

Season's Greetings!

...and Thanks to Our Supporters!



*May you find peace in the simple beauty
of the season.*

*Best Wishes for the New Year,
from the Staff and Board of the
Kansas Rural Center*

2010 was a busy year at the Kansas Rural Center, and you played an important part in our work. The staff and Board of Directors thank you for your support!

Over the past year, KRC sponsored, organized and presented at dozens of workshops, conferences and events. These activities provided you with information on the developing local and regional food system in Kansas, livestock management, grazing and forages options, cover crops and integrated farming systems, organic farming practices, water quality protection, farmers market developments, food safety measures, and more.

From a packed house at the Kansas Graziers Winter Conference in January 2010 to the 150 attending our November 2010 "Cows, Carbon and Carrots" Conference, KRC asked what we could do to help you understand farming in today's changing world and presented practical solutions or options for you and your family.

2011 promises to be full of new challenges and opportunities for all of us. We hope to see you down the road ~ working together, asking questions, finding solutions, and creating a sustainable food and farm future! Best Wishes for the New Year!

Rural Papers

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by the

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Rural Papers is the voice of the Kansas Rural Center, Inc., (KRC), a non-profit organization that promotes the long-term health of the land and its people through research, education, and advocacy. The KRC cultivates grass-roots support for public policies that encourage family farming and stewardship of soil and water. KRC is committed to economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially sustainable rural culture. The KRC is funded by private foundations, churches, and individual contributions. **Rural Papers** is available to contributors or for a \$25 per year subscription to organizations and institutions.

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Small Farmer Commentary

A Tale of Two Christmas's

by Mary Fund

2010 marks the end of the decade with no name. The "2000's" just never rolled off the tongue like the "80's" or "90's", although I can't say that the "20-teens" sounds much better. Eleven years ago at this time, people were uneasy about the shift from 1999 to 2000. Despite the dire warnings about the world's computers crashing, and the ensuing chaos at our energy plants, airports, and financial institutions, we woke up January 1, 2000, to find our computers still working, our transportation system rolling along as smoothly as ever, and our banks chugging along as usual.

Whew, we thought. Or so those who were actually worried about Y2K thought.

Little did we know what the decade with no name would bring. November 2000 brought the most contentious presidential election on record. In September 2001, the world was turned upside down for Americans; and our airports, mass transportation, and sense of security would never be the same. The decade saw the U.S. enter two wars, which were extremely expensive in terms of human lives and drain on the national budget; both wars remain unresolved. And in September 2008, our financial institutions came as close to the brink of collapse as they did during the Great Depression of the 1930's.

Housing foreclosures, business closings, and job losses followed. I don't know a single family that has not tightened their

belts, either out of necessity or fear that worse was to come.

But basically once the banks were taken care of (bailed out by government), they declared the crisis over; a short time later economists declared the recession over. Wall Street has returned to handing out bonuses to their CEOs. And economists puzzle over why investors still sit on their money, and why unemployment remains high.

During all this, our leaders have bickered back and forth over whether more of the same would dig us out of the hole we are in. Tax cuts and reduced government spending, they argue, are just what we need to put Americans back to work. Tax cuts, they insist, will inspire investment in new businesses and create jobs.

Never mind that that scenario did not produce much in the way of jobs the previous eight years, as investors turned their thoughts to cheap overseas production or speculative investment that produces nothing at all. But with a huge case of group memory loss, voters believed them (or at least those who bothered to vote believed them.)

While the top one percent of Americans take in about 24% of the country's total annual income- about the same rate as in 1929 and the highest in modern history, the rest of us reel over job losses or pay cuts

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Cover Photo:

The Road West, Painting by Carolyn Bell, Printed with Permission

Briefs

Mega-Hog Operations Up for Vote Again in Western Ks.

The Associated Press reports that Greeley County, Kansas, residents approved a nonbinding referendum in October 2010 to allow large hog confinements in their county.

But a vote is necessary to replace laws on the books since 1997 that ban mega-hog operations in the county. On December 21, Greeley County residents will vote on whether or not to replace that law. According to press reports, Seaboard Corporation wants to build 120 barns with 1,000 hogs per barn in the area. The operation would cost more than \$30 million, and bring 18 jobs to the county.

In 1997, Greeley County, along with a number of other western Kansas counties, voted to reject such hog operations, following a big push from Seaboard Corporation to develop dozens of such large operations in several counties in western Kansas. In 1998 Greeley County repealed a 1994 resolution that allowed large hog operations. □

**KRC Weekly
E-Reports on the
State Legislature
and Farm Bill
Sign Up on Page 15!
or Go to
kansasruralcenter.org**

Policy News

Sign Up for KRC's Legislative and Policy Alerts

Starting in January 2011, KRC will offer weekly e-reports during the State of Kansas Legislative session, and updates and alerts on the development of the 2012 federal farm bill throughout the year. Paul Johnson, Perry, Ks., farmer and former lobbyist for a consortium of church groups, will be staffing this effort. With state budget woes and a new governor and new cabinet team in place, KRC is launching a new Legislative and Policy Watch Project to monitor the state legislature for decisions affecting a diversified agriculture, the environment and our resource base, and consumers, and to promote a local and regional food system.

The project is possible due to a bequest from Jan Garton, Manhattan, who died in 2009, and left KRC a generous gift. While these funds help support the effort, we ask that participants pay a \$20 fee for the information and services provided. These services include:

* **Weekly E-Reports**, January-May 2011. Registered as a lobbyist for KRC, Johnson will produce weekly e-reports, and track and testify on bills and issues related to farm and food policy. He will also be monitoring state budget issues, including Kansas State University programs, Kansas Department of Agriculture activities, and programs impacting water conservation and quality, small meat processors promotion and regulation, farmers markets promotions, and state food policy goals. Other issues may include rBGH milk labeling, defining sustainable agriculture in law, and existing property tax exemptions for commercial wind and 'tar sands' pipelines.

* **Teleconference Call Updates**. In addition to the weekly e-reports during the session, Paul and KRC staff will hold at least 6 hour-long tele-conference calls to keep you abreast of legislative happenings. These will start January 20 offering a short report on status of issues, and a question and answer opportunity for participants. These calls may include updates on federal farm program budgets and program changes as that debate gets underway in Washington, D.C. Anyone signed up for the E-Alerts can opt into the teleconference calls. Call-in information and the schedule will be available later.

* **Updates on Federal Farm Programs and the 2012 Farm Bill (Jan.-Dec.)**
The Weekly E-Alerts also include updates or notices on developments in the next federal farm bill during the session, and special alerts the rest of the year as needed.

To sign up for the Weekly E-Reports, go to KRC's website at www.kansasruralcenter.org and follow instructions on the home page. OR you can fill out the sign-up form on page 15 of this newsletter. Please return the form and your \$20 check, payable to the Kansas Rural Center, and mail to KRC, Weekly E-Reports, Box 133 Whiting Ks. 66552.

For more information, contact Paul Johnson at pdjohnson@wildflower.net. or contact Mary Fund ksrc@rainbowtel.net, or 785-873-3431.

Sustainable Farming Practices

Cover Crop Workshop Draws Lively Discussion

by Jason Schmidt

Emporia, KS – Lively discussion interspersed with presentations dominated the cover crops workshop held in Emporia, Kansas on December 6. Thirty farmers gathered to listen, learn and discuss “Cover Crops 101: Why, What, When, and How” as a follow-up to the No-Till on the Plains conference held in Emporia in September. Gail Fuller (Emporia no-till farmer), Paul Ingle (Flint Hills RC&D), and Brian Rees (Lyon County Extension) organized the December workshop.

Paul Ingle kicked off the day giving a “Top 12” reasons why to use cover crop. Ingle had initially planned on giving a “Top 10” but after considering the numerous benefits, decided to make the list a “Top 12.”

Gail Fuller and Ed Reznicek (Kansas Rural Center) presented personal experiences of using cover crops. Reznicek, an organic crop farmer in Nemaha county, emphasized the importance of using legume cover crops for fixing nitrogen.

“We live in a vast pool of nitrogen,” Reznicek states regarding the atmospheric content of 78% nitrogen. “Organic farmers rely on nitrogen fixation. Buying nitrogen is like buying water at the river.” Reznicek stressed the importance of planning crop rotations to effectively incor-

porate cover crops into current cropping systems.

Gail Fuller complemented Reznicek’s experience with cover crops. Fuller’s farm motto is “Where we feed billions,” referring to the vast complex of soil life that he is feeding through his no-till cover crop system.

Fuller stated that 1 tablespoon of soil holds more life than all of the human population of China. Cover crops and no-till farming is giving Fuller superior crop yields while also reducing erosion, enhancing soil biologic life and organic matter, suppressing weeds, and increasing nutrient cycling.

Brian Rees, Lyon County Extension, gave an overview of the numerous aspects of cover crops including warm and cool season options for grasses, brassicas and legumes, along with giving agronomic advice on when and how to establish cover crops.

Joan Phillips-Fowler from Lyon County FSA explained some of the challenges and opportunities for integrating cover crops into current USDA farm programs. Phillips-Fowler recommended farmers discuss any plans to incorporate cover crops into current cropping systems with an individual’s FSA and crop insurance agents. Cover crops that are

harvested, hayed, or grazed must be reported and may pose certain challenges for existing farm programs.

In the Jason Schmidt and Dale Kirkham with the Kansas Rural Center led the discussion about the opportunities arising with grazing cover crops. Most cover crops have the potential of providing high quality, inexpensive forage for livestock. Schmidt discussed emerging research that is disproving perceptions that grazing livestock on crop land negatively impacts soil structure.

The grazing discussion centered on the economic opportunities of integrating grazing animals into cover crops. One young farmer commented how he cannot begin to afford to buy crop land; however, as a beginning farmer he can imagine the economic opportunity of leasing cover crops to graze. The challenges of leasing cover crops include a lack of information for establishing rental rates for grazing cover crops, and overcoming the negative perceptions of grazing crop land.

Jeff Davidson, Greenwood County Extension, offered to take the challenges and questions participants raised back to Kansas State University to encourage more research and support for cover crop adoption and management. A second cover crop workshop is planned for early spring 2011. □

Kansas Graziers' Winter Conference Scheduled for January 15

Whiting, Ks. - The Kansas Grazier's Association (KGA) will hold its Winter Conference on Saturday January 15, 2011 at the Geary County 4H-Senior Citizen's Center at 1025 South Spring Valley Road in Junction City, Ks. from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The primary topic of the day will be Mob Grazing, and the keynote speaker will be Greg Judy of Clark, Missouri. Greg and Jan Judy run a grazing operation on 1400 acres of leased land using Holistic High Density Planned Grazing to graze cows, cow/calf pairs, bred heifers, horses, and stockers.

The Judy's have developed a successful system to get into the grazing business by leasing land, employing high density grazing, and grazing other people's livestock.

In 2001, Judy wrote a book titled, **No Risk Ranching: Custom Grazing on Leased Land**, which gives a complete breakdown of the methods they used to build their own operation from scratch. In 2008, he wrote a second book, **Comeback Farms: Rejuvenating Soils, Pastures, and Profits with Livestock Grazing Management**. In addition to "Introduction to Mob Grazing", Judy will discuss animal performance and multi-species grazing with cattle and sheep.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.; and costs \$35 for the day and includes lunch. The conference flyer, a mail-in registration form can be downloaded and printed from the Kansas Rural Center website at www.kansasruralcenter.org.

Driving directions: From I-70 Exit 295 Turn north onto Highway 77, and go to Sapp Brothers Truck Stop Highway entrance; Turn west onto Lacy Drive. Follow Lacy Drive around to stop sign at Spring Valley Road 1/2 mile. Turn north onto Spring Valley Road and proceed to the Geary County 4-H/Senior Center, 1025 South Spring Valley Road, about .7mile. From the north, go to the Sapp Brothers Entrance and follow the above directions.

For more information contact Mary Howell at 785-292-4955, or (cell) 785-562-8726; or the KRC office at 785-873-3431 can help with registration questions.

Sponsors include the Kansas Rural Center, Kansas Farmers Union, Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops, and Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition. □

NE Ks. Grazing Group To meet Jan. 2

Seneca, Ks - On January 2, 1011 the Northeast Kansas Four Seasons Graziers plans to meet at 1:30 p.m. in Axtell, Kansas, at St. Michael's Catholic Church School Basement. The afternoon will include a tour of winter cover crops that are currently being grazed at Brian and Bill Buessing's. The meeting will include indoor discussion and a light lunch.

The group, which organized in the spring of 2010, is a producer led, informal group that meets for pasture walks, farm tours, and discussions on grazing and livestock management.

The group also met December 2 at the Windmill Inn in Seneca, Kansas, for an informal discussion on grazing related topics. About 30 graziers participated in the discussion. The hot topic of the evening was comparing Greg Judy's ultra-high-density mob grazing to Jim Gerrish's management intensive rotational grazing.

For more information or to be added to the e-mail or mailing list, please contact Mary Howell at marshallcofair@gmail.com, or 785-562-8726. □

Check out Kansas Local Food Resources at:
www.kansasfarmersmarket.org
and at: www.buylocalks.com

Rejuvenating Landscapes Through Managing Livestock Behavior; Animal Behavior Specialist Provides Tips

by Jason Schmidt

Holton, Ks. - "Palatability is more than a matter of taste," challenged Fred Provenza to the audience at the Livestock Behavior-based Management Workshop in Holton, Kansas in late September. Provenza, who is an Animal Behavior Specialist with Utah State University, spent the day giving wisdom on how to manage animals to rejuvenate landscapes while also meeting the nutritional needs of the animals.

Palatability is directly connected to the body's feedback to meet the need for energy, protein, and various minerals as well as to self-medicate to treat maladies that Provenza has labeled the "Wisdom of the Body." This concept of the "Wisdom of the Body" has implications for managing and manipulating animal's diets and grazing behavior to eat undesirable plant species while avoiding other desirable plant species.

Provenza explained that by creating negative or positive feedback experiences after eating certain plants, animals can be trained to select or avoid these plants. For example, by adding lithium chloride to grape vines, which will make sheep sick after eating the grape vines, sheep will quickly learn to avoid grape vines. This allows vineyards to utilize sheep to graze without the fear of damage. Likewise, by spraying molasses on undesirable weeds, animals can be trained to select these weeds. Also, cattle supplemented with Polyethylene glycol, a compound that ties up tannins, leads to cattle eating twice as much *Sericea lespedeza*.



Fred Provenza, above left, Animal Behavior Specialist with Utah State University, presented a full day workshop in late September, laying out animal behaviors and nutrition management connections.

Provenza said the U.S. has the highest number of herbicide resistant weeds of any country. He believes rather than relying on herbicides, "we must learn to love them [weeds] to death with herbivores" that have been trained to eat these weeds. These examples demonstrate Provenza's concept of the "Wisdom of the Body" which tells the animals what to eat or not eat. Provenza claims that if animals are given appropriate choices, animals can successfully self-medicate and balance their diets.

Provenza challenged that we do not give enough credit to the wisdom of the body in either animals or humans. He challenged producers to consider offering mineral cafeterias of individual minerals that are deficient to specific locations and allowing animals to individually select the minerals they need. This can be an economical decision reducing the overconsumption of a mineral mixture. Also, a

diverse plant community allows animals to select plants that draw minerals from different soil profiles.

In addition, Provenza spoke about cultural wisdom that develops over time and allows animals to become locally adapted. Offspring learn from mothers what to eat and how to survive in specific environments.

Natal experiences in vitro also affect the food and habitat preferences of animals. For example, lambs exposed in vitro to sheep grazing salt brush in Australia were able to better utilize salt brush, which has an unusually high salt content.

Understanding the cultural influence on animals' diets has many implications including the need to understand the learning curve that animals will go through when introduced to a new environment.

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Provenza Workshop...

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Provenza challenged workshop attendants to select management practices that mimic natural adaptations. These include matching production cycles with seasonal changes in forage growth and quality, and managing offspring to learn from their mothers.

Provenza said nothing is more important from a health perspective than providing variety for animals. Animals grow tired of eating the same thing over and over. Also, combinations of forage species enhance intake and digestibility. For example, cattle perform better on mixtures of endophyte-infected tall fescue and clover pastures than on pastures of monocultures of either fescue or clovers.

These forage species have complementary toxins with cyanogenic compounds (causing bloat) in clovers, and alkaloids in endophyte-infected fescue that when combined increase forage intake and animal performance. Provenza challenged that dietary choice actually increases efficiency, which opposes the philosophy of feeding a total mixed ration (TMR) diet. In research trials, animals offered a free choice diet consumed less while still performing at the same level as animals offered a TMR diet.

Provenza concluded the workshop challenging participants to create management strategies that increase the health of the land and are sustainable. We have become increasingly reliant on fossil fuels for our food production, stated Provenza, which has enabled us to select animals

Back to the Drawing Board for Omnibus Bill; Food Safety Bill Passes

As this goes to press, it looks like the government will continue to function on a Continuing Resolution until February 2011, well after the new Congress takes its place. A Continuing Resolution (CR) is a temporary means of keeping the government funded and working until Congress agrees on a budget.

The federal government began its fiscal year October 1, 2010 without an approved budget, and had been operating on a CR until December 18. But instead of passing an omnibus funding bill, Congress appears to be opting to pass another short-term CR which will take us into February 2011.

that no longer have the ability to thrive on foods and habitats of many environments.

In addition, in 1940 it took 1 calorie of fossil fuels to produce 2.3 calories of food. Today it takes 10 calories of fossil fuels to produce 1 calorie of food leading to a far less sustainable system. Provenza concluded saying we need to "create landscapes that promote healthy soils, plants, herbivores, and people.... not pills and procedures that treat the symptoms of ill-health and ill-being."

The workshop was sponsored by the Jackson County Conservation District, the Kansas Rural Center, Middle Kansas, Delaware and Banner WRAPS, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, NRCS, and the Meadowlark Extension District. □

The omnibus bill contained funding or increases for several USDA programs friendly to sustainable agriculture, as well as the Food Safety Bill. Depending on how the short term resolution is written, sustainable ag could suffer both positive and negative repercussions, such as loss of increases in SARE and the Agriculture and Food Initiative (AFRI). However, it could also mean reductions in conservation programs like EQIP would disappear and funding would resume at farm bill mandatory funding levels.

It is likely that the new House Republican majority will get a chance to rewrite the 2011 spending bill including agricultural appropriations, so some increases may be off the table, or at best have to be renegotiated in a less than friendly Congressional environment.

Food Safety Bill Passes In Last Minute Deal

The Food Safety Bill, (S.510), which was earlier attached to the omnibus appropriations bill and was thought dead, made a last minute resurrection and passed in a late night Senate vote on Sunday (Dec. 19). The House of Representatives will take the bill up on Dec. 20; it is expected to pass. President Obama has pledged to sign the measure. The bill will give the government far-reaching authority to set and enforce food safety standards for farmers and food processors.

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Adapting to Climate Change Important for Kansas Farmers and Ranchers

By Mark Parker



150 people attended KRC's "Connecting Cows, Carbon, and Carrots: Making Sense of Our Food Future" Conference in Emporia, Kansas on November 20. Keynote speaker Joel Brown, USDA NRCS, explained how "90% of our response to climate change should be adapting to it." Photo by M. Parker.

Emporia, Ks.- Climate change is far less a threat to ecosystems than it is to the humans who rely upon them, according to USDA Natural Resource and Conservation Service rangeland ecologist Joel Brown.

Speaking to about 150 people at a sustainable agriculture conference in Emporia sponsored by the Kansas Rural Center, Brown said the debate is over as to whether or not climate change is occurring. Arguments about cause and effect and scientific methodology can continue, he said, but there is no doubt that the planet is warmer – and getting warmer still.

"Climate change will come to dominate our lives," the researcher at USDA's Jornada Experimental Range in New Mexico said. "We live in a changing climate. We shouldn't be

arguing about that. It's changing and it will always be changing."

"Climate change will come to dominate our lives"

Citing the Dust Bowl era as an example, Brown pointed out that nature adapts and returns to productivity after dramatic climate events. The more important question is how well people can adapt to changes in the weather?

Although steps to mitigate climate change, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, garner most of the public attention, Brown believes that

learning to adapt is a more productive course. "Ninety percent of our response to climate change should be adapting to it," he said. Despite mitigation efforts, greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. continue to increase to about 1 percent per year as nearly 7 billion tons rise into the atmosphere.

Agriculture, he noted, is responsible for only 6-7 percent of that total. Even if the industry successfully employed the management and technology to reduce its emissions by 20-30 percent, that fraction of a fraction would have little impact. "We're a small player in that market," he said. "The bottom line is that we're not going to be able to have a huge impact on climate change."

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Sustainable Food and Farming News

Climate Change...

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While the U.S. has reduced emissions per dollar of GNP (Gross National Product), growth in both population and production more than offsets the effect of new conservation technologies and the rate of growth in developing nations will keep global greenhouse emissions on the rise. Although Brown is in favor of taking steps to reduce emissions, the public focus should be on facing a stark reality. “We have to be realistic about mitigation,” he asserted. “It is an increasingly unlikely option.”

The impact of climate change will vary widely, said Brown who began his career as a District Conservationist in Kansas. A small rise in sea level would be catastrophic in Fiji, for example, but would have little direct impact in Kansas. Still, even Kansas farmers are facing – and will continue to face – changing weather. “The frost-free season length has gone up nine to 10 days since 1970,” he observed. “That’s good if you’re feeding hay to cattle in the winter but what about the effect on pathogens and pests?”

Crops and forage production, Brown said, is more highly variable with more volatile weather patterns and there is a direct climate change impact on both plants and animals. Higher carbon dioxide levels can increase plant growth, although not necessarily grain yields. From a stockman’s perspective forage quantity increases with more CO₂ in the atmosphere but quality and digestibility decrease. “In the



Following Brown’s keynote address, a roundtable discussion with (left to right) Jeff Schahzenski, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Joel Brown, USDA NRCS, and Karl Brooks, U.S. EPA Region VII Director, focused more attention on climate change and adaptation.

Photo by M. Parker

future, a higher CO₂ world is destined to reduce individual animal performance,” Brown said.

“Crops and forage production is more highly variable with more volatile weather patterns...”

“I don’t see near-term big changes for eastern Kansas,” he added, “but you can’t find a model that says it’s going to get cooler, either.” More dramatic weather change is expected in the West and the Southeast, Brown said. “Just because we have a rising temperature average across the globe doesn’t mean we won’t have the opposite happen in some areas,” he explained. “There are definitely anomalies but I can tell you that no part of the U.S. hasn’t had

warmer winter temperatures over the long-term average – some far more dramatic than others.”

The evidence of a warming climate is indisputable, Brown said. A dramatically shrinking ice mass in Greenland and Antarctica and a rise in sea level are measured facts, not conjecture, he said. Wide variations in temperature show up locally and regionally but, on a global basis, the trend is clear.

Information is the key to dealing with climate change for agriculture, Brown said, noting that extension and USDA will be more important than ever in providing information about how management can be adapted. “We live in a changing climate,” the rangeland ecologist concluded. “It has always changed and always will but that change is probably going to accelerate. And we’re going to have to learn to adapt.”

Local Food Systems News

Rural Grocery Store Reports Outline Challenges

Lyons, NE. Two new reports from the Center for Rural Affairs (CFRA) highlight the importance of local grocery stores to rural communities, the challenges they face, and how communities can respond to those challenges.

In *Rural Grocery Stores: Importance and Challenges*, the CFRA outline the data showing the slow disappearance of the rural grocery and some of the reasons why. CFRA note that while there is not a national database tracking rural grocery store closings, there is data showing the trend toward disappearance of rural grocery stores in parts of the Midwest and Great Plains.

In Iowa, according to Iowa State University, the number of grocery stores with employees dropped from about 1400 stores in 1995 to just over 700 in 2005. At the same time, “supercenter” stores like Wal-Mart and Target, increased by 175%. Also in Iowa, 43% of grocery stores in towns with populations under 1000 have closed.

In Kansas, according to Kansas State University, 82 grocery stores in communities under 2500 people have closed since 2007, and nearly one in five rural grocery stores have gone out of business since 2006. In total 38 percent of the grocery stores in Kansas town of less than 2500 closed between 2006 and 2009.

The report provides several reasons why this is happening:

* Declining populations mean that many rural communities are without

an adequate customer base to support a local store. In 2000, the average population needed to maintain a grocery store was 2,843. By 2005, that number had risen to 3,252.

In Kansas, 38% of grocery stores in towns under 2500 in population closed between 2005 and 2009.

* A lack of job opportunities in rural communities causes more rural residents to work in larger communities, thus increasing their shopping in those larger communities. Since 1990, the number of rural residents in communities over 2,500 out-commuting to larger communities for work has increased by 72%.

* The increase of corporate, chain store facilities in nearby cities and the ease of driving due to advances in vehicles and highways often make shopping at larger stores more attractive.

* The combination of work and shopping patterns among rural people is also shown in consumer preferences of how people choose their grocery store. A 2007 Nielsen Company study found that 60 percent of consumers choose a grocery store based on whether it “provides good value for the money”. Only 23% cited proximity to home as the most important factor.

The report notes that the lack of a

grocery store places a community on a path for further depopulation and economic decline. In rural communities grocery stores are more than food retailers. They are economic drivers, community builders, employers and meeting places. Food “desert” is the term given to places where the residents are ten or more miles from a full-service grocery store.

The second report, *Rural Grocery Stores: Ownership Models That Work for Rural Communities*, offers solutions to the challenges discussed in the first report, and examines models of rural grocery store ownership.

There are four primary models of ownership for rural grocery stores- independent retailer, community-owned, cooperative, and school-based. While the independent retailer is the most common form, they are also the stores most in danger. The other three models- community owned, cooperative or school based, are dependent on the people involved, their commitment and experience, and most importantly, community support. (See box page 11 for more on school-based stores.)

For more information on the reports, contact Jon Bailey, CFRA, at jonb@cfra.org or 402-687-2103 Ext. 1013. For the full reports go to:

Rural Grocery Stores: Importance and Challenges, October 2010-
<http://files.cfra.org/pdf/rural-grocery-stores.pdf>

Rural Grocery Stores: Ownership Models That Work for Rural Communities

<http://files.cfra.org/pdf/rural-grocery-ownership-models.pdf>. □ (Reprinted w/permission & in part from Center For Rural Affairs Monthly e-newsletter, December 2010. See www.cfra.org)

Local Food System News

Emporia Opens Winter Farmers Market

While most farmers markets have taken down the tents and signs by late October, the Emporia Farmers Market is exploring an indoor winter market one day a month from November - April. The market takes place at 701 Commercial on the second Saturday of each month, and is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In November, sixteen vendors filled the building full of local produce, home baked goods and a variety of hand-crafted items for the first winter

market of the season. In December, local musicians and hot bowls of homemade soup, plus holiday goodies and crafts made for a holiday shopping experience.

Carrots, beets, lettuce, and broccoli were popular treats for shoppers thanks to hoop house gardening efforts of local vendor, Gene Rayburn. Produce also included fall favorites such as butternut and cushaw squash, turnips, and a wide variety of apples.

Farm fresh eggs and frozen poultry, as well as local hamburger, pork sausage and buffalo minute steaks are available at the market. Homemade jams and jellies, banana and zucchini breads, cookies, cinnamon rolls, homemade pies, and many kinds of yeast breads also fill vendor tables.

The produce and products sold at EFM are grown, made, or baked by the vendors. No resale of purchased items is allowed. To receive the EFM free e-newsletter, contact Tracy Simmons, Market Manager at 620-343-6555 or emporia FM@gmail.com. □

(From www.ksfarmersmarket.org "Emporia Winter Farmers Market Report", Nov. 30, 2010)

High School Students Address Food Deserts

By: John Crabtree, johnc@cfra.org, Center for Rural Affairs

Students at Cody-Kilgore wanted to start a student-run, community-owned grocery store. Their rural Nebraska town (population 149) lost their store and residents were forced to travel 70 miles round trip for groceries. Several teachers contacted the Center for Rural Affairs, and the idea grew into a student business incubator with a grocery store as the flagship business.

The project focuses on entrepreneurship education including: planning the business; developing skills in marketing, facilitation and leadership; and purchasing and maintaining equipment. Training and technical assistance are being provided by the Center for Rural Affairs and others.

The Cody-Kilgore students weren't the first to start a grocery store. In Arthur, Nebraska students successfully opened a grocery store after their rural Sandhills community (population 145) grocery closed almost ten years ago. Eight students planned, rallied support, and opened the Wolf Den grocery store, which remains open to this day. Leeton, Missouri, population 619, also lost their grocery store 10 years back. Teachers at Leeton saw an opportunity to teach students business ownership skills and keep dollars in their community. Students took on the job, and it quickly became a town project. The store has been running since January 2009.

Center for Rural Affairs research (see Rural Grocery Stores: Ownership Models That Work at <http://files.cfra.org/pdf/rural-grocery-ownership-models.pdf>) has found school-based grocery stores to be a viable ownership model for rural communities that can help provide crucial local access to food. Moreover, these initiatives foster entrepreneurship, enhance education and provide inspiration to students and community members alike.

□ (From CFRA Newsletter, December 2010, at www.cfra.org.)

NCR SARE Hosts Scaling Up Local Food Systems

To explore new ideas for creating local food systems, the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Professional Development Program hosted a two-day conference in Madison, WI in late September.

The overall goal for the training was development of a regional network of educators, working on scaling up local sustainable food systems, who could actively share information and be more effective in efforts to scale up local food systems in their states.

Participants from Kansas included Rhonda Janke, KSU; Dan Nagengast, and Mercedes Taylor-Puckett, Scott Allegrucci, KRC; Twilya L'Ecyer, Washington Co. Farm Bureau; Jennifer Smith, Douglas Co. Extension; and Rebecca McMahon, Sedgwick Co. Extension. □

Sustainable Food and Farming News

Experts Weigh In On Climate Change

by Mark Parker

Emporia, Ks. - In a panel discussion following the keynote speaker at the recent sustainable agriculture conference, Region VII EPA Director Karl Brooks, National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) Policy Analyst Jeff Schahczenski, and USDA-NRCS Rangeland Ecologist Joel Brown shared their views on climate change issues.

While it may be possible to dramatically change how energy sources and consumption affect climate, Schahczenski said, current politics make that an unlikely scenario. Asserting that agriculture should not be blamed for globally increasing greenhouse gas emissions, he said that the industry does have potential to help mitigate their effects.

Within agriculture, Schahczenski observed, soil and livestock management are the two biggest factors. His suggestions for reducing agriculture's impact on climate change include improved energy efficiency, more efficient use of synthetic fertilizers, a reintegration of livestock manure and green manure crops in fertility management, federal conservation program participation and a movement toward farms providing their own liquid fuels from their own crops.

"Some people say they don't believe in climate change," Schahczenski said. "Climate change is not a matter of belief ... The best science we have suggests something is going on here. We can argue about the details but not the facts."

Discussing the EPA's role in regulations relating to climate change, Brooks acknowledged that the agency's relationship with agriculture has been, at times, "frosty." He said that although EPA's interaction with agriculture regarding greenhouse gases has been very limited, Congress has charged the agency to enforce the Clean Air Act and a 2007 Supreme Court decision dictates that greenhouse gases be included in that enforcement.

Asked by KRC Executive Director Dan Nagengast if prescribed burning in the Flint Hills is a thing of the past, Brooks said, "No, of course not." He did say, however, that it must be recognized that traditional burning has a measurable impact on human health despite the fact that it benefits the native range and beef production there. He said he is "hopeful" that stakeholders will very soon arrive at a solution, adding that there is "an awful lot of common ground."

Joel Brown, the event's keynote speaker, discussed some of his climate change research at USDA's Jornada Experimental Range in southern New Mexico. While changing farm and ranch management can have a positive environmental effect, he said, it's important for farmers to access information on adapting to changes in the climate.

In addition, he suggested that farmers take advantage of carbon sequestration programs for their financial benefits as well as for their contribution to sustaining ecosystems. Brown's keynote presentation, as well as other workshop

presentations, are available online at www.kansasruralcenter.org

The event was held at Flint Hills Technical College in Emporia, where the culinary arts department students provided a meal of all locally-grown food for the 150 participants. □

Cows, Carbon, and Carrots Conference....

Continued from page 9

The "Connecting Cows, Carbon & Carrots" conference was presented by the Kansas Rural Center and co-sponsored by the Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops.

In addition to the keynoter, eighteen workshops featured presentations on a wide range of topics including trends in production and marketing of grassfed beef, opportunities in local and regional food in Kansas, cover crops, specialty crop production, hoop house production, school and community gardens, food policy councils, and the 2012 farm bill. Copies of presentations are available online at KRC's website at www.kansasruralcenter.org. □

Mark Parker is a free lance writer who covered the conference for KRC.

Resources and Events

March 4 Deadline Set for EQIP Organic Initiative

USDA has again allocated \$50 million nationwide for the EQIP Organic Initiative, which serves certified organic growers, those transitioning to organic farming systems, and exempt producers. (See below for definition of “exempt” producers.)

The program provides financial and technical assistance to growers to implement conservation practices like cover cropping, pest management, crop rotation, stream buffers, hedgerow planting, and various other practices.

Interested producers have until March 4, 2011, to sign up for the 2011 program. The EQIP Organic Initiative is available to agricultural producers who are:

- * Transitioning to certified organic or want to transition;
- * Already certified organic (or exempt) and interested in transitioning more acreage to organic; or wish to adopt conservation measures on their farm, or add more land and adopt additional conservation measures.

In Kansas, producers should contact their local county NRCS office. KRC’s website also has information about the program at www.kansasruralcenter.org/eqip.html. □

Central Kansas Vegetable Growers Workshop Set for Wichita February 12

The second annual Central Kansas Market Vegetable Growers Workshop, will be held February 12, 2010 from 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in 4-H Hall at the Sedgwick County Extension Education Center at 21st and Ridge in Wichita, Kansas. The workshop, which is sponsored by Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey, and Reno County Extension, will give beginning and experienced vegetable growers new skills to improve their production methods and marketing skills for selling their local vegetables, while meeting an increasing demand for locally grown produce.

The workshop will cover the basics of vegetable production with a special emphasis on techniques for extending the harvest season for vegetables. Topics will include: high tunnels, tomato grafting, berry production, winter greens production, agritourism, and community supported agriculture.

Featured speakers include:

Dan Nagengast – Dan has been farming in the Lawrence, Kansas area for more than 20 years, and has years of experience growing vegetables and flowers in a high tunnel. He is Executive Director of the Kansas Rural Center.

Dr. Cary Rivard – Cary is the new K-State Research & Extension Vegetable and Fruit Specialist. His most recent research deals with tomato grafting as a way to deal with soil-borne disease issues in organic and heirloom tomato production.

Jay Sleichter – Jay is a market farmer

from Clay Center, Kansas. His family grows vegetables on less than 5 acres, including in 6 high tunnels.

Dr. Brenda Olcott-Reid – Brenda is the owner of Brenda’s Berries & Orchards in Chetopa, Kansas. She grows raspberries, blackberries, apples, and peaches for u-pick and pre-pick sales.

Cost of registration is \$20 before February 4, 2010 and \$25 after. Register online at <http://vegetablegrowersworkshop.eventbrite.com> or by calling 316-660-0144. For more information, please call Rebecca McMahon at 316-660-0142. □

Third Kansas MarketPlace Set for November 15-16, 2011

The 2nd annual Kansas MarketPlace showcasing small businesses and opportunities was held in Dodge City in mid-November with 215 registered attendees, 30 exhibitors, 66 speakers, and abundant opportunities for attendees to absorb information and make connections.

According to the Center for Rural Affairs, who has organized the event the past two years, the Kansas Department of Commerce will take over the event in 2011. It will be held in Salina, Kansas on November 15-16, 2011. □

Food Safety Bill...

Continued from page 7

The bill has prompted lots of controversy and a storied journey through the lawmaking process. Consumer groups were concerned whether the bill went far enough to reach all producers and processors, while some farm interests protested that the bill would effectively shut down many small farmers and small processors. So the opposition ran the gamut from big ag and processors who did not want such far-reaching regulation, to small farmers and processors who feared for their livelihoods to consumer groups fearing that the measure would not adequately protect the public.

The bill that passed contained an amendment that will create size-appropriate alternatives that will benefit very small processing facilities as well as those producers with less than \$500,000 in annual sales that primarily direct market products to consumers, to stores, or restaurants within state boundaries or within 400 miles of the farm or processing facility.

If the food safety bill had died FDA would have proceeded with writing produce standard rules and enhanced food processing controls on the basis of current broad authorities. That authority lacked the specific directives contained in the legislation to avoid one-size-fits-all regulation and remove some on-farm processing activities from regulatory control based on a risk assessment, and would have been harmful to small farm operations.

Court Overturns Ohio Law Restricting rBGH-free Labels

In October, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit ruled in favor of the Organic Trade Association (OTA) in a landmark case that would have prevented consumers in Ohio knowing whether products on grocery store shelves were produced without the genetically engineered bovine growth hormone (rBGH or rBST).

Nearly two years ago, the State of Ohio issued a regulation that restricted a company's ability to state that the milk it markets is rBGH-free and produced without antibiotics, added growth hormones or pesticides. In October, the Sixth Circuit Court reversed the lower court decision, agreeing that consumers have a right to know how their dairy products are produced. The court confirmed that the First Amendment allows organic dairy products to state that they are free from rBGH.

Significantly the court also found that there is a significant compositional difference between milk from untreated cows and milk from cows injected with rBGH. The latter contains elevated levels of insulin-like

For background on the Food Safety Bill, go to www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.net/category/food-safety/. For NSAC's position paper on food safety go to www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.net/publications. (With input from NSAC Weekly Updates Dec. 17 and 20, 2010).

growth factor 1 (IGF-1), a hormone linked to several types of cancers.

The Consumer Reports National Research Center polled more than 1000 people nationwide on various food labeling issues. They found that 70% of those polled were concerned about synthetic growth hormone and 88% agreed that milk from cows raised without rBGH should be allowed to be labeled as such.

The U.S. is in the minority among industrialized nations by allowing the use of rBGH. Canada, Japan, Australia and 27 countries in the European Union ban its use. (From *The Organic and Non-GMO Report, Volume 10 Issue 10, November 2010*).

ATTRA Newsletter Focuses on Livestock Marketing

The December issue of ATTRA News (Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas) looks at the ways farmers and ranchers can add meat, eggs, or dairy products to an operation.

The December 2010 issue includes information about: Meat CSAs and Buying Clubs; Livestock and Orchards; and a list of ATTRA publications on livestock marketing and resources.

Go to www.attra.org/newsletter/attra_news_1210.html. (With input from NSAC Weekly Updates Dec. 17 and 20, 2010).

Small Farmer Commentary

Continued from page 2

and scramble to find funds for things like health care and education. Those in charge - bankers and our Congressional leaders - have returned to the same old tired solutions.

Before Christmas, the newly elected or re-elected members of Congress flexed their muscle and forced a vote to extend the Bush era tax cuts to all Americans. This includes you and me, but is especially important to the wealthiest Americans.

Again, supporters argue that this is essential to getting the investments needed to create jobs and get the economy rolling again. But just what do the wealthy do with their money? Currently banks are sitting on money they can't or won't lend, as those with the cash continue to be reluctant to risk losses.

According to recent news stories, Christmas for the wealthiest among us will be very good this year. Sales of luxury items are up, way up. The Washington

Post recently reported that at Tiffany's, sales of their most expensive merchandise has grown by double digits. Nieman Marcus brought back \$1.5 million fantasy gifts in its annual Christmas Wish Book, and at other luxury retailers, sales are exceeding expectations.

But on the other end of the scale, that same Post story reports that Wal-Mart in some communities is seeing shoppers flooding the stores at midnight every two weeks to buy baby formula the minute their unemployment checks hit their bank accounts.

Numbers are up at every homeless shelter or food bank in the country. School districts report more at-risk families eligible for the free lunch programs. And the ranks of those without health insurance or those under-insured is growing.

And yet, Congress just gave a huge bonus to the country's wealthiest individuals. A bonus that could have helped reduce the national deficit, paid for better health care, education and infrastructure- things that

private business either prices out of reach of many working families, or does not care to invest in.

A tale of two very different Christmases, indeed.

Now, some will argue that the tax cut needs to be given time to work. But others argue that it has had eight years, and we are where we are because of it. Wealth seems to beget more wealth, not cutting edge industry, or education, or services for basic human needs.

Just as we did not know what lay ahead in the decade to come in 1999, maybe we are fortunate to not know what lies in store for the next decade.

But if I may have one Christmas Wish, it would be this: that on January 1, 2011 we wake up in a world where we share a genuine commitment to addressing income disparity; that civility and respect for each other return to public discourse; and that compassion and not fear drives our political and social decision-making.

Best Wishes for the New Year, and Hope for the New Decade! ☐



SPECIAL SIGN-UP FOR KRC WEEKLY E-REPORTS

___ YES I want to sign up for Weekly E-Reports. Here is my \$20 fee.

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Contributors to the Kansas Rural Center's work to promote sustainable agriculture in Kansas receive KRC's newsletter, *Rural Papers*, 5 issues/year, and other Center special reports and information alerts. Subscriptions are available for \$25/year.

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Calendar

January 6-8, 2011, Great Plains Growers Conference, Missouri
Western State University, Fulkerson Center, St. Joseph, MO. Register online or find information at www.greatplainsgrowers.org, or call Katie Cook, Buchanan County Extension office 816-279-1691.

January 15, 2011 Kansas Graziers Winter Conference, Junction City, Ks. See page 5. Registration information also available at www.kansasruralcenter.org; or contact Mary Howell at 785-292-4955, or (cell) 785-562-8726; or the KRC office at 785-873-3431.

Tuesday, January 18, 2011, Delaware WRAPS Livestock Management Roundtable, 1:30 p.m. Fairview, Ks. For more information contact Marlene Bosworth, 785-284-0080 or

mkbosworth@northwindts.com

Saturday February 12, 2011 Central Kansas Market Vegetable Growers Workshop, 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in 4-H Hall, Sedgwick County Extension Education Center at 21st and Ridge, Wichita, Ks. Register online at <http://vegetablegrowersworkshop.eventbrite.com> or calling 316-660-0144.

Saturday February 26, 2011, KRC Winter Board of Directors Meeting, Location to be announced. Contact KRC office 785-873-3431 or ksrc@rainbowtel.net

Please check the KRC website for updated and more detailed calendar and announcement information at: www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar.

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