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USDA reduces meat and potatoes in school lunches

Meat and potato industry groups are concerned that a recent change to the school lunch program will result in an unbalanced diet for America's schoolchildren. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack explained the decision on the USDA blog:

"Today we celebrate an historic achievement on behalf of kids across America. We have accomplished a critical step on the road to deliver healthier, more nutritious food to our nation's schoolchildren. Today the U.S. Department of Agriculture released the final rule that sets the

standards for critical improvements to the child nutrition programs that serve millions of children across the country every day.

The new rule implements important provisions of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. It will substantially increase offerings of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, reduce saturated fat, trans fats and sodium, and set sensible calorie limits based on the age of children being served.

The final standards make the same kinds of practical changes that many par-

ents are already encouraging at home, including:

- Ensuring students are offered both fruits and vegetables every day of the week;
- Substantially increasing offerings of whole grain-rich foods;
- Offering only fat-free or low-fat milk varieties;
- Limiting calories based on the age of children being served to ensure proper portion size; and
- Increasing the focus on reducing the amounts of saturated fat, trans fats and sodium."

Joining Vilsack in the announcement was First Lady Michelle Obama, who has focused on childhood obesity and hunger during her husband's presidency.

"The rule's prescriptive nature in promoting certain groups of vegetables over others will increase costs while handcuffing local schools' abilities to meet USDA's nutrition, caloric, fat and sodium requirements," said John Keeling, executive vice president and CEO of the National Potato Council, in a statement.

"Protein is very important for the health of growing children, and meat is a high quality source of protein," said Jeremy Russell, spokesman for the National Meat Association, which represents packers, processors and others in the industry.

The rules will be phased in gradually while still mandating changes. Pizza will be whole wheat, and whole wheat spaghetti will replace hot dogs and pizza sticks, according to a before- and-after menu from the USDA.

Special Thanks

The members of New Mexico WIFE want to thank all the members who attended the 35th Anniversary WIFE Convention. Over the past thirty-five years, WIFE members have worked diligently on important issues facing our agriculture industry. We sincerely appreciate our generous Friends of WIFE who assisted us financially in helping to fund our efforts.

Following are the companies and associations who sponsored the 2011 National WIFE Convention.

Monetary Donors: American Bankers Association – American Council of Life Insurers – American Petroleum Institute – AT&T – Bayer CropScience – CHS, Inc. – Columbus Electric Cooperative – DuPont Company – Farm Credit of New Mexico – Monsanto Company – Renewable Fuels Association – Scherler Sales – Tri-State Generation & Transmission As-

sociation – U.S. Beet Sugar Association – Western Bank of Lordsburg, NM.

In-Kind Donors: Animas School's Class Ink – Eastern Arizona Ag Center – F&A Dairy Products – Horse N Hound Supply N More – Insta-Copy Imaging – NMSU's Leyendecker Plant Research Center – Rio Grande Winery – Salopek Farms – Stahmann Farms – Sun Valley, Inc. – Tinley Tee Tire – The Truck Farm, LLC – Treasures of Las Cruces – Western Blend Fertilizer Company – Valley Mercantile.

Speakers: Dr. Lowell Catlett, NMSU's Dean of the College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences – Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima – Jake Rollow, Field Representative for U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman – Anna Apodaca, Field Rep for U.S. Senator Tom Udall – Erica Sichler, Ag Field Rep for U.S. Represent-

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President's Report



By Deb Dressler
North Dakota

Winter meetings are opportunities to promote ag

Greetings from southwestern North Dakota. This is the time of the year when agricultural producer forums and machinery shows abound. Hope you all can attend those meetings held in your area. It a great chance for you to tell your agricultural story and to put a face and name to those of us in production agriculture.

I attended an agricultural forum hosted by Congressman Rick Berg (R-ND). Congressman Berg introduced House Committee on Agriculture Chairman Frank Lucas (R-OK) to approximately 40 commodity and farm organization leaders from the state of North Dakota. Chairman Lucas is a fourth generation cow calf producer from northwestern Oklahoma. Congressmen Berg and Lucas explained their take on the huge federal deficit and the upcoming Farm Bill 2012. Both congressmen fielded questions from the audience.

Chairman Lucas explained the workings of the House Ag Committee. The committee consists of 20 minority (Democrat) and 26 majority (Republican) members of Congress. Of the 46 members, 16 are freshmen and 23 have never served on the Ag Committee. He said it was

a good thing the ag appropriations are acted on last; the rural congressmen have their time then without so many roadblocks. With the current Farm Bill expiring on September 1, 2012, it will be a challenge to pass the new Farm Bill with the huge federal deficit. Chairman Lucas would like to see Congress act on the Farm Bill 2012 before the August recess and the escalating reelection campaigns. The Senate will mark up the Farm Bill before the House. Cuts across the board are eminent for the agriculture

sector; the question remains just where and how deep the cuts will be.

The consensus of the forum was that agriculture will be cut, especially in this

time of high commodity prices and huge federal deficit. All in attendance voiced concern on keeping the safety net for crop insurance, permanent disaster programs, and the need for funding research and conservation.

Dollars, Diversity, and Direction was an agriculture event moderated by Northern Ag Network in early January. Topics of discussion included risk management, soil health, impact of oil, cover crops, and how we as producers should tell our stories of agriculture.

Agriculture employs more than six times as many workers as the U.S. automotive industry. U.S. farm policy costs Americans just 2.3 cents per meal of 6.9 cents a day.

Agriculture employs more than six times as many workers as the U.S. automotive industry.

I wish you a successful time of farm meetings, good calving weather, and spring land preparations as the busy time for agricultural producers approaches.

Hope to see many WIFE members at the Legislative Seminar in Washington, D.C., March 3-6, 2012. It is WIFE's opportunity to tell our story and put a face on those who raise a safe, abundant and affordable food supply for all of America. Don't Look Back! Let us all move forward with the 2012 priorities of Women Involved in Farm Economics.

"It will not be doubted that with reference either to individual or national welfare, agriculture is of primary importance..." -President George Washington

Happy Trails. Go tell your story.

WIFE 2012 Area Directors

Area 1

Mary Ann Murray
HC 69
Jordan, MT 59337
(406) 557-2400 MST
(406) 557-2402 FAX
lige@wb.midrivers.com

Area 2

Sheila Massey
PO Box 70
Animas, NM 88020
(575) 548-2420 MST
masseyfarm@vtc.net

Beef Report



By Sue Krentz
Arizona

Staying involved is important

My name is Susan Krentz. I live on the Krentz Ranch in Southeastern Arizona. I have always been a great fan of WIFE because of my good friends in Animas and Sheila Massey.

My maiden name is Kimble, and I grew up on the neighboring ranch to the northeast of where I live now. I suppose one could say ranching is about all I know.

I wish to serve you well as the contact person for the Beef Committee.

As you know, my husband Rob was murdered on our ranch in March of 2010 by a border crosser. We have not found the perpetrator, but we still need to secure the border at the illegal points of entry.

Rob and I were blessed with three kids. Andy, Frank, and our daughter Kyle. We have also been blessed with three grandkids; Robert and Madyson Gutierrez are Kyle and Brandon Gutierrez's children. They live in Green River, Wyoming. Andy and Amanda have a son, Axten, and live in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Frank, our middle son, lives on the ranch with me, and I am blessed.

My husband's family homesteaded the Krentz Ranch in 1907. It has always been a family run business which has always included Rob's brother Phil, his wife Carrie, and son Ben. Sue, Rob's sister, and Louie Pope

are also involved in the ranch operation.

We raise crossbred cattle and have a solid reputation for quality in what we raise and the calves we sell. We have always participated on the cutting edge of the best practices of ranching, including using rotational grazing techniques, proper land management, and beef quality assurance programs. We have three solar wells on the ranch and hope to put in one more this summer.

The past couple of years have been rough on the family, and we do appreciate all the support that WIFE and the membership gave to us.

After I was run over by a passing vehicle back in September of last year as I was leaving church, I worked hard to get back on my feet. In May the north side of the ranch was burned in the Horseshoe II fire. We repaired the fences and water lines that were compromised as a result of the fire. We then worked out a deal with the Forest Service to use the forest lease for this year. So, in the long run, we were blessed. We had a few good rains, and right now we are looking forward to a good spring. I personally say Rob has our back.

I am very involved in the Cowbelle which is the original Cowbelle chapter in the U.S. It began in Douglas in 1939. I have served as my local president and Arizona State Cowbelle president. I have been involved with beef cookoffs, chili cookoffs, Pioneer Luncheons, and continue working on industry issues defending our right to stay in business, own private property, and live free and safe on our own land and homes. I am also involved with the Cochise Graham Cattle Growers

and Arizona State Cattlegrowers. I also belong to P.E.O. and many other women's organizations.

I would love to hear what issues you would like me to cover as the chairman of the Beef Committee. I am always open to your needs and desires. Information gives us power! So please, contact me: Sue Krentz, phone 1-520-558-2252; email: krentz.sue@gmail.com.

2012 WIFE Officers

President

Deb Dressler
8463-20th St SW
Richardton, ND 58652
(701) 938-4246 MST
debdressler1@gmail.com

Vice President

Ruth Laribee
7639 East Road
Lowville, NT 13367
(315) 376-2644 EST
grrlaribee@hotmail.com

Secretary

Diane McDonald
3540 35th ST NE
Inkster, ND 58633
(701) 248-3654 CST
ddmcdon3654@msn.com

Treasurer

Shana Baisch
323 Road 300
Glendive, MT 59330
(406) 365-4133 MST
jsbaisch@wb.midrivers.com

Transportation Report



By Pat Torgerson
Montana

Refining and using domestic oil makes sense for United States

ern oil supplies south to Louisiana for refining. We need to refine the northern Bakken oil right here in Montana and North Dakota where the oil fields are developing.

It makes military sense, too. The refineries in Louisiana are sitting ducks for enemies. New refineries using new technology and meeting current standards should be scattered in the north as they would be safer and harder to terrorize.

Money would be saved by stopping the doubling up of transporta-

tion costs of crude oil going south and refined gasoline going north.

America needs jobs for its people and for the returning troops. Bakken oil fields need workers. Oil towns need carpenters, plumbers, electricians, you name it and they need it. The Bakken oil field generates money for community projects, highway development and such, which is important to everybody.

Let's show OPEC that America doesn't need them. Let OPEC eat their oil.

News has it that Iran threatens to block the strategic Strait of Hormuz. The risk of open conflict looms over our heads and may stop our supply of oil. Iran's nuclear program is all tied up in this threat.

Do we care? Yes, we do. If Iran stops the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf, which has to pass through the Strait of Hormuz to get to America, it will affect our oil supplies and the price of our domestic oil will most likely skyrocket.

Does it make sense for the United States to continue to be at the mercy of OPEC and to its people, who hate us? Why does the U.S. continue to line OPEC's pockets with our money? Buying foreign oil while we have a huge supply of oil right here in Montana and North Dakota is sad.

I read a report about a unit train loaded with American produced crude oil from the North Dakota Bakken oil fields which departed November 7, 2011 destined for St. James, Louisiana. The BOE (Bakken Oil Express) Hub west of Dickinson, North Dakota, has the capacity of 100,000 BOPD per day. The first train departed included 103 oil tanker cars containing approximately 70,000 barrels of oil.

The U.S. people, Congress, and EPA need to update their outdated thinking that we can only ship north-

FAED Scholarship

By Sheila Massey
FAED Scholarship Chair

Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE) has joined with the Foundation for Agricultural Education and Development (FAED) to offer three scholarship for the 2011-2012 school year. The \$500 scholarships are available to any woman entering the first or second year of college, technical or specialized training studies in the agriculture field. Courses may include but are not limited to: Agronomy, Agriculture Economics, Agriculture Engineering, Veterinary Medicine, Extension Educator, etc.

The scholarship may be used at the school of the recipient's choice. Applications are available from State WIFE Presidents or their designated FAED Scholarship Chairman and are accepted in states where WIFE associations are organized. Completed applications are accepted by WIFE chapters or state associations in the state where an applicant resides or attends school.

Completed applications must be received by the state association by March 1, 2012. Applications that are returned to chapters may have an earlier date, which

will be available through the chapter members. The national winners will be notified on or about May 1, 2012.

The cooperating organizations share a commitment to agriculture and education. Members of WIFE work together to improve profitability in production agriculture through educational, legislative and cooperative efforts. In 1983, they formed the Foundation for Agricultural Education and Development to educate and inform the general public about the importance of agriculture and its relationship to the welfare of the national economy.

For a scholarship application form and/or more information about the sponsoring organizations, contact your state's WIFE president or Sheila Massey, FAED Scholarship Chairman.

Prior to the submission of this article to WIFeline, all state presidents were sent complete FAED Scholarship information and instructions. Members of the sponsoring organizations are encouraged to make the application forms available in their locale.

If you have any questions contact Sheila Massey via email at masseyfarm@vtc.net.



By Pam Potthoff
Nebraska

Trade Report

Buying American can help combat trade deficit, job losses

China now owns \$1.132 trillion of U.S. Treasury Securities. They are followed by Japan with \$1.038 trillion. However, the U.S. Federal Reserve and intergovernmental holdings own \$6.328 trillion of the total offerings of \$14.790 trillion.

The trade deficit with China (\$278 billion in 2010) has cost nearly 2.8 million U.S. jobs since 2001.

The European Parliament received a report by its Agriculture Committee suggesting better supervision of suppliers is needed to prevent input prices from spiraling out of control.

Parliament adopted a resolution on market concentration in the food supply chain, calling on Brussels and national authorities to “urgently address the problem of unfair distribution of profits within the food chain, especially with regard to adequate incomes for farmers. DTN story.

In 2011, **China’s urban population** exceeded the number of rural dwellers for the first time, rising to 51.3 percent of the nation’s 1.3 billion people, the government reported.

Countervailing duties (CVD): The use by the U.S. of CVDs to level the playing field between domestic products and imports continues to create WTO challenges. The use of CVDs affects 80,000 jobs across the country.

Other countries use CVD and do so within the WTO and do so legally. Our current laws are not written to be WTO compliant. Congress is considering legislation to correct the problems

A recent court case concluded the US could not impose countervailing duty remedies on companies in nonmarket economies (like China). If the order is not appealed, all CVD rulings currently in affect would be voided. It would not be possible to go back and reestablish the existing orders.

China imposed new tariffs on U.S. vehicles in January. These include sport utility vehicles, midsize and large cars. The new tariffs totaled up to nearly 22 percent of the import prices. The action may be merely symbolic as previous tariffs and taxes have limited sales of such vehicles because prices are about three times what the same vehicles sell for in the United States.

Reorganization of Trade Agency: President Obama announced a government reorganization/consolidation plan to merge six different agencies that are pertinent to commerce and trade. The plan would need approval from Congress. This is an issue for WIFE to monitor.

The Competes Act directed the Commerce Department to make suggestions on how the U.S. could be more effective in the areas of trade, tax, technology and innovation. The report was issued January 4 and points a finger at the lessening of federal support for basic research,

the educational system doing a poor job preparing students to become skilled workers, and the deteriorating national infrastructure. It supports better communication and sharing of ideas from basic science labs to commercial application and the coordination of federal support for manufacturing, including buy-American programs. Limiting excessive government regulations (one of WIFE’s concerns) was not listed as a way to insure that conditions exist in which private enterprises can thrive. However, it is being actively studied by Congress at this time.

American-made products can be found at the following sites:

- Still Made in USA. breaks down what brands are simply assembled here and what products are actually made in the USA of domestic parts
- Madehereinamerica.com
- The award-winning office supply superstore www.BuyOnlineNow.com has a Made In America department featuring more than 10,000 products manufactured right here in the USA.
- The store www.MadeInUSAForever.com carries a wide variety of American-made products.
- AmericansWorking.com.
- MadeInAmerica.com
- BuyAmericanMart.com

If any WIFE member has a different site for American-made products or has experience with any of these sites please let me know, and I will share that information.



**By Alice Parker
Washington**

New wilderness designation would make border patrol more difficult

The Wilderness Act was passed in 1964 with 54 areas encompassing 9.1 million acres in 13 states. The size and number of the areas have grown since 1964.

The Act has increased the number of acres to 109,512,959, and the number of areas has increased to 757 in 44 states and Puerto Rico. The largest increase in the number of acres in wilderness happened in 1980 when 56,000,000 acres were added in Alaska. The largest increase in the number of areas happened in 1984.

About 5 percent of the U.S. is designated as wilderness areas. The largest area (9,078,675 acres) is in Alaska and the smallest (6 acres) is in Northern Florida. California, Arizona, Nevada, Alaska and Oregon have the most wildernesses with the states of Alaska, California, Arizona, Idaho and Washington having the most wilderness acres. A few states do not have wildernesses and they are Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, and Rhode Island.

Agencies that manage the wilderness areas are the Forest Service, National Park Service U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the Bureau of Land Management.

A topic of discussion at the 2011 National WIFE Convention regarding a proposed wilderness designation focused on S1024 "the Organ Mountains-Dona Ana County Conservation and Protection Act." S1024 seeks to create 242,000 acres of wilderness designation on or near the border with Mexico. The legislation will deny nearly all use of motorized

vehicles, including routine patrol of the border. The legislation will prevent mobile surveillance systems, remote control and other electronic detection for maintaining control of the area, again creating additional obstacles making it more difficult to control the border. S1024 is in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests held a hearing on August 3, 2011, with only one invited testimony, which was the Bureau of Land Management who supports the legislation.

Concerns and comments regard-

ing S1024 need to be sent to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. They are Senators Jeff Bingaman (NM), Ron Wyden (OR), Tim Johnson (SD), Mary Landrieu (LA), Maria Cantwell (WA), Bernard Sanders (VT), Debbie Stabenow (MI), Mark Udall (CO), Jeanne Shaheen (NH), Al Franken (MN), Joe Manchin (WV), Christopher Coons (DE), Lisa Murkowski (AK), John Barrasso (WY), James Risch (ID), Mike Lee (UT), Rand Paul (KY), Daniel Coats (IN), Rob Portman (OH), John Hoeven (ND), Dean Heller (NV), and Bob Corker (TN).

WIFE Membership

**By Mary Ann Sheppard
National Membership Chair**

Did you forget to mail your dues to your State Treasurer or to your National Treasurer?

You can make a difference by being involved in WIFE. You can have a voice for agriculture policy making that effects your livelihood.

I challenge every State President to work with their chapter membership chairman to have a contest within your state to get those members who have not paid their dues to rejoin for 2012 and work to get new members.

I ask each state president to write articles about WIFE to be published in your local news paper or magazines. Again I will say you can make a difference on your farms and national polices that govern U.S. AGRICULTURE.

The fight is not over. By 2025 the

population is predicted to increase by millions of people in the U.S.. Who is going to feed these people? You are, the American farmers. This is important for you and your children to continue to work on a farm bill that will support the farmer. This is why it is so important to be a member of Women Involved in Farm Economics.

Let us never forget that the cultivation of the Earth is the most important labor of man. When tillage begins, other arts follow, the farmers, therefore are the founders of civilization. - Daniel Webster.

MEMBERSHIP NATIONAL DUES
\$40.00

Mary Ann Sheppard
496 Co. Rd.30
Shorter, Ala. 36075
e-mail: marygo29@aol.com
Ph # 334-727-7737



By Klodette Stroh
Wyoming

Sugar Report

This will be a pivotal year for those raising commodities

I hope you have a prosperous and blessed year in 2012. Our farmers were able to have a good break with higher commodity prices in 2011. Sugar prices are staying up to help our farmers meet their high cost of production.

Sugarbeet and cane crops of 2011 have been harvested and processed without any weather problems. U.S. domestic sugar production is at 7.89 million tons, which is slightly above the 2010 crop. In accordance with sugar program, Mexico will supply 1.59 million tons of our total import of 3.45 million this year.

My husband Rick and I have been farming over 23 years. Every year of operating our farm has been a learning experience for us. We have used our past experience to keep our business alive.

Every year we rotate our crops from dry beans to barley, wheat or sugar beets. This method improves the soil and cuts back on plant diseases. We carefully watch the market and plant crops with lower cost of production and higher profitability.

Fertilizer and fuel play a crucial part in our farm budget. Three years ago, Rick built a 12 row fertilizer applicator to save on fertilizer use. We have had a very good result from this improved method of fertilizing our crops.

Economic adjustment is a vital

sector of our farming operation. We all have to learn the new era of commodities trades. Globalization has a great influence on agriculture commodities.

Globalization makes it possible for commodity brokers to buy and sell commodities anywhere in the world, which affects the U.S. economy. Commodities prices have been extremely volatile. U.S. farmers have to be very careful in choosing the right time to sell their crops to cover their cost of production.

USDA's crop reports released on January 12, 2012, held bearish surprises on corn, wheat, and soybeans, but analysts caution world grain stocks are far from burdensome on either corn or soybeans. The weather situation in Texas, Oklahoma, Florida and many producing states last year left us with fewer crops. USDA's report was not as low as speculators were expecting, but it was lower than the December report.

After an initial sell-off caused by both producer selling and speculative liquidation of long positions, analysts expect the market focus to quickly revert to weather in the South American growing regions.

In the new era, farmers have to be jack of all trades. We have to know economics, mechanics, the political situation of foreign countries, and commodities trades.

The year 2012 is an election year and time for the new Farm Bill. We have to defend the sugar program and all American producers and make sure to get a solid farm policy. There is so much to keep up with in farming

practices, but I believe farmers are in partnership with God to take care of his land and feed his people.

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**By Marlene Kouba
North Dakota**

Energy Report

Politics influences energy development

General Electric Co. is trying to sell solar panels to customers who have bought their wind turbines in an effort to make up for declining sales. A federal wind energy tax credit is set to expire at the end of the year, which has led a cut in orders on wind turbines for 2013. Invenergy LLC, one of GE's wind and solar customers, will install 23 megawatts of solar panels next to a 210-megawatt wind farm. They claim that since winds are stronger at night and solar panels work best during daylight hours, installing both will result in lower costs and more predictable output. GE is building a factory in Colorado which is expected to begin shipping thin-film solar panels in 2013. They believe that if they had just 10 percent of their installed wind capacity to add solar, it would sell out the new factory for the next six years. Analysts expect the U.S. wind market to crash in 2013 with the expiration of the tax credit, but lobbyists are seeking an extension.

What is lignite coal? About 60 million years ago western North Dakota was a swampy region covered with vegetation that compressed over time and became coal. The Antelope Valley Station in North Dakota consumes more than 5 million tons of lignite coal annually to produce electricity. Their reserves could last more than 800 years at the present rate of use--32 million tons per year. Only Australia has more lignite than North Dakota with 25 billion tons that is economically recoverable.

About 40 percent of the nation's coal comes from Wyoming. The Powder River Basin is the largest coal producing region in the U.S. Last year, four coal leases with about 758 million tons that will take between 10 and 20 years to mine were

auctioned to benefit the state. The state has heavily invested in clean coal technology and converting coal into a gas.

The U. S. produced more than 42 million tons of anthracite coal in 1949. Anthracite production totaled 6.1 million tons in 1980 and 3.5 million tons in 1990. They expect this year's production to be in the 2-million-ton range, all from northeastern Pennsylvania. Industry boosters say their coal burns cleaner and without odor, which makes it ideal for home heating and they say new technologies to mine areas already disturbed before is a plus to the environment.

In January, California's low-carbon fuel standard was ruled in violation of the commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution. The standard, which took effect January 12, 2010, considered corn-based ethanol from the Midwest to be a higher carbon fuel in California.

Some North Dakota groups are planning a test plant to produce 3.5 million gallons of ethanol from the area's energy sugar beets. They say water costs are less than corn processing because beets contain 70 percent water and only 1.5 gallons of water would be needed to produce a gallon of ethanol.

As energy prices rise, about 2.4 million Americans turned to wood to heat their homes—faster than any other fuel as it was a 34 percent increase over 2000. Environmentalists are worried about pollution from wood or pellet stoves. Some health officials say soot and ash can get in the lungs. Users see a health benefit in chopping wood and aesthetic one in burning it.

China, with a growing demand for oil that may surpass that of the U.S., is ready to expand big dollars for it in Canada.

The oil sands of Canada are so big that they will be able to serve both of the world's largest economies for years to come. First they have to be able to build pipelines to the Texas Gulf Coast and the Northern Gateway Pipeline to the Pacific.

On January 18, President Obama rejected the Keystone XL Pipeline to the Gulf Coast after it had been studied for 3 years. Jack Gerard, Chairman of the American Petroleum Institute, said the environmental tests have all been completed and the president was given an extra 60 days to decide if it was in the national interest. It would have helped gas prices in America and we could have had more to export. Canadian Prime Minister Harper said they are ready to spend \$7 billion to help America, but now other routes and plans are being studied. The president's decision may have opened the door to China's investment. In his State of the Union address on January 24, the president stressed an increase in offshore drilling, but not a word was said about inland drilling or pipelines.

America imported 2.7 billion barrels of oil worth about \$280 billion as we are still the world's largest importer of crude oil. Oil prices averaged \$95 a barrel in 2011, up from \$26 a barrel 10 years ago. The U.S. is using less fuel because of a weak economy and more efficient cars and trucks. Therefore, fuel was the top U.S. export in 2011 with \$73.4 billion.

Alberta has the world's third-largest oil reserves, more than 170 billion barrels—more than Russia and Iran. Only Saudi and Venezuela have more. A big oil discovery in Argentina could include 741 million barrels. The Bakken oil fields in North Dakota produced about 510,000 barrels a day through November of 2011 with 63,000 producing wells. It costs about \$7 million dollars to drill a well. Only Alaska, California and Texas produce more oil than North Dakota, where it is yet unknown how much it has.

Over the past few years, hydraulic fracturing (fracking) has come under fire regarding groundwater, especially for its use on natural gas wells in Pennsylvania and other states along the East Coast. In North Dakota, fracking is done in a dif-

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



**By Donna Bolz
Nebraska**

People in the military face many dangers while they are serving. When veterans return home, they find it hard to find jobs, especially in the rural areas. The USDA Risk Management Agency wants to change that with a special project.

The organizations that are partnering in this project are the Center for Rural Affairs, Farmer Veteran Coalition, Swords to Plowshares, Kansas Farmers Union, Missouri Farmers Union, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Kansas AgrAbility Project, Nebraska AgrAbility Project, Missouri AgrAbility Project, and Colorado AgrAbility Project. They will provide funding to introduce new veteran farmers and ranchers to areas of agriculture and help challenge the barriers facing so many rural veterans.

“The long-term goal for this project is to help new veteran farmers and ranchers successfully establish farms and ranches in Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado and Missouri,” said Kathie Starkweather with the Center for Rural Affairs.

This project allows veterans to learn strategies and implement plans for farm/ranch start-up, including financing, land access and business development. Veterans will also learn how to find the resources available to them for technical assistance, production and marketing information, and mentoring.

Rural America has experienced an exodus of family farmers and ranchers out of agriculture. That fact, coupled with a lack of young families going into agriculture, has changed the face

Program aims to benefit farmers and veterans returning to rural areas

of much of rural America, physically and demographically. The 2007 Census of Agriculture showed that the average American farmer is 57 years old and climbing, with 35 percent of all farmers over age 65. Rural America’s small cities and towns are less prepared to absorb returning veterans than many urban areas.

The Iraq and Afghan Veterans of America have noted that veterans returning to rural communities were having the hardest time reintegrating into civilian life, as these communities lacked both employment opportunities and access to needed veteran services. The Carsey Institute noted that only 24 percent of employed young adults ages 18 to 24 hold full-time jobs in rural communities. It is believed that several of these economic and demographic challenges may be opportunities.

Farmers who are at or approaching retirement age control half of all farm and ranch land in rural America, meaning that most of those farmers and ranchers will be looking for ways to transition their operation into younger hands in the near future. Traditional rural employment in farming, logging, mining, fishing and small manufactur-

ing have been declining for decades. However, the smallest of farms have increased in the past decade, due to the great consumer interest in locally grown, organic and specialty foods. This demand creates unique and exciting opportunities for beginning farmers — and the veterans who would become farmers.

“The participation rate of young rural Americans in the military is and has been far above the national average for at least two decades. When veterans receive training and secure agricultural employment in rural communities, rural America is strengthened, all of America is strengthened,” said Starkweather.

According to the grant application, veterans can build on their discipline and sense of service and use farming or ranching to reintegrate into society gracefully and fruitfully. They can also re-energize rural communities. Some assistance to launch a new generation of veteran farmers and ranchers can help ensure their successful entry into farming and ranching and a successful return to their country.

Thanks to the Center for Rural Affairs for help with this article.

Politics influences energy development

Continued from Page 8

ferent way. It is used to drill for oil, not natural gas (which is a byproduct of drilling), and the reserves are far below any drinking groundwater. Any fracks must have five layers of protection—a 4.5 inch liner, 30-40 sweller packers, sliding sleeves, a 4.5 inch frac string and a layer of concrete to protect the ground from fracking fluids. Many of the chemicals found in the fracking are found in common household goods, like cosmetics or mild cleaners. In the president’s

speech he mentioned disclosure of ingredients, but some states already are doing that.

In the past, energy companies have had to buy and import porcelain beads from China for fracking at a cost of over \$500 a ton just for shipping. Now energy companies use “frac” sand. The sand has perfectly round, hard and chemically inert grains. One energy company purchased 155 acres of land for \$2.6 million near Red Wing, Minnesota, for sand mining last year, but area residents are opposed to the project.



By Dianna Reed
Kansas

Dairy Report

Resolution would close loophole

dramatically impact the value of milk produced domestically.” Welch’s bill addresses the need for more accurate regulation and closes the unfavorable loophole on MPCs.
(Source: *Progressive Dairyman*)

According to a press release from the National Dairy Producers Organization in November, the board of directors of the NDPO passed a resolution in support of H.R. 2813. The bill, also referred to as the “Milk Import Tariff Equity Act,” was introduced by Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT) to the House of Representatives.

Bill Rowell, chairman of the National Dairy Producers Organization, Inc., explained that the language of the legislation will work in conjunction with the efforts of the National Dairy Producers Organization, Inc.

The chief importance of the bill is that it closes the loophole in the language on milk protein concentrates (MPC’s). The loophole allows for the free flow of MPCs, caseins and caseinates into this country, without being accounted for as dairy products.

According to a press release, distributed from Welch’s office, “The Milk Import Tariff Equity would simply close this loophole and ensure that milk protein concentrates are regulated at the same level as other dairy products.”

Between 1998 and 2002, approximately 318 billion pounds of U.S. produced milk protein was displaced by imports. At the time, MPCs weren’t included in legislation.

In their Contract with Producers, the National Dairy Producers board pledged to “work to correct deceptive milk importing practices that



By Jacquelyn Sistrunk
Alabama

Specialty Crops Report

Loss of topsoil threatens production of food in America and worldwide

According to *Corn and Soybean Digest*, the United States is losing topsoil 10 times faster than the natural replenishment rate. As a result of erosion over the past 40 years, 30 percent of the world’s arable land has become unproductive. Farmland is shrinking by almost 37,000 square miles per year due to soil erosion.

Topsoil is an irreplaceable resource. Soil renews itself at just 0.5 tons per year.

Topsoil is the basis of the farm economy and the basis for worldwide food production.

Experts tell us that 7 billion people now inhabit our world. That’s 7 billion mouths to feed with depleting arable land.

Smart farmers are going to no till farming to preserve topsoil. No till practices enhance soil health. Cover crops, no till, strip till, and better nutrient management are

tools available to farmers now.

The United States’ current farm system which now relies on soil, fossil fuels, and phosphorous, is doomed to fail. These irreplaceable resources will run out.

Using no till farming saves input costs of \$25-30 an acre for corn and \$18-20 per acre for soybeans.

Why do farmers use tillage? To warm up the soil, to dry the soil for earlier planting, to make a better seed placement zone, or to undo soil compaction. When these practices are unnecessary, no till is a wiser way to farm. The optimum amount of tillage depends on where you farm and what your soils are like.

Topsoil is the diminishing resource that makes American agriculture the best in the world. As population increases and soil decreases, food productivity suffers. Will farming in America reach levels of African farming where it is a constant battle to produce enough food to eat?

Cereal Grains Report



By Lisa Goodheart
Kansas

Rice is grown on every continent except Antarctica. It grows everywhere from flatlands to steep mountainsides. All it needs is a warm, humid climate and plenty of water, which is why rice fields are traditionally flooded. Rice provides about half of the calories for around half the world's population and is one of the most easily digested grains.

There are more than 40,000 different known varieties of rice, but only about 100 of these are commonly grown worldwide. Eighty-five percent of the rice consumed in the U.S. is grown here. The major rice producing states are Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, and Missouri. Almost half of the U.S. rice crop is exported to over 100 countries.

After rice is harvested, the inedible hull is removed, resulting in a

U.S. exports nearly half its rice crop

whole grain, often brown, rice kernel. If the rice is milled further, the bran and germ are removed, resulting in white rice, which has lower levels of nutrients than brown rice.

White rice is refined, meaning the germ and the bran are removed. Whole-grain rice is usually brown but can also be black, purple, red and a variety of other hues. Converted rice is parboiled before refining, a process which drives some of the B vitamins into the endosperm so that they are not lost when the bran is removed. Consequently, converted rice is healthier than regular white rice but is still lacking many nutrients found in brown rice.

There are long, medium, and short-grain rice varieties. Some short-grain varieties are known as "sticky" rice because of the extra amylopectin, a kind of starch that they contain. The stickiness makes them easier to manipulate with chopsticks, and they are perfect for sushi. Brown rice is an excellent source of manganese.

One cup of cooked brown rice

provides 88 percent of our daily need for manganese, a mineral that helps us digest fats and get the most from the protein and carbohydrates we eat. Whole grain brown rice helps us cut diabetes risk, lower cholesterol and maintain a healthy weight.

Cooking common varieties of rice is simple. You can use a rice cooker, but a saucepan works just fine. In general, use one cup of rice to two cups of liquid in a saucepan with a tight-fitting lid. Heat to boiling, reduce to simmer, and cook according to package directions.

Brown rice usually simmers for 45-50 minutes, but there are quick-cooking forms of whole grain rice, also. Store uncooked brown rice at room temperature for up to six months or in the refrigerator or freezer indefinitely. Cooked rice can be stored in the refrigerator for three to five days or in the freezer for several months.

Thank You

Thank you all so much for the beautiful cards, prayers, comforting words and much needed support at the passing of my mother, Louise, and brother Dale. Mom was a long-time member of WIFE. She read every page of the WIFeline and appreciated the contents of the articles. Mom was not a farmer but enjoyed working with farmers in her job of thirty years with Farm Credit. Faith, family and friends are what help through the tough times. Thank you again my WIFE friends for the outpouring of support. You truly are a source of strength.

Ruth Laribee

Special Thanks

Continued from Page 1

tative Steve Pearce – Duane J. Simpson, Monsanto State and Local Government Affairs – Greg Carrasco, Farm Credit of New Mexico Las Cruces Branch Manager – Larry Dominguez, New Mexico Department of Agriculture Industry and Agency Programs Director – Dale R. Fowers, Farm Service Agency's National Association of State and County Employees SW Area Executive – Marita Noon, Citizens Alliance for Responsible Energy Executive Director – Rhonda Mitchell, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association Senior Director Government Affairs – Randy Klein, Renewable Fuels Association's

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Thank you one and all – WIFE members, sponsors and speakers for helping make the 35th Anniversary Convention a success. We couldn't have done it without you!

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Women Involved in Farm Economics Legislative Seminar in Washington, D.C.
March 3-6, 2012
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email: jsbaisch@wb.midrivers.com
Phone: (406) 365-4133
Registration: \$125
Make checks payable to: Women Involved in Farm Economics

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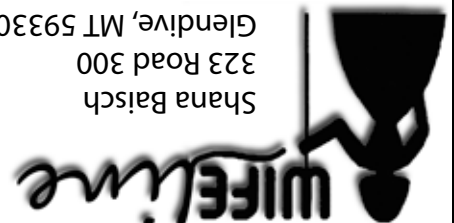
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