

NCBA's suit against EPA: WOTUS ruling does not hold water

In January, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association announced it filed a lawsuit challenging the once-again changed Waters of the U.S. rule. And the lawsuit wasn't brought forth only on behalf of NCBA, but includes 17 other organizations as part of a coalition that feels the WOTUS definition is "an attack on farmers and ranchers," who want to fight back.

With its headquarters in Colorado, the NCBA also has a center for public policy in D.C. And Kaitlynn Glover leads one of those three policy teams — for natural resources.

"We handle soil health, air quality and everything in between ..." she said, including things producers do to enhance their environment. "It's basically the a-to-z of all policy issues that affect cattle producers with the way they do business and how they produce their products."

The center is very policy-facing, she explained, so they engage not only with members of Congress but also through the regulatory process. Glover said NCBA has a pretty long track record engaging on federal jurisdiction issues.

And now, Glover said, "it feels like it's 2015 all over again," referring to the first round of the WOTUS rule that happened during the Obama Administration. "Which then, we moved forward with litigation, then got the navigable waters rule."

During the first go around back then, she said NCBA had real concerns and opposed that final rule for a number of reasons. "It created more uncertainty for cattle producers and land managers. It went far beyond what is a reasonable rule for federal jurisdiction."

That rule was changed during the Trump administration, "and here we go again," Glover said, about the new WOTUS definition by the Biden



Farm organizations are not the only ones concerned that federal regulations concerning water are vague and troublesome. Business groups have also filed a lawsuit over a waters of the U.S. ruling.

Administration. "For us, it feels like 2015, but for our producers, it's been the multi-year cycle of uncertainty."

The big question on WOTUS is its definition, which stipulates where federal jurisdiction begins and ends, dealing with implementing the Clean Water Act. "And we've been really clear throughout the process that jurisdiction needs to not only be clear, but common sense."

The lawsuit says the revised WOTUS definition exerts the CWA jurisdiction

over a "staggering range of dry land and water features — whether large or small; permanent, intermittent or ephemeral; flowing or stagnant; natural or mandate; interstate or intrastate; and no matter how remote from or lacking in physical connection to navigable waters."

It says that under the rule, farmers and land managers will "constantly be at risk that any sometimes-wet feature on their property will be deemed WOTUS" using vague and unpredict-

able standards, which would make normal activities subject to criminal and civil penalties.

Glover said regulating those types of "waters" not only makes no sense, but that they were not the intent of Congress. "It was originally intended to be a fairly limited jurisdiction for the EPA," she said, referring to CWA.

She said that there needs to be a more clear and consistent interpretations of

SEE **NCBA**, PAGE 2



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Bill to add new division to State Vet's office

FRANKFORT – A bill to add a new division within the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Office of the State Veterinarian to enhance the department's preparedness and response to animal emergencies was approved in the Senate Ag Committee Monday.

"Protecting the health of livestock and poultry in the commonwealth is a top priority of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and the Office of the State Veterinarian," said Commissioner of Agriculture Dr. Ryan Quarles. "That protection means being ready for an emergency. The changes that will come about with Senate Bill 46 will go a long

way in helping us achieve this goal."

The need for Senate Bill 46 was first introduced in November when Commissioner Quarles, KDA Chief of Staff Keith Rogers, and State Veterinarian Dr. Katie Flynn testified before the Interim Joint Committee on Agriculture. After passage, the bill now goes to the full Senate floor for passage.

In addition to creating the Division of Emergency Preparedness and Response to the State Vet office, SB 46 renames two current divisions including the Division of Animal Health to the Division of Regulatory Field Services and the Division of Producer Services to the Division of

Animal Health Programs. The changes address the top three deficiencies the Office of the State Veterinarian identified during the last year: emergency programs, policy and regulations, and outreach and education.

OSV is currently made up of 35 positions, led by the state veterinarian and deputy state vet. Most of the jobs, 25, are in Animal Health. The remaining 10 staff are in the Producer Services division. SB 46 would provide for increased staff and resources, allowing OSV to be better positioned for its principal role in protecting Kentucky's animal agriculture.

OSV's need for more staff has been

put on critical display in the last 18 months as the office dealt with several animal disease and natural disaster occurrences, including a Chronic Wasting Disease case in a deer near the Tennessee border, which initiated required surveillance throughout several counties in Kentucky; devastating tornadoes that impacted agriculture across Western Kentucky; several outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, a deadly virus for domesticated poultry; and widespread flooding in Eastern Kentucky.

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- Animal or Animal Products are limited to a cap of \$2 million per entity.
- Nursery and Greenhouse Products are limited to a cap of \$2 million per entity.
- The liability limit for this program is \$17 million per entity.
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New rule released on H-2A wage guidelines

The U.S. Department of Labor announced Monday it will publish a final rule to amend how the Adverse Effect Wage Rates for the H-2A program are set. The department said changes are needed to improve the rates' consistency and accuracy based on the work actually performed by these workers and to better prevent H-2A workers' employment negatively affecting the wages of U.S. workers in similar positions.

The H-2A program allows employers to address temporary labor needs by employing foreign agricultural workers when a lack of U.S. workers for the positions exists, and as long as hiring non-U.S. workers does

not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of U.S. workers in similar jobs. The program's Adverse Effect Wage Rates is the wage below which there would be an adverse effect on the wages of U.S. workers.

The department uses the data for field and livestock workers combined as reported by the Department of Agriculture's Farm Labor Survey to set the Adverse Effect Wage Rate, but on a few occasions in recent years, the FLS has not been conducted. In December 2021, the department proposed using the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics survey to set the Adverse Effect Wage Rate for field and livestock workers if the FLS is

not available. At the same time, the department proposed that the Adverse Effect Wage Rates for all other H-2A job opportunities, such as when those occupations are not included in the FLS survey, be based on occupation-specific OEWS wage data to ensure accurate wage rates are offered and paid to workers performing more skilled jobs which command higher pay, such as supervisors of farmworkers, truck drivers and agricultural construction workers.

The final rule establishes the following methodology for determining Adverse Effect Wage Rates:

- The department will continue to use the average annual hourly wage as reported

by the FLS for field and livestock workers, combined, occupations – which represent most agricultural jobs – for the state or region.

- For all other agricultural jobs, not represented adequately or reported by current FLS data, the department will use the statewide or national average annual hourly wages for the occupational classification reported by OEWS program.

- For job opportunities that cover more than one classification, the department will base adverse effect rates on the highest wage for the applicable occupations.

The Federal Register was scheduled to publish the final rule on Feb. 28.

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Supply included: 3% Feeder Cattle (20% Dairy Steers, 40% Heifers, 40% Bulls); 91% Slaughter Cattle (87% Cows, 13% Bulls); 6% Replacement. Dairy Cattle (19% Fresh/Milking Cows, 23% Bred Cows, 7% Open Heifers, 9% Bulls, 15% Baby Bull Calves, 28% Baby Heifer Calves). Feeder cattle supply over 600 lbs was 40%.

FEEDER CATTLE:

DAIRY STEERS: Large 3: 1 Head, 485#, 117.00.

HEIFERS: 2 Head, 635#, 110.00.

BULLS: 2 Head, 550-570#, 140.00-161.00.

SLAUGHTER CATTLE:

COWS: Breaker 75-80%: 5 Head, 1490-1860#, 80.00-84.00, Average; Boner 80-85%: 124 Head, 975-1970#, 70.00-89.00, Average; 4 Head 1190-1610#, 90.00-98.00, High; 8 Head, 905-1470#, 60.00-70.00 Low; Lean 85-90%: 34 Head, 835-1155#, 58.00-75.00, Average; 5 Head, 1010#, 78.00, High; 3 Head, 825-1075, 30.00-50.00, Low.

BULLS: 24 Head, 1344-2120#, 103.00-120.00, Average; 3 Head, 1945-2044#, 124.00-125.00, High; 2 Head, 1205-1245#, 95.00-98.00, Low.

REPLACEMENT DAIRY CATTLE:

FRESH/MILKING COWS: Supreme, O Stage, 2 Head, 1300-1365, 1850.00-1875.00; Approved, O Stage, 10 Head, 1000-1652#, 1100.00-1675.00; Approved, O Stage, 3 Head, 1000-1050#, 1200.00-1575.00, Crossbred; Medium, O Stage, 2 Head, 1100-1125, 850.00-1000.00; Medium, O Stage, 1 Head, 950#, 725.00, Crossbred; Common, O Stage, 1 Head, 875#, 450.00.

BRED COWS: Supreme, T3, 1 Head, 1500#, 1650.00; Approved, T3, 8 Head, 1100-1600#, 1025.00-1500.00; Medium, T2, 14 Head, 1010-1020.

OPEN HEIFERS: Approved, O Stage, 7 Head, 450#, 430.00.

BULLS: 9 Head, 250#, 325.00.

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GRAINS	This Week	Prior Week	Last Year
Corn	6.61-7.11	6.55-7.13	6.12-6.74
Soybeans	14.65-15.78	14.70-15.83	15.22-16.27
Red Winter Wheat	6.83-7.91	6.80-7.66	7.74-8.23

USDA ESTIMATED DAILY LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTER

	CATTLE	CALVES	HOGS	SHEEP
Fri. 2/10/2023 (est)	122,000	1,000	481,000	5,000
Week Ago (est)	122,000	1,000	484,000	5,000
Year Ago (act)	121,000	2,000	471,000	3,000
Week to Date (est)	616,000	5,000	2,405,000	35,000
Same Pd Lt Week (est)	622,000	5,000	2,422,000	34,000
Same Pd Lt Yr (act)	619,000	8,000	2,369,000	30,000

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STATE AVERAGES

Steers (M&L 1-2)	<u>This Week</u>	<u>Prior Week</u>	<u>Last Year</u>
350-400 lbs	214.69	200.28	196.70
400-450 lbs	211.21	200.03	188.96
450-500 lbs	202.83	197.16	184.46
500-550 lbs	195.18	186.47	175.32
550-600 lbs	193.12	185.53	168.86
600-650 lbs	179.76	175.34	163.89
650-700 lbs	175.71	168.93	159.23
700-750 lbs	168.43	164.42	152.70
750-800 lbs	168.84	165.84	148.21
800-850 lbs	169.60	157.51	144.46
850-900 lbs	158.23	153.01	143.91
Heifers (M&L 1-2)			
300-350 lbs	179.29	163.95	160.12
350-400 lbs	179.36	169.44	158.72
400-450 lbs	175.85	167.80	155.58
450-500 lbs	174.79	166.84	154.52
500-550 lbs	167.73	160.03	147.13
550-600 lbs	162.23	157.31	144.99
600-650 lbs	158.05	152.99	139.93
650-700 lbs	153.56	146.24	140.12
700-750 lbs	147.84	147.62	135.61
750-800 lbs	141.41	142.50	136.56

WEEKLY COW SUMMARY

Slaughter Cows	<u>Average</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>
Breakers	69.00-89.50	76.00-115.00	53.00-79.00
Boners	62.00-95.50	76.00-113.00	55.00-87.00
Lean	57.00-82.00	67.00-101.00	30.00-71.00
Slaughter Bulls	<u>Average</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>
Yield Grade 1&2	80.00-120.00	95.50-140.00	70.00-104.50

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NCBA's suit against EPA: WOTUS ruling does not hold water

FROM PAGE 1

agricultural exemptions for smaller, isolated water features.

Glover said what they tend to see through a lot of these regulatory activities is that “regulations creep. By nature, the federal government expands their jurisdiction to more areas, so that is a very natural and sort of unfortunate, implicit part of a lot of regulatory activities. When you’re looking at something like the WOTUS rule, you’re asking yourself — especially with the Clean Water Act jurisdiction — is regulation of this feature necessary to ensure or monitor the underlying missions of that act?”

And, Glover said, when talking about the small, isolated water features on farms, “The answer is ‘no.’”

During the period allowed after the amendment to WOTUS was announced, NCBA filed technical comments on the rule about the ag exclusions needed for temporary water features. The organization, along with its coalition, says this rule disrupts normal ag operations, interfering with cattle producers’ abilities to make land improvements.

NCBA said that over 1,700 individual cattle producers sent messages to the EPA opposing the overly broad definition of WOTUS, as well as shared views during an agency roundtable. The EPA’s own Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities Advisory Committee even urged the agency to consider a more limited rule, but these recommendations were not incorporated.

There is also a concern about EPA “charging head-first on a controversial rulemaking,” the NCBA said, while the issue is currently before the Supreme Court in Sackett v. EPA, with a ruling that is expected to provide crucial guidance on the meaning of WOTUS sometime this year.

NCBA’s suit against the EPA is joined by multiple other ag organizations, including American Farm Bureau Federation and Texas Farm Bureau, corn growers, pork producers, and egg and poultry; associations of road, transportation and home builders, mining, general contractors and realtors; and

multi-family housing and public lands councils.

On Feb. 22, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, along with co-plaintiffs, also filed for a preliminary injunction against the EPA’s WOTUS rule as unlawful. The Chamber is asking the court to stop the rule from

going into effect while litigation is pending, and to ultimately find the rule invalid.

By Bobbie Curd
Field Reporter

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INFLAMMATORY? UNHEALTHY? 6 FALSE CLAIMS MADE ABOUT SEED OIL

By Food Science Babe (facebook.com/foodsciencebabe). Reprinted with permission from AGDAILY (agdaily.com).

The myths and misconceptions regarding seed oils seem to be growing every day at this point. These are some of the most prevalent unsubstantiated claims that continue to circulate on social media despite myself and many other science communicators' best efforts to share the science based information time and time again.

Here are the claims I see most often, and I provide the truth behind these seed oil myths:

Claim #1: Seed oils are industrial waste products, therefore, unsafe to consume.

The claim that a food ingredient is an industrial waste product implies that because it may have been a waste stream at one point in time that somehow makes it bad to consume. Obviously, this reasoning does not prove anything about safety or nutrition of a food ingredient, but also utilizing a waste stream means there's less waste, which isn't a bad thing.

The word "industrial" is also used to imply something negative about the ingredient, but many different ingredients we consume are used in other industries (water, salt, baking soda, etc.) and once again, that tells you nothing about the health or safety of that food.

Besides all of that, this claim isn't even true regarding seed oils. Seed and vegetable oils have been part of human culture for millennia. China and Japan produced soybean oil as early as 3000 B.C. Southern Europeans started to produce olive oil by 2000 B.C. People started producing olive oil in the Middle East almost 8,000 years ago. Canola was bred through conventional plant breeding methods in Canada during the 1960s and '70s to significantly reduce the levels of erucic acid and glucosinolates in the parent rapeseed for use in food.

Not to mention that the opposite of this claim is actually true. Used seed and vegetable oils are recycled from deep fryers to be used as a direct fuel, as well as in the production of biodiesel, livestock feed, pet food, soap, detergent, cosmetics, and industrial chemicals.

Claim #2: The oils are heated to such high temperatures during refining that it causes them to oxidize.

During the refining process, seed oils are heated to a temperature that drives off volatile compounds, which actually makes the oil more stable. This is why refined oils have higher smoke points and a longer shelf life than their unrefined counterparts. That temperature is lower than the temperature that would be necessary to oxidize the oil.

Deodorization is a steam distillation process that drives off the unwanted aldehydes, ketones, alcohols and short chain fatty acids that cause undesirable odors. Careful execution of this process improves the stability and color of the oil, while preserving its nutritional value. After the steam distillation process, the oil is conditioned under nitrogen to prevent oxidation.

Claim #3: Seed oils are washed in solvents like hexane, which is a known neurological toxin.

Hexane has been used to extract oils from plant material since the 1930s. After extraction the hexane is then removed from the oil. There is no evidence to substantiate any risk or danger to consumer health when foods containing trace residual concentrations of hexane are ingested.

Refined vegetable oils extracted with hexane contain less than 1 ppm of residual hexane. It's estimated that the level of ingestion of hexane from all food sources is less than 2 percent of the daily intake from all other sources, primarily gasoline fumes.

Claim #4: Refined seed oils contain significant levels of trans fatty acids.

The processes used for deodorization have been modified to limit the production of trans fatty acids. Vegetable, seed and even nut oils, have been found to contain levels of trans-fatty acids that are less than or comparable to the levels in beef fat and cows milk, which contain about 2 to 5 percent of trans-fat as a percent of the total fat.



Claim #5: Seed oils are unhealthy and inflammatory.

Evidence strongly shows the opposite of this claim. Human trials consistently show that omega-6 fatty acids do not cause inflammation.

High-quality observational evidence shows modest reductions in coronary heart disease rates by further decreases in saturated fat if replaced by a combination of poly- and mono-unsaturated fat, and the benefits of polyunsaturated fat appear strongest.

Claim #6: The ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 is too high.

Both omega-6 and omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids are essential and reduce risk of heart disease. The ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 is not useful and can be misleading.

A 2021 prospective analysis showed that replacing butter and margarine with canola oil, corn oil, or olive oil was related to lower total and cardiometabolic mortality. Studies show that a diet high in these fats can help lower cholesterol and blood sugar. An analysis by the American Heart Association found that eating more omega-6 fats either reduced markers of inflammation or left them unchanged. Many studies have shown that rates of heart disease went down as consumption of omega-6 fats went up. The AHA supports an omega-6 PUFA intake of at least 5 percent to 10 percent of energy in the context of other AHA lifestyle and dietary recommendations. They conclude, "To reduce omega-6 PUFA intakes from their current levels would be more likely to increase than to decrease risk for CHD."

So, as you can see, many of the popular claims surrounding seed oils are not only untrue, but in actuality quite the opposite. Use the oils you prefer, have access to and work best for your application. Spreading misinformation regarding seed oils is yet another classist take, as it demonizes less expensive, more accessible foods.

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FDA allows soy and almond drinks to be labeled 'milk'

The Food and Drug Administration issued labeling guidance allowing drinks that are not cow's milk to keep "milk" in their names, "but [FDA said] they should display a special nutrition statement showing how their products differ from milk," reports Philip Gruber of Lancaster Farming, which is based in Pennsylvania and serves the Northeast, a dairy hub.

"The agency's guidance on milk alternatives is a major loss and a minor win for the dairy industry, which for decades has sought to restrict use of the term 'milk' to stifle competition from the \$2 billion plant-based beverage industry," Gruber writes. "The FDA defines milk as coming from a cow, so plant-based beverages cannot be marketed as milk," but the manufacturers say they're not calling it milk. "FDA does not have a regulatory definition of plant-based milk alternatives . . . So the alternative drinks must be labeled with their common names, and terms like soy milk appear to be established by common usage, the agency said."

Jim Mulhern, president and CEO of the National Milk Producers Federation, told Lancaster Farming that FDA's guidance doesn't go far enough, but at least acknowledges consumer confusion. He told Gruber, "We reject the agency's circular logic that FDA's past labeling enforcement inaction now justifies labeling such beverages 'milk' by designating a common and usual name."

While people realize that almond milk is not cow's milk, "Research suggests shoppers don't understand the nutritional differences between milk and plant-based alternatives," Gruber writes. "Milk is an important source of calcium, protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin and vitamin B12 — nutrients that plant-based milks may not provide in comparable amounts." Yet the FDA's guidance notes, "Consumers often use the products as milk substitutes and prefer to call them milks. Dubbing them 'beverages' or 'drinks' may suggest inferior quality." The guidance does not define the differences between 'quality' and 'nutritional value.'

The guidance took the FDA's "2018 request for comment that received more than 13,000 responses," into account, Gruber reports. As well as results from "focus groups and consulted other research, finding that shoppers generally realize that plant-based alternatives don't contain milk." The FDA will accept comments on the regulation through April 24.

Meanwhile, the number of U.S. dairy farms continues to shrink. "The U.S. lost 6 percent of its dairy

farms last year, roughly the same share as last year," Gruber reports in another story. "The U.S. lost 1,900 dairies last year, slightly more than the 1,800 dairies the previous year but smaller than the 2,500 farms

that exited in 2020.

By Heather Close
The Rural Blog



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Even though we are in the middle of our winter season, the thought of spring planting is never far from the minds of our grain producers. As we plan for the next crop, there is much to be optimistic about even after the rough growing season we had in 2022.

The USDA released final 2021 production numbers last September that told us something, as farmers, we already knew. Kentucky corn became the top ag commodity surpassing the billion-dollar mark in cash receipts. Soybeans were a very close second.

We passed up everything else we had done in Kentucky up to that point and really stood out in the nation as one of the highest corn yields for a particular state.

However, we are always at the mercy of the weather, and 2022 was not as generous, from a production standpoint. Still, in looking over the ag data from the last two decades, we see how much grain production has increased exponentially in this state.

And we see consistent production, even in those years when the weather doesn't cooperate. We've learned how to use the technology available to us while managing our inputs as efficiently as we can. All of this has led to higher yields over time.

We are seeing consistent trend lines in corn yields that you can almost count on from year to year and the timeliness of our practices, especially our planting, has also helped put us a long way toward a better crop.

More than ever before we have advanced technology to help us learn and to assist us as we move through a growing season.

But one of our most valuable resources has been the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund, which has helped to invest in many production practices that make for better yields.

As for those of us who have been on the farm our entire lives, we know more than ever before. We are more careful in how we plant a crop in the ground; we're a lot more scientific about it, and that has mitigated some of that weather risk.

So, as we anticipate the 2023 crop, I believe the future is bright for increased yields. Certainly, hybrids and genetics, and variety selection have come a long way and continue to add to production in all crops, and the more we manage our soils for productivity, the longer we'll have

As for those
of us who
have been
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our entire
lives, we
know more
than ever
before.

SEE **HEADLINE**, PAGE 5

Paltry fine proves what-not who-we truly value

A much-favored line often quoted by preachers and politicians rightly notes that "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members."

Curiously, a famous American politician, former Vice President Hubert Humprey, and an even more famous attorney-turned-preacher, Mahatma Gandhi, are both credited as its originator.

It's doubtful, however, that many in Big Meat ponder its authorship, let alone its admonition.

The latest evidence to highlight Big Meat's low light is a mid-February case where, according to the Washington Post, a company named Packers Sanitation Services Inc. (PSSI) paid a \$1.5 million fine after it "allegedly employed minors as young as 13 to use caustic chemicals to clean 'razor-sharp saws,' head splitters and other dangerous equipment at meatpacking facilities in eight states... in some cases for years."

Take a moment to consider the full meaning of those words: 13-year-olds, caustic chemicals, razor-sharp saws, and something called "head splitters."

Now contrast them to words like skateboards, video games, bus-sing tables, and high school sports—you know, some of the more common diversions "employing" teenagers.

The difference is stark, violent, and even brutal.

The absolute topper in this woeful tale is that some of the meatpackers using PSSI-hired contract cleaners "are operated by some of the country's most powerful meat and poultry producers, including JBS Foods, Tyson and Cargill. Those companies were not charged or fined," reported the Post Feb. 17.

It's not that these Big Three (of meatpacking's Big Four) aren't profitable enough to have their own cleaning crews of trained professionals who are old enough to drive or at least shave once a week.

We know this because, in 2022, for example, Tyson Foods' net profits totaled \$3.3 billion on sales of \$53.3 billion. The world's biggest meatpacker, JBS, posted results for 2021 (its latest) that showed \$20.5 billion net profit on \$351 billion in sales. Privately-held Cargill doesn't reveal profits but did report \$165 billion in total sales for 2022.

And remember, none of these immensely profitable, global meatpackers were "charged or fined" by the U.S. Department of Labor in this case because none of the cleaners—baby-faced or bearded—were employed by JBS, Tyson, or Cargill.

Instead, all worked for PSSI, a Kieler, Wisc. company that is "privately owned by Blackstone, one of the world's largest private equi-



FOOD
&
FARM
FILE

Alan
Guebert

The
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SEE **PALTRY**, PAGE 6

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Paltry fine proves what-not who-we truly value

FROM PAGE 4

ty firms, and employs roughly 17,000 workers,” explained the Post.

Simply put, that means three of ag’s biggest, richest players are at least two steps removed from legal liability for “accidents” or injuries that occur while workers, some as young as 13, are cleaning and sanitizing their industrial slaughterhouses.

PSSI provides other benefits, too, according to its website. For example, the “vision” of company founders more than 50 years ago included PSSI “providing contract sanitation services using a non-unionized workforce.”

The website doesn’t say if that founding vision also included child labor.

Still, it may get a helping hand in that endeavor as at least two Mid-western states heavy with meatpacking presence, Iowa and Minnesota, are now considering laws that allow “exceptions to child labor regulations in their respective states due to the persisting labor shortage,” reported Business Insider Feb. 13.

Of the two legislative proposals,

Iowa’s is particularly “abhorrent,” related a Feb. 12 Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette editorial. The legislation “pushes for teenagers as young as 14-years-old to work in... jobs like mining, meatpacking, and logging... work longer shifts that last late into the evening... (and) what’s more... the company they worked for would be free from any civil liability or negligence.”

If that proposal becomes law, warned the former Successful Farming writer Cheryl Tevis in a Feb. 18 Substack post, all Iowans “would be complicit, along with our elected representatives and governor, if we look the other way... [while] putting our children in harm’s way.”

Exactly, but we continue to “look the other way;” we continue to give power to the already too powerful until, like now, all we have left to give is our most vulnerable, our children. Shame on them and shame on us.

ALAN GUEBERT publishes a weekly column Farm and Food File through the U.S. and Canada. Past columns, events and contact information are posted at farmand-foodfile.com. Contact Alan Guebert by email at agcomm@farmandfoodfile.com.

Improved practices net strong yields

FROM PAGE 4

these increases in yields.

As much as we educate ourselves on the farm, we see an ever-increasing need to educate the general public when it comes to our agricultural practices and it’s something that we need to factor into our equation of how we produce a crop.

As much as we think about what is happening today, in farming, we always look to the next generation. That’s half the reason why we’re

doing what we’re doing, to provide something for the next generation. And these young people keep getting sharper, keep getting more tools at their disposal to use, and are gaining more information to learn from to produce a good crop.

They will have so much more information and data at their disposal and that makes the future even brighter.

RAY ALLAN MACKEY is the state director of the Kentucky Farm Bureau feed grains wheat advisory committee chair.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor are welcomed. Letters must include the author’s name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Letters should be no longer than 500 words and will be edited for clarity.

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Neighbor's equipment leasing bill headed to house floor

FRANKFORT – The House Agriculture Committee met last week and entertained a vote on HB 130, a measure that expands the variety of farming equipment offered through local shared-use equipment leasing programs.

“Granting our farmers access to equipment that they desperately need but may not have the funding for is something I believe will give our local produc-

ers the ability to be more efficient,” Rep. Amy Neighbors noted. “This measure aims to assist farmers with operations of any size.”

Shared-Use Equipment Leasing is a program offered through the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund and is powered by local fiscal courts and conservation offices. Currently, the scope of equipment offered through this program is limited, and HB

130 will allow the program to include more specialized equipment that would otherwise be a burden to the farmer to purchase.

The committee voted in favor of the bill unanimously, and is expected to be voted on in the House in the coming weeks.





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Specialty crop application deadline extended

The deadline has been extended to apply for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, Agriculture Commissioner Dr. Ryan Quarles has announced. The new deadline is Friday, March 3.

"The Department has received tremendous interest in the specialty crop program, which is intended to help make Kentucky specialty crops more competitive in both domestic and foreign markets," Commissioner Quarles said. "In an effort to make sure everyone who wants to apply has time to do so, we're extending the deadline."

Applicants must describe how the project potentially affects and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public. Private, 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organizations, and quasi government entities, including public universities, are eligible to apply. All projects are subject to the availability of funds. KDA will not award grant funds for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.

Preliminary proposals must be submitted on the form located at https://www.kyagr.com/marketing/documents/Grants_Specialty_Crop_Concept_Proposal.pdf and emailed to Brett McQueary at Brett.McQueary@ky.gov no later than 4:30 p.m. EST

on March 3, 2023. Applicants who have already submitted an application, but would like to amend their proposals and reapply are invited to do so. Qualifying applicants will be notified and invited to complete a full grant application.

Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticultural products, nursery crops (including floriculture), and honey. For a comprehensive list, interested parties may visit www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop.

KDA receives grant funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Agricultural Marketing Service for the specialty crop grant program and conducts an annual competitive application process to award grant funds.

For more information about the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, go to kyagr.com/marketing/crop-block-grant.html or contact Brett McQueary at 502-782-4114 (office), 502-330-6044 or Brett.McQueary@ky.gov.

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The B.I.B.L.E.

Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth

The word “Bible” comes from the Greek word “biblion,” meaning book. Since most Christians consider the Bible to be the foundational book on how to live, this derivation seems particularly appropriate. I recently heard a priest who was preparing to hand out Bibles to graduating eighth graders tell them with a wink and a smile that the word “Bible” stands for “Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.” There is more than a grain of truth in that catchy acronym. Consider how the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament contains detailed dietary laws and rules about clothes (e.g., Deuteronomy 22:5 tells us that “A woman shall not wear a man’s garment” and at 22:11 it says that “You shall not wear cloth of wool and linen mixed together.”) Many of these rules seem strange to us today because we are so far removed from their ancient context. But, most of the proverbs and rules for how to get along with each other make prudent sense and continue to provide a rational basis for how we should live. The Golden rule is a timeless piece of universal advice. Consider the opening verses of the book of Proverbs, which supplies their rationale, and almost a rationale for the entire bible: “To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding. To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgement, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.” Proverbs 1:2-5

– Christopher Simon



Brussels Sprouts with Ham

3 cups trimmed, halved, fresh Brussels sprouts (about 1½ pounds)
¼ cup chopped lean ham
vegetable cooking spray

1 tablespoon light butter
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Prepare Brussels sprouts by pulling off any limp outer leaves, and closely trimming the stem end—don’t cut too much off or the Brussels sprout may fall apart. Rinse under cold water. Cut in half. (If using frozen Brussels sprouts, do NOT cut in half.)

Steam Brussels sprouts in ½ inch boiling water 5 minutes or until sprouts are tender when pierced with a knife. Drain.

Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat; add ham and ½ tablespoon light butter. Cook 3 minutes or until slightly brown, stirring occasionally.

Remove from pan; set aside.

Coat the same pan with cooking spray and place over medium-high heat.

Add Brussels sprouts; cook 3 minutes or until lightly browned.

Add ½ tablespoon light butter, salt, and pepper, stirring until butter melts.

Remove from heat, drizzle with lemon juice.

Add ham; toss to combine.

Yield: 6, ½ cup servings

Nutrition Analysis: 80 calories; 2 g total fat; 0 g saturated fat; 0 g trans fat; 5 mg cholesterol; 320 mg sodium; 11 g carbohydrate; 4 g fiber; 3 g sugars; 5 g protein; 8% recommended allowance for vitamin A; 120% recommended allowance for vitamin C.

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers' market, or roadside stand.



Fiesta Potatoes

8 small to medium russet potatoes, peeled and diced
1 green bell pepper, chopped
1 red bell pepper, chopped

1 medium onion, chopped
1 cup Mexican blend cheese, shredded
½ cup margarine, melted
½ cup low-fat milk
2 tablespoons fresh

parsley, chopped
1 tablespoon dried basil, crushed
¾ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. **Place** the potatoes, bell peppers and onion in a medium pan and cover with water.

Place over high heat and bring to a boil. **Reduce** heat and **simmer** 12-15 minutes, or until vegetables are tender.

Drain the vegetables and **place** in a mixing bowl. **Stir** in the cheese, margarine, milk and seasonings until combined. **Spread** the mixture in a

9-by-13-inch baking pan that has been sprayed with a non-stick coating. **Bake** for about 20 minutes or until bubbly.

Yield: 12, ½ cup servings

Nutritional Analysis: 200 calories, 9 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 370 mg sodium, 24 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber, 3 g sugar, 9 g protein.



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<http://plateitup.ca.uky.edu>

Recipes courtesy of Ky Proud





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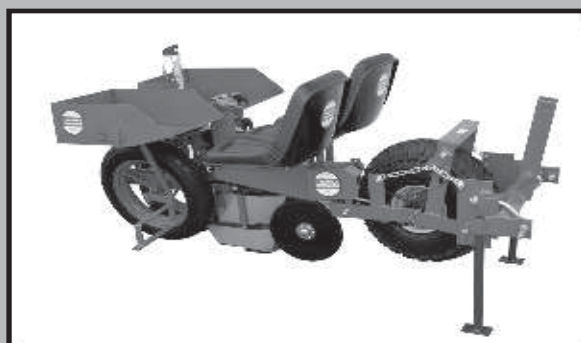
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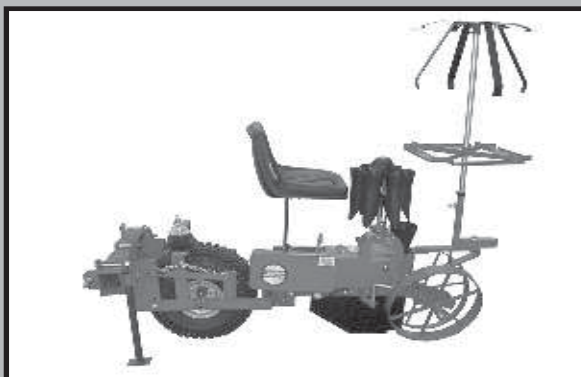
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