Farm bill founded in days of the exodus

By Amy Bickel
Harris News Service

Earl Hayes was just a 17-year-old kid in 1933, working on his family's Stafford County farm for 25 cents a week amid the Great Depression.

Now 92, Hayes easily recalls those days, and remembers spending his wages in one night on 10-cent-a-gallon gas and 10-cent movie tickets before heading to the pool hall to blow the rest.

"I'd go home broke," he said, noting his weekly situation on a Saturday night signaled what most in the farm sector experienced at the time.

It was around that same period that Hayes and his father had wheat on the ground at 30 cents a bushel during the June harvest, then picked it up and took it to the elevator for 25 cents a bushel. The younger Hayes watched as banks and mortgage companies foreclosed on one local farm after another.

"Times were tough," said Hayes, who recently moved from his Zenith-area farmstead to a senior apartment. "You could buy farms at a bargain price."

It was a time of mass exodus from rural America. Hundreds of thousands of farms went out of business. Drought and dust storms hurt income, with the average farm household making half or less than nonfarm households.

Commodity prices plummeted due to a surplus of crops. Some farmers found it more profitable to burn corn for fuel than sell it at 10 cents a bushel.

Hayes said there were two banks in Stafford, and the one his parents had their money in went belly up.

Then, Franklin Roosevelt became president, Hayes said, and his administration's New Deal programs were aimed at saving America's farms and rural areas. The plan helped farmers recover from the economic collapse of the nation's heartland.

"He started putting his loving arms around the farm people because he knew they were important," Hayes said of Roosevelt. "He brought around some farm action."

Nearly 75 years later

But when Roosevelt signed the first farm policy into law in May 1933, he promised it would be a temporary measure.

Yet more than 70 years later, the plan — though tinkered with over the years — still is in place, and many farmers remain dependent on subsidies to aid their farm income amid a tough farm economy that includes high fertilizer and fuel costs.

This year, the farm bill debate continues as Congress works on its latest measure — expected to pass sometime this fall. But it's a different era than Roosevelt's New Deal period, or even a decade ago.

Most Americans are far removed from the land that sustains them, unlike the 1930s when 25 percent of the U.S. population lived on farms. Today, that figure is less than 2 percent.

The top two priorities for Roosevelt's administration were to save "the family farm and help rural America," said Troy Dumler, Kansas State University agriculture economist.

But one question looms for an industry where there are fewer producers farming the same amount of land: Does a program started amid the Great Depression still help those it was intended to help?

"That's the million dollar question, you can basically argue both sides of that," Dumler said. "Some say it helps a lot. Others say not much."

A new New Deal

The government stepped in when successful farmers started losing their farms during the Great Depression. Programs established target prices for certain commodity crops, such as corn, wheat, cotton and rice. The program included payments for taking land out of production, as well as conservation efforts, said Donald Worster, a University of Kansas professor who wrote "Dust Bowl, The Southern Plains in the 1930s."

Roosevelt saw the farm bill as a temporary measure to help boost farm income, Worster said.

"But it became quite permanent. Farmers became part of a welfare state. And for some people, it has meant a lot of money."

See FARM, Page 12.
FARM
Continued from Page 1.

The government has spent $167 billion on farm programs in the last decade, he said, noting the farm bill of the 21st century is no longer a poverty program.

"If you want to combat rural poverty, you give the money to the poorest," Worster said. "But the subsidies today are going to a relatively small handful of people. They tend to be the richest farmers."

Policy opponents, including the Environmental Working Group — an advocacy group that tracks farm payments — argue that subsidies aren't helping the rural communities or the small family farmers that the first farm policy intended.

Still, farm bill leaders, such as Rep. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., say the policy means a lot to a state like Kansas that ranks No. 1 for wheat and grain sorghum production, 10th for soybeans and seventh for corn.

"(It) is more than just about Kansas farmers and ranchers," Moran told reporters in June during a House subcommittee hearing on the farm bill. "This is about whether or not we have people who populate our state, who live in our smaller communities and whether we have kids in our school systems."

A different era

About a dozen farm bills have been passed since the creation of the first farm policy during the Roosevelt administration.

Every five to seven years, agricultural policies are evaluated and reauthorized through the federal farm bill. The last passed in 2002.

Those bills have added everything from a food stamp program — a move aimed at gaining urban support of farm programs — to a conservation reserve acres program, which pays farmers to turn cropland to grassland, Dumler said. The commodity title of the bill includes 20 different commodities.

The 1996 bill, known as Freedom to Farm and largely authored by Kansas Sen. Pat Roberts, was written with an eye to expand agriculture trade and reform U.S. farm policy to comply with the World Trade Orga-
Police search for possible serial rapist

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANHATTAN — Police are on the hunt for a man they say has raped seven college-age women near Kansas State University over the past seven years, the latest attack coming last month.

The man, they say, always wears long-sleeve shirts and dark-colored gloves and covers all but his eyes with a mask. Because of the mask, police don't have a composite sketch of the suspect and few leads to track down.

That uncertainty has ratcheted up the fear in the college community with parents pressuring law enforcement for more information and professors scheduling crime prevention presentations.

"Whenever there is an attack by this guy, we get lots of calls," said Mary Todd, director of the university's Women's Center. "Calls from people concerned about their safety."

Police have continued to provide female students with tips on how to stay safe, such as never walking alone and keeping doors and windows locked. They say they want students to avoid becoming the victim of all sorts of criminals.

"If someone is able to protect themselves from the opportunist rapist, you can protect yourself against the serial rapist," said Capt. John Doehling of the Riley County Police Department, which covers Manhattan.

"Yes, we believe there is one guy doing this. But if it was seven different persons committing these crimes over the course of seven years, people would still need to be concerned."

Studies show the bulk of rapes in a college setting are committed by people who know their victims, either as acquaintances or as a date. But two University of Kansas doctoral students said their research showed women were more afraid of rapes committed by strangers, even though they believed they were more likely to be raped by an acquaintance.

Officials are urging parents to talk to their daughters and make sure they keep the doors and windows to their apartments closed and locked, even during the day.

Female students are also using Wildcat Walk, a service that provides escorts across campus at night. Wildcats Against Rape signed up a record number of new members this semester, about 100 people, compared to the usual 40.

"I think it's great people are concerned and it's great people want to get involved," said Abby Heral, a senior from Pratt and president of the group.

"But I think it's really sad that it has to happen again for people to pay attention to it... This has gone on for years."

Investigators said they believe the rapist got his start in October 2000 when he tried to rape a woman but ran off after a struggle.

His first successful attack came a year later in August 2001, but it wasn't until 2004 or 2005, after at least a fourth rape, that police determined they may be related.

The attacker is described as a man 5 feet 10 inches tall, about 200 to 220 pounds and wears long-sleeve shirts, pants and boots.

Investigators said the man tended to do and say the same things during the attacks, better proof of a single assailant, but they aren't saying what those actions are.

"Those are details that are known to him, the victims and a few of us," said Doehling. "Those are things we need to keep under our hats... If you have information that he's a one-armed man, we'd be putting that out there. That's a pretty good clue. That's something to look for.

"But here, we're talking about methods and tactics."

The victims range in age from 18 to 25 and have lived within a mile or two of each other in the small town. Five of them were attacked between May and September, although one attack was in March and another in December.

At least five victims lived in apartments while another lived in a single-family home. Police won't say how to gains entry.

"We don't want to say for sure," said Riley County Police Lt. Kurt Moldrup. "But in some instances, the victims are not real sure (how the assailant got inside)."

Investigators are also mum on whether they have DNA or other evidence collected at the crime scenes.

They have brought in the FBI to help profile the attacker, although they avoid calling him a serial rapist.

Without an arrest, police said they won't know for certain if one man is committing all the assaults.

"We can't say definitively how this person is casing the victims," Doehling said. "We don't know how much time's spent on that."

While investigators have few details to share, some in
town feel the incidents need to be discussed more to raise awareness and make sure students are protecting themselves.

“When we have a heinous crime happening, let’s talk about it,” said Todd, of the Women’s Center. “I know there’s a line.

“Police want a good investigation so the guy is caught as soon as possible and there’s good prosecution after that.

“But that’s one side of the line. Public safety is on the other.”

Todd said she’s talked with at least two of the victims and they have voiced their concerns that there’s been little news about the attacks.

Heraud said she and other members of Wildcats Against Rape have tried to raise awareness that sexual assaults happen to women all the time, as well as the string of attacks over the past seven years.

“A lot of incoming freshmen don’t know there’s a serial rapist,” she said. “I feel there should be more information.”

Doehling said the goal of law enforcement is prevention, making sure students know how to keep themselves safe.

Information from: The Kansas City Star,
http://www.kcstar.com
BRIEFLY

Greensburg band in Lawrence

LAWRENCE — The Greensburg High School Band will participate Sept. 8 in the 60th annual Band Day at The University of Kansas. Mike Brummett, who directs the Greensburg and the Bucklin high school bands, traditionally brings both groups to Band Day and is doing so again this year.
KU student robbed

LAWRENCE — A University of Kansas student was hit in the face and robbed as he walked on campus early Thursday, KU police said Friday.

The victim said he was walking on the sidewalk in the wooded area east of the Campanile at about 1 a.m. The two assailants left the area in an unknown direction with the victim’s wallet.

The suspects were described as two black men. Both were about 5-foot-10 and weighed between 150 and 200 pounds.
Ideas sought for riverfront

Public workshop will follow up productive May suggestion time

By Mike Hall
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Riverside development isn’t a spectator sport.

The Topeka chapter of the American Institute of Architects wants as many people as possible to get into the game.

Zack Sneeden, chairman of the AIA’s “Topeka 150” project, said members have been traveling to schools to encourage students to come up with ideas.

On Sept. 9, the group will conduct a public workshop from 2 to 4:30 p.m. in the East Gallery Room of the Great Overland Station, 701 N. Kansas Ave. Any member of the public wanting to participate in the process is encouraged to attend.

Sneeden said a brainstorming session conducted in May generated dozens of ideas. Many were duplicates. For example, a number of people suggested an amphitheater or concert space. Two people suggested a dog park, and one suggested a dog bakery.

“These ideas ranged from family-friendly parks for community events to historic destinations that feature Topeka’s rich history to a vibrant shopping and dining destination for northeast Kansas,” he said.

To encourage participation, the AIA has created a competition with more than $4,000 in prizes for the best ideas. The categories for the competition are grades K-6, grades 7-12 and college level. The deadline for entries is Oct. 15.

“At the college level, we have been working with two design studios at Kansas State University and one at Kansas University to integrate the riverfront design competition into their semester curriculum,” Sneeden said.

He said interest has been shown even by a professor from upstate New York and from a few students around the world.

He said details of the competition are available at a Web site, www.reclaimourriver-topeka.org.

Sneeden said meeting with local elementary, middle and high school groups has been particularly rewarding.

“It’s really amazing to hear some of their ideas,” he said. “One of my favorite ideas — one student suggested an aquarium where you walk under the water and see the natural habitat of the river.”

That came out of a meeting between the architects and students at Auburn-Washburn Middle School drafting classes.

“Their teacher, Mr. Poore, will be working with them over the next few weeks to develop ideas for the competition,” he said.

Sneeden said the purpose of the Sept. 9 workshop will be to discuss the viability of some of the ideas already generated and to begin working toward a plan for a “sustainable” development.

The elements of a sustainable plan he said, are circulation and access to the development areas and within the development, mixed use districts “green” designs and facilities, public infrastructure, open park space landmarks and other references to the city’s history.

Mike Hall can be reached at (785) 295-1209 or mike.hall@cjonline.com.
DOWN BY THE RIVER

Here are some of the ideas generated for the proposed riverfront development:

- Amusement park
- Art fairs and art galleries
- Boating (requiring a stable water level in that portion of the river)
- A foot bridge, ferry or aerial tram to connect the north and south sides of the river
- Mini railroad or monorail
- Clubs and restaurants (no chains)
- Dancing water fountain linked to music
- Farmers’ market
- Restaurants on stilts out from the levee
- Gardens
- Boutique shopping areas
- IMAX theater
- Hot-air balloon landing
- Loft apartments
University of Kansas football fans walk down Campanile Hill through construction Saturday to enter Memorial Stadium.

KU fans happy to see progress

By Kevin Haske<br>THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

LAWRENCE — The mounds of dirt obstructing the view of Memorial Stadium are far from picturesque along Campanile Hill.

But Kansas football fans tailgating among earth-moving equipment and makeshift walkways seem to understand.

Glancing toward the stadium from inside her tent Saturday prior to the Jayhawks' season-opening win against Central Michigan, Anne Jones put the construction in perspective.

"The dirt is just a sign of progress," the fan from Overland Park said.

It is progress some contend has taken too long.

The construction of a $31 million football complex linked to the southwest corner of the stadium will only help KU compete more favorably in the raging arms race of college sports facilities. In turn, Jayhawk football is expected to benefit when the complex opens in 2008.

"You can't put a price tag on it, because now KU will be on equal footing," said another fan, Mike Lewis of Augusta. "When you go to K-State and MU, two schools we compete heavily against for recruits, which one of three is behind as far as facilities? It's been us.

"One year's inconvenience doesn't seem like an inconvenience when you think what could happen five years down the road."

Fans entering the stadium down the hill followed one makeshift lane created through the construction. Roughly 30 minutes before kickoff, the steady stream was impressive.

"Look at the people. It's awesome," KU athletic director Lew Perkins said, watching the flow from the press box. "So far, we haven't heard anything from anyone about being bothered by the construction. But it's like anything else: If you win, it's nothing. Lose and you'll get e-mails."
Making the grade

Sen. Sam Brownback already has faced his first big test, the Iowa straw poll, in his quest for the presidency. With the primaries just a few months away, we asked three political science professors to grade his performance so far.
**S.E. 4th and Branner construction nearing completion**

**Question:** What is the project going on with the traffic lights at S.E. 4th St. and its intersection with Branner Trafficway? I think I remember there was talk of replacing the lights with a roundabout.

--- N.D., Topeka.

**Answer:** The work there should be completed very soon, said David Bevens, spokesman for the city of Topeka.

"The roundabout has been eliminated for that intersection and traffic there does not warrant stop lights on all four corners," he said. "The stop lights have been disconnected and bagged and will be removed soon."

--- Dick King

Two stop signs will be placed to control east and west traffic through the intersection and that will be the extent of the traffic control there, Bevens added.

**Question:** I have an antique doll whose arms and legs have fallen off. Do you know someone who can reattach them?

--- L.M., Topeka.

**Answer:** Two women who specialize in working with dolls said they probably can do it, but would need to look at the doll.

You can call Jean at the Antique Doll House at 286-3214 or Jana at Jana's Doll House at 383-5639.

**Question:** Some years ago, I donated audio equipment for a fundraiser at The University of Kansas where the money provided talking records for the handicapped. I lost the name and means for reaching the group with some more donations. Can you help?

--- N.L., Topeka.

**Answer:** You probably are thinking of the annual sale to benefit Audio-Reader, a public service of the university, said Lori Kesinger, program director for the group.

"We accept virtually anything in the audio field, including CDs and players, records, stereos and speakers, turntables, receivers, books on tape, musical instruments, home theater systems and such," she said.

The group also provides a pick-up and delivery service for big items or collections.

"Since we are a nonprofit group, donors can claim tax donations," she said.

Those interested may call (800) 772-8898.

Kesinger said this fall's sale will be from 6 to 9 p.m. Sept. 21 and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 22 at the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Lawrence.

**More about Topeka radio stations:** KTOP-AM began operating in July 1947, said a former employee who called after a date of 1948 appeared in an answer to a reader’s question last week.

If you have a question for retired Capital-Journal newsman Dick King, call 295-5610 and leave a message, or write to Dick King, The Topeka Capital-Journal, 616 S.E. Jefferson, Topeka 66607.

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County: Shawnee

32729-09-02_2002
Advice: Don’t judge a book by its cover

Though they may seem to be strange bedfellows, there’s a long history of interaction between religion and psychology. William James, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Karl Menninger all wrote works about religion.

Although not of their caliber, University of Kansas professor Robert N. Minor’s “When Religion is an Addiction” is a timely, provocative book about the phenomenon of religiously based politics, specifically right-wing politics.

Minor opens his book with this observation: “You’d have to be living on another planet in a galaxy far, far away to miss the influence of the religious, specifically Christian, right-wing in the U.S. today. They’ve made themselves difficult to ignore.”

Central to his thesis is the contention these individuals become addicted to this particular form of religious practice. He writes, “Religion for this influential group is like a mood-altering substance upon which they’ve become increasingly dependent.” Using the methods and practices of addiction counselors, Minor makes a detailed case for his opinion that religion can be addictive.

Although this isn’t an academic book, there are times that more documentation would’ve helped his analysis. He mentions scientific studies on how the brain can respond to what he calls addictive processes in Chapter 2. However, he doesn’t provide any additional information on these studies.

Minor also could’ve been clearer about the differences between addictive and non-addictive religions. He makes the following observation about religious conversions: “What’s been called conversion or being ‘born again’ actually can be a substitution of one addiction for another.”

I don’t think Minor is arguing that all religious conversion is a symptom of addictive religion, but this needs to be more explicitly stated.

In fact, much of this clarification occurs in the concluding chapter, where Minor quotes Baptist minister Charles Kimball on the warning signs of the corruption of religion. I wish Minor had put this material at the beginning and not the end of this work.

Similarly, I think his admission that, “in fact, people on any place along the religious belief spectrum from the theological right to the theological left can use religion addictively” belongs in the introduction, too.

Minor quotes scholars who argue that St. Paul might have been a closeted homosexual and St. Augustine suffered from sexual addiction. These positions are certainly debatable. What’s undeniable is that questions about sexuality and sexual practice are central to orthodox Christian theology.

My major argument with Minor’s book is determining who is and who isn’t a religion addict. While I might agree with the framework he cites, this is still an external observation. How can academics or scientists know the inner motivations of individuals? This is where I think work still needs to be done.

Nevertheless, I do think this work will prove useful to anyone interested in trying to come to terms with the now seemingly insepurable bond between right-wing religion and American politics.

Nicolas Shump is a doctoral student in American studies at The University of Kansas. He can be reached at Nicos225@sunflower.com.
Students in the news

LAWRENCE — Sororities at the University of Kansas pledged 567 women during fall formal recruitment, the KU Panhellenic Association has announced.

The number represents an increase from 2006 fall recruitment when 550 students affiliated with sororities.

More than 750 women took part in recruitment, and all 13 of KU’s Panhellenic Association sororities added new members, said Laura Bauer, program director for Fraternity and Sorority Life. Membership bids were extended to women who completed the recruitment process.

Bauer said this year the Panhellenic Association implemented an online recruitment tool, Campus Director, which allowed women to create an account and register online for recruitment. The new system also allowed the recruitment counselors and sorority chapters to perform all of their data entry and new member updates online.

In addition to the 13 groups with Panhellenic Association affiliation, two sororities with student chapters at KU are members of National Pan-Hellenic Council.

They hold invitational activities throughout the fall semester, and their new members’ names are announced in the spring. These sororities are Alpha Kappa Alpha and Zeta Phi Beta. Sigma Lambda Gamma is a member of the National Association for Latino Fraternal Organizations and also will hold informational meetings throughout the fall semester.

Sororities that are part of KU’s Panhellenic Association are Alpha Chi Omega, Alpha Delta Pi, Alpha Gamma Delta, Chi Omega, Delta Delta Delta, Delta Gamma, Gamma Phi Beta, Kappa Alpha Theta, Kappa Delta, Kappa Kappa Gamma, Pi Beta Phi, Sigma Delta Tau and Sigma Kappa.

Sara Jean Sommer, daughter of Susan and Joe Sommer of Fredonia, a freshman majoring in pre-medicine, pledged Alpha Delta Pi.