

Soybean AgOutlook Event Set For Sioux Falls

SIoux FALLS — With the 2011 growing season complete, it's time for the agricultural community to look forward to 2012. The South Dakota Soybean Association (SDSA) brings this opportunity to farmers at the seventh annual AgOutlook Conference & Trade Show on Thursday, Dec. 8, at the Ramkota Exhibit Hall in Sioux Falls.

Registration is required for the free, one-day conference and trade show. Receive a free meal ticket when you register by Dec. 5. Attendees can register online at www.sdsoybean.org or call the South Dakota Soybean Office at 605.330.9942. Registration is also available at the door. Attendees can purchase additional meal tickets at the event for \$7.

"AgOutlook is an excellent opportunity for farmers from the Tri-State Area to expand their network. This event is really about giving the agricultural community a chance to share, interact and learn from each other," said Chris Fischbach, SDSA President and soybean farmer from Mansfield.

The event kicks-off at 8:30 a.m. with the SDSA Annual Meeting, and the Trade Show opens at 9:30 a.m. For the complete schedule, review the seventh annual AgOutlook Program at <http://www.sdsoybean.org/images/File/7th-Annual-AgOutlook-Program-for-Web.pdf>.

The AgOutlook features the following educational programs from prominent individuals in the industry, showcasing opportunities for those involved in agriculture to grow and meet the demands of the future.

- **"Grains and Biofuels in Today's Global Ag Economy," Matt Roberts** — Roberts will review the current supply and demand situation for grain and oilseed markets, what that means for prices and how growers can best take advantage of these trends in their own marketing decisions. Roberts also examines the impact biofuels will have on these markets in the U.S. and abroad, and the outlook for the Renewable Fuel Standard. By sharing the world supply/demand situation for oilseeds, grain and land, how can your farm position itself to profit from these changes?

- **"Forecasting the Future of Global Agriculture," Dennis Avery** — Avery says it's easier to forecast the shape of global agriculture 40 years into the future than to call the next peak in the corn futures market. Avery has an advantage, however. He has spent decades forecasting global trends in population, farming systems, personal incomes and food demand—for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and more recently as the senior agricultural analyst for the U.S. Department of State. He has personally observed food, farming systems and farm policies in 35 countries. Avery says the big challenge for today's farmers is to triple the yields on the lands we already farm, so we can feed a peak population of 8 billion people.

- **"Stop Playing Not To Lose and Start Playing to Win!" Charlie Arnot** — Redefining agriculture to build public trust and support. In this session, Arnot, CEO of the Center for Food Integrity will provide a roadmap to building public trust and support for today's farming. Not only is Arnot a thought provoking speaker, he is also a recognized leader in the U.S. on food and agriculture issues.

In addition to the featured educational programs, AgOutlook also hosts a tradeshow with more than 80 exhibitors and sponsors.

For more information, visit the AgOutlook webpage under the Producer Resources section at www.sdsoybean.org.

Farmers Worry New Labor Rules Will End Teen Jobs

Labor Dept. Studies New Guidelines For Kids Working In Agriculture

BY JOSH FUNK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — From tending cattle to driving tractors or ATVs, 15-year-old Taylor Muller and her three younger brothers have always done what they could to help the family's farming business.

"Most kids my age don't even have jobs," said Taylor, who assists her father at one southwest Oklahoma farm and her grandparents at another. "We already know what hard work is."

Many other young kids won't be allowed to do those kinds of chores if the U.S. Labor Department approves new rules on children working in agriculture. While the Mullers would likely be exempt because it's a family business, the proposed rules would prohibit most children under age 16 from driving tractors, using power equipment, working with livestock in certain circumstances and doing work at heights over 6 feet.

Federal officials say the rules are needed because farming is one of the nation's most dangerous occupations, but many farmers say children learn important life lessons and might develop an interest in agriculture by working on farms or ranches.

Muller's dad, Matt, says he worries about what the new rules might mean for the future of farming.

"It's very disheartening to me," he said. "Farming is not just a business. It's a way of life."

Michael Hancock, the assistant administrator for policy at the Labor Department's Wage and Hour Division, said the rules covering child farm workers haven't been updated in more than 40 years and that changes are needed to address the dangers of working with tractors and other large farm machines. Farming, he said, is "the single-most hazardous occupation, as measured by fatalities, for children."

Nearly 29 out of every 100,000 farm workers in the U.S. die on the job, according to the National Safety Council. Among workers ages 15 to 24, the rate is about 21 deaths per 100,000 workers. Statistics for workers younger than 15 aren't available because there isn't enough data on them.

Hancock compared the proposed rules, which mostly apply to farm employees between the ages of 12 and 16, to those prohibiting a teenager from operating a meat

slicer in a restaurant or a cardboard compactor in a grocery store.

"There's any number of things kids can do on a farm that will be totally unaffected by these regulations," Hancock said. For instance, he said, they can still detassel corn, haul hay and feed cattle.

Hancock also said he supports the proposed exemptions in the rules for children working on their parents' farms or on farms where a parent is a main operator.

"If the parents are responsible for what goes on on that farm, they're uniquely able to judge those risks," Hancock said.

Nebraska farmer Shane Meyer worries those exemptions won't cover someone like him because the farm with about 2,500 hogs that he runs near Beatrice, Neb., is owned by someone else.

The rules may not be much of a problem for Meyer's boys, who do yard work and help care for the hogs, because one is already 16 and the other will turn 16 next year, but they would make it hard for him to hire any of his employees' or neighbors' kids.

"It's not the farms that are going to suffer. It's the kids," he said.

Agricultural groups say the parental exemption raises a lot of questions because many farms or ranches today are technically owned by limited liability corporations or other entities even if they are run by families. They say the proposed rules simply aren't clear about how they would apply to various ownership structures.

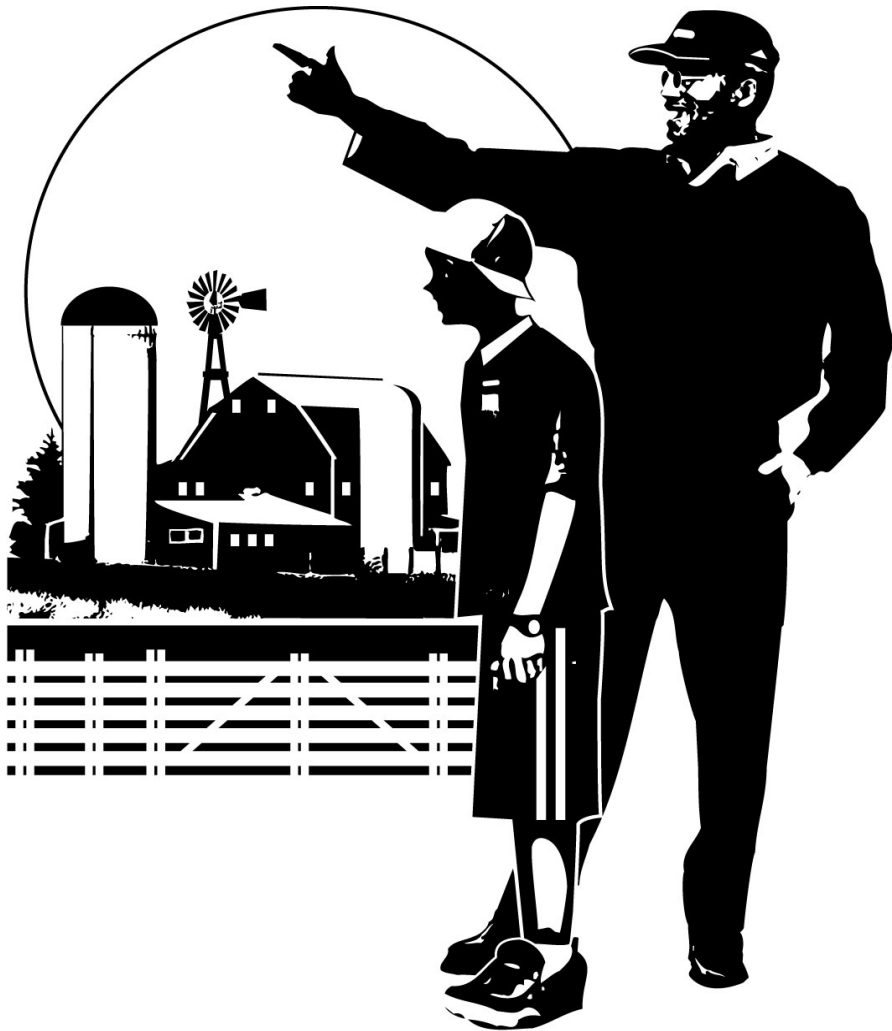
Matt Muller, who grows wheat and cotton on about 2,000 acres near Altus, Okla., said young cousins and nephews have helped out on his farm, but that might not be possible under the new rules. Plus, he wouldn't be able to hire neighbor kids.

He also wonders how his children would be affected if he and his wife switched the ownership to a limited liability corporation.

A fourth-generation farmer with four children under age 16, Muller said he hopes they will follow him into the business but worries they won't if they don't get interested in farming early. He grew up driving tractors and sweeping out grain bins and said it's a lifestyle he doesn't think labor officials understand.

"They may have legitimate safety concerns, but I don't think they've spent much time on a farm," he said.

For instance, the proposed rules would prohibit the use of any sort of electronic or



communication device while operating a tractor, but it's common practice to use two-way radios or cellphones to communicate between tractors, trucks and combines in the field. And many modern tractors come equipped with GPS systems and other electronics that teens might not be able to use.

The National Pork Producers Council, Farm Bureau chapters in several states and other major agriculture groups have organized to oppose the proposed rules. Officials in agricultural states also have questioned the wisdom of the changes.

Iowa Cattlemen chief executive Matt Deppe said he believes the new rules would make it harder for young people to get the hands-on experience they need to become interested in agriculture.

"I see them as creating a barrier for young people interested in the business," said Deppe, who grew up on a farm and learned to drive a tractor at age 10.

And Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Mike Spradling, who raises pecans near

Sand Springs, said he didn't think the rules were needed because farmers and ranchers weren't likely to assign teenagers to the most dangerous jobs.

"Having young people around to help with the daily chores is a big help, and it frees up employees to do some of the more dangerous work," he said.

The Labor Department can only regulate employer-employee relationships, so Hancock said the proposed rules shouldn't affect 4-H, Future Farmers of America or other educational programs. And, they may not keep children from helping on their grandparents' or uncle's farms if they aren't paid.

"I think there is a clear path forward for kids who want to pursue agriculture as a career," Hancock said.

ONLINE: Proposed rules for agricultural jobs:
<http://www.dol.gov/whd/CL/AG-NPRM.htm>

SDSU, Bayer CropScience Expand Wheat Breeding Partnership

BROOKINGS — South Dakota State University and Bayer CropScience have signed a non-exclusive agreement that provides Bayer access to a selection of SDSU's spring wheat germplasm. Bayer CropScience made the initial announcement Monday from its offices in Monheim, Germany.

The partnership will enable both parties to further improve their wheat breeding programs, to provide innovation and research for wheat growers and to ensure advanced education. Financial details of the agreement were not disclosed.

Kevin Kephart, vice president for research, said university scientists welcome this formal relationship between Bayer and SDSU.

"We are very pleased to partner with Bayer CropScience and the company's global effort to increase wheat production," Kephart said. "The spring wheat varieties developed at South Dakota State are widely adapted to the Northern Great Plains region and will be valuable to

Bayer's global program. We look forward to continuing our relationship with the Bayer team to improve wheat production, to provide value to wheat producers and to enhance South Dakota's economic development through this work."

The goal of the agreement is to achieve sustainable cereal production through ongoing development of higher-yielding, high-quality and competitive cereal production solutions. By granting Bayer access to SDSU's spring wheat germplasm, research efforts ultimately will provide genetic resources to improve wheat varieties and productivity gains for wheat farmers.

"The partnership with Bayer CropScience enhances our ability to deliver new cereal grain for South Dakota and the region," said

Barry Dunn, dean of the College of Agricultural and Biological Sciences. "It builds on the resources provided by the state and federal tax dollars, and it allows us to continue to grow economic opportunities for South Dakota."

The South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station will play a critical role in the partnership by conducting research, working with wheat farmers and commodity groups, suppliers, processors and others involved in production and farming of spring wheat varieties.

"It's this scientific capacity maintained by the Agricultural Experiment Station, in close partnership with South Dakota's commodity groups, that enables us to produce germplasm and gene and trait discovery research that has been recognized by agriculture stakeholders of South Dakota for

many years," said Daniel Scholl, director of the Agricultural Experiment Station. "And now AES research is contributing to the biotechnological advances of cereal production in close cooperation with South Dakota farmers and commodity groups. This research also allows us to train graduate students who will become key contributors to agriculture and societal well-being."

SDSU's public breeding program has been widely successful in the state and throughout the region. SDSU varieties typically occupy more than 70 percent of

the spring wheat varieties in South Dakota and roughly 10 percent of the overall spring wheat acres in North Dakota. More than 8 percent of the spring wheat acres in Minnesota are planted with SDSU varieties.

SDSU previously partnered with Bayer CropScience and Ducks Unlimited in June 2010 to expand winter cereal acres in the Prairie Pothole Region of North America to support modern agriculture and to benefit waterfowl habitat in the region. SDSU became the program's first research partner.

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