

The Market Bulletin

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

Vol. 90, No. 4

April 2006



Protecting food and farms

This month it was necessary to activate my emergency response team that has been in training for many months now. Their training permitted them to effectively locate and contain over 200 market hogs transported into West Virginia without a health certificate and that were exposed to avian tuberculosis (TB). The Meat and Poultry Inspection Division veterinary staff examined them and found them to have lesions consistent with TB. Further investigation determined that these hogs, originating in Ohio, had been exposed to avian TB. This information was immediately passed on to the WVDA Response Team. The state veterinarian started a state-wide round-up of these hogs, which were scattered from Buckhannon to Logan.

Several of the hogs had already been purchased, slaughtered, and were in home freezers. Those consumers were advised of the issue with the hogs and were also advised the meat would be safe to eat if it was thoroughly cooked. We also advised them not to handle the raw meat unless they wore protective gloves on their hands, as there was a danger of transmission. I directed staff to make these individuals fully aware of their options with the meat.

The individual who brought these hogs into West Virginia has cooperated with us. I can confidently assure the public the pork in supermarkets has been inspected for the highest level of quality.

A recent article (by Andrew Bridges, Associated Press) from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland emphasized that 58 percent of "emerging" illnesses in humans are transmitted from animals. There are 1,407 known pathogens – viruses, bacteria, parasites, protozoa and fungi – that can infect humans. Scientists only consider 177 of these pathogens to be "emerging" or "re-emerging." Fortunately, most will never cause pandemics, but

experts fear that bird flu could prove an exception.

My initial thoughts, and that of many others, were that we would probably escape the H5N1 virus that has spread across Asia, Europe and Africa this year. Now we are re-evaluating this assumption and anticipating that the migration of birds underway now could bring the virus into Alaska, then on to Canada and the United States.

The greatest fear we have is for our farm birds that are more vulnerable to being exposed to migratory birds which may carry bird flu or other disease. Commercial poultry is contained in houses and

West Virginia State University (WVSU) renamed its land-grant, extension and research programs in honor of long-time West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass March 15, 2006. The programs are now officially designated as the Gus R. Douglass Land-Grant Institute (more next month).



Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass receives the Presidential award from West Virginia State University President Dr. Hazo Carter, Jr., during the March 15 renaming ceremony.



Gus' View . . .

are mainly considered to be safe. My staff will be looking at farm flocks, turkeys and other birds on farms if abnormal losses of up to five birds are reported to the WVDA Animal Health Division.

An alert to horse owners, there is a new disease that has been identified as equine protozoal myeloencephalitis (EMP). The neurologic signs that it causes are most commonly asymmetric incoordination (ataxia), weakness and spasticity, although they may mimic almost any neurologic condition. Some of the signs cannot be distinguished from other problems, such as lameness and airway abnormalities.

The reason for bringing this disease to your attention is to point out the importance of keeping wildlife out of barns and in close proximity to your horses. This is a good practice to follow in caring for any domestic animals. The animal implicated as the host of EPM organism is the opossum, and there are many of them around.

Mice and rats also must be controlled, as they are carriers of many various diseases. One recently brought to my attention is called hantavirus. This was the cause of death of a young airman training for deployment in Iraq at a military base in Texas. The disease is transmitted to humans when they inhale particles of dried urine, feces or saliva from an infected rodent.

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When you do your spring housecleaning, it might be a good idea to wear protective masks when cleaning out buildings or areas where rodents may have been.

I received a letter from Virginia Simmons in Calhoun County informing me about the wildlife in her area. She reports that black bears, wolverines, panthers and coyotes have been seen on Pine Creek Road, just outside of Granstville. These predators are causing wild rabbits to be scarce and ruining deer hunting in her area.

Here on the farm we're in the midst of calving and we had our first fatality which we credit to a coyote. We are making a special effort to reduce the coyote population on the farm, but have not been as successful as the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (USDA/APHIS/WS) has been. They have been working on 60 farms with livestock and sheep owners in Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Pendleton, Pocahontas and Randolph Counties. In February, 57 coyotes were removed from farms for a cumulative total of 101 so far in fiscal year 2006. Fortunately, the Legislature gave us additional funds that we hope to match with federal funds to move trapping teams to other areas of the state that have a large coyote population.

In early March I attended a symposium sponsored by the PEW Foundation. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and deal with issues regarding biotechnology and genetically-modified (GM) foods. Topics discussed were what foods are ready for commercialization and how GM grown foods are going to blend with the organic farm community. GM foods in grocery stores comprise almost everything we consume today except for the specialty section of organically grown products.

The folks representing organic growers presented their side of the

issues as well. No doubt we're going to see zoning in the future wherein organically grown crops will avoid cross pollination with the hybrids and genetically-modified foods commercial crops.

Hay growers in this nation will be facing new regulations in their production and marketing this year. The federal government will be making an effort to protect the nation's food supply and will soon impact the nation's hay growers. According to the FDA, farmers who sell hay must comply with the record keeping requirements of the Bioterrorism Act of 2002. The weekly e-newsletter, *AgClips*, February 25-March 3, notes the mandated records will

include, among other things, the field that each load came from, the truck that hauled it, and names and contact information of the driver and the people who loaded and unloaded it.

I was very pleased by the remarks of Robert W. Lane, Chairman and CEO of Deere and Company. He comments that if the United States wants to remain a global economic superpower it should stop treating rural America like a stepchild. U.S. farmers and ranchers contribute directly and substantially to U.S. economic growth. They provide a secure, abundant and affordable supply of food, fiber and fuel. In doing so, they literally feed and fuel the U.S. and global economy.

West Virginia Katrina assistance appreciated by Mississippi farmers

Commissioner Douglass and other agriculture officials in West Virginia recently received a letter of thanks from Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture Lester Spell, Jr., for \$16,500 in donations sent to the gulf region from the West Virginia farm community in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

"Thank you for the generous donation for livestock feed relief to Mississippi farmers and ranchers affected by Hurricane Katrina. While this thank-you letter is being sent a couple of months after receiving the check, I felt it important to give you and the generous donors information on how the funds were distributed, and time was needed to collect data and distribute feed certificates," wrote Commissioner Spell.

Nearly 60 Mississippi farmers were supplied with certificates to reimburse for feed and hay due to donations from West Virginia farmers and others.

"Nearly all the relief effort and media attention was aimed at urban areas," noted Commissioner Douglass. **"While they certainly needed substantial assistance, I and others in West Virginia felt that the agriculture community was receiving no attention at all. We felt it was necessary to take action to provide some direct relief for farmers and to raise awareness of their equally poor situation."**

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA), along with leaders of the West Virginia Farm Bureau (WVFB), West Virginia Cattleman's Association (WVCA) and West Virginia Poultry Association (WVPA) established the West Virginia Farmers' Assistance and Relief for Katrina (ARK) fund following the disaster to help the gulf-area agriculture community get back on its feet.

On March 15, I was honored when West Virginia State University reorganized and renamed its land-grant, extension and research programs in my name. The program is now officially designated as the Gus R. Douglass Land-Grant Institute. The two land-grant institutions, West Virginia State University and West Virginia University should further enhance and provide the needs of those involved in agricultural or "green thumb" pursuits. I'm grateful for the recognition.

The 2006 legislative session was successful for the Department of Agriculture. I will provide additional information in the *May Market Bulletin*.

Down on the farm we're extremely busy with calving. Fortunately, several are being born each day so we should get through it before too long. I did finally get a little garden planted. Onions, kale and radishes are up, and hopefully some spring weather will give them a boost.

I hope you folks are emerging from the winter weather ready to meet the challenges of spring. Anna Lee is doing well and looking forward to warmer days as well.

Controlling Pests in Log Homes

Final Part of a Four-Part Series

Dr. Lois E. Swoboda, Entomologist, WVDA Plant Industries Division

Even with proper design, construction and sanitation practices, beetle infestations of log cabins sometimes occur. A periodic inspection of the interior and exterior of the structure for beetle damage should be part of routine maintenance. All exposed wood should be visually examined, especially in areas where the risk of infestation is high, such as crawl-spaces, logs in contact with the ground or subject to wetting by rain or run-off and any area where there is unfinished wood. Attics, unfinished basements and storage areas that are not visited daily should be scrutinized since evidence of damage is less likely to be noticed during normal activity in such areas. Use a flashlight. A knife or screwdriver is handy for tapping logs and probing areas of suspected damage.

If evidence of an infestation is discovered, samples of wood and frass should be collected, inspected closely and possibly taken to a professional for analysis. Fresh frass will be the color of newly sawed wood. Emergence holes may be marked with chalk or crayon and observed over a few months. If no new holes appear the infestation may not be active. Appearance of new tunnels indicates an active infestation and any adult beetles or larvae found should be collected for identification. Adults may be found on windowsills or around interior lights. Pheromone traps are available for deathwatch beetles and may be used to monitor activity or discourage mating. However, these are not effective for other wood-boring beetles. Some beetle larvae can actually be heard feeding within the wood. Pets and children are often more sensitive to these sounds than adults. If an infestation is suspected, it may be wise to call in a professional, especially if there appears to be widespread damage. Pest control professionals use specialized tools, like moisture meters, to verify infestation and generally have a broader knowledge of the symptoms of infestation and treatment options than laypersons.

Several 'long-horned beetles', are economic pests of log structures. These beetles are cylindrical in shape and vary in length

from ¼ inch to more than 3 inches. Adult long-horned beetles have prominent, 11-segmented antennae that may be longer than the beetles' entire body. Their larvae are cylindrical and worm like, white to pale yellow in color and have prominent dark mouthparts.

One long-horned beetle that commonly infests log homes is the cedar-tree borer (CTB), *Semanotus ligneus*. CTB attacks a wide range of conifer trees and often deposits its eggs under the bark of recently felled trees. Stripping the bark can reduce the incidence of infestation; however, it is not completely effective as a control measure for contaminated wood. Upon hatching, the larvae migrate into the upper cambium layer

and continue to feed for the next two summers in the upper ¼- to ½-inch of sapwood. CTB has the unique distinction of increasing the value of damaged wood in some instances. Craftsmen and builders have been known to pay premium prices for wood 'sculptured' by this insect. CTB larvae later bore deep into the log to pupate, occasionally reaching the heartwood. The adult beetle is large (⅓- to ⅔-inch long), attractive and predominantly dark-brown or black in color. Its wing covers are marked with red, yellow or orange patches each with a black dot in the center. The best preventative measure against this insect is proper storage of freshly cut logs and immediate stripping of bark when trees are felled.

FUTURE OF STATE FFA AUCTIONS BRIGHT

FFA Ham, Bacon and Egg Sales have been an annual tradition in West Virginia for the past 50 years, and changes spearheaded by the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) are ensuring that these programs remain a fixture for decades to come.

"West Virginia is the only state that still conducts auctions for FFA livestock projects, which teach students about food production and the business aspects of agriculture," said Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass. "In a day and time when Americans are less and less connected to the food they eat, I felt it was critically important that we make sure these programs move into the 21st century."

With technical assistance and encouragement from WVDA, the nearly 100 schools operating FFA programs have upgraded existing facilities or built new ones over the past few years so that students will understand the requirements for commercial meat production, and will take that knowledge into the real world when they graduate.



The WVDA's Regulatory and Environmental Affairs staff visited Greenbrier County recently to teach local FFA and 4-H students how to properly candle (holding the egg up to light to determine the condition of the air cell, yolk and white) an egg. The students candle their eggs to prepare their best dozen for local ham, bacon and egg auctions.

FFA Auction, cont. on page 4

The Importance of Cover Crops

Thomas Clark
Marketing Specialist-Horticulture

It's important for any serious vegetable gardener to know and use cover crops in their gardens. Cover crops are plants sown in the garden to form living mulch and to improve soil quality and fertility. A cover crop helps reduce erosion and keeps weeds from becoming established. Cover crops can be cut and added to a compost pile, or turned under and incorporated into the soil. When used in this fashion, they are referred to as "green manures." Cover crops used as green manures are mostly legumes such as vetch, clover or grasses, such as winter rye and buckwheat.

COMMON PLANTS USED AS COVER CROPS AND GREEN MANURES INCLUDE:

Plants in the legume family grow in cooperation with bacteria. Legumes have bacteria which live on nodules on the roots. They take nitrogen gas from the atmosphere and convert it into a form usable by plants. This process is called "nitrogen fixation." It ensures that legumes will always have plenty of nitrogen for growth. When legumes die, or are turned under the soil, its roots will decompose, and some of that residual nitrogen becomes available to other plants.

Annual Ryegrass - Ryegrass can be sown very thick, and thus provides a good barrier against weeds. It dies during winter, so it's a good choice for areas you want to have clear in the spring.

Clover - Clovers are legumes. Their nitrogen fixing properties make them a good choice for soil fertility management. Clovers are somewhat cold, hardy and may survive mild winters, to be turned under in spring.

Hairy Vetch - Excellent ground cover for weed suppression, also a legume. Vetch can survive a good bit of cold weather, but will die in extreme cold.

Beans, Soybeans - Also legumes, these plants are useful as edible crops, as well as

for their nitrogen fixing abilities. After the pods are harvested, they can be turned into the soil in fall.

Winter Wheat - Winter wheat is a cold hardy grain. It can be planted in late summer after the vegetable harvest is over and will grow again in early spring. When spring is over, turn the grass under and plant your vegetables.

Cover crops are a great way for a vegetable gardener to fight weeds in the off season, and maintain soil nutrient levels for plant growth. They are an important tool for building healthy natural soils and can reduce or eliminate the need for chemical weed control and fertilization when used correctly.

FFA Auction, cont. from page 3

Some programs are also incorporating commercial meat-cutting programs into their curriculum, according to Gene Walker, former WVDA enforcement officer called out of retirement by Commissioner Douglass to help schools improve their programs.

All hams and bacons are now processed in state-of-the-art facilities that meet commercial kitchen standards. For example, processing facilities must have sanitary walls that are impervious to liquids and can easily be cleaned, floors must be sloped to drains and work areas must be able to stand up to the salts used in cure mixtures.

The 63rd Annual State FFA Ham, Bacon and Egg Show and Sale was held March 13 — look for feature story in May Market Bulletin issue.

Hand-washing sinks must be foot, knee or elbow-operated and students must have a dress-in/dress-out room where they can change into clean clothes.

The facilities must also keep daily temperature logs which ensure that hams and bacons are being cured at the correct temperature. Curing at either too high or too low a temperature affects the quality of the cure. Hams are also tested for proper salt content and shrinkage prior to auction. Removing the proper amount of moisture from hams is another critical component to achieving an optimum cure, said Walker.

"The goal of this program has always been for kids to learn, to have the opportunity to raise and process a hog, and to take that meat home to the family. If they can raise a prize-winner and make some money at an auction, that's a great bonus," he said.

Two State Agribusinesses Named Finalists in Gallo Gold Medal Awards

Crazy Baker, LLC, of Greenbrier County and ThistleDew Farm of Proctor have been named finalists in the first ever Gallo Family Vineyards Gold Medal Awards. The program honors U.S.-based artisan food producers who demonstrate the highest standards in quality and craftsmanship.

Crazy Baker entered its traditional Italian confection, Panforte di Siena, made with almonds, spices and candied citrus. ThistleDew's entry was its Hot Pepper Butter, an all-natural, medium hot pepper relish to accompany meats, cheeses, chili, dips and sandwiches.

Artisanal products are created and produced on a smaller scale, using traditional, sustainable methods of growth and production, and emphasize the uniqueness of ingredients. Gallo's program, honoring the highest caliber of such products, will recognize excellence across a variety of food categories and will include a signature "Never Stop Growing Award" for the family-owned business that serves as an inspiration for other food industry professionals.

Gold Medal Winners will be announced this spring and will receive exhibition space to showcase their products at the Gallo Family Vineyards Gold Medal Awards Booth during the 2006 NASFT Summer Fancy Food Show in New York. They also will be honored at a gala awards dinner and reception at Gallo Family Vineyards that will be attended by Gallo executives, contest judges, food industry professionals and food and beverage media members.



Spring Cooking

Spring has sprung! The flowering trees and shrubs are beautiful as are the daffodils and other beautiful spring flowers. Spring is always a great time to

try new recipes or update a family favorite. This month's recipes are sure to become family favorites.

— Bon Appetit!



✂ — Recipes — ✂

Tasty Stir Fry

- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/4 cup honey
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 large, boneless, skinless chicken breasts, thinly sliced
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced and ringed
- 1/2 green bell pepper, cut in thin strips
- 1/2 red bell pepper, cut in thin strips
- 2 cups snow peas, washed and trimmed
- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch

In bowl, mix water, soy sauce, honey, garlic and ginger. Pour 1/2 of mixture into resealable plastic bag and add chicken. Seal bag and turn a few times to coat. Place in refrigerator for 2 hours. Place reserved marinade in the refrigerator.

Drain chicken; discard used marinade. Place chicken in large skillet or wok with vegetable oil until cooked. Remove and keep warm. Add all vegetables, except the mushrooms and stir fry for 6-8 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add mushrooms and stir fry for an additional 1-2 minutes. Return chicken to the skillet. In small bowl, combine reserved marinade and cornstarch. Stir until smooth. Stir into chicken/vegetable mixture and bring to boil. Cook and stir until thickened. Serve with cooked rice or favorite pasta.

✂ — Recipes — ✂

Black Bean Chili Casserole with Mexican Cornbread

Carolyn Blakemore, Fairmont, WV

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|--|--|
| 1 1/2 pounds ground chuck | 1 tablespoon sugar |
| 1/4 cup sweet onion, diced | 1 tablespoon cumin |
| 1/4 cup green pepper, diced | 1/8 teaspoon powdered ginger |
| 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced | 1/8 teaspoon garlic pepper salt blend |
| 1 can (14-ounce) beef broth | 2 tablespoons chili powder |
| 1 can (15-ounce) black beans, rinsed and drained | 1 teaspoon dry minced onion |
| 1 can (14.5-ounce) zesty diced tomatoes with green chilies | 2 cups shredded cheese (Monterey Jack/Cheddar blend) |
| 8 ounces tomato sauce | |

In skillet, brown ground chuck with onion and peppers. After mixture is browned, drain and pour into large saucepan or dutch oven to cook. Combine chuck mixture with broth, beans, tomatoes and sauce. Add sugar, cumin, powdered ginger and garlic blend. Cook and stir as needed for 25 minutes. Add chili powder, stir well and cook for an additional 5-10 minutes until mixture is thickened.

Lightly spray large casserole dish with cooking spray. Sprinkle 1/2 cup of cheese blend on the bottom. Top with chili mixture and remaining cheese blend. Bake at 350°F for 15-20 minutes until cheese is melted and lightly browned. Serve with cornbread.

Mexican Cornbread

- | | |
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| 1 6-ounce package Mexican Style cornbread mix | 1 egg |
| 2/3 cup milk | 1 teaspoon sugar |

In bowl, combine mix, egg and sugar. Mix until smooth. Spray an 8x8" baking pan with cooking spray; pour in batter. Bake in 425°F oven for 15-20 minutes. Cut in squares; serve with chili.



West Virginia Festival of Foods

Sponsored by the WV Beef Council

June 24-25

Charleston Civic Center
Grand Hall

\$6/admission, \$5 w/canned goods.

* Featuring guest chefs

* Wines and wine tastings

* Exhibits and Demos

For more information, contact Sharon King, 345-1500, ext. 220 or sharon.king@cityofcharleston.org

USDA Releases New Farmers' Market Resource Guide

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner recently released the Farmers Market Resource Guide, which is a list of grants, programs and other financial and information resources available from public and private organizations.

Developed by the newly formed Farmers Market Consortium (FMC), which includes the USDA as a major partner, the Guide contains information about each participating agency or foundation and gives details about more than 100 projects and grants available to help start or improve farmers markets.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service took the lead in forming the FMC, which is a public and private partnership dedicated to helping promote farmers markets. In addition to USDA, the consortium includes the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Ford Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation,

the Project for Public Spaces and several farmers market non-profit groups.

Direct marketing of farm products through farmers markets is an important sales outlet for agricultural producers nationwide. Farmers markets continue to rise in popularity, mostly due to the growing consumer interest in obtaining fresh products directly from the farm. There are currently more than 3,700 farmers markets operating in the United States, offering consumers farm-fresh, affordable, convenient and healthy products, while helping farmers supplement their income.

The Farmers Market Resource Guide, which will be periodically updated, is available online at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/> or to order a printed copy, contact the Agricultural Marketing Service, Marketing Services Branch, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 2646, South Bldg., Washington, DC 20250, 202-720-8317.

CAPITOL MARKET

Spring Planting Season

April ~ May ~ June



Charleston's sweetest season kicks off in late March with a colossal selection of locally grown bedding plants. Shop for annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees, as well as great Easter and Mother's Day gifts.

Capitol Market
800 Smith Street
Charleston, WV 25301
304-344-1905
www.capitolmarket.net