

AGNOTES

S.D. Rodeo Association To Begin Summer Season

The South Dakota Rodeo Association kicks off its summer rodeo season with the "Double Diamond" rodeo series including Britton on May 28 and 29th and the Foothills Rodeo at Westington Springs on May 29 and 30th.

Contestants with the top combined scores from these two rodeos will each receive an extra \$200 bonus for their top win.

These two rodeos are the beginning of the 2010 summer season and the June rodeos will continue on to Crooks, Estelline, McLaughlin, Highmore and Irene. The upcoming months have a full schedule of rodeos and will conclude with the SDRA Finals on October 22-24 in Rapid City.

CSP Application Deadline Of June 11 Is Fast-Approaching

HURON—Landowners still have time to sign up for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) but the deadline for getting signed up for 2010 funds is approaching quickly. According to NRCS State Conservationist Janet Oertly, now is the time for producers and landowners who have considered applying for CSP to sign up at their local NRCS field offices. USDA recently announced June 11, 2010 as the national cutoff date, which will require potential applicants to submit applications quickly.

CSP is a voluntary program that encourages producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt new ones on their farm, ranch, and non-industrial forestland operations. The program is popular for those who go the extra mile with conservation and sustainable practices—whether they've accomplished it on their own or through USDA and NRCS programs.

"We've had good interest in CSP last year and this year, but we did not reach all the producers this program was designed to reach. I'd like to change that this year, but the clock is ticking," explains Oertly.

According to Rod Voss, CSP Coordinator, the sign-up process is more streamlined than its predecessor, the Conservation Security Program. "The conservation options available through CSP will make sense to our South Dakota producers," Voss said.

Producers and farm families who have maintained a conservation legacy on their farm over the years or those who have changed the operation over the last few years to include more eco-friendly management strategies, are rewarded through CSP. CSP pays you to maintain those successful practices and it helps you add even more solutions that protect soil, water, and related natural resources on your land.

"I know South Dakota has more landowners and producers who are committed to conservation because I see evidence of it on the land every day," Oertly says. "If you are one of those stewards of the land and you think it might be time to partner with NRCS, I urge you to visit with your local NRCS staff and tell them all you've done. This program was designed to encourage more conservation activity and recognize good stewards and ranchers just like you."

To learn more and get involved with the program for 2010, visit your county USDA Service Center today. Visit www.sd.nrcs.usda.gov.



"Enjoy when you can, and endure when you must."

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

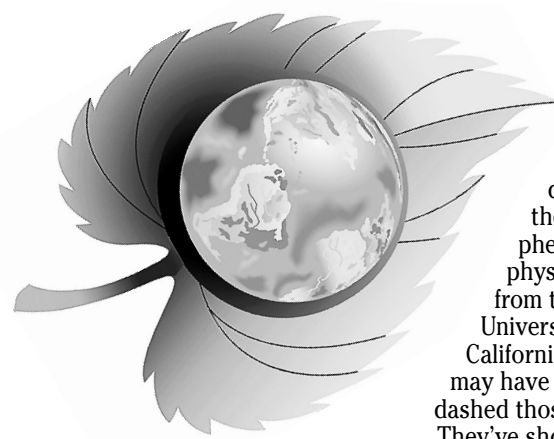
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CO₂ Could Have Significant Impact On Ag

Recent Science Shows Excess Carbon Dioxide Levels Can Inhibit Plants' Ability To Assimilate Nitrates



BY AMINA KHAN
McClatchy News Service

LOS ANGELES — So much for a hoped-for bright spot in global warming.

Some biologists had theorized earlier that rising greenhouse gas levels would encourage plant growth over the long term because of the increased

amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Plant physiologists from the University of California, Davis, may have further dashed those hopes. They've shown that too much carbon dioxide, which plants need for energy, actually can inhibit a plant's ability to assimilate nitrates — nitrogen-based nutrients pulled from the soil that plants use to make enzymes and other essential proteins.

Without those essential proteins, plant health — and food quality — may suffer, the researchers say in a study published online Thursday in the

journal *Science*.

Scientists had previously observed that a rise in carbon dioxide levels — 39 percent globally since 1800, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — would boost photosynthesis, the sunlight-fueled process by which plants make sugar.

But previous studies showed that after an initial spike in sugar-making activity, photosynthesis appeared to level off, even if the carbon dioxide rate remained high.

"Here we have this quandary where we thought rising carbon dioxide levels might actually have some benefit, but it proves to be wrong. ... Over a period of time, be it weeks or years, that stimulation disappears," said lead author Arnold Bloom, a professor in the department of plant sciences at UC Davis.

Other studies showed that after plants were exposed to excess carbon dioxide, their protein content also dropped.

In a series of five experiments, Bloom and his colleagues found an explanation. The team exposed plants to high carbon dioxide (or low oxygen), fertilized them with nitrates and tracked how much nitrogen they successfully incorporated into their systems.

In each case, the researchers found that the more carbon dioxide exposure, the less plants were able to assimilate nitrogen. Without enough nitrogen, the plants could not make as many proteins, including those enzymes used in photosynthesis — and thus, would be unable to take advantage of all that extra carbon dioxide in the air anyway.

The findings have significant implications for agriculture, biologists said. They suggest that, as global warming continues and carbon dioxide levels rise, food may become poorer in quality and less nutritious, and farmers may have to worry about lower-quality crop yields

that could perhaps be more prone to pest infestations (as plant eaters may have to eat more to get the same nutritional value as before).

Farmers will have to figure out how to fertilize their crops without poisoning them, researchers said, since ammonium (another form of inorganic nitrogen that can be used to feed plants) is not subject to the nitrate inhibition issue but can be toxic if not used wisely.

The study "has some very important real-world implications," said Harvard University plant physiologist Noel Michele Holbrook, who was not involved in the study. "How do we think about the idea of breeding for more productive crops, and what sorts of attitudes for breeding are going to pay off in the long run? We're facing really important challenges in terms of food production and quality of food."

YOUR VIEWS

Saving Lives With Safe Food

BY ERIK D. OLSON

At age 2, Kyle Allgood of Chubbuck, Idaho, became sickened by a deadly strain of E. coli O157:H7, from contaminated spinach. When Kyle's abdominal pains would not subside, he was flown to a Salt Lake City hospital, where his downward spiral ended in kidney failure, a heart attack and, ultimately, death.

The tragedy the Allgood family endured is far from rare. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that each year, food-borne illness strikes tens of millions of Americans, hospitalizes hundreds of thousands and kills several thousand — mostly young children like Kyle, the elderly or others who are especially vulnerable. Despite these shocking numbers, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration — which regulates about 80 percent of the nation's food supply — does not require food companies, or the agency's own inspectors, to test products for bacteria. The FDA also has no authority to mandate that food companies recall products, or directly penalize those that violate the law.

A strong federal food-oversight bill was passed last summer by a bipartisan majority in the U.S. House of Representatives. Yet since then, there have been more than 60 separate recalls of FDA-regulated products that were known or suspected to be contaminated. Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate food-safety bill was unanimously approved by its key committee before last Thanksgiving.

It is time for a final vote. The need for Congress to pass this legislation is highlighted by the fact that the vast number of food-borne disease outbreaks in recent years were linked to FDA-regulated products such as spinach, peppers, peanut butter products and cookie dough. Any significant update to FDA food-

safety law would be the first in more than 70 years.

When that outdated law was enacted, Americans ate less processed food, and meals often came from local producers. In the 21st century, any given meal can contain ingredients from across the nation and many countries around the globe. Yet the FDA annually inspects only about 1 percent of shipments of imported foods before they come into the United States.

FDA oversight of domestic food facilities is also in need of significant improvement. A recent Department of Health and Human Services inspector general report found that inspections of food companies' plants have decreased over the last several years, and that 56 percent of facilities did not receive an FDA inspection over a recent five-year period. The report recommended that FDA seek more effective enforcement tools and get better access to food facility records — both of which the agency supported in its response.

Furthermore, a recent study authored by a former FDA economist and published by the Produce Safety Project — an initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts at Georgetown University — estimates the health-related impact of food-borne illness across the nation to be a combined \$152 billion annually. This cost, coupled with the public health impacts of pathogens in the food supply, make a vote on the Senate bill even more important.

The longer it takes Congress to pass food-safety legislation, the greater the likelihood that more Americans will unnecessarily suffer or die as a result of the nation's outdated food-protection authorities.

As Kyle's mother, Robyn Allgood, has said, it might be too late for her son, but "no family should have to go through this — we can save other children."

Monsanto Fund Award Program Offered To S.D. Producers

Project To Give \$2,500 Awards In 43 S.D. Counties

ST. LOUIS — South Dakota farmers have the opportunity to win awards to help community non-profit organizations that are dear to their hearts. The awards are available through Monsanto Fund's America's Farmers Grow Communities ProjectSM, a new program being offered in select counties in California, Kansas, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina and South Dakota. Through the program, farmers can enter to win the chance to direct \$2,500 awards to local non-profit organizations that are important to them and their communities.

The program is intended to benefit non-profit community groups such as ag youth organizations, schools and other civic groups. Farmers can apply online at www.growcommunities.com or by calling (877) 267-3332 to obtain an application.

"Farmers in South Dakota and across America work hard to feed, fuel and clothe our country and the world," said Brett Begemann, Monsanto Fund Chairman. "But they are

passionate about their local communities. That's why we created the America's Farmers Grow Communities Project. From local FFA Chapters and 4H Clubs to fire departments, community centers and schools, we're proud of the investments farmers are making through this program, and the lives that we will touch together."

Farmers, age 21 and over, who are actively engaged in farming a minimum of 250 acres of corn, soybeans and/or cotton, or 40 acres of open field vegetables, or at least 10 acres of tomatoes, peppers and/or cucumbers grown in protected culture, are eligible. The application period runs May 1 through July 31, 2010. The program is open to all qualifying farmers, and no purchase is necessary in order to enter or win. In South Dakota, one winner will be drawn from each of the state's 43 participating counties. Monsanto Fund will announce winning farmers and recipient organizations that

were chosen in August 2010.

"The America's Farmers Grow Communities project was originally launched as a pilot program by Monsanto Company in Iowa and select counties in Missouri and Arkansas in January 2010," said John Raines, Vice President of Customer Advocacy for Monsanto Company. "With more than 7,500 farmers participating and more than \$500,000 benefitting non-profit groups in farming communities, we were very pleased with the program."

Visit www.growcommunities.com to see a complete list of Arkansas, Iowa and Missouri winners. The new project is part of a broad commitment by Monsanto Fund to invest in farm communities, in order to highlight the important contributions farmers make every day to our society. To obtain a copy of the official rules for this program, visit www.growcommunities.com or send a written request to Jane Winburn, 914 Spruce St., St. Louis, MO 63102.

POLICY PENNINGS

Misses And Hits Of State Dept.'s Document On Hunger, Food Security

BY DARYLL RAY
Agricultural Policy Analyst

As a part of the change from one administration to another and in response to the 2008 food price crisis which led to an increase in the number of hungry in the world to over 1.1 billion people, the U.S. State Department followed up on the commitment made at the G-8 Summit in L'Aquila to raise "more than \$20 billion to support a renewed global effort" to reduce world hunger by developing a consultation document called "Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative."

The document recognizes that "chronic hunger and under-nutrition primarily results from poverty—people who are poor often simply cannot afford to buy food. Hungry families spend over half their income to buy the food they need to survive, with little to fall back on." But before looking at local food production issues, public agricultural research, reduction of post-harvest loss, role of women, and sustainability, the flow of the argument quickly shifts to trade: "Food often cannot travel from surplus to deficit regions within and across countries because of poor roads and barriers at the border and checkpoints along the way."

No one is arguing that moving food from food surplus regions to food deficit regions is not a good idea. It is, but first things first. It all begins with small holder farmers producing sufficient food to feed their families. Marketing of food surpluses comes next. On these issues, the State Department document comes up short. In some sense the document provides a 30,000 foot view of U.S. intentions without the kind of specificity on the producer side that is likely to result in increased production in the target countries.

Instead of looking at small holder systems with minimal access to capital the document says, "We will work with partners to develop private input industries, organize private dealer networks, expand sustainable irrigation and water management, and strengthen farmer organizations." Later on we read, "Agriculture is a crucial connection between small-scale producers and markets to purchase inputs and sell products. They are the link between producers and consumers through which handling, storage, processing, market information, transportation, and product distribution services are delivered."

A later bulleted point reads: "Create an enabling policy environment for agribusiness growth. Frequent and unpredictable public intervention in the agricultural sector deters private investment and limits the ability of farmers and businesses to access capital. Companies function best when regulations are transparent, mechanisms exist to enforce contracts, and policies are predictable. The U.S. will contribute to strengthening enabling policy environments for growth by improving the ability of governments to collect and analyze market information, training private sector trade associations in how to engage

local and national governments, [and] pressing for reductions in government controls on commodity prices."

While the document is strong on the needs of developing and protecting agribusinesses, it says little about protecting developing country farmers' traditional access to both agricultural land and pastoral lands—the latter often is seen as empty because the pastoralists only use the land on a seasonal basis.

Without stable access to their traditional lands, farmers and pastoralists are often displaced by large foreign owned enterprises that have the capital necessary to produce products for export markets.

While the document has significant shortcomings in its excessive concern for protecting a role for agribusiness, and focus on trade before looking at production issues, the paper also makes some important points.

The document calls to attention the role that women play and can play in improving agricultural output in developing countries. "Many countries overlook the ability of women to drive agriculture-led growth. As a result, women often have limited access to agricultural inputs and financial services and face legal or social constraints to owning land. Economic output could be increased by 15–40 percent and under-nutrition reduced by 15 million children simply by providing women with assets equal to those of men."

In the paper the U.S. State Department notes: "Gains in productivity come primarily from increases in yields, more efficient use of labor, mitigation of risk, improved links to market, and adoption of improved technologies and production practices. Gains in productivity must be made at a time of dwindling natural resources, increasing water scarcity, and a changing climate. This calls for careful attention to protecting the natural resource base, better management of water resources, and adapting agricultural production systems—crops, livestock, and fisheries—to a changing environment."

We hope that in the revision of this document, the U.S. State Department will provide additional focus on the circumstances, skills, and needs of small holder agriculturalists and pastoralists, recognizing that the characteristics of agriculture are different from those of the manufacturing and service sectors. Also, food reserves are not mentioned. It is extremely important to do all that can be done to increase the productivity of small-holder farmers. But the irregular rains and other disruptions to production will still occur. To us that would suggest that the creation of grain/staples reserve programs should be right up there with efforts to enhance farmer-productivity and probably precede implementation of many of the other programs.

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).

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