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Other Viewpoints

Small farmers show individuality beyond farm policy

Small farms are making a comeback in Kansas despite government ag policy that encourages mass production. This might be a testament to the American consumer, and Washington may want to pay attention.

U.S. Department of Agriculture data released last week showed the first increase in the number of farms since World War II.

In Kansas, the number of farms less than 500 acres increased by 7.5 percent since 2002. And the state added 700 farms of just 1 to 9 acres since 2002.

This is encouraging for rural Kansas. Anecdotally, some of these new farmers are urban people choosing to buy into the rural lifestyle, if only part-time or as a hobby.

The new farmers are not typically conventional wheat growers or cattle ranchers. Rather, they are niche farmers.

They might be like Keith Nafziger, a commercial airline pilot who raises grass-fed, heritage breeds of cattle and sheep on a small farm near Hillsboro.

Many small farmers grow produce for sale at the local farmers' markets. These new producers are evidence of consumers' growing interest in locally grown produce and grass-fed and organic meat.

Federal farm policy does not help such farmers. Instead, it subsidizes big agriculture to keep store food prices down by rewarding mass production. Taxpayer subsidies go to the biggest producers, not to small farmers.

That isn't an altogether bad policy. Cheap food is good.

But much of the decline of rural communities can be blamed on farm policy that drove family farms off the land.

At least some consumers are making a statement that they miss traditional, locally marketed agriculture. This is one more reason Congress should reform farm subsidies, if not end them altogether.

-The Hutchinson News, via The Associated Press.

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774 U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office

Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124



School budget cut less than other areas

The last week was all about wrapping up the 2009 budget negotiations with the Senate, so that we could move forward with 2010 and beyond.

While the cuts were tough to make, they are necessary to provide a long-term solution to the structural imbalance in the budget. Included below are the basic facts of the 2009 rescission bill. The Senate passed the bill and the governor should have it this week. She MAY choose to line-item veto portions of it.

House Sub for Sub for SB 23 as Agreed to by the House and Senate Conferees and passing in both chambers:

• Makes \$325 million in revenue and expenditure adjustments for the remainder of the 2009 Fiscal Year, including \$201 million in expenditure adjustments.

• Makes across-the-board reduction state General Fund spending for all agencies of \$27.8 million, or 1.25 percent, excluding debt service, public schools and human services caseloads. Reduces all non-general fund agencies by 3.0 percent

• Reduces K-12 public schools 1.0 percent (this is in addition to the governor's freeze, which has an estimated growth impact of \$17.7 fund in FY 2011 instead of the governor's plan



million). This equates to overall reduction of \$66 dollars per pupil to the base state-aid formula and includes a 1 percent cut to special education.

Public schools are 51 percent of our total state budget, take a 3 percent smaller cut than any other area of state spending.

• Transfer 50 percent of the "M&E slider" on March 2 to counties, paying out the remaining 50 percent on June 1.

• The plan provides \$2 million in additional money for the physically disabled waivers and creates a rolling waiting list. People with disabilities can be replaced as they heal and move off the list. The governor recommended a freeze of the wait lists.

• Repays the special city-county highway

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to stop payment.

• Does not include the majority of the "fee Jim Morrison sweeps" from non-general-fund agencies as proposed by the governor.

• Transfers \$2.9 million from the general fund to the Wichita Center for Graduate Medical Education Special Revenue Fund to provide additional residency slots for the program in Wichita.

• Restores \$2 million in Economic Development Initiatives Fund to Kansas Inc. and the Kansas Technology Enterprise Corp.

• The conference committee reversed a decision to reduce the Children's Initiatives Fund by 4.0 percent or \$3.1 million.

• Limits transfers from the General Fund to the Health Care Stabilization Fund to \$2.8 million, or 6.5 percent less than the estimated FY 2009 transfer.

I really appreciate serving you in the 121st District and Kansas in general. My apologies to those I was unable to meet with on noon Thursday and a couple of evenings last week, but I just was unable to get to the meetings. I have a LOT of issues I'm working to help my district and just ran out of time.

Creationism is 'good science'

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To the Editor:

Information in the newspaper article titled "Expert to Talk on Evolution" in the Jan. 15 Colby Free Press was misleading and wrong in at least two areas.

The first statement was, "How can we redefine the discussion to embrace a society that desperately needs science, but respects religion?" and, "we have witnessed a growing anti-science movement that is undercutting the ability of educators and scientists to prepare our children to compete."

To suggest that creationists are anti-science is blatantly wrong. Creationists are not antiscience. I have education in biology, botany, zoology, geology, dendrology, entomology and chemistry, and for the most part do not have any conflict with any of these fields.

I know creation scientists and have read works of creation scientists in medicine, astrophysics, astronomy, organic chemistry, molecular biology and geology. Many of these

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Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses not pertaining to a public issue.

Before an election, letters (other than responses by a candidate) will not be published after the Thursday before the polls open.

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have one or more doctorates. You do not need an evolutionary bent to work in any of these fields. To say creationists are "anti-evolutionist" is one thing, but to say they are "anti-science" is flat out wrong.

The second point is the statement, "Dr. Kieft says he has never found a conflict between his faith and evolution theory." He may be a Christian, and I know several Christian evolutionists who make the same claim, but I would challenge each of them with several questions.

The first is, "Do you believe the Bible or just give it lip service?" The Bible's clear teaching is creation as God outlined. Evolution calls the Bible into question.

The second question is, "Do you believe in the Christ of the Bible or some other Christ?" The Bible tells us that in the last days there will be many christs. The Christ of the Bible believed wholeheartedly in creation and spoke of a literal Adam. He created them. Do you believe Him or one of the many other christs?

To call into question God's creative abilities is a challenge to God's authority and a slap in Jesus' face. Some do this unintentionally, myself included, until we learn God's Word more fully. Others, knowing what God's Word says, persist in denying its clear teaching. This is dangerous ground to be on.

The Apostle Paul challenged us to test ourselves to see if we are in the faith. When one opposes God, it really brings up the question,

"Am I in the faith or believing in something else?" This is a question that seriously needs to be thought through, for it has eternal consequences. Many professing Christians will stand before God on Judgment Day and He will say, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers."

A final point is that the evolutionist and the creationist look at exactly the same evidence. The difference is in our presuppositions concerning origins. We come to different conclusions in those areas. I was raised up in evolutionary thinking but in time, I rejected it. Why?

After studying creationist research, I found the creation model to have superior arguments and defense of our origins. What you believe is up to you. I believe truth will reveal itself. This is done through careful research, study and analysis and not through denigrating remarks, false implications and misrepresentations of those with differing views.

I attended Dr. Kiett's lecture and found that every point he made had one or more very good objective creationist counterpoints. For those interested in further study, I would suggest the Institute for Creation Research website at www.icr.org and the Answers in Genesis website at www.answersingenesis.org.

Larry D. Dilts, Colby

Cash helps economy

To the Editor,

The conversation coming out of Washington concerning stimulating the economy emphasizes putting cash in the hands of the people. We wonder how much our Kansas economy would have profited if the 60,000 Kansas public retirees had received a cost-of-living increase these past 10 years.

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