

Farm Bureau maintains strong State Fair presence

Some recent decisions made by the leadership of the Kansas State Fair and Kansas Farm Bureau will result in a name change at a State Fair venue.

For years, Kansas Farm Bureau had an ongoing agreement with the Kansas State Fair under which the farm organization shared the 10-day operational costs, or about \$6,000, for the performance arena and access to backstage storage.

The decision to relinquish the naming rights to the arena was made when the Kansas State Fair presented KFB a proposal for a three-year commitment with a significant price hike, effective this year. When faced with an increase of that magnitude, the KFB Board of Directors made a logical, common-sense business decision.

The State Fair arena may have a different

FB couples named KS Master Farmers, Farm Homemakers

Six Farm Bureau couples have been named 2006 Kansas Master Farmers and Master Farm Homemakers in recognition of their leadership in agriculture, environmental stewardship and service to their communities.

The six couples include Marion and Juanita Alpers, Stafford County, Harvey and Nancy Jo Fasse, Atchison County, Shirley and Richard Felts, Montgomery County, Roger and Sue Pine, Douglas County, Clinton and Bonnie Russell, Edwards County, and Ernest and Barbara Schlatter, Smith County.

The award program dates back to 1927 and is sponsored by Kansas State University Research and Extension and *Kansas Farmer* magazine. The couples were honored at a banquet March 16 in Junction City.

name, but Farm Bureau's involvement with the State Fair will continue to be strong and visible. In 2006 KFB's Ag Central debuted with a hands-on, interactive series of displays, manned by real, live farmers and ranchers, aimed at making fairgoers aware of their daily connection with agriculture.

"Kansas Farm Bureau made a commitment to provide agriculture education programming in its regular exhibit space at the Fair in 2006," Angie Sutton, Director of Member Services and Promotion said. "This new focus was met with enthusiasm from teachers, parents and fair-goers so our intent is to significantly increase efforts in this area."

Kansas Farm Bureau will continue as a Kansas State Fair day-sponsor on the second Friday of the Fair.



Jon and Rhonda Bartley, Pottawatomie County, receive a Tru-Test scale head and AllFlex EID reader from Stephen Bigge and Glenn Brunkow, KFB Beef Verification Solutions, during K-State's Cattleman's Day on March 2 in Manhattan. Prizes were provided by Zeitlow Distributing, McPherson.

KFB Calendar

March 18-24
Ag Week

March 18-24
National Poison Prevention Week

March 27-29
Mid-America Farm Expo, Salina

March 28-April 1
Farm Family of the Year Ag Tour

In this issue

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✓ Six KFB couples honored for leadership and service

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.

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Farm Leader Letter

A publication of Kansas Farm Bureau

More groundwater restrictions on the way?

Kansas Farm Bureau is closely watching proceedings that could lead to additional water restrictions in the Pawnee Valley Intensive Groundwater Use Control Area (IGUCA) in Hodgeman and Ness counties. A hearing was held in Larned during the week of March 12 and more discussion is scheduled for later this month.

The current IGUCA was the mechanism used by the state to shut down the additional appropriation of water. What's being proposed is an expansion of the current IGUCA boundaries, which in all likelihood, will result in additional restrictions.

"The specifics of the additional restrictions remain very much up in the air," said Kent Askren, KFB Water Resources Specialist, who sat in on the Larned hearing. "But it could be across-the-board cuts, priority-based administration or some as-yet-specified "reasonableness" determination whereby water

rights could be cut."

Farm Bureau members have lined up on both sides of this debate. If water use cutbacks are implemented it could directly impact the bottom line for the producer, landlord and the entire community which benefits from irrigated production. On the other side, those having difficulties in satisfying their water rights because of over-development, could benefit from cutbacks of more junior water rights.

Individuals who want to submit evidence or comment may do so at the informal public comment session at 7 p.m., March 27 at Larned City Hall, 417 Broadway.

Kansas Farm Bureau does not have formal member-driven policy on the issue, but will continue to study and monitor. Those impacted are encouraged to forward their concerns to their district's Natural & Environmental Resources or Resolutions Committee members.

Farmers speak out on FSA/NRCS consolidations

Public hearings on the Farm Service Agency plan to board up 11 county offices across Kansas as a cost savings move are over. The FSA plans to co-locate with another USDA sub-agency, the Natural Resources & Conservation Service in Barber, Chase, Comanche, Elk, Geary, Gove, Johnson, Leavenworth, Morton, Wabaunsee and Woodson counties.

"The one common theme voiced at all these public hearings is the long overdue need for

FSA to upgrade its hardware and software," Terry Holdren, KFB National Director of Governmental Relations said. "If FSA could serve its farmer customers with state-of-the-art technology, office closings become a moot point."

The ball is now back in the court of the state FSA leadership. There's precedent in other states to change their office closing plans, based on input received during the public hearing process.


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HEALTHCARE:

House Republicans have introduced their approach to healthcare reform which involves a

four-tiered approach that reforms Medicaid and Medicare and focuses on increasing access to insurance products while decreasing costs to consumers. This is a significant issue for FB members in Kansas. GR staff has been in consultation with legislative leaders and will closely monitor the plan as it progresses.

LANDOWNERS' RIGHTS: A bill that addresses the definition of "urban" blight, is being considered by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill contains specific exemptions for agricultural properties. Baring significant amendments, KFB will remain neutral on the measure.

NATURAL RESOURCES: KFB continues to press for enactment of the Conservation Reserve Enhance Program (CREP) proposed along the Ark River in Western Kansas. KFB supports the establishment of this voluntary program. KFB is participating in a working group to resolve differences between non-profit utilities (NPU's), which supply gas for irrigation from the Hugoton Field, and gas gathering and production companies. Some consensus has been reached and we will continue to work toward a solution that is beneficial to irrigators in the region. KFB testified in support of SB 89, which designates the distribution of potential settlement monies in the Republican River lawsuit with Nebraska.

DRIVERS' LICENSES: KFB will testify in support of SB 294, which establishes a graduated drivers' licensing structure. We will seek clarification about the ages designated for full licensure.

TAX: KFB continues to have significant concerns about the potential property tax shift that could be created by a proposal to cap residential property taxes for senior citizens.

County Presidents on the Hill

Sixty-five county Farm Bureaus were represented by 118 farmers and ranchers during the 2007 Kansas Farm Bureau County Presidents Trip to Washington, D.C., March 11-15. Key issues including the 2007 farm bill, trade and transportation, were addressed by legislative, regulatory and industry experts.

"We put together a program that exposed our leadership to important issues, and gave them opportunities to spread the Farm Bureau message to key policymakers in Washington," Harry Watts, KFB Governmental Relations managing director said.

Tuesday's breakfast included remarks from Kansas Representatives Moran, Tiaht and Boyda. Members then joined Missouri Farm Bureau delegates for the AgriTalk radio program featuring USDA Secretary Mike Johanns, USDA Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Bruce Knight and EPA Counselor Jon Scholl. Political analyst and editor of *The Cook Political Report*, Charles E. Cook, spoke about current political trends, and New Zealand's Ambassador Roy Ferguson discussed his country's move to a system without subsidy programs. Tuesday night's reception included remarks from Senators Brownback and Roberts.

At breakfast Wednesday morning, former Governor Bill Graves, president of the American Trucking Association, discussed current transportation issues, followed by a briefing on key legislative issues from AFBF staffers. KFB's Governmental Relations National Director, Terry Holdren then concluded with the final legislative briefing. A farm bill and commodity-title roundtable included leadership from the National Association of Wheat Growers, National Corn Growers Association and the National Sorghum Producers. Members then heard from AFBF policy staffers.

The event concluded with KFB leadership making various visits to legislators and advocating for KFB's member-driven policy.

Farm flashes

Farm Families head to California

Ten Kansas farm families will embark on a five-day journey to experience California agriculture first-hand in late March. These families were chosen as their district's representatives in the 2006 Farm Family of the Year program. The tour kicks off on March 28 and includes stops in Monterrey, Modesto, Napa Valley and San Francisco, returning to Kansas on April 1. The families will be hosted by several CAFB members on their farms and in their businesses.

Celebrate National Ag Day

Ag Day is celebrated on March 21 – the first day of spring. National Ag Day falls during National Ag Week, March 18-26. It's a day to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture. For more information, visit www.agday.org.



Ottawa Co. FB builds relationships

Ottawa County held Legislative Coffees at Tescott & Minneapolis in February. State Representative Elaine Bowers, State Senator Pete Brungardt and local Board of Education member Kathy Martin all attended.

Area water basin concerns?

KFB has been asked for recommendations of concerned farmers and ranchers willing to represent the Cimarron, Upper Republican, Solomon and Kansas/Lower Republican basins. More information can be found at www.kwo.org/BACs/BAC_Membership. The deadline is April 2. Please contact KFB's Natural Resources Division at (785) 234-4535 to have KFB provide a letter of recommendation on your behalf.

KFB members serve on beef board

Ken Stielow, Russell County, was named 2007 Chairman of the Cattlemen's Beef Board. Dana Hauck, Ottawa County, and Don Hullman, Pratt County, will also serve on the executive board.

Greenwood Co. works with grocer

Greenwood County FB has contracted with G&W Foods of Eureka to give all Farm Bureau members a 5 percent discount on grocery items by simply showing their KFB membership card.

Workshops for cattle managers

KFB and others will host nine K-State Cattle Risk Management Workshops during the month of March. Participants will gain hands-on experience in using Livestock Risk Protection Insurance, forward cash contracts, futures contracts and options on futures. Go to www.agmanager.info for more information.

Farm profitability seminars

Throughout the month of March, KFB-sponsored farm profitability seminars will feature a number of timely issues including the 2007 farm bill, private property rights, weather forecasts and a look at '07 grain markets. For more information go to www.kfb.org/news/seminars.

Northwest Kansas rural experience

Northwest Kansas Rural Experience: Agri-Tourism Part 2 will be April 4 at the Gateway Convention Center in Oberlin. The workshop will host speakers in the agri-tourism field that will provide insight into the business. For additional information, call Thomas County Extension office at (785) 460-4582 or Western Prairie RC&D office at (785) 462-2602.



Easements

You may be one of many Kansas landowners who have granted an easement across your property. Perhaps you will be asked for an easement in the future. These easements could include a transmission or water line or even a natural gas or oil pipeline. In fact, there are a number of major pipeline/ electrical transmission projects throughout the United States, and many have started or are in the process of crossing our state.

Our goal is to bring awareness and educate landowners on their rights when a land agent approaches to acquire an easement. Acquisition of easements often raises many questions – "Why did the company choose this route? Why is the easement needed? What is the procedure? How will I be compensated? How will the land be restored after construction? Can I use the land after the construction is completed? In the next issue we will explore easements in more depth.

For more information, contact Mike Irvin, Director of the KFB Legal Foundation at (785) 587-6621 or Terry Arthur, General Counsel of KFB at (785) 587-6614. Please visit the KFB Legal Foundation web site, <http://www.kfb.org>. For specific situations be sure to consult a lawyer.



Terry Arthur speaks at a recent Cowley County FB Easement Seminar.

KFB Board sets investment management direction

The KFB Board of Directors has set the course for future leadership and daily management of the organization's investments. The Board has engaged John Graham, Manhattan, to serve as a consultant/advisor to the KFB Investments Committee. The committee is composed of five members of the KFB Board of Directors and staffed by David Gaume, KFB Senior Trader. The committee is charged with management of *Bountiful Trust*, the permanent endowment created in 2001, following the sale of the KFB Life Insurance Company.

Graham brings more than 40 years of investment management experience to the task. He also has 36 years experience of undergraduate and graduate teaching experience at Kansas State University, with emphasis on investments, financial planning, capital budgeting and modern portfolio theory.

Graham is no stranger to KFB, having served as Executive Vice President/CEO of Kansas Farm Bureau Services and Affiliates from 1979 through 1999. Since retiring from KFB in 1999, Graham has maintained his teaching duties and offered free-lance investment management consulting services.

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