



Beef Bytes
September 11, 2012

Dear Friends,

As summer winds down and the fall election season nears, the state and federal legislatures face abbreviated fall calendars. Both the state house and senate will be back in session September 24th. That evening the PA Chamber will host Karl Rove and James Carville at its annual dinner.

Value Added Producer Grant applications are due in mid October. Please contact the Versant Office if we can be of assistance.

The All American Dairy show begins at the end of the month and the annual Keystone International Livestock Exposition tips off the beginning of October. We hope to see many of you at these activities.

MeeCee

Articles of Interest

CBE News:

[Opportunities With CBE](#)

The Center for Beef Excellence has a variety of programs designed to promote the beef industry in Pennsylvania. These include offering the use of mobile cattle handling equipment, promoting beef in schools and to export markets, and educating legislators on the value of the industry.

Pennsylvania News:

[Pennsylvania Grazing Conference](#)

A two day grazing conference is scheduled for October 11 and 12 in Indiana, Pennsylvania. Dr. Temple Grandin will be the keynote speaker, and the event will also include farm tours and other sessions. Online registration is available at www.swprojectgrass.com.

National News:

[Research Funding](#)

Scientists at Texas A&M and other schools across the country are facing budget cuts and concerns over funding for research. Meanwhile, China and other nations are investing in agricultural research as expectations of future demand for production continue to grow.

[Drought Effects](#)

The industry may continue to see high culling rates and lower cow prices this fall as producers cope with limited forage supplies. The effect on total cow herd inventory is uncertain, as it is unclear what producers are doing with replacement females.

[Value of Livestock Production](#)

A recent paper from the Stockholm International Water Institute suggested that reducing consumption of animal products would save water and provide more food production. Many scientists disagree, as livestock are grazed on land that is often not profitable for cropping and have the benefit of reducing fertilizer needs on cropland.

[Kansas State Fair Lawsuit](#)

A judge ruled that the Kansas State Fair had the right to prevent People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals from publicly displaying a video from slaughterhouses. PETA claims the rule infringes on the right of free speech and is considering appealing the decision.

[Study on Organic Foods](#)

A research team from Stanford reviewed many studies on organic foods and found that there is little difference in nutrient levels or contaminants between organic and conventionally produced food. Organic produce does show slightly lower levels of pesticide residues.

[Domestic Response to COOL Ruling](#)

Several US groups have filed a lawsuit complaining that the World Trade Organization has no right to overturn US laws. They claim that US leaders did not do their duty to protect national interests in mandatory country of origin labeling.

Global News:

[High Exports Predicted](#)

Although beef export predictions for 2012 were cut, and growth in exports is modest when compared to last year, the USDA predicts that 2013 will see a return to strong growth in exports. This is due to economic growth, strong exchange rates and falling energy prices.

[McDonald's in India](#)

Two new McDonald's restaurants are opening in India, and they will feature a completely vegetarian menu. Beef is not served in any of the stores in the country, due to the Hindu belief that cows are sacred, but the new stores will also operate without chicken or fish.

Cattle Management Articles:

[Management Tips](#)

As producers deal with high forage prices following summer drought, there are strategies to reduce herd costs. These include limit feeding hay, culling open cows, weaning calves early and grazing crop residues.

[Feed Cost Spreadsheet](#)

A South Dakota State University resource allows producers to compare the cost of different feedstuffs on the basis of protein or energy. The spreadsheet requires inputs on each feed source and will take into consideration transportation as well as cost per ton.

[Cattle Purchasing Decisions](#)

High corn price forecasts are making it difficult for producers to determine profitability of cattle feeding for the year to come. Estimating feed costs is important to determine breakeven prices and know what to pay for cattle entering the feedlot.

09-11-2012

[USDA - Weekly Crop & Weather Roundup for the Week Ending September 9, 2012](#)

(Press Release)

- 09-10-2012 [**Congress Comes Back to a Face-Off With Angry Farmers**](#)
WASHINGTON — When Congress returns to business this week, it will be met not by the Code Pink antiwar protesters or the Tea Party supporters who often gathered near the Capitol last year. Instead, farmers will be out in force, rallying for a bill that lawmakers failed to pass before they... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-09-2012 [**Where Cows Are Happy and Food Is Healthy**](#)
FOOD can be depressing. If it's tasty, it's carcinogenic. If it's cheap, animals were tortured. But this, miraculously, is a happy column about food! It's about a farmer who names all his 230 milk cows, along with his 200 heifers and calves, and loves them like children.... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-09-2012 [**U.S. awards more than \\$18 million in training grants**](#)
U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced more than \$18 million in grants to train and aid beginner farmers and ranchers. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture awarded the grants through its Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. Grants are given to... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 09-07-2012 [**Inside PDA for September 7, 2012**](#)
(Press Release)
- 09-07-2012 [**Food for thought: Scientists cast doubt on the superiority of organics**](#)
Past generations would have marveled that Americans were prepared to pay top dollar for familiar food marketed today as "organic." But they lived in a world that was innocently natural, not one in which chemicals are ubiquitous in everyday life. In those days, an apple was an apple, picked from a tree with little regard... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 09-07-2012 [**Food co-ops brace for arrival of giant rivals like Whole Foods, Trader Joe's**](#)
BOISE, Idaho — The Boise Co-op eliminated thousands of slow-selling items, sweeping away the claustrophobic effect that accompanied too many offerings... - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-04-2012 [**USDA - Weekly Crop & Weather Roundup for the Week Ending September 2, 2012**](#)
(Press Release)
- 09-04-2012 [**DEP Lifts Drought Declaration for 15 Counties in Western PA**](#)
(Press Release)
- 09-04-2012 [**To 4H, auction is culmination of a dream**](#)
An auctioneer's familiar staccato call rose above the barnyard noises on Monday signaling the beginning of the 4H Livestock Auction at the 27th Annual Wyoming County Fair. The popular sale featured hogs, beef steers, lambs and goats raised by Wyoming County 4H members as part of their annual livestock project.... - [Wilkes-Barre Times Leader](#)
- 09-04-2012 [**Isaac Brings Touch of Relief, and Hope for Next Season, to Corn Belt**](#)
WARRENTON, Mo. — All through the scorching summer, as their crops withered under cloudless skies, Corn Belt farmers waited and prayed for this moment. Now, courtesy of Hurricane Isaac, it has finally arrived: three days of rain to soak their parched fields and soften the cracked... - [New York Times](#)

08-30-2012 [Inside PDA for August 30, 2012](#)
(Press Release)

Legislative Activity

[SB 1298](#) [Smucker, Lloyd](#) Amends the Pennsylvania Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act further providing for definitions and for appeals.

Printer Number(s): [P1685](#) [P1864](#)

Bill History: 09-24-12 H Set on the Tabled Calendar

Capitol Review

We are all for saving tax dollars, so we were pleased to run across a news item last week reporting that the Department of Public Welfare had found a way to [save \\$5 million per year by preventing wasteful or fraudulent Medicaid payments](#).

And while any savings is good news, especially when it results from eliminating waste, fraud or abuse, we thought it might be instructive to look at this from the perspective of two of Pennsylvania's most vexing problems, the pension crisis and the transportation funding crisis.

At present, the [state is carrying a combined \\$39 billion in unfunded liabilities in the State Employees' Retirement System and the Public School Employees' Retirement System](#). A \$5 million savings from eliminating waste, fraud or abuse would chip away at that problem by a smidgen under thirteen one-thousandths of one percent. Oh, those unfunded liabilities are projected to increase to more than \$60 billion over the next six or seven years.

In the context of the \$3.5 billion annual transportation funding gap, the news is a bit brighter. A \$5 million annual savings would close the gap by a little more than fourteen one-hundredths of one percent. The state would only need to eliminate 700 similar examples of waste, fraud or abuse in order to solve the transportation funding problem. Oh, and as the 2010 Transportation Advisory Committee report points out, the cost of addressing this problem grows by almost a \$1 million per day.

Our point is not to throw cold water on efforts to eliminate waste, fraud or abuse, but rather to inject some reality into any discussion of the extent of the problems and the ultimate solutions. So the next time you hear someone suggest that government can solve its problems simply by eliminating waste, fraud and abuse, tell them to do the math.

In other news, Democrats held their national convention in Charlotte and, as was the case with their GOP rivals, were hit with nasty weather and the resulting logistical challenges. More than 20,000 party loyalists had to be turned away from President Obama's speech accepting his nomination when the event was moved to a smaller indoor venue due to threatened thunderstorms. Many of the faithful cited [Bill Clinton's nominating speech](#) as the convention highlight, even though it did not include a chair.

Organized labor, despite ouchiness over having the convention in what they see as a labor-unfriendly locale, seemed to come around to the idea that the Democrats' tent is more comfy than the alternative. An [August poll said Obama enjoys a 2-1 advantage over Mitt Romney among union households](#).

The [U.S. added 96,000 jobs in August](#), dropping the unemployment rate to 8.1 percent. We are unable to confirm speculation that most of the added jobs were due to the seasonal hiring of fact-checkers to analyze the speeches at both political conventions. If so, they may need to stay on to ferret out whether the unemployment news itself was a good thing or a bad thing.

Former state Sen. John Pippy appears to quickly be finding his sea legs as CEO of the [Pennsylvania Coal Alliance](#). Appearing as a panelist at a Washington County energy symposium, [Pippy reminded attendees that natural gas isn't the only contributor to American energy independence](#).

In other energy news, a Patriot-News article this week speculated that there could be [natural gas under the hallowed grounds of Gettysburg](#). Well, the next thing you know, ol' Jed's a millionaire...

Harrisburg City Council, to the surprise of no one, said it will take advantage of every nanosecond of the court-imposed deadline for acting on the [court-ordered increase in the city's earned income tax](#). If Council refuses to impose the tax increase, members could face contempt-of-court charges and possibly jail time.

Online retail giant Amazon acquiesced to Pennsylvania's demand that it begin collecting sales tax on goods sold over the Internet. The Post-Gazette, however, pointed out that retailers aren't always up to speed on what [should be taxed and not taxed, and on where the tax rates may be different](#). The state estimates that compliance by Amazon and others will bring in an additional \$43 million during the current fiscal year. In the context of the pension and transportation crises, that amounts to... Oh, nevermind.

In Other News

- 09-10-2012 [**In the war on malaria, a new tactic on mosquitoes**](#)
Reducing cases of malaria worldwide involves a scientific conundrum: How do humans control pervasive mosquitoes that are evolving a resistance to insecticides and also carrying an infective parasite that's showing a resistance to antibiotics? Natural adaptation continues countering defensive measures people take to... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 09-07-2012 [**Online sales tax collection could cost Pennsylvania**](#)
State Department of Revenue steps up enforcement of online retailers, but consumers should be sure to check the bottom line As giant pioneering online retailer Amazon begins collecting Pennsylvania sales tax, savvy shoppers might want to double-check that the tax is being... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 09-07-2012 [**With Medicaid, Long-Term Care of Elderly Looms as a Rising Cost**](#)
By NINA BERNSTEIN Medicaid has long conjured up images of inner-city clinics

jammed with poor families. Its far less-visible role is as the only safety net for millions of middle-class people whose needs for long-term care, at home or in a nursing home, outlast their resources.... - [New York Times](#)

09-07-2012

[Most U.S. Farmland Still in Drought, Even After Storm](#)

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The worst drought in decades is expected, over the next few months, to continue choking a large area of the Plains and Rockies that missed the soggy remnants of Hurricane Isaac, according to the National Weather Service's Seasonal Drought Outlook released on... - [New York Times](#)

09-06-2012

[PGC to Hold State Game Land Tours for Public](#)

(Press Release)

09-05-2012

[Inquirer Editorial: Next law to go is Pa.'s voter ID](#)

When Pennsylvania's Supreme Court convenes in Philadelphia Sept. 13 to consider whether the state's restrictive voter-ID law violates citizens' rights, the justices should have read the federal court decision blocking a similarly restrictive law in Texas. The decision serves as a guideline because the issues are analogous. Like... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

09-05-2012

[Tough to battle Asian tiger mosquitoes populations](#)

York, PA - Recently, Deb Oerman's grandsons tried to cool down on a hot day in a pool behind her York home. The 5- and 7-year-olds returned inside covered in bug bites. "They've been getting all (bit) up," Oerman said. "Especially the little one. There were so many bites so close together on his back, it looked like... - [York Daily](#)