



Volume 35

April 2012

No. 4

WIFE member studies agriculture in China

By *Mary Ellen Cammack*
South Dakota

As a member of South Dakota Agriculture Rural Leadership, I had the privilege of touring China and Vietnam. The focus of this trip was agriculture production and trade, and the connection the United States has with China. Geographically China is close in size to the United States, and the climate is similar as both countries. The population of China is currently estimated at 1.3 billion, with estimates reaching 1.4 billion to possibly 1.6 billion by 2025. The upper level of the communist party consists of 300 people, and these individuals control 1/5 of the world's population. I am going to repeat this: 300 individuals have control of 1/5 of the WORLD POPULATION!

Farming is not mechanized in China, as the government believes the manual labor is necessary to help keep China's population employed. Additionally, the occupation of farming is not viewed as a desirable occupation to many. In fact, if someone wanted to make a negative comment to another, they would say "that is so farmer of you." Rice is transplanted from the small hoop green house structures to the growing fields by hand, each plant, individually. Growing, planting, harvesting, every single step, is done by hand, no machines. China is a major producer of corn, and 70 percent of that crop is harvested by hand. Pesticides have not been regulated in China, resulting in many farmers using higher concentra-

tions on fields and also contributing to the farmers having health issues due to the misuse. While in China, I saw no birds, whatsoever, nor did I observe any insects of any type. China is willing to "cut corners", and do whatever it takes to reach the top, as fast as possible.

China's culture is very old, but as a country, China is very young, only about 30 years old. In many ways this reflects on the view the Chinese have of food. They believe that everything needs to be fresh. There is little refrigeration, and nothing frozen. Markets are visited daily (maybe even twice per day) to purchase the food that was harvested that day, and will be prepared and consumed that day, and nothing is wasted. All parts of an animal are eaten. This includes any meat products such as poultry, pork and seafood. Poultry and fish products are usually still alive at the market and processed as ordered by the individual, to take home and cook that

same day. Milk is not pasteurized in China; therefore everyone drinks hot milk, "for their health". Milk is sold in small bags, in the grocery store, with the largest size being 500 ml, and has a shelf life of only 2 days. All water in China must be boiled before drinking. There is no safe water from any of the taps in China. The three main food staples in China are: Pork, rice and vegetable oil. Due to the fact that this culture believes all their food must be fresh, that continues to impact the United States ability to export beef to China. As income increases for the Chinese population, their desire for animal protein will also increase. Currently, the significant exports to China are: Soybeans, cotton, wood, and hides and skins.

I will close with this: "Visit China for a day, and you can write a book; visit for a week, and you can write a short story; visit for a month, and you do not know what to write."



The Board of Directors met in Washington, D.C. Front: Deb Dressler, Billy Senter, Member/Host and Ruth Larabee. Standing: Marlene Kouba, Shana Baisch, Jenifer Felzien, Diane McDonald, Sheila Massey, Mary Ann Murray, Phyllis Ann Hoskins, Barbara Broberg and Sue Krentz. See more D.C. photos inside.

President's Report



By Deb Dressler
North Dakota

Greetings to you all from southwestern North Dakota. Trees are budding, grass is green, and I am anxiously waiting for the first crocus to be sighted, all of which are signs of spring in the northern plains. The last two months have been a whirlwind of airports, red dress clothes, Farm Bill meetings and meet and greet receptions. I want to personally thank the WIFE members who gave of their time to attend the WIFE Legislative Conference recently held in Washington, D.C. It takes a large amount of time, energy and commitment to walk Capitol Hill and tell your story. Thank you to WIFE members at home who keep the home fires kindled.

The Legislative BOD meeting was held on Sunday morning at KSCW, Inc. Thank you to the Senters for providing a great conference room. The BOD was followed by a luncheon of tasty burgers by Bobby Flay. Even though several WIFE members had previously toured Mount Vernon, many new exhibits were enjoyed by all. Martha Washington in period dress, speech and looks was a hit.

On Monday morning, WIFE mem-

bers began their hill visits with the Senate and House Briefings in the afternoon. The 2012 Farm Bill and its progress or lack thereof was the main topic of discussion. WIFE heard from staffers on the Senate Committee on Agriculture. Budget cuts and the federal deficit were on everyone's plate. With farmers and ranchers being less than one percent of the United States' population, an even stronger emphasis must be made to convey to the public where our food is coming from. The House Committee on Agriculture briefed WIFE members on the 2012 Farm Bill, dairy program restructuring, and the agriculture budget.

The annual pizza reception was well attended with New Mexico winning the prize for the "most representation."

On Tuesday morning, WIFE visited USDA and communicated with Carolyn Cooksie, Associate Administrator for Operations and Management, FSA; Anderson Neal, Jr., Acting Director of Advocacy and Outreach; Michael Alston, Deputy Administrator for Insurance RMA; Gary McBryde, Director, Industry Analysis Division Packers and Stockyards Programs; and S. Brett Offutt, Director Policy and Litigation Division GIPSA. The conversations were actively engaged by USDA employees and WIFE members.

Tuesday afternoon was a continuation of the Hill visits. WIFE hosted a "Taste of WIFE" reception to acclaim the two most recent honorary members of WIFE. Jean Reimers, Government Affairs, Bayer Crop Science, and Chris Klose of Klose Communications Inc. were saluted for supporting and mentoring WIFE. Chris Klose was unable to attend the reception. The reception empowered WIFE members to network with honor-



Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack meets with Deb Dressler.

ary WIFE members, corporate sponsors, USDA, agriculture coalitions and associations. Tasty treats from WIFE states and Georgetown cupcakes provided special experiences for the palates of those attending.

Wednesday was the Agri-Pulse reception which was preceded by panel on the Future of Food and Farming, An Agriculture Day Dialogue.

Thursday included the Ag Day 2012 celebration of American Agriculture "Mix and Mingle" luncheon. The honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture, gave the keynote address at the Ag Day Dinner that evening. Orion Samuelson was the master of ceremonies; he has been an advocate for agriculture since the 1950s. WIFE ladies in red were easily noticed, and someone remarked to the group, "Did you plan this?" A special bonus was Secretary Vilsack visiting with each table after dinner. WIFE ladies were not shy, to say the least.

Hope you all have ample moisture for your crops that are and are to be planted. Have a safe spring season. A big thank you goes out to all the farmers and ranchers who produce a safe, abundant and reasonable food supply to our country and our world. Remember our service men and women who strive daily to preserve our freedoms. Buy American, go tell your story, and Happy Trails. Have a Blessed Easter.



Martha Washington delighted Mount Vernon tourists.

Washington, D.C. Reports

WIFE members tour "Bee Condo" on trip

By *Ruth Larabee*
New York

Members attending the Women Involved in Farm Economics Annual Government Affairs Conference were invited for a wonderful "Tour of Bee Condo" with Mario Castillo, Executive Chef Ian Bens, Assistant Rebecca, and Diana Bulger, Area Director of Public Relations. Diana is a New Yorker from Buffalo.

Ancient Egyptians were the first known beekeepers, sometimes floating their hives up and down the Nile to pollinate crops along the river. Now, in Washington D.C. two chefs are among the newest beekeepers in this long line of apiarists.

At the Fairmont Washington, a downtown hotel, Executive Sous-Chef Ian Bens and Executive Pastry Chef Aron Weber tend to more than 100,000 Italian honeybees living on the roof. These honeybees are more docile but protective gear is worn when approximately 150 pounds of honey is harvested in spring and summer. The bees travel up to three miles gathering nectar and pollen from neighboring plants and flowers. In the courtyard of the Fairmont hotel

and a small area outside the culinary department grow many herbs which they use in cooking.

It was fairly warm the day we toured the Fairmont kitchen and roof top but only a couple of bees had ventured outside of the hive. When asked the question of why there were dead bees around the hives, Chef Ian told us the bees take out the dead bees like spring funerals and he has seen bees take a deceased bee and drop it off the roof

Why have the Fairmont and the chefs taken this project on? Chef Ian said a lot of research has gone into the adventure. In an information sheet Chef Ian gave us it states. The bees make our community healthier. Native bees are not very common anymore and have declined sharply due to the pollution, diseases and other factors. Bees are thought to be responsible for 75-85 percent of crop pollination in the United States.

The chefs use three main ingredients. Honey: the bees collect nectar from



At the "Taste of WIFE" Reception, Sheila Massey, Jean Reimers, the newly recognized Honorary WIFE Member, and Deb Dressler take a break from the ceremony.

flowers, which is 80 percent water, and reduce it to 18 percent water which is called honey, and is the bee's source for energy. Pollen: the bees collect tiny grains of pollen in pollen "traps" on their legs and it is perhaps the most perfect single food item as it contains every amino acid, protein, vitamin, mineral and enzyme in order to sustain life. Bees live on pollen mixed with honey, which is called "bee bread". Propolis: is a resinous mixture bees collect from tree buds and other plants. It is also called bee glue as it is used as glue in the hive to seal any cracks. Propolis protects against bacteria, fungi, viruses and has even been found to inhibit cancer. The chefs also use the bees wax and honeycomb.

These ingredients are used in all vinaigrettes, many deserts, breads, other recipes and drinks. Having dined there several times I can personally say the venue is wonderful! They also make soaps, scrubs, and a fantastic rooftop honey peppermint lip balm

We all received a gift of the lip balm in a purse size tin decorated with a hive and some honeybees. It is very nice, smooth and works very well! Our thanks go to Chef Ian, Assistant chef Rebecca, Diana and Mario for a great tour and to our WIFE member Cathy Scherler who took many pictures which I am sure will be in the WIFeline.



WIFE Members pose for a picture in the USDA Meeting Room with Kathryn Hill, an Honorary WIFE Member who is in the Office of Communications and who arranged for the meeting. Left to Right Jenifer Felzien, Sue Krentz, Cathy Scherler, Phyllis Ann Hoskin, Deb Dressler, Barbara Broberg, Kathryn Hill, Mary Ann Murray, Ruth Larabee, Marlene Kouba, Shana Baisch, and Diane McDonald.

All photos courtesy of Cathy Scherler

Oilseeds Report



By Mary Ellen Cammack
South Dakota

Study shows sunflower oil does not increase risk of heart disease

All sunflower oils are naturally high in Vitamin E, and there is no GMO or transgenic sunflower.

Pilar Guallar-Castillon, M.D., Ph.D. of the Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain and colleagues report eating foods fried in sunflower oil does not increase the risk of heart disease or premature death, according to a study of 40,757 adults over an eleven-year period. A more detailed abstract of this research is available via the British Medical Journal (BMJ.com). The research appeared in the January 24, 2012 issue, MNJ2012;344:e363.

There are four types of sunflower oil available:

1. High Linoleic, which is the traditional type of oil produced for many years. It is now produced in small volumes, in North America, because of its limitations in fried foods. A typical fatty acid ratios is: 65 percent oleic acid, 26 percent linoleic acid and 9 percent combined saturates.

2. Mid-Oleic or NuSun, is now the largest volume of sunflower oil produced in the United States and Canada. It was developed through traditional breeding methods. This oil is price competitive with other naturally stable oils, and has a good shelf life. Excellent stability and neutral taste make this excellent as a frying oil. A typical fatty acid ratio is: 65 percent oleic acid, 26 percent linoleic acid and 9 percent combined saturates.

3. High Oleic: The initial patent on this type seed and oil has expired, so this crop is generally contract grown to insure identity preservation through the marketing system. Oleic levels generally start at 82 percent and go higher, with some hybrids producing 90 percent. The advantage of high oleic sunflower oil is added stability and a neutral taste profile. A typical profile is: 82 percent oleic, 9 percent linoleic and 9 percent combined saturates.

4. High Stearic/High Oleic: This is the newest type of sunflower oil, and was developed through traditional breeding methods, just as the previous

three types of oil were. The hybrid seed is under patent and the oil produced from the seed is called "Nutrisun". The advantage is functionality as a replacement for partially hydrogenated oils or tropical oils with a higher saturate level. This oil is used for: baking, margarines, ice cream, chocolate and more products that need a "solid" oil. Production was initiated this year in the U.S. A fatty acid profile is: 18 percent stearic acid, 72 percent oleic acid, 5 percent linoleic acid and 5 percent other saturates.

Source: National Sunflower Association

WIFE Notices

- Proposed Bylaw changes due to Jenifer Felzien (gjfelz@kci.net) and Bobbi Massey (bjmassey@vtc.net) by May 26, 2012
- Nominations, including chapter and state endorsements for officers, c/t chairmen, due to Nomination Chair Cathy Scherler (cscherler@fairpoint.net) by May 26, 2012
- June BOD teleconference June 20, 2012, 6 p.m. MDT. Call 605-477-3000 and enter code 182545# with timer and parliamentarian on the call
- Resolutions due 45 days prior to National Convention or request extension from Resolution Co-Chair Mary Ann Murray (lige@wb.midrivers.com) and Daneen Dressler (daneen.dressler@stonemill.net) Due date of Oct 1, 2012
- National Convention: Bismarck ND Best Western Doublewood Inn, November 14: Pre-convention meetings, November 15-17: Convention.



By Pam Potthoff
Nebraska

Trade Report

U.S. faces variety of trade issues

The U.S. Trade Representatives (USTR) decided to appeal a World Trade Organization's (WTO) Dispute Settlement Panel ruling against the U.S. **country of origin** (COOL) law. On March 23, the USTR notified the WTO of its decision to appeal the ruling issued in November 2011. While the Dispute Panel's findings took issue with certain implementation rules, the panel affirmed the right of the U.S. to label food products with country of origin. WIFE supports COOL.

A move is underway in California to require a detailed **country-of origin label** on every product sold in America. The proposed label would include sourcing information on all the product's parts and components along with the trade balance the U.S. maintains with each of those countries. This would certainly support the "Buy American" campaigns.

An amendment to the Senate Transportation bill offered by U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) to **strengthen "Buy America"** provisions and support Ohio-made steel has cleared the Senate. "Buy America" provisions support American companies and workers by giving a preference to domestically-produced iron, steel, and other manufactured goods in infrastructure projects that receive federal aid.

The livestock gate at the **Columbus International Port of Entry** in southern New Mexico is closed now that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is restricting its veterinarians from crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. The agency cites safety concerns.

The Hispanically Speaking News

is **blaming** NAFTA (and, therefore, the United States) for a rapid rise in the number of overweight and obese people in Mexico, the United Nations' special rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier de Schutter, said. Seventy percent of adults in Mexico are overweight or obese (35 million). Two reasons are given for the increase in obesity: the importation of refined and sugary foods and the exportation of fruits and vegetables to high-value markets.

Canada-Mexico trade hit an all-time high in 2011. Numbers from the NAFTA Office of Mexico in Canada say bilateral trade between the two countries increased 14.6 per cent from 2010 levels to US\$34.4 billion. The latest figures say the NAFTA has increased this trade 751 per cent since the legislation came into effect. Canada has imported more than it has sent to Mexico. With NAFTA's help, Mexico has become Canada's third-largest trading partner behind the U.S. and China.

The U.S. exported more gasoline, diesel and other fuels than it imported in 2011 for the first time since 1949, the Energy Department said. These are refined products. The U.S. still imports more crude oil than it exports.

President Barack Obama signed an order in February to create a task force to target unfair trade practices in countries such as China, as part of a strategy to more aggressively protect U.S. business interests abroad.

McDonald's owns more than 1,400 restaurants in China, and ranks the country as its third-biggest market in the world.

Foodborne disease outbreaks caused by imported food appeared to rise in 2009 and 2010, and nearly half of the outbreaks implicated foods imported from areas which previously had not been associated with outbreaks, according to research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

presented at the International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases in Atlanta.

Taiwan has a ban on meat treated with Ractopamine. This feed additive is rather controversial and is causing international waves. Ractopamine is fed to American livestock in order to promote lean meat. Currently, it is fed to about 60 to 80 percent of the pigs in America.

The U.S. trade deficit rose sharply in January, forging the biggest gap since October 2008. According to the Commerce Department, the United States had not imported so many goods, \$196.1 billion, since July 2008. The \$37.3 billion in services imports was an all-time record, it said. Much of this increase is being blamed on high oil prices. About half of the January trade gap was the politically sensitive trade deficit with China.

Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA) in remarks on the House floor on March 19th urged telecom carriers to tell clients if devices they sell are made by Chinese telecom giant Huawei, because such devices could be subject to **Chinese espionage**. Wolf warned Huawei's equipment could be easily compromised and used in Chinese cyber attacks against the U.S. or to intercept phone calls and emails from American telecom networks.

The U.S. joined the European Union in filing a **major trade complaint** against China, for its export controls on so-called "rare earth" minerals. These are used in everything from micro-electronic devices like smartphones to flat-screen televisions, hybrid car batteries, energy-efficient lighting and wind turbines. China dominates world production of rare earths and refuses to allow their export and sale to follow normal commercial principles.

The Commerce Department will impose tariffs from 2.9 to 4.73 percent on solar panels imported from China

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Water, Private Property, Natural Resources, and Endangered Species

Report



By Alice Parker
Washington

Ever since I was a young girl I have heard the saying "whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting." This saying seems to be as true today with all the water wars going on everywhere. On RFD TV last night they were talking about the water issues in Georgia, Alabama and other states in the South and how they are trying to develop plans to address water issues. I had always thought it was a problem for those in the arid West (17 Western states) and the rest of the nation had adequate rainfall to sustain the needs. Apparently it is a problem everywhere. The population growth is having a bearing across the nation. With the increased population growth over the next several years, the fight over water will only escalate.

A few years ago agriculture production was impacted when the Klamath Basin in Oregon and Northern California was shut down because of endangered species. Two years ago the Central Valley of California was impacted with the Delta Smelt.

Following being told that their irrigation water would be curtailed, people from that area attending the Family Farm Alliance meeting were very discouraged and were worried whether they were going to get enough water to keep their permanent crops (i.e. orchard and vineyards) alive.

In 1993 the Columbia Basin Project development was shut down with the moratorium on any additional withdrawals from the Columbia River because of the listing of the salmon as an endangered species. The moratorium was lifted in 2003, and nine years later progress is being made to continue the development

Special interests attack water use

of the Columbia Basin Project that was authorized by Congress back in 1935. Continued development is being considered because of the depletion of the Odessa Aquifer not because of the authorization of Congress in 1935.

Special interests continue the attack on agriculture and especially on irrigated farms as using too much water and say they are wasting it. If they would only review the hydrological cycle they will see that farmers are not destroying water but are diverting a small portion of it to grow food for them and their families. If they would look at the hydrological cycle and see that once this water is utilized very little of it remains in the crops

but it goes back into the system. It either runs off and flows back into the streams and rivers or percolates into the ground or evaporates into the atmosphere and comes back to earth as precipitation in the form of rain or snow. That's how the hydrological cycle works.

WIFE members are urged to watch and monitor water issues in their states and regions. When issues arise become involved to make sure the agriculture does not become a low priority for the use of water. We can have all the water we want to drink or see running water in our streams and rivers for ascetic purposes or for recreation, but if we don't have food to eat, we will all perish.



By Pat Torgerson
Montana

Transportation Report

Ag can help fuel prices

The squeeze is on. With nearly \$4 gas and the threat

of our domestic crude oil supply being cut off, America is feeling the Big Squeeze in her pocketbook and at the gas pumps and at the grocery stores. Drill here and drill now is part of the solution, but agriculture has the other part!

Ag based liquid fuels offer partial solutions to better and cleaner fuels! Biodiesel oil fuel comes from oil crops such as canola and safflower. Ethanol fuel comes from sugar in grains such as wheat and corn. Both fuels take only a tiny part of the grain leaving the major part to be used to feed people or livestock.

The world needs food and fuel. It

needs the sugar from grain for making fuel and food from the mash (renewed grain). It needs the left over high protein renewed grain from ethanol production. This renewed grain has been used for years in feed lots promoting milk production or weight gain in cattle. Less known or researched, but more importantly, is renewed grain for human food. WIFE (Women involved in Farm Economics) had this renewed grain sent to the Food and Drug Administration for analysis years ago. The positive results were encouraging enough that many recipes for breads, desserts, breakfast cereals and pizza were developed from wheat and corn renewed grains by WIFE members. Proof you can have food and fuel at the same time.

Today, President Obama has a plan to improve vehicle fuel efficiency and significantly reduce emissions

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By Klodette Stroh
Wyoming

Sugar Report

Farm Bill benefits American people

strong this year. One new trend is that farmers are buying used equipment from much farther away via the Internet. For example, Canadian farmers are buying used equipment from the U.S. with their computers.”

Duignan said that while she does not see agriculture getting any better in 2012, she also doesn't see it getting any worse. “With strong cash receipts, farmers buy more combines and tractors,” she said. “In Europe, farmers don't make equipment sales based on cash receipts to the extent that U.S. farmers do because farming there is more heavily subsidized.

That said, European agriculture is about to change because in 2014, the European Union will make its agricultural policy more market-driven,” she said.

Conclusion

The Farm Bill benefits American people. Relying on America's agriculture through out WWI, WWII, Korean, Vietnam, and Desert Storm to feed American soldiers and people is part of our national security. U.S. agriculture should not be compromised; it is the corner stone of our culture and financial system. If we lose our farmers, our national security will be gone.

Farm Bill and Sugar Program

This year nation's Farm Bill will be under examination to be written for another round. Sugar farmers have to tell their story in Washington D.C. to make sure sugar program will be part of 2012 Farm Bill. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) report on this issue, since 2002 the sugar program has been operating at no cost to taxpayers, and it will remain cost free for at least 10 more years. The Agency released baseline projections for sugar policy through 2022 that found no projected sugar loan forfeitures or government purchases of sugar for fuel...the two instances where drastic market oversupplies could trigger taxpayer expense for sugar policy. United States commodities are influenced by the world market and foreign countries' economic well-being.

Global Economy for 2012

World economy is changing rapidly as I am writing this report. Economic optimism is in the air mainly because of growths in several newly emerging countries, like Egypt, Turkey, Vietnam and South Africa. These countries are following the same economic development as Brazil, Russia, India and China (referred to as the BRIC nations) which have been strong for several years. News indicates more housing construction on the rise in France and Germany. JP Morgan's representative and economist Ann Duignan noted “In the U.S., farmers have replaced 50,000 combines during the past five years; however, that only equates to less than 20% of the country's fleet. The used equipment market is likely to stay

Ag can ease fuel price spike

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over the next 15 years. Environmentalists want to steadily increase fuel efficiency requirements for light-duty trucks and passenger cars from an average of 34 miles per gallon in 2016 to more than 50 miles per gallon in 2025, plus reduce the allowable emissions 163 grams of CO2 per mile in 2025 vehicles. These are noble goals and ethanol and biodiesel fuels will help meet them, E30 is a fuel for the future.

General Motors is developing the Ecotec engine and Ford has developed the Ecoblast engine. Both are using higher octane fuel blends. The Ecotech and Ecoblast are designed to allow for increased air pressure to be pumped into the cylinder. This improves the engine efficiency, but makes the engine thirsty for high octane fuel.

Ethanol has a higher latent heat of vaporization, meaning that it absorbs more heat from the combustion, letting the engine run cooler. Thus the engine lasts longer which is good for the cars and light trucks.

There is good news for the heavy-duty trucks, busses and trains using diesel fuel. They have help coming from the

research and development of biodiesel fuels from oil grains. Food and fuel are beautifully and positively intertwined if Americans open their minds to it. We can have both food and fuel.

Today these two Ag based fuels have lots of hoops to jump through to meet government restrictions for production. However, these rules are less restrictive than the ones for new oil refineries.

Feed lots and ethanol refineries dot many states right now on a small scale. The Ag world is willing to crank up their production if given the go ahead. Maybe it is time for the United States to send third world countries high protein blocks made from renewed grains for their human nutritional needs.

Money is better spent doing research to improve American grown fuel on U.S. soil. If anything gets spilled let it be American liquid fuels, not American blood on foreign lands waging wars over oil.

- Ag makes the perfect container--the egg.
- Ag makes the perfect food--milk,
- Ag offers Americans clean liquid fuels--biodiesel and ethanol.

Working together will make the United States great again.



**By Marlene Kouba
North Dakota**

Energy Report

Alternative energy sources continue to be explored

How much fuel do you use when you travel? As I flew to Washington, DC, in early March, the pilot of the 757 announced that we were using one-fourth gallon of fuel per mile. The man behind me was calculating that at 1481 miles we were using about 6000 gallons of fuel. Consider the weight of that fuel plus about 200 passengers and crew, luggage and the plane, what was the weight in the air? What is the cost of such fuel? No wonder our tickets are high. The cruise liner, Queen Elizabeth 2, moves only six inches for each gallon of diesel fuel which is even more than the plane for weight and cost.

In early March President Obama announced a new research effort to make electric vehicles affordable and convenient, stating that by the end of the decade, they would be as simple to operate as today's gas-powered cars and trucks. The incentives would drive vehicle mileage standards for cars and light-duty trucks up to the equivalent of 54.2 miles per gallon by 2025, saving consumers \$1.7 trillion at the pump (roughly \$8,200 per vehicle) and cut oil consumption by 2.2 million barrels a day from the current 16 million-bbd average. However in the same month, the electric GM Chevrolet Volt was put on hold for 11 weeks and laid off 1,300 workers as they have only sold about 9,000 vehicles. When it's open the plant only runs one ten-hour shift for four days a week. When the plant is closed workers still get paid. Not counting obligations to retirement, the average hourly wage and benefits cost to GM union employees is about \$55 per hour. Shareholders paid a little more than \$30 million in wage costs alone for these

weeks of leisure. Overhead probably tacks on another \$15 million or so--all while not one car is produced.

In 1995, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) estimated 150 million "technically recoverable barrels of oil" from the Bakken Shale. In April 2011 that number was up to about 15 billion barrels. In March 2012, they announced 24 billion barrels. Current technology allows for the extraction of only about six percent of the oil trapped one to two miles beneath the earth's surface, so as the technology advances recoverable oil could eventually exceed 500 billion barrels. Williston sits atop the Bakken Shale, which will later this year be producing more oil than any other site in the country. Starting in December North Dakota became the third-largest energy-producing state, bypassing California. The 2011 North Dakota Legacy Fund consists of oil and gas tax revenue and already has \$219.5 million but it can't be spent until 2017.

A Michigan report says their wind energy, at an average cost of 9.1 cents/kilowatt-hour, is almost a third cheaper than that from a new coal plant at 13.3 cents/kWh, and prices are coming down further. The global wind industry installed just over 41,000 MW of wind power in 2011, bringing the world's total installed capacity to more than 238,000 MW which represents a 21 percent increase, with an increase in the annual global market of just over six percent. Today, about 75 countries worldwide have commercial wind power installations, with 22 of them already passing the 1 gigawatt level. China consolidated its position as global market leader, with a cumulative capacity of more than 62,000 MW. For India, 2011 installations pushed their total capacity to just over 16,000 MW. The European Union has installed a total capacity of 93,957 MW-enough to supply 6.3 percent of the EU's electricity.

The U.S. wind sector has installations of more than 6,800 MW. Canada surpassed 5,000 MW. Brazil has a total of just over 1,500 MW.

Wind farms in the Pacific Northwest, built with government subsidies and maintained with tax credits for every megawatt produced, are now getting paid to shut down as there is an oversupply of renewable power at certain times of the year. The problem arose during the late spring and early summer last year when rapid snow melt filled the Columbia River Basin. The water rushed through the 31 dams run by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), a federal agency, allowing for peak hydropower generation. At the same time, high winds led to maximum wind power production. Demand could not keep up with supply, so BPA shut down the wind farms for nearly 200 hours over 38 days. Now, Bonneville is offering to compensate wind companies for half their lost revenue and the bill could reach up to \$50 million a year. BPA says its hands are tied by environmental regulations.

President Obama said on March 13 that the reason you are paying a lot more at the gas pump is because of tax breaks. Meanwhile, the biggest oil and gas players in the world are owned and operated by foreign governments. About 78 percent of global oil reserves are owned and operated by foreign governments, versus privately operated oil companies like those in the U.S.

ExxonMobil paid \$108.1 billion in total worldwide taxes in 2011, up from \$89.2 billion in 2010. Exxon's total worldwide income tax portion of its 2011 bill was \$30.5 billion. Exxon paid \$12.3 billion total in U.S. taxes for federal, state, sales, property, and excise taxes. That's up from \$9.8 billion the year prior. Overall,

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By Donna Bolz
Nebraska

Farmland sales values reach record setting levels in Iowa

Nebraska farmland values tell a similar story. According to the University of Nebraska Farm Real Estate Market Survey, farmland values increased 22% in one year. The increase over a five-year period is 83%.

High commodity prices and increased farm income play the largest role in driving up farmland values. Low interest rates are also a factor. At the same time, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago survey indicated banks required greater collateral to be eligible for a loan.

While high land values benefit landowners who are selling their land, it does little to offer opportunity for beginning farmers. Access to affordable land and capital has been the greatest barrier to beginning farmers for years. Such large increases in farmland values, and tighter lending requirements, make the hill an even bigger climb for beginners.

Don't overlook the role of government policy. While it may be diminished in a time of record prices and high farm income, it still drives up

land values.

For years commodity programs have favored mega-farmers over beginning and small and midsize family farmers. Add to that the unchecked insurance subsidies to mega farms. If one corporation farmed an entire state, the federal government would pay 60 percent of its crop insurance premiums on every acre in every year, even in years of record profits.

The more crop prices rise, the more crop insurance premium subsidies rise. They are now the most expensive farm program.

With no cap on how much one large operation can reap, premium subsidies simply subsidize mega farms to drive smaller operations out of business. They also close opportunity for the next generation. In a time of record commodity prices and farm income, policymakers should reform these programs.

They should stop the abuse that allows mega farmers to use the subsidies to grab more and more land.

Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Tim Johnson (D-SD) introduced a bill to close loopholes mega farmers use to multiply their payments. It would apply to whatever commodity support system becomes part of the next Farm Bill. Policy reform should go even further it should cap the amount of subsidized crop insurance any one farmer can receive.

Communities also play an important role. They can be the link, helping landowners leave a legacy rather than selling to the highest bidder. If we are to create opportunity for the next generation, we need policy reforms and we need our rural communities to engage in this issue.

Farmland values continue to rise. Iowa recently had two record-setting land sales in Sioux County. The first record price was over \$16,000 per acre. The next topped it at \$20,000 per acre. Iowa State University's 2011 Farmland Value Survey reports a 32.5% increase in Iowa farmland values from 2010 to 2011. That is the highest value ever documented by the survey, passing the 31.7% increase documented in their 1973 survey.

Last November, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago reported an overall increase of 25% for states in their district. This is the highest increase since the latter part of the 1970s. States included in their district are Illinois (+23%), Indiana (+29%), Iowa (+31%), Michigan (+16%) and Wisconsin (+17%).

Alternative energy sources continue to be explored

Continued from Page 8

that makes Exxon the biggest payer of U.S. corporate taxes. Exxon paid more than a billion dollars a month in U.S. taxes last year, but earned \$9.6 billion in after-tax profits in 2011 but this doesn't count other U.S. taxes oil and gas companies pay, too. In property, severance and so-called windfall profit taxes, the industry paid more than \$472 billion between

1981 and 2008. Between 1981 and 2008, the oil industry paid more than \$388 billion to the federal and state governments in corporate income taxes, but they paid almost twice that amount, \$683 billion, to foreign governments where they operate. What do you pay? The federal government takes 18.4 cents per gallon for gasoline sold. State and local governments then tack on their own taxes, an average 30.4 cents nationwide.

Dairy Report



By Dianna Reed
Kansas

Milk producers urge Farm Bill passage

According to Randy Mooney, Chairman of NMPF and a dairy farmer from Rogersville, Missouri, "Kicking the can down the road into 2013, where the Farm Bill is concerned is neither good politics, nor good policy. The tough choices about budget priorities won't be any easier next year, but more to the point, dairy farmers need a better program than what we have right now. A Farm Bill extension in 2012 doesn't do us any good."

There has been encouragement that leaders in both the Senate and House Agriculture Committees have recently expressed hope that each chamber can complete work on a bill prior to the summer.

NMPF has worked since 2009 to

formulate a comprehensive economic safety net that is based on margins, rather than just the farm level price of milk. After developing its own proposal, MNPF worked with Reps. Collin Peterson (D-MN) and Mike Simpson (R-ID) to encapsulate those concepts into HR. 3062, the Dairy Security Act.

The National Milk Producers Federation's Board of Directors supported a resolution urging Congress to pass a Farm Bill in 2012, one that contains an improved safety net for farmers in the form of the Dairy Security Act.

The resolution made it clear that the organization does not support any approach in Congress that would extend current farm programs by another year and delay the creation of a better dairy program.

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Specialty Crops Report

Soybean producers are in for a wild ride

The season average farm price for 2012 soybeans is projected at \$11.50 per bushel. Assuming normal weather conditions, national average soybean yield is projected at 93.9 bushels per acre. The United States' share of global trade is likely to increase due to South America's drought reduced 2012 crop.

Soybean farmers are grinning. However, Middle East terrorism, European debt concerns, and possible drought conditions could pull the rug out from under the market at any time.

So, farmers, fasten your seatbelts for yet another wild ride.



By Jacquelyn Sistrunk
Alabama

United States soybean producers are looking to China for success. Strong demand for vegetable oil, growth in livestock, and government policies make China the world importer for over half of soybeans produced. Global demand for soy protein is surging.

In the U.S., soybean oil is used for biodiesel production, soy protein for food consumption, both human and livestock, and vegetable oil.

Members in the News

Parker receives award from Family Farm Alliance

WIFE National Natural Resources Chair Alice Parker was recently awarded the John W. Keys Memorial Award by the Family Farm Alliance. Parker received a plaque reading, "For your Significant Contributions Towards Protecting and Enhancing Western Irrigated Agriculture."

According to Parker, the award had a special meaning to her as John Keys was the Regional Director of Reclamation when she became involved with the Columbia Basin Development League and became a great mentor and supporter.

"He moved on up the ladder and became the Commissioner of Reclamation, and the relationship we had developed while he was Regional Director carried forward after he moved to Washington, D.C.," said Parker. "He was a great supporter of the Columbia Basin Project. The Commissioner was killed in a plane crash after he retired from Reclamation."

According to an article in the Capital Press, President of the Washington State Farm Bureau Mike LaPlant credits Parker with leading efforts in the early 2000s to

expand the Columbia Basin Project and address declining aquifer levels in the Odessa subarea.

"She's like the little engine that could; she doesn't quit," said LaPlant.

"She's very passionate and so respected," said Dan Keppen, Family Farm Alliance executive director. "She has a great network and is really trusted because she's so consistent."

U.S. faces variety of trade issues

Continued from Page 5

ter concluding that the Chinese government provided illegal export subsidies to manufacturers there. Additional tariffs could be imposed in May, when the Commerce Department is scheduled to decide whether China is "dumping" solar panels into the United States at prices below their actual cost. American imports of Chinese solar panels have soared to \$2.65 billion last year from \$21.3 million in 2005. Globally, low-cost Chinese panels have driven down the cost of solar energy by two-thirds in the last four years, narrowing but not eliminating the wide price gap that used to separate solar power from electricity generated by burning fossil fuels.

But the solar energy boom has had few benefits for American manufacturers. The plunging prices led to the bankruptcy of three American solar panel makers last August. The most famous was Solyndra, which cost the federal government more than \$500 million in a defaulted loan.

China now has about 700 solar panel manufacturers. Chinese companies have been able to grow so fast, and cut costs so quickly, because they could take large loans from government-owned banks. China's huge and growing need for oil imported from volatile countries in the Mideast and Africa has made energy independence one of the country's highest strategic and economic objectives.

China has increased the number of **auto parts** it imports into the United States by 900 percent since 2000.

Mexico is experiencing its **worst drought** in 70 years - according to Mexico Rural Development Under Secretary Ignacia Rivera - who predicts it will lower corn production to 780-million bushels - compared to 830-million bushels in the 2010-2011 year. Mexico already is the second-largest customer for U.S. feed grain exports and a leading buyer of DDGS.

China's agriculture output per hectare (the metric unit of area measurement) is higher than the United States' output. That may be partly due to climate and soil, but cheap labor plays a major role. When labor is cheap, each weed can be pulled by hand.

An agreement has been reached between the U.S. and the European Union that would recognize their **organic programs** as essentially equivalent. The partnership will allow access to each other's markets and simplify paperwork for organic producers. The agreement goes into effect June 1st of this year.

WIFE believes in FAIR trade. **WIFE policy** Trade, page 32, #4, states, "WIFE urges the United States to impose and enforce trade regulations no less stringent than those of the various exporting countries with which we do business.

WIFE insists all future trade agreements must not be limited to regulating domestic support levels, export subsidies and market access but every future trade agreement must address differences in labor standards, environmental standards, health standards and trade-distorting effect of currency manipulation and cartelization of agriculture markets."

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WIFE Membership

*By Mary Ann Sheppard
National Membership Chair*

Last month I asked each state president to make contact with her membership chairman and plan a membership drive, giving a prize to the person who gets the most members. Please let me know if you have planned a drive for membership. Maybe you know a person in another state that you can contact to make plans to meet with that person and try to organize a new association.



Membership Information Request

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Send to Membership Chairman
Mary Ann Sheppard
4966 Co. Road 30
Shorter, AL 36075
Phone: (334) 727-7737 CST

Change Service Requested

Shana Baisch
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