

KFB helps steer national farm policy

Voting delegates from Kansas at the AFBF 88th annual meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, succeeded in securing nationwide consensus on a pair of major rural policy issues that will have immediate impact on the farm family budget and long-term impact on preserving the heritage of rural Kansas.

The Kansas delegation succeeded in convincing its peers and colleagues from across the country of the worthiness of an idea crucial to the debate and discussion of the 2007 farm bill. The Kansas concept urges a federal farm program based on producer revenue assurance.

“There is no doubt the political environment in this country and around the globe has changed since the last farm bill five years



The KFB voting delegates represented the interest of Farm Bureau members across Kansas during the AFBF annual meeting. (l-r) Steve Baccus, Ottawa County (KFB president); Edie Dahlsten, McPherson County (KFB VP); John Stegman, Ford County; Jim Dooley, Jewell County; Jeff Varner, Butler County; and E.J. Thompson, Osage County.

ago,” KFB President Steve Baccus said. “We must be positioned so that if federal farm program dollars transition in a different direction, we have programs in place to help American agriculture.”

KFB delegation also gathered national organization support for broadening the focus of rural development, with a goal of enacting federal and state policy that reflects the economic realities on the ground in rural America.

“We see a definite need for even stronger ties between farmers and the businesses in their small rural communities,” said Jim Dooley, Jewell County farmer and another of the six-member KFB voting delegation in Salt Lake City.”

AFBF priority issues for the 110th Congress

- Animal ID Implementation
- Animal Care
- Expand Domestic Energy Supplies
- Water Resources Development Act
- CERCLA/EPCRA Regulation of Manure
- Clean Water Act Implementation
- 2007 Farm Bill
- Ensure a Legal Workforce for Agriculture
- Trade Promotion Authority
- Expand Export Markets
- Strengthen Rural Communities
- Death Taxes
- Repeal of the Alternative Minimum Tax

Members shine in Salt Lake

In other AFBF convention news, Kansas Farm Bureau was one of 21 states that received an award in all five program areas.

Helen Norris, Chair, Kansas Committee of Farm Bureau Women, was reelected to the AFBF Women’s Leadership Committee for the Midwest Region.

YF&R participant, Nick Levendofsky, Republic County, made it through two rounds of the AFBF National YF&R Discussion Meet.

KFB Calendar

January 31-February 1
KFB Day at the Statehouse

February 4-10
Food Check-Out Week

February 6
Food Check-Out Day

February 10-12
AFBF Nat’l Leadership Conference,
Jacksonville, FL

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MANHATTAN KS 66502
PERMIT NO. 103

Kansas Farm Bureau
P.O. Box 3500
Manhattan, KS 66505

In this issue

✓ *KFB works government after violent winter storm*

✓ *Day at the Statehouse – building relationships*

✓ *Exciting new member benefit – GM private offer*

Farm Leader Letter is a publication of Kansas Farm Bureau and is published twice each month.

Kansas Farm Bureau represents grassroots agriculture. Established in 1919, this non-profit advocacy organization supports farm families who earn their living in a changing industry.

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Farm Leader *letter*

A publication of Kansas Farm Bureau

Your opportunity to advocate - Day at the Statehouse

Kansas Farm Bureau’s annual legislative networking event, *Day at the Statehouse*, is Jan. 31-Feb. 1 in Topeka. The event provides members the opportunity to meet state policymakers and advocate for member-driven policies beneficial to agriculture and rural Kansas.

“*Day at the Statehouse* is an institution at Kansas Farm Bureau,” Harry Watts, KFB Governmental Relations managing director said. “We have maximized the opportunities for members to voice their concerns to Kansas legislators.”

Wednesday includes a briefing session with KFB lobbyists at the Capitol Plaza Hotel. An issue-surfacing forum has been added and

gives members another chance to provide their input and concerns on policy-related matters. A reception and dinner with state Senators and Representatives will include remarks from Gov. Sebelius.

At breakfast Thursday morning, House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, Ingalls, and Senate President Steve Morris, Hugoton, will address the FB faithful. The new member-driven VOTE FBF fund raising effort will also be unveiled. Members can then travel to the Statehouse by a KFB-provided bus or at their convenience (park free in the new underground lot on the north side) for committee hearings, legislative office visits and House and Senate sessions. For more information, contact KFB Governmental Relations staff at (785) 234-4535.

Winter storm kicks Kansas Farm Bureau into action

KFB worked many avenues towards helping secure a federal disaster declaration after a massive New Year’s Eve storm left some KFB members without electrical power and limited ability to feed and water livestock.

After Gov. Sebelius declared a state of disaster emergency for 44 western Kansas counties impacted by the storm, KFB Governmental Relations staff worked efficiently with the Governor’s Office and Kansas Congressional delegation. On Jan. 7, President Bush signed a major disaster declaration for Kansas, making funds available for recovery efforts in these 44 western Kansas counties.

The preliminary estimated damage to public infrastructure exceeds more than \$360 million

and qualifies Kansas counties for all seven categories of public assistance through FEMA.

Kansas Congressman Jerry Moran is working to obtain assistance from USDA for farmers and ranchers. While FEMA assistance only goes to public entities, Moran sponsored agricultural disaster assistance legislation to aid farmers and ranchers suffering from the effects of natural disaster. The legislation would cover losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007.

Your farm organization was involved from the onset and worked with the Kansas Department of Agriculture. This led to the establishment of a hotline, (785) 274-1446, and website, www.ksready.gov, for livestock producers in need of emergency feed/water assistance.


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about the complexity of this issue on the federal level, and the state's ability to address it without harming business interests across the state. KFB is part of a coalition seeking to direct this effort so businesses will not be harmed by future legislation.

GOVERNMENT CONSOLIDATION: HB 2130 would allow mergers of cities and counties on a simple majority vote. KFB opposes consolidation legislation unless it requires a dual majority vote of residents living in incorporated and unincorporated areas of the governments to be consolidated.

NATURAL RESOURCES: KFB is closely

Rural opportunity a priority

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius is proposing to elevate the needs and concerns of rural Kansas with the creation of a new Office of Rural Opportunity. Sebelius envisions the office coordinating with business and community leaders, residents and groups with a focus on rural issues. In making her announcement Jan. 4 at the Statehouse, the Governor specifically mentioned KFB.

"The governor understands what those of us who have lived here all our lives understand," said Steve Baccus, an Ottawa County farmer who serves as president of KFB. "The culture and values fostered in our small rural communities are worth preserving. We look forward to working with her on this vital component of public policy in Kansas."

The new office will provide assistance with business recruitment and marketing of rural communities as attractive places to move a business or family.

Immigration, taxes and consolidation

IMMIGRATION: While no bills have been introduced, KFB is concerned

monitoring two hearings this month – a Senate committee hearing on a bill that determines how Kansas would receive a settlement from the Republican River Compact with Nebraska if Kansas is awarded damages; and a House committee hearing on a bill that would end intensive groundwater use control areas (IGUCA) in Kansas. KFB supports two bills that would enact a Conservation Retirement Enhancement Program in targeted areas of the state, and staff have testified on two bills about dam safety.

TAX: KFB testified in support of two bills that would repeal the Franchise Tax. It's expected a number of other measures will phase out or increase exemption levels.

For more information go to www.kfb.org/kfbmembers/legislativeupdate.htm.

New ways to input grassroots policy

Farm Bureau members in Kansas have always had opportunities for grassroots influence on the policy development process. This year, members will have three additional chances for grassroots input. The annual *Day at the Statehouse* will now include an issue-surfacing forum.

The On-Line Issue Surfacing form will be available at www.kfb.org until the issue-surfacing period ends in April. This fall, an Online Listening Post Forum will also be up and running on the KFB website.

"At Kansas Farm Bureau, we believe every member should have a voice in the policy development process," said Resolutions Committee Chair Edie Dahlsten. "We'll continue to look for ways to make it easier for each one of our 40,000 members to weigh in on the issues that affect them every day."

Farm flashes

USDA Energy Conference

KFB is a co-sponsor of the fourth annual Kansas USDA Energy Conference at K-State in Manhattan on Jan. 30-31. The energy conference will focus on federal and state programs that can assist ag producers, business owners, local governments, school districts, rural housing interests and energy contractors. Information is available at www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks.

Child Passenger Safety Awareness

Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week is Feb. 11-17. This year's focus is educating the public about the new booster seat law in Kansas. Beginning July 1, fines begin to take effect and the law passes from the educational phase into the enforcement phase. Visit www.kfb.org/safety.

White/Reinhardt Fund

The application deadline for scholarships and mini-grants through the White/Reinhardt Fund for Education is Feb. 15. Scholarships are awarded to five teachers to attend the National Ag in the Classroom Conference and mini-grants are provided to county or state Farm Bureaus to initiate new projects. Applications are available at www.kfb.org/women. The fund honors Linda Reinhardt, Neosho County FB member and former KFB women's committee chair, and Berta White who were leaders in the national effort to improve agricultural literacy.

Nebraska joins BVS

Farm Bureau members of Nebraska will soon be able to participate in the Beef Verification Solution program and have the initial enrollment fee waived. Nebraska joins Mississippi and Kansas Farm Bureaus. More information about BVS can be found at www.kfb.org.

Food Check-Out Week

County and state Farm Bureaus will celebrate Food Check-Out Week Feb. 4-10. The events mark the time of year when the average American family has earned enough income to pay for their family's annual food bill. Food Check-Out Day originated in 1997 with Neosho County FB member and former KFB women's committee chair, Linda Reinhardt.



Ag Advisory Committee meetings

KFB's Livestock Advisory Committee met Jan. 22-23, and the Crop Advisory Committee will meet Feb. 5-6. Outcomes will be forwarded to the Resolutions Committee. For more information, contact KFB Commodities at (785) 587-6117.

Swine Profitability Conference

K-State's annual Swine Profitability Conference is Feb. 6. The conference provides producers information on production management, marketing and business decisions as they relate to capital investment and profitability. Alan Haverkamp, Nemaha County FB member and swine producer, will be one of the presenters. For more information call (785) 532-1251 or (785) 532-1267.

Meet Congresswoman Boyda

New Kansas 2nd District U.S. Representative Nancy Boyda will host an open house and introduce her constituent services staff in Topeka and Pittsburg. Boyda encourages Farm Bureau



Boyda

members to drop by and introduce themselves Monday, Feb. 5 from 10 a.m. to noon at her district offices: 510 SW 10th Ave. in Topeka and Saturday, Feb. 10 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Stillwell Hotel building, 701 N. Broadway, Suite A, Pittsburg.



Right to farm

Does the Kansas right-to-farm law allow farmers complete freedom to do as they please?

It is our state policy to conserve, protect and encourage the development of agriculture farmland and the production of agricultural products. In addition, it gives recognition to those producers right-to-farm. However, these laws are not an absolute protection from nuisance lawsuits.

Kansas' law is fairly typical. It declares that agricultural activities conducted on farmland are presumed to be reasonable and do not constitute a nuisance, public or private, if the following occurs:

- the activity is consistent with good agricultural practices
- it is established prior to surrounding nonagricultural activities
- the activity cannot have a substantial adverse effect on the public health and safety

Keep in mind that such agricultural activity must be undertaken in conformity with federal, state, and local laws and regulations. If so, it is presumed to be good agricultural practice and not adversely affecting the public health and safety.

Next time, we will discuss the pros and cons of the right-to-farm laws. For more information, contact either Mike Irvin, Director of the KFB Legal Foundation, at (785) 587-6621 or Terry Arthur, KFB General Counsel, at (785) 587-6614. For specific situations, consult a lawyer.

New GM benefit for members

Kansas Farm Bureau membership just became more valuable. Two new offers from GM can help members save on their next vehicle.

GM is providing a \$500 private offer towards the purchase or lease of most GM vehicles. They are also offering a \$750 private offer on the purchase or lease of any GM E85 FlexFuel vehicle (E85 is a blend of 15-percent gasoline and 85-percent ethanol).



These two private offers are available through Jan. 3, 2008. To redeem, show your Kansas Farm Bureau membership card at your GM dealership. Members are welcome to combine either offer with most current incentives, including GM Business Choice.

"This adds even more value to our membership and will be a popular benefit for our nearly 110,000 members," Angie Sutton, KFB member relations director says.

GM has a wide range of vehicles to move a farming business forward. With more than 75 models to choose from, nobody offers a better choice of hard-working cars, trucks and SUVs than GM. For more details and disclosures, visit www.gmfleet.com/kfb.

"Kansas Living" en route

Watch the mailbox soon for your Spring '07 *Kansas Living*. This issue takes an in-depth look at KFB's member-driven policy process and how that translates into standing up for your interests in Topeka and Washington.

