

MISSOURI NEWS SCENE

Revamped event offers a glimpse into future of ag

By JERILYN JOHNSON

THE 41st annual Missouri Governor's Conference on Agriculture will be held on a new date at a new location: Jan. 6-7 at the Millennium Hotel in St. Louis. Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt and Katie Smith, director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture, are inviting producers, agribusinesses and commodity organization leaders. Blunt will address attendees during lunch on Monday, Jan. 7, where he will outline new agriculture initiatives for his administration.

The conference offers plenty of opportunities to network plus a full schedule of thought-provoking speakers focused on "Agriculture — Gateway to the Future."

Smith explains that they selected St. Louis as the conference site because agriculture is a driver of the St. Louis economy. One in every 12 jobs in the 10-county bistate region of St. Louis is related to agriculture, food, fiber or timber. Agriculture and food companies employ more than 20% of the region's workforce. "St. Louis is a logical home for the Governor's Conference on Agriculture," Smith says. "It will not only offer a new location, but also new ideas and a great new perspective of what our future holds."

The Center for Food Integrity will be the first presenter at the conference on Monday morning, Jan. 7. This organization challenges producers, industry leaders and agribusiness to think beyond economics and science when marketing agricultural products. Instead, the center points out that the agriculture industry needs to appeal to consumer emotions to make an impact on public perception.

"Producers are the first and best

Key Points

- Governor's Conference on Agriculture set for Jan. 6-7 in St. Louis.
- Conference will focus on the future of agriculture and challenging issues.
- Speakers include Gov. Matt Blunt and economist Jay Lehr.



GOV. MATT BLUNT

stewards of the land, and producers care about the safety and health of their animals. Unfortunately, agriculture is constantly forced to defend production practices," Smith says. "The Center for Food Integrity's presentation will make you rethink your answers, and it will change the way you think about the other presentations on the conference agenda."

A full schedule of other events and speakers will offer discussions on industry trends, success stories, new marketing opportunities, plus challenges facing Missouri producers.

Program highlights include:



■ **Taste of Missouri reception and Ag Youth Benefit Auction** is set for Sunday evening, Jan. 6.

■ **Livestock expert panel**, where representatives of the beef, pork, dairy and poultry industries will discuss opportunities and strategies to enhance marketing and production.

■ **Dennis Avery**, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and director of the Center for Global Food Issues, will share his views on farm product demand, and the safety and security of food supplies.

■ **U.S. Sen. Kit Bond** has been invited to address the Water Resources Development Act.

■ **Carl Hausmann**, president and chief executive officer of Bunge North America, St. Louis, will offer a local perspective on the outlook of Bunge and the agricultural industry.

■ **Bob Priddy**, author of "Across Our Wide Missouri," will provide an interesting historical perspective of Missouri agriculture.

■ **Jay Lehr**, an economist and futurist, shares his insight into agricultural policy and the impact of advancing technologies on the local, regional, national and global economy.

The conference will conclude on Monday evening with a banquet featuring ventriloquist Todd Oliver and his real talking dog, Irving. This act has appeared on the Showboat Branson Belle, "The Tonight Show With Jay

Leno" and "The Late Show With David Letterman."

For registration information, call the MDA office at 573-522-1533, or visit www.mda.mo.gov.

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Livestock judging lives as Perry family tradition

WHEN looking back over the past 50 years, Bethel farmer Bob Perry's fondest memories stem from experiences on his FFA and collegiate livestock judging teams. He participated on the University of Missouri team in 1952 while completing his degree in animal husbandry. He has since judged livestock shows across the country — in 39 states, to be exact.

"I've always judged pigs the same way I have them at home," Bob says.

Judging has continued through Perry generations. Bob's son Jim judged for MU in 1979. Granddaughter Megan judged under coach Chip Kemp in 2004, and grandson Christopher hopes

to follow suit. Kemp says no other family has been more influential in keeping a viable judging program at Mizzou.

"Not only have numerous family members given their own sweat and time as team members, but as importantly, they've given both monetarily and emotionally to make certain that future students have the same opportunity," Kemp says.

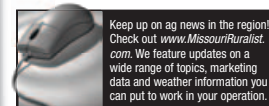
Bob and Jim always make time to pass along what they've learned to younger livestock judging enthusiasts. Many judging teams from across the



country have hauled their judging vans to Bethel to practice at the Perry farm.

"It's hard to imagine how many of today's industry leaders have visited the Perry farm as either 4-H, FFA or college livestock judges," Kemp says.

— Katie Allen



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