

The Market Bulletin

<http://www.wvagriculture.org/>

Gus R. Douglass, Commissioner
Janet L. Fisher, Deputy Commissioner
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State Agricultural Concerns Voiced at Farm Bill Listening Session

USDA's 2007 Farm Bill listening forum was held in Elkins October 7. The USDA was represented by Mr. Thomas Dorr, Under Secretary of Rural Development. This was my second opportunity to visit with Mr. Dorr as I had previously met him a few weeks ago at the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) meeting in New York. Under Secretary Dorr is very personable and knowledgeable in the farm sector.



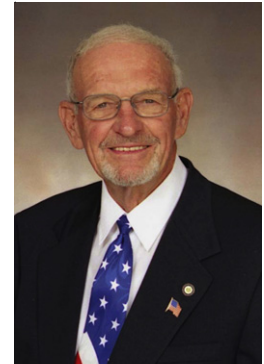
Commissioner Douglass and USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr listen as West Virginia farmers comment on the proposed federal Farm Bill during a listening session October 7 at Elkins Middle School.

I was honored to co-chair the forum with the Under Secretary. I saw every facet of West Virginia agriculture represented, and everyone was given an opportunity to make comments and recommendations. After welcoming Under Secretary Dorr, I took the opportunity to stress to him that West Virginians have special program needs just as most

other regions do. West Virginia representatives have voiced this in the past, but our voices never seem to be recognized or develop into beneficial programs for us. I hope the echoes from this forum will not fall on deaf ears. Our program needs are for family-type farms, not commercial grain or rice farms.

I am getting considerable feedback from across the nation about USDA Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johann's recent decisions regarding programs and the organizational structure of USDA. I had hoped the Secretary would hold listening sessions similar to the Farm Bill sessions before making the decision to privatize the livestock identification program. From my vantage point, this causes far more problems than it solves for the livestock industry. In fact, there is a real question whether we can cooperate with private industry in sharing information about livestock farms in this state. The recent state law that was passed, WV Code (19-9-7a), gives the WVDA authority to propose rules for the collection of farm premises and animal identification data for the United States Department of Agriculture's National Animal Identification System. The information is exempt from disclosure under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (Article 1 [§§29B-1-1 et seq.], Chapter 29-b of the Code). State law would not permit the sharing of information with a private entity, in my estimation.

The Secretary's recent plan to close more than 700 of its 2,353 Farm Service Agency



Gus' View...

(FSA) offices around the country was another decision made without much input from the grassroots sector. The negative reaction from Congress was fast and to the point. We should be hearing more about this in the near future. FSA offices do much more than administer farm programs. They are a conduit for information from local county emergency operations during and after droughts, floods, and other disasters.

Through information provided by FSA offices across the state, John Radar, Executive Director, USDA Farm Service Agency, has asked that I contact the Governor and request that 29 counties in West Virginia be declared drought stricken. FSA's role in securing such declarations and subsequent funding for affected farmers is critical.

Following the Farm Bill listening session in Elkins, I participated in another event of note, the coronation of the Mountain State Forest Festival Queen at Davis & Elkins College. As always, this was a beautiful and colorful ceremony with several maids of honor lead by Queen Silvia LXIX, Anne Michaelae Craig. In the many years I have participated in the coronation, this was the first time it rained; however, the Queen and her court prevailed.

There is plenty of activity in FFA programs across the state as students prepare their projects for the Ham, Bacon and Egg sale in March 2006. Many of the local chapters now have new or upgraded facilities to teach students the process of curing, drying and proper handling of meat. I commend the schools and FFA advisers for their efforts take these to a higher standard.

Deadline Approaching for Apple, Peach Insurance Programs

The final date for West Virginia apple and peach growers to obtain crop insurance on next year's crop is November 20, 2005. Current policy holders also have until November 20 to make any changes to their existing contracts. Price elections for 2006 will be \$7.55 per bushel for fresh apples and \$11.75 per bushel for fresh peaches.

"USDA has been making a concerted effort to provide more opportunities for farmers in areas outside of the Midwest grain belt," said Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass

"I strongly encourage anyone not already involved in these crop insurance programs to consider purchasing this low-cost coverage."

Deadline, cont. on page 2

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Gus' View...

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An example of this achievement is the Tyler Consolidated Meats Product Lab. I recently spoke at their open house, and was proud to be a part of their program as they recognized the many donors and volunteers that brought the lab to fruition. The lab was outfitted with all new equipment and was quite impressive. The board of education, the superintendent of schools, the vo-ag teacher, local volunteers, and especially the young men and women in the program can be proud of their accomplishment. Roane County High School FFA will have its open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony on November 6, 2-4 p.m., to showcase its new meat processing facility. Special thanks to Gene Walker of my staff for the countless hours spent nurturing this very important youth program.

Many threats to human health continue to get our attention. We are closely watching the avian influenza strain that is occurring in Asia and Europe. Our surveillance of all birds here in West Virginia and the United States is at a high level of alertness.

Greenbrier County seems to be a hotspot for rabies. In the past few weeks, two bats have tested positive for rabies. Already this year five other animals have tested positive for rabies in that area. Rabies was found in

two raccoons, a cat, a lamb and a skunk. Another worry for the county is that a bird has tested positive for West Nile virus.

Despite the problems and demands on my time and that of my staff, I think as we close out this growing season, we can relax and give thanks that we have fared better than our friends and neighbors in the Gulf Coast states. Dry weather, yes, but now as the rains have come, we are experiencing some relief.

As the preparations for winter and the Thanksgiving season begin, Anna Lee and I count our blessings. We are thankful for the many people who have counseled, guided and helped us through the year. We are looking forward to deer season as the family gathers from Louisiana, Ohio and West Vir-

ginia for a week of hunting and festivities during the Thanksgiving holiday. All the children and grandchildren, both boys and girls, have followed tradition and enjoy the hunting season.

As we restock the freezer with venison, I have confidence in the meat even though we know chronic wasting disease (CWD) is here in the state. I'll repeat my words from last month's column and remind everyone again to be careful in the handling of deer meat by using disposable gloves when dressing out the deer. All meat should be deboned, and the spinal cord, eyes and brain should not be disturbed.

Happy Thanksgiving to all of you from Anna Lee, me and our family.



Capitol Market Christmas Tree Season Set to Open

West Virginia grown Christmas trees will begin arriving at the market November



18 and eight vendors should be selling full-time by November 25 – the official opening day of the Christmas tree season – according to Tony Richard, who manages the outdoor portion of the market for the West Virginia

Department of Agriculture

Market hours are 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday - Wednesday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursday - Saturday, and from noon-five p.m. Sundays. Christmas tree vendors expected to sell at the market include Black Forest Plantation, Cornelius Christmas Tree Plantation, French Creek Farms, French Creek Farms Landscaping, Whispering Pines, Parson's Trees, Santa's Forest and West Virginia Trees.

Grant Helping to Educate Farmers About Insurance Programs

West Virginia has received \$209,000 in a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to promote federal insurance programs that help farmers manage the financial risk they face from weather-related disasters.

"West Virginia has not received much benefit from Farm Bill dollars in the past, but that is changing," said Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass. "USDA is now offering a variety of new risk management products that are geared toward West Virginia farmers."

This is the second year the state has received such a grant. Last year's grant funded 44 workshops, according to program coordinator Billy Burke. He said he expects to conduct about the same number of workshops this year.

Deadline, cont. from page 1

Crop insurance provides coverage against production losses due to damage caused by natural perils and adverse weather conditions such as hail, wind, frost and drought. The amount of coverage is determined from actual yields and protection levels. Growers are encouraged to contact a local crop insurance agent as soon as possible for more detailed information and premium quotes.

For a list of crop insurance agents in your area, contact the local USDA Farm Service Agency office or log on to the following Risk Management Agency website: www3.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents.

More than \$20 million worth of grants were announced October 7 by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns.

"Through these partnerships, women, minority, limited-resource, and other traditionally underserved agricultural producers will receive assistance in understanding and using risk management tools to improve their economic viability," said Secretary Johanns.

The cooperative agreements provide funds for projects to develop new risk management tools for farmers and ranchers, as well as outreach and education opportunities to limited-resource and other traditionally underserved farmers and ranchers. Funding for these agreements is available under the Federal Crop Insurance Act provisions for risk management and implementation of research and development, community outreach and assistance, as well as agricultural risk management education in targeted states. USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) administers these projects.

Complete listings of the agreements can be found on the RMA website at:

www.rma.usda.gov/news/2005/10/05commoditypartnershipstable.pdf
www.rma.usda.gov/news/2005/10/05smallsessionstable.pdf
www.rma.usda.gov/news/2005/10/05targetedstatestable.pdf
www.rma.usda.gov/news/2005/10/05outreachtable.pdf
www.rma.usda.gov/news/2005/10/05rdtable.pdf

West Virginia Department of Agriculture Sponsoring Farm-City Week Poster Contest

National Farm-City Week will celebrate its 50th anniversary during the week of November 18-24, 2005, and the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is inviting students in kindergarten through sixth grade to enter a poster contest.

The theme is "What does farming mean to you," and winners will be chosen from three age categories: Grades K-2, 3-4 and 5-6. Students can create their own poster or begin with the posters available, in PDF format, on the WVDA's webpage at



FARM-CITY®

www.farmcity.org

www.wvagriculture.org/news_releases/2005/10-26-05. Other educational materials are also available on this webpage.

Posters should be mailed to:

West Virginia Department of Agriculture
Attn.: Communications Division
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Charleston, WV 25305

"The goal of Farm-City Week is to increase awareness of the vast network of people, businesses and resources involved in providing a safe and plentiful food supply for America and much of the world. Fewer and fewer people are involved in food production and many youngsters have little understanding of where their food comes from. We hope this contest will spur them to better appreciate what it takes to get a meal from the farm to the table."

Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass

Deadline for entries is November 14. First place in each category will receive a \$100 savings bond, second place will receive a \$50 savings bond and third place finishers will receive a \$25 savings bond. Winners will be announced at a ceremony at Capitol Farmers' Market, in Charleston, November 17 at 5:30 p.m. Winning artists are invited to attend, but need not be present to receive their savings bonds. WVDA will hand out free candy apples to the public during the event.

"The goal of Farm-City Week is to increase awareness of the vast network of

people, businesses and resources involved in providing a safe and plentiful food supply for America and much of the world," said Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass.

"Perhaps the best place to build that awareness is in our schools. Fewer and fewer people are involved in food production and many youngsters have little understanding of where their food comes from. We hope this contest will spur them to better appreciate what it takes to get a meal from the farm to the table."

Agriculture employs more than 24 million workers in a wide variety of careers and adds \$1.3 trillion to our nation's gross domestic product each year. Agriculture also provides fiber that is used for clothing and other textiles.

Energy is another expanding use for agricultural products. Biodiesel and ethanol are renewable fuels that are increasing in popularity, and numerous methods of extracting energy from biomass are being explored.

For more information, contact the WVDA Communications Division at 304-558-3708 or visit the Department's webpage at www.wvagriculture.org.

Potato Seed Certification in Preston County

Craig Trippett, Agricultural Plant Pathologist, WVDA Plant Industries Division

If you have ever spent any time in Preston County, West Virginia you may have heard of Bill Grose, owner of Moncroft Farms. Located on the border of West Virginia and Maryland, Moncroft Farms has adopted a program that is not found anywhere else in the state. Mr. Grose is the only distributor of West Virginia certified seed potatoes.

What is the purpose of certified potato seed you may ask? Varieties that are designated as certified seed provide potato growers with good quality, high yield, and disease-free potato tubers. Mr. Grose entered the seed certification program nine years ago under the tutoring of now retired West Virginia University plant pathologist, Dr. Robert Young. Mr. Grose explained, "It was a win, win situation for Dr. Young and myself . . . He was looking for an experimental farm that was within driving distance of the university and I was having trouble establishing

a good yielding crop . . . Dr. Young incorporated important management techniques and introduced me to New York certified seed varieties . . . Throughout the past twenty years, Doc Young's help has made me a better potato farmer."

Potato varieties that are classified as West Virginia seed certified must go through a series of tests before they hit the market. All potatoes grown at Moncroft Farms originate from tissue culture labs at The Uihlien Farm of Cornell University in New York where constant tests are run for disease and virus profiles. Varieties cultured by Uihlien are purchased by foundation potato growers in New York State.

Mr. Grose purchases his seed stock from different foundation growers in New York based upon the varieties each potato grower raises. Three summer field inspections are required throughout the growing

season by a Federal or State inspector to check the tolerance levels for diseases and viruses. A determined amount of tubers are then collected at harvest for winter testing at Florida. Potato varieties grown by Mr. Grose must comply with New York certified seed grades in conjunction with the United States Standards for Grades of Seed Potatoes before being tagged as certified.

Mr. Grose sells about one-third of his total 18 acres of harvested potatoes as certified seed. These West Virginia certified potato tubers are sold at farmers' markets or to individual growers. Bill commented, "I sell to Pennsylvania farmer's markets. I also sell in Ohio and Maryland, and I even have a buyer in Maine." The remaining two-thirds of his potatoes are sold commercially to local groceries, wholesalers, state prison systems, the public, and for French fries at the Preston County Buckwheat Festival in Kingwood.

What's Cookin'

Recipes

Pumpkin Biscuits

Cabell Co. 4-H Leaders Assoc.
Ona, W.Va.

- 3 cups self-rising flour
- 1 cup pumpkin
- ¼ cup milk
- 1¼ cups brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg

Glaze

- 1 cup confectioner's sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ cup milk

Mix all ingredients in bowl. Form dough into ball, roll to 1" thick. Cut and place on baking sheet. Bake at 450°F for 20 minutes-until browned.

Yield: 15 biscuits.

Glaze: Mix ingredients until well blended. Drizzle over hot, baked biscuits.

Recipes

Festive Pumpkin Dip

Barbara Swan - Milton, W.Va.

- 1 12- ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 2 tablespoons taco seasoning mix
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ⅓ cup chopped, dried beef
- ⅓ cup green pepper, finely chopped
- ⅓ cup red pepper, finely chopped
- 1 2¼-ounce can sliced ripe olives, drained
- 1 round loaf Italian or Pumpernickel bread

Mix cream cheese, pumpkin, taco seasoning and garlic powder until smooth. Stir in beef, peppers and olives. Cover and refrigerate for two hours or more to allow flavors to blend. Just before serving, cut off top of bread; scoop out bread in chunks for dipping, leaving ½inch shell. Fill shell with dip mixture. Serve with bread cubes, vegetables, corn chips or crackers.

Pumpkin Pleasers

by Jean Smith, Director, Marketing and Development Division

By now many West Virginians have experienced their first snow fall of the season! What a great way to put us all in the Holiday spirit! I encourage you to watch for bargains for your holiday baking and meal preparations! This month's recipes are from the West Virginia Pumpkin Festival Bake-Off!

— Bon Appetite!

Recipes

Pumpkin Mushroom Soup

Rosalyn Ferrell - Winfield, W.Va.

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| 2 tablespoons vegetable oil | Salt and pepper to taste |
| 2 tablespoons butter | 3 tablespoons flour |
| ⅔ cup celery, plus leaves, finely chopped | 1 tablespoon poultry seasoning |
| ⅔ cup onion, finely chopped | 48 ounces chicken broth |
| 1½ cups mushrooms, finely chopped | 29 ounces pumpkin |
| | 2 cups half and half |
| | ½ teaspoon nutmeg |

In medium soup kettle or Dutch oven, place vegetable oil, butter, celery, onions, mushrooms and salt and pepper. Cook for 6-7 minutes until vegetables are tender. Add flour and poultry seasoning, stir well; cook for one minute. Whisk in chicken broth until mixture starts to bubble. Whisk in pumpkin, one large spoonful at a time. Simmer for 10 minutes to thicken. Add half and half and nutmeg. Lower heat; heat until warm. Keep warm until serving time.



Recipes

Walnut Crunch Pumpkin Pie

Mary McClure - Barboursville, W.Va.

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| 1¼ cups coarsely chopped walnuts | 2 large eggs, lightly beaten |
| ¾ cup packed brown sugar | 1½ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice |
| 15 ounces canned pumpkin | ½ teaspoon salt |
| 12 ounces evaporated milk | 1 unbaked (9") pie shell |
| ¾ cup sugar | 3 tablespoons butter, melted |

Mix walnuts and brown sugar in small bowl. Combine pumpkin, milk, sugar, eggs, spice and salt in medium bowl; mix well.

Place ¾ cup nut-sugar mixture on bottom of pie shell. Pour batter over nuts. Bake in preheated 425°F oven for 15 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350°F; bake 40-50 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Cool on wire rack.

Add butter to remaining nut-sugar mixture. Stir until moistened. Sprinkle over cooled pie. Broil about 5 inches from heat for 2-3 minutes or until bubbly. Makes 8 servings.

West Virginia AgrAbility Program receives four-year grant from USDA

Thirty-two percent of West Virginia's adults say their work activities are limited by arthritis or other joint problems, according to a recent study by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. Coupled with the highest median age of any state and one of the highest rates of disability in the country, it's no wonder that West Virginians are also known for tenacity, perseverance, and a do-it-yourself attitude that makes farmers and other self-employed people continue to work through pain, injury, or chronic health conditions.

The West Virginia AgrAbility Project has been awarded a new four-year grant through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Based on the successes of the project's first four years, the 2005-2009 grant renews a partnership between the WVU Safety and Health Extension, the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS), and Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living (NWVCIL). This will allow the



project to continue to work with farmers, farm workers, and farm families to identify ergonomic adaptations, assistive technology, and other tools to accommodate injuries and chronic health conditions.

"Given the nature of farm/ranch work — constant bending, twisting, and heavy lifting — farmers and farmworkers are especially vulnerable to arthritis-related disabilities," according to Inetta Fluharty, Field Operations Manager for the West Virginia AgrAbility Project. "In addition, unlike many workers who retire in their mid-60s, people involved in production agriculture tend to continue working well into their 70s or even 80s. Over a lifetime, the toll such strenuous physical labor takes on any body, especially one affected by arthritis and/or rheumatic disease, can make farming truly difficult."

West Virginia AgrAbility loaned over 180 assistive technologies like long-handled and ergonomic gardening tools, flame weeders and gate latches to farmers in the first four years of the project. Recognizing that each individual has different needs based on their type of agricultural operation, West Virginia AgrAbility Project staff works with individuals one-on-one to explore alternatives, such as

taking on a different set of tasks, modifying equipment or buildings, or engaging in a different type of farming enterprise. In addition to on-site technical assistance, staff members offer information and referral, training for rural professionals, education on preventing additional injuries, and peer support groups for farmers. Since 1991, AgrAbility Projects across the nation have provided assistance and accessibility solutions to over 11,000 farmers, ranchers, farmworkers, and their families.

Recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau as the second most rural state in the country, West Virginia is characterized by small family farms where one or more members maintain part-time or full-time employment off the farm. Fortunately, farmers of virtually any scale may receive free services through West Virginia AgrAbility, as they need only a minimum of \$1,000 in annual sales of agricultural products to be eligible for technical assistance, education and networking. This allows AgrAbility staff to work one-one-one with orchards, diversified vegetable growers, niche woodland herb producers, and many other unique agricultural entrepreneurs in the Mountain State, as well as with its larger and small-scale livestock enterprises. In a recently revised edition of the Farmers' Connection Guide, the project provides information on many growers' associations, publications, and assistive technology sources.

To request a copy of the Farmers' Connection Guide or find out more about what West Virginia AgrAbility Project can do for you, call 800-841-8346, e-mail assist@cebridge.net, or visit the Project's website at www.cedwvu.org/programs/agrability.

Common Sense Steps Can Prevent Forest Fires

West Virginia is known for its natural beauty, especially our acres and acres of deep, serene forests. When we think of forests, some of us imagine hiking through the rugged hills spotting deer and listening to the wind rustle the leaves during this colorful time of year.

While we enjoy our state's natural beauty, many of us rarely consider the importance of forests to our state's economy. As the third most forested state in the nation, West Virginia's forests contribute \$4 billion annually to our economy. The Mountain State's forest products industry employs an estimated 30,000 citizens. As a result, for our quality of life and our economy, we must do all that we can as West Virginians to protect our state forests from forest fires during this fall fire season.

Did you know that 99 percent of all wildfires in our state are the direct result of citizens

and their actions? This year, forestry officials are especially concerned with the potential for forest fires due to near drought-like conditions across our state. Conditions this year are similar to 2001 when nearly 87,000 acres burned.

Although forest fires occur in every county, the West Virginia Division of Forestry has designated 14 "hot counties," which include the following: Boone, Cabell, Clay, Fayette, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, Nicholas, Raleigh, Wayne, and Wyoming. In these counties the occurrence of wildfires is often more prevalent.

It is important for all West Virginians to know that they are not helpless when it comes to preventing or stopping forest fires. By taking common sense steps while working in or just enjoying the outdoors, we can save valuable resources as well as lives.

If you spot a wildfire, the first thing you

should do is get to the nearest telephone and call 911. The fact is that quick response times enable forestry personnel to contain fires more swiftly and keep fires smaller. In addition to calling the appropriate authorities, everyone should understand and obey the forest fire laws - only burn after 4 p.m., extinguish the fire by 7 a.m., attend the fire at all times, create a safety strip around the fire and burn only vegetative materials. Please also refrain from burning debris until we have had some rain and never burn anything on a windy day.

As Smokey Bear says, "Only you can prevent a forest fire." Working together, we can ensure that our state and national forests remain the treasures that we all enjoy. I urge all West Virginians to use common sense steps that will help protect our timber resources — the wooded rolling hills and valleys we all affectionately refer to as "Wild and Wonderful."