Old mill, new co-op link to add value

By ROGER SNELL
Kentucky Agricultural News

Phil Weisenberger and Dan Bonk had never met until they were at a trade show in adjoining booths, with Weisenberger peddling old-fashioned spoonbread and a mix of special batters and Bonk cooking up catfish.

"Try this," Weisenberger said to Bonk.

The result blended more than batter and catfish. Their chance encounter linked the Commonwealth’s oldest family-owned mill to its new aquaculture industry.

Catfish fresh from Kentucky farm ponds, bathed in Weisenberger Mills batter and ready for frying or baking could arrive at key restaurants and grocery stores as early as this spring.

Bonk is still working out the details on behalf of the Graves County-based Purchase Area Aquaculture Cooperative (PAAC), which is supplying the catfish.

Through grants, the PAAC has purchased new equipment to mix the batter and freeze and package the catfish for delivery to Kentucky stores.

The ripple effect of the deal means Weisenberger buys more wheat and corn from Kentucky farmers to fill his four storage silos in back of Weisenberger Mills.

Kentucky needs more fish farmers.
Story, page 3.

Ky. Ag Day marked by honors, meals

KAN staff report

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture celebrated Agriculture Day on March 15 by rewarding young people for their efforts and by helping feed some hungry Kentucky children.

The Kentucky Ag Day luncheon at the Kentucky History Center honored students in grades 1-8 for winning the Department’s annual Poster and Essay Contest.

"Education is an important part of our Department’s mission, and students across the Commonwealth have been learning how farm-fresh food gets from a producer’s operation to their own table through our annual Poster and Essay Contest," Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer said.

Children statewide entered drawings and essays based on the theme "Agriculture: from Farm to Table.” Contest winners in each grade received $100 savings bonds as they were recognized at the luncheon.

Contest winners and their parents and teachers at the Ag Day celebration in Frankfort were treated to a performance of a special one-woman drama, “Diary of the Depression: A Day in a Life” starring actress Annie Denny. The attendees also received a private tour of the History Center’s permanent exhibit “The Kentucky Journey.”

KDA also provided support for the Dare to Care Food Bank and its Kids Café program. The Kids Cafés serve hot, nutritious meals to children in economically challenged areas each week at no cost. The program serves children 2,200 hot meals each week in 13 areas across Kentucky. KDA has committed $3,500 in grants to the project.

"During National Agriculture
Safety first at Farm Machinery Show

The National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville in February signaled that spring was just around the corner. Left: Rodger Bingham, deputy director of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture’s marketing office, reminisced with fellow “Survivor” veteran Tom “Big Tom” Buchanan, a goat and cattle farmer from Virginia. Bingham helped staff the Department’s farm safety display at the show. Below left: KDA farm safety field officer Jason Hodge resets the Department’s tractor rollover simulator. Below right: Future farmer Daniel Roggenkamp, 8 months old, tries out the latest in tractors with help from his cousin, Lauren Thompson. Both live on family farms in Nelson County.

Southern trade group offers export workshop in April

Kentucky companies specializing in food and other agriculture-based products can learn to get more out of export activities through workshops jointly coordinated by the Southern U.S. Trade Association (SUSTA) and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. The next Exporter’s Information Session is slated for April 15-16 in Louisville.

The Exporter’s Information Session will help companies learn how to lower export expenses, meet foreign buyers, participate in industry promotions, and discover the basics of exporting. SUSTA provides services and programs to offset the risks of international marketing.

For more information, contact Kelly Ludwig with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture by phone at (502) 564-4983 or via e-mail at kelly.ludwig@kyagr.com, or log onto the SUSTA Web site at www.susta.org.
Wanted: more fish farmers in Kentucky

April 17 meeting offers education for new, experienced producers

By ROGER SNELL
Kentucky Agricultural News

Dan Bonk and the Kentucky aquaculture industry are faced with a good challenge, one that is rare in farming.

They need more producers. Consumer demand for Kentucky catfish and other aquaculture products surpasses what the Purchase Area Aquaculture Cooperative (PAAC) can supply.

The Kentucky Aquaculture Association will host an important annual meeting April 17 in Elizabethtown to help current producers and encourage new ones. The meeting will be from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. EDT at the Elizabethtown Tourism and Convention Bureau at 1030 N. Mulberry St. and is open to anyone. Workshops on raising catfish and prawns will be offered, and experts on marketing and insurance for specialty crops will be on hand.

“Last year was a very good year where we were selling as fast as we could produce,” said Bonk, who is a board member and sales and marketing director for the Graves County-based PAAC and also serves as president of the Western Regional Chapter of the Kentucky Aquaculture Association.

“What is a shame is that we are so close to a breakthrough, but agricultural loans are difficult to get for the initial capital costs of building ponds and buying aeration equipment,” Bonk said.

Lending institutions are reluctant to make any farm loans without 100 percent collateral, Bonk said. Producers have sought a variety of support to help with startup costs, but more needs to be done, he said.

The PAAC is freezing short-season, fresh products that could last up to one year. Grants helped PAAC get the equipment and new freezers that would allow long-term storage of its products without compromising its quality.

The co-op also bought a new breading and battering machine in December 2003 so it can produce catfish bathed in a special batter mix created by Weisenberger Mills near Midway.

Consumers are responding to marketing efforts by PAAC, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and others to buy from Kentucky producers, Bonk said. The entire 2003 season of prawns was sold out in one weekend of production, he said.

“We’re going to have a lot more prawn in 2004, with 21 growers supplying through us and also through Fishmarket Seafoods of Louisville,” Bonk said. Consumers will find this product in Kentucky restaurants and Kroger stores this fall.

Some Kentucky producers already are taking the plunge into non-traditional aquaculture products.

One producer is raising tilapia, a popular gourmet fish, in huge vats of 100-degree water in several greenhouses. Tilapia has surpassed trout in U.S. retail sales every year since 1995, according to the American Tilapia Association.

With support from the Western Kentucky cooperative, paddlefish products will appear on the Kentucky market in future years. It takes seven to 10 years to harvest the first caviar, a five-star restaurant delicacy derived from paddlefish eggs. The first fish for eating will appear in some Kentucky restaurants this year, Bonk said.

Striped bass also will reach the market this fall for the first time, with more than 100,000 fish in production.

B onk can be reached at (270) 382-2680 or by e-mail at dbonk@wk.net. Angela Caporelli, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture’s aquaculture marketing specialist, can be reached at (502) 564-4983, ext. 259, or by e-mail at angela.caporelli@kyagr.com.

Weisenberger uses same process, expands product line

Continued from Page 1

Weisenberger Mills. Each unit holds up to 20,000 bushels of wheat and yellow and white corn purchased in Shelby, Woodford and Hardin counties. The mill uses 20,000 bushels in about two months, ground over stones and burrs in a roar of twirling belts and wheels.

The mill’s twin turbines have run on water from South Elkhorn Creek in southern Scott County since the early 1800s, but electric power also is available.

Six generations of Weisenbergers have operated the mill at the present location since 1865. August Weisenberger emigrated from Baden, Germany to start milling at Midway, Kentucky in 1862. He purchased the current Weisenberger Mill in 1865.

Phil Weisenberger is the fourth generation, joined by his son, Mac, and grandson, Philip, who is 31. A seventh generation is on the way.

Phil is now retired but goes to the office regularly. Mac is the owner and lone stockholder.

When the business started, there were more than 300 commercial flour mills in Kentucky. Now there are three, with Weisenberger’s the oldest in a single family.

“After World War II, corporate giants like General Mills were able to take advantage of mass advertising and improved marketing, which drove out most family operations”, Phil Weisenberger said.

Their company survives through personal service, loyal customers and constant change, Weisenberger said.

In the early years, the primary products were soft wheat flour and white cornmeal. Weisenberger said his business shifted “to meet how baking needs of our customers evolved.”

Today Weisenberger Mills makes more than 70 products, including flour for any baking purpose, complete mixes for many popular end products, and breading blends for chicken, fish, meats and vegetables. Newer products such as pizza crust mix are rising in sales and popularity.

In Phil’s younger years, the money came from retail sales. Products were delivered by the company’s fleet of trucks.

The manufacturing process has changed little in a century, but express mail and other postal services now handle shipping, Weisenberger said.

The company even uses the Internet to sell products that still start as usual on the third floor as wheat or corn and then whirl, churn, grind and spill their way down two floors to bags filled by hand, one at a time.

Today the mill can produce up to 300 hundredweight, or 30,000 pounds, a day of milled and packaged products. Seven employees, including three family members, handle all the work.

Almost 90 percent of sales are to hotels and restaurants. Kroger and Meijer carry several Weisenberger Mill products in packages with the familiar mill logo.

Loyal customers — including a Kentucky native living in Hawaii — amaze Weisenberger. Hungering for spoonbread on an island known for pineapples, the Hawaii customer orders a case for $6.50 and is happy to pay more than $7.50 for shipping.

For more information, to order via the Internet or to visit the store for a purchase, log on to www.weisenberger.com or call (800) 643-8678.
Youth need to know where food comes from

You’ve heard the term “from Pikeville to Paducah” to describe something that spans the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky. Well, in this issue of Kentucky Agricultural News, you will read about exciting happenings in Kentucky agriculture that stretch from Greenup County to Graves County.

Kentucky Department of Agriculture staff recently went to Greenup County to watch an outstanding program that teaches schoolchildren about agriculture and how it is tied into our everyday lives.

On the other end of the state, the Purchase Area Aquaculture Cooperative in Graves County is getting out the word: Kentucky needs fish farmers. Demand is outstripping supply for Kentucky-raised catfish, prawns and other aquaculture products.

The PAAC also is joining forces with Weisenberger Mills in the Bluegrass to produce already-battered catfish ready to cook and enjoy. Look for it in your local grocery soon. If you don’t see it, tell the store manager you want it.

All over the Commonwealth, the new Kentucky Proud marketing campaign is underway. I was Kentucky Proud to help launch the campaign during the boys’ and girls’ Sweet Sixteen basketball tournaments. We’ve added some color to the logo to go with the familiar cardinal symbol you’ve seen on Kentucky-made products for almost two years. I hope you’ll look for it.

But the lead story in Kentucky Agricultural News this time of year – even though it doesn’t appear on Page 1 – is about the Department’s annual Poster and Essay Contest for Kentucky schoolchildren in grades 1-8. I had the pleasure of meeting the winners at the annual Kentucky Agriculture Day luncheon, and they are all bright, talented young people who represent their schools and their families very well. Through this contest they learned about how food gets from the farm to the table, and how hard our farmers work to provide Americans the safest, most abundant and most affordable food supply in the world.

Many more children submitted entries this year than in the past, and the competition was tough. We can choose only one winner per grade, but many other contestants deserve credit for a job well done.

The contest is one of the many things the Kentucky Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom program does to help Kentucky teachers raise their students’ awareness of the importance of agriculture. Most of us are three or more generations removed from the farm, and it’s easy to take for granted how much farmers do for us every day.

I have three boys of my own, and I can assure you they will grow up understanding that food doesn’t just come from the store. That’s one reason I decided to run for Commissioner of Agriculture.

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Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner

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ID system tested in Springfield

By TED SLOAN
Kentucky Agricultural News

Buyers and sellers crowded the Washington County Livestock Center in Springfield on the normal Friday sale day on Feb. 20. There were clues that something was going on – particularly the dignitaries, reporters and photographers who were on hand for the sale. But had the farmers not been told, they might never have realized that they were witnessing history.

That was the idea. Cattle were herded into the sale ring and then out through the exit as usual. But the animals were fitted with small, eggshell-colored eartags. The exit was equipped with metal panels and, out of sight of the sale ring, a device that read signals from the eartags and fed the signals into the stockyard’s computer.

Such electronic identification systems have been used in certified preconditioned for health (CPH-45) sales for years. But this was the first use of an EID system in a normal sale environment. The Kentucky Beef Network, the University of Kentucky, the Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture set up the demonstration to show that an EID system could be implemented without disrupting a routine livestock sale.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture wants all cattle, swine and small ruminants to have individual or group/lot identification for interstate movement by mid-2005. Kentucky’s cattle industry is considered a leader in EID, and officials from other states have come to Kentucky to see how it works.

Cattlemouse Jeff Settles of Springfield, a member of the Kentucky Beef Network, said an identification system like the one demonstrated in Springfield is crucial to beef cattle producers.

“To me as a producer, it protects my business, my industry. I sell cattle,” Settles said.

The system is designed to trace an animal’s movement from its point of origin to the packing house. It identifies the animal as well as the premises of the seller, the market, the order buyer and/or the animal’s destination. It also can be used to provide production information to the seller.

See CATTLEMAN, page 8

‘Chef’ mixes comedy with ag lessons

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Photos by Roger Snell
‘I am thankful’

I am thankful for the farmer because he harvests the corn. I am thankful for the truck driver because he delivers the corn to the processing plant. I am thankful for the processing plant workers because they put the corn into cans. I am thankful for the truck driver because he delivers the food to the grocery store. I am thankful for my mom, the consumer, because she buys the corn. I am also thankful for my mom because she uses the corn to make vegetable soup. I am very thankful for all the people who work to get food from the farm to my table!

Ben Havener, First Grade
Potter Gray Elementary, Bowling Green
Nancy Brandenburg, teacher

‘Some farmer worked hard’

My Granny was born at home in 1942. They lived on a farm and she worked hard. They had a family garden and she helped her mother pick beans and tomatoes, and helped can them. Another job was to shell corn every night to feed the chickens. She also had to get up early, before she went to school to milk the cows. In the summer she worked in the tobacco fields.

I was born in 1996 and everything has changed. I live in town and we don’t have a garden, or chickens, or a milk cow. We go to the grocery store to get the food we need. I know that farmers grow that food, and pick it fresh to send to the grocery store or Farmers Market.

Now when I eat at Granny’s I know some farmer worked hard to grow the delicious food we have to eat.

Sommer Calvert, Second Grade
Southside Elementary, Versailles
Peggy Carter Seal, teacher

‘Grandfather, uncle grow corn’

My grandfather and my uncle both grow corn. This is how it gets from farm to table.

It all begins each spring when the farmers plant the corn. The farmer takes care of it in the field for six months. Finally in the fall, the farmer harvests the corn with his combine. The corn is then stored in the grain bins for later use.

Some of the corn may get shipped over the ocean for other countries to use. Some corn is used to feed the animals. Some corn is ground up at the dry corn miller to make corn oil, corn starch, and corn sweeteners for soda and chips. Other corn goes to the wet corn miller to make corn oil, corn starch, and corn sweeteners for soda and candy. The mills then send it to the grocery store for us to buy.

Matt McCarty, Third Grade
Utica Elementary, Utica
Jennifer Hayden, teacher

‘Pizza is grown on a farm’

Did you know that pizza is grown on a farm? Yeah, you heard me: PIZZA-IS-GROWN-ON-A-FARM! You think I’m crazy? I’ll prove it.

Let’s break down the ingredients in pizza. First, you must have a crust. What is a pizza crust? It is made out of flour, and flour comes from wheat. Where does wheat come from? Ding, ding, ding – you’re right! It is grown and cultivated on a farm.

The next ingredient must be cheese. You can’t make a pizza without cheese. Well, we all know cheese comes from milk, cows give milk, and cows grow up on a – FARM!

Meat: Almost everyone I know eats some kind of meat on their pizza. There’s pepperoni, sausage, and ham to name a few. Well, as much as I don’t want to talk about it, all three of these meats come from pigs. Once again, pigs are raised on a – farm!

The final toppings on a pizza usually includes things like peppers, onions, and mushrooms. These foods are in the vegetable food group, and vegetables are grown on a – you guessed it – farm! There you have it, pizza, from farm to table. If you really think about it, and get down to the details, pizza IS grown on a farm.

Summer Rose Pugh, Fourth Grade
Grapevine Elementary, Phyllis
Donna Anderson, teacher

‘Your milk could be from our farm’

Have you ever thought how unappreciated today’s farmers are? They supply most of this country’s beef and dairy products from cows, pork from pigs, and poultry from chickens. They also grow fruits, vegetables, and wheat and crops like tobacco and cotton. Some farmers even provide lumber because they have small woods on their property. Although they don’t always do the preparation of the food, farmers must raise the animal that produces the food or grow the crops that produce food or clothing materials.

As the son of self-employed dairy farmers, I know how hard it is to go through the process of getting milk from the cows to the store. First, you have to feed the cows so they’ll produce milk. Most farmers let them graze and feed them hay, silage, or a specialized feed. Then you have to milk the cows. While milking farmers must make sure that milk from cows that are sick and on medicine is separated from what will be sold. Once that is done the farmers must make sure that the milk is kept cool in a tank until the “milk hauler” from the company that you sell the milk to comes to pick it up.

At the company milk is pasteurized, homogenized, and separated so it can be made into cheese, ice cream, and yogurt. The main part of the milk is watered down, bottled, and sold as the different varieties of milk we drink today. Actually, your milk could be from our farm.

Lucas Bragg, Fifth Grade
Temple Hill Elementary, Glasgow
Sherry Stephens, teacher
Farm to Table

‘Farmers work hard everyday to put food on your table’

Although farmers make up less than two percent of Kentucky’s population, they strongly impact people all over the nation and even the world. One farmer can supply food for about 129 people in the United States! Since my dad is a farmer, I get to see firsthand the long and time-consuming process of turning just a seed into a tall stalk of corn and a young calf into a large, plump cow. However, this lengthy yet essential process pays off. Not only does it feed many people, it profits the farmer for all of his or her hard work. Once agriculture products are ready to be harvested and cows weigh enough to be shipped, the process called “from farm to table” begins. Valuable and important, farmers play a vital role in their process; they are the beginning point of the production of certain foods. If you think about it, without agriculture, many people would be out of a job. There are butchers, people that drive the milk trucks from farm to table, and many others. There are also people that must process and sell the products as well, not to mention people that work in factories constructing farm machinery. All of these things make agriculture and farmers even more significant to our economy. After these products have been grown, and transformed into consumer goods, then they are placed in grocery stores, or markets all over the world. Then consumers, like yourself, purchase these products, cook, eat, drink, or use as an ingredient to make another food, which completes the process “from farm to table.”

As you can see, farmers work hard everyday to put food on your table as well as mine. We should ALL celebrate National Agriculture Day, by doing simple things like wearing traditional farm attire, or if you are involved in FFA or 4-H, wearing your t-shirts, jackets, and hats. Even though it may not seem like much, at least show your appreciation to all the farmers that are going about their daily routine so that you can eat breakfast tomorrow morning.

Annie Wigginton, Seventh Grade
Bloomfield Middle School, Bloomfield
Michelle Devine, teacher

‘Think of all the work and time it takes’

Beep! Beep! Beep! Your alarm is going off and you’re dreading to get up and get ready for school. You sleepily walk into the kitchen to try and pick out your breakfast. Milk, and cereal, buttered toast, bacon, eggs, fruit juice, all of these breakfast foods are produced by agriculture.

When you think of agriculture, you probably think of Old Farmer John plowing a field ready to plant corn seeds. Well, Farmer John has a lot to do after planting those seeds. He needs to make sure that his crops are growing well and his livestock are cared for properly. After the corn is picked, the calves are born, and all other crops are harvested. John sells his crops and livestock at the market.

After everything is sold, the livestock gets slaughtered, and crops are sent to a refinery where they are canned, packaged, or made into another product. Then they are sent to grocery stores all around Kentucky.

The next time you eat, don’t only think of the work and time it takes to get groceries, but think of all the work and time it takes to get from farm to table.

Jordan Hatchett, Eighth Grade
Glasgow Middle School, Glasgow
Bobbi Turner, teacher

‘Getting food from the farm to the table was hard work’

On Sunday mornings, the yummy smell of bacon, eggs, and biscuits fill our house. It is the one day a week my family sits down at the table to have breakfast together. Today we have the luxury of going to the grocery and buying all the food we need. From what I have been told, my ancestors were not that lucky. They had to grow and raise their food on the farm.

The Moraja’s came to America from Spain in 1896. Their first stop was Ellis Island. By 1903, they had made their way to Washington County, Kentucky and purchased a 540 acre farm. Their means of transportation were horses, buggies, and wagons.

On the farm, my ancestors raised hogs, sheep, cattle, and chickens. They grew wheat, and sold it to the Washington County Mill. They traded grains for flour, and sold cattle, hogs, sheep and mules for money.

My mom remembers my great-grandmother telling stories of hanging chickens on the clothesline and ringing their necks, getting them ready for the frying pan. The women “tended” to the garden while the men worked on the farm. For food they had their own eggs, meat and vegetables. Cows provided their dairy.

Getting food from the farm to the table was hard work. They couldn’t just open a package of hamburgers and cook it. Meat had to be prepared and milk collected from the cows had to be kept “out back” in the spring house kept cool using ice from the creek. It seems to me that they spent all of their time working to get food ready to eat.

I think the next time I go into the kitchen looking for something to munch on, I will remember all the hard work my ancestors had to do just to get food on the table.

Source: Grandfather, Dick Moraja
Ann Carol Moraja, Sixth Grade
St. Augustine Parish School, Lebanon
Mr. Lynn Farris, teacher

The annual Poster and Essay Contest is open to Kentucky students in grades 1-8. Winners received $100 savings bonds and were recognized at the Kentucky Agriculture Day Luncheon on March 15 in Frankfort.

The winning essays and posters are featured in various Kentucky Department of Agriculture publications, the KDA Web site, and at special events. The contest is sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

For more information, contact Rayetta Boone by phone at (502) 564-4696 or by e-mail at rayetta.boone@kyagr.com.
Cattleman: EID system ‘protects my business’

Continued from Page 5

Glenn Smith of AgInfoLink, the manufacturer of the EID system used in Springfield, demonstrated on a laptop computer how an animal’s movements could be illustrated with lines on a map from its point of origin to its point of sale to its destination.

“It has the ability to quickly identify the animal’s pathways and track the animal down,” Smith said.

Smith spoke to a gathering of producers, reporters, and officials in a small meeting room near the sale ring. As the traditional auction continued inside the decades-old stockyard built with rough lumber, Smith used the laptop, samples of the tags and two hand-held readers to show how the system worked. Some members of his audience took pictures of the proceedings with digital cameras. A cellphone rang.

Amid the clash of past and future, the producers and others gathered for Smith’s demonstration voiced concerns that many farmers have: How much will tagging cost, who will own the data, who will have custody of it, and who will have access to it? Many of those details are being worked out as USDA crafts rules for a nationwide EID system.

Smith explained that each tag consists of a small computer chip wrapped in copper wire and embedded in plastic. The reader sends out a low-energy radio frequency (RF) field, and when the tag is close to a reader, the RF field activates the tag and causes it to emit a signal. The reader picks up the signal and transmits the information on the signal to a computer; Smith said his company is working on a system that will transmit the information to a personal digital assistant (PDA).

The panel reader that was set up at the stockyards has a range of about two feet. Handheld readers have a range of about six inches.

The tags currently cost between $2.25 and $2.50, Smith said. “It’s conceivable that, if we are producing them by the millions, the price could come down somewhat,” he said. A handheld reader tied to a computer costs about $535; a wireless handheld reader is about $895, he said.

Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer in early February asked the General Assembly to appropriate funds to help producers with the cost of the tags.

Asked about the tags’ durability, Smith said, “I bought my first tags in Georgia in 1992 and 1993, and they still work today. The life expectancy of the tag is more than the life expectancy of the animal.”

Smith said five different tags, made by different manufacturers, are on the market. The panel reader that was used at the Springfield stockyards in February cannot read all five types of tags, Smith said, but another manufacturer makes a reader that can.

Beef and dairy cattle would be tagged individually, but poultry and some hogs would be identified as a group, he said.

“There’s going to be a period of time for adjustment for farmers,” Settles said. “Most farmers, I think, are going to be very receptive. Like with anything new, they are resistant to change. And this is a change, but it’s to our benefit.”

KDA helps Kids Cafés on Ag Day

Continued from Page 1

Week, the Kids Cafés served Kentucky-grown commodities as part of their meals,” Commissioner Farmer said, “so producers also benefited.”

Happy Hollow Farms in Springfield received about half the $3,500 to supply pork products to Kids Cafés. Happy Hollow is a part of the nine-member Central Kentucky Hog Marketing Cooperative. The rest of the funds went to supplier Kentucky Premium Beef in Marion, which buys feeder cattle from producers all across the state.

Forums aim to develop regional agritourism leaders

Lincoln County farmer Warren Chaney is sharing his experiences with others.

When Carl Chaney wanted to learn more about ice cream making and how to have a successful agritourism venture, he looked to other farms doing similar enterprises. Today, his family operates a successful ice cream shop at its Warren County dairy and is sharing its experiences with others.

Chaney hosted an agritourism leadership forum early this year conducted by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

Joanna Coles, chairperson of the Agritourism Quick Response Team for the Cooperative Extension Service’s western region, said the team is developing a learning module for Extension agents to use in helping clients find agritourism opportunities and sort through legal issues, business planning and marketing. The team also is developing marketing workshops.

“We hope to bring farmers in and give them some hands-on marketing — making displays, signage and brochures,” Coles said. “So we can help them not only as individuals but maybe as a group marketing effort for their region, which leads to our next goal of regional agritourism leadership.”

The Chaneyes have operated a dairy on their farm since 1942. In 2001, they reduced the size of their herd and began searching for a way to add income.

“Our first thought was we wanted to process milk,” he said. They found there wasn’t anyone in Kentucky doing this on a small scale, so he visited dairies in North Carolina and Alabama and discovered they were processing milk and making ice cream. Chaney then visited with a dairy in Ohio where he became interested in making ice cream, and he went to Penn State for a two-week course on ice cream making.

The result is the Ice Cream Shoppe. In addition to ice cream, the shop contains a restaurant and sells local products such as country ham, cheese and sorghum. The Chaneyes also are planning to do tours of the dairy farm.

“People are so interested in getting back to their roots, and once we started seeing all this, it was just a natural,” said Chaney, a member of the Kentucky Agritourism Advisory Council.

Janet Johnson, chairperson of the subcommittee on leadership, said the committee organized four forums in the western region for people involved in agritourism enterprises as well as marketing and promotion.

“The idea was to bring these people together to look at forming networks from cooperative buying and selling of products to networking for marketing opportunities to share marketing dollars or simply marketing each other,” Johnson said.

Ted Sloan

Glenn Smith of AgInfoLink shows three varieties of ear tags and demonstrates how an electronic identification system can track the movement of livestock on a laptop computer.
New Lewis County business enables soybean farmers in northeastern Kentucky to sell their products close to home.

Jim and Jennifer Meadows of Tollesboro, along with Rick and Donna Lowe of Flemingsburg, were awarded $339,385 in tobacco settlement funds by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board to start a new soybean extrusion business.

Soyx LLC began operation in October 2003. "When the Phase I money came about, the push was to find alternative crops to replace tobacco income," said Jim Meadows, who with his wife owns Rip’s Grainery, a Tollesboro mainstay that has been serving Lewis County for more than a decade. "We’ve had a good market for corn, but there is no area market for soybeans. That’s why Rick and I went before the Ag (Development) Board.”

Meadows and Lowe buy soybeans from producers in Lewis, Fleming, Madison, Greenup, and other nearby counties, paying the going Cincinnati market price. A premium is paid to Lewis and Fleming farmers since the operation was funded through those counties’ ADB funds.

Lewis County farmers harvested 3,000 acres of soybeans in 2002, according to the Kentucky Agricultural Statistics Service, while their neighbors in Fleming County harvested 2,600 acres.

Most of the soy oil is currently being marketed through a molasses firm. The extrusion process also produces a meal that is sold as an alternative feed source for cattle. Area dairy producers buy the meal to feed their animals.

A brighter future for soybean farmers — and Soyx — may be ahead in biodiesel.

Kentucky has already entered the bio-fuel picture with the construction of an ethanol plant in Christian County. The facility is expected to produce about 20 million gallons of ethanol a year, utilizing more than 7 million bushels of corn.

Renewable resource experts are convinced the growth of soy-based biodiesel can be equally successful. Almost two years ago, the Kentucky Soybean Promotion Board came up with an idea to enlighten the state’s diesel operators about biodiesel.

“We began a new program that provides 1,000 gallons of bio-diesel to selected fuel distributors if they will, in turn, blend it with petroleum fuel and offer it to customers,” said Jaime Morgan, communications director for the soybean board. “As a result, diesel operators have had a chance to see biodiesel’s performance first-hand.”

Bio-diesel costs about a penny more per percentage of use, Morgan said. In other words, she said, “if you are using a 5 percent blend with petroleum, the cost is about a nickel more, and so on.” But using bio-diesel extends equipment life, lowers maintenance costs and lessens equipment downtime, Morgan added.

“We are very definitely looking into making our soy oil available to biodiesel distributors in the near future,” Rick Lowe said. “Everyone is excited about the use of renewable fuels, and there certainly seems to be a profit potential there.”

Recent soybean market prices have been good on the whole, Meadows said. “But it’s not the same for Soyx’s end user,” he added, referring to a continuing decline in Kentucky’s dairy industry.

“Everything seems to be going south for the dairy farmer nowadays, and that is certainly a big part of Soyx – the meal byproduct. We are remaining optimistic about this project,” Meadows said. “As far as this end of our new business goes, we’re using Lewis County soybeans to feed Lewis County livestock – and then some.”

The Soyx soybean extruder processes soybeans into soy oil and cattle feed.

The Kentucky Beef Expo was sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and coordinated by its Division of Show and Fair Promotion.

April 2004 Kentucky AGRICULTURAL News

www.kyagr.com

A juicy read


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Robert Stout named state veterinarian

KAN staff report
Dr. Robert Stout of Versailles was named Kentucky’s state veterinarian in February by the Kentucky Board of Agriculture.
Dr. Stout joined the Kentucky Department of Agriculture on July 1, 2003, in a homeland security position funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
Dr. Stout is a graduate of the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture and the veterinary school at The Ohio State University. He has been an equine and cattle practitioner in Versailles since 1974.
A native of Indiana, Dr. Stout has lived in Versailles since 1962 except for his term at OSU and an internship at the University of Georgia.
Dr. Stout replaces Dr. Don Notter of Harrodsburg, who served as Kentucky’s state veterinarian for 16 years.

Angus field day set for May 8

Special to KAN
The 2004 Kentucky Angus Association field day will be held May 8 near Lancaster. Briggs and Beth Cunningham, owners of Cliffside Farms, will host the event.
The program will begin at 2 p.m. Topics will include freeze branding, synchronization, and using and understanding ultrasound technology. The Central Kentucky Junior Angus Association is planning activities for the youth. A tour of the farm and an evening meal will conclude the activities.
For more information, contact the Cunningham family at (859) 792-4618 or log onto www.cliffsidefarms.com.

ABAK scholarships available

Special to KAN
The Agribusiness Association of Kentucky has developed a scholarship program for state undergraduate students majoring in agriculture to help them afford the cost of a postsecondary education.
The scholarship is in the amount of $1,000 per school year, paid in two equal installments of $500 per semester.
For more information on the scholarship, contact the ABAK at (502) 226-1122. Deadline for application is June 1.
The ABAK is a statewide trade association that represents agribusinesses on a state and national basis.

Thacker earns sheep industry honor

Special to KAN
A Versailles sheep producer received a top award from the American Sheep Industry Association during its national convention Jan. 23 in Sacramento, Calif.
The McClure Silver Ram Award was presented to Roger Thacker of Versailles for his substantial contribution to the sheep industry.
Thacker has been an active member of the Kentucky Sheep and Wool Producers Association as well as ASI for more than three decades. He worked to get sheep and goats included in funding opportunities from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board. In 1996, the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Sheep Profit Day was dedicated to Thacker for his many contributions to the state sheep industry.
ASI is a national organization supported by 41 state sheep associations, benefiting the interests of nearly 64,000 sheep producers.

Benefit dairy sale in May

KAN staff report
The Derby Showcase dairy cattle sale is scheduled for May 2 at 2 p.m. EDT at the Franklin County Fairgrounds.
The all-breeds sale benefits the Louisville Jersey Parish. The sale precedes the June 1 deadline to transfer calves to juniors’ names for the purpose of in-store promotion in 2004.
For more information, contact Jackie Branham at Mills Lane Farm at (502) 227-7113 or (502) 545-0890.

Farmers get second chance for Phase II funds

Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy
The Kentucky Tobacco Settlement Trust Corporation has adopted an amnesty certification program for the Phase II Fund.
The amnesty program was developed to allow growers and tenants to qualify for Phase II payments if they did not file a valid certification form during the initial sign-up for Phase II funds. The amnesty program is an attempt to reach 100 percent certification of tenant and grower pounds for the crop years of 1998, 1999, and 2000 for Kentucky’s Phase II program.
Certification forms will be mailed out in mid-May to farms that have not been certified for all or a portion of the grower and tenant pounds. In addition to the certification form, any grower or tenant associated with that farm for any one of the three years will be sent an alternate contact letter. In early June, Phase II representatives will hold four regional meetings across the state to answer questions and provide assistance in completing the forms.
Participants in the amnesty program will not receive retroactive payments. Those who are certified under the amnesty program will begin receiving payments in December 2004.

NJSA youth conference deadline near

Special to KAN
Applications for the National Junior Swine Association’s third annual youth leadership conference are due to the National Swine Registry office by April 15.
The conference for youth ages 16-21 will be May 20-23 in Dayton. Ohio. The theme for this year’s conference is “Find Your Success.”
Scott Vernon of San Luis Obispo, Calif., will serve as the keynote speaker for the conference. Vernon is a leading motivational speaker for youth organizations and understands the challenges of the livestock industry.
Warren Beeler of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture’s Division of Show and Fair Promotion is scheduled to speak at the conference. Tours and workshops will be offered.
The conference fee is $100. All rooms, meals and activities will be included in this fee. Applications may be obtained by contacting the NSR office at P.O. Box 2417, West Lafayette, IN 47976-2417; by phone at (765) 463-3594, or via the NSR’s Web site at www.nationalswine.com.

National Junior Angus Show on tap

Special to KAN
The 2004 National Junior Angus Show will be held July 12-17 at the American Royal Complex in Kansas City, Mo. The six-day event will feature the largest single beef cattle show in the world and a host of educational leadership activities for all members of the National Junior Angus Association.
The cattle show will include divisions for bred-and-owned bulls, heifers and cow-calf pairs as well as owned heifers, cow-calf pairs and steers. Youth can also participate in educational competitions such as prepared and extemporaneous speaking, team sales, quiz bowl, photography, poster, graphic design and creative writing.
Exhibitors and contestants at the NJAS must be a junior member of the American Angus Association and must be 9 years old but not yet 21 as of Jan. 1, 2004.
For more information, call the American Angus Association at (816) 383-5100 or log onto the NJAS Web site at www.njas.info.

Angus association offers United Kingdom tour

Special to KAN
The celebration coincides with the 125th anniversary of the Aberdeen Angus Society in the United Kingdom.
Space on the tour is limited. For more information or to download a registration form, a complete itinerary and costs, go to www.anchorsawaycruises.com/angusscotland or call Terry Steele at Anchors Away Cruises and Tours at 1-800-527-8666, ext. 203.
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

NOTICE: Agriculture-related classified ads are run free of charge in KENTUCKY AGRICULTURAL NEWS. FOR SALE items must be restricted to residents of Kentucky. Address advertisements to KENTUCKY AGRICULTURAL NEWS, 7th Floor, 500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY 40601. PRINT your name, address and city or county plainly. All communications and transactions must be made between interested parties, and the Department of Agriculture assumes no liability for such transactions. The Department of Agriculture also reserves the right to refuse advertisements as well as dismiss advertisements due to date, space restrictions, etc. Persons using this service are encouraged also to utilize private press media for their advertisements.

ANIMALS

FOR SALE: Katahdin hair sheep. Registered and commercial. (859) 428-1491.

CHAROALIS PERFORMANCE YEARLING BULLS. Sired by TT Real Stryker 1953H. Very good EPDs with above average weaning and yearling weights. Good pedigrees. $1,200 each. Free delivery within 50 miles. River Ridge Farms. Call (270) 528-3322, ask for Greg, or e-mail glsws@scrtc.com. Canmer, Ky.

FOR SALE: Registered service age Holstein bulls. A.I. sired from high producing, high testing sires. (270) 358-3758. Clifford Farms, Williamsburg, Ky. Details, call (270) 358-3758.

BOER GOATS FOR SALE: Registered bucks and nannies, fullblood and percentages with papers, quality breeding and show stock, contact Larry Cole, Cole’s Creek Boer Goats, Bowling Green, Ky., (270) 777-0014 or (502) 535-0014.

FOR SALE: Purebred Charolais Bulls. Hamilton Charolais, Stamping Ground, Ky. Call Jim Hamilton at (360) 535-2003 or (502) 535-6974 or e-mail hamil535@bellsouth.net.

FOR SALE: Registered Angus bulls and heifers. Bulls eligible for 50% cost-share. Call nights (502) 863-6342, days (859) 221-5958.


FOR SALE: South American Llamas. Males and bred females. Registered; some microchipped. Assorted colors and wool types. Friendly, and in excellent health. Call (606) 379-6040, or e-mail at Dchosu@aol.com.

FOR SALE: Purebred Angus bulls and reg. Angus heifers. Pottinger Angus Farm. Call Randy at (270) 324-3062 or Herman at (270) 324-3423 or e-mail plankus@juno.com.


BRANGUS CATTLE FOR SALE: Registered, purebred and commercial Black Brangus bulls and heifers. EPDs available with several qualifying for grant monies. If you are interested in decreasing calving problems and pinkeye and increasing weaning weights then you would be interested in Brangus cattle. Cicle C Brangus, Big Clifty, Ky., (270) 242-7006, susan@aggressivewetline.com.

FOR SALE: Used & stud service. Horses: ponies (all types), new & used trailers, metal roofing & siding, Mule Kate Paint, new & used tack (over 300 saddles), fur blankets, reconditioned, horses (complete from $25 to $500), Wrangler, Panhandle Slim and Lucille clothing, watches, children and adult cowboy hats, chaps, ladies western purses, boots, etc. Gray AQHA stud service, $250, 6th, trailer package – $6,500. All will build to your specifications. Call Jonathan 8a.m.-5 p.m. CT weekdays @ (270) 401-1529.

PROPERTY FOR SALE

164 ACRE FARM IN LOGAN COUNTY: Fenced and creek for cattle, deer, turkey and small game for hunting. 20 minutes from Bowling Green, very private on Old Greensville Rd with county water available. Priced to sell at $179,000. Call (270) 542-684.

120 ACRE FARM FOR SALE, Williamsburg, Ky. (Whitley County) 3-bedroom house, 1 bath, full basement. Three ponds, 2 stocked with fish. Three homes and creek for cattle. Creek runs through property. Call (606) 549-2524.

BEAUTIFUL BUILDINGLOTS, 10+/-acres. All have growing timber or market-ready Christmas trees. One stocked pond; good hunting; approved for septic systems; good aquifer approximately 400 feet deep. Miracle Co., northwest of Brandenburg, Reasonably priced from $11,054. Timber Trace, (502) 339-645.

88-ACRE FARM, with barns, deep well, ponds, and timber. Adjacent house on 18-acre hilltop, four years old, 4,600 sq. ft. Timber Trace, (502) 339-645.

160 ACRE FARM: 600 ft. of Kentucky River for cattle, deer, turkey and small game for hunting, 20 minutes from Bowling Green, very private on Old Greensville Rd with county water available. Priced to sell at $179,000. Call (270) 542-684.

HOMEMADE BREADS, CANDIES, COOKIES, etc. $20 to $50 each. Kerry Beth Hayden, 117 E. Broadway, Williamsburg, Ky. (270) 247-6642.
Anna Alpern, First Grade
Maxwell Elementary
Lexington
Sara Szuliski and
Marilyn Oldham, teachers

Avery Turner, Second Grade
Gamaliel Elementary
Gamaliel
Amy Howard, teacher

KoKo Sams, Third Grade
Payneville Elementary
Payneville
Laura Pollock, teacher

Joseph Wilson, Fourth Grade
Tompkinsville Elementary
Tompkinsville
Danetta Wilson, teacher

Laiken Buechler, Fifth Grade
Chenoweth Elementary
Louisville
Darleen Horton, teacher

oSha Shireman, Sixth Grade
Payneville Elementary
Payneville
Becky Whelan, teacher

David Lee Whelan, Seventh Grade
Stuart Pepper Middle School
Brandenburg
Marge Opie, teacher

Ellen Bravard, Eighth Grade
North Drive Middle School
Hopkinsville
Rivers B. Moss, teacher

2004 Poster Contest Winners