

AGNOTES

Farmers' Market Assistance Workshop Set For Feb. 27

February 27, from 12:30-4:00 p.m. a Farmers' Market Moms Assistance workshop will take place at the Corps of Discovery Welcome Center south of Yankton on Hwy 81.

Topics will include:

- What is the Farmers' Market Moms Program
- Makings of a Successful Farmers' Market
- Communicating with the Consumer
- Buy Fresh Buy Local
- Funding opportunities
- Community Gardens

Featured Speakers will be: Billene Nemec — managed the Haymarket in Lincoln, Nebraska from 1986 - 2000, the Old Cheney Road Market from 2006-2008 and still manages a small mid-week Havelock market. Billene has presented many work shops on building and sustaining a farmers market in communities. Billene also heads the Nebraska Buy Fresh Buy Local Program.

Pat Garrity — began his mid-sized organic fruit farm in the early 1980s in South Dakota and sold the produce in a variety of farmers' markets throughout the area. Pat started running a stand at the Floyd Boulevard Market in Sioux City, Iowa in 2004 and took leadership of the market in 2006. Today Pat is South Dakota's Buy Fresh Buy Local program coordinator.

Wegman To Speak At Platte Energy Workshop Feb. 24

The Platte Energy Workshop will be held on February 24, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., at the Community Center Banquet Hall, 310 S. Main St., Platte.

Steve Wegman, S.D. Wind Energy Association, will be the featured speaker at the workshop. Viewed by many as the most knowledgeable and passionate speaker on wind development in South Dakota, Steve will speak on leasing land for large wind development projects and will also provide the latest information on prospective transmission lines locations across S.D. A man of many talents, Steve will also give a talk on using infrared thermography to identify energy losses in buildings.

Other Workshop Speakers include: Doug Auch with D&Z Energy Systems in Lesterville will share cost and performance information on solar energy systems and the small wind turbines they install; Ronnie Hornsta, President of Southeast Dakota Wind LLC will give a briefing on how they organized and started their Landowner Wind Association in the Avon, Tyndall, Tripp area and how things are progressing; the topics of renewable energy and your electric cooperative along with energy audits for your home, business and farm will be presented by Russell Gall with Charles Mix Electric Cooperative.

The workshop will close with a question and answer session by the panel of workshop speakers starting at 8:30 PM. Local attorney Ken Cotton has also agreed to be on the panel to help answer potential questions from the workshop participants.

For more information contact: Jeff Stewart, Randall RC&D - (605) 487-7077 ext. 4; Email: jeff.stewart@sd.usda.gov

Dakota Cattlemen's Annual Banquet Set For March 27

The Dakota Southern Cattlemen's Annual Banquet is set for March 27, Tyndall. Speakers are Adam Wirt, Lennox, and Shirley Singrey, Parker. They were members of the South Dakota Agriculture & Rural Leadership Class 5 that just returned from a trip to South Africa. We're looking forward to hearing of their experiences and thoughts of Agriculture in South Africa.

Anyone may attend. For more information call 605-589-3531.

Policy Experts Met To Search For Solutions To Agricultural Challenges Of 21st Century

Global Town Hall Discussed How To Feed A Hungry World, Preserve Water And Improve The Lives Of Farmers Worldwide

WASHINGTON, D.C. — An eminent panel of science and policy experts braved a historic blizzard recently to identify solutions for the greatest agricultural challenges of all time. The global dialogue comes in response to a final call for action from the late Nobel Laureate, Dr. Norman Borlaug, to feed the world and improve the lives of farmers, all while preserving natural resources.

"Now Serving: 9 Billion: A Global Dialogue on Meeting Food Needs for the Next Generation" highlighted the opportunities and challenges facing farmers and nations in the coming century, especially as global population continues to rise, resources become more scarce, and climate and pest pressures continue to mount. Participants from over 30 countries on four continents shared their thoughts and perspectives with the panel of experts as part of this global dialogue.

Moderated by Emmy-Award winning journalist Frank Sesno, the event was hosted by CropLife International, the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) and the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST).

Panelists included Nina V. Fedoroff, Ph.D., Science and Technology Advisor to the Secretary of State and to the Administrator of USAID; Mark Cantley, former head of the European Union's "Concertation Unit for Biotechnology in Europe" and of OECD's Biotechnology Unit; Gale Buchanan, Ph.D. former U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Undersecretary for Research, Education and Economics; Robert Paarlberg, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science at Wellesley College and a leading expert on international agricultural and environmental policy; and, Calestous Juma, Ph.D., Professor of the Practice of International

Development and Director of the Science, Technology and Globalization Project at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

"While there is no single solution to the agricultural challenges we are facing, innovations in farming and plant sciences, and a commitment to continued research into new technologies, will be crucial to helping achieve food security" noted Denise Dewar, Executive Director of Plant Biotechnology at CropLife International, a global federation representing the plant science industry.

"Today's global dialogue was an opportunity to consider new ground-breaking perspectives on agricultural policy for the 21st century."

"Cutting-edge science, combined with sound public policy, offers the only real solution to the economic, environmental and nutritional issues confronting both producers and consumers worldwide," commented Sharon Bomer, Executive Vice President of the Food and Agriculture Section at the Biotechnology Industry Organization.

A new report from CAST, "Agricultural Productivity Strategies for the Future: Addressing U.S. and Global Challenges,"

was introduced at the event, prefaced by the last published words of the late agronomist and microbiologist Dr. Borlaug. Known as the father of the Green Revolution, Dr. Borlaug is one of only six people to have won the Nobel Peace Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. The new report was designed as an update to CAST Paper No. 1, written by Dr. Borlaug in 1973.

"Extending Norman Borlaug's legacy of increasing crop yields through modern farming techniques is critical if we are to keep feeding a growing world," said John Bonner, CAST's Executive Vice President and CEO.

The event, held during an historic snowstorm at the Newseum in downtown Washington, D.C., was also live-streamed to a global audience. Participants were able to ask real-time questions through YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and e-mail.

The webcast is available for download and continued comment at www.cropnewsnetwork.com.

The CAST paper is available at: <http://www.cast-science.org/displayProductDetails.asp?id=Product-168>.

POLICY PENNINGS

Exports: Agriculture's Long-Standing Holy Grail

BY DARYLL RAY
Agricultural Policy Analysis Center

The farm media is all atwitter over the announcement by the Obama administration that they have set a goal of doubling U.S. exports in five years. This will include help for farmers in boosting their exports.

You will have to pardon us if we don't get overly excited about the implications of this export initiative for U.S. farmers.

The lure of a permanent export-driven prosperity has been the holy grail of agricultural producers since shortly after the first Europeans settled in what is now the U.S. Tobacco proved to be a profitable enterprise for early settlers until a burgeoning supply from the colonies exceeded the demand and prices plummeted.

Over the next three-and-a-half centuries, there were years of export-driven agricultural prosperity, no question about that. But for major commodities, it is equally true is that export

volumes typically accelerate for a few years then level off, grow agonizingly slow, or decline.

The years of sharp increases were often caused by external political events or decisions.

The list of such events and decisions over the last hundred years includes: World War I, World War II, the Soviet Union deciding to import feed in 1970s instead of liquidating livestock herds when their crops failed, and China's recent decision to import soybeans to feed its burgeoning pork and poultry sectors as well as China's importation of cotton to help feed textile firms that have left the U.S.

In addition there were times in which surging U.S. agricultural exports occurred less because of political decisions and more due to severe production problems in the countries doing the importing. The temptation, of course, was to see such aberrations as an emerging trend. Currently, this latter source of export optimism appears to be alive and well in

the U.S. pork and poultry industries.

Historically long-term follow-through of export surges typically have generally not occurred. Typically the export surges and accompanying higher prices plant the seeds of their own destruction or, as already mentioned, were only caused by glitches in foreign production anyway.

That is not to say that agricultural exports are unimportant. Exports have always been important. They are currently important and will continue to be in the future. There will always be countries that need our products and U.S. farmers will gladly supply them.

But as important as exports are to U.S. farmers, those who make many-years-in-advance projections of agricultural export volumes have historically tended to err on the side of "irrational exuberance." Some made quantitative projections while others cultivated and fanned

bullish export expectations.

Those representing the full gamut of agricultural interests have propagated these projections and expectations. Commodity organization, general farm organizations, public research and outreach personnel and media all joined the chorus.

And there were lots of folks who desperately wanted to hear good-news export projections.

Congress, executive administrations, and economists like it because spontaneous export expansion requires little to no government intervention in agricultural markets and costs taxpayers little. Agribusiness like it because expanding exports means more inputs to sell and more agricultural output to process and transport. Farmers like export-based demand growth because they can produce full out and receive revenue from the market place rather than government payments.

That was the past, what

about the future? The value of agricultural exports the last couple years have indeed been impressive. The questions are what will the volume and value of agricultural exports look like when the coming decade is in our collective rear view mirror?

To us, factors affecting the agricultural export crystal ball are world-wide production reactions to recent increased crop prices and how the countries that have fueled recent explosions in meat exports want to affect their future balance of production versus imports of meats and feed crops.

But those are big pieces to chew on, too big for the space left in this column. In a future column we will give our perspective.

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Organic Program Sets Pasture Requirements

BY MELISSA ALLISON
McClatchy News Service

SEATTLE — For years, livestock ranchers and organic activists have bickered about how much time dairy and beef cattle should spend in pastures to be certified organic.

On Friday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program finally answered that question, in the first major decision to come out of the program since Miles McEvoy left Washington state last fall to run it.

"It's been a long time coming," he said in a telephone news conference after the new rule was released. "It's been a very divisive issue within the organic community, and we're happy to put clarity around this issue."

The new rule, which becomes effective in mid-June,

requires that for organic certification, dairy and beef cattle must spend at least 120 days a year in pastures.

There is no acre-per-cow requirement, but the pasture must have enough grass that the animals receive at least 30 percent of their dry matter intake from the pasture during the grazing season.

"You can meet this threshold whether you're in Vermont or Arizona," said USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan.

Most organic livestock operations already meet these requirements, she said. Some will have to change the way they operate or give up organic certification, but Merrigan declined to name them.

"Businesses have had more than a subtle hint that this was the direction we were going in, and hopefully they have made appropriate plans to change and

upgrade their operations," she said.

The organic program is requesting public comment on one aspect of the new rule that was not thoroughly addressed by more than 26,000 public comments it received in response to the proposed pasture rule. That involves the "finish feeding" period.

Under the new rule, livestock being taken to slaughter — in contrast to dairy cows — are exempt from the 30 percent pasture requirement during the last four months of their lives, known as the "finish feeding" period. They still must have access to pasture.

Public comments on that aspect of the new rule will be taken through April 19 at the National Organic Program's Web site.

FOOD

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and conventional agriculture is not economic, but rather the added emphasis of sustainable farmers on both the environmental and social benefits. Sustainable agriculture includes the health of the surrounding rural communities in their business plans. What makes sustainable farming work is that it's a holistic perspective on the operation — how does the farm, the community, and the ecosystem fit together — rather than merely looking at the budget from a year-to-year standpoint of "will I be able to cover my expenses

this year and hopefully, depending on the commodity market, be able to make a little profit?" Stallman's quip about sustainable agriculture not being economical simply doesn't hold any weight, Fulton said. Sustainable farmers would not continue farming if they weren't making money.

Stallman is right to feel threatened, though. Consumers are increasingly calling for a change in the way their food is produced, Fortenberry said. They're no longer standing idly by, taking whatever food is handed to them by producers. They're demanding quality. That empowerment, which could conceivably bring down the whole of big business agriculture, is what is so threatening.

Producers shouldn't forget

that they operate a business, and all businesses produce according to what their consumers want, Fulton said. The motivation of the sustainable producer is to please the consumer who will eat their food. The motivation of the conventional producer is to please the middlemen. And the consumer can tell the difference.

"Production agriculture has been under attack lately, and it's a good thing," Fulton said. "We need an attitude adjustment."

STALLMAN'S SPEECH, "PASSAGE TO SUCCESS"

View a video of American Farm Bureau Federation president Bob Stallman's speech, or read the transcript, at www.fb.org/index.php?fuseaction=2010annual.video.

South Dakota Farm Numbers Increased From 2008

SIOUX FALLS — The number of farms in South Dakota in 2009 is estimated at 31,500, an increase of 200 farms from 2008, according to the South Dakota office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Total land in farms in 2009, at 43.7 million acres, is unchanged since 2005. South Dakota's 2009 average farm size of 1,387 acres is down 9 acres from one year ago.

In 2009, farms with sales from \$10,000 to \$99,999 totaled 9,800, an increase of 200.

Farms with sales from \$100,000 to \$249,999 totaled 5,000, down 200 from 2008.

Farms with sales greater than \$250,000 totaled 7,500, an increase of 400 from the year before.

Access this complete report at: <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/nass/FarmLandIn/2010s/2010/FarmLandIn-02-12-2010.pdf>

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