



THE FARM POST

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Fuel Costs Go Beyond Sticker Shock for Farmers, Ranchers

Americans are experiencing sticker shock at the gas pump these days, but high fuel costs are hitting America's farmers and ranchers especially hard. According to testimony presented today by the American Farm Bureau Federation, government figures show farmers this spring will pay almost 85 percent more than they paid in 2000 just to plant their crops.

Testifying before the House Natural Resources Committee, Colorado Farm Bureau President Don Shawcroft said America's farmers and ranchers need reliable and reasonably priced fuels in order to maintain their ability to feed, clothe and fuel the world. Farmers and ranchers, he explained, cannot simply pass higher expenses along to their customers.

"Most Americans are feeling sticker shock caused by high gasoline prices when they fill their automobile's tank," Shawcroft said. "But there is no term in the English language to accurately describe what farmers and ranchers feel every time they put diesel in the tanks of their farm equipment."

Shawcroft cited numerous examples of the economic impact currently experienced by farmers and ranchers. He said the cost just for refueling a typical tractor can be more than

\$1,000.

"Depending on the number of acres being covered, farmers and ranchers have to fill those tanks multiple times just to complete the work on one field," Shawcroft said. He also explained that the impact is far more than just higher costs for fueling tractors, harvesters and trucks. Higher natural gas and petroleum prices greatly increase the price for fertilizer, and crop protection products.

Shawcroft said sound public policy can help provide answers. He told members of the committee that America must renew its commitment to domestic oil and gas production, continue to develop all sources of renewable energy and do more to make all forms of home-grown energy available to all American consumers.

"Energy rich repositories such as the Outer Continental Shelf, the Bakken Oilfields and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge must be explored and opened for oil and gas production," Shawcroft said.

Shawcroft also said home-grown energy must be made more available to American consumers through implementation of the approved increase of the ethanol blend rate to 15 percent, building a biofuel infrastructure that includes blender pumps and biofuel pipelines and continuing

to provide incentives, such as the tax credits currently in place, to encourage the production of biodiesel fuels.

"We must continue to develop all sources of renewable energy. Much advancement has occurred in the production of renewable energy sources such as ethanol, biodiesel, biomass, wind and solar energy."

Form 1099 Repeal Great News for Farm and Ranch Families

Action by the Senate today passing a bill repealing the onerous Form 1099 requirement is great news for America's farm and ranch families, according to American Farm Bureau Federation President Bob Stallman.

"This was a costly, burdensome and unnecessary tax compliance requirement that was counterproductive to job creation and economic growth," Stallman said. "Farmers, ranchers and small businesses are overloaded with paperwork, and we are pleased that our leaders in Washington took steps to provide relief. Farm Bureau commends the Senate for passing H.R. 4, and we urge President Obama to sign it."

The health care law contains a provision set to begin in 2012 requiring that businesses submit a Form 1099 to the Internal Revenue Service for every vendor from which they purchase \$600 or more worth of goods or services. H.R. 4, passed by both the House and the Senate, would repeal this new requirement.

FARM BUREAU LAUNCHES 'TRADE MATTERS' CAMPAIGN

With U.S. farmers and ranchers losing market share and competitive advantage in key trade venues, the time is now for Congress to approve free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and Korea.

Through the recently launched "Trade Matters" campaign, all Farm Bureau volunteer leaders and members are encouraged to reach out to their U.S. representatives and senators to urge them to pass these pacts.

When fully implemented, these agreements represent almost \$2.5 billion in additional agriculture exports for farmers and ranchers, and will support 22,500 U.S. jobs.

For more information, as well as links to connect with your congressional delegation, go to www.FBActInsider.org.

FARM BUREAU, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND STATE AGENCY HEADS OBJECT TO BROAD CLEAN WATER ACT 'GUIDANCE'

The American Farm Bureau Federation and other agriculture and industry groups are crying foul over reports that the Environmental Protection Agency and Corps of Engineers intend to issue "guidance" on the Clean Water Act (CWA). The groups say that the document's real purpose is to guide agency field staff in expanding federal control and permitting requirements.

The groups are concerned that the agencies are abusing the regulatory process in order to do what they have not been able to do under the letter of the law: expand the scope of "waters of the United States," or those that fall under federal jurisdiction under the CWA. In general, the document that was leaked to the press is less "guidance" and more a menu of options for field staff to use to support a determination that a given waterbody is a "water of the United States," according to the groups.

"The language plainly states that EPA and the Corps intend to expand their regulatory control to include most wet areas, including waters now considered entirely under state jurisdiction," wrote AFBF and 24 other groups that are members of the Waters Advocacy Coalition in an April 4 letter to Lisa Jackson, EPA administrator, and Jo-Ellen Darcy, assistant secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

"This expansive federal approach signals a clear intent to restrict the use of private land and supersede the authority of state and local governments to make local land and water use decisions."

Two Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2006 affirmed that the CWA limits federal jurisdiction to navigable waters and waters that have a significant connection to navigable waters. Since then, legislation has been introduced in every Congress to remove the word "navigable" from the CWA and expand federal authority. Farm Bureau has opposed those bills because of the increased permitting requirements farmers and ranchers could face just to engage in normal farming activities, and none of the bills has been passed into law. The coalition letter says that the EPA and Corps guidance attempts to implement these failed legislative proposals without a vote by Congress.

Several members of Congress also are concerned. In their own letter to Jackson and Darcy, they said that if the administration wants to seek changes to the CWA, it needs to propose regulations and give the public a chance to comment on them, or submit proposed legislation to Congress. The letter was initiated by Rep. Bob Gibbs (R-Ohio) and signed by at least 154 members.

"In light of the substantive changes in policy that the administration is considering with this 'guidance,' we are extremely concerned that this 'guidance' amounts to a de facto rule instead of mere advisory guidelines," the members wrote.

A coalition of state environmental agency directors also is urging EPA not to impose "interim guidance, interim rules, draft policy and reinterpretation policy" on states. The Environmental Council of the States issued a March 29 resolution calling on EPA to consult with states and follow proper rulemaking procedures if it deems new guidance or rules to be needed. If EPA follows the same path it took with April

Continued to page 4

THE PIKE AND SCOTT COUNTY FARM BUREAUS

OUR VALUES

We are committed to provide leadership in all areas that affect the lives and livelihood of our members. We will represent the interests of our members with integrity and respect, upholding the standards established through decades of excellent service. We will cooperate with other associations and agencies to promote the well-being and interests of our members. We believe in the sanctity of private property and individual rights as the basis of our freedom and economic progress. Our heritage is built upon faith, patriotism, stewardship, and individual responsibility.

OUR VISION

We are the leader and voice of agriculture in Pike and Scott Counties.

OUR MISSION

We will lead our members in their pursuit of prosperity. We will advance programs and public policies that promote a strong agricultural economy and benefit our members and their communities.



Mrs. Orisek's 3rd grade class at Bluffs Elementary school learned about the different symbols of Illinois. The student's made a charm necklace by using a variety of items that represented many of the state's symbols. Along with making the necklace, they learned that Illinois produces many different crops. The Ag-in-the-Classroom project partially funded by annual contributions of Pike and Scott County Farm Bureau members through their generous contributions to the Two Rivers Farm Bureau Foundation.

HOWDY!

by Blake E. Roderick

NIGHTMARES!

I woke up with a start very early this morning dreaming that I was eating a Big Mac, fries, and coke. I immediately felt ashamed and defeated as it's been over four-years since such a meal has passed my lips.

Betsy related to me her nightmare from the night before where the house fell in...not because of a tornado or earthquake but it just collapsed. I'm afraid the anxiety of living in the "money pit" has overtaken her subconscious thoughts. Then again, she may have found the engineers report on the structural integrity of the house...just kidding sweetie pie.

I used to have nightmares about tornados. All the time there would be multiple tornados as if in some cheap made for the Sci-Fi Channel movie. I suppose this goes back to my youth whilst living in Rochester, IL a tornado tore through the field in the back of our house. I don't think I've ever seen a tornado and at this late stage in my life, I don't think I want to.

Then, after moving into the "money pit", I would have nightmares of trees falling during storms. When the winds pick up, I still have some anxiety even though the storms of the past decade have removed all but two of the trees. Applying a bit of economics to my tree problem, I assuage my anxiety.

We have a \$1,000 deductible on the house and buildings and no deductible on the comprehensive on our cars. It would cost a couple grand each to remove the two trees of worry. If they fall on a building, the insurance will pay to remove them. I've got this all figured out. Then again, what if they just fall in the yard? I'll be left with the clean up...oh the nightmare...gives me one more thing to worry about.

Then there are nightmares about flooding...actually these may manifest themselves during the day but then I have been accused of sleeping with my eyes open. This time of year the anxiety over high water gets critical. During my 30-years here, I've witnessed 7 of the Top 10 flood events on either the Mississippi or Illinois rivers, actively participating in most of those. While today, the Mississippi has crested and the Illinois while in flood is not expected

to be in major flood stage, if we were getting the rains now hitting southern Illinois and Missouri...our goose would be cooked.

Then there are the nightmares about gas prices. I had two meetings in Quincy yesterday. I stopped by Hy-Vee for lunch and a little indiscriminate shopping. On my grocery receipt there was a little message that I could receive a 10-cent gas discount at their gas station. The price was \$3.89 bringing it down to \$3.79 with the discount but it was still \$3.69 in Hannibal so over the river I went. Of course, the price here in Pittsfield was \$3.99...30-cents more than across the river. That is a real nightmare.

Then there's the nightmare of the upcoming redistricting. The last time this happened we witnessed the epitome of gerrymandering (see Howdy! March 2009). The 17th Congressional District wanders from the Quad-Cities down the Mississippi River across the southern end of Pike down through Carlinville up and across a narrow swath of Springfield along old route 36 to pick up part of Decatur. It is an ugly district that really disenfranchises many voters and exemplifies the corruption of the redistricting process in 2001. We're going to Macomb tomorrow to present testimony at an Illinois Senate redistricting hearing. Hopefully, the new district maps will be compact and contiguous and won't be a mapping nightmare.

Then there is the federal budget deficit that is a real nightmare. We here in the rural area may be a bit insular in our views on the federal budget, the deficit, and the debt. We are talking about numbers that are so big they are almost unfathomable. When I was a kid, we talked about federal budgets and debt in the billions. Now we throw the word trillion about as if it is nothing.

A little math lesson; a million is a thousand thousands (1,000,000), a billion is a thousand millions (1,000,000,000), and a trillion is a thousand billions (1,000,000,000,000). Exponentially speaking, a trillion is 10 to the 12th power (10¹²).

There are about 2,500 stars visible to the naked eye any given night which when we look out on a clear dark night seems too numerous to count. The president's 2012 federal budget shows receipts of \$2.6 trillion and outlays of \$3.7 trillion giving us a deficit of a little over a trillion dollars. I think this is rosy.

The United States' debt for 2012 will be almost \$11 trillion (\$11,000,000,000,000) or 4.4 billion times more than the number of stars you can see in the sky on a beautiful clear spring night.

My household's share of that debt is about \$125,000. If I only had a portion of that obligation, I could structurally repair the "money pit" so my sweet heart wouldn't have nightmares anymore.



the AG AGENDA

Bob Stallman

President, American Farm Bureau

Trade Should Matter to all Farmers and Ranchers

Free Trade Agreements are the talk of the town—in Washington, D.C., that is—and among the leaders of agriculture organizations across the country. But for folks fortunate enough to have a life beyond the ups-and-downs of national politics, the acronym 'FTA' doesn't really mean much.

Trade issues, understandably, seem to get pushed to the background of farmers' thoughts. Foreign trade is not immediately tangible. It doesn't weigh in on day-to-day decision-making in farm operations, like cost increases and regulations do. And, many farmers assume trade issues are out of their hands.

But, America's farmers and ranchers have a huge stake in global trade and the current FTAs with Korea, Colombia and Panama that are pending before Congress. Combined, the three agreements represent nearly \$2.5 billion in U.S. agriculture exports. These FTAs should be in the forefront of every farmer's and rancher's thoughts.

Not Playground Politics

I recently had the opportunity to visit Panama and Colombia with a delegation of Farm Bureau leaders to show support for the pending U.S. trade agreements with both of the countries. The trip coincided with Farm Bureau's efforts to get Congress to pass the Panama, Colombia and Korea free trade agreements as quickly as possible. We met with government representatives, U.S. embassy officials, industry leaders and agricultural producers in Panama and Colombia to reinforce our support for the FTAs.

While emailing, texting, tweeting and video conferencing all have their place in the modern world, for me nothing is better than a face-to-face meeting and a firm handshake. Being in the same room with the Colombians and Panamanians led to a fuller discussion on the challenges with the FTAs, while building trust with one another.

Both countries feel frustration that they negotiated these trade agreements in good faith four-plus years ago. They don't understand why the U.S. has held them up for so long. They want to be our trading partners, but, as one Colombian official told me, while they would rather source their agriculture products from the U.S., they can't wait forever.

In the meantime, our competition is going into these markets and establishing business and trade relations with Korea, Colombia and Panama, making it more difficult for us once our FTAs are passed. We won't be able to swoop in and say "We're ready now, drop those countries and trade with us instead." This isn't the schoolyard and Korea's not bidding its time with the European Union until America feels like playing.

Blackfoot to Bocas del Toro

Colombia is the top South American export market for the U.S. But, from 2008-2009, our exports dropped almost 50 percent because of the stalled FTA. The U.S. market share peaked in Colombia in 2008 at 46 percent, but by 2010 it had fallen to 24 percent. Without a signed agreement, Korea (the fifth largest trade market in the world) and Panama are likely to follow suit. We've put ourselves in the position of fighting a defensive battle in markets that have already been negotiated for our products.

This is not only a trade issue, it's an important economic issue, a global competition issue and a matter of how the U.S. is viewed by other countries. It's so important, that the American Farm Bureau has started a national campaign called "Trade Matters" urging Congress and the administration to pass all three FTAs by the end of summer. To learn more about the campaign and have your voice heard by Congress, visit: <http://capwiz.com/afb/home/>.

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Blake E. Roderick, Editor/Publisher

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NEVER UNDERESTIMATE TODAY'S YOUNG FARMERS

Ben LaCross

Young farmers and ranchers are alive and kicking. In fact, never in my adult life have I been so inspired by agriculture's future leaders as I am right now.

So, understandably, I was dismayed and puzzled after reading a recent blog post by a staffer from the activist group Natural Resources Defense Council, titled "Increasing age of farmers puts our food system at risk."

The writer used numerous disjointed statistics to support her unfounded thesis: "The scary truth is that industrial agriculture is failing to breed a crop of bright young farmers to take their (older farmers) place."

From my viewpoint, as a young farmer, I am amazed by my fellow young farmers and ranchers. These young people are motivated, community-minded, environmentally conscious and ready to lead agriculture. Perhaps the writer should have gotten out into the countryside to meet a few of my young counterparts.

Make no mistake, the challenges we face in agriculture are real. But young farmers and ranchers are equipping themselves with the necessary knowledge and experience to produce food, fuel and fiber

for our ever-growing population.

As a specialty crop grower, I find it very interesting to get to know young farmers in different sectors of agriculture and learn about the issues they are dealing with.

We talk about succession planning, such as how we can effectively transfer responsibilities on the farm from our parents and grandparents to ourselves. We talk about connecting consumers with the food we are growing for them. We talk about food safety. We talk about how we can meet consumer demand. We never talk about diminishing numbers of young farmers and ranchers, as we see firsthand the growing youth movement in agriculture.

Annually, nearly 900 young farmers and ranchers under the age of 35 from around the nation attend Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers National Leadership Conference to learn more about agriculture and network with one another. This year, for the first time, we partnered with the Agriculture Department, which held its Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Conference in conjunction with our meeting.

In addition, groups like FFA and 4-H help young kids

grow leadership skills, gain a sense of self-worth that only agriculture can teach and ignite the entrepreneurial spirit in hundreds of thousands of elementary and high school children.

Each year, more than 50,000 FFA members gather in Indianapolis to compete, grow as individuals and celebrate their role in agriculture. While not all those members will become farmers, FFA broadens their perspectives on agriculture and rural leadership. I am always amazed at the poise and ability these young people have and I can't help but be proud that the next generation of farmers are so engaged.

Agriculture is a challenge and a responsibility to those of us involved in it. We understand the stakes. A nation of full bellies and warm bodies is our calling. The demographics of agriculture may be changing, but young farmers and ranchers are poised to continue to put food on America's dinner table.

Make no mistake; the future of American agriculture is in caring and able hands.

Ben LaCross chairs AFBF's national YF&R Committee. He is a cherry, plum and apple farmer in Cedar, Michigan.

FASTBALLS AND FARMING

By Craig Fata

This time of year reminds one that baseball season is like farming. Now that Opening Day has come and gone and planters are starting to roll across much of the country, a number of parallels can be drawn.

In the spring, baseball teams hope all the work they did in the off-season pays off, and everybody, the Chicago Cubs included, holds out hope for a successful summer and a great result in the fall.

Farming is the same way. Growers put their seeds in the ground after lots of planning, preparation and scouting, and then they turn it over to nature - the same way a team's fate is mostly in the hands of the players after Opening Day.

There are certain things farmers can do to help their crops, in much the same manner there are certain strategic moves managers can make to help win baseball games. But, once you plant those seeds - or send the "hit-and-run" sign to the third-base coach - a lot of it is out of your control. It's going to be up to Mother Nature (or a guy hitting .220) whether you succeed.

And like baseball players,

farmers hope for good weather. Too hot or too cold for too long and things can turn rough in a hurry. A good rain, especially during the dog days of August, is always welcomed by those with a crop in the field and season-weary ballplayers alike.

One way in which farming differs from baseball is in the rules of the game. The rules don't change very much in baseball. The game that's played today is essentially the same one that was played by Babe Ruth and Shoeless Joe. Sure, there's the designated hitter and the wild card, but if the Babe showed up at a sandlot or at Yankee Stadium today, he'd likely not miss a beat.

Farming, though, seems to have to adapt to new rules every year. Whether it's new permit requirements from a federal agency or new activist-driven state laws about how to care for animals, it seems like folks who farmed in the Babe's era might be awfully confused about how to jump through some of the man-made obstacles that confront today's farmers.

But, at the heart of all that is natural and good, baseball is still baseball, and farming

is still farming. There is little doubt that Lou Gehrig could hit today, just as sure as our great-grandparents could be successful farmers if they were suddenly dropped in the middle of a fertile field and asked to tend a growing crop. It might take time to get used to the new rules and nuances of both occupations, but it all boils down to the natural part of getting a bat on a ball, and coaxing crops and animals to grow.

And in farming, like in baseball, if all goes right, you'll be successful in the fall. You might not have a champion harvest every year, but as long as you're competitive, it's usually a pretty good season. As of now, the corn crop and the Cubs both have a legitimate shot at a season to remember.

Craig Fata, a recovering Cubs fan, is a media relations manager for the Illinois Farm Bureau.



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Contact your county Farm Bureau for your rebate form.

www.ilfb.org/member

SERVICE LEARNING FOR AGRICULTURE

By Gary Shupe, Chair, JWCC Agricultural Sciences

I gave the JWCC agriculture students at the Quincy campus an assignment this semester that may have been out of the ordinary for some students. I asked them to perform a service learning activity involving agriculture. The main objective was for the students to communicate the importance of agriculture to others. Since so many children have little exposure to farming and agriculture, and their understanding of where their food comes from is not much more than going to the grocery store, I thought the activity should focus on children. I wanted the students to experience a variety of ways to present a message about agriculture to grade school children.

The service learning activity began with the students contacting Sharon Knorr who facilitates the AITC (Ag in the Classroom) program in Adams County schools. Mrs. Knorr uses the AITC program to teach young people about the interlocking role of farming and food and fiber production, its impact on environmental quality, wildlife habitat, clean water, and the preservation and improvement of forests. I thought this would be a perfect service learning activity and a great environment for the college students to experience!

Each John Wood student scheduled a date to assist Mrs. Knorr with her presentations and activities for two grade school class periods. They interacted one-on-one, or with small groups of children, in the range of kindergarten to middle school grades. I was always eager to hear how everything went for the students when they returned to my classroom. The response almost always given was an enthusiastic report on how much they enjoyed the children and the experience. Some students even stayed an extra class period or two to continue helping Mrs. Knorr.

The service learning experience was going well, but out of the blue I received a phone call from a teacher at the Quincy Public School's Early Childhood and Family Center. They were seeking help from the JWCC agriculture students. Their teachers needed agriculture-minded people to staff the activities they had planned for a Mini Ag Day for their three and four year olds attending the center. I was extremely pleased that well over 80% of the class volunteered to assist with the morning and afternoon activity as part of their service learning experience. Of course, it didn't hurt to sweeten the pot with a few extra credit points for anyone volunteering that had already completed their AITC participation! Needless to say, I believe both the experiences were more valuable to the students than any extra grade points they may have received!

The end of the semester has come and I now need to assess whether the service learning assignment was a success. I believe the answer became obvious shortly after the first students returned from their Ag in the Classroom experience. Their smiling faces and the liveliness in their voices as they shared stories brought back from the experience was just about all I needed!

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Commodity board petitions can now be circulated

Farmers who this year would like to run for three-year terms on the Illinois Corn Marketing Board, Illinois Soybean Program Operating Board, or Illinois Sheep and Wool Marketing Board may now start circulating nominating petitions.

Producers must be at least 18 years old, have produced and marketed the pertinent commodity during the 2011 commodity year, reside in the district to be represented, and have submitted a valid petition by the filing deadline to be eligible for election.

Openings exist in districts 1, 4, 7, 10, and 13 of the corn board, districts 1, 5, 7, 9, 12, and 13 of the soybean board, and districts 1, 4, and 7 of the sheep and wool board.

Pike and Scott Counties are in District 12 of the Soybean Board.

Elections for all three boards will be held July 6. For more information, call IDOA at 217-782-6675 or write to: Illinois Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Marketing and Promotion, P.O. Box 19281, State Fairgrounds, Springfield, Ill., 62794-9281.



More than 500 FFA members, County Farm Bureau Managers, FFA advisors from 80 Illinois counties attended the 2010 Illinois Farm Bureau & Affiliates Youth Conference, April 4-5 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield.

Pictured (left to right) are: FRONT ROW: Summer Irvin, Western FFA; Hannah Eddington, Western FFA; Gavin Brackett, Griggsville-Perry FFA; Shelby Pruett, Pleasant Hill FFA; BACK ROW: John Edgar, President, Illinois Association FFA; Taylor Smith, Pittsfield FFA; Lauren Jones, Pleasant Hill FFA; Mitchell Smith, Griggsville-Perry FFA

The annual two-day conference is sponsored by Illinois Farm Bureau and its affiliated companies, which include GROWMARK, COUNTRY Financial, Prairie Farms and the IAA Credit Union. Please visit www.youthed.org or <http://www.facebook.com/ilfbbyea> for more information on the Illinois Farm Bureau & affiliated companies Youth Education program.

SOYBEAN MEAL FEEDS ILLINOIS LIVESTOCK AND ECONOMY

Soybean meal plays an important role as feed in animal agriculture in Illinois, which in turn has a significant impact on the state's economy. A recently completed soybean checkoff-funded study by Promar International confirms the results.

"Domestic livestock industries are by far the major source of demand for U.S. soybean meal, and future soybean demand is tightly linked to the health of those industries," says Ron Moore, soybean farmer from Roseville, Ill., and Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) chairman.

Promar finds Illinois animal agriculture during 2009 used an estimated 653,000 tons of soybean meal, the equivalent of about 22 million bushels. Illinois soybean farmers raise more than 400 million bushels annually. Pork producers accounted for 82.5 percent of the meal consumed, followed by five percent by egg, 4.1 percent by dairy and 3.6 percent by beef producers.

During the same year, animal agriculture represented \$4.5 billion in Illinois revenues, \$744 million in household income and 37,136 jobs. Animal agriculture also yielded an estimated \$173 million in income taxes and \$246 million in property taxes in 2009.

"The economic impact of animal agriculture in Illinois is substantial. About \$1 million in production sales from the above livestock segments yields \$2.36-2.91 million in total economic activity, \$390,000-\$487,000 in household wages, and 21.5 to 22.5 additional jobs," says Moore.

"And while that is good news, soybean checkoff-funded efforts must continue to help address the decline in animal

agriculture production we have seen in Illinois over the past ten years." Promar estimates the decline led to a decrease of \$202 million in economic output, \$33 million in household wages, more than 2,000 jobs and \$7.7 million in income tax revenue.

"ISA leaders recognize the impact of the decline, and know it needs to change if soybean farmers are going to maintain a strong domestic customer base within the state," says Nicole Boettger, ISA livestock program and strategy contractor. "We are working on a number of fronts with animal agriculture groups to not only maintain, but enhance, markets and economic activity."

National hog production has increased by 20 percent in the past decade, while Illinois production has fluctuated, dropping from 2003 to 2007, but recovering again by 2009. National cattle production has decreased by four percent in the last decade, and Illinois cattle production has dropped since 2007 by more than 10 percent.

Promar finds two pieces of Illinois legislation may enhance animal agriculture for the future. One provides lower interest rates and increased access to capital during the growing season, as well as expands the Illinois Finance Authority's long-standing loan guarantee program for agriculture by including working capital and coverage for innovative farming practices. The other encourages local food purchases. Schools and prisons will increase consumption of local foods. In-state producers will be favored over out-of-state counterparts, even if more expensive.

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) is the statewide organization for Illinois soybean growers. The farmers on its board administer soybean checkoff funds to support research, promotions, and educational programs designed to increase demand for Illinois soybeans and administer legislation and membership programs. For more information, visit: www.ilsoy.org.

CLEAN WATER "GUIDANCE"

continued from front page

2010 guidance dealing with mountaintop coal mining, it will solicit public comments but ignore them, according to Don Parrish, AFBF senior director of regulatory relations.

"Public comment on guidance is a sham," declared Parrish. He said the agencies are using the regulatory process to advance a political agenda, one that neither the Supreme Court nor Congress considers lawful.

"Guidance layered on top of guidance is not the proper approach to deal with this important issue.

The correct procedure is to issue a notice of rulemaking, propose the rule with ample time for public comments and put the final rule into effect only after comments have been considered," Parrish explained. "EPA and the Corps are making a mockery of the regulatory process and, let's be clear, they are trying to shift the burden of proof from government to individuals to demonstrate that a waterbody, or even in some cases dry land, is not a 'water of the United States.'"

**11th Annual
Two Rivers Farm Bureau Foundation
Golf Tournament
Friday, June 17, 2011
Old Orchard Country Club**

Pittsfield, Illinois

10:00 a.m. Shotgun Start

\$50/Golfer or \$200/Team

Includes Green Fees, Cart, Award Dinner

Lunch and Beverages Available on Course

Register at www.tworiversfb.org

or at your county Farm Bureau office



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Livestock farmers: A larger industry means a stronger one. A strong industry gives producers a greater competitive edge through efficiencies in regulation, technology, transportation, strategic marketing, and more.

Grain Farmers: Livestock is the strongest domestic market for Illinois corn. Each year, the state's livestock eats 118 million bushels worth of corn and 31 million bushels of soybean meal.

Community Members: Our nation's food security depends on domestic production. Plus Illinois' economy depends on farms that flourish and rural communities that prosper. Each year, the Illinois livestock industry generates:

- \$3.4 billion in economic activity
- \$334 million state tax revenue
- 45,000 jobs

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