



White Church Elementary School 4th graders enjoy pizza served to more than 600 school children and educators from across the Kansas City metropolitan area March 27. This event marked the Kansas/Missouri observance of National Agriculture Day (Ag Day), in Bonner Springs.

County Farm Bureaus celebrate ag safety awareness



County Farm Bureau organizations used Ag Safety Awareness Week, March 4-10, to recognize the many positive steps the agricultural community takes to ensure safer farms and ranches. Above and left, Barton County Farm Bureau hosted a Safety Day on Feb. 21. Pictured here, students leave the Barton County



Fire Department Smoke House. Above and right, Gray County Farm Bureau conducted a CPR class for area residents March 5. Pictured (left to right) Gray County Farm Bureau Vice President Ken Penner and EMT Midge Holsten practice compressions.



Cherokee County Farm Bureau sponsored an Agriculture Technology tour for Riverton and Columbus FFA chapters March 6. Students toured area farms and visited the Fort Scott Community College John Deere Technology Center. Pictured here, students listen to a technology center student talk about the computer system used to detect mechanical problems.

KFB Calendar

March 28-April 1
Farm Family of the Year Tour

April 14-15
Young Farmers and Ranchers State Committee Meeting

April 30-May 1
KFB Board Meeting, Manhattan

May 10-12
3i Farm Show, Garden City

Kansas Farm Bureau

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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

Possible water use cutback talks continue

Kansas Farm Bureau continues to closely monitor and attend proceedings that could lead to additional water restrictions in the Pawnee Valley Intensive Groundwater Use Control Area (IGUCA) in Hodgeman and Ness counties. The meetings, initiated by the Chief Engineer, Division of Water Resources, began March 12, and continued with an informal public comment session March 27.

If Chief Engineer David Pope rules in favor of expanding the boundaries of the Pawnee Valley IGUCA, a second meeting would occur later this fall and focus on corrective controls.

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.

Implementation of a voluntary, incentive based water conservation program – such as the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – could be a possible solution.

“CREP is tailor made for situations like this. It would allow water-rights holders to be part of the solution and could help soften the blow caused by possible water right cutbacks,” says Kent Askren, Kansas Farm Bureau water resources specialist. “It would also ensure that agricultural producers and landowners water-

resource rights are adequately protected.” CREP is currently being debated in the legislature.

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.

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.

CREP creeps along in Topeka

A bill that would establish a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, a voluntary program that would permanently retire water rights and idle land for 15 years in the upper Arkansas River Valley, passed the state Senate and is awaiting action in the House.

The program would allow for gradual implementation, would not create a net increase in idle farm ground, and would provide \$155 million in federal funding to the region.

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Gary Benteman, Washington County FB president, raises a question during the Agritalk radio program, March 13 while attending the County Presidents Trip to Washington, D.C. A delegation of leaders from KFB recently traveled to the nation's capital to lobby elected Representatives and Senators on funding for retaining and attracting youth, leadership training, providing incentives for entrepreneurial activities and capturing/preserving local wealth.

Statehouse Update

As you read this newsletter, the state legislature is headed for first adjournment, scheduled April 3 or 4. The budget committees will return to Topeka in a of couple weeks, and all 165 elected state lawmakers will reconvene for what's slated to be a 3-day wrapup session on April 25.

TAX: KFB testified favorably on HB 2476, a measure that would provide tax incentives for renewable fuels infrastructure, in the Senate Tax Committee.

LANDOWNERS' RIGHTS: SB 296, a bill that addresses the definition of "urban" blight and contains specific exemptions for agricultural properties, was defeated in the Senate Judiciary Committee. After several amendments, the measure failed to gain a second within committee. KFB does not expect the measure to receive further action this session.

DRIVERS' LICENSES: SB 294, which establishes a graduated drivers' licensing structure, was heard in the House Transportation Committee

NATURAL RESOURCES: SB 15, which provides a cost-share program for dam rehabilitation, was rereferred back to the Senate Natural Resources Committee. The bill will return back to the full Senate for consideration.

Why the high fertilizer costs?

Spring planting has brought with it some higher than expected fertilizer prices. KFB policy research analyst Tanner Lucas dug beyond the sticker shock to find out why.

Initially the price hike could be explained by lingering effects of Hurricane Katrina. This phenomenon effectively eliminated production in a region where a large portion of the country's fertilizer is produced, leading to a severe shortage. The volatile natural gas market, as it always does, responded to the shortage by substantially increasing prices for this now valuable commodity. To date, U.S. production capabilities have not come back on board.

A major driver of increased fertilizer prices at this moment is the increase in demand due to record levels of corn acreage being planted this spring. Many of these acres are replacing soybean acres, which traditionally rely on far less nitrogen in the soil. Thus the current prices relative to the cost of producing nitrogen is due to market fundamentals, i.e. supply and demand.

Forecasting this issue into the future, however, may give some cause for hope. Many economists have indicated the market will eventually "solve" this problem. If profit opportunities exist, the market will ultimately find them and exploit them so profits go back down to zero. However, it will take time due to the logistics of importing more fertilizer.

Farm flashes

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.

Three great deals for members

As a member of Kansas Farm Bureau you have access to money saving benefits and services from affinity partners like Choice Hotels, General Motors and John Deere. For a complete list of these benefits log on to www.kfb.org/memberbenefits.

Economic development conference

The Kansas Department of Commerce and others are hosting the 2007 Kansas Community Economic Development Conference April 11-12 in Lindsborg. Topics include rural economies, geographic information systems and state-level opportunities. For more information, call (785) 864-3701 or go to www.ipsr.ku.edu/conferen.kcccd.

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.

USDA Energy Workshops

USDA Rural Development will present a series of regional workshops covering USDA's energy programs in April. The workshops will explain funding opportunities for energy projects eligible under USDA's Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement Program, the Community Facility Program and the Value-Added Producer Grant Program. All workshops are free and open to the public. For additional information call 785-271-2700 or visit www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks.

2006 custom rates available online

Providers and users of custom services who want to know what is considered fair compensation for custom work can view the 2006 Kansas Custom Rates publication at www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Kansas/Publications/Custom_Rates/custom06.pdf. Rates are based on data collected by Kansas Agricultural Statistics from approximately 1,600 custom operators, coops, elevators, farmers and ranchers.

Online cattle sales for BVS customers

Beef Verification Solution customers can now market their cattle online through the *Beef Verification Solution Cattle Listing*. This is a free service for BVS participants, and will allow cattle buyers to view listings 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For more information, visit www.agsolusa.com/bvs/CattleListing.htm.

Member represents soybean industry

John Wray, Franklin County, joined nearly 100 other participants at a Washington, D.C. seminar organized by the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) this month.



Easements

An easement is a legal right to use someone's land for a particular purpose. It can involve a general or specific portion of the property. For example, the municipal water company may have an easement to run water pipes under your property. Your name is on the deed (you're the title holder) and you still own the property, but the water company has the right to use a part of it for its pipes (i.e. construction and maintenance). Easements are usually in writing and recorded at the county register of deeds office.

Easements are part and parcel of the land they affect. They don't change when the property changes hands. Subsequent owners are obliged to let whoever owns the easement to use the property for its stated purpose.

Whoever owns the property may not interfere with the intent of a legal easement. If, for example, the electric company has wires strung across its right of way, you cannot take them down or block their path. A property owner who does interfere with an easement can be liable to the easement owner for any damage he causes.

For more information, contact either Mike Irvin, Director of the KFB Legal Foundation at (785) 587-6621 or Terry Arthur, General Counsel of KFB at (785) 587-6614. For specific situations be sure to consult a lawyer.

Moran says 'not so fast' on Kansas FSA office closings

No sooner than USDA's Farm Service Agency finished a round of public hearings in the 11 Kansas communities where they propose closing county offices, they encountered public opposition from an influential member of Congress.



Moran

"FSA has not provided adequate assurance that this plan will result in better services for producers or be a significant savings of taxpayer money," said Rep. Jerry Moran (Kansas). "Furthermore, it is premature to close FSA county offices before Congress writes the 2007 farm bill, when future administrative and program needs will be decided."

During their visit to Capitol Hill earlier this month, dozens of Kansas county FB presidents lobbied for those very administrative and program needs, urging members of Congress to beef up investment of hardware and software systems in county FSA offices, which, if done effectively, could render the office closure question irrelevant.

Kansas Farm Bureau has been involved in this effort since late 2005, when FSA first proposed closing 29 of its county offices.

"Farm Weekend" on your radio

Five minutes of the Farm Bureau news of the week... on your radio... on the weekend. News from Washington, Topeka and more often than you may think – from your farm. Made available to every radio station in Kansas, *Farm Weekend* airs mainly early mornings Saturday or Sunday. If you don't catch it on the air, listen each week online at www.kfb.org.

