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June 29, 2010

### FROM STEVE'S DESK Taylor

by Steve



I contend there are some overused words in our vocabulary today. Some years ago, it seemed that at every meeting I attended, a speaker used the word "segue," meaning to transition from one thought to another. I really got tired of that word, even though I joined in and used it

myself. Another word I also hear a lot is "networking." It is a well-worn word but one that serves a purpose.

I'm writing this on a Friday afternoon and, in a couple hours, I will be catching a flight to San Antonio, Texas to attend the American Seed Trade Association's (ASTA) Annual Convention. I go to "network" with ASTA members, staff, and my other state counterparts. It can be hard to put a value on networking. At other times, however, it's not so hard and there are tangible results. For example, ASTA's "First the Seed" information was invaluable to me when I testified at the state Capitol this year on legislation concerning seed laws. It's only through networking that you can become aware and understand the value of such things.

Last month, I attended the 2010 BIO International Conference in Chicago. I appreciate the BIO Food and Agriculture Committee helping to sponsor my attendance. It was a great conference. We discussed the Roundup Ready alfalfa case mentioned below and the potential precedence-

**Shawnteetown Feed & Seed**  
Jackson

**Wayne Orey**  
Riggins R-Co, LLC  
Marshall

**Jason Paris**  
MFA Inc.  
Columbia

**Duane Simpson**  
Monsanto  
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setting nature for other crops. While the recent Supreme Court decision was certainly a battle won, the war continues with groups like the Center for Food Safety using the courts and the National Environmental Policy Act to promote their agendas. At the national, state, and local levels, we in agriculture need to be engaged and network to leverage our various strengths.

At our MO-AG Summer Meeting next month, we have the President and CEO of the Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA), Daren Coppock, joining us for some golf and our evening banquet. I hope you are already registered. If not, it's not too late to sign up for some fun and "networking" with the head of one of our premier national affiliates.

Sorry to cut this short, but, I have to catch a flight. Hope to see you at the Lake.

*Steve*

### **REMINDERS**

#### **Reserve Your Room for the MO-AG Summer Meeting Before the July 2 Deadline**

The room block at the Country Club Hotel for the MO-AG Summer Meeting on July 21-23 is filling up fast and the deadline is nearing. To reserve a hotel room, contact the Country Club Hotel at (800) 964-6698. The room rate of \$102/night will be held until Friday, July 2. After the 2nd of July, the block of rooms will no longer be held and you may or may not be able to get a room at the Country Club Hotel, depending on vacancy. To register for meals and activities, check out the registration form for the Summer Meeting by [clicking here](#) or call the MO-AG office at 573-636-6130.

### **NEWS YOU CAN USE**

#### **Supreme Court Lifts Monsanto Injunction**

The Supreme Court on Monday struck down a 2007 injunction that barred farmers from planting

Monsanto Co.'s Roundup Ready alfalfa seed until the federal government completed a study of whether the seed's use would affect conventional and organic alfalfa crops. The ruling could allow the Department of Agriculture to allow the interim planting of Roundup Ready alfalfa with some restrictions, while the agency completes an environmental study.

The USDA had previously cleared the use of the genetically engineered alfalfa, but a trial judge issued the injunction after deciding the government didn't properly study potential environmental impacts. The case was the high court's first on genetically engineered crops. Critics said the use of the Roundup Ready alfalfa could contaminate alfalfa that isn't genetically engineered. Monsanto said contamination was highly unlikely. The court, in a 7-1 opinion by Justice Samuel Alito, said the trial judge abused his discretion by issuing the injunction, which Justice Alito said was too broad and unnecessary. "A permanent injunction is not now needed to guard against any present or imminent risk of likely irreparable harm," Justice Alito wrote.

Justice Alito said it was possible the USDA could allow the interim planting of Roundup Ready alfalfa in isolated ways that would pose no threat to conventional crops. He also said that if the USDA allowed interim planting while it completed an environmental study on the Monsanto seed, the plaintiffs could go back to court and challenge the agency's interim actions.

The biggest impact of the court's ruling could be felt in other Roundup Ready crops, particularly sugar beets, from which much of the nation's sugar is derived. A federal judge ruled in September that the USDA didn't conduct an appropriate environmental impact study on Roundup Ready sugar beets. The judge hasn't decided on how to remedy the violation and a court hearing is scheduled for July. Monday's ruling may make it less likely that the judge will issue a broad injunction that bars the planting of Roundup Ready sugar beets while a full environmental study is conducted.

No matter the outcome of the Supreme Court case, it was likely that farmers would be cleared again by the USDA to plant Roundup Ready

alfalfa. After losing in the lower court, the agency analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the herbicide-tolerant seed and issued a draft environmental impact statement last November, again recommending that farmers be allowed to plant it. A final agency action on the seed is expected by next spring, which could prompt a new round of litigation.

David F. Snively, Monsanto's senior vice president and general counsel, said in a prepared statement that Monday's ruling "is important for every American farmer, not just alfalfa growers. All growers can rely on the expertise of USDA, and trust that future challenges to biotech approvals must now be based on scientific facts, not speculation," Mr. Snively said.

The Center for Food Safety, which filed the lawsuit challenging the USDA's approval of Roundup Ready alfalfa, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. [*Source: Wall Street Journal*]

### **Attempt to Reinstate Biodiesel Credit Fails Again**

For the third time this month, the U.S. Senate has failed to clear the 60 vote hurdle necessary to move forward on legislation reinstating the biodiesel tax incentive. On Thursday, an amendment to the American Job and Closing Loopholes Act of 2010, which included a retroactive reinstatement of the biodiesel tax incentive through December 31st, 2010, failed by a 57-41 margin. And according to Iowa Renewable Fuels Association biofuels manager Grant Menke, this latest defeat is particularly damaging, as the Senate has no current timeline to take up the tax extenders legislation again. Menke says if the Senate is serious about creating green jobs and reducing the country's dependence on crude oil, "it can start by reinstating the biodiesel tax incentive immediately." He says the lack of action "has served no purpose other than assuring that the U.S. biodiesel industry remains stagnant at best and in a freefall at worst." [*Source: Brownfield*]

### **Barge Traffic Slowdown on the**

## Mississippi

Barge traffic on the Mississippi River at a specific point in Northeast Missouri and West Central Illinois has been temporarily stopped because of high water deemed too dangerous for operation. WGEM in Quincy, Illinois says water on Wednesday nearly topped Lock and Dam 20 at Canton, Missouri, halting barge traffic there until the water recedes. Several barges upstream have had to "tie off" on the swollen river until they can get through. The report says the high river levels have also shut down railroad traffic in Canton.

The culmination of heavy rains in Iowa and north Missouri have caused both the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers to swell, leading to several broken levees along the Missouri, flooded and flood-threatened croplands and flood warnings in several river towns. [*Source: Brownfield*]

## Curbing Speculation Could Destabilize Commodity Prices

Price spikes for gasoline, grain and other commodities could be magnified if lawmakers curb speculative trading in futures markets, according to a new study released last Thursday in conjunction with the weekend's G20 summit. Congress is considering proposals to restrict a growing surge of speculation in commodity futures that some blame for a 2008 spike that netted record corn, rice and wheat prices and pushed gasoline over \$4 a gallon.

But new research suggests that the billions of dollars invested by speculators may have helped stabilize prices rather than drive them up, said Scott Irwin, a University of Illinois economist who co-wrote the study. "Restricting investments by speculators could do exactly what these proposals are trying to avoid," he said. Irwin and Southern Illinois University economist Dwight Sanders researched the 2007-08 price bubble in commodity markets in a study commissioned by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The OECD, an international alliance of 31 nations that promotes the market economy, released the

study before world leaders met at the G20 Summit in Toronto to address global economic problems. The study found no convincing evidence that speculators aggravated price increases that were already on the rise as drought cut into grain supplies and growing worldwide demand boosted oil demand, said Irwin, a professor of agricultural and consumer economics. Instead, he says the findings indicate that the influx of cash from index traders provided a deep new pool of liquidity that reduced volatility and held price increases in check. "It's like dropping a stone in a puddle -- the bigger and deeper the puddle, the smaller the waves," said Irwin, who testified in 2008 before a House committee considering limits on speculation in commodity futures markets.

He says speculators have been wrongly targeted because the 2008 price spike occurred amid a dramatic surge of index trading that marked a major structural change in commodities futures markets. But research shows the shift was a coincidence, not a contributor, he said. "In times of extreme market turmoil, there has been a historical tendency to look for a scapegoat, and that often that ends up being the speculator," Irwin said. "The evidence that we have in this episode is not inconsistent with that historical pattern." He says the findings suggest that Congress should rethink new limits on speculative trading in futures markets, which are included in a sweeping financial reform package under debate this summer. "Our policymakers and regulators should look at the entire body of evidence and make policy decisions based on evidence, not conjecture," Irwin said. "'Do no harm' is the first principle they should adhere to. There needs to be a high standard of evidence before they intervene with any kind of restrictions." [Source: *Ag Professional*]

### **FDA Urges Limited Use of Livestock Antibiotics**

In what's sure to create more negative publicity for the meat industry, the Food and Drug Administration is calling the use of antibiotics in livestock "a serious public health threat" and is urging meat producers to limit the amount of antibiotics they give to animals.

The FDA's potentially damaging comments were

contained in draft guidelines printed in the Federal Register on Monday. The agency says the misuse and overuse of antibiotics has led to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. The agency recommends that producers use the drugs "judiciously," limiting their use unless they are medically necessary and only with the oversight of a veterinarian. The FDA acknowledged that the use of antibiotics has had "tremendous benefits" to animal health. The agency says its greatest concern is producers using antibiotics on healthy animals to speed growth and reduce feed costs. The agency said it will issue more specific guidelines in the near future. [Source: *Brownfield*]

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### JULY, 2010

6 Missouri Pork Association's Pork Classic  
Golf

Tournament; Columbia, MO

7 Missouri Soybean Association's Annual  
Golf Tournament;

Shirkey Golf Course; Richmond, MO

**7 MCGA Golf Tournament; Warrenton  
Golf Club;**

Warrenton, MO

**8 MCGA Golf Tournament; Shirkey Golf  
Club;**

Richmond, MO

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

Lake Ozark, MO

27-30 MU Crop Injury and Diagnostic Clinic;  
MU Bradford Farm;

Columbia, MO

**29 MCGA Golf Tournament; Chillicothe  
Green Hills Golf**

Course; Chillicothe, MO

### AUGUST, 2010

12-22 Missouri State Fair; Sedalia, MO

## **SEPTEMBER, 2010**

**1 Annual Delta Center Field Day;  
Portageville, MO**

## **OCTOBER, 2010**

5 MU CAFNR Career Fair; Columbia, MO  
6-8 Missouri Seedmen's Association Annual  
Meeting;  
Resort at Port Arrowhead, Lake Ozark,  
MO

## **NOVEMBER, 2010**

**18 ALOT Annual Meeting Seminar, Dinner  
and Auction;  
Columbia, MO**

## **JANUARY, 2011**

5-7 MO-AG Convention; Lodge of Four  
Seasons;  
Lake Ozark, MO

## **FEBRUARY, 2011**

**9-10 2011 Missouri Pork Expo; Columbia,  
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.*

Missouri Agribusiness Association  
PO Box 1728, 410 Madison Street  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
(573) 636-6130  
Fax: (573) 636-3299  
[MO-AG Website](#)

**[Forward email](#)**

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Missouri Agribusiness Association | P.O. Box 1728 | 410 Madison Street | Jefferson City | MO | 65102

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