

# THE Agricultural Business Council of Kansas City

July 15, 2009

## Upcoming Meetings

### Svaty Named Kansas Secretary of Agriculture, Succeeding Polansky



Kansas Governor Mark Parkinson named State Rep. Josh Svaty (SWAH'-tee) as the Acting Secretary of Agriculture on July 14 as outgoing Secretary Adrian Polansky takes a new post heading the Kansas Farm Service Agency with the United States Department of Agriculture.

Svaty, 29, has served 7 years in the Kansas House of Representatives. A native of Ellsworth County, he is a fifth generation farmer. The Svaty Farm is a diversified operation in the heart of the Smoky Hills that includes wheat, milo, soybeans, corn, sunflowers, a cow/calf

heard and sheep.

The nomination is subject to authorization by the Senate Confirmation Oversight Committee to exercise the powers, duties and functions of office during the interim period until the full Senate can consider the nomination. Acting Secretary Svaty will assume all secretarial duties following Secretary Polansky's last day on July 17th.

In accepting the nomination, Svaty pointed to his credentials for the post, stating: "During my time in the Kansas Legislature, I worked closely on many issues as the Ranking member on the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. I was involved in the Renewable Fuel Standard, efforts to increase research on wheat varieties through the Wheat Commission, and numerous variations of water policy. I was also very involved in energy policy, and the future holds little distinction between agriculture and energy. I feel I am uniquely suited to bring the knowledge of agriculture and energy policy to the department. "

He also commented on his farming experiences, stating "we are very diversified in an effort to survive the fluctuations of a volatile market. When I was younger, we had an extensive farrowing operation for pigs. We were driven out by market forces just like most other

After a brief summer break in July, the Agricultural Business Council of Kansas City's monthly luncheon meetings will resume in August. We are honored to have **Congressman Jerry Moran** (R-KS) join us at the American Royal on Friday, August 28 for: *An Update on Farm Policy Issues Facing American Agriculture*. Additional information will be forthcoming. Please also mark your calendars for these upcoming meetings:

September 24 - Expanded luncheon focused on climate change and it's implications for agriculture

October 15 - *Addressing the Challenges Facing Wheat Growers*, featuring **Daren Coppock**, CEO, National Association of Wheat Growers, and **John Thaemert**, Sylvan Grove, Kansas & past president, National Association of Wheat Growers

November 6 - Breakfast Meeting in conjunction with AFA Leadership Conference

## USDA Estimates Higher Corn Acreage

-- excerpted from  
*Meetingplace.com, June 30, 2009*

USDA has estimated U.S. corn acreage at 87 million acres, up 1 million acres from last year and well above both analysts' expectations and the 85 million acres USDA expected farmers to plant based on its poll of their intentions in March.

Corn futures prices fell the daily

farmers that had pigs on the side for steady income. We grow most of the major crops for Kansas - wheat, corn, milo, soybeans, and sunflowers - but we also were raised working a truck garden to sell vegetables at a farmer's market for supplemental income."

Svaty continued, saying "agriculture is not an easy economy. It fluctuates, is hard to predict, and is highly dependent on the Kansas weather, which is famous for its unpredictability. Nevertheless, I believe the stellar reputation of Kansas' farmers and ranchers is one of our most marketable assets. Now more than ever the consumer wants to know the source of their food, and their desired source is an idealistic image that is not far from many of the farms and ranches we have in this state: the farmer as steward, shepherd, and provider for people all around the world."

## KBA Looking for Big Results

-- Dennis McLaughlin, McLaughlin Writers Group



Beyond its part in keeping the nation safe from bio and agro-terrorism and keeping Kansas on the path to becoming the nation's leader in bioscience research, the Kansas Bioscience Authority offers an additional fringe benefit to Sunflower state moms and dads. The initiatives and projects the KBA launches, said its CEO and President Tom Thornton, could keep the "kids in the state."

Speaking before Council members at the June luncheon, Thornton was of course alluding to the brain drain that afflicts communities all over the world when their best and brightest leave the region in search of exciting, rewarding careers. But Thornton's comments were not so tongue-in-cheek when he suggested Kansas was well on its way to becoming the undisputed leader in agricultural bioscience research. "It's not just an aspiration or a goal: Kansas has a running start," he said, noting the state has been focusing on both institutional and industrial bioscience research for a while. The investment of capital, time and effort has made bioscience a formidable sector of the Kansas economy, and the state has been recognized as one of the top ten most vibrant bioscience centers in the U.S. The *Wall Street Journal* noted the phenomenon glibly saying back in 2004, "Even Kansas is in the game with the KBA."

Since its inception in 2004, the KBA has played a role in creating 1,100 jobs in the state and attracting \$150 million in private investment. Currently the KBA is working to increase R&D investments in state bioscience activity from \$130 million to \$250 million.

However, the organization, unique in the sense that it is funded by the state while governed by a private board, is not resting on its laurels. "Incremental is okay," says Thornton referring to initial successes so far, "but we're looking for huge outcomes."

The "greatest outcome" to date has been the \$650 million federal

limit of 30 cents per bushel at the open on the Chicago Board of Trade after USDA's Acreage report was released.

USDA's acreage estimates are based on surveys conducted during the first two weeks of June on thousands of farms across the United States. At 87 million acres, this would be the second-largest corn acreage in more than 60 years.

USDA also estimated farmers sowed a record-high 77.5 million acres to soybeans, up 1.8 million acres from last year and up 1.5 million acres, or almost 2%, from the March planting intentions forecast.

USDA's August 12 Crop Production report will contain the first 2009 estimates of corn and soybean yield and production.

## Monsanto Restructures

Monsanto announced on June 24, 2009 that it is creating a separate division for its Roundup and other herbicides businesses to better align spending and working capital needs. This action is designed to enable Monsanto to stabilize the business and allow it to deliver optimal gross profit and a sustainable level of operating cash in the coming seasons.

In addition to the new division, Monsanto announced a planned restructuring that will include a reduction of approximately 900 employees across the entire company. The reduction will vary from country to country and will be less than four percent of the company's global workforce. The company anticipates the actions will require a one-time restructuring charge estimated at approximately \$350 million to \$400 million, or \$0.41 to \$0.47 per share to the company's fourth-quarter EPS in fiscal year 2009. The company expects to complete its restructuring in fiscal year 2010.

## Farm Progress Announces

award to develop and operate the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). In toe-to-toe competition against several other high-profile bidders, Thornton said Kansas approached the challenge "with unity, our agricultural heritage, the concentration of animal health companies" as well as a resume of "prior research in animal and zoonotic disease." Kansas won, unanimously.

## Climate Change and Carbon Credits: Sorting Out the Confusion

-- Stu Elli, University of Illinois, posted July 13 (<http://www.farmgate.uiuc.edu/>)

*The climate change issue is one of the most pressing policy issues facing agriculture today. Agriculture is a diverse industry with a variety of perspectives on this issue. We share this article in hopes of enhancing the discussion on this important issue. The Council is planning an expanded luncheon meeting on September 24 featuring several speakers on this topic.*



The US House of Representatives narrowly approved legislation addressing climate change and sent it to the Senate, where supporters hope the fall will bring restrictions or costs for releasing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The public is divided on the issue of global warming, responsibility for greenhouse gases, and what should be done and

by whom. Agriculture currently is one of the major stakeholders in the debate, and can come out either in good shape or bad.

The definition of good shape or bad shape is offered by Luther Tweeten as either mitigating or adapting. Tweeten is the emeritus Chairman of the Ohio State University Department of Agricultural Economics and in a recent **perspective** does not tell government what to do, but says whatever the choice of government may be, it will have an impact on agriculture. Tweeten cites the Intergovernmental Committee on Climate Change which reports average temperatures are rising, with food production gradually shifting away from tropical and subtropical regions and more into Canada and Siberia over the next century. Because of high populations in the developing countries in Africa and Latin America, Tweeten says such a shift will create hardships among the world's food insecure people.

Tweeten readily says the science of global warming is unsettled, and scientists cannot agree among themselves. But he says global warming is an unintended consequence of producing energy with the use of fossil fuels that release carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere and that traps heat from the sun. While society may suffer the consequences, the market must send the proper signals for efficient resource allocation and private costs must be paid to match the cost to society. He says governments are in control, but the constituents of policy makers are less than enthusiastic about paying more taxes and energy costs to correct any damage. And he adds that greenhouse gases do not stop at the borders of an individual country.

To mitigate greenhouse gases, Tweeten says one solution is to impose a \$26 per ton tax at a coal mine or oil well that is designed to offset

## Broadcast Business Unit

Farm Progress is adding a broadcast business unit and has hired Max Armstrong, one of the most well-recognized agricultural broadcasters, to serve as director of broadcasting. Farm Progress made the announcement on June 26, and said its new business unit will provide radio, television, and enhanced Web programming for the agricultural market. While Armstrong will join Farm Progress in a full-time capacity, he will continue his This Week in AgriBusiness show co-hosted with Orion Samuelson and also will continue to host a Saturday morning show on WGN radio.

## European Regulators Back Monsanto Corn Products

-- St. Louis Business Journal, June 29, 2009

European food regulators issued a favorable scientific opinion on Monsanto's Roundup Ready 2 corn product for cultivation and reaffirmed the safety of its insect-protected corn trait. The European Food Safety Authority confirmed that YieldGard Insect-Protected Corn is safe for cultivation, animal feed and human consumption.

The European Commission is now required to propose renewal of the existing product approval before any bans on the product can be lifted in France and Germany. Earlier this year, Germany banned the use and sale of the genetically modified corn, alleging it is harmful to wildlife. France, Austria, Hungary, Greece and Luxembourg also banned the corn, which is resistant to the crop-damaging corn borer.

Following a four-year review, EFSA scientists also confirmed that herbicide-tolerant Roundup Ready 2 corn is as safe as conventional maize for all uses, including cultivation, across the entire European Union.

the \$26 cost per ton of carbon dioxide that society has to pay. While no one wants the cost of energy to rise, Tweeten says a cap and trade policy is becoming a popular alternative which would allow heavy energy users to pay for a permit to emit more than their share of greenhouse gases. Following the issuance of permits by governments, a market would develop for the trading of them. But he says the purpose would be to raise the cost of carbon-based fuels to the point that alternative source of energy would be preferred.

Tweeten says agriculture would have a difficult time slowing the momentum, because food production accounts for only 13% of manmade sources of greenhouse gases, and biofuels contribute only minor positive results in the limitation of greenhouse gases. He says a gallon of ethanol requires nearly a gallon of fossil fuel equivalent in the form of motor fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, transportation, and processing. However, he says agriculture would have a modest role by supplying only 300 million tons of carbon credits, which means one ton of carbon stored in the soil for perpetuity. He calculates a farmer could break even by spending up to \$1.30 per acre annually to retain the carbon, but would lose money if he has to sacrifice more than one-half bushel of corn to hold or sequester the carbon. He says that means no-till production can be the most profitable enterprise, but then again, it requires more carbon-based chemicals to control weeds.

Farmers would have the option of selling their carbon capture enterprise to industry, but the result would be minimal compared to the overall cost. Tweeten says authorities project a \$50 billion cost to control the climate in the year 2035, but carbon credits sold by farmers for \$26 per ton would net agriculture only \$390 million. While that is only the US, Tweeten says the world's nations acting individually would be too small to have any positive impact, and many times they have other priorities, such as poverty, disease, conflict, or food insecurity. He suggests the adoption of wide ranging policies that would include development of crop genetics to resist drought and heat stress, better infrastructure for moving crops from production to consumption areas, and high yield crops that will minimize crop area to allow expansion of forests that do a better job of holding on to carbon dioxide.

In summary, although there is considerable controversy about global warming, there is public policy momentum to seek changes that would mitigate any rise in temperature due to the burning of fossil fuels that create carbon dioxide and methane. Agriculture cannot do much to reduce emissions of those gases, and even biofuels require fossil fuels for production, refining, and transportation. Agriculture may be able to lend its capacity to retain carbon in the soil by selling carbon credits from no-till agriculture to industries that emit more than their share of carbon dioxide. Such a program may seem significant, but may also be overshadowed other initiatives, such as improved crop genetics for drought resistance and better movement of food from areas of high production to areas of high consumption.

## K-State's Professional Development Conference Takes on The Issues

## MU Scientists Turn Fibroblasts Into Stem Cells

-- *DVM Magazine*

Scientists at the University of Missouri say they found a way to convert regular cells from a pig's connective tissue - called fibroblasts - into stem cells. The cells were not derived from embryos and no cloning techniques were used, eliminating some of the controversy around stem-cell research.

"It's important to develop a good animal model to test these new therapies," says R. Michael Roberts, professor of animal science and biochemistry at MU's Bond Life Sciences Center. "Cures with stem cells are not right around the corner, but the pig could be an excellent model for testing new therapies because it's so similar to humans in many ways."

The researchers cultured fibroblasts from a fetal pig, then inserted four specific genes into the cells. The genes "reprogrammed" the differentiated fibroblasts to "believe" they were stem cells, according to the study, published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (PNAS)*.

## Linksters Tee It Up For Pork

The Missouri Pork Association hosted its annual Pork Classic at the L. A. Nickell Golf Course in Columbia, MO, in early July with 23 teams participating in the tournament. Proceeds benefit the Missouri Pork Association government and public policy efforts.

Besides the team awards, prizes were presented to men and women golfers for longest drive, longest putt and shot-closest-to-the-pin.

The Missouri Pork Association would like to thank everyone who took part in the tournament and helped make the day fun and enjoyable for all. The Association would also like to thank the sponsors who made the 2009 event possible: Alltech, CMA



Kansas State's Master of Agribusiness Professional Development Conference will tackle the timely issues of a struggling economy, climate change and volatile markets

as they relate to agriculture and agribusiness. The third annual program, co-sponsored by AgCareers.com, takes place August 27-28 at the Embassy Suites near the Kansas City International Airport.

Sara Wyant, President of Agri-Pulse Communications, will open the conference with an overview of the cap and trade policy and introduce other speakers who will address specific aspects of the controversial protocol. Mike Frame, CHS Energy Sales Director, will address cap and trade from the energy perspective; and Rick Krause of the American Farm Bureau, will look at the policy from agriculture industry angle. Guy Trafford of Australia's Lincoln university, will talk about how cap and trade has worked down under.

The economic meltdown and its effect on agribusiness will be examined by Allen Featherstone, Professor, KSU, Ken Keegan, Senior Vice President and Chief Risk Officer at Farm Credit Services of America, and Terry Garvert of Cargill's Grain and Oilseed Supply Chain NA.

Risk management in the current commodity market will be discussed from several perspectives on day two of the conference. Joe Barker, Kansas City Branch Manager of Country Hedging, will present the trader's view, while Dominic Melendez, Strategic Procurement Manager Raw Materials for Hill's Pet Nutrition, offers the agribusiness angle. Jane Lu Hsu from Taiwan's National Chung Hsing University looks at managing risk in the international market.

The event is open to agribusiness professionals interested in learning more about the current global agricultural industry. Registration fee is \$200 and includes meals and materials. Individuals can register for the conference and reserve a hotel room online at [www.mab.ksu.edu](http://www.mab.ksu.edu).

## AFA Unites Agricultural Interns From Across Kansas City

-- Emily Schneider, AFA



Every year hundreds of students move to a new city, a new state or even a new country to pursue an internship in the agriculture industry. For many students, this is the first time they have truly been "on their own," and while internships offer excellent learning opportunities, students can find themselves rather lonely during the first few weeks.

With that in mind, AFA hosts an annual event for agricultural interns in the Kansas City area.

Consulting, Precision Structures Inc., FCS Financial, National Pork Producers Council, Phibro Animal Health, Missouri Corn Growers Association, Hebron Hills, Mt. Zion Homestead, Land O Lakes Purina Feed, Bayer Animal Health, Elanco Animal Health, Validus, Missouri Soybean Association, PIC, National Pork Board, Motomco, Smithfield, Osborn and Barr, Dairy Farmers of America, CFM Insurance Co., Farmland Foods, Davidson Construction & Management Co., Fort Dodge Animal Health, Lextron, Forrest Keeling Nursery, Boehringer-Ingelheim, Missouri Dairy Association, Cargill Pork, Longhorn Cattle and Swine Confinement and UPI/Parks.

The Missouri Pork Association represents the state's pork producers in the areas of promotion, research, education and legislation. For more information about this or any other programs of the Missouri Pork Association, go to [www.mopork.com](http://www.mopork.com), or call the Missouri Pork Association office at (573) 445-8375.

## Agriculture Is Not a Dirty Word

-- Yvonne Vizzier Thaxton, Poultry Perspective Blog, Meetingplace.com

*Writing in her blog last month for Meetingplace.com, editor Yvonne Vizzier Thaxton noted that Science Magazine had published an article titled Agriculture Is Not a Dirty Word. Read the full article in "Agriculture Is Not A Dirty Word", Allen S. Levine, Science, May 29, 2009. The following is an excerpt from Thaxton's blog.*

"I am amazed," she wrote, "because stories like this are rare in main stream scientific publications.... the average person does not think of agriculture as 'science' but rather relates to it as an established enterprise that just happens." The supply of food is taken for granted and doesn't get much attention until there is an outbreak of E. coli, Salmonella or some other food borne disease. The result, Thaxton goes on to say, is "complete ignorance of the importance (of agriculture) and the need to support it rather than destroy it." Even land grant universities, she mentions, are

The event, called Cow Town Chow Down, is a chance for the interns of AFA's partner companies to come together, network and make new friends. At the same time, it gives students a chance to learn more about different companies and organizations throughout the agriculture industry.

This year's Cow Town Chow Down was held June 25th at Minsky's Pizza on Main St. Interns from various agricultural companies attended the event to meet one another and learn more about AFA and other aspects of the agricultural industry. AFA plans to continue this tradition and hopes it will continue to make a positive impact on students who are getting out of their comfort zones to make their mark on the industry.

In addition to Cow Town Chow Down, AFA offers similar networking opportunities year round. At the AFA Leaders Conference in November, students have numerous opportunities to network and get to know each other. AFA provides a directory of all students who attended the conference so they can stay in touch once they return to their respective universities. Additionally, the AFA Alliance Web site allows students to contact Alliance leadership to find out more about the AFA Alliance and the people who make up the organization.

AFA is a not-for-profit organization created for tomorrow's leaders in the agriculture industry. It is dedicated to encouraging and supporting college students preparing for careers in the agriculture and food industries. AFA was founded in 1996 and is headquartered in Kansas City, Mo. Since 1997, more than 1,300 scholarships have been awarded totaling more than \$5 million.



*Emily Schneider is a senior at Kansas State University majoring in Agricultural Communications and Journalism, with minors in Agricultural Economics and International Agriculture. She is serving as the marketing and communications intern for AFA during the summer of 2009. Throughout the summer, Schneider is responsible for coordinating the AFA newsletter, writing the annual report and helping with advertising, design work and event planning for the organization. Schneider grew up on a dairy farm near Salina, Kan.*

## Ft. Dodge Aims to Simplify Verification Process

-- [Cattlenetwork.com](http://Cattlenetwork.com)



® Fort Dodge Animal Health has teamed with Micro Beef Technologies to add MICRO PVP™ - an age and source verification component - to the Prime Protection™ Plus program.

The MICRO PVP Ranch Program allows producers to verify age and enroll their cattle in a USDA-approved program prior to shipping cattle from the ranch. Its design enables the use of most calving record formats. The system was developed with input from the USDA and is designed to simplify the age-verification process, allowing producers to focus on cattle, not paperwork. Approved Micro PVP cattle can also be

dropping the word (agriculture) and using names like 'life sciences' to encourage financial support and attract students.

In its article *Science Magazine* concluded that as the nation moves "into a new era of shared accountability and responsibility, let's keep in mind that agricultural sciences affect us all, and when agricultural science is thriving, our communities likely are thriving, too."

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accepted into any other USDA-approved age verification program.

Fort Dodge Animal Health's preconditioning program offers pre-weaning and weaning protocols addressing vaccination, parasite control and calf management that enhance the value of calves. The program also provides calf buyers with certified vaccination and weaning histories, in addition to the new age and source verification. It allows the flexibility of choosing pre-weaning or weaning protocols that best meet the individual operation's business and marketing objectives. Involvement in the program also qualifies producers to participate in value-added calf sales at local sale barns.

From 2004 to 2006, preconditioned, weaned calves generated price premiums of \$5 to \$8 cwt. above commodity cattle. In 2007, MICRO PVP users earned average premiums of \$2 to \$3 cwt. across all classes of cattle and all sale formats.

## Credit Conditions in Rural America

-- Brian Briggeman, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City



Access to credit and its proper use are extremely important in today's business environment. With rising default rates, farmers and rural business owners should be prepared to bear some additional risks to receive credit. However, federal and state agencies, banks and other credit market

participants are collaborating on new ways to ensure credit is flowing to rural America. Indeed, credit markets are still tight, but gauges of the credit market indicate some recent improvements.

Even though some signs of improvement are emerging, the economic and financial crisis is still limiting credit access. Operating in such a volatile environment is difficult for farmers and business owners. And while the current crisis is largely out of their control, they need not be uniformed. Monitoring Federal Reserve System surveys and the TED spread can help farmers and rural business owners monitor the global economy and recognize when credit markets begin to improve.

*Excerpted from Issue III of the 2009 Main Street Economist published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. The complete article may be found at:*  
[http://www.kansascityfed.org/RegionalAffairs/MainStreet/MSE\\_0309.pdf](http://www.kansascityfed.org/RegionalAffairs/MainStreet/MSE_0309.pdf)

## Legislation Confronts Shortage of Public-Health Veterinarians

-- VIN News Service



A renewed effort to get more veterinarians working in public health made its way into the House last week, and supporters of HR 2999 say the bill carries more potential traction than any of its predecessors.

**John Deere  
Agricultural  
Marketing Center**

**Elvin Hollon  
Dairy Farmers of  
America, Inc.**

**Leslie Kaufman  
Kansas Cooperative  
Council**

**Erin Nash**

**Damon New  
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Trust**

**Don Nikodim  
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For starters, the Veterinary Public Health Workforce and Education Act goes beyond brick-and-mortar facilities to provide scholarship funds, faculty loan repayments and creates a fellowship program for would-be federal veterinarians, to be administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The goal is to address the "severe lack" of veterinarians trained in food safety, food systems, biomedical research and other public health-related areas of practice. And like failed legislation before it, HR 2999 authorizes a competitive grants program where the nation's 28 veterinary medical schools can apply for funds to build facilities and buy equipment to increase enrollment and educate more veterinarians in those sectors.

If passed, a newly established Division of Veterinary Medicine and Public Health, a branch of HHS, would administer the program. While some fear that allowing competitive grants could result in a money grab among colleges fighting for financial assistance, Brian Smith, director of Governmental Affairs with the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, insists that there's plenty of room for growth in the profession.

Veterinarians are the frontline of defense against potentially deadly disease outbreaks, according to Rep. Tammy Baldwin, a co-sponsor of the bill, and nation needs enough public health veterinarians to help keep it food supply and families safe.

*CVR Energy*

The Agricultural Business Council of Kansas City is indebted to Dennis McLaughlin, McLaughlin Writers Group, for contributing most of the content of this newsletter. Erica Venancio handles the formatting.

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