

NewsWatch

Kansas Clippings

Movers and shakers

Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has named four Kansans to four-year terms of the State Board of Agriculture, including **Patrick Maloney**, Kingman; **Gary Beachner**, Parsons; **Louise Ehmke**, Healy; and **Daniel Guterman**, Bucyrus. The board advises the governor and secretary of agriculture on issues affecting farmers, ranchers and other ag stakeholders. It also proposes rules and regulations, and reviews and recommends legislative initiatives for the KDA.

New hires join K-State Research and Extension county offices

K-State Research and Extension offices in five locations have hired new agents. **Jennifer Smith**, a University of Missouri graduate, is horticulture agent in Douglas County. **Joy Purkeypille**, a University of Nebraska graduate, is family and consumer sciences agent in Linn County. **Tressie Mitzner**, a Fort Hays State University graduate, is county director in Gove County. **Jill Martinson**, a K-State graduate, is 4-H youth development agent in Dickinson County, and **Joe Leibbrandt** has transferred from Logan County to become agriculture and natural resources agent in the Sunflower District, covering Wallace, Cheyenne and Sherman counties.



Department of Commerce designates \$25,000 for agritourism scholarships

Scholarships totaling \$25,000 distributed by the Kansas Department of Commerce will enable agritourism operators to attend conferences, seminars and educational events, thus helping these vendors develop skills and techniques to help their businesses flourish. Two types of scholarships will be awarded: Conference Attendance scholarships will reimburse awardees up to \$5,000 per application for all costs related to educational tours, workshops, seminars, registration and dues, and the Best-Practices Educational Trip Scholarship reimburses awardees up to \$2,000 per application for costs associated with guided, organized trips to agritourism, tourism or value-added businesses regionally or nationally. Application deadline is Jan. 1. Scholarship recipients will be notified about a month after the deadline. Applications are available online at www.kansasagritourism.org.

Kansas is finalist for National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility

Manhattan is one of five communities being considered for the Department of Homeland Security's new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, which will be a home for scientists from the

departments of Homeland Security, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services to research biological and agricultural threats to humans and animals. The new laboratory will replace the aging Plum Island facility in New York. Other communities in the running

include Granville County, N.C.; San Antonio; Athens, Ga.; and Madison County, Miss. The laboratory will bring to the community an influx of scientists, researchers and educators that eventually will spawn ancillary and support businesses. Final selection will take place in 2008.

Center for Food Safety challenges water-term permits

The nonprofit Center for Food Safety has filed comments with the Kansas Department of Agriculture on the water-term permit applications from Ventria for field trials of genetically modified rice. The CFS wants the permits to be denied, arguing that the possibility of contamination of neighboring food crops creates unnecessary and unacceptable risks to the public and environment. Farmers near Junction City working with Ventria have planted 3,000 acres of irrigated rice for pharmaceutical purposes; future plantings may be up to 30,000 acres. The rice has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for human consumption. The CFS argues the proposed irrigation of experimental pharmaceutical crops is not a "beneficial use" as understood in traditional Kansas water law, and that any such water permits may impair existing water rights.

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