to silence free speech under the pretext of a national emergency. There already is an organization set up to manage such emergencies, and it includes

personnel from the National Security Agency, Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and policymakers (politicians). There is also an agency called CYBERCOM that is set up within the Department of Defense.

A report from an Arizona television station says illegals are routinely coming across a 73,000 acre classified military base, which is home to the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and the U.S. Army Network Enterprise Technology Command. The site is located in the Huachuca Mountains, only a few miles from the border.

The military's perspective is that it's not the Department of Defense's (DOD) responsibility to chase down invaders. They are unconcerned as they say apprehending undocumented immigrants is a DHS mission and not a DOD one. There were 96 illegal immigrants captured in 2011 but 331 have already been caught this year.

A few years ago, illegal immigrants easily gained access to Fort Dix in New Jersey to plan a deadly attack. Later, a dozen illegals were arrested for working inside a Texas military installation-Ft. Bliss and Biggs Army Airfield. Two years ago, illegals were caught from Cuba, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. That year, U.S. Border Patrol agents apprehended 663 "Aliens from Special Interest Countries" which are deemed "special interest" because of their suspected ties to terrorism.



Beef Report



By Sue Krentz
Arizona

'Agenda 21' raises questions

for consumers both in the United States and around the world.

Another issue to consider is from Andy Hutchison, a friend from Oklahoma. Her concern is over the action plan known as "Agenda 21," which was put forth by the United Nations, and it has turned her into an agricultural activist just like most of us.

Hutchison started tracking stories ten years ago at ag meetings such as the Animal Ag Alliance--personal stories of fellow ranchers and farmers who were directly affected by this idea.

The stories range from the use of drones to the abuse of the Environmental Protection Agency to threats of the Endangered Species Act, all bent on destroying their livelihood,

Hutchison has done a good job of collecting information and will come and talk to any group who wants to listen. She works hard to stop Agenda 21, pointing out that it is described by Wikipedia as "a non-binding voluntarily implemented action plan of the United Nations with regard to sustainable development."

Agenda 21 works at local, national and global levels and is lead by multilateral organizations and individual governments.

One main concern is that Agenda 21 will determine what is and is not "sustainable", a term that has no sensible way to measure the results.

Hutchinson educates the public and groups on how to recognize Agenda 21 and its infiltration into many of the agencies we work with as producers and landowners. Hutchison is quoted as saying she "has had enough of trying to deal with animal rights activists and environmentalists." The Oklahoma rancher said these groups could never be satisfied. Enough is never enough and they will just keep asking for more

until private property rights are things of the past, Hutchison says.

For more information, contact Andy Hutchison at bossybovine@yahoo.com or follow her on Facebook.

The fall works are beginning and many ranchers are getting ready to ship.

First thoughts go to our brothers and sisters in South Dakota and their bouts, who lost more than anyone can imagine. The journey is long and hard but everyone's prayers and thoughts are with all who suffered personal losses in the recent storms

There are certainly a lot of issues to deal with this coming year. One of the most important issues is the Farm Bill. This bill has been in limbo for many years and causes many of our programs to be in limbo, based on old budget protections. This has already been very destructive to the Natural Resource Districts or Soil and Water Districts, as it may be known in some areas.

Not passing the Farm Bill is blocking the help that many farmers and ranchers need to keep their innovative projects going. This will hurt a lot of producers who have had disasters such as flooding, drought and fire and are trying to get back on their feet. This is a perfect example of how everything is connected in this world and how every action has a reaction.

The mindset of the Administration is very concerning, as is their intent to do "fundamental" change to the United States.

Agriculture must find a way to work together for a common goal of being the best producers of safe food

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By Jean Wach
Nebraska

Cereal Grains Report

Analysts optimistic of 2014 wheat markets

In Russia, the nation's Grain Union estimated winter wheat plantings could be down 3 million hectares or more. In the Ukraine, the national service predicted planting could be down by as much as 30 percent.

5. Will 2014 bring a bull or a bear? Analysts agree that it could still go either way, but they're optimistic it will be bullish.

An October 21 article from agweb.com examined "why demand for U.S. wheat looks promising." According to the article the wheat market has a lot of fundamental basis underneath it and has a good story that is building. World stocks are very tight. Demand for wheat around the globe is about as aggressive as the production is around the world.

A November 4 article on the same website stated that wheat analysts are the most bearish they've been all year as farmers reap a record crop, which is contributing to the longest decline in global food prices since 2009. Prices for most agricultural commodities are plunging after growers sowed more acres and reported record yields while the U.S., the world's biggest exporter, recovered from the worst drought since the 1930's.

If these two conflicting articles aren't confusing enough, another article says the Federal Reserve is influencing the markets. Funds trade federal policy more than anything, noting that the macro economy works against commodities.

First off, funds are taking into consideration the Federal Reserve's tapering of the monetary stimulus program. They are going to quit subsidizing inflation, which is bearish for commodities because the Fed is essentially de-leveraging America. Those holding on to a lot of commodities and big money men had better sell what has already inflated.

Secondly, speculators and funds

look at what Congress is up against. They have to get a budget, which they haven't had in years.

The third factor is the debt, which is an even bigger crisis. A rally in the commodity market is not dependent on crop conditions, but instead is reliant on the macro economy. Money will go where it's safe: blue chips and gold. Isn't it great there is something else besides the weather and supplies around the world that controls your cereal grains price?

The hardest decision a cereal grains farmer has to make is when to market the grain. This year is especially hard as there has been a lot of advice that's different each week.

This year's harvest is in the books. Wheat farmers survived a round of volatile market prices and unique production challenges. Here are five questions to ponder on for the 2014 season:

1. What are wheat breeders working on? The short answer is pretty much everything. From durable resistance to multiple diseases to intensive wheat stem sawfly studies, it's all being researched.

2. Does that research include biotech wheat? Biotech wheat is a hot topic in the industry but specific plans for a commercial launch remain elusive. All three winners of the 2013 World Food Prize are engaged in biotechnology research. These recipients say that pressure to produce more and more food for a growing global population will continue to drive scientific advancements in biotechnology.

3. Is the "super cycle" over? Commodity prices rose an average of 9.5 percent each year from 2002 to 2012 but the Worldwatch Institute is reporting that the so-called "super cycle" might be coming to an end. Now the group is investigating if the commodities market has permanently cooled, is dramatically reversing or is resuming its previous pace.

4. What are some of the key countries to monitor? Delayed fall planting in the former Soviet Union has every analyst watching that part of the world.

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WIFE Updates

QUILTERS WANTED

Are you proud of your state? Are you proud of being in productive agriculture? Here is your chance to express this pride by making a quilt block!

National WIFE needs talented ladies who are willing to applique a 12-inch square block depicting an agricultural scene or farm animals. For finer details embroidery stitching can be used.

The assembled blocks will be made into a quilt to be raffled off. The public will have the opportunity to donate \$5.00, which will purchase a single ticket or \$25.00 to purchase 6 tickets. The donation will also make participants eligible for a \$100.00 certificate toward dining at a local restaurant and a \$50.00 certificate for the purchase of meat. The drawing for these items will take place at the National WIFE convention next fall.

Finished blocks are to be sent to Pat Torgerson at 1425 Runaway Bay Drive, Chandlerm, AZ 85249 or Kerry Froese at 1001 Co. Rd., Las Animas, CO 81054 by March 15.



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