

Action aimed at allowing Sunflower power plants

There is movement in Topeka on legislation aimed at allowing Hays-based Sunflower Electric Power to construct a pair of coal-fired electricity generating plants in Finney County. Last fall, Kansas Department of Health & Environment Secretary Roderick Bremby denied Sunflower's construction permit application.

That decision ran counter to a host of long-standing Farm Bureau member-generated policy positions on rural revitalization, electrical generation capacity, energy and the state's competitive advantage.

Kansas Farm Bureau is part of a coalition of agriculture, business, industry, and labor organizations that have come together under the Alliance for Sound Energy Policy, a statewide non-partisan effort to promote environmentally-sound, pro-growth energy policies in Kansas. The Alliance will encourage responsible energy policies that safeguard public health, protect the environment, provide affordable electricity, and integrate renewable energy solutions.

Kansas Farm Bureau's involvement in the Alliance will uphold member-driven policy and at the same time, allow your farm organization to defend concerns related to the potential precedent at stake when an industry meets or exceeds all the technical, scientific and citing requirements for a permit under state and federal regulation and is still denied.

Sec. Bremby's ruling was based on the potential for carbon emissions, despite the fact that carbon dioxide is currently unregulated as a pollutant at the state and federal level. Language in the legislation would limit carbon emission regulation solely to electricity-generating plants.

Catch on to Carbon Credits

Informational meetings continue across Kansas introducing members to a new and innovative method for taking advantage of carbon credits through AgraGate Climate Credits.

Meetings include:

FEBRUARY 11

- Marion, 10 am, Marion City Building, Basement Meeting Room, 203 North 3rd. Co-sponsored by Flint Hills RC&D
- Abilene, 3 pm, Dickinson County Courthouse, Basement Meeting Room, 109 East 1st. Co-sponsored by Flint Hills RC&D
- Jamestown, 7 pm, Community Room. Co-sponsored by Kansas Crossroads RC&D

FEBRUARY 13

- Great Bend, 10 am, Barton County Community College Fine Arts Room F-30, 245 Northeast 30th Road
- Hays, 2:30 pm, Fort Hays State University, Memorial Union Trails Room, 600 Park St.

FEBRUARY 20

- Wichita, 9:30 am, Great Plains Nature Center, 6232 East 29th Street North

FEBRUARY 26

- Hiawatha, 10 am, Fisher Center, 201 East Iowa Street. Co-sponsored by Glacial Hills RC&D
- Emporia, 3:30 pm, Lyon County Extension Office, 2623 West Highway 50. Co-sponsored by Glacial Hills RC&D

MARCH 5

- Colby, 1 pm, Colby Community Building Little Theatre, 285 East 5th
- Hoxie, 7 pm, Midwest Energy Offices, 916 Sheridan Street

MARCH 6

- Dodge City, 9:30 am, Civic Center VIP Room, 2110 1st
- Garden City, 1:30 pm, K-State Experiment Station, 4500 East Mary Street

Additional information is available from Kansas Farm Bureau (toll free) at (888) 811-0002, swaffars@kfb.org or AgraGate (toll free) at (866) 633-6758 or by visiting www.agragate.com.

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MANHATTAN KS 66502
PERMIT NO. 103

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

In this issue

✓ Legislators question trucking regulations

✓ Take a look at KFB's accomplishments for 2007

✓ Action in Topeka aimed at allowing Sunflower power plants

Farm Leader Letter is a publication of Kansas Farm Bureau. It is received in the homes of nearly 40,000 farmers and ranchers who are dedicated to agriculture and rural Kansas.

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.

Editor: Meagan Cramer
E-mail: cramerm@kfb.org

Farm Leader *letter*

A publication of Kansas Farm Bureau®

Legislators question trucking regulations

Farm Bureau members of Kansas used KFB's annual legislative networking event, *Day at the Statehouse*, to explain the importance of maintaining the status quo on trucking transportation to their state legislators Jan. 29-30 in Topeka.

Recently, the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) announced its intention to regulate the first leg of transportation of a commodity as interstate (between states) commerce under the theory that the grain on its way to the elevator will one day wind up in Missouri, New Jersey or China. This designation creates a host of problems and headaches for Kansas producers.

Producer Gary Benteman, grows wheat, corn, milo and soybeans on 550 acres in Washington Co. He's worried about how the new interpretation will affect his farm.

"We don't over-the-road truck and we don't feel that we should have to comply with the same

rules they do." Benteman said. "We'd just like to see the KCC back off and leave things the way they were."

Sen. Mark Taddiken (Clifton) explains producers aren't the only ones worried.

"I'm very concerned that the KCC, a state entity, that's supposed to be helping folks, seem more directed towards enforcing laws that just don't make sense" he said. "I think we're making progress, and I think it is due directly to the involvement of the Kansas Farm Bureau."

KFB has led the charge on opening a dialogue with the KCC, legislative leaders and the congressional delegation on a solution.

Standing Up For You

Look inside to see the multitude of ways your farm organization has supported its members through a full range of programs and services.

Hometown Hope

Edie Dahlsten, McPherson County farmer and vice president of KFB, testified along with Stafford Co. producer Carolyn Dunn during a Senate Commerce Committee Feb. 5 regarding creation of the Kansas Commission on Rural Policy.

This think tank will be tasked with identifying resources that can assist communities seeking to build capacity among local leaders, attract and retain youth and wealth, and equip and encourage entrepreneurs.



KFB
KANSAS FARM BUREAU®
The Voice of Agriculture®

Volume 25/Issue 3 • February 8, 2008
www.kfb.org

KFB 2007 Accomplishments

Five years after the original KFB member-driven, strategic planning process known as the *Roadmap* was created, your farm organization is working hard to reach the goals you set for KFB. The goals of advocacy, relevance, responsiveness, financial independence and communications adopted in 2002 still ring true today.

Last fall, the KFB Board of Directors reaffirmed these goals for an additional five years through 2012. Across these pages you'll find some specific examples of how your farm organization worked to reach these goals in 2007.

- **Movement Made on Disaster Payments**

Staff worked tirelessly with the Kansas congressional delegation to provide disaster assistance for the 2005, 2006 and 2007 crop years following multiple disasters across the state, while also providing on-the-ground support to members affected by severe winter storms, tornados, late freezes and flooding.

- **Membership Numbers Surpass 110,000**

Kansas Farm Bureau counties rallied to surpass last year's membership numbers and topped 110,069 for the 2007 program year. Services to members were upgraded in 2007 to include a toll-free telephone number for benefit inquiries and the option to pay their dues by credit card or debit card.

- **Keeping Members Safe and Aware**

Sixty programs covering farm, traffic, poison and food safety were conducted by staff for nearly 14,000 people. Do-It-Yourself (DIY) programs were developed and allow hands-on volunteers access to 15 different safety program areas including food, fire, farm, sun, poison, bicycle and traffic.

- **Starting Early with Education**

KFB's unique book, *Milk Comes From a Cow?* is aimed at children. Original artwork, fine photography and accurate agriculture information make this a book a top seller. KFB provided five books free of charge to each of the 105 county FBs who then distributed them to schools, public libraries, pediatrician and dentist

offices. The book was so well received, a second printing is anticipated. A second book, *The Soil Neighborhood*, will be released fall 2008.

Staff unveiled five unique programs designed to teach science, technology, history and mathematics. More than 1,000 students have benefited from these programs.

- **Provided Input on Clean Water Act**

Following a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, legislation was filed in both chambers of Congress to subject all bodies of water to Clean Water Act jurisdiction. The impact on Farm Bureau members would be disastrous if farm ponds and ditch water are subject to regulation under the act. Members contacted legislators directly at www.kfb.org to express their opposition to this legislation.

- **Beef Verification Solution Continues to Grow**

Kansas Farm Bureau's *Beef Verification Solution* program continued to grow in 2007, extending the benefits of age and source verification, animal data management and voluntary animal identification compliance to Nebraska, Oklahoma and Colorado. The sale of RFID/AIN ear tags saw a 37 percent increase, and the number of animals enrolled in the privately managed database were up 91 percent compared to 2006.

- **Pushing Hard for Water Conservation**

Kansas Farm Bureau was a strong supporter of the establishment of a Conservation Reserve

Enhancement Program (CREP), a targeted, voluntary water rights retirement program designed to retire water rights in the Upper and middle Arkansas river basin to extend the life of the Ogallala aquifer in southwest Kansas. As passed, the measure creates a voluntary CREP with limited enrollment and funding for the next two years. KFB will continue to work with legislators for expansion of the program.

- **Members Save \$1 Million+**

A General Motors private offer was launched with nearly 2,000 members taking advantage, putting \$1 million dollars back into their pockets. Choice Hotels proved to be another popular benefit saving members about \$23,000. Usage of many other benefits climbed upwards throughout the year.

- **IGUCA Proceedings**

Staff monitored and provided input on behalf of members in the proceedings for the expansion of the Pawnee-Buckner Intensive Groundwater Use Control Area (IGUCA) expansion. Staff continues to monitor the proceedings.

- **In Print**

One of the most effective tools your farm organization uses to share your story with others is the weekly *Insight* column, made available to every news media outlet in Kansas. As of 2007, the twice-monthly hard copy *Farm Leader Letter* is now received in the homes of every voting member of the organization – nearly 40,000. It's a comprehensive, 5-minute read of the important work of your farm organization. Your quarterly membership magazine, *Kansas Living*, featured members sharing their stories in four in-depth themes including member-driven policy, benefits of agriculture-based energy, highlighting the KFB Foundation's new planned giving efforts and detailing member-driven rural development.

- **Farm Bill Remains a Priority**

Throughout the working of the farm bill, staff successfully opposed efforts to reduce or eliminate direct payments, supported creation of a revenue component to ensure agriculture operates with a functional safety net and offers producers a workable alternative to ad-hoc

disaster payments, and supported language that allows dry-land production on acres enrolled in a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

- **Supporting agriculture and leadership**

KFB's Foundation for Agriculture awarded 19 scholarships totaling \$12,500 to students at K-State, Fort Hays State, Collegiate Farm Bureau members, as well as students enrolled in technical schools. Over 200 grants and contributions totaling \$57,606 were awarded to organizations including county Farm Bureaus, 4-H, KSU Agriculture Student Council, KARL, Young Farmers & Ranchers, Excellence in Teaching and the KansasBIO initiative.

- **Saying No to the Kansas Franchise Tax**

Your farm organization played a significant role in the passage of a measure that raises the threshold for the Kansas Franchise Tax to \$1 million of net worth in FY '08 and phases the tax out over the next five years. Passage of this legislation translates into \$135 million in savings for businesses across the state by 2012, including many farm and ranch limited liability companies and partnerships.

- **On the Radio**

Heard twice-daily, six days a week on more than three dozen radio stations across Kansas, KFB's 2-minute *Voice of Agriculture* features the voices of FB members who share their passion for agriculture and rural living. In addition, the weekly 5-minute KFB radio program, *Farm Weekend*, offered listeners an update on the week's news related to Farm Bureau.

- **Agriculture Solutions**

KFB's cutting-edge *Revenue Protection Solution (RPS)* helped participating farmer/rancher members improve their revenue during 2007. RPS allows producers to protect their bottom line. Given current market levels, farm operations have in excess of \$100 per acre at risk unless price is protected. Agriculture Solution's tools and products can protect uninsured and unhedged price risk and allow for secure cash flows by establishing minimum hedged and insured bottom line. The farmer

maintains flexibility on delivery and capture benefit of higher prices.

- **Supporting Ethanol and Biodiesel**

KFB supported legislation giving a 6.5 cent per-gallon tax credit to fuel retailers who sell enough ethanol to meet an annually increasing Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS). The law also gives a 3 cent per-gallon credit for each gallon of biodiesel sold by a retailer. The law is an attempt to build the necessary infrastructure for ethanol and biodiesel throughout the state.

- **P&E Committee Takes Giant Strides**

Topping the successes of the 10-member Promotion and Education committee includes creation of a table-top display personalized to each county, a general organization brochure and a DVD featuring photos that depict Farm Bureau at its best. A traveling display with a small refrigerator and cabinet showcasing ag-based products found in everyone's home was created.

- **On Television**

In 2007, Kansas Farm Bureau produced a half-hour television documentary that offered a compelling case that small, dwindling, rural Kansas towns can reinvent themselves. *Rural Kansas: Hope Endures* features the stories of a number of active Farm Bureau members and aired statewide on public television in Kansas.

- **Developing Membership**

In 2007, KFB's Collegiate Farm Bureau program added a seventh chapter. A new scholarship program was initiated and awards totaled \$4,000. Opportunities for the collegiate FBs included a collegiate-level discussion meet, participation in KFB events and involvement with county Farm Bureaus. Five Farm Bureau members of Kansas participated in the inaugural year of the FB Leadership Experience. The program is for emerging county Farm Bureau leaders with the potential for providing exceptional leadership in their county and state. Participation in recognition programs

through KFB hit an all-time high with 140 Century Farms honored, 100 Farm Family recipients recognized and 100 counties awarded Awards for Excellence.

- **Our Food is Affordable**

Participation in KFB's *Food Check-Out Day* included 91 percent of county Farm Bureaus working with Ronald McDonald House Charities, creating grocery store displays/food giveaways, developing school programs, conducting radio and television interviews and presenting a display at the State Capitol.

- **State FB Women Plant the Seeds**

The state committee of Farm Bureau Women developed and implemented a health care initiative aimed at informing members about the dangers of overexposure to the sun.

- **YF&R Builds On Their Kansas Roots**

The active Young Farmers & Ranchers committee hosted 330 registrants for the 2007 YF&R Leaders Conference, started a KFB Photo Contest with 63 total entries, served breakfast to 880 people at Kansas Junior Livestock Show, and packed 512 *Food 4 Kids* backpacks at Kansas Food Bank in Wichita.

- **Online**

The twice-weekly KFB e-news provides a real-time update of the important advocacy work of KFB.

- **Protecting members in the courtroom**

KFB's Legal Foundation has kept its eye on the prairie dog case in Logan Co. Recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reintroduced black-footed ferrets into the county without the knowledge of adjacent landowners or Farm Bureau. Staff continues to push for landowners and ranchers to keep the ability to manage their land as they've done for decades. After being asked to assist with a dispute in Barton County, staff intervened and asked the county commission to follow state law that says all agricultural use is exempt from zoning and regulations by local government. The commission agreed.