

COUNCIL MAJOR SPONSOR OF KANSAS JR. LIVESTOCK SHOW

Youth from across the state came to Wichita to compete for auction premiums and scholarships during the 77th Kansas Junior Livestock Show last month at the Kansas Coliseum. The largest youth livestock show in Kansas featured 744 4-H and FFA members from 83 counties exhibiting 1,268 head of livestock. Major sponsors of the show are the Kansas Livestock Association, Kansas State University and the Agri-Business Council of Wichita (ABCW). Pictured are ABCW



Board Members Chris Trumble and Jim Mock (seated) helping attendees sign up for a bidder number during the Beefeater BBQ Silent Auction. —

BUTLER COMMUNITY COLLEGE SEES HIGHER ENROLLMENT, WELCOMES AG STUDENTS

While Harvard University is struggling to keep its doors open, Kansas' own Butler Community College has seen a 15-percent jump in enrollment this fall.

Stacy Cofer, Chief Advancement Officer for Butler, says this is because many parents and students are finding value in the sound education offered by their local institution. Butler has always been a great value, at half the cost of a state university, while still being the 5th largest institution in Kansas.

This fall 9,555 students began classes on campus in El Dorado, while Cofer says she expects enrollment to reflect a similar increase for the spring 2010 semester. The economy has a lot to do with these numbers, she said.

"When the economy is soft, people retrain and that has a positive effect on enrollment," Cofer says. "Also, people are questioning the benefit of a university education when so many times we offer the same thing in two years time."

Butler's College of Agriculture offers associate degrees in agribusiness, agriculture, farm and ranch management and pre-veterinary and a certification, or one-year, as well as an associate degree in livestock management and merchandising. Its pre-vet program is the largest in the college, with many students transferring to Kansas State University and Oklahoma State University. There are 250 students in the College of Ag including associates and certification programs, which is double from five years ago.

"For a person wants to go back to family farm and doesn't have the intention to go beyond an associate degree, we offer livestock management and merchandising certificate, which is the same title as an associate but requires less time to complete," she says.

With nearly two-thirds of its students coming from Sedgwick County, Cofer says Butler is a well-kept secret. Nearly 80 percent of students work in addition to taking classes, and 39-percent are first generation students. Cofer says the institution takes pride on its small class size with a 17-to-1 student to teacher ratio.

Cofer says Butler is also a financially-smart institution in that it planned for the state's recent budget cut. The school's leadership made an adjustment last December, preparing for the 12-percent reduction in state funds. Even so, Cofer says she is proud Butler has kept up its student support, with

MEMBER PROFILE: HAW RANCH FEEDLOT II, LLC

As a member of the Agri-Business Council of Wichita (ABCW), David Lowe says it's important to be an ambassador of agriculture. As the general manager of Haw Ranch Feedlot II, LLC, Lowe realizes the significance of producing a safe, healthy beef product for consumers who don't understand where their beef comes from.



Lowe

Over time, he hopes the ABCW includes more members from the production agriculture segment.

"The Council has a strong contingent of bankers, lawyers and sales people but no farmers, swine producers or dairy people. If the council could attract those members it would bridge that gap between the rural and urban segment – the people who actually put food on the table and the people who consume that food."

Haw Ranch Feedlot II, LLC has been a member of the ABCW for three years and Lowe says he's made it a point to attend as many functions as possible, including the monthly membership luncheons and the 2007 BIONXT Conference. The feed yard is headquartered in Kansas City

scholarships for both activity and academic awards.

"For the 2009-2010 year, our foundation will give out \$300,000 in scholarship monies," she says. "We are trying to help everyone we can."

And a good many of them are young people on livestock judging scholarships. Butler Judging Coach Chris Mullinex recruits young people for his livestock teams from across the country. His record is significant, with 24 national All-Americans in five years and the only community college program in the nation to rank in the top ten in every national contest over the past ten years. Currently, the Butler Livestock Judging Team has the highest Grade Point Average of any activity group on campus.

"Many livestock judging kids are given an activity scholarship," Cofer says. "Private donors give money towards an agriculture scholarship and their disbursement might actually be funding more than one student."

For more information about Butler, contact Cofer at (316) 320-7312. —

FINANCIAL ANALYST SAYS HER AG BACKGROUND MADE HER CAREER

Carla Ott-Calvert says she learned to appreciate agriculture thanks to her family, a long line of Sedgwick County farmers. As the financial analyst for Ott Agronomics, Ott-Calvert now helps farmers and ranchers manage their most important information including USDA and crop insurance contracts, monthly financial and break-even analysis, commodity charting and financing requests.

"I have a lifelong interest in serving agriculture and am interested in the transition process between generations," Ott-Calvert says. "My passion is seeing future generations continue to enjoy productive rural areas and ensuring a valued product for consumers, both domestically and worldwide."

Ott-Calvert graduated from Kansas State University with a business degree, then worked for the Federal Land Bank apprentice program. She later served as a commercial lending officer in a variety of industries. Today, as manager of her own financial business, Ott-Calvert says she can help producers make timely and sound business decisions.

"Millions of landowners and producers contract each year with USDA and provide their planted acre information," she says. "Production agriculture itself requires significant capital investment and the ownership of various stakeholders. It is the primary responsibility of producers in our region to manage land, equipment, labor, seed, fertilizer and crop protection for maximum profitability and return."

Ott-Calvert serves on the Agri-Business Council of Wichita (ABCW) board of directors and has attended the organization's monthly lunches for three years running. She says she appreciates hearing from industry leaders on cutting-edge technology and industry trends and enjoys listening to high-profile speakers, like new Kansas State University President Kirk Schulz.

"The ABCW lunches provide an opportunity to explore changes in the industry and consumer demands and needs," she says. "We all seek good information that can be helpful to our businesses. I feel the Agri-Business Council can be a source of this information, allowing its members to network with others on current ag industry knowledge and experience." —

SENATE CLIMATE BILL INTRODUCED

A climate change bill recently introduced in the U.S. Senate lacks many of the provisions sought by farm groups to ensure growers could get paid for carbon-storing practices. The bill, proposed by Sens. Barbara Boxer, D-CA, and John Kerry, D-MA, would leave the decision of offsets oversight to the president, while the House-passed bill gives that authority to the Agriculture Department. The Senate draft also would establish a new independent Offsets Integrity Advisory Board to help the president determine what projects should be eligible and assure that they represent "verifiable, additional and permanent" reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.



Ott-Calvert

and the lots in Turon and Potwin feed up to 50,000 head of cattle.

Lowe says business of cattle-feeding has evolved during his 45 years in the industry, mostly due to consolidation and ownership. After graduating from Kansas State University, he returned to his family's farm in Republic County. Lowe became interested in the feedlot business, working for a commercial feed yard in Oakley, then moving to a Boone Pickens-owned feed yard in Tulia, TX.

He says there are as many feed lots today as there were in 1965 but they are now owned by fewer people. The same applies to the packing industry.

"In Tulia, sometimes we had 8 to 10 packers that called on us every week to purchase slaughter cattle," Lowe says. "Now there are essentially three and it's the same in the feedlot business, and to some degree the cow calf business. There are fewer ranchers controlling more cows and more acres all the time."

Cattle are also sold differently than when he first got started in the 60s. It used to be cattle were sold on a live basis, based on their weight, and ranchers and feed yards were paid per pound. Today, cattle are sold on a value-added basis, meaning the paycheck is issued on the percent of cattle that grade choice or have a low-yield grade – carcass merits versus live animal characteristics.

"The guess work is out of it now," he says. "Carcasses are valued and paid for based on what meat can be sold to the consumer."

Lowe says the issue of agriculture education is more important than ever, at a time when most American school children are not able to name where basic food items come from. He remembers a time when KFRM Radio Station Owner Kyle Bauer brought a busload of 5th and 6th graders from the Wichita area to the Potwin yard. Lowe says he offered commentary on the bus about the cattle as the children toured the feed yard. Then the kids were served a hamburger for lunch.

"It was always amazing to me that those kids had no idea that meat came from a steer or milk came from dairy," he says. "That is why Council is important because I'd almost

American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) has stated this Senate bill is a “step back” from the House bill on credits for farmers and AFBF expects the Senate Agriculture Committee will try to rewrite the credit provisions. There is doubt on Capitol Hill that the Boxer-Kerry bill will make it to a Senate vote this year and the measure is said to lack the 60 votes needed to avoid a filibuster.

The Senate’s version of climate change legislation seeks to achieve a 20-percent reduction of 2005 levels in carbon dioxide

emissions by 2020, compared to the 17-percent goal in the House bill. Both the House and Senate bills feature a long-term target of an 83-percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. This summer the U.S. House of Representatives passed a climate bill that would allow farmers and landowners to earn credits for measures that can remove or keep carbon out of the atmosphere. —

betcha if you asked Wichita residents, 50-percent of adults would not have any idea where food came from anymore than those kids. The ABCW can educate the general public – the consumer – on where their food comes from.” —

*This E-newsletter will be distributed monthly with information on upcoming events, activities and speakers.
For more info, E-mail james_mock@sbcglobal.net.*

