

CONSUMERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF HSUS AND PETA SCHEMES

Seventy-one percent of Americans questioned in a new opinion poll wrongly believe the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is an "umbrella group" for America's local humane societies. Sixty-three percent incorrectly think their local humane society is affiliated with HSUS. And fifty-nine percent falsely believe HSUS contributes most of its money to local organizations that care for cats and dogs.

The poll, which sampled the opinions of 1,008 Americans, was commissioned by the nonprofit Center for Consumer Freedom and conducted by Opinion Research Corporation.

"These numbers indicate that Americans don't really know what the Humane Society of the United States is all about," said CCF Director of Research David Martosko. "HSUS intentionally uses those sad dogs and cats in its TV infomercials as props in an animal rights fundraising shell game. Meanwhile, thousands of American pet shelters are underfunded and struggling." Martosko blogs about HSUS at humanewatch.org.

According to the federal income tax return filed by HSUS for the tax year 2008, less than one-half of one percent of the organization's budget consisted of grants to hands-on pet shelters. HSUS does not run a single shelter for dogs or cats anywhere, and it is not affiliated with any local "humane society" organizations.

In other animal rights efforts, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), is responding to recent news reports that the city council of Colorado Springs, CO has will eliminate all the trash cans from public parks. The decision will reduce the city's ballooning budget and PETA sent an urgent letter to Colorado Springs Mayor Lionel Rivera offering to financially maintain the receptacles in the city's public parks in exchange for placing ads on them. The ads would read, "Meat Trashes the Planet. Go Vegan. PETA" and would feature an image of one of PETA's bikini-clad Lettuce Ladies.

"Our proposal would help keep Colorado Springs' beautiful parks from becoming litter dumps and would prompt residents to adopt a healthy, humane and environmentally friendly vegan diet," says PETA Executive Vice President Tracy Reiman. "No one has a bigger carbon footprint than the meat and dairy industries so if you really want to go green, the best thing that you can do is go vegan." —

BUSINESS PROFILE: ICM, INC.

Fueled by a passion to grow and sustain agriculture, ICM President and CEO Dave Vander Griend, and his brother Dennis, have been trailblazers in the ethanol industry for more than 30 years. As an engineering student at

South Dakota State



University in 1978, Dennis enlisted his brother Dave to assist him in building his first distillation column design. And in fact, that two-column received the first-ever commercial fuel ethanol manufacturing permit issued by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

From the late '70s through the mid '90s, Dave and Dennis worked with various companies to grow the ethanol industry. They believed there was a better way to build safer and more efficient distillers grain dryers and in 1995, ICM established its headquarters in Colwich. As the designer and process engineering firm for more than 100 dry-mill ethanol plants in North America, ICM employs nearly 300 people dedicated to renewable energy solutions.

Though the ethanol industry has been tough on facilities, producers and supporting companies, ICM has found ways to work through current economic challenges. ICM Energy Solutions, Inc. was created to manage operation services for ethanol plants and was most recently engaged by Tharaldson Ethanol, Casselton, ND to oversee production of ethanol, distillers grains and co-products of its 110-million gallons per year plant. The company also specifically located its cellulosic ethanol demonstration plant alongside its 1-million-gallon per year corn-to-ethanol pilot plant in St. Joseph, MO. This strategic location allows ICM to increase its total renewable fuels capacity by also producing fuel-grade ethanol from non-food cellulose materials such as switchgrass, forage sorghum, and corn fiber. ICM can also validate refining technologies and establish the foundation for full commercial-scale development of an advanced biorefinery project.

Another recent venture for ICM is a contract with Sunoco, Inc., a manufacturer and marketer of petroleum and petrochemical products. ICM will retrofit an existing, idle plant in New York, which Sunoco purchased in 2009. The facility is the largest ethanol manufacturer in the northeastern U.S. and is strategically located to supply the company's retail gasoline network with blended ethanol.

In December 2009, ICM was one of 19 awardees for a pilot/demonstration scale facility through the U.S. Department of Energy Biomass Funding Opportunity Announcement. The award provides a grant of \$25 and ICM expects to contribute more than \$6 million of its own funds as its cost-share for an advance biorefinery project. For more information, go to icm-inc.com. —

REGULATORS OPEN AG COMPETITION HEARINGS

Federal officials concerned about how much control a few corporations have over the nation's food supply have pledged to begin a new era of antitrust enforcement, seeking to balance agricultural power between companies, farmers and consumers.

More than 650 farmers, slaughterhouse workers, lobbyists and executives gathered for a hearing on competition in agriculture that will help shape how the Obama administration redraws its antitrust policy after decades of industry consolidation.

Some Obama administration officials have made clear their unease with increasing agribusiness consolidation, with just a handful of firms controlling the lion's share of beef production, biotech seeds and poultry growing. For farmers, it is a long-overdue effort to constrain corporations like Monsanto Co., Archer Daniels Midland Co. and Tyson Foods Inc., which producers say wield unprecedented power over food production. Industry groups worry new laws or big antitrust lawsuits could punish companies in the midst of a recession and stifle innovation and investment.

The hearings focused on the seed industry, where Monsanto and DuPont control the market for genetically engineered traits inserted into the vast majority of U.S. crops. Farmers have complained the lack of competition among biotech seed makers has led to a jump in seed prices, even as crop prices stagnate. —

MEMBER PROFILE: ALAN WOODARD

Alan Woodard is a farm boy who loves to work with farm folks. Growing up on a family operation in Maize, he learned the value of production agriculture then chose to make a career in the business side of the industry.

Today, as community bank president of Commerce Bank, Hutchinson, Woodard says he has the opportunity to balance life as a city banker and a small-town farmer. As president, he manages all aspects of the Hutchinson branch. This career move presented itself when the former president moved from the area and Woodard, who had been working several joint agriculture accounts with the predecessor, was asked to serve in the interim.

"I found Commerce Bank to be a good fit for me," he says. "I had been in the Hutchinson market for 15 years already, most of that in agriculture banking."

Woodard earned a bachelor of science in business administration from Emporia State University, Emporia, then began training as a loan officer with the Farm Credit system. He says technology has changed the banking industry in big ways and the most recent economic downturn has improved the analysis of loan clients.

"When I first began making loans for Federal Land Bank, one of the active loan files actually listed, 'Hard-working, good German family,' in the credit comments section," he says. "There was no talk of liquidity or solvency or cash flow, only character traits."

Woodard says during his Farm Credit training he learned about one of the five "C's" – character – and that it is always first and foremost. He says a loan customer may have financial potential but if they are not of good character, the chances of a positive banking relationship are slim.

Currently, Woodard maintains a farming and small cattle operation, mostly he says to allow his children a place to truly learn where food comes from – a knowledge severely lacking among many of today's youth.

"When Hayes turned five, he all of a sudden fell in love with farming," Woodard says. "This rekindled my flame. We farm dry land wheat, soybeans and grain sorghum and keep a small number of calves, which Hayes enjoys."

As secretary/treasurer of the Agri-Business Council of Wichita, Woodard hopes to build on the success of the Council's 2008 BioNXT Conference and host another big event in the near future. He says this will not happen without volunteer members.

"The BioNXT Conference started a great steam of momentum but since then it has plateaued," Woodard says. "The board is in the process of creating more of that steam and the involvement of many volunteers is key. It takes many hands to make the work light."

Woodard lives in Hutchinson with his wife, Stacy, and their three daughters, Hailey, Hilari and Heidi and their son, Hayes. —



Woodard

AGRICULTURE FOLLOWS LEAD OF U.S. RECOVERY

The livestock sector can lead the agricultural economy to higher net farm income, assuming the farm economy benefits from a recovering general U.S. economy.

This analysis tops a 2010 baseline report prepared by the University of Missouri Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI). The 66-page report was delivered to the U.S. Congress on March 9. The 10-year baseline shows economic possibilities for livestock, crops and biofuels under certain assumptions.

Projected net farm income increases the next two years largely because of stronger livestock prices. Net farm income fell by more than \$30 billion in 2009, as sharp declines in cash receipts were not offset by modest drops in production costs.

Rising prices for meat, milk and other commodities contribute to higher food-price inflation this year. Corn producers can see strong returns per acre until the end of the 10-year baseline. The baseline shows a 3-million-acre projected increase in corn area in 2010 with more increases in later years.

For the full story, go to fapri.missouri.edu. —

Continued: Kansas World Trade Center