5181 AMELIA EARHART DRIVE - SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
phone: (801)537-1414 – Fax (801) 238-6414 - bquigley@kjzz.com

AGRICULTURE

U.S. FARM REPORT

The nation's longest running agricultural news program

Show #1808

Weekend of April 05, 2008

PLANTINGS REPORT: THE MUCH-ANTICIPATED PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS REPORT FROM THE U-S-D-A HAS SOMETHING FOR BOTH BEARS AND BULLS...DEPENDING ON THE CROP. ON MONDAY THE AG DEPARTMENT PROJECTED U-S FARMERS WILL PLANT JUST OVER 86-MILLION ACRES OF CORN THIS SPRING...DOWN EIGHT PERCENT FROM LAST YEARS RECORD PRODUCTION. MOST OF THOSE ACRES ARE SHIFTING TO SOYBEANS. USDA ESTIMATES FARMERS WILL PLANT 74-POINT-EIGHT MILLION ACRES....UP ABOUT 18-PERCENT. WHEAT ALSO PICKS UP SOME ACRES - ESTIMATED TO HIT JUST UNDER 64-MILLION...A SIX-PERCENT INCREASE. COTTON CONTINUED ITS DOWNWARD TREND FROM LAST YEAR. THE USDA PROJECTS NINE-POINT-FOUR MILLION ACRES OF COTTON WILL GO IN THE GROUND THIS YEAR...DOWN ABOUT 13-PERCENT FROM 2007.

REPORT REACTION: SHORTLY AFTER THE REPORT WAS RELEASED, AL TALKED WITH LONG-TIME TOP PRODUCER MARKET ANALYST JERRY GULKE TO GET HIS REACTION.

HOG REPORT: IN OTHER NEWS THIS WEEK, THE HOG MARKET GETS HIT WITH A BEARISH REPORT FROM THE U-S-D-A. RELEASED LATE LAST WEEK, THE U-S INVENTORY OF ALL HOGS AND PIGS AS OF MARCH FIRST WAS PEGGED AT JUST UNDER 66-MILLION HEAD...A LOT HIGHER THAN MOST IN THE TRADE WERE EXPECTING. OVERALL, THE TOTAL IS UP SEVEN PERCENT FROM A YEAR AGO...BUT DOWN A COUPLE POINTS FROM DECEMBER.

ILLINOIS FARMLAND PRICES: SOME PRIME ILLINOIS FARMLAND GOES FOR AN INCREDIBLE PRICE. ACCORDING TO THE LAND-OWNER NEWSLETTER, 275 ACRES IN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY WENT FOR MORE THAN 15-DOLLARS PER ACRE LAST MONTH...WITH ONE BUYER TAKING IT ALL. THE GROUND IS SAID TO "FLAT AND BLACK"...WITH SOME OF THE BEST SOILS IN THE COUNTY. BESIDES BEING RICH IN PRODUCTION POTENTIAL, THE LAND COULD ALSO BE HEADED FOR DEVELOPMENT AS IT SITS JUST A QUARTER MILE FROM THE URBANA CITY LIMITS.

ROUNDTABLE: MIKE NORTH FROM FIRST CAPITOL AG
ELAINE KUB – DTN FUTURES ANALYST

JOHN'S WORLD: ONE OF THE MANY ADJUSTMENTS I HAVE MADE RECENTLY WITH MY SON BEING BACK ON THE FARM HAS BEEN MY PERSONAL TRANSPORTATION SITUATION. I OFFERED MY TRUSTY OLD PICKUP TO AARON FOR THE TIME BEING, LEAVING ME WITH JUST MY COMMUTING CAR - A MANLY PONTIAC VIBE. THAT'S EXACTLY THE KIND OF CAR THAT WILL GET YOU LAUGHED OUT OF THE COFFEE SHOP, SO IN A FIT OF SOUND JUDGEMENT, I DECIDED TO WALK BACK AND FORTH FROM MY HOUSE TO THE MAIN FARM. IT'S ONLY A HALF-MILE. IT'S NOT LIKE IT WOULD KILL ME. NOW I'M NOT SO SURE. EVEN THOUGH I STILL JOG THREE OR FOUR TIMES A WEEK, WALKING SEEMS TO USE A DIFFERENT SET OF MUSCLES ALTOGETHER. IT HAS NOT BEEN FUN GETTING THOSE UNUSED FIBERS UP TO SPEED. BUT ON THE PLUS SIDE, THE SEVEN MINUTES EACH WAY HAVE BECOME A GREAT TIME TO THINK AND PLAN. BETTER STILL I CAN GUAGE WHAT GROUND CONDITIONS ARE FAR BETTER THAN FROM BEHIND A WINDSHIELD. NOT HAVING A VEHICLE AT HAND HAS CUT DOWN SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT TRIPS TO TOWN THAT COULD HAVE BEEN POSTPONED FOR WHILE TOO. I KNOW, THERE ARE FEW THINGS AS BORING AS SOMONE NATTERING ON ABOUT THEIR GOOD HABITS, BUT I THINK I MAY JUST SURVIVE MY PICKUP-ECTOMY - AND YOU MIGHT TOO. OF COURSE, THERE HAVEN'T BEEN TOO MANY RAINY DAYS YET.

WTO HORMONES: THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION SAYS IT WON'T LIFT ITS BAN ON BEEF TREATED WITH CERTAIN HORMONES - EVEN THOUGH THE W-T-O SAYS THE BAN VIOLATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE RULES. THE RULING, WHICH CAME DOWN MONDAY, IS A WIN FOR THE U-S AND CANADA AS THEY BATTLE THE E-U OVER THE SAFETY OF HORMONE-TREATED MEAT. THE W-T-O PANEL RULED THE E-U HAS NOT PRESENTED ENOUGH SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE TO JUSTIFY THE BAN. AS A RESULT, IMPORT SANCTIONS ON E-U PRODUCTS COMING IN TO NORTH AMERICA CAN REMAIN IN PLACE. IT

IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS IN THE U-S AND CANADA TO GIVE CATTLE HORMONES TO MAKE THEM GROW FASTER.

ORGANIC GROWTH: ALSO THIS WEEK - THE ORGANIC INDUSTRY IS ONLY GETTING BIGGER IN THE GOLDEN STATE. ACCORDING TO THE CALIFORNIA CERTIFIED ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION, THE AMOUNT OF FARM AND RANCH ACREAGE CERTIFIED FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTION HAS SURPASSED THE HALF-MILLION-ACRE PLATEAU. THE STATE HAS SEEN STEADY GROWTH IN CERTIFIED ORGANIC DAIRIES AND LIVESTOCK OPERATIONS...WITH MUCH OF THE NEW ORGANIC ACREAGE SERVING AS PASTURE LAND. THE FASTEST GROWING ORGANIC CROPS INCLUDE OATS, RICE, GRAPES AND WHEAT.

PLANTINGS REPORT: AS GROWERS PREPARE TO HIT THE FIELDS FOR THE 2008 GROWING SEASON, IT LOOKS LIKE THERE WILL BE QUITE A SHIFT IN CROP ACREAGE THIS YEAR. IN ITS PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS REPORT RELEASED MONDAY, THE AG DEPARTMENT PROJECTED CORN WILL BE PLANTED ON JUST OVER 86-MILLION ACRES THIS SPRING, AN 8-POINT DIP FROM 2007. MOST OF THOSE ACRES WILL SHIFT TO SOYBEANS AND WHEAT...WHILE COTTON PLANTINGS ARE PROJECTED TO DIP A BIT.

REPORTS & CRP: ALONG WITH DRIVING MARKET ACTIVITY THIS WEEK, MONDAY'S REPORT COULD HAVE A PROFOUND EFFECT ON TWO IMPORTANT PIECES OF AG POLICY - THE CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM AND THE RENEWABLE FUELS STANDARD. PRO FARMER WASHINGTON AND POLICY EDITOR ROGER BERNARD HAS THAT ANGLE OF THE STORY.

SPIRIT OF THE HEARTLAND: YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN THEM YOURSELF - WIND FARMS POPPING UP ALL ACROSS FARM COUNTRY. BECAUSE THEY'RE CHEAPER AND EASIER TO BUILD THAN CONVENTIONAL POWER PLANTS, SOME 30 STATES ARE NOW HARNESSING THIS OPPORTUNITY...AND THE WINDS OF ECONOMIC CHANGE ARE SWIRLING.
AS STEVE GRANT REPORTS, THE SHOW-ME STATE HAS MORE THAN JUMPED ON THE WIND POWER BANDWAGON.

MACHINERY MINUTE: IN THIS MORNING'S MACHINERY MINUTE, WE WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT AN UPDATED WEBSITE. FRANKLY, IT'S OUR OWN, BUT WE THINK IT'LL BE A USEFUL TOOL FOR PRODUCERS LOOKING FOR SOME IRON. THE MACHINERY FEATURE ON AGWEB-DOT-COM HAS BEEN RECENTLY UPDATED AND IMPROVED TO HELP YOU FIND NEW AND USED EQUIPMENT. DURING THESE STRONG ECONOMIC TIMES IN AGRICULTURE, EQUIPMENT SALES HAVE BEEN SKYROCKETING...AND GETTING YOUR HANDS ON NEW EQUIPMENT IS TOUGH. FARM JOURNAL'S MACHINERY EDITOR MARGY FISCHER TELLS US ABOUT THE IMPROVEMENTS.

RECYCLING-UTILITY POOLS: RECYCLING HAS BECOME A WAY OF LIFE IN HOMES AND BUSINESSES ACROSS THE COUNTRY...AND NOW, THE TREND IS EXTENDING TO THE BIG UTILITY POLES FOUND ALONG ROADSIDES IN THE BAYOU. IN LOUISIANA, MUCH OF THE SOUTHERN YELLOW LUMBER USED TO PRODUCE UTILITY POLES IS TREATED WITH HEAVY METALS...GIVING RESEARCHERS A CHALLENGE TO KEEP THIS WOOD OUT OF LANDFILLS. TOBIE BLANCHARD FROM THE L-S-U AG CENTER SHOWS US WHAT THEY'VE COME UP WITH...

TRACTOR TALES: "TRACTOR TALES" THIS WEEK COMES TO US FROM THE HOOSIER STATE...THE STORY OF A MASSIVE TRACTOR BUILT MORE THAN 90 YEARS AGO...

COUNTRY CHURCH SALUTE: WE TRAVEL TO CONNEAUT LAKE, PENNSYLVANIA THIS MORNING FOR OUR COUNTRY CHURCH SALUTE. THE HIGH STREET COMMUNITY CHURCH HAS BEEN SERVING THEIR COMMUNITY SINCE 1800 AND RECENTLY MOVED INTO A BEAUTIFUL NEW BUILDING. THEIR FIRST BUILDING IN 1854 SET THE EXAMPLE OF HANDS-ON MEMBER INVOLVEMENT. THAT STRUCTURE WAS ENLARGED IN 1925 WHEN SEVEN MEN AND HELPERS HAND DUG THE BASEMENT FOR A MAJOR ADDITION. THE MEN THEN RAISED THE SANCTUARY AND ADDED OAK PEWS, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER IMPROVEMENTS. IN 1980, THE CONGREGATION CHOSE TO LEAVE THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH RATHER THAN MERGE WITH ANOTHER CONGREGATION AND BECAME THE HIGH STREET COMMUNITY CHURCH. IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED MEMBERSHIP RECOVERED UNTIL A NEW BUILDING WAS NEEDED AND ADDED LAST FALL - AGAIN WITH MULTIPLE MEMBERS PROVIDING MUCH OF THE LABOR AND MATERIALS. WE THANK SHERMAN ALLEN FOR PROVIDING THE HISTORY AND PHOTOS AND HELPING ME WITH THE PRONUCIATION OF CONNEAUT LAKE.

USFR MAILBAG: TIME NOW FOR OUR WEEKLY LOOK INSIDE THE FARM REPORT MAIL BAG...WE RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM MIKE HRADEL IN FREE SOIL, MICHIGAN. HE HAS A QUESTION ABOUT CELLULOSIC ETHANOL. "GRAIN ALCOHOL APPEARS TO BE THE BIOFUEL OF CHOICE AT PRESENT BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THAT ITS FUTURE IS LIMITED SINCE IT IS DERIVED FROM SUCH SMALL PORTION OF AN ACRE'S POTENTIAL... WHAT IS HOLDING BACK ALGAE AND SWITCHGRASS?" MIKE, MANY FOLKS ARE ASKING THE SAME QUESTION, AND THERE ARE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS POURING INTO CELLULOSIC ETHANOL. IT YIELDS ABOUT TWICE AS MUCH ENERGY AS IT TAKES TO MAKE, WHILE CORN YIELDS ONLY ABOUT 30 PERCENT MORE THAN THE INPUTS. THERORETICALLY CELLULOSIC COULD DOUBLE THE ETHANOL YIELD PER ACRE WITH REDUCED INPUTS COSTS. FINALLY THE REDUCTION IN GREEN HOUSE GASES IS OVER 90 PERCENT COMPARED TO A SMALL DISPUTED DECREASE FOR CORN ETHANOL. EVEN WITH THESE ADVANTAGES I DOUBT CELLULOSIC ETHANOL WILL BE A FACTOR SOON. FIRST, WHILE CROPS LIKE SWITCHGRASS ARE OFTEN MENTIONED, FARMERS HAVE NO EXPERIENCE, EQUIPMENT OR INCENTIVE TO GROW IT. THE MORE LIKELY FEEDSTOCK IS MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE - GARBAGE. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE VAST INFRASTRUCTURE FOR GROWING AND MARKETING CORN ETHANOL WON'T VOLUNATRILY SWITCH. ANOTHER FACTOR IS THE LAND NEEDED. WHILE IT CAN GROW ON MARGINAL GROUND, THOSE ACRES ARE WHAT IS CALLED PASTURE AND THE NATION'S HERDS WOULD MISS THEM VERY MUCH. SOMETIME THE GOOD IS THE ENEMY OF THE BEST. IN THIS CASE A GOOD SOURCE FOR ETHANOL - CORN - WILL PROBABLY PREVENT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BETTER SOURCE - CELLULOSIC. PLEASE VISIT OUR HOMEPAGE FOR LINKS TO MUCH MORE.

U.S. FARM REPORT

The nation's longest running agricultural news program

Show #1809

Weekend of April 12, 2008

$13.00 CORN?: JUST HOW HIGH COULD THE PRICE OF CORN CLIMB THIS YEAR? AT LEAST ONE LEADING COMMODITY FIRM BELIEVES 13-DOLLARS A BUSHEL IS **NOT** OUT OF THE QUESTION. ACCORDING TO A D-T-N REPORT, JOE VICTOR OF ALLENDALE SAYS IF A WEATHER SITUATION DEVELOPS - SUCH AS DELAYED PLANTING - AND TREND LINE YIELDS DIP TO AROUND 131-BUSHELS AN ACRE, THE SEASON AVERAGE PRICE COULD VERY WELL TOP THE 13-DOLLAR MARK. AT THIS TIME ALLENDALE IS PROJECTING PRICES TO AVERAGE AROUND SIX-DOLLARS A BUSHEL...A FIGURE BASED ON EXCELLENT WEATHER AND AN AVERAGE YIELD OF 155 BUSHELS AN ACRE.

WHEAT: THE FIRST CROP PROGRESS REPORT OF THE 2008 GROWING SEASON IS OUT, AND IT REFLECTS A STRUGGLING WHEAT CROP. THE AG DEPARTMENT REPORTS FORTY-FIVE-PERCENT OF THE NATION'S WINTER WHEAT IS RATED GOOD TO EXCELLENT. IN THE BIG WHEAT PRODUCING STATES, WEATHER IS HAVING AN IMPACT. ONLY TWENTY-TWO PERCENT OF THE TEXAS CROP IS RATED GOOD TO EXCELLENT AS IT STRUGGLES WITH DRY CONDITIONS. IN KANSAS, 44-PERCENT IS GOOD TO EXCELLENT, WHILE IN OKLAHOMA 51-PERCENT HAS A FAVORABLE RATING.

SOYBEAN RUST: ALSO THIS WEEK - NEWS THAT SOYBEAN RUST CAN NO LONGER BE DETECTED IN LOUISIANA, TEXAS OR MISSISSIPPI. THE AG DEPARTMENT DOES REPORT THE FUNGUS IS ACTIVE ON KUDZI IN SIX FLORIDA COUNTIES - BUT NONE IN THE PANHANDLE. IN ADDITION, RUST HAS BEEN DETECTED IN AT LEAST ONE PATCH OF KUDZU IN ALABAMA.

CASH RENTS: CORN PRICES HIT NEW HEIGHTS THIS WEEK - FURTHER RAISING THE ANTE FOR GROWERS LOOKING TO FARM ACREAGE THEY DON'T OWN. OUR REPORTING PARTNERS AT TOP PRODUCER MAGAZINE RECENTLY CONDUCTED A SURVEY OF ITS READERS TO PIN-POINT CASH RENT TRENDS. NEARLY FIVE-HUNDRED READERS RESPONDED AND MOST RENT AT LEAST SOME GROUND. OF THOSE, FOURTY-FOUR PERCENT HAVE CASH-RENT AGREEMENTS. FOURTEEN PERCENT OF THOSE SURVEYED HAVE LOST GROUND TO OTHER FARMERS IN COMPETITIVE BIDDING. TOP PRODUCER EDITOR GREG VINCENT SAYS THAT'S A GROWING TREND. ONE OTHER FACT FROM THE SURVEY -- NINETY PERCENT PREDICT RENTS WILL GO UP IN 2009. YOU CAN READ MORE IN THE SPRING ISSUE OF TOP PRODUCER MAGAZINE - OUT THIS WEEKEND.

ROUNDTABLES: MARK GOLD – TOP THIRD AG MARKETING & FARM JOURNAL ECONOMIST BOB UTTERBACK

JOHN'S WORLD

FUEL PRICES: PAIN AT THE PUMP ONLY GOT WORSE THIS WEEK AS GAS PRICES MAKE ANOTHER MOVE HIGHER. ACCORDING TO THE TRIPLE-A'S FUEL GAUGE REPORT, THE AVERAGE PRICE OF REGULAR UNLEADED CLIMBED TO THREE-36 A GALLON THIS WEEK...UP 13-CENTS OVER THE PAST MONTH AND 56-CENTS FROM A YEAR AGO. THE NEWS IS NO BETTER FOR DIESEL. RIGHT NOW THE AVERAGE PRICE IS FOUR-OH-FIVE A GALLON...UP 20-CENTS FROM A MONTH AGO, AND MORE THAN A DOLLAR FROM THIS TIME LAST YEAR. UPDATED DAILY, THE TRIPLE-A'S FUEL GAUGE REPORT IS BASED ON A SURVEY OF 85-THOUSAND STATIONS COAST-TO-COAST.

FUEL THEFTS: ALONG WITH A SPIKE IN DRIVE-OFF'S AT GAS STATIONS NATIONWIDE, THE RISING PRICE OF FUEL IS CREATING A SECURITY PROBLEM IN PARTS OF RURAL AMERICA. ACCORDING TO THE CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU, A SIGNIFICANT RISE IN FUEL THEFTS IS BEING REPORTED IN MERCED COUNTY. AS A RESULT, THE STATE AG DEPARTMENT IS WARNING FARMERS TO STEP-UP THEIR ANTI-THEFT PRACTICES. THIEVES ARE REPORTEDLY USING VEHICLES WITH LARGE TANKS AND PORTABLE ELECTRIC PUMPS TO DRAIN FUEL STORED ON FARMS AND RANCHES.

UN FOOD SUPPLIES: THE AG ARM OF THE UNITED NATIONS IS SOUNDING THE ALARM OVER THE IMPACT HIGHER FOOD PRICES ARE HAVING ON POOR POPULATIONS AROUND THE GLOBE. THE U-N'S FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION NOTES WORLD FOOD PRICES HAVE CLIMBED 45-PERCENT IN THE LAST NINE MONTHS...WITH SERIOUS SHORTAGES OF RICE, WHEAT AND MAIZE BEING REPORTED. THE F-A-O SAYS A NUMBER OF FACTORS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE PRICE HIKE - REDUCED PRODUCTION DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE, HISTORICALLY LOW STOCKS, INCREASED CONSUMPTION IN EMERGING ECONOMIES, INCREASED DEMAND FOR BIOFUELS PRODUCTION, AND THE HIGHER COST OF ENERGY TO TRANSPORT SUPPLIES.

PORK SUPPLIES: IN AN EFFORT TO STABILIZE A SINKING MARKET, THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU IS ASKING THE GOVERNMENT TO STEP UP PORK PURCHASES. IN A LETTER TO THE AG DEPARTMENT, FARM BUREAU PRESIDENT BOB STALLMAN SAYS THE EXTRA SUPPLIES WOULD BE A HEALTHY ADDITION TO THE NATION'S NUTRITION PROGRAMS. THE LIVE HOG MARKET IS IN A TAILSPIN...ON THE FIRST OF THIS MONTH, WHOLESALE PORK PRICES DIPPED TO THEIR LOWEST LEVELS IN FOUR YEARS.

SPIRIT OF THE HEARTLAND: SHIVER SHANTY...CHAPEL OF EASE...THUNDER HOUSE. WHAT IN THE WORLD AM I TALKING ABOUT??? IF YOU'VE BEEN AROUND LONG ENOUGH - YOU MIGHT HAVE RECOGNIZED THESE "OTHER" NAMES FOR THE OLD-FASHIONED OUT-HOUSE. IN OKLAHOMA, THERE'S A RETIRED PROFESSOR WHO'S MADE A HOBBY OF FINDING AND DOCUMENTING OUT-HOUSES BEFORE THEY PASS FROM HISTORY. GAYLON CULVER FROM AFFILIATE KFOR-TV IN OKLAHOMA CITY GOES ALONG FOR A VERY INTERESTING RIDE...AS YOU SAW, BILLY HAS GATHERED ALL KINDS OF INFORMATION ON OLD OUT-HOUSES, AND HE'S MORE THAN HAPPY TO SHARE IT. A COUPLE TIMES EACH MONTH HE GIVES TALKS ABOUT HIS FINDINGS TO GROUPS LOOKING TO COMPARE OLD STORIES.

MACHINERY MINUTE: RAINFALL MAP...AS GROWERS TRY TO DECIDE EXACTLY WHEN THEY SHOULD LAUNCH IN TO PLANTING, A HANDY ONLINE RESOURCE CAN HELP YOU TRACK RAINFALL. ALONG WITH DISPLAYING RAINFALL TOTALS OVER THE PAST 24-HOURS, THIS NOAA-GENERATED RESOURCE PROVIDES PRECIPITATION TOTALS FOR THE PREVIOUS WEEK, THE LAST TWO WEEKS, THE CURRENT MONTH TO DATE, AND THE CURRENT YEAR TO DATE. THE INFORMATION IS BASED ON MEASUREMENTS FROM MORE THAN FOUR-THOUSAND RAIN GAUGES. YOU CAN ZOOM IN ON ANY GIVEN STATE OR ANY OF THE 16 GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS FROM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE. WE'LL POST A LINK ON OUR HOME PAGE FOR EASY ACCESS TO THE NOAA RAINFALL MAP.

TEXAS WIND TURBINES: ACROSS THE WIND SWEPT PRAIRIES, MORE AND MORE LAND-OWNERS ARE ADDING VALUE TO THEIR LAND THANKS TO GIANT WIND TURBINES. LAST WEEK WE SAW HOW THIS MOVEMENT IS GAINING MOMENTUM IN MISSOURI...AND TODAY, A SIMILAR STORY FROM TEXAS. FOR GENERATIONS, WINDMILLS WERE ESSENTIAL TO PUMP WATER FROM THE GROUND. THIS WAS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT ON VAST RANCHES, WHERE SURFACE WATER WAS A RARE COMMODITY. NOW, SOME OF THAT RANCH LAND IS SEEING A RESURGENCE IN WIND POWER -- NOT FOR WATER, BUT ELECTRICITY. REGIONAL REPORTER ERICA GOSS SHOWS US HOW AND WHY WIND FARMS ARE CATCHING ON IN THE LONE STAR STATE. ACCORDING TO THE AMERICAN WIND ENERGY ASSOCIATION, TEXAS LEADS THE NATION IN THE AMOUNT OF ELECTRICITY GENERATED BY WIND TURBINES.

TRACTOR TALES: WELCOME BACK...TRACTOR TALES THIS WEEK FEATURES AN OLD MACHINE THAT'S BEEN AROUND NEARLY 90 YEARS...AND STILL RUNS STRONG.

COUNTRY CHURCH SALUTE: WE HAVE TWO COUNTRY CHURCH SALUTES THIS WEEKEND - OUR FIRST GOES TO IMMANUEL LUTHERAN OF BERTRAND, NEBRASKA WHO WILL CELEBRATE 125 YEARS OF MINISTRY THIS WEEKEND. FOUNDED BY 75 SWEDISH SETTLERS IN 1883, THE ORIGINAL HOME FOR THE CHURCH WAS MOVED TWICE TO ACCOMMODATE MEMBERS LIVING IN THE COUNTRY. KNOWN AS THE WETLANDA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, SWEDISH MID-WEEK SERVICES WERE CONDUCTED UNTIL ABOUT 1940. THE PRESENT BUILDING WAS COMPLETED IN 1952. THE CURRENT PASTOR IS GARY PANKO. OUR SECOND CHURCH IS THE MOUNT ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEAR BUCYRUS, OHIO. THEY WILL MARK THEIR 150TH ANNIVERSARY THIS WEEKEND. BEGUN AS A UNITED BRETHERAN CHURCH, THEY ERECTED THEIR FIRST CHURCH BUILDING IN 1870. THIS CHURCH BURNED IN 1897 AND WAS REBUILT IN A FEW MONTHS. OVER THE YEARS THE CHURCH WAS SERVED BY DOZENS OF MINISTERS WHILE THE CONGREGATION INCLUDED FAMILIES

WITH DECADES OF ATTENDANCE. WE THANK PASTOR SONDRA SNODE FOR SENDING IN HER CHURCH.

USFR MAILBAG: TIME NOW FOR OUR WEEKLY LOOK INSIDE THE FARM REPORT MAIL BAG...THIS EMAIL ARRIVED FROM BOB STUHLMILLER FROM KINGSTON, WASHINGTON ABOUT BREAD PRICE INCREASES:

"...IF THE VALUE OF THE WHEAT IN A LOAF OF BREAD WAS 7 CENTS BEFORE THE INCREASE IT STANDS TO REASON THAT IT IS ONLY WORTH 21 CENTS IF THE WHEAT PRICE HAS TRIPLED...WE NEED SOMEONE TO START TELLING THE STORY OF THE REAL NEEDED INCREASES. IF IT IS FROM FUEL PRICES TO DELIVER THE PRODUCT PLEASE DON'T BLAME THE FARMER." BOB, MANY GRAIN FARMERS ARE STARTING TO OBJECT TO ANGRY CONSUMER COMPLAINTS ABOUT FOOD PRICE INCREASES. AND YOU ARE RIGHT - FOR BREAD AND FOODS LIKE THE INFAMOUS BOX OF CORNFLAKES THE RAW COMMODITY DOES CONTRIBUTE ONLY A TINY PORTION OF THE RETAIL PRICE. FOR MEATS, ROUGHLY HALF THE COST IS BASED ON GRAIN PRICES. EVEN THEN, THE FARM CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL RETAIL PRICE IS ABOUT 20 CENTS - CERTAINLY NOT THE ONLY OR EVEN LARGEST INFLUENCE. LABOR CONTRIBUTES 38 PERCENT, FOR EXAMPLE. HOWEVER, THAT IS NOT THE IMPLICATION AGRICULTURE HAS BROADCAST LOUDLY UP UNTIL A FEW MONTH AGO. WE LINKED FARMERS TO FOOD PRICES WHEN THEY WERE LOW. THINK OF HOW MANY TIMES YOU HAVE SEEN FARMER PICTURES TIED TO THE FACT AMERICANS SPEND ONLY ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF DISPOSABLE INCOME ON FOOD. CONSEQUENTLY AMERICANS BELIEVE THE FARMER-FOOD PRICE LINKAGE. AND I THINK WE WILL HAVE A TOUGH TIME REVERSING THAT FALSE IMPRESSION WE WORKED SO HARD TO IMPLANT. WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN HONEST WITH THE CONSUMER. AMERICAN FOOD PRICES ARE THE PRODUCT OF AN EFFICIENT FOOD INDUSTRY IN WHICH AGRICULTURE IS AN IMPORTANT BUT SMALL PARTNER.

U.S. FARM REPORT

The nation's longest running agricultural news program

Show #1810

Weekend of April 19, 2008

BEEF TRADE

WE START THIS MORNING WITH AN IMPORTANT UPDATE ON BEEF TRADE...AND A DEAL THAT GETS U-S BEEF BACK INSIDE SOUTH KOREAN MARKETS.

THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE REACHED AN AGREEMENT TO FULLY RE-OPEN THE SOUTH KOREAN MARKET.

U-S TRADE REPRESENTATIVE SUSAN SCHWAB SAYS THE MARKET WILL FIRST ALLOW TO BONE-IN BEEF CUTS FROM ANIMALS THIRTY MONTHS OR UNDER.

EVENTUALLY THE MARKET WILL OPEN TO ALL U-S BEEF PRODUCTS, REGARDLESS OF AGE.

SOUTH KOREA CLOSED ITS GATES TO U-S BEEF PRODUCERS FOLLOWING THE B-S-E OUTBREAK IN 2003.

AT THAT TIME, SOUTH KOREA WAS THE THIRD LARGEST IMPORTER OF U-S BEEF.

SCHWAB SAYS THE DEAL REMOVES A MAJOR OBSTACLE BETWEEN A FREE-TRADE-AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH KOREA AND THE U-S.

CANADA BSE

MEANWHILE, A RECENT CASE OF B-S-E IN CANADA HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED AS AN "A-TYPICAL' STRAIN, PROMPTING HEALTH OFFICIALS TO NOW LOOK FOR MULTIPLE STRAINS.

IT WAS MAY 2003 -- NEARLY FIVE YEARS AGO -- WHEN WE FIRST REPORTED ON THE OUTBREAK IN CANADA.

IN DECEMBER, CANADA AUTHORITIES ANNOUNCED A 13-YEAR-OLD HEREFORD HAD TESTED POSITIVE.

CANADIAN AG OFFICIALS NOW SAY THAT AGE FACTOR SEEMS TO BE A COMMON LINK IN CATTLE THAT GET THE A-TYPICAL STRAIN, WHICH HAS ALSO BEEN FOUND IN EUROPE.

CANADIAN INSPECTORS SAY ALL COUNTRIES MUST REMAIN DILIGENT IN IDENTIFYING NEW AND MULTIPLE B-S-E STRAINS.

FARM BILL

BACK IN WASHINGTON, THE FARM BILL STATUS SEEMS TO CHANGE HOURLY.

AS THE WEEK WOUND-DOWN, NEGOTIATORS ON BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO TRADE OFFERS BACK AND FORTH.

GIVEN THE FLUID SITUATION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE PROSPECT OF PERMANENT LAW BEING IMPLEMENTED REMAINS A REALITY.

PERMANENT LAW WOULD TAKE FARM PROGRAMS BACK 50 YEARS.

STILL, OUR PRO FARMER STAFF IN WASHINGTON SAYS

ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION OF PERMANENT LAW COULD BE AVOIDED THROUGH SOME PROCEDURAL DELAYS INITIATED BY THE AG DEPARTMENT.

THAT COULD GIVE LAWMAKERS MORE TIME TO FINISH THE FARM BILL.

CROP PROGRESS

THE FIRST CROP PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SEASON WHERE CORN IS A FACTOR SHOWS HOW THE WET SPRING IS IMPACTING FIELD WORK.

FS/SS---CORN PLANTING

2% NATIONWIDE

7% 5-YEAR AVERAGE

AS OF EARLIER THIS WEEK, TWO PERCENT HAD BEEN PLANTED...DOWN FROM THE THE FIVE YEAR AVERAGE OF SEVEN PERCENT.

OF THE EIGHT STATES WHERE CORN HAS BEEN PLANTED, MOST ARE CONSIDERABLY BEHIND THEIR AVERAGE PACE.

THERE'S BEEN NO REPORTABLE AMOUNTS OF CORN PLANTED IN BIG "I'S" YET.

WINTER WHEAT HEADING IS ALSO LAGGING BEHIND. FOUR PERCENT OF THE NATION'S CROP HAS ADVANCED TO THAT STAGE, DOWN FROM NINE PERCENT.

THERE'S SOME IMPROVEMENT IN THE WHEAT CONDITION. FOURTY-SEVEN-PERCENT IS RATED GOOD TO EXCELLENT...UP TWO POINTS FROM LAST WEEK.

45-PERCENT OF KANSAS AND SIXTY-PERCENT OF THE NEBRASKA WHEAT CROP IS IN GOOD SHAPE.

ROUNDTABLE

GREG WAGNER & GARY WILHELMI

JOHN'S WORLD

TO ALMOST NOBODY'S SURPRISE, THE FARM BILL MISSED ANOTHER DEADLINE THIS WEEK. WHILE THE DEBATE HAS PRODUCED THOUSANDS OF WORDS OF COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS, IT HAS BEEN NOTABLE FOR THE NARROWNESS OF THE NEGOTIATION.

MANY RETIRING CONGRESS MEMBERS HAVE LAMENTED THE LACK OF COOPERATION THAT USED TO GET THINGS DONE IN THE CONGRESS, AND THE SENATE IN PARTICULAR. THE ATMOSPHERE IN WASHINGTON TODAY LACKS THE GIVE-AND-TAKE TO GET AN ACTUAL BILL PASSED IN PREVIOUS CONGRESSES.

FOR THE FARM BILL, I THINK PART OF THE REASON IS THE ATTITUDE OF THE CURRENT LUCKY PARTICIPANTS - FARMERS LIKE ME.

WE HAVE RECEIVED SO MUCH FOR SO LONG, WE NOW CONSIDER GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS OUR JUST DUE FROM OTHER TAXPAYERS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY IRONIC GIVEN WE ARE AT THE SAME TIME ALSO WALLOWING IN HISTORICALLY HIGH PROFITS.

IT IS THIS SENSE OF DESERVING, OF ENTITLEMENT THAT HAS BECOME ONE OF MY PROFESSION'S LESS ATTRACTIVE FEATURES. AND IT IS THIS IMPERIOUS POSITION THAT HAMPERS ATTEMPTS TO COMPROMISE. MY WAY OR NO WAY IS A POLITICAL TACTIC WITH DIGITAL RESULTS - 1 OR ZERO.

THE RELUCTANCE TO NEGOTIATE, ONLY STIPULATE, WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE CAN BE DONE FROM A POSITION OF POLITICAL STRENGTH. IF THINGS DON'T TURN OUT EXACTLY AS FARM PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES THINK THEY SHOULD, PERHAPS WE SHOULD REEVALUATE EXACTLY HOW STRONG OUR POLITICAL POSITION IS.

PILGRIM'S PRIDE

IT'S BEEN A CHALLENGING WEEK FOR ONE OF THE LARGEST POULTRY PROCESSORS IN THE COUNTRY.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS AGENTS RAIDED PLANTS OPERATED BY PILGRIM'S PRIDE, LOOKING FOR UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS.

NEARLY FOUR-HUNDRED HOURLY WORKERS WERE ARRESTED AT PLANTS IN FIVE STATES.

THOSE ARRESTED ARE ACCUSED OF IMMIGRATION-RELATED CRIMES, SUCH AS IDENTITY THEFT AND ILLEGAL USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS.

THE COMPANY SAYS -IT- UNCOVERED THE IDENTITY THEFT AT ITS ARKANSAS PLANT AND NOTIFIED FEDERAL AUTHORITIES, LEADING TO THE RAIDS.

PILGRIMS PRIDE – FEED COSTS

ON TOP OF THAT, EARLIER IN THE WEEK PILGRIM'S PRIDE SAID IT WAS CUTTING PRODUCTION BY FIVE-PERCENT COMPANY-WIDE, AS IT TRIES TO COPE WITH RISING FEED COSTS.

IT'S ALSO SHUTTING DOWN A NORTH CAROLINA PLANT.

WE'RE HEARING PLENTY OF SIMILAR STORIES FROM THE LIVESTOCK SIDE OF AGRICULTURE OVER CONCERNS OF RISING FEED COSTS.

HOG PRODUCERS HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY HARD-HIT BY THE INCREASES.

NATIONAL EDITOR CHARLES JOHNSON PROVIDES IN-DEPTH COVERAGE IN THE UPCOMING ISSUE OF FARM JOURNAL MAGAZINE.

CHARLES SAYS COMPARE THAT TO THE COMPANY'S EIGHT-BILLION DOLLAR ANNUAL GROSS INCOME...AND YOU GET AN IDEA THE STRUGGLE IT FACES.

READ ABOUT THE "FEED FIGHT" IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF FARM JOURNAL MAGAZINE.

FOOD FOR POOR

FROM FEED TO FOOD... THE WHITE HOUSE HAS ORDERED THE AG DEPARTMENT TO RELEASE TWO-HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS IN EMERGENCY FOOD AID TO HELP FOREIGN COUNTRIES STRUGGLING WITH INCREASING FOOD COSTS.

PRESIDENT BUSH DIRECTED THE AG DEPARTMENT TO DRAW FROM THE BILL EMERSON HUMANITARIAN TRUST.

THE FUNDING WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE U-S AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

THIS ADDITIONAL FUNDING WILL HELP OFF-SET THE RISING COMMODITY PRICES THAT IMPACT U-S EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS ALREADY IN PLACE, LIKE IN AFRICA.

THE EMERSON FUND CONTAINS ONE-HUNDRED-SEVENTEEN MILLION DOLLARS IN CASH AND AROUND THIRTY-THREE MILLION BUSHELS OF WHEAT.

WHAT'S NOT CLEAR AT THIS POINT, HOW THE 200-MILLION DOLLAR AID WILL BE SPLIT BETWEEN ACTUAL DOLLARS AND WHEAT STOCKS.

CEREAL RECALL

A POPULAR BREAKFAST CEREAL IS UNDER RECALL THIS MORNING BECAUSE OF CONCERNS OVER SALMONELLA.

THE MALT-O-MEAL COMPANY ISSUED THE RECALL AFTER REPORTS OF 23-PEOPLE IN FOURTEEN STATES GETTING ILL.

THE RECALL INVOLVES THE UNSWEETENED PUFFED RICE AND PUFFED WHEAT CEREALS DISTRIBUTED UNDER THE MALT-O-MEAL BRAND NAME.

THE RECALL ALSO INCLUDES TWELVE PRIVATE LABELS THAT WERE PRODUCED BY MALT-O-MEAL.

THE CEREAL BAGS HAVE "BEST IF USED BY" DATES FROM APRIL 8, 2008 THROUGH MARCH 18, 2009.

A FULL LISTING CAN BE FOUND ON THE COMPANY WEBSITE -- MALT-OH-MEAL-DOT-COM.

WE'LL PUT A LINK ON OUR WEBSITE TOO.

SPIRIT OF THE HEARTLAND

ONE OF THE GREAT THINGS ABOUT TRAVELING CROSS COUNTRY IS SEEING WILDLIFE OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES...ANIMALS YOU DON'T NORMALLY SEE IN YOUR OWN BACK YARD.

IF YOU'RE HEADED TO THE MID-SOUTH ANYTIME SOON, YOU JUST MIGHT RUN INTO SOME UNEXPECTED WILDLIFE. AS CHUCK DENNEY SHOWS US IN THIS REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, WILDLIFE IS CHANGING IN THE VOLUNTEER STATE...

ON THE PLUS SIDE, U-T WILDLIFE EXPERTS SAY SOME SPECIES OF HAWKS ARE THRIVING - WITH POPULATIONS UP NEARLY A THOUSAND PERCENT IN RECENT YEARS.

MACHINERY MINUTE

IN THIS MORNING'S MACHINERY MINUTE...

THE MARCH SALES FIGURES ON BIG IRON SHOW STRONG GAINS IN LARGE TRACTORS, BUT TWO WHEEL TRACTORS ARE DOWN.

ACCORDING TO THE ASSOCIATION OF EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS, MONNTHLY SALES ON FOUR WHEEL DRIVE TRACTOR WERE UP NEARLY 29-PERCENT FROM A YEAR AGO.

YEAR TO DATE FIGURES ARE UP 31-PERCENT FROM OH-SEVEN.

THE A-E-M REPORT INDICATES TWO WHEEL DRIVE-FARM TRACTOR SALES IN MARCH WERE DOWN 25-PERCENT FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

COMBINE SALES ARE ALSO UP - BY EIGHT PERCENT -FOR THE MONTH.

MILK SECURITY

EFFORTS TO COMBAT TERRORISM CAN BE FOUND IN BIG CITIES AND SMALL...WITH AGRICULTURE A PRIME AREA OF CONCERN.

AS THE INDUSTRY LOOKS FOR WAYS TO PROTECT ITSELF, ONE SUCH EFFORT CAN BE FOUND IN KENTUCKY WHERE ENGINEERS HAVE COME UP WITH A HIGH-TECH SOLUTION TO SAFELY TRACE MILK FROM FARM TO TABLE.

MARK ECK-LOV FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY HAS THE DETAILS.

MARK TELLS US FIELD TESTING FOR THE SECURITY SYSTEM IS NOW UNDERWAY...THE RESEARCH TEAM PLANS TO DEMONSTRATE THE TECHNOLOGY TO POTENTIAL USERS LATER THIS YEAR.

TRACTOR TALES

WELCOME BACK...IN THIS MORNING'S TRACTOR TALES, WE MEET AN ILLINOIS FELLA WHO'S PROUD TO SHOW-OFF HIS 1953 FORD JUBILEE.

WE TRAVEL TO LOYAL, WISCONSIN AND THE TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH THIS MORNING FOR OUR COUNTRY CHURCH SALUTE. WE ARE HAPPY TO HELP THEM CELEBRATE THEIR 125TH ANNIVERSARY.

ORGANIZED IN 1883 BY THIRTEEN CHARTER MEMBERS, THE CHURCH HAS GROWN TO 648 BAPTIZED MEMBERS TODAY.

THE ORIGINAL CHURCH HOME WAS A LOG CHURCH ABOUT A MILE NORTH OF LOYAL. THE SITE TODAY IS MARKED BY A CEMETERY. IN 1892 A SECOND CHURCH WAS ERECTED IN LOYAL, BUT BADLY DAMAGED BY LIGHTNING IN 1913.

A NEW STRUCTURE - THE PRESENT CHURCH - WAS BUILT TO REPLACE IT. IN 1957 AN EDUCATIONAL UNIT WAS ADDED.
ONE OF THE ORIGINAL CHARTER MEMBERS - WILLIAM LUCHTERHAND - WAS THE FIRST OF SEVEN GENERATIONS OF CHURCH MEMBERS. I THINK THAT MAY BE A RECORD FOR OUR COUNTRY CHURCH SALUTE.
WE THANK VELORA ROEHL FOR SUBMITTING HER CHURCH.

USFR MAILBAG

TIME NOW FOR OUR WEEKLY LOOK INSIDE THE FARM REPORT MAIL BAG...

DURING A STORY ABOUT A VETERINARIAN SHORTAGE IN THE U-S, WE MENTIONED PROGRAMS TO HELP PROSPECTIVE VETS PAY FOR THEIR INCREASINGLY EXPENSIVE EDUCATION.

WE RECEIVED SEVERAL COMMENTS SUCH AS THIS ONE FROM JOHN SANKEY

"I BELIEVE YOU MENTIONED THAT 8 VET SCHOOLS OR STATES WERE -
FORGIVING - TUITION COSTS FOR VET STUDENTS TO PRACTICE (LARGE ANIMAL PRODUCTION) IN THEIR STATES. DID I HEAR CORRECTLY? DO YOU HAVE NAME OF VET SCHOOLS/STATES?"
JOHN, THANKS FOR ASKING. WE INDEED DID SAY THERE WERE EIGHT STATES WITH SOME KIND OF PROGRAM TO SOLVE THE SIMULTANEOUS PROBLEM OF ENORMOUS VET SCHOOL COSTS AND THE NEED FOR LARGE ANIMAL VETS IN UNDER-SERVED AREA.
BUT FINDING THE INFORMATION PROVED TO BE A LITTLE MORE DIFFICULT. THANKS TO THE FOLKS AND THE AMERICAN VERTERINARIAN ASSOCIATION WE HAVE NAILED IT DOWN. BECAUSE EACH STATE HAS A UNIQUE PROGRAM, YOU NEED TO READ THE DETAILS FROM THE SUMMARY THEY KINDLY PROVIDED.
WE HAVE A LINK ON OUR HOMEPAGE - USFARMREPORT.COM - THAT WILL TELL YOU EVERYTHING WE HAVE FOUND. THE SHORT VERSION IS THERE ARE PROGRAMS IN THESE STATES: GEORGIA, KANSAS, OHIO, LOUISIANA, MAINE, PENNSYLVANIA, MISSOURI, NORTH DAKOTA, WASHINGTON, AND WYOMING.
TWO OTHER STATES, ILLINOIS AND OKLAHOMA ARE IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS. ALL THE PROGRAMS ARE DIFFERENT, AND JUDGING FROM THE BUDGET CRISIS WE SEEM TO BE CONTINUALLY ARGUING ABOUT IN THE LAND OF LINCOLN, FUNDING FOR THESE PROGRAMS IS ALWAYS AT RISK.
THIS WOULD ALSO BE AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNTITY FOR THE MILLIONS OF HORSE OWNERS TO WEIGH IN WITH THEIR LEGISLATORS. WE HOPE THIS INFORMATION HELPS.

U.S. FARM REPORT

The nation's longest running agricultural news program

Show #1811

Weekend of April 26, 2008

MIDWEST DROUGHT

A LEADING AG CLIMATOLOGIST BELIEVES THE MIDWEST IS OVERDUE FOR A MAJOR DROUGHT.

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BROWNFIELD RADIO NETWORK, DR. ELWYNN TAYLOR OF IOWA STATE PUT THE ODDS OF A SIGNIFICANT DROUGHT AT 33-PERCENT...TWICE THAT OF A NORMAL YEAR.

TAYLOR SAYS THE BIGGEST REASON FOR THE INCREASED RISK IS THE FACT THE MIDWEST HASN'T HAD A MAJOR DROUGHT IN TWENTY YEARS. OVER THE PAST EIGHT CENTURIES, THE LONGEST GAP BETWEEN MAJOR DROUGHTS IN THE REGION IS TWENTY-THREE YEARS...SO IF THERE'S NOT ONE BY 20-11, AN 800-YEAR-OLD RECORD WOULD BE BROKEN.

ONE NOTE OF CAUTION - TAYLOR SAYS THE LIKELIHOOD OF A DROUGHT IS STILL RELATIVELY LOW...ONE IN THREE.

CORN PLANTING

IT'S TOO MUCH RAIN - NOT TOO LITTLE - THAT HAS PLANTING OFF TO A SLOW START IN THE HEART OF FARM COUNTRY.

AS OF LAST WEEKEND, THE AG DEPARMENT REPORTS FOUR-PERCENT OF THE NATION'S CORN CROP HAD BEEN PLANTED...SIGNIFICANTLY BEHIND THE FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE.

THE WEEKLY UPDATE NOTES VERY LITTLE FIELD WORK IN THE HEART OF THE CORN BELT - INCLUDING ALMOST NO PLANTING AT ALL IN IOWA AND INDIANA.

WINTER WHEAT

AS FOR WINTER WHEAT, THE AG DEPARTMENT RATES 45-PERCENT OF THE CROP GOOD TO EXCELLENT...DOWN A COUPLE POINTS FROM LAST WEEK. IN KANSAS, THE NATION'S NUMBER-ONE WHEAT STATE, 42-PERCENT OF THE CROP FALLS INTO THAT CATEGORY.

OVERALL, THE CROP IS MATURING LATER THAN NORMAL, WITH ONLY SEVEN-PERCENT AT THE HEADING PHASE...

CANADA WHEAT

IT LOOKS LIKE GROWERS NORTH OF THE BORDER WILL BE GROWING A LOT MORE WHEAT THIS YEAR.

STATISTICS CANADA -- WHICH DOES A TALLY SIMILAR TO THE USDA -- PREDICTS ACRES WILL BE UP SIXTEEN PERCENT THIS YEAR, ABOUT FOUR MILLION MORE ACRES OVER LAST YEAR.

IN ADDITION, THE AGENCY IS PROJECTING A RECORD PLANTING OF CANOLA AND FIELD PEAS.

CFTC HEARING

SOME OF THE KEY PLAYERS IN THE BUSINESS OF COMMODITY FUTURES GATHERED IN WASHINGTON TUESDAY TO LOOK AT THE PROGNOSIS OF THAT INDUSTRY.

THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION, WHICH REGULATES THE INDUSTRY, HELD A FORUM TO DISCUSS THE STABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETS.

RECORD PRICES AT THE EXCHANGES HAVE PROVED TOO TEMPTING FOR SOME INVESTORS.

THAT NEW MONEY HELPED CREATE SOME OF THE VOLATILITY IN MARKETS WHERE FARMERS AND RANCHERS SELL THEIR GRAINS AND LIVESTOCK.

ROUNDTABLE

MIKE FLOREZ FROM FLOREZ TRADING & RANDALL WALLACE FROM F.C. STONE

JOHN'S WORLD

THE FOOD VERSUS FUEL DEBATE TOOK AN UNSETTLING TURN THIS WEEK AS RICE SHORTAGES - REAL AND IMAGINED - WERE ALL OVER THE NEWS.

AS IS NOW CUSTOMARY, THE SHIFT FROM FOOD CROPS LIKE RICE TO FUEL CROPS LIKE OILSEEDS OR CORN DREW MUCH OF THE FIRE.

BUT AS BIOFUEL PROPONENTS POINT OUT, A LARGER CAUSE IS SIMPLY THE DEMAND FOR FOOD AND THE ABILITY OF MORE PEOPLE TO PAY FOR IT. WHILE WE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT A

DEMAND DRIVEN MARKET FOR FOOD BASED ON ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA, THE TIMING AND SPEED OF THE ARRIVAL OF THIS NEW HUNGER CAUGHT MANY OF US BY SURPRISE.

AMERICANS, OF COURSE, DON'T REALLY EXPERIENCE THIS PINCH THE SAME WAY AS MOST OF THE WORLD'S CITIZENS, OTHER THAN BEING ABLE TO BUY ONLY 4 BAGS OF RICE PER TRIP AT COSTCO. BUT IF YOUR DIET IS MOSTLY RICE, THIS IS A MATTER OF URGENCY AND ANGER.

U-S BIOFUEL MANDATES AND SUBSIDIES WILL CONTINUE TO COME UNDER FIRE. BUT FOR THOSE PRODUCERS LIKE ME WHO ARE A LITTLE HAZY ABOUT EARLY 20TH CENTURY HISTORY, LET ME OFFER THIS BRIEF COMMENT.

WHEAT CROP FAILURES IN RUSSIA AND THE U-S ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR ONE HELPED SPEED THE ARRIVAL OF THAT GHASTLY CONFLICT. SO IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBT ABOUT WHICH SIDE WILL WIN THE FOOD-FUEL DEBATE, I SUGGEST THE SMART MONEY WILL SIDE WITH HISTORY.

OIL PRICES

AS THE WEEK CAME TO A CLOSE, WE SAW CRUDE OIL PRICES HIT ANOTHER ALL-TIME HIGH.

ON TUESDAY, CRUDE OIL CLOSED AT ONE-HUNDRED-NINETEEN-90 A BARREL...BEFORE FALLING BACK TO ONE-SIXTEEN-A BARREL.

THE NATIONWIDE AVERAGE FOR A GALLON OF GASOLINE IS NOW THREE-57 A GALLON.

ACCORDING TO TRIPLE-A, THAT'S 31 CENTS HIGHER THAN JUST ONE MONTH AGO....AND 70-CENTS MORE THAN A YEAR AGO.

AVERAGE DIESEL PRICES ALSO HIT AN ALL-TIME HIGH AT FOUR-23.

ETHANOL EFFICIENCY

A NEW ANALYSIS FROM ARGONNE NATIONAL LABORATORY SHOWS AN IMPROVEMENT IN ETHANOL PRODUCTION.

THE REPORT SHOWS WATER CONSUMPTION IS DOWN MORE THAN 26-PERCENT.

IT ALSO SHOWS ELECTRICITY USE IN PRODUCTION IS DOWN NEARLY 16-PERCENT.

ARGONNE COMPARED DATA FROM 2001 TO 2006 TO REACH THEIR CONCLUSIONS.

ETHANOL

MEANWHILE, PRO FARMER WASHINGTON EDITOR ROGER BERNARD RECENTLY SAT DOWN WITH AG SECRETARY ED SCHAFER TO TALK ABOUT THE U-S POLICY ON ENERGY AND ITS IMPACT ON CORN PRICES.

DOWNER CATTLE

SOME OF THE KEY PLAYERS IN THE U-S MEAT INDUSTRY MADE AN "ABOUT FACE" IN THEIR POSITION ON DOWNER CATTLE.

THEY ARE NOW BACKING A TOTAL BAN OF NON-AMBULATORY COWS FROM ENTERING THE FOOD SUPPLY.

THE AMERICAN MEAT INSTITUTE, THE NATIONAL MEAT ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION ANNOUNCED THEIR JOINT POSITION.

THE THREE ORGANIZATIONS FILED A PETITION WITH THE AG DEPARTMENT, CALLING FOR A CHANGE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY.

THE GROUPS WANT THE RULES AMENDED SO DISABLED CATTLE ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE FOOD SUPPLY UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

DAIRY PRODUCTION

THE NATION'S DAIRY COWS ARE PRODUCING AT A RECORD PACE. ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT FIGURES, MILK PRODUCTION IN MARCH TOPPED FIFTEEN-BILLION POUNDS - UP MORE THAN TWO POINTS FROM A YEAR AGO.

IN ALL, THE NUMBER OF MILK COWS IN THE 23-MAJOR DAIRY STATES NOW TOTALS MORE THAN EIGHT-POINT-FOUR MILLION. WHEN YOU BREAK DOWN THE NUMBERS, PRODUCTION PER COW LAST MONTH AVERAGED NEARLY 18-HUNDRED POUNDS.

CALIFORNIA CONTINUES TO LEAD THE NATION IN PRODUCTION.

SPIRIT OF THE HEARTLAND

TRACTOR TALES HAS LONG BEEN ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR SEGMENTS HERE ON U-S FARM REPORT...AND FOR GOOD REASON.

RESTORING OLD MACHINES TO NEW GLORY IS A FAVORITE HOBBY FOR MANY IN FARM COUNTRY...BUT IN IOWA, THERE'S A CRAFTSMAN WHO HAS A BIG LOVE FOR SMALL-SCALE EQUIPMENT.

AL JONES FROM AFFILIATE KTIV-TV IN SIOUX CITY, IOWA HAS THE STORY OF AN ARTIST WITH A DIFFERENT KIND OF "GREEN THUMB".

MACHINERY MINUTE
CANADA SALES

WE ALL KNOW HOW STRONG FARM EQUIPMENT SALES HAVE BEEN HERE IN THE U-S IN RECENT MONTHS...AND THE NEWS ISN'T MUCH DIFFERENT IN CANADA.

ACCORDING TO THE ASSOCIATION OF EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS, MORE THAN 44-HUNDRED TRACTORS HAVE BEEN SOLD IN THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF THE YEAR...ALMOST 12-HUNDRED MORE COMPARED TO THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2007. IN MARCH ALONE, SALES WERE UP 22-PERCENT.

COMBINES ARE ALSO A HOT TICKET IN CANADA - WITH SALES UP 21-PERCENT THROUGH MARCH.

SOYBEAN ALLIANCE

ALONG WITH AGRICULTURE, PURDUE UNIVERSITY IS RENOWNED FOR ITS FIRST-RATE ENGINEERING PROGRAM...SO IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE THAT STUDENTS THERE WOULD EXCEL IN A COMPETITION WHERE SOYBEANS ARE THE SOURCE OF INNOVATION.

BRIAN BAXTER SHOWS US WHAT THEY CAME UP WITH IN THIS REPORT FROM THE INDIANA SOYBEAN ALLIANCE.

TRACTOR TALES

WELCOME BACK TO U-S FARM REPORT.

IN THIS MORNING'S TRACTOR TALES....WE HEAR FROM LARRY KEFFER FROM LA-FON-TAINE, INDIANA.

LARRY TOOK HIS 1959 ALLIS CHALMERS D-TEN TO THE MAUMEE VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF ANTIQUE TRACTORS IN AUBURN, INDIANA.

COUNTRY CHURCH

WE HAVE A GREAT STORY ABOUT A CHURCH REACHING FOR THE FABLED HIGHER GROUND OF SONG THIS MORNING FOR OUR COUNTRY CHURCH SALUTE. CORRESPONDENT GEORGE MYER SHARES HOW HIS CHURCH BECAME A CHURCH ON THE MOVE.

THE HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN ELKADER, IOWA WAS BEGUN IN 1899 BY GERMAN IMMIGRANTS.

GERMAN-LANGUAGE SERVICES WERE CONDUCTED ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH UNTIL 1921.

IN 1924 THE CHURCH DECIDED TO DIG A BASEMENT UNDER THE CHURCH, AND AS ALL BASEMENT OWNERS EVENTUALLY COME TO REALIZE, KEEPING WATER OUT OF A BASEMENT IS A STRUGGLE.

IN 1999, AFTER 6 FEET OF FLOODING, THE DECISION WAS MADE TO MOVE THE BUILDING TO ELKADER AT A COST OF $13,000.

THESE SCENIC PICTURES SHOW THE CHURCH CROSSING THE VOLGA RIVER IN LITTLEPORT IN OCTOBER OF 2000 ON ITS WAY TO HIGHER, AND WE HOPE, DRYER GROUND .

USFR MAILBAG

TIME NOW FOR OUR WEEKLY LOOK INSIDE THE FARM REPORT MAIL BAG...

I RECEIVED THIS POINTED REPLY FROM SUE VIOLETT IN NORTH CENTRAL MONTANA.

"IT MAY SURPRISE YOU TO DISCOVER THAT NOT ALL PRODUCERS ARE WALLOWING IN HIGH PRICES THIS YEAR AND MAY STILL NEED FARM PROGRAM SUPPORT. WE ARE ENTERING OUR 10TH YEAR OF DROUGHT HERE AND VERY FEW FARMERS AROUND HERE GOT ANYWHERE NEAR THE HIGHS IN THE MARKET FOR THIS LAST YEAR'S CROP AS WE, OF NECESSITY, HAD MOST OR ALL OF IT FORWARD CONTRACTED.

BY THE WAY, SINCE YOU SEEM TO BE SO CRITICAL OF THE FARM PROGRAM, DO YOU STILL SIGN UP FOR IT?"

I HEAR YOU SUE. ONE YOUR FIRST POINT, "WALLOWING" MAY HAVE BEEN A POOR CHOICE, BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU RECORD PROFITS ARE POURING DOWN ON SOME FARMERS I KNOW.

EVERY YEAR THERE ARE THOSE PRODUCERS WHOSE WEATHERS LEAVE THEM OUT OF THE GOOD TIMES, AND I TEND TO SPEAK TO NATIONAL TRENDS.

I AM SORRY YOU ARE UNDERGOING HARDSHIP, BUT I WONDER ABOUT A FARM POLICY THAT ENCOURAGES PRODUCTION ON SUCH LAND.

TEN YEARS OF DROUGHT RAISES REAL CONCERNS FOR ME THAT THE LAND IS NOT ARABLE. BECAUSE OF THE POLITICS OF PERMANENT DISASTER FUNDING NEEDED TO SUPPORT THIS SEEMINGLY PERMANENT DISASTER, WE HAVE NO NEW FARM BILL.

FINALLY, I AS I HAVE ADMITTED BEFORE I DO SIGN UP FOR THE FARM PROGRAM. AS YOU KNOW PAYMENTS ATTACH TO ACRES - NOT PEOPLE, AND THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT SIGNING UP WOULD REBOUND ONTO MY LAND OWNERS AND THEIR LAND VALUE. THIS IS HYPOCRITICAL, BUT OUR HOPE IS TO DONATE OUR ENTIRE PAYMENT.

U.S. FARM REPORT

The nation's longest running agricultural news program

Show #1812

Weekend of May 03, 2008

THE 2008 PLANTING SEASON IS OFF TO A SLOW START IN MANY PARTS OF THE CORN BELT...WITH MOTHER NATURE TO BLAME.

IN PARTS OF THE DAKOTAS AND MINNESOTA, UP TO EIGHTEEN INCHES OF SNOW CAME DOWN LAST WEEKEND. WHILE TEMPERATURES REBOUNDED DURING THE WEEK, IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE FIELD WORK CAN REALLY GET GOING.

MEANTIME, PARTS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER ARE RUNNING HIGH RIGHT NOW.

THIS IS THE SCENE IN DAVENPORT, IOWA WHERE EARLIER THIS WEEK THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE REPORTED THE RIVER WAS RUNNING NEARLY FOUR FEET ABOVE FLOOD STAGE.

SEVERAL LOCKS SOUTH OF TOWN ARE CLOSED TO BARGE TRAFFIC.

SOUTHERN FLOODING

THAT FLOODING ON THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI WILL EVENTUALLY HEAD DOWN STREAM...ADDING TO THE MISERY FOR FARMERS IN ARKANSAS, TENNESSEE AND MISSISSIPPI.

THIS IS WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE JUST ABOUT A WEEK AGO IN NORTHWEST TENNESSEE IN DYER COUNTY.

THE HIGH WATER SEEN HERE WAS THE RESULT OF SNOWMELT AND HEAVY RAINS IN THE CORNBELT A MONTH AGO.

ONCE IT HEADED DOWN RIVER, THE FLOOD TOOK OUT TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF WINTER WHEAT...AND SEVERELY DELAYED PLANTING OF CORN AND COTTON.

ACCORDING TO A D-T-N REPORT, MORE THAN 800-THOUSAND ACRES WERE UNDER WATER FROM EITHER MISSISSIPPI FLOODWATER OR BACKWATER FROM THE YAZOO RIVER.

BUSH-FARM BILL

IN WASHINGTON THIS WEEK, PRESIDENT BUSH CHIMES IN ON THE ONGOING FARM BILL DEBATE...AND HE DOESN'T MINCE ANY WORDS.

THE PRESIDENT SAYS THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR CONGRESS TO REFORM FEDERAL FARM POLICY.

AT THIS TIME, A COMPROMISE BILL IS STILL BEING FINE TUNED ON CAPITOL HILL...AND SHOULD BE TO THE PRESIDENT'S DESK IN THE COMING WEEKS.

ROUNDTABLE

AL PELL WITH MARK GOLD AND ANDY SHISSLER

JOHN'S WORLD

-SCRIPT UNAVAILABLE

BUSH-ENERGY

WE BEGIN AT THE WHITE HOUSE WHERE THIS WEEK, PRESIDENT BUSH SPOKE OUT ABOUT THE HIGH PRICE OF FOOD AND FUEL.

DURING A ROSE GARDEN NEWS CONFERENCE, THE PRESIDENT CAME TO THE DEFENSE OF ETHANOL - SAYING THE CURRENT ECONOMIC DOWNTURN SHOULD SPUR EVEN MORE INVESTMENT INTO HOMEGROWN FUELS.

LATE THIS WEEK, THE AG DEPARTMENT'S CHIEF ECONOMIST PREDICTED FOOD PRICES WILL GO UP EVEN FURTHER THIS YEAR...AS MUCH AS FIVE PERCENT.

JOE GLAUBER SAYS GROWING ECONOMIES AROUND THE WORLD CONTINUE TO PRESSURE FOOD SUPPLIES.

OKLA SWITCHGRASS

AS PART OF AN EFFORT TO REFINE NEW SOURCES FOR RENEWABLE FUELS, THE LARGEST SWITCHGRASS FIELD IN THE WORLD WILL SOON BE FOUND IN OKLAHOMA.

A THOUSAND ACRES OF SWITCHGRASS WILL BE PLANTED BY THE OKLAHOMA BIO-ENERGY CENTER TO CREATE A "LIVING LABORATORY."

THE CENTER SAYS SWITCHGRASS IS A GOOD CHOICE FOR FARMERS IN THE SOONER STATE BECAUSE IT'S A PERENNIAL AND RESISTANT TO DROUGHT.

IN ANOTHER PART OF FARM COUNTRY, WORK IS WELL UNDERWAY TO DETERMINE IF SWITCHGRASS IS INDEED A LOGICAL BIO-FUEL SOURCE.
PAT O'LEARY TAKES US TO TENNESSEE IN THIS REPORT FROM THE U-S-D-A.

VEGETARIANS

IN OTHER NEWS THIS WEEK...RESEARCH INDICATES THERE'S A GROWING NUMBER OF AMERICAN'S WHO DON'T EAT MEAT.
ACCORDING TO A STUDY DONE FOR A MAGAZINE CALLED THE "VEGETARIAN TIMES", MORE THAN SEVEN MILLION PEOPLE - OVER THREE PERCENT OF THE U-S POPULATION - ARE VEGETARIANS.
HARRIS INTERACTIVE CONDUCTED THE POLLING.

PORK SALES

AT THE SAME TIME, DEMAND FOR PORK - IN THE STATES AND ABROAD - IS ONLY GETTING STRONGER.
FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE YEAR, PORK DEMAND WAS UP EIGHT POINTS FROM THE YEAR BEFORE. EXPORTS ARE DRIVING THE DEMAND EQUATION...IN FEBRUARY ALONE, OVERSEAS SALES WERE UP 55-PERCENT FROM 2007.

SPIRIT OF THE HEARTLAND

GARLIC

MILLIONS OF AMERICAN'S LOVE THEIR GARLIC...AND NOWHERE IS THIS ODORIFIC CROP MORE IMPORTANT THAN CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL VALLEY.
HERE YOU'LL FIND THE CHRISTOPHER RANCH...AN OPERATION WHERE GARLIC IS KING.
IN THIS REPORT FROM THE CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU, TRACY SELLERS TAKES US FOR A TOUR.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE IN CALIFORNIA TO ENJOY GARLIC FROM THE CHRISTOPHER RANCH. THEIR PRODUCTS CAN BE FOUND IN A NUMBER OF MAJOR FOOD CHAINS...INCLUDING COSTCO, MEIJERS, DOMINICKS, SAFEWAY AND KROGER. FOR A COMPLETE LIST, HEAD TO CHRISTOPHER-RANCH-DOT-COM.

MACHINERY MINUTE

TYPICALLY THIS TIME OF YEAR, PLANTERS ARE STIRRING UP DUST ACROSS FARM COUNTRY. BUT IN MANY AREAS, IT'S SIMPLY BEEN TOO WET FOR MACHINES TO HIT THE FIELDS.
THIS WAS THE SCENE IN NORTHWEST IOWA THIS WEEK AS ANOTHER COLD, WET DAY STALLED PLANTING PROGRESS.
AS OF LAST WEEKEND, THE AG DEPARTMENT REPORTS ONLY 10-PERCENT OF THE NATION'S CORN CROP WAS IN THE GROUND...A FULL 25-POINTS BEHIND THE FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE.
IN IOWA, ONLY THREE PERCENT OF THE CROP HAS BEEN PLANTED. DESPITE THE SLOW START, CROP WATCHERS SAY TODAY'S MACHINERY CAN TURN THINGS AROUND QUICKLY.

DOC COTTINGHAM

LIKE THEIR COUNTER-PARTS IN IOWA, INDIANA GROWERS ARE ALSO ANXIOUS TO DIVE INTO PLANTING.
DOC COTTINGHAM FARMS IN WEST-CENTRAL INDIANA AND HE'S THE AUTHOR OF FARM JOURNAL'S "MACHINERY DOC" COLUMN. DOC TELLS US HE'S PUTTING NEW TECHNOLOGY TO THE TEST THIS SPRING.

BY THE WAY, "R-T-K" STANDS FOR REAL TIME KINEMATIC SIGNAL CORRECTION...A WAY TO FURTHER ENHANCE THE PERFORMANCE OF G-P-S GUIDANCE SYSTEMS.

TRACTOR TALES

TRACTOR TALES THIS WEEK IS A BIT OF A HISTORY LESSON. BEFORE FORD COULD BRAND ITS OWN FARM MACHINERY LINE, THEIR MODELS WERE CALLED "FORDSONS".
THIS WAS BACK IN THE 1920'S - AND THIS MORNING, WE MEET AN INDIANA COLLECTOR WHO BROUGHT ONE BACK TO LIFE.

COUNTRYCHURCH

OUR COUNTRY CHURCH SALUTE IS HAPPY TO SALUTE THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF CHITTENANGO, NEW YORK THIS WEEKEND. FOUNDED IN 1840, THE CHURCH HAS SERVED GOD IN THEIR COMMUNITY FOR OVER 168 YEARS. WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE SCRIPTURE FROM ROMANS

12, THE CHURCH WAS FIRST LOCATED ON GENESEE STREET IN DOWNTOWN CHITTENANGO. IN 1966, THE PRESENT CHURCH WAS BUILT ON THE CORNER OF TUSCARORA AND BOLIVAR ROAD.

LIKE MANY CHURCHES TODAY, FIRST BAPTIST HAS BUILT AN EXCELLENT WEBSITE TO INTRODUCE THE CONGREGATION AND PROVIDE HELPFUL INFORMATION. THE U-R-L IS APPROPRIATELY: LOVE-LIFTED-ME-DOT-COM. THEIR MANY MINISTRIES ARE DETAILED, ALONG WITH INFORMATION LIKE THE LOCATION AND WHEN SERICES ARE CONDUCTED.

AS MORE PEOPLE TURN TO SUCH WEBSITES, ACCORDING TO MY PASTOR, IT WILL CUT HER TELEPHONE TIME IN HALF.

YOU CAN READ PAST SERMONS BY PASTER DANIEL MAXFIELD, FOR EXAMPLE, AND FIND GUIDANCE FOR YOUR BIBLE STUDY. WE THANK DONNA WALRATH FOR SENDING US THE INFORMATION.

USFR MAILBAG

TIME NOW FOR OUR WEEKLY LOOK INSIDE THE FARM REPORT MAIL BAG...

WE RECEIVED THIS VOICEMAIL FROM GREG DILL IN MOUNT CLAIRE, CALIFORNIA.

"WHAT EFFECT HAS THE SELL OFF OF FARM ACREAGE TO BUILD SUBURBAN HOME TRACTS HAD - SAY IN THE LAST 10 YEARS? IF THAT ACREAGE WAS SAY PLANTED IN CORN, OR WHEAT, OR SOY BEANS - WHAT EFFECT WOULD THAT HAVE ON THE WORLDWIDE SUPPLY?"

GREG -THANKS FOR CALLING AND FOR A VERY INTERESTING QUESTION. HERE IS WHAT I FOUND OUT.

ACCORDING TO THE ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE OF THE USDA, ABOUT ONE TENTH OF ONE PERCENT OF FARMLAND IS CONVERTED TO DEVELOPMENT OF SOME KIND EVERY YEAR. THIS TREND WAS MEASURED BETWEEN 1992 AND 2001 AND THE REPORT WAS JUST ISSUED BELIEVE IT OR NOT IN APRIL 2007 IN THEIR PUBLICATION, AMBER WAVES. THESE FOLKS DO GOOD WORK, BUT VERY SLOWLY.

A TENTH OF A PERCENT OF FARMLAND LOSS WOULD BE HARD TO DETECT IN AG OUTPUT NUMBERS. A SMALL DROUGHT OR FLOODING WOULD HAVE A MUCH LARGER CONSEQUENCE. STILL IF IT CONTINUES THE LOSS OF LAND WILL HAVE TO BE COMPENSATED FOR BY GREATER PRODUCTIVITY.

IT IS VERY HARD TO PREVENT THIS CONVERSION HOWEVER. OUR NATION'S PROPERTY LAWS ARE AMONG THE MOST POWERFUL IN THE WESTERN WORLD, AND ANY ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE WITH THE RIGHTS OF OWNERS TO DISPOSE OF PROPERTY AS THEY SEE FIT IS RESISTED FIERCELY.

I THINK A BETTER ANSWER IS ALREADY ARISING BY VIRTUE OF PAINFULLY HIGH ENERGY PRICES.

THE RUSH TO THE SUBURBS HAS DEFINITELY SLOWED, AND THE WHOLE IDEA OF COMMUTING HAS BECOME EVEN MORE UNATTRACTIVE. BASIC ECONOMICS MAY YET SAVE THOUSANDS OF FARM ACRES.

U.S. FARM REPORT

The nation's longest running agricultural news program

Show #1813

Weekend of May 10, 2008

FARM BILL
WE BEGIN IN WASHINGTON WHERE IT LOOKS LIKE A NEW FARM BILL WILL SOON BE READY FOR THE PRESIDENT'S REVIEW.
LATE THIS WEEK HOUSE AND SENATE NEGOTIATORS REACHED AGREEMENT ON A PACKAGE - WITH BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS EXPECTED TO VOTE ON THE PLAN NEXT WEEK.
UNLESS SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES ARE MADE - SPECIFICALLY REGARDING SUBSIDY PAYMENTS - THE PRESIDENT IS PROMISING TO VETO THE BILL.
PRO FARMER WASHINGTON SPECIALIST ROGER BERNARD HAS FOLLOWED THIS PROCESS CLOSELY. HE SAYS A PRESIDENTIAL VETO DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN THE BILL IS DEAD FOR GOOD.

RUSSIA LIVESTOCK DEAL
BE SURE TO MONITOR AGWEB FOR THE LATEST ON THE FARM BILL DEBATE. IN OTHER NEWS THIS WEEK - RUSSIA LOOKS TO THE WORLD - AND THE UNITED STATES IN PARTICULAR - TO HELP RESTORE ITS DECLINING LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY.
IN A DEAL ANNOUNCED THIS WEEK, THE U-S WILL EXPORT CATTLE, SWINE AND SPORT HORSES TO RUSSIA.
BASED ON THIS AGREEMENT, AMERICAN EXPORTERS WILL NOW BE ABLE TO COMPETE IN RUSSIA'S 300-MILLION-DOLLAR MARKET FOR LIVE ANIMAL IMPORTS.

SK BEEF TRADE
STARTING NEXT THURSDAY, SOUTH KOREA WILL REOPEN ITS MARKET TO U-S BEEF. BASED ON AN AGREEMENT REACHED LAST MONTH, THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT SAYS IT WILL RESUME QUARANTINE INSPECTIONS OF AMERICAN BEEF.
AT THE SAME TIME, SOUTH KOREA WILL SEND TEAMS TO THE U-S TO PERSONALLY INSPECT MEAT PROCESSING FACILITIES.

CROP REPORT
THE USDA RELEASED NEW ESTIMATES FRIDAY SHOWING LITTLE RELIEF FROM TIGHT SUPPLIES OF NEARLY EVERY MAJOR COMMODITY BOTH HERE AND AROUND THE WORLD.
WHILE THE ESTIMATES FOR CORN CARRYOVER MET MARKET EXPECTATIONS, SOYBEANS CARRYOVER FOR THIS CROP YEAR DID NOT LIVE UP TO PREDICTIONS AS SHORT SUPPLIES WILL NOT BE GREATLY INCREASED THIS YEAR.
IN GOOD NEWS FOR BREAD MAKERS, WHEAT INVENTORIES WILL BE REBUILT THIS YEAR, BUT COTTON SUPPLIES WILL DROP SHARPLY AS FARMERS RESPOND TO MARKET SIGNALS.
THE CARRYOVER NUMBERS WILL DOUBTLESS BE ADJUSTED IN FUTURE TO ACCOUNT FOR SLOW PLANTING PROGRESS, SO STAY TUNED.

WHEAT TOUR
FOLLOWING A LONG WEEK IN THE FIELDS, THE WHEAT QUALITY COUNCIL IS CALLING FOR A MUCH IMPROVED WINTER WHEAT CROP IN KANSAS THIS YEAR.
THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL TOUR WRAPPED ON THURSDAY - AND BASED ON THEIR FINDINGS, THE CROP IS EXPECTED TO HIT NEARLY 380-MILLION BUSHELS...A 33-PERCENT BUMP FROM LAST YEAR'S MEDIOCRE HARVEST.
WHILE SCOUTS FOUND DROUGHT AND WIND DAMAGE IN THE SOUTH-WEST PART OF KANSAS, THE REST OF THE STATE IS MUCH IMPROVED OVER A YEAR AGO.

ROUNDTABLE
GREGG HUNT & BRIAN BASTING

JOHN'S WORLD
SORRY-NO SCRIPT AVAILABLE

EIA-GAS PRICES

IN WHAT SHOULD COME AS A SURPRISE TO NO ONE, THE GOVERNMENT SAYS PAIN AT THE PUMP WON'T EASE ANYTIME SOON.

THIS WEEK THE ENERGY INFORMATION CENTER PROJECTED REGULAR UNLEADED WILL AVERAGE JUST OVER 3-50 A GALLON THIS YEAR...UP MORE THAN 70-CENTS FROM A YEAR AGO.

THE NEWS ISN'T ANY BETTER FOR DIESEL - WHICH IS NOW PROJECTED TO AVERAGE 3-94 A GALLON...UP MORE THAN A DOLLAR FROM LAST YEAR'S LEVELS.

FARM BILL

AFTER MONTHS OF BACK-AND-FORTH, HOUSE AND SENATE NEGOTIATORS HAVE AGREED ON A NEW FARM BILL PACKAGE.

THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE EXPECTS BOTH HOUSES TO VOTE ON THE MEASURE NEXT WEEK. IF PASSED AS IS, THE BILL LOOKS TO BE DEAD ON ARRIVAL AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

UNLESS SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES ARE MADE, SCHAFER SAYS THE PRESIDENT HAS ALREADY TOLD HIM HE WILL VETO THE BILL....STAY TUNED.

OBAMA IN INDIANA

THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN MARCHES ON TO WEST VIRGINIA THIS WEEK - WITH BARACK OBAMA AND HILLARY CLINTON STILL BATTLING IT OUT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION.

THIS PAST WEEK OBAMA WON BIG IN NORTH CAROLINA...WHILE CLINTON EEKED OUT A WIN IN INDIANA. WITH MORE THAN 18-HUNDRED DELEGATES, OBAMA IS CLOSING IN ON THE 22-HUNDRED NEEDED TO SECURE THE NOMINATION.

DURING HIS INDIANA CAMPAIGN, OBAMA EMPHASIZED HIS PLANS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AS HE MET WITH FARMERS AT A COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS...

AS MENTIONED, WEST VIRGINIA VOTERS GO TO THE POLLS THIS TUESDAY...AND THE FOLLOWING WEEK, PRIMARIES ARE SLATED FOR KENTUCKY AND OREGON.

SPIRIT OF THE HEARTLAND

WITH THE PRICE OF GAS GOING UP...AND UP...AND UP...IT'S EASY TO TAKE OUT YOUR FRUSTRATIONS ON THE BIG OIL COMPANIES...AND SOMETIMES, EVEN THE POOR CLERK MANNING THE CONVENIENCE STORE COUNTER.

WELL THIS MORNING, WE HAVE THE STORY OF A GAS STATION IN THE SMALL TOWN OF PERRY, OKLAHOMA THAT'S BEEN OWNED BY THE SAME FAMILY FOR MORE THAN A HALF CENTURY.

AS GALEN CULVER SHOWS US, LITTLE HAS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS...AND FOR GOOD REASON.

IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING WHERE TO FIND THIS CLASSIC GAS STATION, THE TOWN OF PERRY IS LOCATED ABOUT AN HOUR NORTH OF OKLAHOMA CITY, RIGHT OFF OF I-35.

MACHINERY MINUTE

IN PARTS OF FARM COUNTRY, IRRIGATION SYSTEMS ARE AN ABSOLUTE MUST...WITHOUT THEM, SOME FIELDS SIMPLY COULD NOT PRODUCE MEANINGFUL YIELDS.

RESEARCH IS NOW UNDERWAY TO IMPROVE IRRIGATION TECHNOLOGY - EVEN GOING AS FAR AS AUTOMATING SYSTEMS TO MEET THE ACTUAL AND CHANGING NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL PLANTS.

ACCORDING TO FARM JOURNAL'S PAM HENDERSON, SCIENTISTS WITH THE AG RESEARCH SERVICE IN TEXAS ARE DEVELOPING A SYSTEM THAT USES FEEDBACK DIRECTLY FROM THE CROP TO CONTROL IRRIGATION AND IMPROVE EFFICIENCY.

IN ADDITION, SENSORS COULD ONE DAY BE MOUNTED ON CENTER PIVOT IRRIGATION ARMS TO DETERMINE EXACTLY WHAT PARTS OF A FIELD NEED WATER...AND WHICH PARTS DON'T.

GREENSBURG DEERE UPDATE

A YEAR AFTER AN F-5 TORNADO LEVELED GREENSBURG, KANSAS - THE LOCAL JOHN DEERE DEALER IS WELL DOWN THE ROAD TO RECOVERY.

WITH ITS MANY ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY ELEMENTS - INCLUDING A WIND TURBINE TO GENERATE POWER - OWNER MIKE ESTES SAYS THE NEW 28-THOUSAND-SQUARE-FOOT DEALERSHIP WILL BE A CERTIFIED "GREEN" FACILITY.

THE DEVASTATING F-5 TORNADO HIT GREENSBURG ON MAY 4TH, 2007. IN ALL, ELEVEN PEOPLE WERE KILLED - AND NEARLY EVERY HOME AND BUSINESS IN THE TOWN OF 15-HUNDRED WAS DESTROYED.

DURING THE REBUILDING PROCESS, ESTES SAYS A TEMPORARY STRUCTURE WAS AVAILABLE FOR FARMERS WHO NEEDED PARTS.

FISH FARMER

IN RECENT WEEKS WE'VE TOLD YOU ABOUT THE TREMENDOUS FINANCIAL PRESSURES FACING HOG PRODUCERS THESE DAYS...ESPECIALLY THOSE ON THE SMALLER SCALE.

WITH THAT IN MIND, WE WANTED TO SHARE THE STORY OF A MISSOURI FARMER WHO TOOK A HARD RIGHT IN THE HOPES OF KEEPING THE FAMILY FARM A VIABLE OPERATION.

KENT FADDIS HAS THE STORY IN THIS REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI.

TRACTOR TALES

WELCOME BACK...TRACTOR TALES THIS WEEK TAKES US TO MICHIGAN FOR THE ST. JOE VALLEY ANTIQUE ENGINE AND SWAP MEET...THERE WE CAUGHT UP WITH DALE SULT, AN OLIVER COLLECTOR SHOWING OFF AN OLD MOLINE...

COUNTRY CHURCH SALUTE

NOW, WE JOURNEY TO THE WESTERN PART OF PLYMOUTH COUNTY, IOWA TO FIND ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, COMMONLY KNOWN AS ELLENDALE CHURCH FOR OUR COUNTRY CHURCH SALUTE.

EARLY CATHOLIC SETTLERS FOUNDED THE CHURCH IN THE 1860'S AFTER FOLLOWING THE INDIAN TRAILS ALONG THE BIG SIOUX RIVER AND BROKEN KETTLE CREEK.

FATHER JEREMIAH TRACY WAS THE FIRST PASTOR. IN 1872 LAND WAS DONATED FOR A CHURCH IN JOHNSON TOWNSHIP, WHERE A CEMETERY REMAINS TODAY.

AFTER TWO BUILDINGS WERE DESTROYED BY WIND AND FIRE, A THIRD HOME FOR THE CONGREGATION WAS COMPLETED ABOUT TWO MILES SOUTH ON LAND DONATED BY ELLEN GORMAN, HENCE THE NAME ELLENDALE. THAT STRUCTURE WAS REPLACED BY THE PRESENT CHURCH IN 1925.

THE CHURCH IS NOTED FOR IT'S MANY COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES WHICH INCLUDE AN APPLE PIE PROJECT WHICH LAST YEAR SOLD NEARLY 1500 HOMEMADE PIES. THEIR ROAST BEEF DINNER IN SEPTEMBER IS EQUALLY POPULAR.

WE THANK MARY JANE TRAPPER FOR SENDING IN HER CHURCH.

MAILBAG

TIME NOW FOR OUR WEEKLY LOOK INSIDE THE FARM REPORT MAIL BAG...

WE RECEIVED MANY VOICEMAILS THIS WEEK. SOME OF YOU HAD SOME GOOD ADVICE FOR MY CORN THAT I PLANTED TOO SHALLOW FROM HAVING A KID ON A FOUR-WHEELER RUN DOWN THE ROW, OR USING A ROLLER.

THE JURY IS STILL OUT, BUT I THINK A GENTLE THREE-QUARTER INCH RAIN THIS WEEK MAY HAVE SAVED THE DAY. I'LL LET YOU KNOW, AND THANKS FOR THE IDEAS. I KNOW MANY OF YOU HAVE FAR WORSE PLANTING PROBLEMS THAN MINE.

BUT PAM LELAND IN COLORADO SPRINGS HAD THE MOST INTERESTING COMMENT:

"WHAT IS THE CASH FLOW CYCLE FOR FARMERS?"

FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK THAT QUESTION, PAM, BECAUSE I JUST HAD A SERIOUS CONVERSATION WITH MY BANKER ON THE SAME TOPIC.

TO OVER-SIMPLIFY, MY FATHER WOULD BORROW OPERATING MONEY IN THE SPRING FOR INPUTS, AND PAY IT BACK IN THE FALL AND WINTER WHEN CROPS AND LIVESTOCK WERE SOLD.

A FEW YEARS AGO MY PATTERN WAS SIMILAR BUT EVOLVING. I COULD MAKE EXTRA PROFIT BY HOLDING GRAIN LONGER INTO THE FOLLOWING SUMMER, AND AT THE SAME TIME, APPLYING FERTILIZER IN THE FALL MEANT FUNDING INPUTS EARLIER.

THE LATEST TWIST IS THE PUSH TO SELL SEED AND FERTILIZER FOR THE 2009 CROP RIGHT NOW TO PROTECT AGAINST PRICE INCREASES AND SHORTAGES.

THE STEADY UPTREND IN PRICES ALSO ENCOURAGES LATER SELLING. SO I COULD HAVE A CREDIT LINE FOR 2007, 2008, AND 2009 OPEN ALL AT ONCE AS BALLOONING COSTS AND MARKETING PLANS MARCH TO DIFFERENT DRUMMERS.

FARMING IS NOW A MONEY MANAGMENT CHALLENGE. I'LL BE WRITING MORE ABOUT THIS DISCONCERTING DEVELOPMENT IN JOHN'S WORLD ON AGWEB SOON.

U.S. FARM REPORT

The nation's longest running agricultural news program

Show #1814

Weekend of May 17, 2008

MEAT EXPORTS

THE EXPORT PICTURE CONTINUES TO BRIGHTEN FOR THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY, WITH OVERSEAS ORDERS ON THE UPSWING FOR BOTH BEEF AND PORK.

ACCORDING TO THE U-S MEAT EXPORT FEDERATION, BEEF EXPORTS INCREASED 37-PERCENT IN THE FIRST QUARTER, WHILE PORK EXPORTS WERE UP 29-PERCENT.

WHILE CITING THE WEAK U-S DOLLAR AS THE DRIVING INFLUENCE, THE FEDERATION NOTES THE GAINS ARE BEING MADE DESPITE A GROWING SHORTAGE OF SHIPPING CONTAINERS.

FARM EQUIPMENT

BUSINESS IS ALSO GOOD FOR FARM EQUIPMENT DEALERS...IN FACT, DEERE AND COMPANY RELEASED A RECORD-BREAKING PROFIT REPORT THIS WEEK.

FOR THE QUARTER ENDING APRIL 30TH, DEERE EARNINGS HIT A NEW HIGH OF 763-MILLION DOLLARS...WITH THE AG DIVISION LEADING THE WAY.

THE COMPANY REPORTS AG EQUIPMENT SALES INCREASED 34-PERCENT FOR THE QUARTER...A TREND THAT'S EXPECTED TO CONTINUE THROUGH THE END OF THE YEAR.

PLANTING

WHILE THE PACE OF PLANTING HAS PICKED UP IN THE HEARTLAND, PROGRESS OVERALL REMAINS WELL BEHIND SCHEDULE.

AS OF LAST WEEKEND, THE AG DEPARTMENT REPORTS 51-PERCENT OF THE CORN CROP WAS IN THE GROUND...UP 24-POINTS FROM THE WEEK BEFORE, BUT STILL MORE THAN 25-POINTS BEHIND THE FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE.

IN MISSOURI, PROGRESS WAS PEGGED AT JUST 34-PERCENT...NEARLY 50-POINTS BEHIND THE FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE.

AS STEVE GRANT REPORTS, NO ONE - NOT EVEN A RECORD SETTING GROWER - IS IMMUNE FROM MOTHER NATURE.

ROUNDTABLE RICHARD BROCK & JIM HEMMINGER

FARM BILL

WE BEGIN IN WASHINGTON WHERE DESPITE THE PROMISE OF A PRESIDENTIAL VETO, BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS GIVE A BIG THUMBS UP TO A NEW FARM BILL.

ON WEDNESDAY, THE HOUSE APPROVED THE MEASURE BY A VOTE OF 318-TO-106...AND THEN ON THURSDAY, THE SENATE FOLLOWED SUIT - VOTING 81-TO-15 IN FAVOR OF THE BILL. BOTH MAJORITIES ARE MORE THAN ENOUGH TO OVERRIDE A PRESIDENTIAL VETO.

AMONG OTHER PROVISIONS, THE LEGISLATION INCREASES SPENDING ON CONSERVATION AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS...AND ESTABLISHES A PERMANENT AG DISASTER FUND.

SAYING HE WILL VETO THE BILL AS IS, PRESIDENT BUSH IS CALLING FOR A ONE-YEAR EXTENSION OF THE CURRENT PROGRAM.

THE PRESIDENT SAYS THE EXTENSION WOULD BE QUOTE, "A FAR SUPERIOR OPTION THAN SUPPORTING A BILL THAT INCREASES FARM SUBSIDY RATES, SPENDS TOO MUCH AND FAILS TO REFORM FARM PROGRAMS."

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT AGWEB FOR THE VERY LATEST ON THIS FLUID STORY...

CPI UPDATE

IN OTHER NEWS THIS WEEK - PRICES CONTINUE TO CLIMB AT THE PUMP, AND AT THE GROCERY STORE.

ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT'S CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, PRICES IN APRIL WERE UP NEARLY FOUR-POINTS FROM A YEAR AGO.

LEADING THE WAY - FOOD PRICES, UP FIVE PERCENT...WITH DAIRY SOARING NEARLY 12-POINTS.

AT THE PUMP, GAS PRICES ARE UP MORE THAN 20-PERCENT FROM APRIL OF '07.