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Community Wind Energy Spotlight of October 31 Workshop



Production taxes from wind farms in Minnesota all go back to local counties, townships, and school districts. Photo from National Renewable Energy Lab.

Whiting, Ks. - Kansas ranks third of all states in the United States in wind energy potential. Yet other states, like Iowa and Minnesota, with much less potential, far exceed Kansas in wind turbine installation. The wind turbines that have been installed in Kansas largely benefit outside investors and out of state users. They have also resulted in anger and division among local residents as only a few individual landowners benefit while communities that must live with the “wind fields” do not.

Why has Kansas has spent so little time and effort developing this renewable resource? This question and more will be answered at the Kansas Community Wind Workshop” to be held October 31 at Cloud County Community College (CCCC) in Concordia, Ks.

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KRC Distributes Energy “Quiz”

Whiting, Ks.- The Kansas Rural Center (KRC) is distributing an Energy “Quiz” on renewable electrical energy to guide citizens as they talk to candidates this fall. “As energy issues rise to the forefront of political debate and decision making, we’ve taken a strong interest in how alternative or renewable energy sources are considered,” stated Dan Nagengast, KRC Executive Director.

One area of particular interest is Kansas’ abundant wind energy resource and its possible contribution to not only a clean source of electrical energy but its value to rural communities.

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Rural Papers

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The Small Farmer Commentary

Ag Subsidies Carry Global Harm

by Charlie Melander



Saline County farmer Charlie Melander finds the ills of U.S. farm policy in tour of West African nations last summer. Above Charlie holds the hand hoe that is the main cultivating tool in rural Mali. A Malian farmer from the village of Santankouto in the Kita region of Mali stands beside him. Photo J. French.

For the better part of my life, I have farmed and been involved in the rural life of north-central Kansas. My family believes that good stewardship and citizenship go hand in hand. Using no-till and minimum-tillage practices, we can produce wheat, soybeans, milo and other grains with less energy. These farm tactics that minimize working the ground promote clean water, healthy soils and quality wildlife habitat.

We have discovered that conservation practices such as these often clash with government commodity programs that encourage maximum production. Commodity payments that encourage over-production and contribute to falling grain prices create an economic climate in which Kansas grain farmers cannot survive without subsidies.

Farmers race along on a treadmill that maximizes bushels and costs but not profits. Also, these production subsidies drain dollars from beneficial initiatives like the Conservation Security Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

I consider this after returning from a

tour of the rural areas of West Africa -- a region rich in resources and where some of the world's highest quality cotton is grown.

In Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin and Chad more than 10 million farmers live in an area that has been farmed for hundreds of years in a rotational system. These farm families grow vegetables, sorghum, millet, corn and peanuts.

But it is the cultivation of cotton, introduced about the time the U.S. Civil War disrupted the export of fiber to Europe, that supports the slim cash economy that helps maintain roads, build schools, dig wells and build health clinics.

I saw firsthand how the agricultural policies that contribute to large cotton and grain surpluses devastate the livelihoods of the people in villages like Dafara, Kita, Santankouto and Djidian. Village farmers, government officials, cotton processing executives and cooperative members all had the same message: "Please reform the commodity subsidies."

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Kansas Briefs

Medical debt Impacts Kansas Farm Families

In mid-August, the United Methodist Health Ministry in conjunction with the Kansas Farmers Union, released a report documenting a significant level of unaffordable medical bills and medical debt in mostly insured farm families.

In the report, *Losing Ground: Eroding Health Insurance Coverage Leaves Kansas Farmers with Medical Debt*, written by the Boston-based Access Project, 95% of the randomly selected KFU member respondents reported having health insurance, but 17% reported having medical debt. Only five percent of those 65 and over reported medical debt, while nearly 29% of the non-elderly respondents reported debt.

These findings raise the question of whether the health insurance covering younger farm families adequately protects them from financial risk. Many respondents with debt reported avoiding health care to keep away from accruing more debt.

"The findings call us to focus on health care costs as an important source of the economic pressure many farm families face," stated Kim Moore, President of the United Methodist health Ministry Fund.

The report can be downloaded at <http://www.accessproject.org/>. □

Farmers' Markets Test Electronic Benefit Transfers

This summer two Kansas Farmers' Markets in Lawrence and Wichita have been testing the use of wireless point of sales devices using Vision cards (formerly food stamps) as well as debit and credit cards. Food stamp and cash assistance recipients are able to use their cards at the farmers' market information booth to get tokens that can be used to buy food items.

Allowing public assistance recipients the opportunity to use their benefits at farmers' markets encourages purchase of fresh produce and a healthier diet. Officials have also estimated that allowing the use of debit cards could increase sales at farmers' markets by 20%, based on results at other markets nationwide that have added electronic payment options.

The Kansas 2006 Electronic Benefits Transfer Demonstration Project is funded in part by the Kansas Rural Center, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Ks. Department on Aging, and Ks. Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. Other partners include K-State Research and Extension, and the state's departments of agriculture, commerce and health and environment. □



Fresh local foods were the main course for an evening at Kramer Dining Hall at Kansas State University in late August in an effort to encourage students to eat more health-promoting fresh fruits and vegetables.

KSU Offers Taste of Local Foods

Local foods are beginning to be a part of the dining hall experience at Kansas State University. In late August, Kramer Dining Hall held a local foods night featuring Barbra Flores' Kansas-grown vegetables. Introducing just picked local foods into cafeteria fare is an effort to encourage K-State students to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, says Mally Sisson, registered dietitian at Kramer Dining Hall. Sisson hopes to make it a regular experience.

Jana Beckman, coordinator of the Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and part of a team that introduced Sisson to the concept of working with local growers, said that supporting nearby growers gives local economies a boost. Colleges across the country are beginning to adopt the local foods concept. □

Heartland Network News

Bus Tour Showcases Alternative Enterprises

by Jerry Jost



Karen Pendleton, tour guide, introduced 50 bus tour participants to each other. KRC organized a tour of six value added farm enterprises in northeast Kansas and northwest Missouri in late August. Photo by J. Jost

Lawrence, Ks.- With the support of USDA's Risk Management Agency, KRC organized a late August bus tour of six farms in northeast Kansas and northwest Missouri to learn about different value-added farm enterprises. The tour also highlighted practices and tools farm families use to plan successful businesses. Fifty people participated in the one day tour.

The first stop was on the edge of Lawrence, Kansas, at the Pine family farm which manages over 3,000 acres of corn and soybeans. To diversify their revenue stream, the farm harvests an additional 350 acres of fescue and bluegrass turf grass. Sue Pine and her daughter, Shawn Bay, shared how their family has worked to improve family communications and shared decision-making.

To improve communication and management, the Pine family has breakfast family meetings three times a week to coordinate their daily operations. Currently the family

meets for day-long sessions three times each year with their accountant and a trained mediator to work together as they make key decisions and plan changes within their family business. The Pines have found that the investment of working with skilled professionals to help the family set goals, talk through decisions, and make strategic decisions, to be the best business investment they've made.

The next stop was MJ Ranch where Mel and Joyce Williams manage 520 acres of rolling pasture hills in Jefferson County. With rotational year-round grazing, the Williams direct market grass-fed beef to their customers and the Community Mercantile Coop in Lawrence. The Williams used the whole farm planning tool, the River Friendly Farm Assessment and cost share through KRC's Clean Water Farm Project to improve their pastures and provide an alternative water supply to their cattle which protects water quality downstream.

Wild Horse Orchard near McLouth has been a farm in Perry Walter's family since the early 1870's. Perry and Laurie wanting to involve their children in farming, began planting a peach and apple orchard in 1980. More recently an ultraviolet treatment system helps them add value to surplus apples by making apple cider. The Walters mix tart and sweet apple varieties to create cider that has won many awards in Kansas-Missouri cider competitions.

For a virtual bus tour of the farm families and enterprises in this story, go to:
<http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/publications.html>.

Weston Red Barn Farm is a working farmstead for families to visit baby animals in the spring, peach harvest in the summer, and a fall festival with apples, pumpkins and a maze. Steve Frey, who owns the farm along with his wife Cindy, reflected, "We remind ourselves that we must stay true to our sense of place. We want to present what farm life used to be like."

The Freys recently added a commercial kitchen to bake ready to eat products for their customers. They also have a retail farm store and host weddings. Summarizing their business, Frey stated "agritourism is all about your relationship to your customer."

Bill and Kathy Wright manage Pumpkins Etc. near Platte City, Missouri, which is just north of Kansas City. They sell pumpkins and 7,000 hardy mums and asters. The pumpkin enterprise started out as a children's enterprise.

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Clean Water News

CWFP Farmer Profile

Preservation and Conservation Lie at the Heart of Farm Enterprises

by Connie Pantle



Mike Nickels has three jobs: landowner, land manager, and hunting guide, all of which require a keen sense of stewardship. Above, his solar powered water pump supplies livestock water from his pond to a tank. Cattle are fenced from the pond, and water quality benefits.

McLouth, Ks. - A 1946 Chevrolet pickup truck parks in front of a red, one-room school house on top of a hill in northeast Kansas. A man steps out of the truck and walks toward the school house. Behind the school house wildflowers bloom among grasses blowing in the wind. Beyond that is a living fence of plum and Russian olive trees. It looks like a scene from sixty years ago. But it isn't. It is a modern farm in Jefferson County and the owners are Mike Nickels and his wife Debbie.

During Mike's lifelong residency of Jefferson County, his 700 acre farm has seen a lot of changes. But it is what appears unchanged that Mike is most proud of. Mike said he strives to improve the land and protect our greatest renewable resource, "Mother Nature".

Mike has three jobs that keep him busy full-time. He is a landowner,

provides land management services to other area landowners and offers a guided hunting experience to hunters from across the country through "Old School Guide Service".

As a landowner, Mike saw the importance of preserving his family's farm ponds. Mike said a farm with access to a pond is a real asset. To help preserve the pond, Mike applied received cost-share funds through the Kansas Rural Center's Clean Water Farms-River Friendly Farm Project (CWF-RFFP) to implement an alternative watering system next to his pond.

Mike was eligible to apply for the cost-share because he had completed the River Friendly Farms environmental assessment. "I was pleased we were covering so many areas without catastrophes," Mike said of the assessment results. "But the pond jumped out at me." Mike noticed

changes in the pond since cleaning it out once several years ago and said, "If we kept doing what we were doing, we were headed down that road again."

Once Mike decided to install an alternative water system, he found he needed some guidance in its implementation. "I was trying to make it too complicated," he said. Mike sought advice from resources like the Kansas Rural Center and his local conservation office and decided a solar powered pump was the answer. The solar pump was installed near the moveable water tank and a garden-type supply hose brings the water up the hill from the pond to the tank. On the other end, the hose is suspended near the center of the pond using simply a plastic jug. This method keeps the hose from getting near the edge and possibly below the waterline.

After installing the tank, Mike emphasized the importance of fencing the pond to his tenant. "I researched the benefits of exclusion (of cattle from the pond) and they are greater than allowing the cows to linger in the pond on a hot day." Mike said he discovered the risk of foot rot is decreased because the animals' feet are kept dry and clean.

Mike said the watering system, in conjunction with the pond fencing are vital, especially in dry, hot weather. "The watering system really showed its worth this summer during the heat. If livestock had been wallowing in the pond all season there would have been little, if any, water left before the August rains helped out," he said.

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Heartland Network News

Bus Tour ...

Continued from page 4



Participants view the sorting and packing process at Wild Horse Orchard near McLouth. The orchard features cider making. They've won many awards in Kansas and Missouri competitions. Photos by J. Jost.



Walking through rows of mums at the Pumpkins Etc. Farm of Bill and Kathy Wright near Platte city Missouri, participants learned how the Wrights transitioned from a traditional crop and livestock farm to specialty crops.

After the children left the farm, the Wrights added a mum business. Now they sell mums in 2 gallon pots along with their pumpkins at their retail barn. Over the years, the Wrights transitioned from a traditional farm with hogs, cattle and crops to their pumpkins and mum enterprises. While their gross income is down, Bill says, their net income has actually increased.

The last stop was at the Holy-Field Vineyard and Winery near Basehor, Kansas. Holy-Field provides a scenic view of 12,000 vines located on 14 acres adjacent to the winery. Les Meyers and his daughter Michelle, planted the first vines in 1986. After developing their wines and markets, Michelle was able in 1998 to transition to full employment at the vineyard and winery. Their newsletter, published three times per year, has become an important connection to their customers. Over a period of six weeks, loyal Holy-

Field customers come each Sunday to harvest grapes. The Meyers turn this into a festive event serving a meal to all their harvest hands. For many, it has become a family tradition including parent, children, and grandchildren.

Bus tours of alternative enterprise in Kansas have become increasingly popular. This tour drew 50 people and had a waiting list for seats.

Sponsors for the tour include the Helping Farm Families Manage Successful Businesses Project, the Kansas Rural Center, and Kansas State University.

To view a virtual bus tour with pictures and stories of the above farm families and enterprises, go to <http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/publications.html>. □

Funding for Business and Markets Project Announced

USDA's Risk Management Agency has funded a partnership agreement with Kansas State University for the Training and Facilitation of Successful Farm Family Businesses and Markets Project. The Kansas Rural Center is a partner in this project.

The funding allows KRC to provide services with business planning to farmers' markets and farm families, provide educational events on farmers' markets and grazing management, organize farmer mentoring relationships, and organize a farm bus tour of farm enterprises. For more information, contact Jerry Jost at (785) 766-0428 or jjost@myvine.com. □

Environmental Assessment Prompts Changes Even Without Cost-Share

by Connie Pantle

Yates Center, Ks. - While completing the River Friendly Farm (RFF) environmental assessment, Glen Massoth, Yates Center, said his eyes were opened. "Watersheds are interconnected and dynamic. What you do has an impact downstream. It opens your eyes to see the bigger picture," he said. "The assessment makes you see that small things have a big impact."

Glen is the fourth generation to farm the Woodson County cropland purchased by his family in the 1870s. Glen raises corn, wheat, soybeans and grain sorghum, and is a board member of the Woodson County Conservation District and the Cherry-Plum Watershed District.

He completed the environmental assessment notebook in the spring of 2004 and said it was a valuable tool for him. He said he enjoyed working with the KRC's Clean Water Farm Field Assistant Dale Kirkham on the notebook. Glen was introduced to Dale and the RFF environmental assessment at a Woodson County Conservation District meeting.

"Dale's presentation of the notebook really sparked my interest," Glen said. Glen also added that Dale's expertise in many areas was beneficial to him as he tries to improve conservation efforts on his farm.

The objectives of the assessment are to help define farm goals and strengthen progress towards goals; reduce costs in the long-term, if not in the short-term; and lead to improved quality of natural resources (soil, water, air). By answering the

questions in the assessment the farmer is able to identify the high priority issues and needs on his or her farm, and develop a course of action and identify resources to assist him.

The assessment is divided into sections: quality of life; soil and natural resource conservation; nutrient management; pest management; livestock waste management; irrigation management, and farmstead assessment.

The quality of life section includes a family goal setting exercise, a family activity calendar, and a family goals worksheet. "I wasn't sure about the goal setting section, but we did set goals as a family and we're working toward those," Glen said. This section is confidential and is for the use of the farm family only.

The soil and natural resource conservation section focuses on developing a soil conservation plan and a strategy to limit the farm's soil loss. Glen said this section was valuable to him as it caused him to examine the importance of organic matter in the soil.

"Organic matter is vital to increasing the soil's water-holding capabilities and preventing runoff," Glen said. Since completing the assessment, Glen has worked to increase the organic matter in the soil and it is now two to three percent organic matter. Glen said this effort is ongoing and he will continue practices to increase the organic matter even more such as leaving crop residue in the field.

The nutrient management section looks at practices that keep nutrient losses to a minimum, decreasing nonpoint source pollution to surface and groundwater as well as unnecessary expenses. An effective nutrient management plan includes soil testing and applying nutrients accordingly. While Glen has kept soil testing records for over forty years, he said the notebook allowed him to see the "effect of when you apply the fertilizer broadcast versus incorporating it into the soil."

As the RFF environmental assessment points out, every farm with livestock needs careful management of livestock waste and manure. In the livestock waste management section, a farmer is able to figure the appropriate ratio of land-to-animal for spreading of livestock waste. In addition, the farmer is able to determine ways to reduce the occurrence of fecal bacteria and nutrients leaching into surface or groundwater.

The farmstead assessment section looks at four components, including well water; household wastewater treatment; farm and home solid and hazardous waste disposal, and farmstead fuel and petrochemical storage risk.

Glen said this section pointed out "the threat for water contamination on your farm if a failing septic system is present." "We were watering cattle below a farmstead with a failing septic system," Glen said. Therefore, he replaced the failing septic system with a waste water lagoon.

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Small Farmer Guest Commentary

Ag Subsidies....

Continued from page 2

We saw the overcrowded cities of Dakar and Bamako, where many from the rural areas flocked only to find the same lack of opportunities and jobs. We saw a generation of young people facing a life with no schools, no accessible clean water, no jobs.

In the poorest countries of West Africa more than 75 percent of the people live in rural areas. They are hindered from what would be modest improvements in their lives by agricultural policies in Europe, Japan and the U.S.

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture figures, U.S. cotton subsidies reached \$4.8 billion dollars in 2005, exceeding the crop value by 124 percent. This means that U.S. cotton is being marketed well below the cost of growing the crop while overall

production is 24 percent higher than in the previous decade.

American cotton farmers earned almost 40 percent of their gross cash income from government payments in 2005. Yet they still exported more than 62 percent of their production.

The word used to describe this is "dumping."

It's time we change our subsidies in ways that could better serve rural America and the poorest nations. We can contribute to less poverty and hunger in the developing world by devising a better Farm Bill in the months ahead.

In a world of finite resources we must reward conservation, not consumption.

We should create incentives that will provide more good rural jobs while

protecting the soil and water that must support us for generations to come.

I returned from Mali and Senegal with a strong sense of how all of our lives are interconnected. While visiting the Malian village Santankouto, a farmer let me try the hand hoe he worked with during long hours under the African sun. Together, we shared a moment doing something common to both of us -- cultivating the soil. In spite of the difference in language, I understood that we shared much more in common. We wished to do good work, provide for our families, care for the land and make life better for the next generation. □

Charlie Melander, Assaria, Ks., was part of a delegation of U.S. farmers that toured Senegal and Mali in July with Oxfam America, a nonprofit organization that works to end global poverty. This article was reprinted with the author and the Salina Journal's permission.

Farm Policy Briefs

Farm Bill Debates Heat Up

Washington, D.C. - Amid talk of extending the current farm bill there is also a strong call for starting the 2007 farm bill debate. Chairs of both House and Senate Agriculture Committees oppose an extension of the current Farm Bill. USDA Secretary Johanns announced in late September that the administration plans to send a proposal for a new 5-year farm bill to Capitol Hill in January.

In addition congressional budget watchers agree that 2007 will be a budget cutting year using the budget reconciliation process. Many expect major budget cuts to be demanded from the Agriculture Committees (and other programs). If this

happens, then the Farm Bill will need to be re-written.

As this goes to press, Congress is preparing for its fall recess prior to the election season. They must pass a Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government going, since a new fiscal year begins October 1 without final action on appropriations bills other than defense and homeland security. The defense bill will carry all domestic programs including agriculture.

SAC 2007 Farm Bill Agenda to Be Released. The Sustainable Agriculture Coalition plans to release its 2007 Farm Bill platform "No Time for Delay" in early October.

Copies of the platform will be available at their website after it is released, but summary documents of four issue areas are available now at www.msawg.org. The four two-page summaries cover:

- * Farming Opportunities and Fair Competition Policy Options;
- * Conservation and Environmental Policy Options;
- * Marketing and Rural Development Policy Options;
- * Research and Extension Policy Options.

This fall check the KRC website (www.kansaruralcenter.org) for updated information on availability of SAC and KRC Farm Bill related information. □

When We Finally Take the Off Ramp

By Jim Scharplaz

Minneapolis, Ks. - When I was small, my family lived in a little community not far from where I live now. Often I drive the two-lane blacktop through the remains of that town. Past the cemetery where my parents lie, past the school where I began first grade (now a private home), past the site of the township hall where we schoolchildren recited poems and performed skits for the Community Club, then over the abandoned railroad and across the creek.

My journey is peopled with memories. But only memories, for now I don't meet anyone on the road, nor do I see anyone in the fields or farmyards I pass.

When I reach the small farm where my aunt and uncle lived, all that changes. An interstate highway cuts across what was once their land. And on it the traffic is ceaseless. One side is a torrent of cars and trucks rushing west, the other an equal torrent rushing east. The contrast with the deserted road on which I travel is jarring.

When the freeway was built, residents of our village and others believed that it would bring commerce. Gas stations and restaurants sprang up at every interchange.

They soon failed. People got on the freeway, but none left it. Those interchanges could have been built with no off ramps.

But perhaps they will be used someday. As world population and demand outstrip fossil fuel supply, our present industrial farming practices

will no longer be possible. No alternative fuel has the qualities -- portability and energy returned for energy invested in production -- that make fossil fuel the lynch pin of industrial agriculture.

Thanks to cheap fossil fuels, farmers today can treat every acre pretty much the same. Diesel powered machinery can till any soil type. Fertilizer produced using natural gas compensates for variations in natural fertility. Pesticides manufactured from petroleum kill weeds and insects for the whole growing season.

Very few farmers are needed to manage this industrial process. And consumers can live far from the field, as trucks transport the average bite of food 1,600 miles from farm gate to dinner plate.

Good crop yields can be achieved without fossil fuel, but much more care is required. Every farm, every field, every acre requires individual attention, with careful consideration given to just the right crop for the land, and the best cultural practices for the crop. Operations must be carefully timed to control weeds and pests, and years-long crop rotations must be planned to assure fertility. It will take many more farmers on the land to supply the necessary knowledge, care and craftsmanship.

If you are in one of the cars rushing by on the freeway, your efforts are just as important as mine as a farmer to develop post-fossil fuel agriculture. Part of the solution is political.

To a large extent, the present rural landscape in much of America is the

result of federal policy that subsidizes massive production of just a few, easily industrialized crops -- corn, soybeans, wheat. This policy has caused the loss of soil, biodiversity, localized food markets and farmers, resulting in a fragile system dependent on increasingly tight and insecure supplies of petroleum.

Agricultural subsidies must be unhooked from production and tied to good farming practices. This will preserve the soil we all depend on to eat, and make our food supply less dependent on oil. Even if you live in a city, your legislator votes on farm legislation just as mine does, and your taxes pay the subsidies. Let your legislator know what you want.

On a personal level, you can seek out craftsman farmers and support them by buying and eating what they grow. These farmers have the know-how we will need more of. Live too far from the farm? Try farmers' markets and food co-ops. Yes, it's more work. Post-fossil fuel consuming will require more care and effort, just as post-fossil fuel farming will.

Better still, use that off ramp. Wherever you are going, remember that someone in the oncoming lanes is rushing away from there. It's probably not that great a place. Exit now. □

Jim Scharplaz raises cattle in Ottawa County, Kan., and is former Kansas Rural Center board member. He wrote this essay for the Land Institute's Prairie Writers Circle, Salina, Ks .

Nickels CWF Profile...

Continued from page 5

Since fencing the pond, Mike said the cattle are not pushing down the mud around the pond, resulting in an increase in vegetation around the pond, which is vital to wildlife in the area. Mike said waterfowl and wildlife need this vegetative cover. As an example of this, earlier this summer he spotted a fawn hiding in the tall grasses near the pond.

The simple solar pumping system that Mike uses allows him to disassemble and move the tank to the other side of the pond in just a few hours. Providing water for the cattle on both sides of the pasture allowed Mike and his tenant to split the pasture and in turn, address the two pastures individually. "We have warm season grasses on one side and cool season grasses on the other side," he said. This allows the cattle the ability to seasonally graze the pastures which prevents overgrazing and also reduces the amount of manure in each pasture.

In addition to the CWF-RFFP cost-share, Mike received additional funding from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks for fencing on the project. Through Mike's experiences, he's discovered there is funding "out there for almost anything you want to do".

Other BMPs (best management practices) that Mike introduced on his land include using cover crops to stabilize the soil year round to improve soil quality and reduce nutrient loss; conducting regular soil testing to monitor and manage nutrient needs, and incorporating surface applied fertilizer immediately

after application to minimize runoff. These were all issues that were brought out during the completion of the RFFP environmental assessment.

The land management facet of Nickels Farms evolved as Mike began providing conservation planning and related services for farmers. These services include practices such as controlled burns; erosion management; tree planting; native grass seeding; timber stand improvement; fencing for livestock exclusion, as well as improvement and protection of wildlife habitat. Mike said Nickels Farms provides a service that often times is unavailable or costly through other sources. Since 1993, Mike estimates that he has planted approximately 20,000 seedling trees.

Mike also manages six other Jefferson County farms, totaling 1000 acres, on a year-round basis. As a manager of these farms, Mike assists the landowners in programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and keeps the land maintained to the specifics of the program.

Mike said the land management and the hunting guide service evolved as "the farms were already designed for hunting". Old School Guide Service offers hunts in pursuit of whitetail deer, eastern turkey and wild quail as well as bass fishing. The guide service has been featured numerous times in "Buckmasters Magazine" and "Rack Magazine".

Mike hosts hunters that travel from as far away as the East and West Coasts, and has found that most hunters like to travel over 500 miles. Typically, the hunters stay in nearby towns like Oskaloosa or Valley Falls, bringing more money

into the local economy. Most hunters who harvest a deer are unable to transport the meat. Therefore, they donate the meat to local food banks through Winchester Meat Processing. (More information on Mike's hunting and guide service business can be viewed at www.oldschoolguide.com).

Looking around Mike's farm, his interest in preserving the past is obvious. The 1946 pickup was purchased from his wife Debbie's family in Oberlin, in northwest Kansas. "The surprise of refinishing the truck is that it took nine colors to fully detail an old 'green and black' truck," Mike said. "The wood floor of the bed was replaced with maple that was cut from one of our farms."

Another restoration project on the farm is the old red school house sitting on the hill, the namesake of Old School Guide Service. Mike said it was originally located south of Oskaloosa and known as Clover Hill School, District #54, one of Jefferson County's 100 districts.

In 1998, it was moved 13 miles to the Nickels Farm. During the move, the bell tower had to be removed and replaced at the Nickels Farm. Although Mike estimates the building was built around 1900, he said "the building was in great shape when it was moved".

Preservation and restoration whether nature or history is just part of the daily life on the Nickels farm. □

Assessment and Changes... *Continued from page 7*

After completing all sections, Glen was able to list his farm's high priority issues on the scorecard and apply them to the action plan. Glen then realized "there were a lot of things that needed to be done," however there wasn't any CWFPP cost-share available at that time.

"Instead of waiting for funds to become available, I identified the problems and corrected them," he said.

In addition, Glen sought funding from other sources. Glen approached the local Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS) for cost-share to plug two wells, one well on a farmstead and the other in an existing crop field. Glen said the notebook made him realize how detrimental it was to the ground water as they were applying fertilizer and other chemicals directly over the poorly sealed well.

Another issue that Glen addressed was the low quail population on his farm. To increase the population of the quail and other wildlife, he now leaves filter strips and also leaves crop residue such as wheat stubble in the fields. Now, there are several coveys of quail on the farm.

The action plan also highlighted Glen's concern for the cedar trees invading the native hay meadow. Glen now uses burning to manage the cedar trees. In addition, Glen was approved for an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost-share grant through the local NRCS office. This is a brush management cost-share that Glen applied for to control siresia

lespedeza. Glen said the RFF tied right in to his application for EQIP cost-share. "You see how you impact the water and others in your watershed," he said.

In addition to the benefit of making these changes to his farm, Glen was eligible for a \$250 incentive payment from the CWFPP.

"The environmental assessment is not only a tool for the farmer to help identify needed improvements and to help prioritize action, but is a valuable educational opportunity," Mary Fund, CWFPP project coordinator, said. "The questions themselves provide information on the appropriate level of management to protect resources." About 200 farmers statewide have completed the assessment.

Once a farmer completes the assessment, he or she is eligible to apply for up to \$5,000 in limited cost-share through the Clean Water Farm-River Friendly Farm Project. The cost-share funds can be used in conjunction with state and federal cost-share programs. The completed environmental assessment and action plan can also be used to develop requests for other state and federal cost-share funds, whether the farmer applies for KRC funds or not.

To receive a copy of the assessment tool or for more information, please contact KRC at 785-873-3431, or at ksrc@rainbowtel.net. For a downloadable copy, go to the following web address: <http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/publications/RFFP.pdf>.

The CWF-RFFP is a KRC project funded by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment via funds from the EPA Section 319 Non-point Source Fund. □

Smithfield Buys Premium Standard Farms

In mid-September, Smithfield Foods, the country's top pork producer, announced plans to buy Premium Standard Farms, the nation's number two pork producer. The sale would increase Smithfield's pork processing marketshare to 31 percent from 26 percent, and increase its pork production to 19 percent from 14 percent. Both firms are vertically integrated, owning both processing plants and hog production facilities.

Many have raised questions about whether the hog market can remain competitive if the merger goes through. But they also express doubt that the U.S. Justice Department will intervene as the administration has shown little interest in preserving "the fair competition and fair trade" outlined in the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921. □ (From *Agribusiness News*, 9.20.06)

PSF Loses Lawsuit Over Hog Stench

A Jackson County Missouri jury awarded \$4.5 million to three families who successfully argued that odors from a north central Missouri hog farm created a nuisance. The jury also found Premium Standard Farms (PSF) liable for punitive damages, prompting the producer to settle before a second phase of the trial took place.

PSF, headquartered in Kansas City, accepted the \$4.5 million decision. The suit is part of a much larger class-action lawsuit that includes all property owners within 10 miles of 20 PSF hog farms. The company reportedly has over 300,000 hogs on 1300 acres. □ (From *K.C. Star*, 9.23.06)

Wind Conference ...

Continued from page 1

The workshop is being organized and sponsored by the Kansas Rural Center, Kansas Farm Bureau, Kansas Farmer's Union, Kansas Energy Office, Wind Powering America, the CCCC, and the Kansas Board of Regents.

The workshop will feature speakers from successful wind energy efforts in Minnesota and Iowa. Panel discussions will feature Joe King, Coriolis, Community Wind Tool kit; Joe Harkins, Special Assistant to the Ks. Governor Seibelus; Ken Frahm,

Kansas Energy Council; representatives from the Kansas Electric Cooperatives and Kansas Municipal Utilities, and Kansas legislators.

The workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Cook Theatre at CCCC. There will also be Kan-ed ITV Remote Sites at Butler Community College, Colby Community College, and Dodge City Community College. A \$10 registration fee covers lunch. To register, contact Marilyn Martin at 800-729-5101 Ext. 201, or 785-243-1435 Ext.201; or e-mail mmartin@cloud.edu. □

Energy Quiz...

Continued from page 1

Kansas will soon be asked to approve a number of new power plants that will be powered by imported coal. Over 150 new coal plants are being proposed in the U.S. alone, and 850 in the world. This comes at a time when global scientific consensus is moving rapidly toward the need for alternatives to coal, that do not pollute with Mercury (a toxin), Nitrous Oxide (smog), Sulphur Dioxide (acid rain), and atmospheric Carbon Dioxide (a major source of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming).

According to KRC, full discussion of alternatives for non-polluting renewable forms of electrical energy is needed. "Public policy that promotes and encourages the development of our wind energy has the potential to infuse a large new income stream into our economy," stated Nagengast.

KRC's energy quiz was developed to offer citizens and candidates some basic information on wind energy, how other states have developed it

and benefit, and what kinds of policies we need in Kansas. It also offers references and links to other resources as discussion and debate on this critical issue heats up.

The short version is inserted into this issue of Rural Papers. For the long version of the Quiz, go to www.kansasruralcenter.org and follow the information on the home page. □

Event

NCRL Annual Meeting Set for Kansas

The 83rd Anniversary Gathering of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference (NCRL) will be held November 10-11, 2006, in Overland Park, Ks. The deadline for discount on early registration is October 13. With the theme "Sustainable Food, Sustainable Businesses, Sustainable Farms", the gathering will explore how food businesses work to support an ecological, profitable, culturally appropriate and socially just outcome". Go to www.ncrlc.com/Annual_Meeting_83rd_KS.html. □

E.Coli Outbreak in Spinach Raises Questions

As of September 23, 173 cases of illness due to e.coli 0157:H7 infection had been reported to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) including 92 hospitalizations and one death, according to a statement released by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The outbreak has been tied to consumption of bagged raw spinach. Twenty-five states have reported cases of the infection.

Contamination in the field is one possible cause. E.coli is spread through mammals' fecal matter. Water (irrigation and surface water runoff) is suspected, but all water sources were tested and no bacteria was found.

The FDA has determined that the spinach implicated was grown in three California Counties: Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Clara. The FDA also stated that the public can be confident that spinach grown outside these areas can be eaten. However consumers are advised **not** to consume fresh spinach if they cannot confirm that it was grown outside the three California counties.

Industry experts point out that the country's increasingly centralized food system is partly to blame as produce from one source is distributed all over the country. About 74% of the fresh market spinach in the U.S. comes from California. 32,000 acres are grown in the state, with 17,000 acres in Monterrey County alone.

Health officials and growers are scrambling to find management practices to prevent contamination. But many growers and processors are facing economic disaster. □

KRC Notes

Thanks to Survey Responders

We want to thank all the KRC friends who responded to the survey on our newsletter and website we sent out in July! The survey, which was sent to everyone on our mailing list, asked what parts of the newsletter you like most, which parts you'd change or what issues you'd like to see us cover better. We also asked about your preference for an electronic newsletter and how we could improve our website.

You told us your favorite parts of the newsletter are the farmer profiles or success stories, the small farmer commentaries, and sustainable food system news. Issues you want us to cover more include sustainable agricultural practices, farm bill/public policy, state legislative issues, and water quality

and environmental issues.

Staff are currently working to update parts of the website and soon you will see new additions including a Food Policy Council or Local Foods page, a Farmers' Market page, and a Legislative or Policy page, plus updates of other information. Within the next few months, the newsletter will be made available electronically to those who indicated they preferred an electronic copy, and a separate e-newsletter is in the works. We will also continue to publish a paper copy of *Rural Papers*.

As an incentive to return the surveys, we offered a drawing for three copies of Marci Penner's "Kansas Guide for Explorers". The following names were drawn and mailed their copies: Nathan and Rhonda Stillwell, Partridge; Bob Haughwout, Wichita; and George Sanneman, Idana. Congratulations!

Resources

Kansas Water Festival Guide Available

The Kansas Festival Field Guide is now available online at www.kaacee.org/festivals. The guide was developed by the Kansas Association of Conservation and Environmental Education's Statewide Water Celebration Project.

Water celebrations are educational and fun community events designed to educate and entertain the public about important water resource issues.

The Kansas Festival Field Guide connects local organizers, volunteers, supporters, and participants in the over 35 water festival events serving students and communities in over 55 counties across the state. The online directory provides ideas and inspiration for new water education events. The Statewide Water Celebrations Project is funded by Kansas Department of Health and Environment and US EPA 319 funds.

Visit www.kaacee.org/festivals or call Melissa Arthur, Coordinator, at 785-597-5452 for more information. □

Resources

SARE Farmer Rancher Grants Available

The Northeast Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NCR-SARE) is currently accepting applications for their 2006 Farmer Rancher Grant Program. NCR-SARE awards grants to farmers and ranchers for on-farm research, demonstrations, and education projects. By providing funds ranging from \$6,000 per individual grant to up to \$18,000 for grants awarded to groups of three or more, NCR-SARE helps facilitate essential agricultural research and development.

The Bauman family of Garnett, Ks. recently received a grant through

NCR-SARE to assist in funding their new livestock management system. Their system will allow them to rotate different types of animals through the same enclosed pastures or paddocks.

Last year NCR-SARE funded 47 grants totalling \$414,489. Twelve states make up the NC Region including Kansas. Grant proposals are due by December 1, 2006. For more information contact NCR-SARE at 1-800-529-1342; or ncrsare@unl.edu. The application can also be found on the NCR-SARE website at www.sare.org/ncrsare/prod.htm. □

Save the Date!

2007 Sustainable Agriculture Conference

"The Well-being of Rural Kansas"
Paths to Healthy People,
Healthy Environment, and
Healthy Economies

February 16-17, 2007
K-State Alumni Center
KSU

Manhattan, Ks.
More details available later

Jefferson County Grazing Tour Scheduled for October 5

Oskaloosa, Ks.- KRC is sponsoring a tour of Oren Long's farm near Valley Falls on Thursday, October 5 beginning at 5:30 PM. A financial analysis of Long's cow-calf enterprise showed it was in the top third of Kansas' most profitable operations. His pasture system is a grass-legume polyculture managed without purchased fertilizer and provides up to 11 months grazing. The farm has earned the highest rating (Tier 3) in the Conservation Security Program.

The tour is northeast of Valley Falls near the intersection Highways 4 and 16. From there go 1/4 mile east on Highway 16. Look for the signs and

drive north into the pasture entrance.

This tour is also sponsored by K-State Meadowlark Extension District, NRCS Jefferson County Field Office, Jefferson County Conservation District and the Kansas Graziers Association.

Support for the tour is provided by Kansas Department of Health and Environment and EPA Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Control. For more information, contact Jerry Jost at (785) 766-0428 or jjost@myvine.com. You can see a flyer for this tour along with a map at <http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/caledar.html>. □

Douglas Co. Field Day Set for October 19

Lawrence, Ks. - The Managing for Multiple Objectives Field Day will be hosted Thursday, October 19, by John and Amy Bradley from 1 to 5 PM at 1414 N. 1000 Road in Douglas County.

Presenters will cover the Bradley's efforts to stockpile fescue, improve riparian and winter feeding areas, develop a frost-proof watering system, improve timber stand, integrate wildlife habitat, native grass establish-

ment and brush control.

For more information contact Bill Woods, Douglas County Extension, at 785-843-7058. The field day is sponsored by KRC, K-State Research and Extension Douglas County, Douglas County Conservation District, NRCS, Douglas County Farm Bureau, Douglas County Livestock Association, Kansas Forest Service and the Kansas Graziers Association. □

Business Planning for Farmers' Market Offered

Lawrence, Ks. - KRC offers a free service to develop a business plan to help grow your farmers' market. This workshop will be custom designed to meet specific needs of your market and will be held in your community.

For more information, contact Jerry Jost at (785) 766-0428; or e-mail at jjost@myvine.com. To get a brochure, visit <http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/projects.html>. □

Mentoring Farmers in Transition Service Offered

KRC offers a free service to connect farmers beginning to farm or making a transition with master farmers who have experienced similar changes. For more information, contact Jerry Jost at (785) 766-0428 or jjost@myvine.com. □

Oct. 12 Fall Forestry Field Day

The Fall Forestry Field Day will be held Thursday, October 12th, from 9 AM – 3:30 PM at Roy and Carolyn Turney's Tree Farm located a few miles southwest of Emporia, Ks. The field day will provide an opportunity for woodland owners, forest industry, foresters, research scientists and other natural resource professionals to network and share the best information, experience and techniques available to protect and sustain the forest and related natural resources of Kansas.

The Turney's Tree Farm features a 32 year old black walnut plantation, a 20 year old windbreak, and wildlife and native grass plantings. Sessions will also be held at the neighboring Brad Davis farm where native woodlands and a black walnut plantation border the Cottonwood River. The Field Day will include exhibits, and 7 concurrent outdoor educational sessions.

A \$15 registration fee will cover the cost of lunch and other expenses. Registration will increase to \$20 after October 6th. Additional information maybe found at <http://www.kansasforests.org/rural/foreststewardship/fallfieldday.shtml> or by calling the Kansas Forest Service State Office at 785-532-3300. □

Is Fair Trade or Free Trade Best for Local Agriculture?

Manhattan, Ks. - A panel discussion "Is fair trade or free trade best for local agriculture?" will be held on November 9 from 3 to 4:30 p.m. in the K-State Union Little Theatre in Manhattan, Ks.

The discussion is part of a week long focus on Fair Trade at K-State. Guest panelists will include Rink Dickinson, co-founder of the Equal Exchange (known for their coffee and chocolate), Jim French, Kansas farmer and staff for Oxfam America, and Teresa Selfa, Rural Sociologist at K-State with expertise in local food issues. Rhonda Janke, Sustainable Cropping Systems Extension

Specialist at K-State will moderate the discussion. The public is invited to attend.

Rink Dickinson is also the featured speaker at the Lou Douglas Lecture in the evening of November 9. Since founding the Equal Exchange in 1986, Dickinson has played a major role in helping Equal Exchange become a model of a democratically controlled, socially responsible business. Equal Exchange was founded to create a new approach to trade, one that engages consumers and builds honest fair trade relationships. □

Organic Research Grants Available

Santa Cruz, CA- The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) is accepting applications from organic farmers and ranchers or from producers working with an Extension educator or university researcher for organic farming research proposals.

The deadline is December 15, 2006. Proposals are encouraged in the following areas:

- * organic livestock systems;
- * economic constraints and opportunities relevant to the viability of small and medium scale organic farms;
- * projects that investigate the interactions between components of organic systems that take a systems-management (rather than an input substitution) approach to solving production problems.

OFRF encourages organic farmers and ranchers to apply for a grant. Also partnerships between a farmer or rancher and an extension educator or university researcher are also encouraged. Contact Jane Sooby at 831-426-6606 or e-mail Jane@ofrf.org. Or check the OFRF website at <http://www.ofrf.org/research/application.html>. □

Basin Advisory Team Members Sought

Topeka, Ks. - The Kansas Water Office is taking applications for members to the Basin Advisory Committees (BAC) for the twelve state major water basins. Organizations (like KRC) from across the state have been asked to nominate applicants and encourage our members or supporters to submit applications.

The deadline for applications is October 15, with a second round of

applications due in the spring of 2007. Members serve four year terms and attend 3 or 4 meetings per year. The BAC's advise the Kansas Water Authority and Kansas Water Office on development and implementation of the State Water Plan and all water related issues within their basin.

If you are interested in serving, contact Mary Fund at 785-873-3431, or ksrc@rainbowtel.net; or visit the www.kwo.org for more information. □



Celebrating 25 Years of Farming With Nature KANSAS RURAL CENTER - RURAL PAPERS

Contributors to the Kansas Rural Center's work to promote sustainable agriculture in Kansas receive KRC's newsletter, *Rural Papers*, 6 to 8 issues/year, and other Center special reports and information alerts. Subscriptions are available for \$25/year.

___ Yes, I want to support Sustainable Agriculture in Kansas and subscribe to Rural papers.

Here's my contribution: ___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ Other ___

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Make Checks Payable to:
Kansas Rural Center
304 Pratt
Whiting, Ks. 66552

Calendar

October 7 & 8, 2006 Kaw Valley Farm Tour, (Lawrence and Douglas County) 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., \$10/car; Farm Tour Guide book provides maps and directions to 14 farms; For more information go to: www.visitlawrence.com/farmtour, or call Karen Pendleton at 785-843-7058; karenp@pendletons.com.

October 12, Community Forum on Kansas Environmental Issues; at the Village Presbyterian Church 6641 Mission Road , Prairie Village, Ks. 5:30 p.m. Supper 6 p.m. Program 7 p.m. Sponsored by Ks. Natural Resource Council and Prairie Village Environmental Committee. Contact: Margaret Thomas at mgt84roe@aol.com; or call kathy Riordan 913-383-7882.

October 19, Managing for Multiple Objectives: Bradley Field Day, 1 to 5 p.m. Lawrence, Ks. For more information contact Douglas County Extension Office 785-843-7058. Also see the announcement page of KRC's website.

October 21, Market Gardening Workshop: Business Management for Small Farms, "Telling Your Farm's Story". Business structures, farm financing, and other management issues. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Location TBA. More information available later.

October 31, Kansas Community Wind Workshop, Cloud County Community College, Concordia, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. See KRC website for more detail.

November 10-11, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, "Sustainable Food, Sustainable Business, Sustainable Agriculture"; **Overland Park, Ks.**; For more information, go to www.ncrlc.com/Annual_Meeting_83rd_KS.html Or call Sister Pauline Tursi, NCRLC, 515-270-2634.

Please check the KRC website for updated calendar and announcement information at:

www.kansasruralcenter.org.

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