

### In This Issue

FROM STEVE'S DESK

REMINDERS

REMINDERS

UPCOMING EVENTS

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January 27, 2010

### FROM STEVE'S DESK *Taylor*

*by Steve*



#### Animal Agriculture in 2040?

I was at a meeting last week and one of the presentations I heard was entitled "The Future of Animal Ownership." The presenter spoke about the ambitions of the "animal rights" groups. According to this gentleman, the long-term goal of the animal rights group is no animals used for food or fiber and no animal ownership. In the future, animals will not be "owned" but have rights similar to people and people will be held responsible for providing care.

Not possible, you say? In our courts today, pets are assigned rights and are already being considered as if they were children. In divorce cases, judges are deciding custody of a pet in terms of what's best for the pet, just like the court would for a child. Dogs and cats today and cattle and hogs tomorrow, because an animal is an animal, right? In terms of effecting public policy, it could be argued that the animal rights movement today is where the environmental movement was 30 years ago. So, where will that put animal agriculture in 30 years? What's in store for 2040?

Make no mistake, the intention of this movement is to end animal agriculture production. In several states, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has gone on the attack against conventional animal agricultural production. Some affiliated with HSUS have clearly stated that the "ultimate goal is the abolition of all animal agriculture."

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The first step towards that here in Missouri is an initiative petition drive by a group called "Missourians for the Protection of Dogs." The group is primarily a front for HSUS. According to the contribution disclosure forms filed with the Missouri Ethics Commission, the HSUS has given this group over \$450,000 since it was established last month.

HSUS and its agenda must be stopped. HSUS operates through misconception and erroneous tax returns filed with the IRS. In order to get its millions of dollars of contributions, HSUS promotes the misconception that it will help local animal shelters. The fact is, however, that the HSUS is not affiliated in any way with local humane societies. In 2007, it provided only \$0.5M of its \$131.3M in revenues to local organizations for the care of dogs and cats. That's less than 1/2 of one percent.

The HSUS is also filing erroneous tax returns and operating outside its 501(c)3 tax exempted status. In 2007, HSUS stated on its tax returns that it expended only about 3% of its revenue on lobbying and also reported to the IRS that it "did not attempt to influence national, state or local regulation, including any attempt to influence public opinion on a legislative matter or referendum, through the use of volunteers or paid staff." In 2008, HSUS correctly reported to the IRS that it is attempting to influence regulations and public opinion on legislative matters. However, HSUS still does not report to the IRS all its expenditures for lobbying activity, with still only about 3% of its revenue being reported as expedited for lobbying efforts. Given the huge amount of lobbying activity that HSUS brags to its supporters that it is involved in, that 3% figure makes no sense.

The IRS must investigate the HSUS. The IRS must determine that the HSUS is operating outside its tax exempted status and that HSUS should cease its current lobbying activities or lose its tax exempt status.

With its ballot petition here in Missouri, the HSUS is actually harming animal welfare. Missouri is currently making huge progress in promoting animal welfare through our Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA). In the one

year that Dr. Jon Hagler has been Director of MDA, he has focused MDA like a laser beam on improving animal care through MDA's Operation Bark. He, along with Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster, has done a great job enforcing Missouri's animal welfare laws. The Attorney General's Office and Department of Agriculture have seized hundreds of dogs from unlicensed puppy breeders in Missouri.

The HSUS ballot petition will take the focus away from current Missouri law and the need to provide MDA the resources it needs to insure animal welfare in Missouri.

In the near future, you will hear more about what all of Missouri agriculture is intending to do to meet these challenges. Here at MO-AG, we are highly involved in discussions regarding the current ballot petition and the long-term HSUS threat. I encourage all of you to spread the word that this ballot petition is not good for animal welfare, not good for animal agriculture, and it should NOT be signed. MO-AG is also a sponsor of "Farmers Feed U.S." ([www.farmersfeedus.org/mo](http://www.farmersfeedus.org/mo)) and a member of the national organization, Animal Agriculture Alliance. We continue to advocate at the state and federal levels.

We, in agriculture, are all in this together. More corn is used for feed than for ethanol, exports, or any other use. Our current grain and animal production system is the most efficient in the world and provides people with more food, feed, fiber, and fuel than any other agricultural system in the world. I know you realize the threat we face. The job ahead is to educate those who do not know agriculture, as well as fight against those who tear down agriculture and promote misconception for their own agenda's sake.

Stay tuned!

*Steve*

## REMINDERS

### **2010 MO-AG Sponsorship**

At this time, we are accepting sponsorships for the 2010 MO-AG programs. Please [click here](#)

for more information. Thanks again for everyone who was a 2009 MO-AG Sponsor.

## **2010 Pesticide Label Books Available**

The Asmark Institute now has the 2010 Pesticide Label Books available for purchase for \$18.40 each (plus tax and freight). Orders of 50 or more, for \$15.40 each order. To order, [click here](#).

## **NEWS YOU CAN USE**

### **Ag Groups Defend Atrazine**

A broad coalition of agriculture groups, ranging from sorghum growers in Nebraska to grape growers in California, have written EPA administrator Lisa Jackson in defense of the herbicide atrazine. In their letter, the groups point out that atrazine is a critical tool in the production of many crops, including corn, sorghum, sugar cane and citrus. And they stress that it has been used safely for 50 years in over 60 countries.

The EPA will begin another evaluation of atrazine as part of a series of scientific advisory panels, which will begin on February 2nd. The coalition of ag groups says it will be actively involved in the EPA re-evaluation of atrazine and will insist that any decisions be based on what they call "transparent, peer-reviewed science." They say atrazine has become the target of a coordinated attack by environmental groups seeking to eliminate its use.

Among the groups signing the letter are the National Corn Growers Association and National Sorghum Producers. Other groups which signed the letter include:

- Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Assn
- Illinois Farm Bureau
- Illinois Corn Growers Association
- Iowa Corn Growers Association
- Iowa Farm Bureau
- Indiana Plant Food and Ag Chemicals Assn

- Missouri Agribusiness Association
- Missouri Corn Growers Association
- Nebraska Corn Growers Association
- Nebraska Grain Sorghum Producers
- Nebraska Grain Sorghum Board
- South Dakota Corn Growers Association

[Source: *Brownfield*]

## **Missouri Agriculture Gets Energized**

While many factors facing farmers, such as the weather and volatile markets, are beyond your control, there is one thing you can manage better - energy usage. To aid Missouri's farmers and ranchers in improving energy efficiency and profit margins, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources is offering up to \$3 million statewide in cost-share grants to agricultural operations for energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy equipment.

Gov. Jay Nixon, who made this announcement at the 2010 Governor's Conference on Agriculture in St. Louis, says the grant program is possible thanks to the U.S. Department of Energy and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Eligible projects or systems include solar-powered water systems, tanks and fences; GPS guidance systems; irrigation improvements, dairy facility improvements, swine and poultry facility improvements; conservation tillage equipment; and biomass furnaces. The grants will fund up to 75% of the equipment and hardware cost of an energy-saving project, with a limit of \$5,000 per applicant. Labor costs are not covered. The department is also looking for new and innovative prospects, such as bioenergy projects using agricultural or food waste to capture or generate methane for heat or power.

**FYI** - Anyone interested in receiving a cost-share grant should complete an application on the Missouri DNR Web page. Questions? Contact the DNR Energy Center at 573-751-2254, visit your local Soil and Water Conservation District office, or visit the DNR Energy Center's Web site by [clicking here](#).  
[Source: *Missouri Ruralist*]

## **Move Underway in House to Reject Tax Change for Missouri Farmland**

A move is underway in the House to reject a tax increase on farmland proposed by the State Tax Commission, even as sponsors acknowledge that in doing so they reject a tax cut for some farmers. If anything is to be done, it must be done fast.

House Agri-Business Committee Chairman Brian Munzlinger (R-Williamstown) put it simply. "I just feel this is not the time to be raising taxes," Munzlinger testified in front of his committee on HCR 7, a resolution that would reject the State Tax Commission recommendation. The Commission recommends a 30% tax increase on the top four categories of farmland, mostly the state's best cropland, but not necessarily confined to row crops. Some is in pasture. The Commission recommends a 24% tax decrease on three categories of the least valuable Missouri farmland. The Commission made its recommendation based on a Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) study that indicated the productive value of cropland had risen with the rise of the ethanol industry. A depressed livestock industry led the Commission to recommend the tax cut for pasture land. Farmland is assessed based on its productive value.

Two other Representatives appeared before the Committee on the issue, both proposing rejection of the State Tax Commission recommendation. Rep. Casey Guernsey (R-Bethany) sponsors HCR 3. Rep. Mike Lair (R-Chillicothe) sponsors HCR 17.

During testimony before the Committee, Munzlinger contended that even though ethanol might have increased the productive value of cropland, it hasn't pushed it up enough to absorb a big tax hike. "With the current economic situation that we are facing in general, but also in the agricultural economy where farmers carry a very heavy debt load, we feel this is just no time at all to be putting especially a 30% tax increase on a lot of our land we have in this state," said Munzlinger.

If lawmakers are to stop the tax increase, as

well as the tax cut, they must act quickly. State law gives the legislature 60 days from the beginning of the session to reject the Tax Commission's proposal. [Source: *Missourinef*]

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FEBRUARY, 2010

- 10-11 Missouri Pork Expo; Columbia, MO  
12-14 Missouri Farm Bureau Young Farmer Conference;  
Osage Beach, MO  
19-21 Western Farm Show; Kansas City, MO  
22-23 Missouri Farm Bureau Commodity Conference and Legislative Briefing; Jefferson City, MO  
24 MU Agricultural and Life Sciences Career Fair 2010;  
Reynolds Alumni Center; Columbia, MO

### JULY, 2010

- 21-23 **MO-AG Summer Meeting; Country Club Hotel;**  
**Lake Ozark, MO**

Note: Items in **red** are new postings since the last Wrap-Up issue.

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## Letters to the Editor

*Do you have a response to the Missouri Agribusiness Wrap Up? Let us know! The Missouri Agribusiness Wrap Up is a bi-weekly publication of the Missouri Agribusiness Association (MO-AG). MO-AG is a member-owned association based in Jefferson City, Mo. which protects members' interests in state legislation and provides educational opportunities.*

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