

# More than a drop in the bucket

Close to three years of work are starting to pay off as the Chautauqua County Farm Bureau has secured a \$1.2 million water infrastructure project championed by their U.S. Congressman, Todd Tiahrt.

Leading the charge for rural water

infrastructure has been Chautauqua Co. FB board member Libby Long who has helped host Congressional staffers and used County FB Presidents Trips to Washington to make their case.

Due to shallow wells and oil and gas exploration, much of the groundwater in the area is contaminated.

“Lots of people have to haul water for their drinking water for household use. It’s a terrible expense, with fuel as it is today and the upkeep of trucks,” says Long. “When the drought was really bad, lots of people didn’t have water for their cattle, so they hauled water.”

The landowners hope to begin construction this fall. It’s a classic example of how grassroots Farm Bureau advocacy works.



Libby Long, Chautauqua Co., thanks U.S. Congressman Todd Tiahrt for his help in securing a \$1.2 million water infrastructure project during the County President’s Trip to D.C. March 13.

# Leadership and learning in Louisville

Eighteen Farm Bureau women of Kansas attended the National Women’s Leadership Conference in Louisville, Ky., in April. Nearly 700 conference attendees heard sessions on family business dynamics, grassroots political advocacy, challenges and opportunities in animal agriculture, women’s health issues and more.

“Women have so much to offer in agricultural circles,” Norris said. “Research has shown that women are very believable as advocates for agriculture. We have a big role to play, and sometimes I think we overlook that as women.”

Sumner County producer and Kansas Farm Bureau Women’s Chair, Helen Norris, enjoyed sharpening her skills on a variety of issues and encourages others to join the cause.



Attendees to the National Women’s Leadership Conference from Kansas included: back row (l-r) Sue May, Decatur Co.; Darleen Flentie, Nemaha Co.; Ginger Roberts, Allen Co.; Cheryl Korte, Allen Co.; Lois Moss, Johnson Co.; Jamie Knabe, Douglas Co.; Carolyn States, Phillips Co.; Donna Simpson, Bourbon Co.; Doyce Bates, Jefferson Co.; Debbie Kueser, Anderson Co.; Fran Force, Coffey Co.; front row (l-r) Linda Sale, Labette Co.; Helen Norris, Sumner Co.; Linda Reinhardt, Neosho Co.; Diana Kaiser, Gove Co.; Donna Bates, Jefferson Co.; Gay Beth Moore, Haskell Co.; and Mary Elton, Coffey Co.

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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*

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## Congress drags its feet on Colombia TPA

The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement, now before Congress, provides tremendous opportunities for Kansas and other U.S. exporters, but the leadership in the U.S. House has put up a roadblock in front of this enhanced Kansas agricultural trade.

Growth in U.S. agricultural exports could exceed \$900 billion per year if it comes to pass. Expanded growth for agriculture also means expanded job growth for American workers. It takes American workers to move, store, process and transport U.S. farm products from our shores to overseas customers.

Earlier this year, Congress provided duty-free access to Colombian agricultural products shipped into the United States. Yet, when given an opportunity to pass an agreement that would provide the same benefits to American products and U.S. farmers, ranchers, supporting industries and workers, the leadership of the U.S. House drags its feet.

The U.S.-Colombian trade agreement would move our relationship from one of a one-way street to a full partnership with reciprocal commitments. This South American country is the second-largest market for U.S. agriculture in the western hemisphere. An improved relationship will lead to even more trade and help bolster our own strained economy.

In 2006, our state’s global export shipments

totaled \$8.6 billion. That same year Kansas exported \$26 million to Colombia. Kansas crops led the way with 32.8 percent of the total exports, followed closely by transportation equipment with 25.8 percent.

Congress has already approved the Andean Trade Pact, which allows Latin American nations to send their goods here tariff-free. This whole thing leaves KFB president Steve Baccus, a grain farmer from Ottawa County, asking some pointed rhetorical questions.

“Do you realize the tariff on a piece of American construction equipment, manufactured with union labor in the U.S., going into Colombia is \$200,000? You’re going to tell me Congress will vote against removing that tariff that will help the agriculture producers and union laborers of the U.S.?”

With more than 95 percent of the world’s population living outside the United States, it’s vital to this country and state’s economic interests to continue expansion of international and bilateral trade. The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement has turned into a long, uphill climb, made worse by the hard line of the U.S. House leadership, which Kansas’ own Representatives Nancy Boyda and Dennis Moore are currently following.

Use CapWiz ([www.kfb.org](http://www.kfb.org)) to Contact Reps. Boyda and Moore today. Urge them to take the correct action, and soon.

**Legislative  
ALERT!**  
[www.kfb.org](http://www.kfb.org)

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# On the horizon: hope for your hometown

The hard work of your farm organization means hope for Kansas hometowns is getting closer to fruition. A KFB-created proposal for the Kansas Commission on Rural Policy has moved through the House and Senate and now awaits Gov. Sebelius' signature.

The rural policy commission will study current state efforts to support rural communities and make recommendations for improvements and greater efficiency.

## Farm bill moving slowly

Lawmakers are trying to wrap up the farm bill conference report and hope to pave the way for President Bush to sign or veto the bill by May 16. That's the date the current extension of the 2002 farm bill expires.

Despite attempts by Kansas Senator Pat Roberts and Congressman Jerry Moran to restore funding to the direct payment and address several concerns arising from the earlier cuts and administrative changes to crop insurance the agreement remains virtually unchanged. The Kansas conferees did succeed in restoring funding for direct payments in year one of the bill—worth approximately \$100 million to producers.

As of now, some key components include:

- A direct payment cut of approximately \$313 million over years two, three, and four of the bill with preservation of direct payments in year one and complete restoration in year five
- Rebalancing of loan rates and target prices
- A counter-cyclical revenue program similar to the one included in the Senate-passed bill
- A \$3.85 billion permanent disaster program
- An additional \$4 billion for conservation programs, including \$1.1 billion for CSP and \$2.4 billion for EQIP.

It will support innovative and creative ways that foster entrepreneurship to grow existing businesses and create new ones in rural Kansas – to provide essential off-farm employment.

## Wrapping up the session

Watch the May 23 issue of your *Farm Leader Letter* for a complete wrap up of 2008 legislative activity.

The proposal was the result of KFB member-driven policy aimed at honing in on four basic concepts to preserve rural communities in the

face of significant outmigration; leadership development, wealth retention, fostering entrepreneurship and youth retention.

## The Value of Grassroots Political Action

KFB-member driven policy on rural development, common sense trucking regulations, energy and immigration policy. These legislative victories for farmers and ranchers don't "just happen."

They come from building, maintaining and enhancing good working relationships with those whom we elect to represent our interests in Topeka and Washington.

Your farm organization's political advocacy fund – VOTE FBF – is a vital tool in the relationship-building process. Only by actively participating in the political process at all levels, can we control our own destinies. Your involvement is critical to success.

Join VOTE FBF today. Visit [www.kfb.org/votefbf](http://www.kfb.org/votefbf).



# Farm flashes

## Graduate-level courses available

KFB is offering scholarships for two graduate-level courses offered through Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (KFAC) this summer. The courses will cover connecting classrooms to Kansas ag and mastering a school garden. Each course is three credit hours and will be offered at Colby, Manhattan and Olathe. To learn more, visit [www.ksagclassroom.org](http://www.ksagclassroom.org), contact Cathy Musick at (785) 532-7946 or e-mail [ksfac@ksu.edu](mailto:ksfac@ksu.edu).

## FSA data released

As required by a decision of the U. S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) has begun releasing FSA data for all operations owned and operated by individual agricultural producers and closely held family-owned business entities. Records include all information in a producer's Farm Compliance Record such as: planting date; reported acreage; official acreage measurements; insurance coverage; type of crop; whether or not the crop is irrigated; intended use of the crop; crop status, including double crop program acreage, experimental, repeat crop acreage, prevented planting or failed crop. Farm Field Common Land Unit information to be released includes digitized farm field boundaries, classified as farm and/or field boundaries, farm numbers, field numbers, tract numbers, acres, at specific geographic locations using spatial attributes and coordinates.

## Fire and land management

Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition, Inc. will offer a school for producers and landowners titled "Fire and Its Role in Management." Aug. 12-14 will be in Morris Co. at White Memorial Camp and Aug. 19-21 will be in Barton Co. at Camp Aldrich. For more information call (620) 241-3636, (785) 922-7061 or visit [www.kglc.org](http://www.kglc.org).

## Asia and you

K-State's Master of Agribusiness program invites you to its 3rd international trip. The group will travel to Southeast Asia, Nov. 7-22, with stops in Kuala Lumpur and Malacca, Malaysia; Bangkok, Thailand; and Hanoi & Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Visits to various crop and livestock operations, agricultural and food-related industries, aquaculture and shipping ports, as well as sight-seeing, are planned. If you are interested or would like to register, please contact Mary Bowen at [mjbowen@ksu.edu](mailto:mjbowen@ksu.edu) or (785) 532-4435. A full itinerary is available at [www.mab.ksu.edu/Alumni/International\\_Trips.html](http://www.mab.ksu.edu/Alumni/International_Trips.html).

## Symposium on beef cattle welfare

K-State's Beef Cattle Institute encourages all stakeholders in beef cattle production to 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](http://www.isbcw.beefcattleinstitute.org).

## New sheep and goat resource

Kansas producers involved in goat or sheep production have a valuable resource right here in Kansas. Dr. Brian Faris is the new Extension State Sheep & Goat Specialist for Kansas State University and brings extensive background and expertise in both goat and sheep production. Faris grew up raising registered and commercial Rambouillet sheep and Angora goats on the Edwards Plateau in Sonora, Texas. He showed market lambs for 12 years and was extremely active in numerous other 4-H projects throughout his career. He has three degrees in animal science. Individuals or county Farm Bureau organizations may contact him at [bfaris@ksu.edu](mailto:bfaris@ksu.edu) or (785) 532-1255.



## Employment and Immigration

If you hire others, you need to comply with the U.S. immigration laws, which Congress reformed in 1986. These changes were passed to preserve the tradition of legal immigration while seeking to close the door to illegal entry. To comply with this law, you must verify the identity and employment eligibility of each person you hire, complete and retain a Form I-9 for each employee. This includes citizens and noncitizens.

The form I-9 helps employers verify individuals who are authorized to work in the United States. The law requires you as an employer to:

1. Ensure your employees fill out section 1 of the form I-9 when they start work;
2. Review document(s) establishing each employee's identity and eligibility to work;
3. Properly complete section 2 of the form I-9;
4. Retain the form I-9 for 3 years after the date the person begins work or 1 year after the person's employment is terminated, whichever is later; and
5. Upon request, provide form I-9 to authorized officers of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), or the Office of Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices (OSC) for inspection.

## Deadline looms for watershed districts

A window of opportunity to file for a single permit to appropriate water covering all existing watershed structures within districts is due to the Division of Water Resources (DWR) before June 30.

Current Kansas law requires that all surface water impoundments having a capacity of 15 acre feet or more must have a permit to appropriate water. After the June 30 deadline, an application for each individual watershed will be required. According to Kent Askren, KFB's water resources specialist, not taking advantage of this opportunity could have significant financial implications.

"Instead of a few hundred dollars to cover the filing and inspection fees, after June 30 the cost could be in the thousands of dollars," says Askren.

For more information, contact Askren at (785) 234-4535.

## Reflections on the past

You will soon receive the Summer 2008 edition of your membership magazine, *Kansas Living*. The issue takes a look back at your farm organization and the heritage and tradition that makes it what it is today.

You'll read about a fifth generation farmer continuing the tried and true traditions of his family farm, see how things have changed on one Kansas dairy, and tame the prairie with a Century Farm family from Meade Co.



Join us as we reminisce.