

YOUR VIEWS
 Don't Unravel
 Health Care Reform
 BY JOHN CRABTREE
 Center for Rural Affairs

I've talked about the need for reforming America's health care system for nearly two decades. Many people have agreed with me over the years, and many have disagreed. I respect and value differences of opinion. It is precisely those differences, and the debate, that gives me hope that health care reform will help move America forward, rural America in particular.

Reasonable people of differing opinions should be able to disagree about how best to implement health care reform and how far reform should go. And although it may be dissatisfying — for both sides — the checks and balances of democratic decision-making provide an opportunity for wisdom, reason and common-sense to have their part in this debate.

However, politics, and the machinations and maneuvering that go into political campaigns, often do not make for good public policy decisions. The legal challenge filed by thirteen state Attorneys General immediately after the health care bill was signed into law is a pretty good example of putting politics before people.

The Attorneys General that are bringing this legal challenge tend to represent states whose citizens have the most to gain from the health care reform bill. Over 26 percent of non-elderly South Dakotans — more than 176,000 people — will directly benefit with help from the health care reform bill making their health care coverage more affordable.

As the country moves forward with health care reform, we should embrace debate and differences of opinion. But petty partisan politics should not trump the human costs of our policy choices.

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Jones has served as vice president for international development with KSCW, Inc. — a consulting company offering services over a wide range of areas in public policy, issue advocacy, organization management and international development, as well as assisting in structuring and executing grassroots campaigns.

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**Youth Horse Versatility
 Workshop Set For June 6**

BROOKINGS — Newcomers to training ranch horses can gain solid experience and knowledge during the June 6 4-H and youth ranch horse versatility training workshop in Vermillion.

The workshop takes place from 1-5 p.m. at the Clay County Rodeo Grounds near Vermillion and is open to all young people regardless of membership in 4-H.

Those interested should pre-register before June 2. Special pricing for large families is available, and some scholarships to defray cost also are available. Openings are very limited. Call South Dakota Cooperative Extension 4-H/Youth Development Educator Will Kennedy at 605-677-7111 to register or with questions.

Kennedy said the event is perfect for newcomers or for young people who want to fine-tune their ranch horse skills.

"Our instructors will have you 'cowboying up' in no time," said Kennedy. "Do you want to bring your working horse to town and show off what he can do? Or maybe prove your show horse is more than an arena machine? This is your chance to do some ranch cutting, cow horse, ranch trail, ranch reining, and pleasure."

Kennedy said the day ends with a low-pressure, enjoyable run-through of the classes so participants can showcase what they have learned. Youth younger than 14 will need to have a parent or assigned adult on site at all times.

All types of horses are welcome, from pleasure horses to jumpers, with the only requirement being that the horse is safe, sound, and has the training and ability suitable to its rider's skill level. Management will reserve the right to remove animals or participants for safety reasons.

Call for registration fees.

MARKET INSIDER

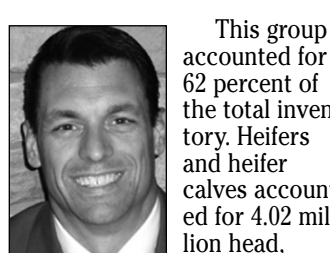
Cattle On Feed Reports Lower Numbers Than Last Year

BY BRIAN HOOPS
 Yankton

On Friday, April 23, the USDA reported the monthly cattle on feed report. The USDA report is called neutral to slightly bullish, with the highlight of the report being on feed supplies at 96 percent of a year ago.

The USDA reported cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 10.8 million head on April 1. The inventory was 4 percent below April 1, 2009. The inventory included 6.71 million steers and steer calves, down 4 percent from the previous year.

This group accounted for 62 percent of the total inventory. Heifers and heifer calves accounted for 4.02 million head, down 3 percent from 2009. Placements in feedlots during March totaled 1.86 million, 3 percent above 2009. Net placements were 1.80 million head. During March, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 395,000, 600-699 pounds were 375,000, 700-799



Brian Hoops
 Market Insider

**Monsanto Seeks End
 Of Ban On GE Alfalfa**

BY BILL LAMBRECHT
 McClatchy News Service

WASHINGTON — Monsanto Co. asked the U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday to set aside a 2007 ban on plantings of genetically engineered alfalfa made amid concerns over environmental harm.

In the Supreme Court's first case dealing with genetically modified crops, Monsanto sought to persuade justices that a federal district court in California went too far in siding with growers of conventional alfalfa who were worried about contamination from the pollen of genetically modified plants.

"There is absolutely no evidence in the record whatsoever of cross-pollination," asserted Monsanto lawyer Gregory Garre.

The issue is particularly important for growers who sell to Europe and other markets that ban genetically altered crops, mostly out of health concerns.

The case stems from a lawsuit filed four years by Idaho alfalfa grower Phillip Geertson and others. A northern California district court ruled for Geertson when he argued that conventional and organic growers faced the "likelihood of irreparable harm" from contamination.

The district court allowed farmers who had purchased the Monsanto-engineered seeds to plant. But it prohibited further distribution of the seeds until the Agriculture Department completed an environmental impact statement. The ruling was upheld by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Alfalfa is used mainly for livestock feed, and much of what is grown is exported.

Conventional farmers fear the economic implications of the altered seeds, which are modified to protect plants from applications of Monsanto's Roundup Ready herbicide and have become popular among farmers seeking to rid their fields of weeds. The so-called contamination can occur when seed is spilled along roads or when pollen gets transferred between fields by wind or insects.

Whatever the court rules also may have a bearing on regulation of other Monsanto products, such as genetically modified sugar beets.

The case has implications for the biotech industry as well for organic farmers and environmental advocates. The biotech industry has preferred operating under what the Agriculture Department calls its streamlined regulatory approach rather than more intensive oversight that could slow the movement of products to the market.

Rice growers are watching the case because of uncertainties related to genetic contamination of their crops. In a brief field in the Monsanto case, rice growers contended that contamination of long-grain rice had already cost their industry \$1 billion.

Organic food interests, too, are participating in the case, and have pointed out that about half of the alfalfa hay grown in the United States is for dairy farms.

In presenting the government's position, Deputy Solicitor General Malcolm Stewart echoed some of Monsanto's arguments. He said he expected that it will take another year for the Agriculture Department to complete the environmental impact statement ordered by U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer.

Breyer is the brother of Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, who recused himself from the Monsanto case.

Lawrence Robbins, who argued the case for Geertson and the other plaintiffs, referred to earlier testimony in predicting that within two years, the plantings of modified alfalfa could increase five-fold to 1 million acres.

"In a year, six months, people might have to get ready for a different world, if not a brave new world," he said, referring to the spread of wind-blown pollen from engineered alfalfa.

Justices peppered the lawyers with questions about genetically engineered crops, a topic not considered previously by the high court even though gene-altered seeds were approved for planting in the United States in 1996.

Chief Justice John Roberts questioned whether the district judge could have avoided the ban by returning the case to the Agriculture Department, the agency charged with determining the safety of modified crops.

Roberts also brought up the contention that conventional and organic growers faced a "likelihood" of harm from genetic contamination. He said he was surprised that the court had not previously taken up the question of whether "likely means more likely than not."

Justice Antonin Scalia interrupted Robbins when he made a reference to poisoning the water in New York City while speaking generally of contamination threats.

"This isn't contamination of New York City's water supply ... This is not the end of the world, it really isn't," Scalia said. "The most it does it affect the farmers who want to cater to the European markets."

Robbins responded that Japan and other nations also demand products grown without genetic modification. "They (organic growers) have chosen this rapidly growing, large business with billions of dollars at stake," he said.

While raising questions about the lower court ruling, justices also grilled Monsanto's lawyer about whether the company was seeking a review of the merits of the lower court decision when the company's appeal was based on the scope of the injunction.

Geertson, 71, who was on hand for the oral arguments, said in an interview afterward that he has moved his alfalfa seed business to western Canada, where modified alfalfa can't be grown.

"I think they're arguing about legal issues while the house is burning down," he said, referring to the spread of engineered seed.

A decision in Monsanto vs. Geertson Seed Farms is expected in June.

Report: U.S. Corn, Wheat, Beans

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — An early start to corn planting doesn't necessarily mean an ideal final crop, and 2009's high yield despite a late start is a good example.

"The most important consideration for a good corn crop is the weather leading up to the harvest period," said AccuWeather.com Agricultural Meteorologist Dale Mohler.

Consistent rain through the summer, ideally three-quarters to one inch of rain per week, hot days with highs in the 80s and nighttime lows in the 60s can lead to the best corn yield.

This season's early planting sharply contrasts last year's late sowing, in which 20 percent was planted by this growth period. The sowing was primarily delayed by spring rains.

"April and May were very wet in the prime corn-planting states last year," said Mohler. "Planting was a month behind schedule, but near-perfect summer weather yielded a good crop."

AccuWeather.com meteorologists forecast the weather to remain favorable for winter wheat, also grown in the Midwest.

Ideal winter wheat growing conditions include consistent rainfall of up to three-quarters of an inch of rain per week, with high temperatures between 70 and 80 F.

The USDA's latest report said 69 percent of the winter wheat crop is in good or excellent condition.

Soybeans
 While soybeans are currently in their early planting stages, the Midwestern weather has yielded an earlier-than-normal planting start for the crop. Similar to the impacts made to corn planting, upcoming weekend rains throughout the Central states could slow the early sowing of soybeans.

**Agritourism
 Directory
 Seeks Listings**

The creation of a directory for Agritourism has been announced this month by Jane Eckert of St. Louis, MO. The website — RuralBounty.com — has been set up to provide free listings for all Agritourism farms in the United States and Canada. Premium listings are also available for a fee but the website will assist visitors in locating anything from farm fresh fruits and vegetables to events to activities. Each member's Web page will provide their address, phone and email address and a link to their farm or business Web site if they have one. Everything from wineries, farmers' markets CSA programs, organic farms, farm stands, lodging and outdoor sports have been listed.

Check it out at: www.RuralBounty.com or call 314-862-6288.

**"Truth will always be truth,
 regardless of lack of understanding,
 disbelief or ignorance."**

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LEMMON SD NATIONAL GUARD REUNION

The Lemmon Area Chamber of Commerce and the Community of Lemmon would like to extend an open invitation to anyone who has ever served in the Lemmon National Guard Units.

We are planning the event for
Saturday & Sunday, August 28 & 29, 2010.

Full details of the Schedule of Events and the Registration Forms are available at www.lemmonsds.com (click on calendar of events) or by calling the Lemmon Chamber Office at 605-374-5716. The email address is lchamber@sdplains.com