



Insider

Quarterly Newsletter
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Join Us for A-FAN's Annual Stakeholders' Meeting Nov. 25

Livestock markets analyst and small farms expert **Dr. Chris Hurt** will be the keynote speaker for A-FAN's annual stakeholders' meeting Monday, November 25, at the Embassy Suites in Downtown Lincoln.



Dr. Chris Hurt

Coffee and conversation starts at 9:00a.m., with the program starting at 9:30. Lunch will follow the program.

Nebraska Director of Agriculture **Greg Ibach** will give the opening remarks. A-FAN's annual report and special awards will precede Dr. Hurt's presentation.

Dr. Hurt is professor of agricultural economics at Purdue University. He specializes in evaluating the livestock industry structure, and analyzing the outlook of live cattle and hogs. He is known for his examination of the factors that can influence structural changes in the pork industry, and has evaluated the adoption of new technologies in moderate-sized midwestern farms.

Interested in attending? Simply RSVP to emilyt@a-fan.org. (There is no cost for members and guests.)

A-FAN's \$200 Grocery Giveaways Draw State Fair, Husker Harvest Days Attention

A-FAN was busy in late summer exhibiting at both the Nebraska State Fair and Husker Harvest Days.

These annual events provided A-FAN with excellent platforms to advance its message to the public about the importance of agriculture to the state and the commitment of its farmers and ranchers to grow nutritious food for our plates. Over 300,000 attended the State Fair in Grand Island August 23 to September 2, while the Farm Progress-sponsored Husker Harvest Days west of Grand Island drew over 100,000 visitors September 10-12.



Visitors to our exhibits couldn't miss the message that agriculture is vital to Nebraska's economy.

A-FAN's objectives for its State Fair and Husker Harvest Days presence was to actively draw media attention to its mission advocating for the state's animal agriculture industry and to reinforce its message that Nebraska farmers and ranchers are passionate about growing food for Nebraska, the country and the world, as per A-FAN's recently introduced "Growing Food is Our Passion" theme.

To help draw visitors to our booths at the two events, A-FAN sponsored \$200 grocery giveaway drawings. The lucky State Fair winner was Cynthia Valleo of Lincoln, whose name was drawn from

over 1900 entries. Caleb Roberts of St. Edward won the Husker Harvest Days drawing, from nearly 600 entries.

"I have been around livestock," Roberts said. "My step-dad has cattle and I have been able to help him from time to time. I recently became a father, so this will definitely help."

Media coverage was strong. At the State Fair, Willow Holoubek was interviewed by NTV (for their "Good Morning Nebraska" show and "Grow") and KRVN. At Husker Harvest Days, she was interviewed by NTV (again for "Good Morning Nebraska Show" and "Grow,") as well as by KOLN/KGIN's Jon Vanderford for the 10/11 "Morning Show" and "Pure Nebraska" telecasts on KOLN/KGIN Central Nebraska and on KOLN/KGIN 10/11.

Thanks to these volunteers who helped staff the State Fair booth this year: Barry Young, Agri-King; Robert Turek, United Feed Corp.; Earl Latshaw, Sunnyside Farms; Jeff Horst, Pioneer Seed; and Leslie Smith, KNEB Radio, Scottsbluff; and Asia Haack, Lois Jean Hartman, Kay Hartman, Scott Spilker and Bill Luckey, friends of A-FAN.





Farm Tour Gives Food Influencers an Eye-opening Experience

Farm Road Rally III opened some eyes among the 30 invited food industry influencers on a tour of Smithfield Farmland's Crete pork processing plant and Prairieland Dairy operations at Firth September 12.

The tour, one of an on-going series of behind-the-scenes looks at real-life farming and food processing operations, was co-sponsored by A-FAN and the CommonGround farm women's movement to raise awareness among food industry influencers of the commitment that Nebraska farmers, ranchers and food processors share to provide nutritious, healthy food to the world.

Participants included grocery store management staff from B&R Stores, Russ's Markets, SuperSaver markets, an independent dietitian, chefs from Omaha Hy-Vee stores and a Lincoln chef who is also a culinary instructor. A-FAN's Willow Holoubek was impressed with the group's interest level and involvement in the discussions.

"These food professionals were deeply interested in the tour stop discussions," Holoubek said. "They asked a lot of good questions and we had good discussions with the company presenters. A-FAN and CommonGround believe it is important to provide these influencers with a first-hand look at where their food comes from."

One of the participants with an eye-opening experience was Bill Wagner,

"I feel very lucky to have been a part of this very informational and well-organized tour."

— Mario Ochoa,
Hy-Vee Chef



Invited food pros (above) tour pork processing and dairy plants September 12, learn about commitment of farmers and producers to provide our nutritious food.

Russ's Market store director. "It was a great, informative tour," he said. "It was my first time at a dairy, very interesting. And then [at Smithfield Farmland] to see the pigs one minute and then a food source the next was overwhelming. It is just the chain of life, but very interesting."

The tour's first stop was at Smithfield Farmland, where participants learned that the Crete plant processes over 62,000 hogs a week, or nearly 3 million head a year, 1.9 million of which come from Nebraska farms.

Then the group bussed to Firth for an afternoon tour of Prairieland Dairy. A-FAN staff and and CommonGround Nebraska volunteers used the travel time to discuss food issues with participants.

At Prairieland Dairy, the group learned the company is a four-family partnership that milks 1,400 cows, produces its own feed on 600 acres of

row crops, and operates its own dairy processing plant, Prairieland Foods. They also learned that Prairieland closely watches cow health around the clock, monitoring the ankle bands each cow wears.

Amber Pankonin, a dietician with Health Under Pressure, said she had not heard of A-FAN before, "so I am definitely thankful to have met them and taken the tour. I appreciated getting to do the tour of Farmland with Willow. Not that I was uncomfortable, but she really took the time to make sure I was comfortable with everything we saw. I think I was just taken aback when I heard the hogs."

"I feel very lucky to have been a part of this very informational and well-organized tour," said Mario Ochoa, chef at Omaha's Center Street Hy-Vee. "Even though I play an important role in the food industry to our consumers, I seem to have forgotten the reality of what important steps have to be taken for

(continued on Page 4)



Dodge County Puts A-FAN's Developmental Plan to Good Use

Agriculture drives Nebraska's economy. As farming goes, so goes the state, with one job in four related to agriculture. And the biggest economic driver in the state is its \$7.2 billion livestock farming industry.

The industry's continued economic strength, requires proactive community efforts to build sustainable, interdependent growth in the livestock industry. To accomplish this goal, livestock farmers need the support of area businesses.

That's where A-FAN comes in.

"A-FAN's goal is to help communities take advantage of their strengths and potential to create sustainable economic growth," says Willow Holoubek, executive director, "We need to actively involve all stakeholders in both the public and private sectors to implement sustainable livestock development in rural Nebraska."

AFAN is providing information and guidance to community leaders who ask for assistance in making informed decisions about which opportunities are best in the long run for the economic vitality of their communities.

A-FAN's developmental program dovetails nicely with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture's Livestock Friendly County program, which recognizes counties that actively support their livestock industries. To date, 23 of the state's 93 counties have earned

the livestock-friendly designation with three more applications pending.

Dodge County, which applied this summer for Livestock Friendly County designation, is taking full advantage of the A-FAN resources to make

"The A-FAN plan allows [Tillery's] coalition of stakeholders to prepare for any potential opportunity in an orderly and systematic way."

the county a destination for dairy operations looking to relocate. The Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce and its Agricultural Business and Natural Resources Council, with A-FAN's support, has aggressively stepped up to encourage the nation's dairy producers to consider relocating to Dodge County.

Studies show that within a 100-miles radius of Fremont, there are seven dairy processing plants operating at a combined milk supply deficit roughly equivalent to the production from 30,000 to 50,000 cows. That deficit is problematic, according to Ron Tillery, executive director of the Greater Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce.

"The danger is that if they can't get sufficient milk supplies these dairy plants might close and move somewhere else," Tillery says. The A-FAN plan allows his coalition of stakeholders to prepare for any potential opportunity in an orderly and systematic way. The Chamber, with A-FAN, spearheaded the development of the Dodge County Livestock and Dairy Development Plan.

As a result of Dodge County's planning, a California dairy operation approached the county in July about relocation potential. Because Dodge County had done its groundwork with A-FAN and its developmental plan, the California dairyman traveled to Fremont in mid-July to entertain a presentation from the county's coalition.

The meeting was hosted by A-FAN, the Greater Fremont Chamber of Commerce, Greater Fremont Development Council, Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Omaha Development Council.

(continued on Page 4)





Farm Tour Gives Food Influencers an Eye-opening Experience *(continued from Page 2)*



Farm Raod Rally guests enjoying flavored milk at Prairieland Dairy.

our animal proteins to be processed so they can end up on our shelves for our consumers.

Thank you for that reminder. And I am happy to know there are organizations such as A-FAN and CommonGround Nebraska out there to educate the general public and to serve as ambassadors to our agricultural industry.”

More farm tours for food influencers are in the offing.

“Given the positive response we’ve had from participating food professionals about their learning experiences during these

events,” Holoubek said, “we will be planning more farm tours. It’s a great way to get the word out about the commitment and passion Nebraska farmers and ranchers have for providing quality food to the state and the world.”

A-FAN staffers for the tour included Willow Holoubek, Melissa Slagle, Talia Goes and Emily Taylor. CommonGround volunteers included Sharon Portenier, whose family operates a cow/calf and row crop farm near Harvard, and Shana Beattie, whose family runs a diversified hog and row crop farm near Sumner.

We’d love to hear from you!

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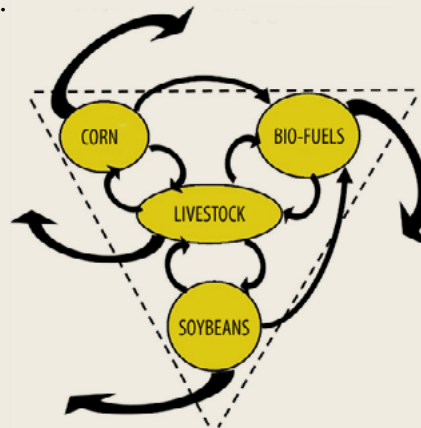
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Dodge County Puts A-FAN’s Developmental Plan to Good Use *(continued from Page 2)*

The Dodge County presentation to the visiting dairy farmer addressed his areas of concern, including the availability of land and water and ready access to abundant feed. Also discussed: the existence of nearby dairy markets and processors, labor availability and strong dairy industry infrastructure.

In the presentation, the group emphasized Nebraska’s “golden triangle” of abundant resources. This includes corn, soybeans, biofuels and feed byproducts which create interdependence of livestock farmers and row crop farmers.

NEBRASKA’S GOLDEN TRIANGLE



The dairy industry provides an excellent starting point for livestock development in Nebraska, Holoubek says, pointing to the

recent efforts by Dodge County business leaders. “Dodge County is stepping forward to get things done. Hats off to them.” Currently negotiations are ongoing with Dairy Farmers in other states.

A-FAN encourages all other communities in the state to follow Dodge County’s example. To get started,

call Willow Holoubek, Executive Director, at 402.421.4455 or e-mail her at willowh@a-fan.org