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Farm subsidies are on the table

If everything is now on the table for federal budget cuts, that includes payments to those who put food on our tables.

The deficit debate could be a turning point for Kansas lawmakers on Capitol Hill, who've long seen agricultural subsidies as essential to protect the nation's farm families and food production.

"To get serious about the debt is to tackle entitlement reform, and that includes the farm bill," Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., recently told the Agribusiness Club of Washington.

Just as he was as chairman of the House Agriculture Committee for the 1996 farm bill, Roberts will be a key player in writing the 2012 farm bill (his seventh as a lawmaker) – now as ranking Republican on the Senate Agriculture Committee.

He and Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., and their GOP colleagues in the House will have to balance their zeal for deficit reduction with their duty to help rural constituents who've relied on subsidies to make ends meet.

A farmer himself, Rep. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler, is in an especially interesting position on the issue.

Huelskamp's "Big First" district ranked second in the country, behind only North Dakota's single district, in total federal agricultural subsidies in 2009, collecting \$368 million, according to the Environmental Working Group. Kansas ranked fifth among states that year, drawing \$912 million.

Though candidate Huelskamp was supported by the antisubsidy Club for Growth, he told The Eagle last summer he thought the amount of farm subsidies was OK as it was.

But Huelskamp drew attention for telling a Salina audience recently: "Farmers are going to have to make the argument, to Head Start folks and others, that their subsidies are worth borrowing 42 cents for every dollar spent." (One farmer in the audience was ready to see them go, saying "the Constitution doesn't say anything about farm subsidies.")

For his part, Rep. Mike Pompeo, R-Wichita, ran for his job by talking about using lower tax rates, less regulation and other policies to transition away from farm subsidies.

And like all but four Republicans in the House, Pompeo and Huelskamp voted earlier in April for the "Path to Prosperity" proposal of House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, R-Wis. That austere blueprint calls for \$177 billion in cuts to agricultural programs over the next decade, including \$30 billion from direct payments and crop insurance. Ryan would have payments to farmers reflect high commodity prices and reform federal support for crop insurance in a way that asks producers to assume and manage risk.

"'The Path to Prosperity' recognizes that there are no sacred cows in Washington," Huelskamp recently told the Hutchinson News when asked about farm subsidies.

He also said: "As we prepare for consideration of the 2012 farm bill, I welcome the input of Kansans who might be affected by this legislation. The more information we have, the better."

The question then will become what lawmakers do with the



Take hints when sending applications

I have discovered several things while going through dozens of resumes, attempting to fill a couple of reporting jobs.

But the first thing I learned was that everyone has the same name for their resume. They call it "resume." All of them.

Not "Bill's resume," or "Smith resume." Just resume.

There's some variety. Some are "resume. pdf," others "resume.doc." People with a new computer will send "resume.docx," showing it came from the latest, supposedly greatest version of Microsoft Word. I've even seen "resume.ppd," which came in the form of a PowerPoint slide show.

And all I wanted to know is where the candidate went to school and where he or she has been working and how long.

I realize that when someone writes up a resume, it's probably the only file in their computer by that name. But most of the people I'm looking at are college graduates, or at least upperclassmen.

Don't they know how many files by that name I'm going to get?

With one national ad, I'll get 20 to 30 applications. Often the file "resume" is accompanied by one called "letter," or sometimes "cover letter." It's hard to sort those, too.

The first thing I want to look at is a college



such as English. The first thing I have to do, however, is rename the darned resume.

Put your name in the file name, people! You're all individuals. Don't make me work. Next, I want to know where the candidate has worked - and how long. If he's changed jobs every nine months, I figure something is wrong, either with him or his choice of jobs.

A candidate who stays at least two years looks a lot more stable, and it doesn't hurt to have four or five in at least one place.

Ambition and a desire to move up are good, but beware of the candidate who proposes moving down. They're seldom happy with the move.

Salary expectations can be out of synch. The gal who wants \$35,000 to do a \$25,000 job won't be happy, even if the boss can pony up the big check. Yet people apply for any job sometimes, any job at all.

education in journalism or something related, jungle tells me there are a lot of kids out there reading a good book or casting a fly.

who want to be newspaper men and women. They burn with a passion for the job that's inspiring.

The pay isn't what it should be, but it never has been. Our business, like many, calls people for reasons that transcend pay.

And many of them can even write.

There's another thing about resumes. Beware the fancy writer who uses a lot of adjectives to describe her abilities. She should be writing menus, not news stories. News stories depend on detail and tight writing, not \$10 adjectives and \$15 adverbs.

They should teach that in college.

Short is good. They should teach that, too. A page, maybe a page and a half for a resume. Half a page for the letter.

And God help the applicant who misspells words in the resume. That's a deal breaker. Get someone to proof your stuff before you apply.

Then, give the letter and the resume your name, not just something generic.

Some poor sap is out there, sorting files in the e-mail bin. He needs to be able to tell yours from the rest of the stack.

Give him a break. Show him you're a cut above the generic mob.

Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West News-The good news is, my slogging through this papers. When he has the time, he'd rather be

feedback, how deeply they cut – and whether a nation with fewer farm subsidies and freer markets can still have affordable and plentiful food.

- The Wichita Eagle, via The Associated Press

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It's time to address America's credit

In mid-April, Standard & Poor's, a financial rating service, announced that it was cutting its outlook on the U.S. government's ability to repay loans from "stable" to "negative," increasing the likelihood of a potential downgrade of America's credit rating.

This should be a dire wake-up call to Washington that now is the time to address federal red ink. For all of America's greatness, it is embarrassing that the United States may become a credit risk.

As I travel across Kansas, I hear stories about how constituents have had to tighten their belts during these trying economic times.

It perplexes me how some in Washington think that despite what average Americans are doing, the federal government can just continue business as usual: spending, spending and more spending, with little regard to the bills and past-due statements collecting dust on the counter. I wonder how and why it is possible for Washington to be so blind to what has been referred to as the most predictable economic crisis in American history: the day foreign countries decide to stop lending to the United States and start sending out collection agents.

By taking on more and more debt, the U.S. is putting itself in a dangerous position. We are embarking on "The Great American Bailout."



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When I was a child in 1970, foreign countries held 5 percent of the country's \$283 billion in debt. When I was a young adult in 1990, other nations held 19 percent of the country's \$2.4 trillion debt. As of last year, nearly one-half (47 percent) of all of the country's \$8.4 trillion debt was held by foreign countries.

Washington is putting America at the behest of other nations; to allow so much debt compromises our sovereignty, our world status and our economic freedom and liberty.

The United States government is saddled with more than \$14 trillion in debt, and in the upcoming few weeks, Congress will be asked to expand our nation's credit limit.

As I have written before, the only way I could support another debt ceiling increase would be if there is a meaningful compromise that makes substantial cuts to the deficit.

One option I have suggested is a balanced

budget amendment, which the states would have to ratify. States have to balance their budgets, and so too should Washington.

This goes beyond the balance sheet. Not only does excessive spending expand our deficits and add to our federal debt, but it creates a climate of uncertainty for those who have the resources to turn our economy around.

Job creators shy away from hiring new employees when higher taxes and more regulation to pay off the debt are just around the corner. Investors shy away from providing capital to entrepreneurs (who subsequently create jobs) when they are vilified and penalized through the U.S. tax system and asked to assume an ever-larger share of the debt burden.

America used to be a shining example of prosperity. However, now Washington is putting Uncle Sam in a position where he is embarrassed to show his face at the bank - or to take the calls from the collection agencies.

We cannot afford for Washington to hit the snooze button one more time. Let's hope this is the final wake-up call overspenders and excessive borrowers need before realizing that they have put America in a compromised position.

Tim Huelskamp is the congressman from Kansas' 1st District, serving his first term.

Where to write, call

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U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, Russell Senate Office Building, Courtyard 4, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 224-6521. Fax (202) 225-5124 moran.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax

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