

## News Notes

**Carthage plant closes for violating air-quality rules**

Gov. Matt Blunt ordered the Missouri Department of Natural Resources on Dec. 28 to temporarily close Renewable Environmental Solutions Inc. of Carthage. DNR will review the company's operations and give them the opportunity to determine what additional steps can be taken to become compliant with state air-quality rules and to operate without producing a vile odor. Blunt also directed DNR to pursue every legal option to ensure the plant is compliant with state clean-air laws and to refer any violations to the attorney general for legal action.

"The people of Carthage have endured terrible odors from the plant for too long," Blunt says. "I want the business to be successful, but the concerns of the people who live and work near the plant are more important to me. If left unresolved, this one business will have a negative impact on the region by hurting tourism and job growth."

RES produces oil from byproducts derived from the nearby ConAgra Foods turkey-processing facility. The plant currently produces 100 to 200 barrels of oil per day. RES was cited for violations of state air rules on six occasions in 2005.

**Task force gives final counsel**

The Eminent Domain Task Force, appointed by Gov. Matt Blunt, issued final recommendations Dec. 30 for legislation

pertaining to the exercise of eminent domain power in Missouri.

In addition to restricting the use of eminent domain for private development, the task force recommended procedural changes affecting its use for public purposes. Task force recommendations call for procedural changes including advance notification of intent, explanation of both the process and property owners' rights, and consideration of alternate routes or sites.

"These recommendations are intended to bring property owners into the process earlier and to provide better information when easements or title must be acquired for public infrastructure," explains Leslie Holloway, task force member and Missouri Farm Bureau representative.

Two key recommendations clarify contentious issues. First, "just compensation" can be more than fair market value. And second, a process should be established whereby landowners could, under certain circumstances, re-acquire property or easements taken by an entity with eminent domain power.

In a ruling last June in the case of *Kelo v. City of New London*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the U.S. Constitution does not prohibit the use of eminent domain power for private economic development. However, the court also affirmed the states' discretionary authority to restrict the use of eminent domain.

# WTO trade deal talks tedious, but crucial for beef producers



## Dailey Discussions

By DUANE DAILEY

**D**ON'T let your eyes glaze over when talk turns to trade agreements under the World Trade Organization. Complex details were discussed in the session in Hong Kong, and more is to come.

Those details are vital to Missouri beef producers, says Scott Brown, livestock analyst at University of Missouri's Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute. Brown provided background data to the U.S. negotiating team.

First, a bit of background: Cattle producers don't like to admit it, but prices have been fantastic. Prices crept up as consumer demand grew while beef supplies were short. But, that economic law works the other way as well.

The U.S. cattle herd has turned around and is growing. The 2006 FAPRI baseline shows a U.S. herd of 105 million head by the end of the decade, up from 95.8 million head.

More calves on the market could mean prices dropping by \$30 per cwt. by 2010. That is coming off historic highs in 2005.

Hang on for trade talk. Those deals put forward in Hong Kong by the U.S. team will bring reductions in tariffs, export subsidies and domestic supports. Here's where details get interesting. "We have very few trade-distorting policies in place, so the cattle industry has to make virtually no change to comply with the agreement," Brown says.

If other countries lower their barriers, more U.S. beef can move abroad. What's that mean in dollars? An analysis by FAPRI-UMC on the Hong Kong proposal shows an added \$24 per head for Missouri calves above and beyond current trends without the agreement.

We need those exports as the cow herd expands. "The industry can reap the benefit of additional market access into Asian countries. If we can't export, that meat ends up in local meat cases, which puts downward pressure on the bottom line for Missouri producers," Brown explains.

Trade deals remain alive after Hong Kong. However, the clock is ticking. U.S. Congress granted the president authority to negotiate trade on a "fast track." However, that authority expires in 2007.

"This requires movement, quickly, in this trade round, before that authority goes away," Brown says. "Countries won't want to make deals that can be changed by Congress."

Export trade requires more attention by U.S. producers. If we learned one thing in negotiations with Japan in reopening the trade door, it is that they can be very picky customers.

"It's important for Missouri pro-

ducers to understand that to export, they must produce product that other countries want," Brown says. "Quality becomes No. 1."

And, above all, any future disease outbreak can remove all positives from the trade deals. More records will be required, as age- and source-verification demands expand.

**Improved musk-thistle control**

A new herbicide especially useful on thistles is available this year, says Kevin Bradley, MU Extension weed specialist. After three years in MU trials, Milestone is available from Dow AgroSciences.

"It's as good as anything we've seen on musk-thistle control," Bradley says. It is also good on bull nettle and spotted knapweed, a new intruder in southwest Missouri.

The active ingredient, aminopyralid, is entirely new, Bradley says. It is a growth-regulator-type herbicide. Grassland farmers will find it useful, as there are no grazing or haying intervals after application. Also, there is no restricted-use label, so an applicator's license is not required.

Bradley has trials under way to see how soon you can reseed clover into a sprayed pasture. "With any herbicide, you lose the legumes, so that is something to think about."

"Since this is a new material, growers should only expect a higher cost for the product," Bradley says. In MU trials, a 4-fluid-ounce-per-acre application has been effective for musk-thistle control. At that rate, cost will run about \$11.50 per acre.

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