

## AGNOTES

## Funds Available For Specialty Crops

PIERRE — The specialty crop industry in South Dakota can now apply for select funding of projects that enhance the competitiveness of fruits, dried fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, nursery crops and horticulture. "We are pleased to partner with specialty crop producers to help bolster this growing industry in South Dakota," said South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture Bill Even. "The funds can be used for projects that involve research, food safety, nutrition, promotion, distribution, best management procedures, and a variety of other uses to advance the specialty crop industry in South Dakota."

The funds are part of the Specialty Crop Block Grant, a program funded in the 2008 Farm Bill. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA) encourages applicants to develop projects that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

SDDA has established the following priority areas for projects in South Dakota:

- industry education
- consumer promotion
- applied research
- local foods initiatives

Applications may also be submitted for projects outside of the priority areas, but all applications are due to SDDA by April 23, 2010.

"We have funded some excellent projects in the past and look forward to working with the specialty crop industry on new projects that will enhance these crops in South Dakota," said Dale Blumhousht, SDDA Director of Agricultural Development.

For program guidelines, application forms, or other Specialty Crop Block Grant Program information, call SDDA at 605-773-5436 or visit [www.state.sd.us/daa](http://www.state.sd.us/daa).

## SDFB Scholarship Applications Due

Applications are due March 15, 2010, for scholarships being offered by the South Dakota Farm Bureau. Applicants or their parents/guardians must be a current member of the SDFB and must have been a member for two years. The scholarships will be awarded to students who will be attending an accredited school of higher learning.

The awards will be based on academic performance, honors, ACT score, leadership abilities and involvement in activities, and financial need.

Applications are available from the SD Farm Bureau website (<http://sdfb.org> or <http://sdfb.fb.org>).

In addition to a signed application, the student must include:

- An official high school transcript and ACT score or official college transcript
- Two reference letters
- A copy of the Letter of Acceptance from the qualified school the student is planning to attend.

College students must include a letter from the qualifying school confirming enrollment acceptance. The SDFB scholarship fund was established in 2006 with an initial endowment from former SDFB President Richard Ekstrum and his wife, Agnes. Ekstrum's desire to establish the scholarship is a result of his Farm Bureau leadership and his service to community and state endeavors. Scholarships are awarded yearly from the earnings on the fund.

## Calving Workshops Set For March 16

BROOKINGS — The South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service will host calving workshops in three towns on March 16.

The day begins at 10 a.m. at the Beadle County Extension office in Huron. The workshop then moves to the Hand County Courthouse assembly room in Miller at 2 p.m. The last workshop is set for 6 p.m. at the fire hall in Gann Valley. Each session lasts about 2 hours.

The workshops are free. For information, call Ann Price at 605-853-2738.

"Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it."

RONALD REAGAN

## Resource Workshop Held For Farmers' Markets

BY LINDA WUEBBEN  
P&D Correspondent

Horror stories of unsafe food and numerous health issues attributed to food consumption are driving individuals and families across the country to find home-grown food stuffs whether they are garden vegetables or meat products.

The demand for local food is growing and in order to create more resources for consumers to find local food sources, the Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D) of Plainview offered a workshop last week at the Corps of Discovery Welcome Center on Hwy 81.

The "Farmers' Market Moms Resources & Assistance Workshop" provided an afternoon's worth of information about the program which promotes family gardening projects and encourages participation in local farmers' markets.

Speaking during the afternoon was Billene Nemec who managed the Haymarket in Lincoln from 1986-2000. Today she heads the "Buy Fresh Buy Local" program in Nebraska.

Pat Garrity, the program coordinator of South Dakota's "Buy Fresh Buy Local" program, spoke of the success they are seeing and his experiences and leadership with the Floyd Boulevard Market in Sioux City, IA.

Both individuals described the transition happening in farmers' markets.

A survey completed in 2001 by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln indicated the interest in local food opportunities is strong. Consumers are also willing to spend more for food when they know it is grown locally. An awareness is spreading in the United States, and sustainable agriculture and rural residents could be the big winners.

"Buying local food keeps farmers on the farm," said Nemec. Typically today,

food on a consumer's table travels anywhere from a minimum of 1,500 up to 2,500 miles from the farm. Nutrients are lost and fossil fuel consumption grows. Nemec added that buying local food also sustains farm land from one generation to the next.

Nemec listed several reasons why consumers are willing to buy local and buy fresh. The first on the list is superior flavor and freshness. Farmers' Markets offer a diversity of fresh food stuffs and many items not found in a grocery store.

Ethnic foods are more readily available and home-grown meat with the flavor consumers remember from their childhood is very popular.

"People are learning what you eat is what you are," said Nemec. "A family working together in a gardening project will be a healthier family." They will learn about nutrition together and build healthy communities also she said.

Consumers today are learning about healthy environment and growing their own food in healthy soil is appealing to more and more people. Nemec said there are consumers who carry 'I care where my food comes from' cards and leave them at restaurants who do not support local farmers.

"We have to take care of what we have; work together to preserve what we have," said Nemec.

Garrity described local foods as food stuffs produced within 100 miles of where the consumer lives. It is generally artisanal or manually grown rather than in an industrial process. Meat will be harvested from animals which live in humane conditions and often call a pasture home.

"Actually metropolitan areas have grasped this idea already; almost five years ago," said Garrity. In the bigger cities, 5-7 percent of food purchased is bought at local farmers' markets. The need for many regional local food coops is growing and farmers interested in undertaking this new career needs to grow also.

"We need to interest young people," said Garrity. "Our industry is dying." A survey of the crowd attending the workshop showed the majority participating was over 55-years-old.

Only a handful of young individuals were there.

"We are only asking people to spend their real dollars in a different venue," said Garrity.

So Garrity sees a need for improved marketing and education, education, education. A

cook in a food service company told him they haven't cooked from scratch since 1972. A partnership with other food-conscious organizations will have to happen.

Developing local farmers' markets will need cooperation from someone who can be the CEO, another will help with accounting and still another will know various marketing options. Standards and rules will help the market members and coops capitalize on strengths in the community.

Yankton has a community garden and found many successes in its first year.

Todd Larson, director of the Parks and Recreation Dept. in Yankton, is very pleased with the initial gardening season. The Healthy Yankton organization was able to fund some of the project with the City of Yankton offering aid as well.

"I see an ongoing cycle," said Larson. "The gardeners made their plots a desti-

nation and it was a neat experience." Now he knows there are several Yankton residents eating healthier and he watched the community garden become a place for socialization. It was also a boost for economic development in the area as well.

"The city incorporated the community garden with a dog park and I saw many families come to work in the garden and also play with their dogs," said Larson. And the gardeners became neighbors. It was a neat aspect and the quality of life improved for many people.

The project created 96 gardening plots which were 12 ft. x 18 ft., and 52 plots were rented out. Water was made available and there were rules for the participants. There was a partnership with the master gardeners group last year and he hopes to involve some youth groups this year. Larson expects all the plots to be rented this year.

Another goal he has for Yankton is to unite the two current farmers' market groups; the one in downtown Yankton and the one at the Yankton Mall.

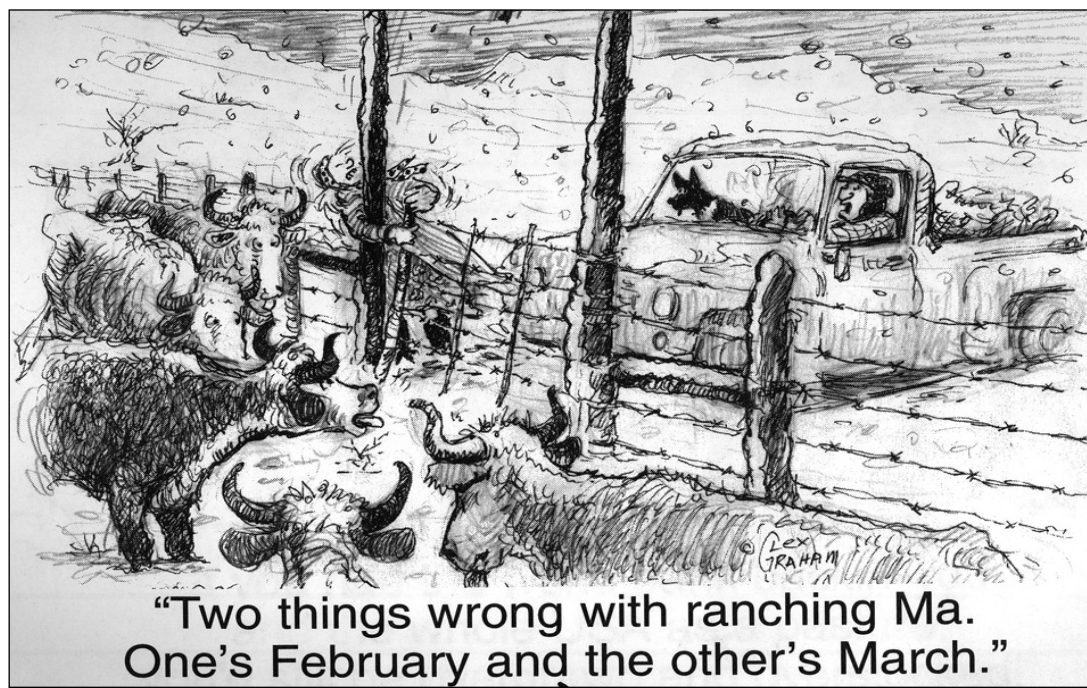
"I see Riverside Park as a unique and exciting place for a farmers' market," said Larson. "We have this valuable area and it would be great to tie all the sellers together in an open air market with a European theme."

The workshop was just a gardening tool; one which will hopefully encourage more individuals and families to start a garden; and also offer ideas for those who wish to become vendors in a marketing coop. The Farmers' Market Moms program is eager to educate the consumer, encourage the grower and increase the marketing of healthy food.

The speakers agreed it is time to get a conversation started.

"Actually metropolitan areas have grasped this idea already; almost five years ago."

PAT GARRITY



"Two things wrong with ranching Ma. One's February and the other's March."

## POLICY PENNINGS

## Corn Production In 1980 And 2009

BY DARYLL RAY  
Ag Policy Analyst

As a part of our series on agricultural exports, we want to revisit some familiar ground by taking a fresh look at the data and clarifying some of the issues.

When governmental officials or farm leaders get excited about an increase in exports, it is important to look at the measure they are using. In each instance, are they referring to the value of exports or the volume of exports? It makes a difference.

Let's look at corn. Since 1980, world corn exports have remained essentially flat with 3.2 billion bushels traded in 1980 and 3.3 billion bushels traded in the 2009 crop year. During this same period, the production of corn in the world has nearly doubled growing from 16.1 billion bushels to 31.4 billion bushels today.

As a result, the share of corn production that is exported has dropped from 19.6 percent in 1980 to 10.6 percent in 2009.

Turning to the U.S., corn exports reached 2.39 billion bushels in 1980. From that point, corn exports fell before reaching 2.37 billion bushels in 1989. Another peak, 2.23 billion bushels was reached in the 1995 crop year. The most recent peak in 2007 reached 2.44 billion bushels, 50 million bushels above the level reached 27 years earlier.

U.S. corn exports have been in a flat pattern for the last 29 years. Over that same period, the value of exports has varied from a farmgate value low price of \$2.09 billion in 1986 to a projected \$7.7 billion in the 2009 crop year. In making this calculation we used the season average price

received by farmers because any value added beyond the farmgate does not accrue to farmers.

While the constant mantra since 1985 proclaims that lowering price benefits farmers by increasing the volume, corn farmers actually benefit not from a drop in price to some "world level" but from an increase in price during an era of relatively flat, but variable, exports.

Over the past thirty years there has been little recognition that the world market for corn exports is relatively flat, with variations due to production fluctuations in the countries of our importing customers and export competitors.

Another important factor, though seldom discussed, is the increase in corn production over time in the countries that consume it. While U.S. farmers have repeatedly been promised increases in corn exports to be used to produce meat for a growing middle class in other countries, many those countries have chosen to grow all or much of their own grain, resulting in a flat export market.

Like in the U.S., other countries do not want to become dependent upon imports to feed their people. They would prefer to import only when their production falls short of domestic needs. That may not be what farmers want to hear but neither should they want to hear only the parts of export stories that, in isolation, paint unrealistic pictures.

Daryll 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).

## USDA Adds More Acres To CRP Program

WASHINGTON — Senator John Thune recently announced that the USDA has allocated an additional 33,500 acres to South Dakota for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This announcement is part of a 300,000 acre nationwide general CRP sign up. CRP, which was reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, provides incentives for agricultural producers to preserve wildlife habitat.

"This increase in available acres will be very helpful for South Dakota's ongoing wildlife conservation efforts," Thune said. "Preserving wildlife habitat will help keep South Dakota's gamebird population strong, meaning more hunting opportunities for South Dakotans and visitors to our state. Conservation of wildlife habitat is good for the environment and good for our economy,

and I am proud to support this successful program."

South Dakota will receive additional acres in the following programs:

- 18,000 acres for the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Initiative in West River
- 15,000 acres for Duck Nesting Habitat
- 500 acres for Upland Bird Habitat

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## 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](http://farmrescue.org) or call 701-252-2017 for an application.

PRIORITY CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY MARCH 31

Farm Rescue

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Recycling is free to everyone in the Yankton area at the Yankton County Recycling Center.