

Is U.S. Farming Different Than European Farming?

BY DR. MIKE ROSMANN

A September 7, 2013 article in *The Economist* says American agriculture is different from the European variety because Americans treat food as commodities whereas Europeans are more concerned where food comes from and if it is produced in ways they view as acceptable.



Dr. Mike ROSMANN

The *Economist* article says the emphasis on science in American education and the Extension Service prepare American farmers to rely on technology and to be dispassionate about their methods of food production.

Shortly after *The Economist* article appeared, Oklahoma State University agricultural economics professor Jayson Lusk wrote that European agriculture is not as productive as American agriculture because government regulation of agriculture is greater in Europe.

Lusk also took offense that *The Economist* article attacked an organization in which he participated as a youth-4H, which *The Economist* said prepares future American farmers to use production methods the British publication took to task. Lusk says America's science, technology, independence and business gives US producers the edge.

When I visited Germany and France in April-May while on a 12-day tour of their healthcare systems I asked two dozen persons in these countries "What is your main concern about food production?" The people I interviewed were farmers, food and clothing merchants, restaurateurs and consumers in southern Germany and central France.

A summary of some of the findings was recently published in *Farm World*.

Germany and France are only two of 28 European Union (EU) countries; the sample of opinions I obtained is not statistically representative of these countries or the larger EU. While not strictly scientific, my informal poll findings cast additional light on differences between American and European agriculture.

Three quarters of the respondents indicated their prime concern was the ongoing agricultural trade talks between the EU and the United States. They said their countries would have to go along with the outcomes of negotiations in order to remain in the EU.

Half of the ten German and French farmers I interviewed said they liked belonging to the EU but all were concerned they would have little or no "say" in a matter that could change their entire way of life if the EU allows importation of GMO seeds and products.

They were apprehensive that GMO seeds and the use of herbicides that contain glyphosate would encourage large scale crop production and introduce what they see as American-style agriculture. Most European farms are family operated businesses.

The farmers said the economic squeeze they already feel would intensify if they have to compete with American products. A German farmer who raises canola for biodiesel fuel, similar to how soy oil is added to produce biodiesel in the US, said he does not favor importation of American oilseeds or products even though his non-farming neighbors complain their canola cooking oil costs more as a result.

A French farmer explained he feels GMOs are not natural and he would not drink American milk products because most US milk contains added hormones or is tainted by GMO feed consumed by American cows.

Food and fiber merchants whom I interviewed included five street-side vendors and grocery store merchants who sold food and two clothing store proprietors. All shun what they described as a "bigger is better" model of business.

These shopkeepers dislike American-style chain stores, which they say threaten the European style of family businesses. Adoption of American-style agriculture and business models would signal a return to the bygone era of feudalism when producers and merchants had to work for those who owned the land and businesses.

We can't compete, they said, with well-funded corporate lobbyists in the EU countries whom they perceive as gaining influence over EU decision-makers in the trade negotiations to allow importation of American goods that are produced with GMOs and pesticides which are mostly banned in Europe. Health issues about GMOs, whether real or not, also worry them.

Not everyone agrees. Some non-farmers and non-business owners, such as restaurant waiters and typical European consumers of agricultural goods, said there is nothing wrong with American food and the importation of American products.

It's cheaper, they said. It's time we change, they added. The concerns of German and French people about food, fiber and biofuels are important to Americans because Europe is a large and mostly untapped market for American agricultural products.

In my view, European farmers may differ from American farmers in some of the ways each group farms, but there are more similarities than differences. And the similarities are due to more than that the majority of North American farmers trace their ancestors to European roots.

We share the drive called the agrarian imperative to produce the food and the materials for fuel and fibers for clothing and shelter that are needed for our chosen styles of survival as humans. European agriculture is older and more traditional in its methods. Whether or not that is wrong remains to be seen.

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Trailblazing Rural Physician Training Set

VERMILLION — Today (Wednesday) marks the first day that medical students from the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine begin their contributions and learning as participants in the medical school's new, trailblazing rural healthcare initiative called FARM (Frontier and Rural Medicine).



Rasmussen



Walker

As part of the FARM program, six third-year students were selected to serve at five hospitals in five rural South Dakota communities. Each student will receive nine months of intense and hands-on clinical training at a single hospital that will help them understand the opportunities and conditions of practicing medicine in a small-town setting.

"We want to expose students to rural communities and rural

healthcare," said Dr. Susan Anderson, MD, director of the FARM program. "We're trying to dispel the myths of rural medicine. There is a misunderstanding that small communities do not have modern technology or facilities. This is not true. We also want our students to experience the different level of care and relationships they will have with patients in small communities. They will find out that they often meet their patients around town, in the grocery store or in other places. Practicing medicine in a small community has its own rewards and challenges, and we want our students to understand that."

Approved and funded by the South Dakota Legislature in 2012, the FARM program was specifically designed to combat the shortage of physicians in rural areas of South Dakota, a priority of the medical school and Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

"We are excited and proud of our first group of FARM students," said Anderson. "We are also excited to partner with some excellent healthcare facilities around the state. This is a win-win

situation, for our students, the communities, and the entire state. We think this program will successfully increase the number of physicians practicing in rural communities across South Dakota."

Students involved include (also listed with community assigned and hospital, and the student's hometown):

- Nicholas Kohles — Milbank/Milbank Area Hospital (Avera); Hometown: Aberdeen

- George Ceremuga — Moberge/Moberge Regional Hospital and Clinics; Hometown: Rapid City

- Josh Doorn — Parkston/Avera St. Benedict Health Center; Hometown: Sioux Falls

- Erin Rasmussen — Platte/Platte Health Center (Avera); Hometown: Vermillion

- Heather Walker — Winner, SD/Winner Regional Health Care Center (Sanford); Hometown: Vermillion

- David Kapperman — Winner/Winner Regional Health Care Center (Sanford); Hometown: Hartford

Younger People Concentrated In Six S.D. Counties

BROOKINGS — According to a recently released U.S. Census Bureau report South Dakota was among seven states in the U.S. that showed a decline in median age. "A number of those states are located in the Great Plains. This is an interesting change in an era when the number of people over the age of 65 is projected to increase," said Leacey Brown, SDSU Extension Gerontology Field Specialist.

The median age in South Dakota is 36.8. This age, Brown said, is slight decline from the previous estimate. "It is important to note median is not average. For example, if you have five people ages 3, 9, 12, 24, and 57, the median age would be 12," she said. "This tells us very little about the people of South Dakota or where they reside."

Where the young live While South Dakota may

be attracting younger people, Brown said those moving to the state are moving to very specific areas of the state. "Of the 67 counties in South Dakota, 39 have a median age above 40," she said.

In South Dakota, 389,170 people are under the age of 35. More than half of those or 199,126, are concentrated in six counties in South Dakota. Four of those counties are located in more urban areas of the state, including Lincoln, Minnehaha, Pennington and Meade. The remaining two host the largest universities in the state Brookings and Clay Counties.

"Younger people are concentrated in very limited geographic areas of the state," Brown said.

What is attracting young people to flock to the Great Plains?

The U.S. Census Bureau suggested younger men are

coming to the Great Plains due to the Bakken oil boom, explained Peggy Schlechter, SDSU Extension Community Development Field Specialist.

"While that may be the case for North Dakota, only two of the counties discussed by my colleague are near the Bakkaen — Pennington and Meade," Schlechter said. "South Dakota seems to be making some gains in drawing a younger population."

How can our rural communities benefit from this migration pattern? Schlechter said the answer to this question can be found by looking at some of the things people consider when planning a move to a new community.

"People often look for a safe community with close proximity to relatives. They also seek communities that offer quality education and health care. Some reasons people may choose to move

to a rural community include open spaces, a slower pace of life, and recreation."

If small communities can offer opportunities to make a living and provide a lower cost of living, Schlechter said younger people might migrate. To assist communities looking to market themselves, SDSU Extension has developed Marketing Home-town America program.

To learn more about this program, contact an SDSU Extension Community Development Field Specialist near you: Kari O'Neill, 605-685-6972, Martin; Peggy Schlechter, 605-394-1722, Rapid City; Kenneth Sherin, 605-995-7378, Mitchell; Paul Thares, 605-374-4177, Lemmon; Chris Zdorovtsov, 605-782-3290, Sioux Falls; and Dave Olson, 605-688-5614; Brookings.

For more information, visit iGrow.org.

Cool Wet Weather Affects Insect Populations

The cool, wet weather this spring and summer is responsible for a rapid growth of some pest insect populations and the decrease of others, explained Mary Roduner, SDSU Extension Consumer Horticulture Field Specialist.

"The extra moisture, with cooler temperatures is encouraging lush green plant growth later in the season than is normal for many areas of the state. This lush growth is encouraging the rapid growth of some pest insects. While at the same time, the wet weather is decreasing other insect populations," Roduner said.

Due to their reproduction habits, the saturated soils and excessive moisture has been devastating to populations of pests like, grasshoppers, cutworms and spider mites. However, because of their feeding habits, for other pests like, aphids and plant bugs who are attracted to lush foliage, weather conditions have resulted in a population boom.

MORE ABOUT THE PESTS AND INSECTS

- Grasshoppers, Family Orthoptera, are a pest that becomes a serious problem in hot, dry weather. However, because female hoppers lay their eggs in soil mainly during the fall months, Roduner said this year, when the soil is cool and water saturated coming out of the winter, eggs will develop fungal infections and rot before they hatch. The result is greatly reduced grasshopper populations.

"Young grasshopper nymphs are also very susceptible to fungal infections and will avoid areas that remain wet or have high humidity. There will always be a few but the numbers are not high enough to do serious damage," she said.

- Cut worms, Family Noctuidae. Cut worms are the caterpillars that cut tomato and pepper seedlings off at ground level during the night hours. "This year's weather will cause many overwintering larvae or pupa to drown. This can reduce the population for several years," Roduner said.

The adult moths are often referred to as "miller moths." In warm, dry years the numbers can be very large, causing incredible amounts of damage to field and garden

crops. Control is difficult, Roduner explained, because the larvae spend the day below the ground and targeting sprays are rarely successful.

For the home gardener, a paper collar around the new transplant will prevent the larvae from reaching the plant stem.

- Spider mites, Order Acari, are a hot dry weather pest. While not an insect, but a spider relative, spider mites cause so much damage that most people lump them with insect pests.

Two main varieties are found in gardens. Red spider mites make dense, fine webbing on plants and will cover plants completely. Two-spotted spider mites do not make much webbing but are far more destructive to plants.

"During cool and wet seasons like spring 2014 or during times of high humidity, spider mites do not show up in large numbers," Roduner said.

Spider mites generally stay on the undersides of leaves and suck large amounts of sap. Leaves take on a spotted appearance and dry out. Mites are able to also pass some diseases.

Spider mites can be sprayed with Neem oil weekly. "It is organic and will not damage other insects. Because it is an oil formulation, be sure to spray on cloudy days or at dusk to prevent damage to the leaves," Roduner said.

- Aphids, Family Aphididae are very small soft-bodied insects that suck plant sap. "Alfalfa, sweet clover and ornamentals have especially large populations. Aphid females give birth to

live females who are already pregnant. Each newborn aphid is pregnant with multiple generations causing populations to explode rapidly," she said.

The best control for aphids, Roduner shared, is to apply lightweight horticultural oil. "This oil will clog their breathing spiracles or horticultural soap that breaks down the waxy coating on the exoskeleton," she said. "Insects are not able to heal themselves so when the wax coating is removed or damaged, soft bodied insects like aphids will quickly dehydrate."

Using an insecticide spray is not recommended. "Sprays will kill the lady beetle larvae that feed on aphids and the aphids themselves develop resistance very quickly," Roduner said. "Monitor plants closely to start control methods before the population is too large."

- Plant bugs, Family Miridae, are a very diverse group of insects that feed on plant sap. "Some species will pass diseases, but the main damage done to many plants is the removal of large amounts of sap, reducing a plant's ability to produce and store nutrients," Roduner said.

Tarnished plant bugs feed on strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, peaches, tomatoes and other fruits. Their damage is called "catfacing." As the liquid in the developing fruit is removed, it dries and becomes hard and bit-

ter. The best control method is to use a pyrethrum spray according to label directions. Be sure the plant is listed on the label.

WEATHER CREATES POLLINATION CHALLENGES

Cool wet weather will deter honeybees from flying and pollinating flowers, explained Roduner.

"They are unable to fly when temperatures are below approximately 57 degrees Fahrenheit or if there is mist and rain in the air. This means that early spring flowers and fruit trees will not have pollinators when temperatures are below average - like the weather we've experienced this growing season," she said.

Honeybees, Family Apidae, are our main pollinators and we depend on them for pollination of apples, pears, squash, cucumbers, some field crops, flowers and many other plants; however bumblebees are able to fly and pollinate many crops during cool wet weather.

"Encouraging bumblebees will increase pollination and fruit crops. Avoid spraying insecticides when either bee is active to prevent sprays and residues from killing them. Our bee populations are in danger and cool, wet weather is making their lives harder," she said.

To learn more and view images of the pests and insects discussed in this article, visit iGrow.org.

HHS Dogs At Tractor Supply Saturday

Heartland Humane Society will have dogs available for adoption at Tractor Supply (TSC) in Yankton this Saturday from 10 a.m.-noon. TSC is located at 2908 Broadway.

"We want the public to stop out and meet our wonderful dogs awaiting adoption," said Christa Kranig, HHS shelter coordinator. "These events are great socialization practice for our dogs and extremely helpful if you are looking at potentially adopting a new pet for your home."

The shelter currently has more than 15 dogs, ages ranging from one month to 10 years. All dogs

available for adoption can be found on the shelter's webpage.

Kranig encourages anyone interested in adopting an animal to fill out an application prior to the Meet and Greet. You can pick up an application at the shelter or find it online at www.heartlandhumaneociety.net/.

The shelter will also be open Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. for anyone interested in cats or other small pets. HHS is located at 3400 East Highway 50.

For more information, contact Heartland Humane Society 605-664-4244.



AM 1450

MORNING COFFEE

WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY

Wednesday, July 9

7:40 am YC Observer
(Kathy Church, Kristy Wyland)

8:20 am Hy-Vee Foods
(Chef Staci)

Thursday, July 10

7:40 am Yankton Chamber
(Carmen Schramm)

8:20 am Dakota Museum
(Crystal Nelson)



Krawczak-Chase

Jessica Krawczak and Mark Chase, both of Minneapolis, MN, announce their engagement and upcoming marriage.

Parents of the couple are Diane Selt of Essexville, MI, and the late Kenneth Krawczak; and Bill and Colleen Chase of Yankton, SD.

The bride-elect obtained a B.S. degree in Packaging Engineering from Michigan State University and is currently employed as a product engineer at Target Corporation in Minneapolis, MN.

The groom-elect obtained a B.S.B.A. degree in Entrepreneurship from Saint Louis University and a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Minnesota. He is currently employed as a product engineer at Target Corporation in Minneapolis, MN.

The couple is planning an July 26, 2014, wedding at The Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis, MN.