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33rd National Convention

Agriculture Builds America's Stability

by Pam Potthoff

Topics at the 2009 WIFE National Convention on November 11-14 in Syracuse, New York, were as diversified as the agricultural backgrounds of the enthusiastic, knowledgeable women attending. These women were representational of the over one million female farm operators counted in the 2007 Census of Agriculture. The importance of women in agriculture was emphasized by Angie Considine of the USDA's National Ag Statistics Service as she addressed the convention. Fourteen percent of the nation's 2.2 million farms have women as the principal operator, adding importance to the feminine voice of agriculture speaking out and being heard—a major goal of Women Involved in Farm Economics.

The 33rd WIFE Convention was dedicated to Peggy Shultz, a charter New York WIFE member, who passed away this year. Peggy had eagerly anticipated seeing all of her old friends in WIFE this fall. Peggy was greatly missed.

The feminine perspective was evident as New York WIFE member Sherry Beyer spoke with pride about her family's process of making maple syrup. It was evident as Montana WIFE member Mary Ann Murray lamented the lack of availability of large farm equipment tires. It was evident as National President Tammy Basel showed pictures of her grandchild and as other WIFE grandmas expressed their burning desires to preserve their land for future generations by stopping perpetual land use arrangements and preventing infringements on personal property rights. It was there as Chris Fesko, an international speaker for ag, described the importance of keeping city kids connected to Rural America. It appeared again as members tapped their toes to the nine-piece Old Tyme Fiddler's Association on Friday night. They also participated in a lively spontaneous auction of a pig tie



that was graciously donated by the lead fiddler, Keith Hunt.

The feminine perspective was also seen in the wide variety of delicious foods and desserts served during the convention! It was recommended that next year's registration fees include membership to Jenny Craig!

The ladies of WIFE heroically completed over 130 resolutions, debated broad changes in the structure of WIFE through the Heart to Heart discussion, added interesting, challenging questions for the various speakers and enjoyed a spirited challenge to see which state could sell the most raffle tickets during the last few hours. Montana WIFE held Colorado WIFE off long enough to win

the \$150 rebate on assessments. The winner of the rifle or \$500 was Eugene Kinzel of Dickinson, North Dakota. The raffle was a big success. (*Reports on the speakers can be found elsewhere in this WIFEline.*)

During the Heart to Heart discussion it was evident many states had discussed the various aspects before attending convention. The advantages of changing WIFE's structure were weighed against the disadvantages. Commodity and Topic (C/T) Chairmen were given high points for their excellent articles, attention to details and vigilance toward legislation affecting their areas. Although many combinations were suggested during the original debate in June in Denver, few changes were actually made in the number of C/T Chairmen. One big change was moving Legislative Chairman from an appointed to an elected position and including her in the rules and funding of a C/T Chairman.

A proposed by-law change to eliminate the Second Vice

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TAMMY'S TOPICS

By Tammy Basel, SD
National President



Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE) had a successful annual convention in Syracuse, New York. Thank you to everyone who helped make it a success--we could not have done it without you. Special thanks goes to our host state of New York. Your dedication to WIFE is much appreciated.

One huge accomplishment was our work on policy. We considered nearly 150 revisions and additions--WOW.

The fundraiser was an amazing success so thanks to everyone who sold or purchased tickets. Plans are in the works for another raffle next fall.

Recently the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee met. This is the grains side of the Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyard Administration (GIPSA) and I am a member of this committee. It is a very unique group of people who are on the current committee. When the administrator looks to the committee for suggestions, he gets input from a diverse group. The current committee has representation from many areas including an exporter, a mill operator, a college professor, many aspects of the seed companies, other related individuals, farmer/ranchers and WIFE.

On November 25, GIPSA submitted the Advance Notice Proposed Rule (ANPR) on the Federal Register. They are asking if there any changes that need to be made with the wheat standards. To find the current standards go to www.gipsa.usda.gov and click on the tab "See the official US Grain Standards". If you raise wheat it will be important to take the time to look over the current standard and suggest any needed changes, or maybe it would be best to have no changes made.

Thanksgiving has passed and hopefully everyone took time to reflect how very blessed we are. Families are important. They are there for us in good times and bad. It is the people we laugh, work, and play with, or enjoy the simple pleasures of everyday living. If your table was overfilled with food and some are gently complaining about the abundance of leftovers, consider how very, very lucky we really are because of our abundance. American farmers and ranchers are great stewards of the land, the wildlife they feed and provide shelter for, and providing safe and nutritious meals for families all over the world. My family will be in the ranch business one more year and how sad it is for the dairy families who no longer have any dairy cows. How grateful we are for the people who milked the cows.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



WIFeline

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MOLDY CORN

By Mary Ellen Cammack, SD
National Beef Chairman

Moldy corn is not uncommon, but the identification of the mold and any associated mycotoxins is essential to formulating diets that are safe for all classes of beef cattle.

It is the mycotoxins produced by the certain molds (fungi) that produces the risks. Some of the common molds associated with mature corn include Fusarium or Gibberella, Penicillium, and Dipolodia. Other fungi that are only occasionally a problem are Cladosporium and Aspergillus.

Aspergillus is generally a light green or dark yellow, powdery mold and is of the greatest concern to corn and livestock producers. Aspergillus is most commonly associated with drought, extreme heat, and insect injury. Aspergillus produces aflatoxin, a potent animal toxin that can be very problematic for beef cattle.

More common, and somewhat lower risk, is the Fusarium/Gibberella complex. These molds range from white to pink or red in color and are associated with wet conditions and moderate temperatures and are found in stalks and ears, especially during wet periods and following insect injury. The fungi can produce several mycotoxins, including fumonisin, deoxynivalenol (DON, or vomitoxin), and zearalenone.

The other molds mentioned are much lower risk for toxin development. Diplodia does not produce mycotoxins and is not a health risk to livestock, but it can be confused with some of the Fusarium molds.

Whether the feed being harvested is dry or high moisture grain, silage, earlage or forage, it is a good idea to be aware of the mold content, if any. Samples can represent a field or storage unit and can be mixed to create a single representative sample to be submitted for mycotoxin analysis. Approximately five to ten pounds of grain is required for accurate laboratory testing and the samples can be mailed in either cloth or paper sacks, to prevent any further mold growth.

Significant mold accumulation in feed may reduce the digestibility of the diet by as much as five percent for ruminants. Therefore, it is advised to adjust the energy content of the moldy grains down by five percent to account for reduced digestibility. Palatability is another concern for beef producers, even if molds do not produce mycotoxins as molds may reduce the animals feed intake. Little can be done once mycotoxins are present, although there are feed additives that bind aflatoxin; however, the additives do not bind other mycotoxins. Mold inhibitors added to harvested feed may prevent additional mold growth, but will not eliminate the existing mycotoxins.

Grain screenings from mold-affected grains are likely to have very high mycotoxins, as the mold is separated from the grain during handling. Grain screenings should be thoroughly blended and analyzed for mycotoxin concentrations before feeding to beef cattle. Grazing corn stalks may also be a greater risk to cattle, as concentrations of deoxynivalenol and fumonisin may be five to ten times greater in the cob and husk than in the grain. Risk factors include: moldy ears,



stalk rot, insect damage, and lodging. Accurate sampling of corn stalks is very challenging and the decision to graze or not to graze should be based upon the mycotoxin analysis of the grain, along with assessment of the other risk factors mentioned.

KRVN RADIO

On November 16 the Nebraska Rural Radio Association presented their service award to Nebraska State Senator, Elaine Stuhr, at their annual meeting held in Lexington, Nebraska. In Stuhr's acceptance speech she told the attendees to speak out on ag issues by talking to legislators about ag policy and to get involved in the work of ag organizations and commodity groups. Stuhr, a member of Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE), served as WIFE's national president from 1985-87. This farm partner and teacher from Bradshaw, Nebraska, then became a three-term member of the Nebraska Legislature. She credited her early membership in Nebraska WIFE as giving her the desire to enter state government. Her speech was aired on KRVN, which is a farm news station headquartered in Lexington with other stations at West Point and Scotts Bluff.

Past National WIFE President Pam Potthoff presently has a weekly "spot" for WIFE on farm topics. KRVN broadcasts are heard in areas in Kansas, Iowa, South Dakota and Wyoming as well as in Nebraska.

Agriculture Builds. . . continued from page 1

President was approved. This change was made for 2010. Convention attendees also supported eliminating all three Area Directors although a motion to lower the number to two was voted down. Since this adjustment would require a by-law change and notice was not given prior to the convention, this change will be presented during the 2010 convention and would take effect in 2011.

The consideration of the many resolutions kept convention attendees busy for a large chunk of time. The Resolutions Committee (composed of all C/T Chairmen) had already made recommendations on the proposals. All "neutral" recommendations by the committee were forwarded to the 2010 convention. Many of the proposals were house-keeping steps concerning previous policy. When the 2010 Policy Book arrives in WIFE mailboxes, members are urged to compare to 2009 policy and note changes.

Members voted to give two Honorary Memberships during the 2010 Legislative Affairs Conference in Washington, D.C. Long-time WIFE advocate and DuPont liaison Clete Boykin and USDA Director of Communications Kathryn H. Hill will join an elite group of women holding honorary memberships in WIFE.

Officers for 2010 are President Tammy Basel of South Dakota; Vice President Deb Dressler of North Dakota; Secretary Mary Ann Murray of Montana; and Treasurer Melinda Sorem of Kansas. Area Directors are Shana Baisch of Montana; Ruth Larabee of New York; and Alice Fairfax of Missouri.

Montana WIFE issued an invitation to hold the 2010 National Convention in Billings, Montana.

LIVESTOCK UPDATE

Reported by Mary Ellen Cammack, SD

Jess Peterson, Executive Vice President of the United States Cattlemen's Association (USCA), was the keynote speaker for the 33rd national convention of Women Involved in Farm Economics held in Syracuse New York. Mr. Peterson reviewed 2009 priority issues identified by USCA which included the following pending legislation: USCA supports the Beef Checkoff Modernization Act (S. 1062) which would amend the Beef Research and Promotion Act to allow the promotion of beef born and raised exclusively in the United States and would also establish new referendum requirements.

This organization also supports the passage of the Foot and Mouth Disease Prevention Act (H.R. 1226 and S. 337) which would prohibit increased meat imports from Argentina until the Secretary certifies to Congress that every region of Argentina is free of foot and mouth disease without vaccination.

Increased funding to upgrade the current facility on the Plum Island Animal Disease Center is also supported. USCA is opposed to the proposed National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in Manhattan, Kansas, and encourages Congress to not allocate any funds that will allow the planning or construction of a new facility.

H.R. 503/S.727 which is the Equine Cruelty Act of 2009 is opposed by USCA. This legislation prohibits transportation of horses to foreign countries where horses may reach the food chain. This legislation has negatively impacted all areas of equine marketing and resulted in increased horse abandonment and release of unwanted horses on private and public lands. H.R. 1018, referred to as the ROAM Act, limits the process to remove excess and unhealthy horses and burros from public lands.

Peterson also explained that USCA opposes S.787, the Clean Water Restoration Act, as this will likely increase a producer's exposure to regulatory pressure without providing social or resource benefits. The organization supports S. 527/H.R. 1426 as it would exempt livestock operations from the Clean Air Act.

H.R.1549/S.619, the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA), removes valuable and proven medicines that ranchers rely on to keep herds healthy and is opposed by USCA.

Peterson also spoke in support of strengthening antitrust laws and ensuring fair market competition, recommending Congress to increase market transparency by addressing captive supply contracts plus mandatory price reporting and packer ownership of cattle. While USCA does not support a national mandatory animal ID system, it does support standardizing of existing programs, including brand inspections, health certificates, brucellosis tags, tuberculosis tags, etc. They urge the Department of Agriculture to have a proactive approach to disease prevention by strengthening import standards rather than the current reactive approach of disease control after an outbreak occurs in the United States.



WORKSHOPS AND BILLS

By Jenifer Felzien, CO
National Legislative Chairman

WIFE has been remiss in not shouting from the roof top that the Senate Agriculture Committee has a woman as chair for the first time in the history of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Congratulations goes to Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR). Senator Lincoln has spoken to WIFE and she comes from a seventh generation farm family that grows rice, wheat, soybeans and cotton.



The Justice Department and the USDA will be holding public workshop on "Competition in the Agriculture Industry". The public workshops will be held to explore the competition issues affecting the agriculture industry and the role antitrust and regulatory enforcement should play in that industry. The first workshop will be held early in 2010. The workshops will address the dynamics of competition in agriculture markets including buying power and vertical integration. They will examine legal doctrines and jurisprudence and current economic learning and they will provide an opportunity for farmers, ranchers, consumer groups, processors, and agribusiness to review examples of anti-competitive conduct. The first workshop is to be held in Washington, DC, and other workshops will be held regionally.

You may submit written comments but they are to be written in electronic form and to be submitted to the Department of Justice no later than December 31, 2009. Two paper copies should be addressed to the Legal Policy Section, Antitrust Division, U.S. Department of Justice, 450 5th Street, N.W. Suite 11700, Washington, D.C. 20001 and should be by courier or overnight service if possible. The electronic version of each comment should be also submitted by e-mail to agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov.

Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) proved to be of little interest to farmers this year as less than eight percent opted for the program. Corn had the highest number of base acres enrolled followed by wheat and soybeans.

Estate tax is supposed to die in 2010 but it looks as if it will be extended. WIFE needs to keep informed and let our representatives know that we want the extension for 2010.

A Climate Bill has passed out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee as of November 6, 2009. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and five co-sponsors introduced legislation that seeks to add an agriculture piece, including an ag offsets program.

WIFE and agriculture are facing many challenges from getting fall crops harvested to the multi changes in health care and climate change; yet we must stay diligent and let our elected officials know how this proposed legislation along with weather will affect our farms and ranches in the coming year.

Calendar of Events:

Deadline for WIFEline reports - December 25
Legislative Seminar - March 9 - 10, Washington, DC

WIZARD OF OZ

Reported by Jean Priefert, NE

New York State Senator Darrell Albertine gave WIFE members some things to consider and added to our knowledge during the national WIFE convention in Syracuse.

This seventh generation dairy farmer from northern New York, near the Canadian border, is the only senator in New York state government and the only member out of 212 in the legislature with an agricultural producer background. Each of the 62 senators represent approximately 220,000 people in the state. He is a member of many senate committees including agriculture and energy.

Big business keeps squeezing individual producers. United States producer's compliance with required regulations results in extra costs but much of the rest of the world does not have such regulations. The United States dairy industry is hurt by imports, such as casein (a phosphorus-containing protein). A two percent over production will cause a surplus.

Many members of farm families must work off the farm to add to total farm family income. Many products are not labeled so we don't know where they come from. No matter what commodity farmers raise, most are suffering right now. His wife will buy U.S. beef, by choice. So many people that he comes into contact with will ask "Why does this affect me? I get my food from the store." The public thinks they don't need us.

On the way to speak during our convention, the Senator said "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" from the Wizard of Oz played on his car radio. This story is over 100 years old and written by Frank Baum (1885-1919) who was born near Syracuse, New York. His family moved to Aberdeen, South Dakota where he was a newspaper editor during the 1893 depression and farm prices were low—the worst in history then. He later lived in Chicago. His Oz series of 14 stories constructed a fairyland out of American materials. The Emerald City was the national Capitol, the Wizard was any president, Dorothy was the symbol of any man's innocence, the Wicked Witch of the East was East Coast finance, the Yellow Brick Road was the gold standard, Oz is the abbreviation of ounce of gold, presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan was the cowardly lion, the farms were the scarecrow and the workers were the tin man and so on.

With most Americans now several generations away from any farm experiences, we must work to inform them about production agriculture. Where does milk change hands? When his milk leaves the yard it becomes the processors. Vertical integration is causing the demise of many small farmers. Importation is having a big effect.

In his legislature there is a bill about euthanizing mink. They knew their decision would impact farmers. The animal rights people were there.

He told a story about a young boy who wanted a pet. The family went through various choices and he ended up with a chicken. The next morning it laid an egg. The mother brought it in but didn't know what to do with it. She made some calls to try to find out. The sad part of the story is that she was a graduate of culinary arts in Cornell University and didn't know what to do with a fresh egg! We need to educate the public!

Sen. Albertine's frustration is the reason for his commitment to agriculture. He has had the opportunity to meet with political leaders, including President Obama, and leaders from foreign countries.

TRANSPORTING CORN

By Lisa Goodheart, KS
National Feed Grain Chairman

Transportation issues affect all industries, and the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) is helping various sectors of the agricultural industry explore trends in ports, ocean freight and rail. Their purpose is to help industry leaders resolve current transportation issues and improve options for the future.

The NCGA takes a proactive role in leading the industry and helping to find solutions and opportunities that will positively affect corn producers. They seek out opportunities to communicate with others interested in a cost effective transportation system and they support efforts to move the industry forward. The United States spends approximately one percent of the gross domestic product on transportation, and discussions are being held to decide if that is a sufficient amount to provide an efficient transportation system, considering that freight needs are expected to increase by 60 to 70 percent over the next ten years.

While these issues seem large in scope, they have a direct effect on farm profitability. Even though United States growers produce the highest quality corn in the world, there are often questions about the ability to deliver grain at a cost effective rate. One new development is that there are initiatives to broaden the potential for containerized shipping, which will provide growers with an opportunity to capitalize on a rapidly growing market.

PEANUT CROP

By Jacquelyn Sistrunk, AL
National Peanut Chairman

Alabama and Georgia's 2009 crop is running late, but looking good. Extremely wet conditions in late May kept farmers out of their fields resulting in peanuts being planted after the usual recommended planting dates.

Extremely wet conditions in September delayed harvest from the first week of October until the middle of October, about ten days late.

In spite of weather conditions this year, peanuts look good, but it's difficult to tell if the final yield will supply this year's demand.

FIRST TIMERS

Members who attended a convention for the first time were Jamie Spring of South Dakota, Margaret Fletcher of Indiana, Angie Considine of Washington, DC, plus Cathy Millick and Sherry Beyer both of New York.



THE “OTHER GOAT”

By Gwen Cassel, NY

National Sheep and Goat Chairman

The demand for meat from sheep/lambs and goats is increasing throughout the United States. In many populations, meat from these small ruminants is considered a staple, is considered the most appropriate to be served to family and guests or is for special celebrations.



The increase in the number of meat goats being produced has changed the look of our landscape in many areas. To those who are familiar with dairy goats, such as Nubians, Alpine, LaMancha, Saanen, etc., which are used as a meat source as well as excellent milk producers, the concept of separate meat breeds of goat is new.

Writing for the New York State 4-H Meat Goat Project, Dr. Tatiana Stanton explains, “. . . there are some strains of goats that have been genetically selected by man specifically for meat. Some of these are actual breeds while others of these are just beginning to have distinct traits that pass reliably from parents to offspring. The breeds or strains used in the U.S. have all been genetically selected from populations of goats brought by settlers to new countries. These goats were often allowed to become almost feral (run wild). Under these conditions, only those who could survive their rugged environment lived long enough to produce offspring. This type of genetic selection where nature, not man, chooses which livestock will be used to produce offspring is called natural selection.” These breeds or strains include Spanish Meat Goat, Tennessee Meat Goat, South African Boar Goat, New Zealand Kiko Goat and crosses of these breeds.

Dr. Stanton goes on to explain that in their countries of development, feral or wild breeds were often crossed with domestic goat breeds to produce desired meat, browsing and grazing characteristics, or to increase milk production to grow strong, fast growing kids. Most of these breeds are hearty and adapt well to various climates and terrains. However, groups of goats that have lived primarily in one area, such as the southern part of the U.S., can have difficulty adjusting to the cold and dampness of northern climates. In addition, animals moved from different parts of the country will bring new or resistant forms of parasites that new owners may not be aware how to control. Identifying and obtaining new herds from local producers will often aid in quick movement into a new commodity for farmers or ranchers. There are many good sources for more information available on the net, and through local extension offices.

Targeted grazing utilizing sheep will be showcased by the award-winning television series, The Profiles Series. The show aired on the Discovery Channel on Monday, November 30, at 7 a.m. EST and PST. Narrated by Lou Gosset Jr., the episode was aired in 80 million television households. The full segment is also available to watch at <http://profilesseries.com/Americansheep.htm>.

This project took life with the funding assistance of an Invasive Species Grant by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service awarded to the American Sheep In-

dustry Association (ASI). With industry funds matching this grant, ASI was able to team up with The Profiles Series to produce a quality program intended to inform, educate and enlighten viewers, both nationally and internationally, about the U.S. sheep industry and how targeted grazing is an ecological-friendly tool that is gaining a foothold to help manage invasive weeds.

ITALIANS AND PASTA

By Phyllis Howatt, ND

National Cereal Grains Chairman

Italians like durum from North Dakota. Durum is the hardest of all wheat varieties, with high protein and overall good quality making it the wheat of choice for pasta products and couscous.

Buyers from leading pasta brands really like to get their hands on durum from North Dakota producers because it is the highest-protein wheat that is found anywhere. With the right weather and crop nutrients, it is an excellent product. Some of the durum buyers live in Italy, where high protein is critical for cooking pasta al dente. Many pasta-making customers advertise that they are selecting the best durum wheat from around the world. Italian pasta makers are very particular.

North Dakota annually produces enough durum for 8.5 billion servings of spaghetti, and enough wheat for 15.5 billion loaves of bread. In 2008 North Dakota produced 50 percent of the durum and 45 percent of wheat in the United States. Production agriculture is the largest sector of North Dakota's economy. Nearly 24 percent of North Dakota workers are farmers and ranchers or are employed in farm-related jobs.

North Dakota has 44.1 million land acres and land in farms is 39.6 million acres. Nearly 90 percent of North Dakota's land area is in farms and ranches. North Dakota farmers and ranchers are proud to be providers of the highest quality food in the world!

This will be my last “Cereal Grains” article and I thank all of you who have helped me by providing information for it. I also thank Marlene Kouba, our editor, for her help and all of our many WIFE readers as well. Good luck to the new Chairman and I am sure she will welcome any information she can use, as I did.

RIFLE RAFFLE

The drawing for the winner of the rifle raffle was held on the last day of the National WIFE convention in Syracuse New York. The winner of the raffle was Eugene Kinzel from Dickinson, North Dakota, who chose to take the \$500 instead of the Henry Golden Boy 22 rifle. In a grueling competition Montana just barely stayed ahead of Colorado to win the \$150 prize for the state selling the most tickets. Alabama should have received a prize for the most tickets sold in the shortest amount of time. Keep your raffle selling skills sharpened for the tentative plan is to have another raffle in early fall next year with the drawing at convention again. The raffle was a very successful fundraiser and we thank everyone that sold and bought tickets.

—Shana Baisch, National Vice-President

NET NEUTRALITY

By Donna Bolz, NE
National Communications
Chairman

On July 31, 2009, Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA) introduced H.R.3458. What is this bill about and why is it important to us? H.R.3458 is also known as the Net Neutrality bill. Net Neutrality is a policy of network neutrality which supports freedom of the individual to see and hear and send any information he or she wants on the Internet. It allows the full diversity of voices to flourish. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to establish a national broadband policy, safeguard consumer rights, spur investment and innovation and for related purposes. It has been referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

The Internet Freedom Preservation Act of 2009 amends the Communication Act of 1934 to set the policy of the United States regarding various aspects of the Internet, including access, consumer choice, competition, ability to use or offer content, applications and services, discriminatory favoritism and capacity.

This bill would make it the duty of each Internet access service provider to (1) not block, interfere with, discriminate against, impair or degrade the ability of any person to use an Internet access service; (2) not impose certain charges on any Internet content, service or application provider (3) not prevent or obstruct a user from attaching or using any lawful device in conjunction with such service, provided the device does not harm the provider's network; (4) offer Internet access service to any requesting person; (5) not provide or sell to any content, application or service provider any offering that prioritizes traffic over that of other such providers; and (6) not install or use network features, function, or capabilities that impede or hinder compliance with these duties.

There is no doubt that the Internet has grown to be a powerful force for free speech and democratic participation. The growth may not continue unless Congress takes steps now to protect net neutrality which is the principle that keeps the Internet free and open. Companies like AT & T, Verizon, Comcast and Time Warner want to be the Internet gatekeepers, deciding which web sites go fast or slow and which won't load at all. They are spending big bucks to get their way. These companies have already spent more than \$50 million to send more than 500 lobbyists to Washington. They want the bill killed. They want to be able to block, discriminate and censor phone and cable companies.

Cable and telephone companies could make a lot of money if they could ensure certain content was more of what they wanted. Some network management is necessary but some of the management is very worrisome. The worst part about the danger is that it is very hard to know whether the telephone or cable companies are influencing content. All changes happen behind the scenes. Someone has to be tech savvy to suspect discrimination in the technical protocols of your Internet access.



Billions of dollars are at stake. Pretty soon almost all information will travel over the Internet, even if it is video that you watch on your television or a telephone call with your family. Individual Internet users have no protection if a company does not like the content they want to publish or to read.

This is something that needs to be followed carefully in the coming days.

DAIRY IN 2009

By Dianna Reed, KS
National Dairy Chairman

As we are nearing the end of the year of 2009, and in looking back over the last months, it does not paint a very pretty picture. 2009 has been a devastating year for the dairy industry. We have not only lost many family farms and many years of hard work with some suicides, but dairies are going bankrupt while processors are having record earnings,

The year started with the ending of a whole herd buyout through the Cooperatives Working Together program and continued throughout the year with three more--the last one is in progress now. Thousands of dairy cattle were taken to slaughter along with many bred heifers. These buyouts were farmer funded and not a government program.

The United States government started hearings on what could be done to improve the price paid to producers for milk as well as something to address the volatility in price. As of this date, there have been no solutions, just hearings, and our nation's dairies continue to decline even though Secretary Vilsak and many others agree that something needs to be done to stop the tremendous ups and downs on milk price. The milk price has seen a slight increase and feed cost has been reduced a fraction but this has not been enough to help those still in trouble.

The Senate passed legislation to deliver \$350 million in aid to dairy farmers struggling to cope with low milk prices. The money includes \$60 million to cover the federal purchase of surplus cheese production and other nutrition programs. The purchased products would then go to food banks and other nutrition programs. The remaining \$290 million is expected to go out in direct payments to farmers. A hold has been placed on this bill by Senator Barbara Boxer of California until it can be clarified as to how the direct payments to farmers will be made.

The global economy has also been a factor in the drop of the milk price when exports began to decline due to foreign countries buying less. There is some turnaround being seen for exports to some countries as their economy rebounds except to Mexico. The Mexican economy is not rebounding as well and they are a very large importer from the United States.

As we near the start of a new year we, as dairy farmers, have to wonder what it will bring. Will the mailbox price be enough to keep the remaining farms going? Recovery from 2009 will take a very long time, if at all.



WATER

By Cynthia Thomsen, NE
National Rural Health Chairman

Look for health information you can trust. When looking on the Internet, remember that anyone can create a web page. It is recommended to use Organized Wisdom. Health information can be found by reading Wisdom Cards. You will get a quick review and a variety of sites for more information. These were reviewed and approved by physicians. Some of the sites will take you to the Mayo Clinic. Try www.organizedwisdom.com. Organized Wisdom is great but it will not substitute for your doctor's advice.

"Know your Farmer, Know your Food" is a site created by the United States Department of Agriculture. This is to help everyone become more aware of where the food is raised and brought to market for consumers.

Water is bottled and being sold. Evian is one brand to look at. The spelling of the name is the reverse of the word naïve. Remember the bottle it is in will remain in the landfill for hundreds of years. Often the water is taken from the tap, placed in a plastic bottle and sold to consumers when they could go to their own tap and drink water for free and not worry about a plastic bottle. Remember your city tap water is tested.

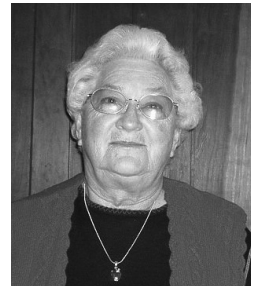
"Water Wars" Privatization, Pollution, and Profit is written by Vandana Shiva a world renowned environmental thinker and activist. The book takes you on a look at the world today and looks at the role water plays in our activities. Add this to your reading list today.



CHINA LIFTS TRADE

By Frances Rohla, NE
National Pork Chairman

China is a crucial market for our pork exports. H1N1 has hurt the pork industry. In the year of 2008, China was the fastest growing market, according to USDA. Then the disease of H1N1 hit, blaming pigs for the spreading of the flu to humans instead of humans giving the H1N1 flu to pigs. There was no science behind the naming of swine flu, but someone had to take the blame. Finally the pork industry is fighting back but to this day H1N1 is still called the "swine flu". At the end of October, China said they will be lifting the ban of U.S. pork. After meetings with Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack and U.S Trade Representative Ron Kirk, China's Agricultural Minister and Commerce said that the decision to lift trade was based on scientific analysis.



The H1N1 flu virus from infected humans was given to pigs at the Minnesota State Fair. A cat and two ferrets in Colorado became ill when a family had H1N1. All survived after being treated.

Pork producers had said that they would cut their breeding herd by three percent but the summer was cool for breeding so producers raised two extra pigs per litter. Weights (hog carcasses) were three pounds heavier at the slaughter house. Fewer hogs, good weather, fast weight gains equaled same pounds at the market, so economists feel that prices will rally about May or June 2010!!!

Did you know that pork is a good source for the important vitamins and minerals B6 to Zinc?

Ohio voters approved Issue 2 establishing the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board. The board will enforce guidelines for the care and wellbeing of livestock and poultry in the state.

The National and The Ohio Pork Producers Council and other agricultural organizations supported the amendment to the State Constitution, which was approved by a 64-36 margin. It was opposed by the Humane Society of the United States which will push for a ballot initiative in 2010 to prohibit certain production practices in Ohio.

The thirteen-member Animal Care Board will be chaired by the director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture. The board will also consist of three family farmers, two veterinarians—including the state veterinarians, a representative of a local humane society, a food safety expert, the dean of an Ohio Agricultural College, two members representing statewide farm organizations and two members representing Ohio consumers.

The 2010 budget for the National Pork Board was approved in Des Moines, Iowa, at \$44.1 million, approximately 25 percent less than the 2009 budget. Producers are receiving less money per hog so there are fewer check off dollars.

SOUTH DAKOTA WIFE attended a RUSH hockey game in Rapid City, South Dakota in December 2008 and was acknowledged on the team's message board during the game. During the 2009 Black Hills Stock Show and Rodeo, South Dakota WIFE sponsored the first South Dakota History Day, hosting approximately 450 fourth grade students from the Rapid City area. We had various presenters with information on the history of our state and the direct relationship with agriculture. Members also attended several South Dakota Beef Industry Council meetings during the year. Tammy Basel continues developing her Ag and Natural Resource Day, which expanded to two days and hosted over 1,200 students in 2009. Funding for this project is secured many months in advance and 2010 promises to be another successful event. A third day has been added in neighboring communities. South Dakota WIFE is regularly represented at the monthly Rapid City Area Ag Committee meetings.

—Mary Ellen Cammack, President

DUES

Beginning on January 1, 2010, national dues will be raised \$10. Get your dues in to continue getting the WIFEline and keeping posted on WIFE activities.

www.WIFEline.com

TRADE BILLS

By Ruth Laribee, NY

An atypical partnership of extensive interest groups stand united to support the Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment (TRADE) Act of 2009. The Act was introduced as HR 3012 by Rep. Mike Michaud (D-ME) and Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) is expected to present a Senate version by December of this year. Descriptions reported as to the importance of this bill are "fight for fair trade" and the "tool for comprehensive reform" of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). HR 3012 has 119 original House sponsors. The TRADE Act provides major changes in trade policies of the U.S. including a review of trade pacts now in existence and what must be or not be contained in the trade agreements of the future. Essential musts comprise of agriculture rules, food and product safety, environmental and labor standards, federalism protection, national security, and currency anti-manipulation rules. There is a list of 'must not haves' in the future American trade agreements including bans on Buy American and anti-sweat shop or environmental procurement policies.

The TRADE Act would require the President to submit plans to Congress to solve the problems of the existing U.S. pacts, identified by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), before negotiating new pacts and before congressional deliberation on agreements that are pending. "Fast Track" negotiating authority would be replaced with a new process consisting of Congress putting forth rules and standards monitoring progress fulfilling the congressionally mandated goal during negotiation procedures.

The expansive partnership supporting the TRADE Act include labor, consumer, environmental, farm-family and faith organizations. The array of national signers at this time include; AFL-CIO; Communications Workers of America; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Workers; International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Electrical Workers, and Teamsters; International Union of Painters and Allied Trades; United Steelworkers; Sierra Club; National Farmers Union; National Family Farm Coalition; United Methodist Church; Friends of the Earth; Public Citizen; Citizens Trade Campaign; Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy; and the Americans for Democratic Action. According to one report a senior White House observer said, "It's impossible to ignore the clout behind these different groups representing a broad range of interests that have come together on a major trade bill and the message they are sending about trade reform."

The bipartisan Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) food safety bill, S 510, requiring foreign supplier's verification activities, is a voluntary qualified importer program. The inspection of foreign facilities registered to import food has been passed by the Senate Health Committee.

Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT) and 18 co-sponsors have intro-



duced HR 3674, the House version of the Milk Import Tariff Equity Act of 2009. Sen. Charles Schumer's (D-NY) Milk Protein Concentrate (MCP) bill, S 1542, and HR 3674 bill have only slight differences. Farmers say the bills are not strong enough in halting what they call "the flood of cheap milk protein concentrates"

The Department of Justice is once again looking into the manipulation of dairy pricing saying, "it's not only a domestic problem" but investigators are looking at large New Zealand and European Dairy firms that operate in the United States. Many farmers hold big dairy firms trading on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange responsible for illegal commodity price manipulation thereby causing low milk prices. Some Congressional members and the Obama administration are focusing intently on enforcement of the US antitrust laws.

It is interesting to note that it might be possible the dairy crisis helped in bringing about the extensive partnership of many groups together for trade reform.

CANOLA ADVENTURES

By Vernice Balsdon, ND
National Oilseeds Chairman

The National Canola Research Program may continue to be funded and receive an increase of \$30,000, under the 2010 ag appropriations bill pending a conference with the House and Senate. Agronomic research would help boost and maintain domestic canola acres. Currently there are not enough U.S. canola acres to meet domestic demand for canola oil, which is one solution to reducing trans fat in the food supply.

The U.S. Canola Association celebrated America with a "Red, White and Bluegrass" during their sixth annual "Canola on the Hill" event in the Longworth House Office Building in Washington, D. C. on March 18. About 400 people tasted foods made with canola oil. Some members of Congress added their talent to the bluegrass band.

Scientists from Germany, France and the North Dakota State University are using modern technology to genetically modify the fatty acids in canola and rapeseed to initiate development of seed with high oil content and yield.

Although canola was officially developed in the early 1970s, its story began almost 70 years ago when a seventh grader, Keith Downey, began spending his summers working for research plots in Saskatchewan. Years later he took over the alfalfa program at the University in Saskatoon in the 1950s. He was also given the rapeseed program. Later he had to choose between the two and he chose rapeseed. However, technology of the time was not conducive to altering its composition. In 1969, 'canola' emerged from rapeseed as a distinct plant. There are various stories about the origin of canola but Downey says the name was designed by the Rapeseed Council to mean 'can' for Canada and 'ola' sounded like oil. He predicts that specialty or "designer" oils will account for 25 percent of the market by 2015 compared to about 10 percent today.



SUGAR CROP DAMAGE

By Klodette Stroh, WY
National Sugar Chairman.

Crop disaster: It breaks my heart to write this month's sugar report. I do not recall seeing a blessed record crop with beautiful lush fields of sugar beets like this year's crop. Farmers were so excited about their crop in Montana and Wyoming. Local farmers couldn't wait to start harvesting those huge beautiful sugar beets. A few days into harvest season my neighbor said he was digging over 35 tons of sugar beets to an acre. Usually sugar beets averages between 23 to 26 tons.



An unexpected early October freeze devastated over 80 percent of the sugar beets, potato, dry beans and wheat in Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho. We were all stunned.

Approximately 135 thousand acres of sugar beets were planted in Colorado, Idaho, Nebraska, Montana and Wyoming this year. Wyoming had 27,000 acres with the majority of those acres located in the Powell, Worland, and Lovell areas. Farmers in Powell, Cody and Lovell area had just started their early harvest and results were astonishing. Between Friday, October 9 and Monday, October 12 Mother Nature brought subfreezing temperature and devastated the majority of the crops. Leaves and a large portion of the beet top were frozen.

Frozen beets have a bad-apple effect and it is difficult to store them. For this reason The Western Sugar Cooperative has imposed quotas on grower deliveries of the frozen beets to limit the capacity of the Lovell factory or the Billings factory. Quota will help the factory to be able to slice the beets immediately because beets with frost damage cannot be held in storage. This process will extend sugar beet harvest into months ahead.

According to the Farm Service Agency and the Federal Crop Insurance Park County farmers are facing losses over \$12 million. Farmers in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho need help. Under the new Farm Bill counties will have to prove that at least 30 percent of a particular project suffered crop damage or that 30 percent of a single producer's crop was damaged to qualify for federal money. As a member of Park & Big Horn County WIFE, I wrote a letter to Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal and presented the situation to Park County Commissioner asking them for a Secretarial Disaster Declaration. Our Park County was declared disaster.

Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-MT) has also started the process of declaring agriculture emergencies for Montana. The declaration triggers producer eligibility for low-interest government loans and bailout money from the federal Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program.

Counties or states have to have "Secretarial Disaster Declaration" permitted by the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture. Producers in that county have to carry crop insurance for all insurable crops to be qualified for assistance.

Sugar imports report: The major sugar users had launched a scheme in September, 2009 to pressure the Secretary of Agriculture to import more sugar before September

30 (the end of the 2009 fiscal year). The fact of the matter is that we will end the 2009 fiscal year with 1.252 million tons of surplus sugar in our warehouse this year. This means a five-pound bag of sugar for every person living in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

United States sugar farmers need a fair price for their crop. Importing more sugar in to America's market will cause sugar prices to plunge and drive our farmers out of business. Please contact your senators and representatives to advise Secretary Vilsack to discourage any sugar import. As American sugar farmers are facing crop losses related to weather disaster, they need to have a decent price for the sugar that they may salvage out of their damaged sugar beet crops.

NEW YORK POWER

Reported by Donna Bolz, NE

Jerry Handlin, lead account executive from National Grid of Watertown, New York, shared information on the local utilities in northeastern New York. National Grid is an investor-owned utility. Municipal companies are owned by taxpayers. However, they do not own their own generation plants. In 1997 they sold their generation plants and now have to buy all electricity. Profit margins are capped. Prices charged are determined by supply and demand.



Some generation plants are now closed but demand is increasing and costs will increase, too. One percent of their total electricity is generated from wind energy but it cannot stand alone. It is just in the development state as wind farms are very expensive to construct. It is only 30 percent effective. The lightest amount of production is in the winter. The power that is generated in the Northeast New York area goes down state. The majority of power in New York comes from fossil fuels--coal, natural gas, oil and a small percent is nuclear. Solar is growing but is very expensive. It is not efficient to ship electricity across the county. You have to put supply where demand is. There is no true national grid. The blackout in the east a few years ago started when a tree fell on a utility line in Ohio and it had a domino effect.

One of Mr. Handlin's jobs is to help people save on their utility bills. He stated that most can save at least 10 percent by doing several simple things: (1) Using compact florescent bulbs can make a big difference A 75-watt bulb can be replaced with a 15-watt florescent bulb. (2) The water heater is the biggest waste in your home so set the temperature on it to 125 degrees. (3) A programmable thermostat will also help save. Setting back the temperature at night can cause big savings. (4) Ground heat source pump should be five to six feet deep where the temperature is more constant than shallower depths.

Another new option would be to burn trash in landfills to produce methane gas that can be used to make electricity.

GALLONS

A gallon of water weighs 8.33 lbs., a gallon of vegetable oil weighs 8 lbs. and a gallon of gasoline weighs 6 lbs.

ON THE FARM

Reported by Linda Newman, MT.

WIFE members were highly entertained and motivated by speaker, Chris Fesko, owner of Chris Fesko Enterprises, during our national convention in Syracuse, New York.

Chris is very witty, energetic, smart, friendly, entertaining, fun, dedicated, and very passionate about reaching out to the non-farm public—especially children, to teach the importance of Agriculture through creative, educational and fun learning experiences.

Since we, as WIFE members, are always trying to impress on the public how important agriculture is to everyone, Chris gave us several suggestions that we should follow in doing so:

- Be very passionate in our presentations about agriculture
- Speak in terms that our audience can understand
- Address ignorance without being condescending
- Make our needs their needs
- Give them ownership in you
- She suggests—“Bark, and the whole world will bark with you”!!

Not only did Chris speak to us in Syracuse, she invited us to visit her family’s dairy farm near Skaneateles, New York. While there, her daughter gave us a tour through all of their dairy operation. They milk about 600 head of cows, so it was quite an operation.

From there, we visited the Discovery Center which is an old red barn near their farm that had been scheduled for demolition! Chris decided to refurbish it and made it into a Discovery Center that is open to 36 schools in the Syracuse, New York, area for field trips. She specializes in third grade field trips but all ages enjoy it when they visit. The bottom level of the barn is a “petting zoo” with pigs, sheep, goats, chickens, and rabbits, bales of hay, etc. and then the middle level is the “learning center” where the kids do such things as “corn cob calculations”, learn about “simple” and “complex” machines, and many other different stations to learn something about science or mathematics as they pertain to agriculture.

Teachers, who have used the Discovery Center and Chris’s teaching materials as resources, have said that science grades have risen substantially for Syracuse area students.

To end the tour, we were invited to the Fesko home, which is a log house that they built from logs harvested from the woods that are on their property, and is one of her videos, “From Tree to Table” which captures that process.

WIFE members were treated to a very nice buffet dinner with Chris and her family and got a great taste of New York hospitality at its best!!

Chris is an award winning educator, farmer, videographer and producer, and is the creator of the *On The Farm* video



series. These videos are delighting children and adults of all ages both in the United States and internationally. Chris has also been featured in Women’s Day magazine and has received several awards for her videos including the Telly Awards and Parent Choice Awards. Anyone interested in more information may visit her website at www.fesko.com or

TRADE BY DECADES

Reported by Marlene Kouba, ND

Tom May, Vice-President of Trugman-Nash, Inc., dealing with dairy exports and imports, spoke to WIFE members in Syracuse.

He said it is hard to understand where our country was and where it is going. In early days purchases were easy but today there are many decisions. In 1950, there were the good guys, the U.S., and the bad guys, Russia and China. You need an accountant to go shopping.

“We are in the most competitive century. What does it mean to us in agriculture?” he asked. Times in the roaring 20’s were great and driven by the free market. The Crash then led to the Great Depression in the 30’s. The New Deal was influenced by those who thought government had a big important part to play to have prosperity but it had more regulations. The 80’s had a free market again. Reagan said government was the problem not the solution. NAFTA opened a new round of trade. Most cheese quotas are part of Section 22.

In 2008, lending increased. Some companies became holding companies and then went bankrupt. Debt was worthless. A global run on the banks started in late 2008 with zero interest. Obama continues to add funds to failing markets. The electorate is against incumbents and free trade. The Trade Act, H. R. 3012, is sponsored by unions and environmentalists. It mandates NAFTA and a study that deals with food safety rules and requirements. Obama has no interest in fair trade. There are 32 states that are milk deficit—unable to provide enough for their own state. There will probably be no new trade agreements soon. All kinds of problems will involve trade in the near future.



ASPARAGUS

Asparagus means sprout or shoot in Greek and it belongs to the lily family. Asparagus cultivation began more than 2000 years ago in the eastern Mediterranean region. Greeks and Romans prized asparagus for its flavor, succulent texture and the medicinal qualities it was believed to have and dried it for use in the winter. In China, candied spears remain a special treat. In the 16th century, asparagus gained popularity in France and England and early colonists brought it to America. The first production of asparagus in California dates from 1852. Nearly 95% of the 200 million pounds of fresh asparagus in the U.S. now comes from California where the harvest begins in February. Other supplies come from Washington, Michigan and the Mid-Atlantic states.

COALITION FOR A PROSPEROUS AMERICA

By Pam Potthoff

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to represent WIFE on the Coalition for a Prosperous America's (CPA) Board of Directors. It has been quite a learning experience!



CPA is a national, nonprofit organization, representing interests of 2.7 million citizens through its farmer, rancher, manufacturing and organized labor association and company members. CPA's mission is to work for a new and positive U.S. trade policy that delivers prosperity and security to America, its citizens, farms, factories and working people.

The CPA board is composed of representatives of manufacturing, labor, transportation and five of us from agriculture. CPA holds a conference call at least once a month for up to two hours. I have also listened in on calls of some of the CPA committees. Agricultural interests are weighed heavily in these calls and I feel ag is well represented on the board.

CPA is beginning a plan to organize chapters in the states. The offshoring of so many manufacturing jobs is a major influence causing interest in Pennsylvania and Iowa.

CPA's lobbying and executive officer have been visiting Congressional offices to educate staff and members of trade issues as well as meeting with the Obama staff. I have been invited to some of these meetings but have declined thus far.

Earlier this year, CPA urged the U.S. Treasury to cite China as a currency manipulator. They have endorsed H.R. 2378, which would classify misalignment by any country as a trade subsidy that could be neutralized through anti-dumping and countervailing duties.

They have met with the Department of Commerce to discuss foreign value added taxes (VAT), currency misalignment and state-managed economics.

CPA is a source of up-to-date information on trade issues. They issue a daily email and if you wish to be included, just contact me. More information about CPA can be found by googling Coalition for a Prosperous America. Check out the Fixing America's Economy document.

COALITIONS

During the convention there was discussion on WIFE's support of various coalitions. An objection to the Coalition for a Prosperous America's (CPA) support for the Administration imposing temporary tariffs on Chinese tire imports was expressed because of the difficulty of buying large equipment tires. WIFE's representative to the CPA Board of Directors, Pam Potthoff, has researched the issue farther and reports that only low end tires were affected by the tariffs. The tariff was brought about because China subsidizes exports by 35 percent or more through artificially keeping their currency cheap. This is a barrier to U.S. exports which makes products that are 35 percent or more too expensive. China also uses a rebate tax on their exports of 15 percent or more to help their exporters and also taxes our sales to them by 17 percent or more. These trade-distorting practices allowed China to flood the U.S. market with cheap tires. CPA believes our country cannot recover from the recession without fixing the trade problem. The massive U.S. trade deficit reduces GDP, investment, innovation and jobs in the U.S., and agricultural prosperity.

NITA GIBSON

By Mary Ann Sheppard

Nita Gibson of Lubbock, Texas was president of national WIFE in 1980 and 1981. She and her husband were cotton farmers.

Her home is decorated with photos of Nita with Presidents and many dignitaries. Nita began her political career as a member of the Democratic Party in Texas but when Nixon ran for president she campaigned for him. Later she served as the Lubbock Vice-Chair for the Republicans and helped Senator John Tower be elected. She spent her own money in all of her political arenas. When asked why she would do that she said, "If I saw a need, I went to Washington."

When Barry Goldwater ran for president, Nita was a delegate to the National Republican convention in 1964. Later she testified for cotton before the House Ag Committee.

Nita appeared on the Phil Donohue television show as well as several other leading television shows and they paid her way.

In 1981, Nita received a call from President Ronald Reagan. She said, "I only got Charles off that tractor two times—once to tell him I had cancer and once to tell him I had just talked to the President!" She is now a cancer-free survivor.

When President Reagan called her she was serving as National President of WIFE. He asked her to attend a meeting where only 15 were invited. She and her husband gave him a pair of custom boots. The President sent her a handwritten note of thanks.

In 1982, Nita was instrumental in creating the Payment in Kind (PIK) program.

In 1985, Nita ended a ten-year stint with the local radio station. She had been on the radio for five minutes every day to talk about cotton.

Nita's husband has passed away and she has donated her political memorabilia to the Southwest Collection at Texas Tech University so others can share her political journey. She plans to publish a book on her life and career--not for glory but for posterity. "I believed I could make a difference," she said.

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

NASS

Reported by Pat Torgerson, MT

Angie Considine, representative of National Agricultural Statistic Services (NASS), loves working with numbers. Her two-year assignment to develop information from the 2007 Census on Women farmers and ranchers has given her this opportunity. Her second assignment to gather information about cash rent will be equally challenging.



Angie Considine

NASS issues 500 statistical reports and about 9000 other reports annually. Their mission is to provide timely, accurate and useful statistics to U.S. ag producers.

Angie knew this assignment would be very demanding, but her husband and children told her to do it. Angie came to WIFE's convention armed with facts and an informative powerpoint show. Her pamphlets and quick mind made for an interesting presentation.

Here are a few of her facts: (1) More than 30 percent of U.S. farm operators are women. (2) More than 14 percent of all principal farm operators are women. The key word here is principal. The principal operator is the person in charge of day-to-day decisions for the farm or ranch. (3) The states with the highest percentage of female principal farm operators are Arizona, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine and Alaska. (4) The average size of farm is 452 acres for male operators and 210 acres for female operated farms. (5) The majority of women farm operators are white.

Angie thanks the women who took the time to fill out the census form in 2007. She was a source of information during the convention. WIFE members look forward to visiting with her in Washington, D. C. in March during our legislative visit.

NEBRASKA WIFE utilized a FAED grant to prepare a traveling display board for events throughout the state. Nebraska WIFE manned a booth at the Husker Harvest Days and the Nebraska State Fair. President Pam Potthoff represented Nebraska WIFE at the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) listening session in Loveland, Colorado, the USDA Town Hall Meeting with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar and a Farmers Union luncheon. Nebraska WIFE is planning an activity book about water. They visited their unicameral legislature and hosted a brown bag luncheon for all senators during Ag Week and gave them an Ag Day poster, brochures and handouts. Various chapters visited schools during Ag Week. Chapter 52 had a booth at a Health Fair Chapter 53 hosted a farm safety day for kids. Some of their meetings are now being held by teleconference. All look forward to a Christmas meeting with Luella Stevens who has been unable to travel this year.

AGRI-MARK

Reported by Kay Zeosky, NY

Bob Wellington, Vice President for Economics, Communications and Legislative Affairs of Agri-Mark, has been a great friend of Women Involved in Farm Economics for many, many years. A dairy economist for the past 31 years, he spent his first 11 years working for the government and the next 20 years working for Northeast farmers at Agri-Mark Dairy Cooperative. He says he much prefers working for farmers!

Wellington spoke about National Food Security or Insecurity—where, how, or when our food is grown. He believes that the incredible diversity and low cost of food in our supermarkets make them the eighth wonder of the world. He added, "That's why people don't care. It is so plentiful and there is never a shortage of food except in a snowstorm." Expecting a storm, he once saw an older lady in the store pushing a cart with eight gallons of milk in it. People do not realize that in the northeast there is only enough food available in those stores to last four or five days.

Agri-Mark is a cooperative with non-farm counterparts. Their 1,300 members produce milk on farms in the New England area and New York State. They own and operate four manufacturing plants. Their Cabot brand cheese was a \$50 million business that now brings in \$400 million.

A few years ago the Chateaugay, New York, plant owned by Finland, was about to close its doors. Finland owned 20 plants with one in Russia and one in New York. Realizing that scores of farmers were about to lose their market, Agri-mark bought the plant, invested \$10 million to change it to cheddar cheese production, and spent another \$20 million to take care of the resulting whey. Their McCadam and Cabot brand cheddar now win international prizes.

The value-added products have brought their farmers great profit margins. With 100 percent of their profits going back to farmers, they were able to pay a premium of \$.30 per hundredweight on May's production and another \$1.00 per hundred-weight on milk produced in the month of September.

Agri-Mark has held "open barn days" with 10,000 people in attendance to make consumers aware of how their milk is produced. There were 1,000 who attended in Boston alone.

Wellington stated that the Dairy Compact, when it was in force, paid farmers \$145 million while it only raised milk prices five to ten cents per gallon with no government money involved. It would be a way to help farmers stay solvent without any cost whatever to the US Treasury.

He feels that milk prices will go up \$4.00 or \$5.00 next year, but it will take our farmers years to recover from their losses. "It seems very unfair," according to Wellington, "that people who push papers around earn a lot, while the actual producers cannot get by." He added that, "We need to remember that nine million cows create one million jobs."

Wellington will continue to look for ways to help farmers get the highest price possible. His speech was fact-filled and interesting. Dairy farmers will never find a more knowledgeable and caring friend.

WIFeline
Marlene Kouba
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Regent, ND 58650

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ATTENDEES AT THE 2009 WIFE CONVENTION REPRESENTED THE FOLLOWING PRODUCTS

606,289 acres of wildlife habitat
1,791,200 quarter pound hamburger patties
12,665,500 one pound loaves of bread
6,130,400 lbs. of cornstarch
66,637,824 crayons made from soybeans
2,047,500 lbs. of spaghetti
678,240 servings of lamb
24,000 gallons of canola oil
150 gallons of honey
3,450,000 lbs. of milk
62,800 lbs. of buckwheat flour
860,000 lbs. of flax
12,000 agriculture business hours

