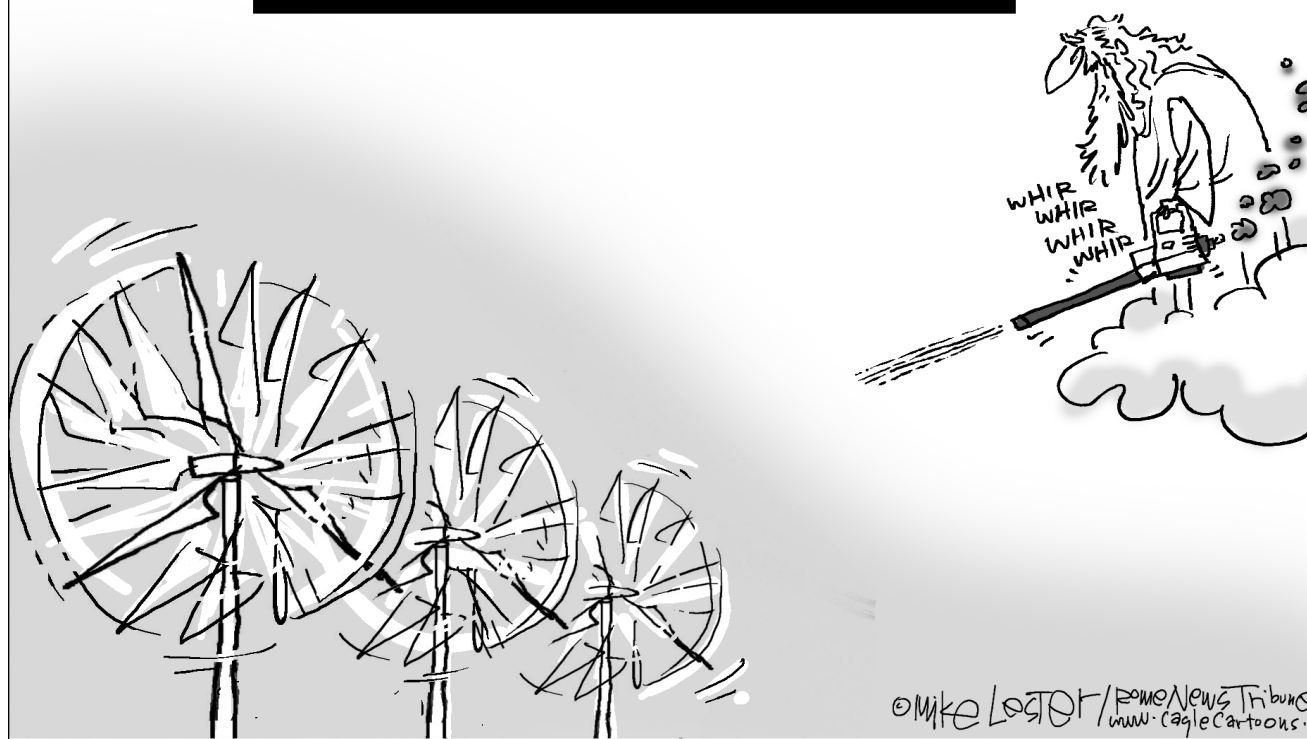


HOW WIND POWER WORKS



EXTENSION EDUCATOR:

If Early Fall Snows Stalled Corn Harvest, Try Grazing

LINCOLN, Neb. — Some Nebraska corn growers are still waiting to get out in the field and finish harvesting their crop.

However, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln forage specialist says it might be a better idea to allow cattle to graze that corn.

"If early fall snows prevented you from harvesting all your corn, instead of waiting for snow to melt and the ground to either freeze or dry out, try grazing," Bruce Anderson said. "Grazing standing corn is one way to finish harvest early so preparation for next year's crop can begin. After all,

cattle can get into graze much earlier than large harvest equipment."

Cattle also will be able to take advantage of corn ears that fell to the ground.

When considering grazing corn, cattle producers first may want to feed cattle corn to help the animals adapt to a higher grain diet, Anderson said.

In addition, producers should limit the size of the area animals have access to so they don't run wild, knocking down, trampling in and wasting the valuable feed.

Limiting the area can involve daily strip grazing, Anderson said.

"Use electric fences that you reposition every day to allocate only one day's worth of feed at a time," he said.

To determine how much area to provide on a daily basis, Anderson recommends first estimating corn grain yield.

"Each bushel of grain you provide should support about three cows for one day, considering that they also can eat much of the corn forage but will have some waste," he said.

Producers can give cattle an estimated area to start, then give a little more or a little less each day depending on how well cattle used the previous day's allocation.

POLICY PENNING

Is It Livestock's Turn To Experience Grain Export Turbulence?

BY DARYL RAY
Ag Policy Analyst

To us there is a disconnect between agricultural export expectations in this country—particularly with regard to meats—and the stated intentions and market actions of China and Russia, which are the very countries being touted as US agriculture's export saviors. US producers are caught in the cross-hairs, hoping that those touting exports are correct and fearing that the rosy projections will once again come to naught.

Heather Thorstensen of AgriNews—Minnesota reports that at the recent Minnesota Pork Congress meeting, Nick Giordano, National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) vice president and counsel for international affairs, "told attendees there is no greater money-making opportunity for US pork than China. 'Everything pales in comparison to China.' He said, calling it the 'mother load.'"

Pork exports to China sky-rocketed in 2008 as the Chinese prepared to feed the influx of foreign visitors attending the 2008 summer Olympics at the very time China's domestic pork production plummeted due to disease outbreaks and weather-related death losses.

Despite the ban on US pork imports over the H1N1 controversy imposed in 2009 and continued drug-related issues, U.S. short-term optimism apparently presumes elimination of the ban and

return to the glory export days of 2008.

But word from those familiar with China's thinking on agriculture suggest that such optimism is likely overdone both in the short-run and long-run.

Chenjun Pan, senior manager of Rabobank in Beijing, says in a press release that "China is unlikely to rely on pork imports." Don Roose, an Iowa commodity analyst, says China may lift the ban to provide a relief valve should disease problems reappear. But, "China wants to be self-sufficient," he said in Dow Jones article, "and it is currently well stocked with pork."

Meanwhile, "two leading Chinese and Japanese food processing companies have started a chicken-raising project in China's Henan province... that will be able to produce 300,000 metric tons of feed, 50 million chickens, and 120 million metric tons of chicken meat products every year" (Rita Jane Gabbert at meeting-place.com).

Yes, China has one-sixth of the world's population, but they have shown no indication that they intend to become dependent on US producers for their pork and poultry.

Yes, China increased meat imports to compensate for an animal disease episode and the crush of visitors to the 2008 Olympics and they certainly could need to cover short-term needs again, but in our opinion a clear-eyed look at their history and stated intentions indicates that their goal is to become virtually self-sufficient in meat.

With regard to Russia, Agrinews' Thorstensen reports that "NPPC not only wants to reach an agreement with Russia, it wants to increase the US quota share as a condition of [Russia's] World Trade Organization accession."

While NPPC's Giordano was making the Minnesota speech to US producers, Russian leaders announced that Russia was working to be self-sufficient in pork production by 2012. In addition they have stated that they intend to eliminate all poultry imports by 2015.

These goals of the Russian government are a part of a new food doctrine that treats food as an issue of national security.

Many of us are old enough to remember how Russian grain imports in the early 1970s—some call it the Great Russian Grain Robbery—created a short period of prosperity for US grain farmers who tore out fence rows and shelter belts to maximize their production. Today, Russia is self-sufficient, or nearly so, in grain production.

While Russia might not reach the 2012 and 2015 goals for pork and poultry, there is little reason to doubt that the goal of food security is not beyond their reach.

Time and time again we have seen US exports fail to meet the expectations of US producers. It is easy to over-

do it. We all like to produce and want to believe optimistic, if not pie-in-the-sky, assertions about export growth in the future. While producers can increase production relatively quickly when increased export demand drives prices up, it is the ratcheting back of production that is painful when exports fall off. Grain producers know all about that.

The way things are shaping up, it looks like livestock producers, especially pork and poultry producers, may be the next set of agricultural producers that are invited to peer yonder at an export oasis. We hope that such an oasis in a desert of traditionally low and uncertain profits is real and not a mirage.

When food security issues become a top priority, as they were in the 1970s and are again today, economics shares its influence on countries' domestic-production vs. import decisions with other very powerful considerations.

Darryl E. Ray holds the Blasingame Chair of Excellence in Agricultural Policy, Institute of Agriculture, University of Tennessee, and is the Director of UT's Agricultural Policy Analysis Center (APAC). (865) 974-7407; Fax: (865) 974-7298; dray@utk.edu; http://www.agpolicy.org. Darryl Ray's column is written with the research and assistance of Harwood D. Schaffer, Research Associate with APAC.

Will Antitrust Probe Consider Ag's Struggle In Global Market?

BY JOHN R. BLOCK
McClatchy News Service

GALESBURG, Ill. — Today's doom and gloom headlines often make us forget the amazing advances our nation has made over the past three decades — none more so than in the internationally vital agricultural sector.

When I left my post as the nation's 21st secretary of agriculture in 1986, for instance, the average crop yield per acre in the United States was 33.3 bushels per acre for soybeans and 119.4 bushels per acre for corn. As of last year, thanks to the onset of almost revolutionary seed technologies, those yields rose to 39.7 bushels per acre for soybeans and 153.9 acres for corn.

I'm particularly aware of those statistics because I grow both crops on my family farm near Galesburg. That's why I was more than a bit taken aback recently when I learned the Department of Justice has launched a series of workshops to discuss possible antitrust actions against some of our most innovative agricultural companies — with a prime emphasis on bio-seeds.

As a lifelong farmer, I can tell you that today's gains in agricultural production would not have been possible without the super-grains engineered by such American companies as Syngenta, Pioneer Hi-Bred, Monsanto, Bayer, Dow and others.

Just 15 years ago, farmers faced an epic struggle in fighting weeds that ravaged our soybean crops. We sprayed huge amounts of various herbicides on our fields but were still forced to pay people to pull weeds by hand. At the same time, we had to spray pesticides on our corn crops, but still lost corn yield to pesky insects.

Those actions, of course, were not environmentally friendly, but we had no providers of biotech seeds in those days.

Fortunately, today there is no shortage of biotech seeds to choose from. The most complicated part of the process, in fact, is deciding which type of seeds are the best matches for our farm. There are almost too many choices and too many companies competing for our business.

It's true that today's corn seed — like today's cars — cost dramatically more than 15 years ago. We pay a range of

prices that average about \$225 for a bag of "triple stack" corn seed today and use it on about 70 percent of our acreage. That compares to about \$175 a bag for seed that does not have insect resistance traits, but it's well worth it. If antitrust investigators are worried about one or two companies dominating the market, they should know that we're buying our seed from seven different producers this year.

In the end, farmers across the country are picking seeds that yield the most, require less chemicals and labor, and reduce the number of passes tractors must make across a field. For those who haven't taken Economics 101, that's called the law of supply and demand.

While it's true that there are fewer players in many areas of American agriculture — chiefly because of mergers — we shouldn't be operating on the shopworn theory that big is always necessarily bad.

That theory overlooks the fact that U.S. bio-seed companies are facing an increasingly crowded global marketplace. Within the past decade, a number of strong competitors have emerged in countries like China, India, Brazil and even the Philippines.

To compete on the international stage, bigness is essential to attract the top scientists and fund the huge research programs needed to survive and prosper.

That's especially important when you consider that the earth's population now stands at 6.7 billion and is projected to surpass 9.7 billion by mid-century — about double the 4.9 billion inhabiting Earth a mere 24 years ago.

I look forward to the day where bio-seed innovations create low-fertilizer fields that produce the abundant drought-tolerant crops needed to feed millions of malnourished people in the parched wastelands of Africa and Asia.

The Department of Justice and Congress, of course, should make sure that existing anti-trust laws are enforced to the letter.

But they should not give in to an "anti-big" impulse to penalize successful companies that have the wherewithal to invest in the new technologies American farmers need as they face the daunting challenge of feeding the world's skyrocketing population.

My First Kidding Experience

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent



Brhel

Just when I thought we might get through this winter without any sick days, my two-year-old vomits on my side of the bed. A couple days later, her sister follows suit in the backseat of the car on the way home from church. Sigh...it's been a tough couple of weeks here, trying to comfort kids when they're not feeling well and trying not to infect myself in the process, because of course, there are no sick days for the stay-at-home mom.

In the midst of what chaos a stomach virus can cause, my husband started a second job that includes Sundays and a couple evenings a week, our car blew a tire and then the spare went flat, and it looks like I'll need to dig out from another snowdrift tomorrow to get my oldest daughter to the doctor before she starts preschool later this week.

There is no rest for the weary. But there are moments of bliss in this crazy time. Every day, my hens surprise me with a few eggs — it's like Christmas every day as I peek inside the nest boxes and fill the egg carton. And after watching and waiting for the past several weeks — doing pen checks every few hours around the clock — Angel, one of my white Saanen dairy goats, gave birth to two very healthy, snow white girls. I was so nervous that we'd have problems — that she'd kid in the middle of a bitterly cold night, timed right between my middle-of-the-night pen checks — but she had them about at about 8 a.m. this past Saturday, when it was maybe in the upper 20s, and I was able to get them into the kidding barn before the wind picked up.

Growing up, I had a lot of experience with lambing in the middle of the winter but this is my first time kidding. I had heard stories of goats being weaker in the cold than lambs and had my emergency kit ready. I didn't need any of that. Those babies are so tough. After clipping and dipping the navels in iodine, I pushed the babies under mom to encourage nursing, and they took off

from there! By that night, they were frolicking around the stall.

I have one goat, a dark brown Alpine aptly named Chocolate, that may kid in March, but everyone else — another two white Saanens, one brown Oberhasli, plus my three Suffolk sheep — are due in April. I knew it was a risk to kid a goat in February, but we're hoping to begin milking her as soon as possible. We had been buying raw milk from a neighbor until last week when her goats started drying up, so we're back to buying goat milk from the store, which is none too cheap.

While in town buying a new heat lamp, my husband tried milking Angel to get colostrum (first milk) to store in the freezer, just in case we have any problems with a future birth. He said she stood well, only kicked once, but that she didn't seem to have much milk. This is the first time anyone has ever left the babies on Angel, as her previous owners did what most Grade A dairies do and bottled the babies, but I see little point in pulling the babies off only to lose money on them with milk replacer — or worse yet, to bottle-feed some of the milk we'd be milking ourselves. So, I was curious as to Angel's mothering skills, which seem good to me, and now I wonder if she'll have any milk left over for us.

From my research, people who keep the babies on the doe usually milk in the morning after keeping the babies off mom during the night. They also usually wait at least a week to start milking so the babies can get a good nursing relationship established. From a human lactation standpoint, I know that if you want more milk, you got to take more milk — the body only produces as much as it needs to. So, I'm thinking that while it seems Angel's milk supply is down now, that it should continue to grow. And the milking manuals support this theory. I guess we'll see how things go until next month's column.

DOJ, USDA Workshops To Begin March 12 In Iowa

WASHINGTON — The Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced the agenda and panelists for the first joint public workshop, which will be held on March 12, 2010, in Ankeny, Iowa, to explore competition and regulatory issues in the agriculture industry. The workshop will be held at the Des Moines Area Community College's FFA Enrichment Center.

The workshops, which were first announced by Attorney General Eric Holder and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Aug. 5, 2009, are the first joint Department of Justice/USDA work-

shops ever to be held to discuss competition and regulatory issues in the agriculture industry. The goals of the workshops are to promote dialogue among interested parties and foster learning with respect to the appropriate legal and economic analyses of these issues, as well as to listen to and learn from parties with experience in the agriculture sector. Attendance at the workshops is free and open to the public. The general public and media interested in attending the initial workshop should register at <https://go.dmacc.edu/ffa/agworkshop>. The Department of Justice's

Assistant Attorney General for the Antitrust Division Christine Varney and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will participate in the workshop and will be joined by Iowa Agriculture Secretary Bill Northey and Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller. They will participate in a roundtable discussion with presentations on current issues affecting farmers. Two panels focusing on the competitive dynamics in the seed industry and trends in contracting, transparency and buyer power will follow. The first day of the workshops will end with an enforcer roundtable and public testimony.

"The right to do something does not mean that doing it is right."

WILLIAM SAFIRE

Design Homes, Inc. MN Contractor #20146710

Garage Packages & Storage Buildings Now Available!

- ✓ Free Custom Floorplans!
- ✓ Free Whirlpool Appliances!
- ✓ Extreme Insulation Package!
- ✓ Lennox Furnace Standard!

Now Offering Solar & Geo-Thermal Call For A Free Brochure And DVD

Before You Build...
designhomes.com ~ 800-627-9443

Need Help Planting a Crop?

Call Farm Rescue, the nonprofit organization that plants and harvests crops for family farmers who have experienced a major injury, illness or natural disaster. Up to 1,000 acres planted free of charge. Go to farmrescue.org or call 701-252-2017 for an application.

PRIORITY CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY MARCH 31

Farm Rescue