

Iowa FFA Ag Broadcasting Career Development Event State Script – 2012

NPPC to defend against HSUS complaint

April 19, 2012 By Julie Harker

The **National Pork Producers Council (NPPC)** says it will defend itself against what it calls "the latest attack by animal rights activists on America's hog farmers."

On Wednesday, the Humane Society of the United States issued a news release saying it had filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission about the NPPC. The HSUS claims the industry's "We Care Initiative" and "Pork Quality Assurance Plus" program are deceptive and a violation of the Federal Trade Commission Act. The HSUS says the pork industry continues to use "abusive practices."

A release by the NPPC says they will "analyze the complaint once it actually is made public" and "vigorously defend" against the false claims made by the HSUS.

USDA will allow LFTB labeling

April 4, 2012 By Bob Meyer

In response to requests from beef processing firms, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is going to allow companies to label meat containing lean, finely textured beef (LFTB). The idea is the labeling would allow companies to continue to provide the beef to an informed consumer. USDA needs to finalize the labels but some possibilities are "Contains Lean, Finely Textured Beef"; "Contains Finely Textured Beef" or "Contains Lean Beef Derived from Beef Trimmings"

Rich Jochum, Corporate Administrator for Beef Products Incorporated (BPI) the company which ceased production of LFTB at three plants welcomed the news saying it will provide consumers with options and "pave the way for BPI's lean beef to reestablish its place in the market."

Missouri advances anti-farm video bill

April 18, 2012 By Julie Harker

Gaining employment under false pretenses is a tactic commonly used by animal rights activists on farms in all states. A bill that would make it illegal for people to be hired at Missouri livestock operations for the sole purpose of trying to obtain videos of animals being mistreated has advanced in the state legislature. The Missouri House has given initial approval to an ag package that, among other things, creates the crime of 'agriculture production facility fraud.'

Ag Policy Committee Chairman Tom Loehner of Koeltztown, Missouri said on the House Floor, that footage of normal livestock production practices can be taken out of context to make a facility look bad.

"Whether it be a cow that maybe got hurt and went down - you've gotta get it up somehow," says Loehner, "You pick it up and you can't pick it up by hand - and - you hook whatever you can to it to raise it up to get it out of the way. I mean, you can take a (video) shot of that, somebody pickin' up a cow with a skid steer, and you just block that out for that second and it looks like we're just killin' this thing." Loehner says farmers need protection from that. Urban legislators argued farmers should have nothing to hide. Another favorable vote on the omnibus ag bill would send it to the Missouri Senate.

Renewed focus on the estate tax

April 17, 2012 By Ken Anderson

Farm groups are making another push for permanent and meaningful estate tax relief. The current estate tax provisions, which include a five million dollar per person exemption and a top tax rate of 35 percent, will expire at the end of this year. If Congress doesn't act, the exemption drops to one million and the top tax rate above the exclusion amount jumps to 55 percent.

Legislation that would reform the estate tax has been introduced in both houses of Congress. Iowa Senator Charles Grassley is one of the co-sponsors of the Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act.

"I signed on to this death tax repeal bill because it's the best way to provide relief," Grassley says. "Since it's likely we're not going to be able to achieve permanent repeal though, current law at five million dollars and a 35 percent tax rate should be made permanent as soon as possible."

But, Grassley says, with gridlock in Congress and the upcoming elections, action on the estate tax is unlikely until late in the year.

"Sadly, I don't think I'm going to get much of a chance to bring this issue up, because of the fact that there may not be a tax bill up in the Senate until after the election," he says.

Most farm groups support keeping the estate tax at its current levels. And they say the continued uncertainty over estate tax liability makes it difficult for family-owned farms and ranches to make sound business decisions.

Tighter margins may slow farmland gains

April 16, 2012 By Ken Anderson

Tighter commodity margins are likely to slow the pace of gains in farmland values in 2012.

So says Ken Keegan, chief risk officer for Omaha-based Farm Credit Services of America, which serves the states of Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming.

"As we look at the basic fundamentals, there's still a strong demand factor in the market, but certainly some signs that the commodity margins we experienced in 2011 potentially could be less than what we saw," says Keegan, "and that should have a bit of a cooling effect in terms of rate of increase."

But Keegan tells Brownfield he doesn't foresee any major declines in farmland values. "Our perspective is that there's still good opportunities for our producers. Their balance sheets are, for the most part, strong—and they have risk-bearing ability to withstand some cyclical adjustments," Keegan says. "So, based on that, we don't forecast a huge pop of a 'bubble' that may have built."

Keegan says continued low interest rates and a strong export market for ag products will help support farmland values—but he says, as margins tighten, the interest from outside investors may cool off a bit.

"The return to that investment is pretty moderate—in many cases, under three percent," he says. "Now, I don't know in terms of alternative investments—that also has an impact in terms of peoples' decisions—but there are certainly not robust returns for farmland investments."

Keegan says outside investors—those from outside of the community where the land was being sold—accounted for 11 percent of all farmland purchases in the Omaha bank's service area in 2011.

Lucas decries GAO report on crop insurance

April 13, 2012 By Julie Harker

The **Government Accountability Office (GAO)** recommends Congress limit crop insurance premium subsidies for farmers and that does not sit well with **House Ag Committee Chair Frank Lucas**.

In a statement released today, Lucas says he rejects the report adding that farmers have repeated over and over they want crop insurance to be the "backbone of the safety net." Lucas says the GAO proposal "would discourage participation in the crop insurance program" and "endanger its integrity."

In field hearings, Lucas says farmers across the board want the government to do no harm to the private-public system of federal crop insurance.

The GAO report says if a limit of \$40,000 were applied to individual farmers' crop insurance premium subsidies - as for other farm programs - based on USDA data - the government would have saved as much as \$1 Billion in crop insurance costs last year.

The calendar says it's time to plant

April 18, 2012 By Dave Russell

Finally...the calendar says it's time to plant, and in Hancock County Ohio they're doing just that. But John Motter who farms around Jenera says moisture is becoming an issue. "It just seems the neighbors here are saying, okay I'm going to plant it as I go, I'm not working anything ahead, I'm just taking it one field at a time and trying to do the best job I can as I put it in, because I only want to do this once," said Motter. Quite a contrast to last spring, when the question being asked was, is it ever going to quit raining.

A lot of early insect activity

April 9, 2012 By Dave Russell [Leave a Comment](#)

Compared to a normal year, insect activity is about 3 to 4 weeks ahead of schedule and Ron Hammond, Extension field crops entomologist at the Ohio State University says alfalfa weevil is a good example, with most all of Ohio already seeing activity. Hammond tells Brownfield that while the recent drop in temperatures won't help in terms of mortality, it is slowing them down.

"The rate of which the insects were growing has slowed down, but unlike other years when they might not have even been here yet, they are out there," said Hammond.

"Basically what it's doing is slowing things down just a little bit."

Another insect he's concerned about, especially with weeds getting a head start, is black cutworm.

"When we do get the corn planted over the next perhaps 2 to 3 weeks, throughout the rest of April and it starts growing, those cutworm larvae are going to be a fairly good size and can cause damage very quickly," Hammond said.

Which is why, the Extension entomologist is suggesting farmers step up their scouting activity as soon as corn and soybeans emerge.

"We just have to be a lot more aware of what could be happening and make sure we're observing that, catching it before it gets bad, rather than two weeks after the fact," Hammond said.

More reaction to FDA's antibiotics guidelines

April 12, 2012 By Ken Anderson

More reaction to the **FDA's antibiotics guidance** released yesterday.

The **National Cattlemen's Beef Association** says it's glad the FDA isn't completely banning the use of antibiotics and antimicrobials in cattle and other livestock species. But NCBA says it is still concerned with regulatory actions that aren't based on peer-reviewed science or that set the precedent to taking animal care and health decisions out of the hands of veterinarians.

The American Feed Industry Association says it supports the FDA guidance and FDA's collaborative approach to the issue.

New York congresswoman Louis Slaughter, who has led the anti-antibiotics efforts in Congress, called it a step in the right direction, but said more needs to be done. Quoted in a **Los Angeles Times blog**, Slaughter said "nonbinding recommendations are not a strong enough antidote to the problem...additionally, the FDA's pace here has been nothing short of glacial."

In the same piece, Natural Resources Defense Council attorney Avinash Kar called the FDA's action a "make-believe solution."

Farm Policy.com reported the following statement from the U.S. Department of Agriculture: "USDA knows that America's livestock producers are concerned about the health and care of their animals and are committed to the judicious use of antibiotics. We understand that producers will need to adjust their management practices in light of these changes, and that some producers operating on a smaller scale or in remote locations may have difficulty accessing a veterinarian, and that is why USDA will continue to work with FDA to ensure flexibility for farmers and ranchers caring for their animals while these changes are phased in. USDA is working with FDA to ensure the drugs producers need to protect the health of their animals are available in all locations; that FDA holds a series of public meetings throughout the country to hear from producers; and that updated outreach materials are provided to our livestock extension community to educate producers about these changes and the judicious use of antibiotics."

Under the new FDA policy, all antimicrobial medicines approved for use in animal agriculture will be used only for therapeutic purposes—disease treatment, control and prevention—and under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian through use of a Veterinary Feed Directive.

It's official, we had the warmest March on record

April 9, 2012 By Bob Meyer

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has made it official; we had the warmest March on record this year. The average temperature in the contiguous U.S. was 51.1 degrees Fahrenheit, 8.6 degrees above the average for the 20th century and a half-degree above the previous record set in 1910. Twenty-five states east of the Rocky Mountains had their warmest March on record. Preliminary data indicates there were 15,272 records broken during the month. Every state in the nation had at least one record-warm daily temperature reading including 21 instances where the nighttime temperatures were as warm as or warmer than the existing daytime record for that date.

The warm weather is also credited with spawning 223 tornados reported in the country, well above the average of 80 in March.

In addition, the January through March period was the warmest first-quarter ever in the lower 48-states with average temperature 6-degrees above the long-term average. NOAA records date back to 1895.

NPPC: FDA antibiotics guidance 'problematic'

April 11, 2012 By Ken Anderson

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) warns that a new guidance issued by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on the use of antibiotics in livestock and poultry production will have a significant impact on pork producers.

The FDA guidance, first proposed in June 2010, calls for antibiotics that are "medically important" to humans to be used in animals only when necessary to assure their health.

FDA says it will work with animal health companies to help them "voluntarily" discontinue the sale to livestock and poultry producers of antibiotics that are labeled only for nutritional efficiency.

Additionally, all antibiotics that are in classes used in human medicine will need to be used under a veterinary feed directive.

NPPC chief veterinarian Dr. Liz Wagstrom says that, while the guidance doesn't have the force of law, it may be treated as such by FDA.

"On the call that FDA had with industry stakeholders today, they made it very clear that at the end of this three-year period, when they evaluate what progress has been made with companies voluntarily giving up their labels—that if they aren't satisfied with the movement away from growth promotional labels—they will take more action," Wagstrom says.

Wagstrom says Denmark's experience with similar antibiotic restrictions provides a glimpse into what lies ahead for the U.S. pork industry.

"We're going to have more sick pigs. We may have more dead pigs. We know it's going to cost producers more to produce those pigs. It may result in higher costs to consumers," she says, "and likely not result in any demonstrable public health benefit."

The guidance is a move by FDA to address an increase in antibiotic resistance illnesses in humans, which opponents of modern agriculture blame on the use of antibiotics in livestock and poultry production.

But Wagstrom says peer-reviewed risk assessments, including at least one by the FDA, show a "negligible" risk to human health of antibiotics use in food-animal production.

FSA extends CRP deadline to April 13th

April 3, 2012 By Julie Harker

The deadline has been extended for the **Conservation Reserve Program** sign-up because of increased interest. Juan Garcia, Farm Service Agency Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs, tells Brownfield they are extending the deadline for sign-up by one week. "We have been very pleasantly surprised by the demand demonstrated thus far for the program and we want to give producers every opportunity to take advantage of the sign-up."

Rather than the original deadline of April 6th, producers now have through Friday, April 13th, 2012 to enroll in the CRP.

"We want to give producers and county office personnel ample time to discuss the program provisions and of course submit the most competitive offer possible for our producers out there."

Garcia says 6.5 million CRP acres are expiring this year.

USDA cuts soybean, wheat supply, leaves corn unchanged

April 10, 2012 By [John Perkins](#)

USDA has tightened domestic ending stocks projections for soybeans and wheat, while leaving corn unchanged.

USDA pegs wheat ending stocks for the current marketing year at 793 million bushels, down 32 million on the month and 69 million less than this time last year. That's on an increase to feed and residual use, cancelling out a small decrease in the seed use guess. The average farm price for the current marketing year is estimated at \$7.20 to \$7.40 per bushel.

Corn ending stocks were left steady with last month at 801 million bushels with no changes to the balance sheet. Before the report, analysts were expecting a sizable decrease but the supply is still considerably below last year's level. The average farm price for corn is estimated at \$6 to \$6.40 per bushel.

Soybean ending stocks were reported at 250 million bushels, down 25 million from a month ago but up 35 million from a year ago. USDA raised the crush and export estimates as expected while making modest cuts to the seed and residual use categories. The average farm price for soybeans is estimated at \$12 to \$12.50 per bushel.

Also, USDA lowered its Argentine corn production estimate a half million tons to 21.5 million and cut beans 1.5 million tons to 45 million, while leaving Brazil corn unchanged at 62 million tons and lowering soybeans 2.5 million tons to 66 million.

2011/12 U.S. wheat ending stocks are estimated at 793 million bushels, compared to 825 million in March, and the April 2011 guess of 862 million for 2010/11 wheat. Ahead of the report, the average of analysts' estimates was 796 million bushels. The seed use projection was lowered 3 million bushels to 79 million while feed and residual use was raised 35 million to 180 million, putting domestic use at 1.189 billion bushels. The 2011/12 average farm price is estimated at \$7.20 to \$7.40 per bushel, compared to last month's range of \$7.15 to \$7.45, and the 2010/11 average of \$5.70.

2011/12 U.S. corn ending stocks were unchanged on the month at 801 million bushels with no adjustment to the supply and demand tables. On average, analysts were expecting stocks to be around 717 million bushels, in a range of 626 million to 801 million bushels. Still, in comparison, 2010/11 U.S. corn ending stocks were 1.128 billion bushels. The 2011/12 average farm price is estimated at \$6 to \$6.40 per bushel, compared to \$5.90 to \$6.50 a month ago, and \$5.18 a year ago.

2011/12 U.S. soybean ending stocks came out at 250 million bushels, compared to 275 million last month and 215 million last year. USDA increased the crush and export use projections by 15 million bushels each, now at 1.630 billion and 1.290 billion bushels respectively, while decreasing seed use 1 million to 86 million and cutting residual use 4 million to 30 million bushels, putting total use at 3.036 billion bushels. The average 2011/12 farm price is estimated at \$12 to \$12.50 per bushel, compared to \$11.40 to \$12.60 in March, and the 2010/11 average of \$11.30.

2011/12 world wheat ending stocks are estimated at 206.27 million tons, compared to 209.58 million a month ago. World production is pegged at 694.32 million tons, up slightly from the 694.02 million seen last month as a modest increase for Pakistan offsets a small decrease in Middle Eastern production. Domestic feed use is seen at 137.89 million tons, compared to 131.06 million a month ago, and exports are pegged at 143.73 million tons, compared to 142.93 million last month.

How soon will we see E15 at the pump?

April 9, 2012 By Ken Anderson

With the federal EPA's recent approval of the first applications for E15 registration, the next question becomes-how quickly will fuel retailers move to offer the blend of 15 percent ethanol and 85 percent regular gasoline to consumers?

Growth Energy CEO Tom Buis says it may take some time, but eventually the free market will work.

"It's like with anything-there will be some early adopters-and the retail industry is a very competitive industry," Buis says. "So if the station across the street is offering fuel to consumers 5 to 15 cents a gallon cheaper, you know where the customers are going to go."

Before they can offer E15, retailers must submit a "misfueling mitigation plan" to demonstrate how they will prevent "inadvertent fueling" of the new blend. E15 usage is restricted to model year vehicles 2001 and newer, and some retailers are concerned about the potential for misfueling liability.

But Buis points out that the number of older vehicles-those still in use-is declining every year and now constitutes less than 30 percent of all vehicles on the road-another reason why he thinks retailers will eventually warm up to E15.

"Every time someone buys a new car-and there are about 15 million vehicles sold per year-that number goes up," he says. "So it's well above 70 percent of the vehicles than can accept the fuel-they're approved for it-and the fuel consumption (percentage) is even higher.

"So, yeah, we think they will adopt it."

Buis says he expects E15 will begin showing up at some fuel pumps in the Midwest by this summer.

USDA: China trade mission overall success

April 5, 2012 By Julie Harker

The USDA hosted its largest trade trip to date - to China in late March - and has deemed it an overall success, although complete access has not been achieved. Michael Scuse, Acting Under Secretary of the Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service, led the mission along with state ag directors of Iowa, South Dakota and several other states - and representatives of nearly 40 companies that supply a variety of US ag products.

"From seafood, wine, equipment, animal feed, forestry products, fruits and vegetables, food ingredients - so, it ran the whole gamut of agricultural products."

Scuse says the companies were pleased with the deals they were able to reach with the Chinese.

"They were all extremely happy with the business-to-business meetings that we provided in both the city of Chengdu and Shanghai - We understand that the sales so far, and they're going to continue to add up, but, right now we know that the sales are in the millions of dollars."

China has a fast growing middle class and overall economy so the demand is only expected to grow. Scuse says China already buys large amounts of U.S. soybeans and cotton along with corn and pork BUT access continues to be denied on some key products.

"A couple of examples would be beef, apples, pears, forestry products from Virginia and North Carolina - that would be the down side where we're having to continue to negotiate to get these products in.

Sixty-percent of exported U.S. soybeans go to China and China gets one-third of the U.S. cotton crop.

USDA sees largest U.S. corn acreage since 1937

March 30, 2012 By [John Perkins](#)

The Ag Department is projecting big year to year increases in corn and wheat planting along with a slight reduction for soybeans and a big drop for cotton.

USDA expects U.S. farmers to plant corn on 95.864 million acres this year, up 4% from 2011 and above the high end of pre-report expectations. If realized, this would be the most corn planted since 1937's 97.2 million acres, with USDA projecting record acreage in Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Soybeans are pegged at 73.902 million acres, down 1% on the year and below the range of analysts' estimates. USDA's expecting bean acreage to be down or unchanged in most of the Cornbelt and Great Plains, with the exceptions of Illinois, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Total planted area for wheat is seen at 55.908 million acres, 3% above a year ago but below pre-report estimates, with winter wheat declining 1% since USDA's last guess and spring wheat 3% below last year. USDA anticipates increased acreage in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas against record low winter wheat planted area in Nebraska and Ohio and a new record low for spring wheat in South Dakota. By type, winter wheat is pegged at 41.709 million acres, up 3% from last year, spring wheat is placed at 11.976 million acres, down 3%, and durum is seen at 2.223 million acres, a 62% jump from 2011.

Cotton acreage is estimated at 13.155 million, an 11% year to year decrease and below analysts' expectations. Upland cotton is pegged at 12.885 million acres, also down 11% from a year ago. Selected crops in Brownfield states:

Illinois: Corn: 12.5 million acres, down 1% from 2011; Soybeans: 9 million acres, up 1% from 2011; Winter wheat: 660,000 acres, down 17% from 2011; Sorghum: 25,000 acres, up 14% from 2011; Oats: 30,000 acres, unchanged from 2011; All hay (harvested): 540,000 acres, unchanged from 2011.

Iowa: Corn: 14.6 million acres, up 4% from 2011; Soybeans: 8.8 million acres, down 6% from 2011; Winter wheat: 25,000 acres, up 14% from 2011; Oats: 130,000 acres, up 8% from 2011; All hay (harvested): 1.15 million acres, up 1% from 2011.

Nebraska: Corn: 10.3 million acres, up 5% from 2011; Soybeans: 4.7 million acres, down 4% from 2011; Winter wheat: 1.35 million acres, down 11% from 2011; Sorghum: 165,000 acres, up 10% from 2011; Oats: 75,000 acres, up 25% from 2011; All hay (harvested): 2.4 million acres, down 3% from 2011.

Wisconsin: Corn: 4.2 million acres, up 1% from 2011; Soybeans: 1.68 million acres, up 4% from 2011; Winter wheat: 265,000 acres, down 23% from 2011; Oats: 220,000 acres, up 5% from 2011; 30,000 acres, down 9% from 2011; All hay (harvested): 1.65 million acres, up 3% from 2011.

LFTB issue pushes AFA Foods into Chapter 11

April 2, 2012 By Bob Meyer

The lean finely textured beef issue has pushed ground beef processor AFA Foods into bankruptcy. Based in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, AFA interim Chief Executive Officer Ron Allen says the ongoing dispute has caused a dramatic reduction in demand for ground beef products. The company filed for Chapter 11 protection in Delaware listing \$219 million in assets and \$197 million in debt.

AFA is owned by Yucaipa Companies, a Los Angeles-based private equity firm. Bloomberg reports the company is in discussions with potential buyers and has secured a \$56 million credit line to carry it through the bankruptcy process. The company has around 850 full-time employees at locations in Pennsylvania, California, Texas, Georgia and New York with annual revenue of \$958 million

Dude, it's beef

March 30, 2012 By Meghan Grebner

A coalition of governors were in South Sioux City, Nebraska Thursday to voice their support for the US beef industry and Beef Products, Inc.

Iowa Governor Terry Branstad said the use of quote, "inaccurate, inappropriate, and charged words designed to scare people" (end quote) about the use of Lean Finely-Textured Beef has to stop. "I believe the national media has permeated this discussion with a poisonous tone that is detrimental to the beef industry and the jobs that support it," he says. "I do not believe workers in plants in Iowa, Nebraska, and Texas should wonder why they will not have a job because of misleading headlines." Branstad added, "It's time to end this smear campaign."

Texas Governor Rick Perry says the economics of the loss of LFTB is easy to calculate. "There are retailers who are discarding of 10-12 pounds of usable protein per head of cattle," he says. "Now, at the same time, we're seeing our beef cattle numbers at record low levels. What I've described is a formula for a very significant price hike in beef." For what Perry says is "no valid reason."

Several other state and government officials made the trip to tour the BPI beef plant.

Pace of biodiesel production slows

March 22, 2012 By Ken Anderson

The **National Biodiesel Board** (NBB) says the pace of biodiesel production in the first two months of 2012 slowed considerably from the last half of 2011.

Total biodiesel production in January and February was 135 million gallons. That is an increase over the same period last year, but is down from the record production late last year when the industry exceeded 100 million gallons per month for five consecutive months. Production reached a peak of 160 million gallons in December. NBB officials say the drop-off reflects lost momentum this year after Congress allowed the biodiesel tax incentive to expire. And they say the Obama Administration's delay in finalizing next year's biodiesel volume requirements under the Renewable Fuels Standard has also created uncertainty in the industry.

The Senate recently rejected another attempt to extend the biodiesel tax credit and other renewable energy tax incentives. And Iowa Senator Charles Grassley says the tax credit extenders bill may not come up again until after the November election.

"I'd be surprised if we had any tax bills between now and the election—but there will have to be tax bills after the election," Grassley says "But we can't stop there—so when we get attempts, like we have in the past, we'll attempt."

Despite the slow start, biodiesel industry officials believe the industry is still on pace to meet the one-billion gallon RFS requirement for this year.

Meanwhile, the **Iowa Renewable Fuels Association** (IRFA) has sent a letter to President Obama, urging him to finalize the rule increasing the 2013 biodiesel volume requirement under the RFS to 1.28 billion gallons.

IRFA points to a recent study from Cardo ENTRIX showing an increase in biodiesel production from one-billion gallons to 1.28 billion gallons would support more than 10-thousand new jobs.

Iowa has 13 biodiesel plants.

UEP head defends egg bill

March 28, 2012 By Ken Anderson

The president and CEO of United Egg Producers (UEP), Gene Gregory, has taken a lot of heat in recent months—mostly from other segments of animal agriculture—for UEP's decision to compromise with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) on the issue of cage size for egg-laying hens.

But Gregory continues to defend the compromise—and the so-called “egg bill” now pending in Congress—saying that federal standards are necessary to ensure the future survivability of the U.S. egg industry.

Many livestock organizations are still not convinced that HSUS can be trusted—but Gregory says, to this point, it's been a good partnership.

“Our dealings with them through this process have been surprising to me. It's been far better than we dreamed it would be—and they have been excellent partners,” Gregory says. “So hopefully—hopefully—that will carry on.”

Can the egg bill make it through Congress? Gregory acknowledges that opposition to the egg bill by the beef and pork industries is going to make it more difficult.

“Were it not for their lobbying efforts against us, we would have lots more co-sponsors. So if we don't pass the legislation, it will be primarily because of that livestock—or other agricultural opposition—I think.”

Gregory says they had originally hoped to see a vote on the egg bill by this summer, but admits that is not likely to happen in this election year.

Gregory's comments came in an interview with Brownfield at the National Institute for Animal Agriculture conference in Denver.

Could beef prices be on the rise?

March 28, 2012 By Meghan Grebner

Beef Products, Inc. announcement that it is halting production of lean finely-textured beef at three of its four plants yesterday could place increased pressure on an already tight beef supply.

David Anderson, livestock economist with Texas AgriLife Extension says the beef that was taken from those trimmings will no longer be available in the food supply. “What does that mean?” he says. “It means higher prices. It means higher prices for consumers because we are effectively cutting the supply of meat.” The end result, he says, “Is higher prices.”

He says in the long-term there is a supply response from higher prices. “Really what we might think about then is that there is a biological time to produce more cows,” he says. “But with higher prices - ranchers will eventually respond and produce more cows.”

Anderson tells Brownfield eventually it could mean an increase in beef production - but that doesn't make up for the high prices consumers will face in the meantime.

American Meat Institute President J. Patrick Boyle says it would require as many as 1.5 Million more head of cattle to make up the difference from the loss of lean finely textured beef.

EQIP funds to address water quality issues in Ohio

March 29, 2012 By Dave Russell

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has provided an additional \$1 million through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to address water quality issues in the Grand Lake St. Marys watershed. In making the announcement on Wednesday, March 28, State Conservationist Terry Cosby said there is already a sizeable waiting list of producers with EQIP applications in the watershed.

"The best applications float to the top, the people that do the most environmental benefit for the money they are getting are the ones we are funding," said Cosby. "We are able to fund as many as we can, the rest of them will have to wait."

Cosby tells Brownfield that after talking with NRCS staff in the Grand Lake St. Marys watershed it's estimated an additional \$7 million would be needed to meet current funding requests.

"We still have a lot of requests, we still have a lot of work to do," Cosby said.

NOTE: Since 2008 NRCS has provided \$7 million in EQIP financial assistance to producers in the Grand Lake St. Marys watershed.

Two weeks ago, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, along with Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown, Michigan Senator and Chairwoman of the Senate Ag Committee, Debbie Stabenow, and Representatives Nancy Kaptur of Ohio and John Dingell of Michigan announced that an additional \$2 million through EQIP was being made available to address water quality issues in the Western Lake Erie Basin.

"Since we have 65 to 70 percent of the land base, we'll probably get around 65 to 70 percent of those funds, so somewhere around \$1.2 - \$1.3 million will be coming to Ohio," said State Conservationist Terry Cosby.

Sign-up for the EQIP funds in the Western Lake Erie Basin will end on April 27.

"We are aggressively knocking on doors, working with landowners, we're doing whatever we can to get those folks in the office," Cosby said. "I think we're going to have a very good sign-up and will be able to use those dollars"

Contract	Month	Open	High	Low	Last	Change
<u>Wheat</u>	May 12	625-2	627-6	614-2	615-6s	-9-0
<u>Corn</u>	May 12	621-0	628-4	609-4	612-4s	-8-4
<u>Soybeans</u>	May 12	1415-2	1454-0	1413-0	1446-6s	+31-0
<u>Soybean Meal</u>	May 12	392.1	406.0	391.7	406.0s	+14.1
<u>Oats</u>	May 12	325-0	327-0	322-0	322-2s	-0-4
<u>Canola</u>	May 12	615.50	623.60	615.50	622.20s	+7.40
<u>Live Cattle</u>	Jun 12	116.075	116.675	115.125	115.450s	-0.400
<u>Feeder Cattle</u>	May 12	152.400	152.750	151.825	151.900s	-0.175
<u>Lean Hogs</u>	May 12	88.350	88.375	86.950	87.500s	-0.975
<u>Class III Milk</u>	May 12	15.08	15.24	14.89	15.15s	+0.11

USDA sees largest U.S. corn acreage since 1937

March 30, 2012 By John Perkins

The Ag Department is projecting big year to year increases in corn and wheat planting along with a slight reduction for soybeans and a big drop for cotton.

USDA expects U.S. farmers to plant corn on 95.864 million acres this year, up 4% from 2011 and above the high end of pre-report expectations. If realized, this would be the most corn planted since 1937's 97.2 million acres, with USDA projecting record acreage in Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Soybeans are pegged at 73.902 million acres, down 1% on the year and below the range of analysts' estimates. USDA's expecting bean acreage to be down or unchanged in most of the Cornbelt and Great Plains, with the exceptions of Illinois, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Total planted area for wheat is seen at 55.908 million acres, 3% above a year ago but below pre-report estimates, with winter wheat declining 1% since USDA's last guess and spring wheat 3% below last year. USDA anticipates increased acreage in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas against record low winter wheat planted area in Nebraska and Ohio and a new record low for spring wheat in South Dakota. By type, winter wheat is pegged at 41.709 million acres, up 3% from last year, spring wheat is placed at 11.976 million acres, down 3%, and durum is seen at 2.223 million acres, up 62% from 2011.

Cotton acreage is estimated at 13.155 million, an 11% year to year decrease and below analysts' expectations. Upland cotton is pegged at 12.885 million acres, also down 11% from a year ago, and American pima is seen at 270,000 acres, 12% below 2011.

Selected crops in Brownfield states:

Illinois: Corn: 12.5 million acres, down 1% from 2011; Soybeans: 9 million acres, up 1% from 2011; Winter wheat: 660,000 acres, down 17% from 2011; Sorghum: 25,000 acres, up 14% from 2011; Oats: 30,000 acres, unchanged from 2011; All hay (harvested): 540,000 acres, unchanged from 2011.

Iowa: Corn: 14.6 million acres, up 4% from 2011; Soybeans: 8.8 million acres, down 6% from 2011; Winter wheat: 25,000 acres, up 14% from 2011; Oats: 130,000 acres, up 8% from 2011; All hay (harvested): 1.15 million acres, up 1% from 2011.

Nebraska: Corn: 10.3 million acres, up 5% from 2011; Soybeans: 4.7 million acres, down 4% from 2011; Winter wheat: 1.35 million acres, down 11% from 2011; Sorghum: 165,000 acres, up 10% from 2011; Oats: 75,000 acres, up 25% from 2011; All hay (harvested): 2.4 million acres, down 3% from 2011.

Wisconsin: Corn: 4.2 million acres, up 1% from 2011; Soybeans: 1.68 million acres, up 4% from 2011; Winter wheat: 265,000 acres, down 23% from 2011; Oats: 220,000 acres, up 5% from 2011; 30,000 acres, down 9% from 2011; All hay (harvested): 1.65 million acres, up 3% from 2011.

Closing Grains and Livestock Futures: April 20, 2012

April 20, 2012 By Bob Meyer

May corn closed at \$6.12 ½ down 8.5 cents
May soybeans closed at \$14.46 ¾ up 31 cents
May soybean meal closed at \$406.00 per ton up \$14.10
May soybean oil closed at 55.83 up 66 cents per cwt
May wheat closed at \$6.15 ¾ down 9 cents
Apr. live cattle closed at \$120.55, down 15 cents
May lean hogs closed at \$87.50, down 95 ½ cents
May crude oil closed at \$103.61, up \$1.34
May Class III milk closed at \$15.15, up 11 cents
Dow Jones Industrial Average: 13,029 up 65 points.

Point Forecast: Ames IA
42.02°N 93.62°W

Forecast at a Glance

Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night
								
Mostly Clear Lo 36 °F	Chance Showers Hi 57 °F	Mostly Cloudy Lo 42 °F	Partly Sunny Hi 62 °F	Partly Cloudy Lo 38 °F	Mostly Sunny Hi 64 °F	Partly Cloudy Lo 45 °F	Mostly Sunny Hi 73 °F	Partly Cloudy Lo 55 °F

Detailed 7-day Forecast **Current Conditions** [\[Move Down\]](#)

Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 36. North wind between 8 and 11 mph becoming calm.

Saturday: A 40 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 57. South southwest wind between 5 and 13 mph, with gusts as high as 23 mph. New rainfall amounts of less than a tenth of an inch possible.

Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 42. Southwest wind at 7 mph becoming north northwest. Winds could gust as high as 18 mph.

Sunday: Partly sunny, with a high near 62. North northwest wind between 9 and 14 mph.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 38. North northwest wind between 6 and 13 mph, with gusts as high as 18 mph.

Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 64.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 45.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 73.

Tuesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 55.

Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 74.

Wednesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 51.

Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 72.

Thursday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 48.

Friday: A 30 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly sunny, with a high near 61.

A Few Clouds

**55 °F
(13 °C)**

Humidity:	44 %
Wind Speed:	N 17 G 22 MPH
Barometer:	30.05" (1017.6 mb)
Dewpoint:	33 °F (1 °C)
Wind Chill:	51 °F (11 °C)
Visibility:	10.00 mi.

[More Local Wx:](#) [3 Day History:](#)