



Like all across the country, farmers markets in Kansas are growing in number and in the variety and scope of what they offer. Not only are customers flocking to the markets in larger cities like Topeka, Wichita and Lawrence, but small town markets are seeing increased interest from both consumers and producers. Growing for local consumption, whether it be fruits and vegetables, poultry, beef or some other niche market, is one way some farmers are adding enterprises to existing farms, or are adding enterprises for children returning to the farm. Beginning farmers with no traditional farm experience are also finding market gardening an entry point into farming and small business development. Above David Coltrain, Washington, bags up broccoli for a customer at the Hanover market. Inside, check out stories on KRC's Savor the Season Program at farmers' markets, our upcoming niche marketing guide, and other related stories. Photo by Cole Cottin.

## Gerrish Grazing Workshops Set for Topeka and Hays

Jim Gerrish, well-known Idaho rancher, researcher, grazing educator, author and co-founder of the Missouri Grazing School, will deliver two 2-day workshops in Topeka and Hays, Kansas in August.

Gerrish will be in Topeka at the Ramada Inn, Lower level meeting rooms, 420 SE 6th St. on Monday-Tuesday, August 13-14, and in Hays at the Whiskey Creek Restaurant West Meeting Room, 3203 Vine St. Hays, Kansas on Wednesday-Thursday August 15-16. Each workshop will begin at 8:30 a.m. and run until 5 p.m. each day, and each workshop will be tailored for the grasses, forages, rainfall, growing conditions and grazing potential in that area of the state.

Gerrish has over twenty years of beef-forage systems research and outreach experience while he was on the faculty of the University of Missouri and twenty years of commercial cattle and sheep production on his farm. In addition to workshops and seminars, he provides an on-farm consulting service which helps farmers and ranchers more effectively manage their grazing lands for economic and environmental sustainability.

He is author of two books, **Management Intensive Grazing: The Grassroots of Grass Farming**, published in 2004, and **Kick the Hay Habit: A Practical Guide to Year Around Grazing**, published in 2010. Gerrish also writes for **Stockman Grass Farmer** magazine and is a contributing editor to **Beef Magazine**.

Gerrish is back in Kansas at the request of graziers who attended a series of successful one-day workshops last summer. This year he will go into more depth on a range of topics including: getting the most from your pastures, kicking the hay habit, grazing system design, stocking rates, carrying capacity, planning for year-around grazing, balance forage supply and animal demand, and more. Ranchers and graziers will learn information and management skills that will improve production and profitability.

*Contd. on page 10*

## Rural Papers

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## Small Farmer Commentary

### Drought and Cultivating Resilience

by Mary Fund

*"I was born in a drought year." So begins my favorite Wendell Berry poem.\* With 82 Kansas counties declared disaster areas due to drought by mid-July, and the Governor requesting that another 37 be added to the list, that poem has often come to mind lately. I have been thinking not only about immediate drought management on the farm, but about the bigger issue of resilience. While some still argue that we can explain this year's triple digit temperatures and drought as simply "summer", the "weather is the news reality" begs to differ.*

*At KRC's 2008 Sustainable Agriculture Conference in Blue Rapids, Ks., Dr. Fred Kirschenmann spoke about our natural resource base and changing climate as critical to "meeting agriculture's challenges in a rapidly changing world." Building resilience, which is the ability to recover or adjust to misfortune or change, was central to his comments.*

*Kirschenmann urged us to think about agricultural sustainability in a new way. He spoke of "weak sustainability", which defines sustainability "as a steady state, assuming that the underlying structure of agriculture or the economy stays the same." Under this system, all we have to do is tweak a few issues, or "green it up" (as nearly all corporations have done these days), and everything else would stay the same.*

*But Kirschenmann argued that the world is changing so rapidly that we can't afford this definition of sustainability. It will not prepare us for the big changes we face in term of climate and resources.*

*Instead he offered a version of "strong sustainability" which asks how can we build resilience into the system? To do this you have to think about adaptation and not just tweaking or greening it up. "We are moving," he told the 100 plus farmers and ranchers in the audience, "into a future where energy costs are going to go up, and the climate will become more unstable. The question is how is my farm going to survive these circumstances? This is true for not only agriculture but for society and the economy in general."*

*"Industrialization", he explained, "is all about efficiency, which make sense until you realize that the only way to achieve efficiency is to eliminate redundancy. And in nature, redundancy is what makes resilience. If one thing crashes, there are six others that still work." In terms of agriculture, the native prairie is the premier example of resilience, as during drought, certain species seem to disappear but others thrive because they are adapted to drought. As Wes Jackson's lifetime of work at the Land Institute asserts, mimicking the prairie with our agricultural crops may hold the key to adaptation for the future.*

*But as most scientists, and even some economists realize, resilience requires biodiversity, and we are losing biodiversity at record pace.*

*Here in northeast Kansas, unprecedented amounts of grass and pasture have been broken out the past few years for cropland based on current high crop prices. Natural field borders of trees, grass and brush, as well as riparian areas are bulldozed, taking with them wildlife*

*Continued on page 3*

# Briefs

## GMO Myths and Truths Report Released

On July 5 a new report titled “GMO Myths and Truths” was released. Written by genetic engineers, the report presents a large body of peer-reviewed scientific evidence of the problems genetically engineered crops and organisms pose to human health and the environment. The intent was to take the debate beyond the usual rhetoric, and focus on the peer-reviewed science to summarize the findings.

The reports authors are Dr. Michael Antoniou of King’s College London School of Medicine and Dr. John Fagan, a former genetic engineer who now operates a GMO testing lab.

The authors claim that “GM crops

are promoted on the basis of ambitious claims~ that they are safe to eat, environmentally beneficial, increase yields, reduce reliance on pesticides, and help solve world hunger.” Instead, the report points to studies that show that genetically modified (GM) crops have harmful effects on laboratory animals in feeding trials and on the environment; GM crops also result in increased pesticide use, and fail to increase yields.

“Over 75% of all GM crops are engineered to tolerate being sprayed with herbicide. This has led to the spread of herbicide resistant superweeds and has resulted in increased exposure of farmers and communities to these toxic chemicals” stated Fagan. “Epidemiological studies suggest links between herbicide use and birth defects and cancer.”

The report claims that based on the evidence of research reviewed, there is “no need to take risks with GM crops, when readily available, and sustainable solutions to the problems that GM technology claims to address already exist. Conventional plant breeding, in some cases helped by safe modern technologies like gene mapping and marker assisted selection, continues to outperform GM in producing high-yield, drought tolerant and pest-and disease resistant crops that can meet our present and future food needs.”

The full report can be accessed at: <http://earthopensource.org/index.php/reports/gmo-myths-and-truths>. □

## KRC News

### Thank you to Kohlmeier and Reznicek

Thank you to Lyle Kohlmeier and Ed Reznicek for their work in the Clean Water Farm Project. Both, who were part-time staff, opted to discontinue working KRC’s Clean Water Farm Project with the WRAPS focus. (See page 9 for more detail.) Lyle was just with us for one year but his years of experience with USDA NRCS will be missed in KRC’s work.

Ed Reznicek has been affiliated with KRC in one way or another for over two decades, but with the cuts to the CWFPP funding, decided he needed more time for his role as Kansas Organic Producer’s General Manager and for his own farm. Ed will continue working as an independent contractor with the Delaware WRAPS on their Cover Crop Initiative. He will also continue to help KRC as an advisor with program development. □

## Small Farmer Commentary Continued

Contd. from page 2...

*and pollinator habitat to make way for homogenous fields of corn and soybeans. Resilient? I think not.*

*Not that systems with more complex crop rotations, deep rooted cover crops, and livestock integrated into the operation won’t be sorely tested during the current drought, but past indications are that they will fare better ecologically than simpler, specialized operations (and if you leave out federal crop insurance and commodity crop subsidies, they may also fare better economically).*

*Whether you view the current drought and high temperatures as a short-term typical weather cycle or part of a bigger shift to a dryer, warmer climate, a shift to making*

*your farm or ranch more resilient is important. It might begin with something simple like cover crops as forages for livestock following an early harvest of corn for livestock feed. Or it might involve installing paddock fencing and alternative watering sites to better manage pasture and livestock. Or it may involve incorporating wheat or small winter grains into that rotation of corn and soybeans. These are certainly not the whole solution but they are a start.*

*Wendell Berry’s poem ends with “ My sweetness is to wake in the night after days of dry heat, hearing the rain.” I know I look forward to that. □*

*\*“Water”, from **Farming: A Handbook** by Wendell Berry, 1967 Harvest/Harcourt Brace Jovanich Publishers.*



## House Ag Committee Voted a New Farm Bill; Waiting on Full House Action

by Mary Fund

On July 12, the House Agriculture Committee voted a new farm bill out of committee. But as this goes to press, there are serious concerns whether or not there will be any floor action prior to the current bill's expiration on September 30. Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH) has consistently refused to guarantee the farm bill any floor time.

Time is the crucial element as the House bill must pass the floor of the House, and then go to conference committee for House and Senate agreement before the September 30 deadline. Neither of these tasks will be easy, and some say they are next to impossible given the differences in the House and Senate in the commodity policy and food stamp (Supplemental Food and Nutrition Assistance) provisions.

The House bill projects to save \$35 billion over the next decade by cutting \$16 billion from nutrition programs and \$6 billion from conservation programs, while increasing crop insurance subsidies and decreasing commodity subsidies for a net savings of \$14 billion.

Debate on the nutrition title took up most of the Committee's time, but

in the end no changes were made to the \$16 billion in cuts proposed in the House draft bill. Amendments were offered (and failed) that would have restored the cuts and that would have replaced the House draft with the Senate-passed farm bill version, which would have reduced the overall nutrition cuts to \$4.5 billion. Attempts were also made by Kansas Rep. Tim Huelskamp and others to make even deeper cuts in the nutrition programs, but these failed as well.

According to the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), the House version contained a few positive provisions for farm families, rural communities and the environment, but overall failed to include farm program reform into the bill. "The bill needs very significant improvements if it is going to emerge as a bill that expands opportunities for family farmers to produce good food, sustain the environment, and contribute to vibrant communities," noted Ferd Hoefner, Policy Director for NSAC.

**House Farm Bill Pluses.** On the positive side, the Committee accepted a farm to school provision that allows greater flexibility to small rural schools and establishes pilot projects to allow schools to use program dollars from

the USDA food distribution program to purchase produce from local farmers. The Committee also included a number of improvements to spur economic growth through local and regional agriculture, and included some improvements for beginning farmers and ranchers.

**House Farm Bill Misses.** However, the Committee also failed to act on a nationwide sodsaver provision, allowing the continued destruction of native grass and prairie lands. Basically according to Hoefner, the committee condoned the use of taxpayer dollars to subsidize the destruction of native grass, basing their opposition to the sodsaver act as protecting property rights.

The Committee also repealed the livestock and poultry farmer protections established in the 2008 farm bill, and undid the compromise on poultry protections established just last year. "By agreeing to repeal the livestock and poultry farmer protections, the Committee threw America's livestock and poultry farmers under the bus," stated Hoefner. "Adding more insult to injury, the Committee reneged on a broadly supported compromise to protect poultry growers from abusive behavior on the part of poultry processors."

The House version also eliminated the National Organic Certification Cost-share program, which currently provides the nation's organic farmers with limited assistance to help pay for certification fees for standards set by the federal government. This is one of the very few programs that specifically benefits organic farmers. (The Senate version would continue this program.)

*Continued on page 11*

## Beware of Blue Green Algae Threat for Farm Ponds

by Mary Fund

As the summer heat and drought bear down on the Heartland, the threat of blue green algae blooms in reservoirs and farm ponds increases. Blue green algae (BGA) can sicken or kill livestock and other animals, and is also harmful to humans, so precautions must be taken.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) issues advisories and warnings for public reservoirs and recreational waters, but farmers and ranchers need to be aware of the threats to farm ponds and creeks that provide livestock water.

Kansas State University has produced a Fact Sheet, "Identification and Management of Blue-green Algae in Farm Ponds" available online at <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/h20ql2/mf3065.pdf>. If blue-green algae are suspected, a water sample should be collected, and can be sent to the K-State College of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Laboratory. (\$19/sample). The KSU fact sheet includes tips on taking a water sample and where to send for testing.

BGA is a bacteria that favors warm, stagnant water and thrives in nutrient laden waters, so farm ponds are at high risk. This year many farm ponds started the spring with low water levels due to the dry winter. That combined with lack of rainfall and high temperatures have increased the threat.

In late May, BGA was identified as

the probable cause of death of 22 cattle at a Marion County ranch. Veterinarians involved say there is no way to definitively prove that BGA were the cause, but the evidence is strong.

According to KSU veterinarian Larry Hollis, BGA looks like a pale greenish oil scum on top of the water, except around the edges where it is more cobalt blue in color. KDHE also reports that some algae blooms can look like foam or a thick slurry, and can be blue, bright green, brown or even red, and may look like paint floating on the water. All ponds have algae and moss, but veterinarians say the BGA looks different enough to catch your attention.

If a BGA bloom is suspected, it is important to remove the livestock as quickly as possible as the toxins produced can kill animals within a short time. Fencing the pond and providing an alternative source of water is necessary.

Human reaction to contact with BGA range from irritating skin rashes to respiratory complications to severe vomiting and diarrhea. Humans are unlikely to consume pond water, but avoiding contact is important.

KDHE also has information available on their website at [www.kdheks.gov/algae.illness/index.html](http://www.kdheks.gov/algae.illness/index.html). □

## Eastern Kansas September 12-13 Grazing School Taking Registrations

Emporia, Ks – Farmers and ranchers are invited to participate in the third annual Eastern Kansas Grazing School at the Lyon County Fairgrounds in Emporia on September 12 and 13, 2012.

The two-day management intensive grazing (MIG) school will be a hands-on learning experience preparing participants to start their own rotational grazing system with forages adapted to eastern Kansas.

Topics to be covered include the science behind grazing, graziers arithmetic, matching livestock and forage needs, pasture layout and design, grazing economics, and fencing and watering designs. Hands-on field exercises and two farm tours will be included.

Speakers will include experts from Kansas NRCS, Missouri NRCS and Extension, and Kansas State University. This school is appropriate for both beginner and experienced graziers and is targeted at adult learners.

The school will begin at 8 AM and end at 5 PM both days at the Lyon County Fairgrounds located at 2632 West U.S. Highway 50 in Emporia, KS. A fencing demonstration workshop will be held the evening of September 12 at the Lyon County Fairgrounds, which will be open to the public.

*Continued on page 8*

# Our Local Food News

## Our Local Food Chapters



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## Niche Marketing in Kansas Guide and Workshop Due This Fall

This summer, KRC's Our Local Food (OLF) Project is working on two projects aimed at introducing Kansas producers to niche marketing opportunities.

Niche markets, such as farmers markets, CSAs, restaurants, institutions, grocery stores, food coops, and mail-order or internet sales, can help an established farmer or rancher diversify their existing operation and increase their customer base, or help a beginning producer find a sustainable market for their products.

As part of the initiative to promote niche marketing in Kansas, KRC is planning a day-long strategic marketing workshop and farm tour for livestock producers.

The workshop will bring together a team of experts who will provide information on successfully incorporating niche marketing into an existing operation - from both a logistics and financial standpoint; developing a "brand" and utilizing effective marketing strategies; and understanding the regulations, financial risks, and appropriate liability coverage needed to direct market animal products in Kansas.

The farm tour will provide attendees the opportunity to see a thriving niche market farm in action, as well as the chance to connect with other livestock producers and wholesale buyers. The workshop and tour is scheduled for September 21 in the North Central/Concordia area. Look for more details later this summer.

OLF staff have also been busy creating "Finding Your Niche: A Marketing Guide for Kansas Farmers" that will be the go-to guide for information on niche market farming for Kansas producers.

The guidebook, scheduled to be available in October, will include a series of tip sheets covering strategies and tools for: successfully getting started in, or transitioning to, niche market farming; how and where to market your products; processing, handling, and sales regulations that pertain to direct market farming; and links to resources for marketing vegetables, fruits, meat, poultry, eggs, dairy products, honey, and farm-raised fish. The guidebook will be a terrific resource for beginning producers and experienced farmers, alike. □

## Resources

**Kansas Farmers Markets** - For a list of markets statewide or to search for the market nearest you, go to: <http://www.ksfarmersmarkets.org>

The website is organized so you can search for a market by city or county; or you can view a list of all the markets in Kansas.

**Local Food Connections--** For sources of local food in Kansas go to the "Food Finder" at KRC's newest website: <http://www.ourlocalfoodks.org>

Farms and food businesses are still registering at this relatively new site, but check it out for farm listings, farmers markets, and more.

# Our Local Food News

## Savor the Season Helps Promote Specialty Crops

by Tracey Graham



Displays of the Savor the Season recipe cards can be found at 40 farmers markets around the state. The cards provide information on how to select, store and prepare the crops, as well as a recipe. "Food Safety Ends with You" cards are also available. Photo by Cole Cottin.



Bell peppers are but one of the vegetables featured on the Savor the Season cards. Photo by T. Graham.

Kansans are enjoying the bounty of basil, beans, beets and bell peppers currently available at their farmers markets. These summer crops and 21 more are featured in the Savor The Season program. KRC staff has worked to develop the program, which is funded through a USDA Specialty Crop Grant via the Kansas Department of Agriculture to KRC.

Forty farmers markets across the state are participating in the program by displaying banners and distributing materials that encourage shoppers to enjoy seasonal foods when they are at their peak of ripeness, flavor and quality. Savor The Season provides recipe cards featuring Spring crops (arugula, bok choy, lettuce, napa cabbage, rhubarb, salad mix, snow peas, spinach and swiss chard), Summer crops (basil, beans, beets, bell peppers, cantaloupe, cherry tomatoes, eggplant, garlic, heirloom tomatoes, okra, and onions) and Autumn crops (acorn squash, pumpkin, spaghetti squash, sweet potato, turnip). Each card includes tips on how to select, store and prepare the crops, and provides a tasty recipe. Additional recipes for these featured crops and many others are available on the [ksfarmersmarkets.org](http://ksfarmersmarkets.org) website.

Also available is the Savor The Season "Food Safety Ends With You" card, which offers tips on how to keep the fresh fruits and vegetables our farmers work hard to grow safe from contamination.

In addition, Savor The Season is providing 16 farmers markets with minigrant or cost-share funding to help promote specialty crops in their area. This funding is being used in a variety of creative ways to bring special events to markets throughout this year's growing season. Many of the events are posted on <http://www.facebook.com/SavorTheSeason>.

Folks looking for a new idea for cantaloupe, wanting to learn why heirloom tomatoes are such a big deal, or who are interested in preparing okra without getting slimed, can pick up the cards at farmers markets in: Abilene, Allen County, Ark City, Atchison, Basehor, Clay Center, Clyde, Manhattan (Downtown), Emporia, Florence, Fort Scott (R and B Produce), Glasco, Goodland, Hanover, Haysville, Independence, Kansas City (KCK Greenmarkets @ Catholic Charities, Juniper Gardens & Strawberry Hill; Rosedale), Larned, Lawrence (Cottin's Hardware, Downtown), Leavenworth, Lyndon, Marysville, Medicine River, Oberlin, Paola, Perry Lecompton, Reno County, Spring Hill, Topeka (Capitol Midweek, Monday Market at Your Library), Walnut Valley, Washington, and Wichita (Delano Community, Kansas Grown!, Normandie Center, Old Town). For more information on the Savor the Season program contact Tracey Graham at [twinrivers.olf@gmail.com](mailto:twinrivers.olf@gmail.com) or call 620-343-4397. □

# Our Local Food News

Stories from the Field:

## Mobile Food Prep Unit Helps Garnett Farmers Market Promote Products

by Tom King

Garnett, Ks.- When Rosanna Bauman sees a problem, she seeks a solution, even if it means trying something new.

As the manager of the Garnett Farmers Market, Bauman recognizes the importance of offering samples to market customers. But certain types of produce, such as cut melons and cut tomatoes, are deemed potentially hazardous by the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA), requiring special precautions for regular public service. Currently, the KDA allows a vendor to provide samples of produce to the public only six times per year.

Offering samples on a regular basis requires a KDHE-certified kitchen or mobile food unit, models which were unsuited to the needs and budgets of the Garnett Farmers Market Association (GFMA) members.

"Typically, our members sample their produce at the Farmers Market or serve concessions at U-Pick pumpkin and strawberry patches, so they didn't need an elaborate food truck and they certainly didn't need the attached expense," Bauman says. "It wasn't financially feasible for members to individually get a mobile food vendor license through the KDA."

But Bauman had a plan. In collaboration with the KDA, she

designed a Mobile Food Prep Unit (MFPU)--actually a former camper frame converted to a trailer--for the exclusive use of GFMA members.

Members rent the unit for fundraising dinners, and market and U-Pick events. The trailer contains a large preparation counter, a three-compartment sink and a hand wash sink.

"Many venues may not have electricity, and hot water is needed for proper hygiene and washing of utensils," says Bauman. Batteries in the trailer supply hot water under pressure and a tank underneath holds gray water. A storage area in the front of the trailer holds tables and tents available for rent to GFMA members.

Renters provide their own equipment for cooking (grills, roasters, slow cookers), and their own tools and coolers. No leftovers are allowed to be saved for reheating, which eliminates a major safety concern.

"Since the GFMA operates as a unit, food safety training is essential," says Bauman. The Bauman family operates ANCO Poultry Processing in rural Garnett, a USDA-certified poultry processing facility. Bauman's knowledge of food safety and her training in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) is a boon to GFMA

members. She personally trains each member in proper washing techniques, food storage and handling procedures, and safe cooking methods.

The cleaning and maintenance of the Mobile Food Prep unit are communal operations. Bauman posts Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP) for hygiene and hand washing, as well as maintaining a sanitary checklist to be completed at the end of each serving day. "Our members hold themselves to a higher standard in regard to food safety because they know other members are counting on them," she says. "I'm confident we have the food safety angle covered." □

## Clean Water Farm News

### Eastern Ks. Grazing School...

*Contd. from page 5*

The grazing school is sponsored by K-State Research and Extension, NRCS, and the Kansas Rural Center.

The maximum number of participants is limited to 35 farms, and is on a first-registered basis. Registration is \$50 for the first person from a farm, which includes lunches, snacks, and hand-outs. Additional persons from the same farm are \$25, which includes lunches and snacks. Registration for the school is due by August 15.

For more information and to receive a flyer, contact Brian Rees, Lyon County Extension Office at 620-341-3220, or [brees@ksu.edu](mailto:brees@ksu.edu). Or go to the KRC website for a registration form at [www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar.html](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar.html). □



# Clean Water Farm News

## Clean Water Project Wraps Up Its Work; KRC to Explore Emerging Resource Issues

Whiting, Ks- Starting in July, the Kansas Rural Center Clean Water Farms Project (CWFP) will be a much reduced version of itself. Due to state and federal budget cuts, KRC's work will be reduced from 18 watersheds to just four watersheds in the eastern half of the state.

As part of the state's Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy Program (WRAPS), KRC and other service providers and a number of WRAPS watersheds will either receive no funds or reduced funds for the next fiscal year. In April, KRC was offered a package of funding to continue working in ten watersheds, but after analysis determined that the funds were not enough to make the program viable, and that participating would cost KRC more than it could afford, KRC opted to continue working in only four watersheds.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), who administer the funds, and the WRAPS Work Group, which is made up of advisors to KDHE from state and federal agencies and institutions, had the unpleasant task of dividing up the shrinking dollars among service providers like KRC and WRAPS watersheds around the state.

KRC will continue working in four watersheds, where funding and close staff proximity made the workload doable. Field Staff Dale Kirkham, Eureka, will continue on a quarter time basis working in the Eagle Creek and Toronto WRAPS watersheds, and Mary Howell will work half-time in the Middle Kansas and Tuttle Creek

WRAPS watersheds. In these four watersheds, they will continue to offer limited one-on-one farmer and rancher assistance, organizing educational workshops and tours, and assist farmers and ranchers in developing cost-share applications for WRAPS funding to implement best management practices.

KRC's involvement in general water and conservation issues, though, is far from over.

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### **KRC will focus on exploring new questions and the emerging challenge of farmer adaptation to a changing climate.**

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"KRC has a long history of involvement with natural resource issues. We were into water quality before it was cool. Now, there are lots of players and lots of options," stated Mary Fund, KRC's long-time water and resource project coordinator. For the future, Fund states that KRC will explore new questions and the emerging challenge of farmer adaptation to a changing climate.

"Whether you call it climate change or not, Mother Nature appears to have some big challenges ahead for us. Farmers and ranchers will have to find ways to make food production resilient in a changing world."

*Continued on page 10*

## Clean Water Farms Project

*For well over a decade, U.S. EPA 319 funds through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) gave KRC the opportunity to offer farmers and ranchers financial assistance and outreach/education to adopt sustainable farming practices that protect water quality.*

*Since 1995, KRC's Clean Water Farms Project provided \$590,000 in cost-share dollars to farmers and ranchers to implement practices to protect water quality and farmers - long before some of those practices were commonly accepted. For instance, KRC was among the first in the state to fund management intensive grazing systems, providing funds for alternative watering systems and cross fencing.*

*In 2000, the project developed a whole farm planning tool, the **River Friendly Farm Environmental Assessment**, as a way to help farmers and ranchers identify problems and needed management changes and how to implement changes on their farms. Over 300 Ks. farmers completed whole farm plans.*

*Use of the tool assumes a systems approach to farming. Not one BMP at a time, or one issue at a time, but an approach that looks at the cropping system, the grazing and pasture and livestock operation, the wildlife habitat on the farm, the water resources- as well as the human resources. Then it helps the farmer or landowner identify solutions or improvements, develop a plan and timeline, and links the farmer to financial and technical resources to achieve that plan.*

*KRC administered 150 cost-share projects that between 2000-2010 alone leveraged over \$400,000 in state and federal cost-share. A recent KRC survey of past program participants indicated that most adopted additional practices beyond their KRC funded project- most often at their own expense. Farmers (and KRC) contributed nearly \$3 million of their **own** money toward those and additional projects.*

*Continued on page 10*

# Clean Water Farm News

## CWFP History....

*Continued from page 10*

Cost-share was capped at \$5,000 per farm, so that available funds could be distributed to more producers. Many of the farmers and ranchers KRC worked with, for one reason or another, did **not** participate in the state or federal conservation programs—too much red tape, or they were simply not eligible for the program, or too much time spent waiting for approval.

During the project, outreach and education was a strong component. KRC conducted over 90 farm tours, 145 workshops, and over 260 presentations on farming and sustainable farming practices reaching thousands of people.

Before receiving the first funds, KRC was doing on-farm research of farming practices with farmers. KRC was working with practices to reduce chemical fertilizer and pesticide use, use legumes as forages, use cover crops to provide both nutrients, erosion control and forages for livestock, and other alternative practices to rely more on on-farm resources and less on inputs. The CWFP funds enabled KRC to offer farmers cost-share funds to absorb some of the initial risk they were taking by adopting these practices.

About five years ago, the project began shifting to the state's Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) framework established by KDHE, where attention has focused more on individual BMP's and not a whole farm approach, as the primary means to achieving TMDL's (total maximum daily load) standards in sub-watersheds with specific problems and high ranked target areas.

KRC will continue working in four watersheds. The RFFP assessment tool will continue to be available on KRC's website at <http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/publications/RFFP.pdf>, and you can contact KRC with questions. □

## Jim Gerrish Workshops...

*Continued from page 1*

The workshops will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 5:00 p.m. each day. Deadline for registration for food count is August 8. Registration fees, which include lunch and beverages, are \$80 per individual for each workshop; and \$50 per workshop for high school or college students.

Attendees are responsible for their own hotel and motel arrangements. The Topeka workshop is being held at the Ramada Inn and reservations can be made there by calling 785-234-5400. Hays has a number of lodging options.

To register go to the Kansas Rural Center website at [www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org) and click on the 2012 Jim Gerrish Workshop Registration button. From there you can print out a registration form and mail it plus a check to the Kansas Rural Center at P.O. Box 133, Whiting, Ks. Or you can register online via the KRC website by clicking on your preferred workshop location and date.

For more information contact: Mary Howell, KRC workshop coordinator, at 785-562-8726 or [kfu.mary@gmail.com](mailto:kfu.mary@gmail.com), or contact KRC at 785-873-3431, or [ksrc@rainbowtel.net](mailto:ksrc@rainbowtel.net).

The workshops are made available by a grant award to the Kansas Rural Center from the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA). Kansas Farmers Union, Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition, and Kansas SARE are joining KRC as co-sponsors. □

## CWFP, KRC, & Resources....

*Continued from page 9*

Funding, though, she conceded, is going to be tough not only for non-profits like KRC seeking to help farmers, but for producers looking for financial and technical assistance for conservation practices on their farms and ranches, as state and federal programs are cut.

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**“Cultivating resilience is what we need to be doing— not just on individual farms and ranches, but in the farming and food system overall.”**

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“The state and federal reduction in funding comes at a time when there is unprecedented grass and pasture land being broken out to raise high priced crops,” she explained. “And this comes at a time when climate and weather is becoming more unpredictable, and the consequences of doing the wrong thing will be harder to correct down the road.”

Farming more vulnerable erosion prone land and reducing biodiversity, Fund asserts, is a recipe for disaster.

“Cultivating resilience is what we need to be doing— not just on individual farms and ranches but in the farming and food system overall,” stated Fund. “And practices that help farmers and ranchers do this is where KRC hopes to place its natural resource focus in the coming years.” □

## Farm Bill ...

*Continued from page 4*

Furthermore and perhaps most telling about who and what the House Committee serves, there was no House action to place a lower cap on commodity subsidies and to close the current payment limitation loopholes that attract widespread abuse and allow virtually unlimited payments with taxpayer's money. In fact, they increased crop insurance subsidies—without even any lip service to strengthening conservation compliance for such payments.

**Environmental Riders.** The House Committee farm bill also includes riders that impact environmental protection. According to NSAC, "one provision significantly weakens USDA's ability to regulate the use of genetically engineered (GE) organisms. It would greatly narrow the scope of the environmental assessment for GE crop approvals and would limit the amount of time that USDA has to review GE crop applications. It would also authorize USDA to do a study to look into exempting certain GE crops from the (weakened) regulatory process (and from regulation) and to make recommendations for a national low-GE presence in supply chain policy."

Another provision reverses the court decision re-affirming the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to regulate pesticide pollution under the Clean Water Act.

### What If There is No Bill.

If the House fails to bring the bill to the floor, there are several scenarios being batted around. One is for a clean extension of the current farm bill

## Future of the State Budget: The Big Gamble Begins

by Paul Johnson

The Kansas budget for Fiscal Year 2013 (July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013) was finally finished in the very last days of the session. Now the scramble begins to assemble a FY 2014 Kansas budget that can balance. The mega-tax bill signed by the Governor had little impact on the 2013 budget but for 2014 the impact will be far greater.

Governor Sam Brownback signed into law far reaching tax cuts reducing and eliminating some income taxes in Kansas. The belief held by the Governor and conservatives is that these cuts will generate enough new revenues (via jobs and businesses) to

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with no changes; another is for an extension with limited changes; other scenarios include short-term extensions (lame-duck session this fall), or a one year extension. Another scenario is for the House bill to go directly to a House-Senate conference committee, who could theoretically agree on a final bill. This bill could then be attached to an end of year must pass legislation including appropriations for FY 2013, extension of the Bush-era tax cuts, increasing the debt limit, etc.

While options fall to the side as the clock keeps ticking, many are urging the House to take action now. On July 13, NSAC joined 45 national farm, commodity, conservation, rural and religious organizations in sending a letter to House leadership urging them to schedule floor debate on the House Ag Committee's Farm bill. □

offset losses from the tax cut. This belief will be tested soon as the projection for the 2014 State budget is \$303 million in the red, spelling special challenges for public schools, social services and environmental programs.

Lost tax revenue for 2013 was just \$231 million but for 2014 the lost tax revenue jumps to \$802 million.

The Governor is already looking for budget cuts to handle this imbalance. This year he vetoed \$800,000 for the Local Environmental Protection Program. (This is the program that tests private water wells and sewer systems.) The Governor reduced from \$1.1 million to \$600,000 funding for the Wichita Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project funding. (This project stores treated river water in the Equus Beds aquifer for future water needs.) The court case over school funding has begun and that may play into more funding for public schools directed by the Kansas Supreme Court. The Medicaid managed care plan known as KanCare may not begin by January 1, 2013 so the assumed savings will not materialize.

An economic renaissance for Kansas will have to happen quickly to offset the loss of income tax revenues. The \$300 million state budget deficit in 2014 jumps to \$914 million in 2015 and to \$2.4 Billion by 2018. □

*The above was first published in KRC's Weekly EUpdates monitoring the State Legislature and the Farm Bill. Back issues of KRC's Weekly EUpdates can be found on the KRC website at <http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/archive2.html>.*

## Our Local Food News



Glacial Hills RC&D sponsored a Local Food Bus Tour on May 23 that highlighted specialty crop production and local producers, processing and merchandising. Ten stops from Hiawatha (Brown County) to Washington county included hoophouses, market gardens, local shops, and a farmers market. Featured businesses included: Hearthside Country Store, Sabetha; Granite Road Greenhouses, Beatty; Frankfort meat processing locker (now certified for organic processing); Elsie Grace's, Frankfort; Winslow's Gardens, Frankfort; Wellness Weaver's, Waterville; Lafsen Gardens, Greenleaf; David Coltrain/ Coltrain Produce, Palmer; MarCon Pies, Washington; Hanover Farmers Market. A "virtual" photo version of the tour can be viewed at: <http://www.kawrivervalley.org> and scroll down to the tour. Photos by Cole Cottin.

## Events

### Forestry and Pasture Tour Set for Tuttle Creek WRAPS

On Thursday August 9, the Kansas Forest Service and Tuttle Creek WRAPS (Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy) will host a tour of two Marshall and Washington County farms with interesting pasture, forestry and streambank practices. The free tour will begin in Barnes at 9 a.m. where participants will meet along the north end of Highway 9 on the westernmost edge of Barnes (near the welding shop).

The tour will wrap up with lunch and presentations at the Kloppenburg Center in Hanover (512 E. North St.). The tour aims to educate landowners and producers within the Tuttle Creek Lake (Lower Big Blue and Lower Little Blue River) watershed on forestry, riparian and grazing practices, and available cost-share programs.

The tour will make two farm stops (Mark and Evelyn Diederich near Greenleaf) and the Kruse farm near Herkimer) to view a rotational grazing system, spring development and tire tank installation, and a streambank cedar tree revegetment.

Dwayne Rice, NRCS Range Management Specialist, will discuss drought issues, and Tom Meek, Clay County Conservation District manager, will cover cost-share options. Thad Rhodes, KFS, and Charles Barden, K-State Research Extension, will offer information on cedar tree revegetments and riparian forest management for high value lumber and wildlife concerns. Barbara Donovan, WRAPS Coordinator, will talk about the WRAPS programs and cost-share options.

Lunch will be served at 12 p.m. in Hanover at the Kloppenburg Center in Hanover. Please RSVP for the meal count by noon August 3 by contacting Billy Beck, KFS, at [wjbeck@k-state.edu](mailto:wjbeck@k-state.edu) or 785-532-3693, or Barbara Donovan, Tuttle Creek WRAPS Coordinator, 651-247-8292. Tour sponsors are Kansas Forest Service, Tuttle Creek WRAPS, K-State Extension, and the Kansas Rural Center. □

## Does Your Cover Fit?

by Lyle Kohlmeier

*Editor's note: Recent dry conditions may have some wondering whether cover crops are a good idea or not as they worry about what kind of moisture they take out of the soil profile. But farmers who have been using cover crops have been surprised at what they've learned in recent dry years. Root systems developed by the cover crops and the aboveground foliage actually cooled the soil, and suppressed weeds that might have also depleted soil moisture. Also, the cover crop can be harvested to provide livestock food at a time when all forages are in short supply. Lyle Kohlmeier, who left the KRC Clean Water Farms Project the end of June, wrote the following last spring just as the concerns began to deepen about the dry conditions in Kansas. mf*

No, I am not talking about the sheet on your queen size bed. I am talking about one of the more recent topics of discussion in water quality, grazing lands, and conservation: the use of cover crops.

Many producers have already or are considering incorporating cover crops into their management system. The reasons for including cover crops vary from one operation to the next. The most common reasons include addressing soil health issues, increasing grazable forages, or reducing purchased inputs, such as commercial fertilizers.

If you are considering incorporating cover crops into your operation, one of the first questions you should ask yourself is, "What am I trying to achieve with this cover crop?" Your overall objective will begin to give direction to where you need to head.

There may be several different

conditions or a combination of conditions you are trying to address. Once you know what you are trying to achieve, a good inventory and understanding of your current conditions will aid in clarifying some of the options you may want to consider.

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### Key Points During Drought:

**\* Cover crops are even more valuable during times of drought.**

**\* Cover crops keep soil cooler, provide forage for livestock.**

**\* In drought, the water profile was better in fields with a growing cover crop.**

*From Kansas Farmer,  
March 2012*

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Are you dealing with low organic matter levels, compaction layers, high input costs, or needing to diversify your crop rotation? Different cover crop types are going to address different conditions. For example, if you are trying to address a soil compaction issue, a deep tap root crop may be a good option. To address low organic matter levels, a fibrous root grass type crop could be the answer.

If your interests are dealing with grazing issues, again it is important to evaluate your existing forage sources and where the gaps or low quality periods currently exist. For example if your current forage source is predominately supplied by warm season grasses, you may want to consider a cool season cover crop to increase the period of higher quality grazable forage.

You may be currently based on cool season introduced grasses. Inter-seeding these stands with legumes can reduce your inputs of purchased plant nutrients and extend the forage quality longer into the grazing season.

Many producers are opting for multiple benefits from the use of cover crops by the use of a mix or "cover crop cocktail". The use of a mix can help you obtain grazing benefits along with soil health and/or water quality benefits. A cover crop mix can help you harvest more moisture and plant nutrients throughout the soil profile that your current crops may not be able to reach.

Getting a good handle on your conditions and understanding the effects of the different cover crops will help make sure the cover crop fits the situation. If you are interested in adding cover crops to your operation and are not sure where to start or need help in evaluating your existing conditions and developing alternatives, there is help available. For more information or help in evaluating your conditions and options, just contact your local Conservation District, Watershed Restoration and Protection Coordinator, or the Kansas Rural Center. □

# Resources and Events

## Report on Locally Sourced Meat Marketing Released

Lack of slaughter facilities is a key reason why more producers do not participate in local direct to consumer sales of meats, according to a recently released report from the USDA Economic Research Service.

The report titled, "Slaughter and Processing Options and Issues for Locally Sourced Meat" evaluated "the availability of slaughter and processing facilities for local meat production and the extent to which this may constrain or support growth in demand for locally sourced meats."

The report found that while per capita meat consumption has been declining in the U.S., beef produced in alternative systems (i.e. natural, certified organic, grass-fed) has grown about 20 percent per year for several years. Sales of foods sold direct-to-consumer have doubled in the past decade, yet, direct-to-consumer meat and poultry sales have not kept similar pace.

The report indicates a "chicken or egg" scenario, in which local markets need slaughter plants to supply local meats and build demand, while steady demand is necessary to attract or keep small processing companies. The report focused on small slaughter facilities since larger plants do not offer custom fee-for-service slaughter.

According to the report, local, direct-to-consumer sales accounted for just 0.4 percent of total agricultural sales in 2007. However, they accounted for \$1.2 billion in current-dollar sales in

2007, compared with \$551 million in 1997, a growth rate of 118 percent.

The report's authors also note that slaughtering animals at smaller state-inspected plants can limit marketing potential, since they are restricted to intra-state commerce. As of June 2012, no states participate in the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program, which would allow shipments across State lines. Three States, Ohio, Wisconsin, and North Dakota, are in various stages of development and training to be eligible for the program.

The report also discussed alternatives that small producers can consider when they cannot access appropriate slaughter facilities. Mobile slaughter units (MSUs) are small facilities that can be transported to individual farms or collective gathering sites where farmers can have their livestock processed in small quantities. Though faced with a different set of challenges, MSUs can fill a role for small livestock growers who lack access to nearby or appropriately sized slaughterhouses.

The report also suggests that farmers form cooperatives or aggregate their livestock in order to meet larger facility requirements. Operating under a set of shared production guidelines, these producers can provide a small- or mid-scale processor with consistent steady business, as well as brand themselves for more effective local or regional marketing.

The full report is available online from USDA/ERS at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ldp/2012/06Jun/ldpm21601/ldpm21601.pdf>. □

## Summary of 2012 Kansas Legislation Passed Available

Summaries of legislation passed during the 2012 Kansas Legislative session are available online at: <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/Summaries.htm> as posted by the Kansas Legislative Research Department.

Three summaries cover all of the major legislation passed by the 2012 Kansas Legislature, including information on water bills, land-spreading of 'fracking wastes', the state budget, KPERS omnibus bill, and the mega-tax bill- Senate Substitute for HB 2117, and more. □

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## Eight Steps to Help Small Town Grocery Stores

Small rural grocery stores are often the key to keeping communities alive and viable places to live and raise a family. The Center for Rural Affairs in Nebraska has developed a list of simple first steps aimed at helping keep or establishing a grocery store. See the Eight Step document at <http://www.cfra.org/node/3995>.

You can also go to their website on Renewing Rural Grocery Stores for information on alternative ownership models and more at <http://www.cfra.org/renewrural/grocery>. □

# Resources and Events

## USDA Releases Adaptation to a Changing Climate Report

An 84-page report from the USDA Economic Research Service, "Agricultural Adaptation to a Changing Climate: Economic and Environmental Implications Vary by U.S. Region", suggests that farmers have considerable flexibility to adapt to changes in local weather, resource conditions, and price signals by adjusting crops, rotations, and production practices. Such adaptation can partially mitigate the impacts of climate change on national agricultural markets but may have significant implications for both regional land use and environmental quality. The report summary and full report can be found online at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/848748/err136.pdf>. □

## Fall Forage Tour Planned at Dale Strickler's Sept. 10

Cover crop and forage specialist Dale Strickler will host a Fall Forage Tour at his farm on September 10 starting at 1

.p.m. The farm tour will be 1 mile south of Courtland on the west side of the road.

The tour will include Strickler's cow/calf operation and the following forages: Eastern Gamagrass, Bird's Foot Trefoil, Tropic Sun No-Toxic sun Hemp, Low Alkaloid Reed Canary Grass, Brown Midrib Forage Sorghum Sudan, and many others.

The tour is sponsored by Star Seed. Contact Dale Strickler at 785-614-2031 for more information. □

## Water and Fencing Workshop Livestock Workshop Sept. 11

A workshop on electric fencing and livestock watering options will be held September 11, 2012, near Jamestown, Ks. in Clay County. The workshop will be held at the Jamestown Log Cabin Retreat and Dale Strickler Farm, 250 Xavier Road, Jamestown, Ks. ) south of Courtland) It will begin at 8:30 a.m. and last until 4 p.m. Lunch will be

provided courtesy of Star Seed.

Mark Green, District Conservationist in Springfield, Missouri, USDA NRCS, and instructor and regional coordinator for the SW Missouri Regional Management Intensive Grazing Schools, will discuss and demonstrate the latest in electric fence products, the pros and cons of various materials used in electric fence construction, and installation techniques. Green will also cover livestock watering topics: water distribution for improved grazing distribution, permanent and portable tanks, above and below ground pipeline, and water sources etc.

The workshop is free, but please RSVP for handouts and food planning to Mary Howell at 785-562-8726, or [kfu.mary@gmail.com](mailto:kfu.mary@gmail.com).

Sponsors are the Kansas Rural Center with funding from USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA). □



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

Go to [www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org) for copies of back issues.

## Celebrating 33 Years of Support for Sustainable Agriculture --Rural Papers

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## Calendar

**August 9, 2012 Forestry and Pasture Tour/Workshop**, MS and WA county stops, starting from Barnes, Ks. For more information go to [www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar.html](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar.html)

**August 13 - Grazing Management Teleconference Call**. Join Dale Kirkham, Gary Kilgore and more for Q and A on grazing, forages, and livestock issues. 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Dial 1-877-304-5632 then enter 300 346 2424# to join this toll free call.

**August 13-14, 2012 Jim Gerrish Grazing School**, Topeka, Ks. For more information go to [www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar)

**August 15-16, 2012 Jim Gerrish Grazing School**, Hays Ks. For more information, go to [www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar)

**August 21-23, 2012 Mid-Shortgrass Range School**, Camp Lakeside, Scot County Lake, Sponsored by KGLC Contact Tim Christian 620-241-3636, or [tdchristian@cox.net](mailto:tdchristian@cox.net).

**September 11, 2012 Water and Fencing Tour** at Dale Strickler's, Jamestown, Ks. Contact M. Howell at 785-562-8726

**September 12-13, 2012, Eastern Kansas Grazing School**, Emporia, Ks. For more information, contact Brian Rees, Lyon County Extension Office at 620-341-3220, or [brees@ksu.edu](mailto:brees@ksu.edu). Or go to the KRC website for a registration form at [www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar.html](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar.html)

**September 21, 2012 Strategic Marketing Workshop for Livestock Producers**. Location and details to be announced.

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Please check the KRC website for updated and more detailed calendar and announcement information on the above and for additional events at:  
[www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar).

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\*House Ag Committee Voted A New Farm Bill; Waiting On Full House Action

\* Beware of Blue Green Algae Threat for Farm Ponds

\* Eastern Ks. Sept. 12-13 Grazing School Taking Registrations

\*Niche Marketing In Ks. Guide & Workshop Due This Fall

\* Savor the Season Helps Promote Specialty Crops

\*Mobile Food Prep Unit Helps Garnett Farmers Market Promote Products

\* Clean Water Project Wraps Up its Work; KRC to Explore Emerging Resource Issues

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