

KFB engaged in cattle industry deal ramifications

News that Brazil-based JBS S.A. intends to add National Beef, Smithfield Beef and Five Rivers Cattle Company to its beef processing business in the United States has some Kansas cattle producers concerned and KFB engaged on their behalf.

Total cost of the acquisitions is set at \$1.7 billion. The deal could take six months to a year to complete, according to officials with the various companies involved. National Beef operates beef plants in Dodge City, Liberal and Kansas City, Kan.

While JBS is a market-based, for-profit enterprise and saw the opportunity to expand its business, this proposed transaction has the potential to drastically reshape the American cattle industry. The U.S. Department of Justice will first have to approve this transaction before becoming official.

KFB will use that time to elevate the discussion about the potential real-world ramifications of this transaction on the lives of family farmers and their rural Kansas communities.

“The timing of this announcement is

fortuitous,” said Steve Baccus, a grain farmer from Ottawa County, who serves as president of Kansas Farm Bureau. “This week, more than five dozen county Farm Bureau presidents from Kansas were on Capitol Hill. We were not shy in sharing our concerns with our elected leaders in Washington.”

“Cattle producers will have some legitimate concerns about what this may mean in terms of industry consolidation and the potential for decreased competition,” said Mark Nelson, KFB Director of Commodities. “We’ve combined the third, fourth and fifth largest packers into one, so we’ve just taken some bidders out of the market.”

Officials of JBS S.A. have indicated publicly the company has no intentions of closing any beef packing plant in the United States, though they admitted there is more processing capacity than there is a supply of cattle.

Working with our partners at AFBE, KFB is committed to active involvement in these discussions to protect the interests of our membership and of the American cattle feeding industry.

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KFB Calendar

March 16-22

Ag Week

March 16-22

Poison Prevention Week

March 31-April 4

Farm Family Trip to California

April 9-10

County Professional Leadership Conference, Manhattan

County Women’s Chair Conference, Manhattan



Sedgwick Co. FB took a bus full of members to the Port of Catoosa in Oklahoma in February. Members learned where their grain went after it leaves the co-op. The group also toured the facility and watched as a barge of fertilizer was unloaded. A video and slides were shown to explain how the facility was developed and what the plans were for the future.

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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®

Kansas Senate unanimous in support of KFB member-driven rural development initiative

A unanimous vote in the Kansas Senate (40-0) on a KFB-inspired rural development initiative is aimed at providing hope for withering rural Kansas hometowns. The proposal will create a ‘think tank’ whose main purpose will be to help revitalize rural towns across Kansas by focusing on building local leaders, attracting and retaining youth, equipping entrepreneurs and retaining local wealth.

This legislation, the result of KFB member-driven and adopted policy, will allow innovative, creative ways to foster entrepreneurship that will grow existing businesses and create new ones in rural Kansas to provide essential off-farm employment.

“This unanimous Senate vote sends the

strongest possible signal that help for our hometowns is on the way,” said Steve Baccus, an Ottawa County farmer who serves as president of Kansas Farm Bureau. “Strong, vibrant, rural Kansas communities will be a tremendous shot in the arm for those who want to build their lives on the farm.”

The amount of wealth expected to transfer out of small, rural Kansas communities in the next generation is in the hundreds of billions. This initiative will create mechanisms to capture a small percentage of that wealth, that would provide the wherewithal for communities to implement new and innovative ways to secure future prosperity.

Now it’s on to the Kansas House, where similar strong support is expected.

Energy policy maneuverings in Topeka

Last week the Kansas House and Senate adopted a conference committee report that would prevent Dept. of Health & Environment Secretary Rod Bremby from again denying a permit to Hays-based Sunflower Electric Power to construct a pair of coal-fired electric plants in Finney County. The bill has been sent to Gov. Sebelius, where a veto is expected.

It takes a two-thirds majority in each chamber to over-ride a Governor’s veto and the search for those votes is underway.

Your farm organization has been hard at work since Bremby’s initial decision last fall which

runs counter to a host of long-standing FB member-generated policy positions on rural revitalization, electrical generation capacity, energy and the state’s competitive advantage.

KFB is part of an 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 encourages responsible energy policies that safeguard public health, protect the environment, provide affordable electricity and integrate renewable energy solutions.

KFB
KANSAS FARM BUREAU®
The Voice of Agriculture®

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Immigration reform in Topeka: FB has a better idea

FB member-driven and adopted policy does not promote or condone the presence of illegal aliens in the United States. Similarly, the farmers and ranchers of the organization do not support the extension of social welfare or educational benefits to illegal aliens.

This policy position is a result of a consensus-driven effort that reflects the beliefs and thought processes of farmer/rancher members of Farm Bureau across the nation.

Because of its complex and far-reaching nature, FB members believe it's an issue best suited for debate and resolution at the federal level. U.S. law already contains severe penalties for those who would knowingly hire illegal aliens and those provisions should be enforced.

Advocating for your policy in Washington



Rooks Co. FB President Dana Pieper talks about livestock management with WIBW's Kelly Lenz during the County President's Trip to Washington D.C. More than 150 Farm Bureau members of Kansas brought your member-driven policy message to Capitol Hill during the trip.

Sixty six county Farm Bureaus were represented by 150 farmers and ranchers during the 2008 Kansas Farm Bureau County Presidents Trip to Washington, D.C., March 9-13. Key issues including federal transportation issues, the farm bill, animal welfare and water 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," said Harry Watts, KFB Governmental Relations managing director.

Participants heard from Kansas Representatives Moran, Tiahrt, Moore and Boyda as well as

Some new legislation in Topeka, however, attempts to deal with illegal immigration by unjustly hampering small business owners. The measures would penalize businesses by potentially revoking their state-granted business license. Since these proposals could have a direct impact on FB members, your farm organization is involved.

KFB and other agriculture and business organizations are supporting some better ideas in Topeka that will target the problem and not law-abiding businesses: The state should provide businesspeople a clear understanding of the rules. Second, target and punish employers who intentionally hire and abuse undocumented workers. Finally, those who perpetuate the use of fake ID documents must be brought to justice.

Senators Brownback and Roberts. Ottawa Co. grain farmer and FB president, Steve Baccus, along with members Dana Pieper, Rooks Co., and Brett Skillman, Coffey Co. discussed timely ag topics during a live radio broadcast with WIBW's Kelly Lenz. Members heard about the presidential race from political analyst and syndicated columnist Mark Shields.

The event concluded with KFB leadership making visits to legislators and advocating for KFB's member-driven policy including discussion of the farm bill where they asked for maintenance of direct payments, making no additional cuts to crop insurance and keeping the safety net intact.

Farm flashes

Register today: Wheat Quality Tour

Register today for the Wheat Quality Council's HRW Wheat Tour of Kansas May 5-8. The first five members who register at www.kfb.org/commodities will get their \$250 registration fee paid by KFB. Registration closes April 18 or when all five spots are filled.

Celebrate National Ag Week

National Agriculture Week is March 16-22 with National Agriculture Day being celebrated March 20. Each year the observation is on or around the first day of spring and is a time to celebrate American agriculture and honor the people who work to food, clothe and fuel the country and abroad. For more information, visit www.agday.org.



Women going to Kentucky

Sixteen Farm Bureau women from Kansas will attend the national leadership conference in Louisville April 25-28 with more than 600 Farm Bureau women from across the country. Topics include leadership, communications, public policy and marketing.

Ag futures market tour

Join the KFB Futures Market Tour July 8-10, and visit the largest agricultural futures markets in the U.S. – the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and the Chicago Board of Trade. Tours include education seminars from market participants and regulators. For more information, contact Mark Nelson at (785) 587-6103. Members can register at www.kfb.org.

Public comments on CRP

USDA will hold a public meeting March 26 from 9-11 a.m. on proposed changes to managed haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land at KSU Aggie Research Center, 1232 240th Avenue in Hays. FSA is proposing rule changes to the frequency that managed haying and grazing is allowed on land that is enrolled in CRP. Public comments must be received by April 22 to: MHG EAs, Geo-Marine Incorporated, 2713 Magruder Blvd., Suite D, Hampton, Va. 23666-1572 or go to <http://public.geo-marine.com>.

Emergency loans for Dec. storms

Emergency loans through FSA are available to help qualified producers recover from production and physical losses due to the severe winter storms occurring Dec. 6-19. For more information, contact the FSA office at your local USDA Service Center.

Harvey Co. receives mini grant

Harvey Co. FB is one of 27 recipients of the White-Reinhardt mini grant for 2008. The group will use the money to help fund construction of a chicken coop for a local ag-tech charter school. The fund honors Linda Reinhardt, Neosho Co. FB member and former KFB women's committee chair.

Symposium on beef cattle welfare

K-State's Beef Cattle Institute will provide a venue in which all stakeholders in beef cattle production can meet and discuss the many welfare-related topics concerning the raising, feeding and harvesting of beef cattle at the International Symposium on Beef Cattle Welfare May 28-30 in Manhattan. For more information visit www.isbcw.beefcattleinstitute.org.



Agritourism

What is it? Agricultural tourism is the act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation.

Agritourism is a growing industry in the U.S. and presents a number of opportunities for Kansas farmers. It is one alternative for improving the incomes and potential economic viability of small farms and rural communities. Some forms of agri-tourism enterprises are well developed in our state, such as:

- Corn Maizes
- Hay rack rides
- Pick-your-own crop harvests
- Guided hunting excursion
- School group tours
- Bed & breakfast operations
- Farm and ranch recreation

Are there any risk/liability issues for the operator? The Kansas Agritourism Promotion Act became law on July 1, 2004. The purpose of the act was to promote rural tourism and economic development by encouraging owners or operators of farms or ranchers to invite members of the public to view and participate in such operations and attractions for recreational or entertainment purposes.

The act provides two primary benefits to those who meet its requirements: limits liability for injury or death to participants, and tax credits of up to 20% of the increased cost for liability insurance.

Leadership training for women's chairs

Current county Farm Bureau women's chairs or designees are encouraged to attend *Planting Seeds to Harvest Leaders*, a leadership development opportunity brought to you by the state committee of Farm Bureau Women. The program is scheduled for April 9-10 in Manhattan.

Terry Gilbert, a Kentucky farmer and chair of the AFB women's leadership committee; Linda Reinhardt, Neosho Co. FB member and former KFB women's committee chair; and Helen Norris, Sumner Co. FB member and KFB women's committee chair, will participate in a panel discussion highlighting their experiences in leadership roles and networking. Other workshop topics include communicating the ag story, influencing the political process, developing leaders and ag education.

Registration is \$65 through your county FB office. Visit www.kfb.org and click on "KFB Women" for more information.

Your 'voice' on the radio

Heard twice daily, six days a week on 40 radio stations statewide, KFB's 2-minute *Voice of Agriculture* features the voices of FB members who share their passion for agriculture and rural living. FB members heard recently include:

- GT Barnes from Ness Co. talks about the economic sense of caring for his livestock
- Dave and Leota Casement in Chautauqua Co. invited 90 3rd graders for a day of fun on their farm

Visit www.kfb.org for a complete list of radio stations which air the *Voice of Agriculture*.

