

Monthly Briefing

A Summary of the Alliance's Recent and Upcoming Activities and Important Water News

Alliance Engages in DC Forum On EPA Rulemaking Impacts to Farmers

The Family Farm Alliance (Alliance) on September 29th outlined growing concerns Western farmers and ranchers have regarding recent rule-making efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) before Republican lawmakers in Washington, D.C. Norm Semanko, the executive director of the Idaho Water Users Association and a long-time member of the Alliance's Advisory Committee, represented the Alliance and the National Water Resources Association before a forum entitled "The EPA's Assault on Rural America: How New Regulations and Proposed Legislation are Stifling Job Creation and Economic Growth." The forum was hosted by U.S. Representatives Frank Lucas (R-OK), Sam Graves (R-MO), and Doc Hastings (R-WA), Co-Chairs of the Rural America Solutions Group.

Semanko and other experts from across the country traveled to Washington to discuss EPA regulations and provide real-life examples of how these regulations and related legislation have



Alliance Advisory Committee Member Norm Semanko, Executive Director of the Idaho Water Users Association. Source: Rose Law Group

affected their work, families, and communities. The Co-Chairs lead a panel discussion on a range of EPA proposals and related legislation, including carbon dioxide restrictions, the Clean Water Act, farm dust regulations, hydraulic fracturing and more.

In addition to Semanko, representatives from the Center for Energy Economics and Public Policy at the University of Wyoming's College of Business, the National Sorghum Producers, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the U.S. Coal Corporation, Lincoln Paper and Tissue, and the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation offered testimony and answered questions during the forum.

Senator James Inhofe (OKLAHOMA) and fifteen Members of the House of Representatives were present at the forum.

"Every day, the EPA seems to demonstrate how vastly disconnected it is to the folks who feed us," said Representative Lucas, Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committee. "The EPA has become an agency gone wild, creating regulations and policies that are burdensome, overreaching, and that negatively affect jobs and rural economies. If the EPA is allowed to continue down this path, the only choice for many farmers and ranchers will be to stop farming altogether."

"Small businesses are the engines of job creation in America, creating seven out of every ten private sector jobs in

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A copy of Norm Semanko's written testimony can be downloaded and printed from the Family Farm Alliance website: www.familyfarmalliance.org

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Alliance, Rural Interests Focus on EPA Regs (cont'd from Pg. 1)

recent years. Now more than ever, the American people need the kinds of jobs that are created by our small businesses,” said Representative Graves, Ranking Member of the House Small Business Committee. “Unfortunately, more government regulations could devastate small businesses nationwide by raising the cost of doing business and forcing employers to cut salaries and slash hiring. In the rural communities, where double-digit unemployment has become the norm and the fight for employment is already fierce, more job-killing regulations would be nothing short of catastrophic. Today’s forum provided us the opportunity to explore the very real impact current and proposed regulations have on our families and businesses. I hope the Administration is listening.”

Semanko told forum participants that Western water users are becoming increasingly concerned about the number of environmental regulations and policies that are currently being

rewritten or reconsidered by the Obama Administration.

“Recent rulemaking efforts at EPA and the White House Council on Environmental Quality carry the risk of real potential harm for Western irrigators and the rural communities that they serve,” he testified.

Semanko outlined several actions taken by EPA in the past year which have catalyzed these concerns:

- In June 2010 EPA released its draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System general permit for point source discharges from the application of pesticides in, near or above waters of the U.S. EPA intends to finalize the Pesticide General Permit in December and implement it by the April 9, 2011 deadline set by the court. This EPA permit, and similar permits required in all

delegated states, will adversely impact pest and weed control activities throughout the U.S.

- Earlier this year, EPA released its draft Strategic Plan for 2011-2016, which strongly indicates that EPA will attempt to take control of watershed and water planning activities from the states, place more emphasis on regulating greenhouse gases, setting nutrient standards for water bodies, environmental cleanup, chemical regulation, and enforcing environmental laws through “vigorous and targeted civil and criminal enforcement” actions.



Although the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), numerous Colorado communities and the Governor of Colorado support the expansion of existing storage space in Chatfield Reservoir near Denver, EPA regional staff denied the proposal.

Source: USACE Digital Visual Library

- The Central Arizona Project awaits a critical decision from EPA on emissions upgrades that may be mandated for the Navajo Generating Station (NGS). The emission requirements being considered by EPA are intended to satisfy unique visibility criteria – driven in part by the proximity of NGS to Grand Canyon National Park - and they carry with them a heavy cost to local farmers.

- As exhibited in a decision involving Colorado’s Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation Project (widely supported by Colorado communities and Governor Ritter), recent guidance from EPA regional offices show a clear bias against water storage projects that appears to prejudge potential projects without consideration of important civic, economic and environmental needs.
- The Obama administration is reconsidering a 2008 EPA rule recently upheld in the Circuit Court of Appeals that allows water transfers from one water body to another

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Alliance, Rural Interests Focus on EPA Regs (cont'd from P. 1)

without Clean Water Act permits. This new level of regulation, permitting and certain litigation could hamstring the economies of several Western states, where millions of acre-feet of water are transferred every year.

- EPA has failed to establish clear procedures for its pesticide effects determinations and subsequent actions consistent with 1988 amendments to the Endangered Species Act. This has resulted in unnecessary restrictions without any indication that Pacific Northwest salmon will benefit and puts producers along the West coast at a competitive disadvantage.
- EPA's relationship with certain litigious environmental groups needs to be understood by taxpayers and closely monitored.

“These types of federal water resource actions and regulatory practices threaten to undermine the economic foundations of rural communities in the arid West by making farming and ranching increasingly difficult and costly,” said Semanko.

Other witnesses from other parts of the country testified that farmers and their way of life and livelihood have never felt more challenged or threatened than they do today by the continuous onslaught of regulations and requirements from the EPA.

“It appears that the EPA is intent on being a controlling partner in all farms in the Chesapeake Bay watershed,” said Wilmer N. Stoneman, III, Associate Director of Governmental Relations, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. “They claim that’s not the case. But regardless of their intent, that will almost certainly be the result of their regulation and pending legislation.”

Stoneman pointed out in his testimony that, in just the last year and a half, EPA has set in motion a significant number of new regulations or legislation that he predicts will fundamentally alter the face of American agriculture.

“Bureaucrats, most of whom know nothing about agriculture, will determine how we raise our crops and feed our livestock. Environmentalists will have greater capacity to sue us if they don’t agree with us,” he said. “It appears that agriculture is facing the tip of EPA’s spear, and we frankly don’t understand why.”

Stoneman said that while “Buy Local” is heard throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed, EPA is now targeting

the once-protected small farmers, especially dairies and cattle operations.

Stoneman testified that EPA’s proposals will drive costs so high that small, local farmers simply cannot keep up.

“The reality is that smaller, local farms face a heightened risk of going out of business,” he said.

The cattle industry is also under attack from EPA, said Tamara Thies, Chief Environmental Counsel for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association.

“The fact is the EPA is waging an unprecedented war to end modern production of animal agriculture,” Thies testified. “EPA exhibits reckless indifference to scientific fact and, instead, imposes stringent regulations based on nothing more than its biased anti-animal agriculture agenda that will leave many cattle operations with no recourse but to shut down and eliminate jobs.”

Among several examples of these regulations, Thies described EPA efforts to propose a dust regulation that is twice as stringent as the current dust standard.

“Incredibly, we are talking about dust kicked up by tilling fields and harvesting crops, cattle movements, and pickups driving down dirt roads,” said Thies. “For agriculture, the current standard is already very difficult and costly to meet – doubling it would be virtually impossible.”

Gerald Simonsen, a Nebraska sorghum, soybean, corn and cattle producer and Chairman of the National Sorghum Producers focused his testimony on EPA’s targeting of one of the most essential tools in the farmer’s toolbox today – atrazine.

Two-thirds of sorghum acreage is grown with the help of atrazine, and more than half of all corn farmers and almost all sugar cane growers rely on atrazine as well. According to Simonsen, a recent analysis by University of Chicago economist Don Coursey found that banning atrazine would cost corn growers as much as \$58 an acre and destroy as many as 48,000 jobs.

Semanko’s testimony noted that many of EPA’s administrative changes are drawing praise from environmental organizations that have been advocating for them for some time.

“Ultimately the huge negative impacts of such destructive policies will be aimed at the heart of the economy in rural America,” Semanko told the Co-Chairs at the forum. “We can only hope that the Obama Administration will give equal consideration to the concerns of agricultural organizations. While it may be difficult to get EPA and other Administration agency policy makers to change the approach they are taking, we are pleased that this Congressional forum is being provided and that you are paying attention.”

“It appears that agriculture is facing the tip of EPA’s spear, and we frankly don’t understand why.”
Wilmer Stoneman III, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

Alliance Participates in Roll-Out of National Water “Call to Action” in D.C.

The Family Farm Alliance joined a diverse coalition of businesses, farmers, environmental not-for-profits and government agencies earlier this month in issuing a landmark call to action aimed at heading off a national crisis in water quality and supply that could affect the nation's economy, the livability of our communities and the health of our ecosystems.

"Charting New Waters: A Call to Action to Address

U.S. Freshwater Challenges," is the culmination of an intensive two-year collaboration exploring solutions to U.S. freshwater challenges. It was presented to the Obama Administration at a meeting of federal agencies convened by the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and released to the public during an August 15

forum at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center.

Alliance President Patrick O'Toole, a rancher from Wyoming, was one of five individuals who appeared on a "Leaders" panel before the public unveiling of the "Call to Action" earlier today. Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen (OREGON) was also in attendance.

"There was broad consensus among participants that our current path will, unless changed, lead us to a national freshwater crisis in the foreseeable future," the Call to Ac-

tion reports. "This reality encompasses a wide array of challenges ... that collectively amount to a tenuous trajectory for the future of the nation's freshwater resources."

The report identifies serious challenges to the quality and supply of freshwater, such as pollution and scarcity; competing urban, rural and ecosystem water needs; climate change; environmental and public health impacts; and a variety of economic implications. It offers actions to con-

front these threats and a plan to ensure that our freshwater resources are secure for the 21st century.

"We have been issued a challenge, and it's time to rise to meet that challenge," said O'Toole, who raises sheep and cattle with his family on ranch straddling the continental divide.

"Family farmers and ranchers have a proven track record of finding solu-

tions to constantly emerging challenges, and we hope this report will point federal policy makers in our direction."

While a great deal of progress has been made since landmark freshwater legislation in the 1970s, many freshwater challenges persist, the report says. It sees some as acute and obvious, such as severe droughts and broken water mains. Others are characterized as more subtle and chronic, building quietly over the years - such as endocrine disrupting chemicals in rivers and drinking water and the



Family Farm Alliance President Patrick O'Toole (far L) participated in the "Leaders Panel" earlier this month in Washington, D.C., along with national urban, conservation and business leaders. The panel was moderated by Gwen Ifill of PBS' Washington Week and Newshour (far R). Source: The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread

“Call to Action” Rolled Out in DC (Cont’d from Page 4)

slow but steady depletion of aquifers and declining snowpack in parts of the country.

The document is believed to be the first such comprehensive, cross-sector examination of U.S. freshwater challenges and solutions. It represents consensus recommendations of diverse interests convened by The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread in Racine, Wisconsin.

Reliable freshwater supplies are an essential underpinning of U.S. economic security, with energy generation, manufacturing, food production and many activities of daily life dependent on access to freshwater, the report says. It notes that an estimated 41 percent of U.S. freshwater withdrawals are for thermoelectric power generation, primarily coal, nuclear and natural gas; 37 percent go toward irrigated agriculture.

"For too long, our society has treated water as a cheap, non-strategic and infinitely available resource. Not anymore. Threats to water quality and access are putting our businesses, communities and way of life in jeopardy. The time to act is now," said S. Curtis Johnson, chairman of Diversey Inc., a leading global provider of cleaning and hygiene solutions to the institutional marketplace and co-signer of the Call to Action.

The document proposes a series of shared actions across sectors to ensure sustainable and resilient freshwater resources so that we have the ability to absorb changes, sudden or otherwise, through flexible water management strategies.

The Call to Action's recommendations include a range of freshwater management strategies to head off a potential crisis, such as streamlining and better coordinating fragmented governance among federal, state and local jurisdictions. Another key need identified in the report is modernizing our freshwater regulatory framework, developed in the 1970s to deal with the acute environmental issues of that era.

The report also calls for better accounting of the full cost of services delivered by municipal water and wastewater utilities and sharing this information with consumers. Revised pricing structures that more accurately reflect the full cost of services could be one step toward financing badly needed upgrades to U.S. water and wastewater systems.

"Freshwater is our most precious resource and the lifeblood of our economy - industry, agriculture and energy generation all depend heavily on adequate supplies of freshwater. Water quality in our natural and municipal freshwater systems is vital to the health and livability of our communities," said Helen Johnson-Leipold, chairman of The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread. "The Foundation and its many partners in this collaboration offer the Call to Action as a means of bringing

overdue attention to our nation's freshwater challenges and sparking action to address them."

A leading representative of the agriculture community commended the process that led to the announcement.

"It's enabled a range of participants who seldom engage each other to arrive at some potentially significant and effective recommendations, such as those regarding water quality and the Farm Bill, guidelines for the work and composition of the proposed Freshwater Commission, and emphasis on the importance of local and state leadership in developing co-beneficial solutions based on sound data in local watersheds," said Ray Gaesser, past president of the Iowa Soybean Association and co-signer of the Call to Action.

In addition to signing onto the Call to Action, the parties in this groundbreaking initiative also made commitments as individual organizations to take actions to address freshwater challenges.

The Family Farm Alliance has produced a document - "Western Water Management Case Studies" (July 2010) - that illustrates farming best practices and success stories from throughout the Western United States.

"As our document was being prepared, we were asked to testify before a Senate water committee about the report, which was seen by policy makers on Capitol Hill as a constructive approach to educating policy makers on how to solve vexing water challenges," said Keppen. "We have since distributed that report to national conservation, water and farming organizations, Western governors, Congressional offices, key Obama Administration policy makers, and the media."

A PDF version of the Alliance report can be downloaded and printed from the organization's website: www.familyfarmalliance.org.

"Going forward, we commit to working with interested parties to host watershed tours throughout the West, with the goal of helping policy makers and practitioners understand and implement collaborative, grassroots-based best practices for watershed management," said O'Toole. "As a first step, we will host a tour of the Little Snake River watershed in Wyoming - one of the case studies outlined in our report- which highlights the successes that can be achieved through integrated, collaborative watershed management and the importance of locally led management efforts."

For additional information about the Call to Action, please visit www.johnsonfdn.org/ChartingNewWaters.

Houston Engineering's Klamath DSS Project is Featured in Alliance Case Study Report

The Family Farm Alliance Western Water Management Case Studies Report showcases many examples of creative and successful ways that scientists and agricultural leaders in the Western states are working together to conserve water, develop safe and effective water markets, fix aging infrastructure problems, and restore watersheds.

This report has been developed as a practical tool for policy makers and water users who are struggling with the complications created by a host of new rules, policies and prescriptions for water and the environment. The report includes individual case studies developed with input from more than 50 leaders in the western water community, including irrigation district managers, engineers, ecologists and water lawyers.

Houston Engineering provided financial support for the publication of these case studies and also had one of its projects, the Klamath Basin Decision Support System (DSS), featured in this report. The full Alliance case study report in PDF format can be downloaded from the Alliance website (www.familyfarmalliance.org).

The Klamath County Board of Commissioners recently invited the public to begin using several exciting new web tools, developed as components of the Klamath Basin DSS (www.klamathdss.org). These tools allow a user to view information about water and natural resources, natural resource restoration projects, and obtain integrated information about water supply availability in the Klamath Basin.

The Klamath Basin DSS is the vision of the Klamath County Board of Commissioners, a vision which quite simply, is to allow a broad and diverse audience access to a common base of resource data for the Klamath Basin.

“The belief and hope is that by providing timely access to a common base of resource data, including information related to water supply and use, future conflicts surrounding water and resource management can be minimized and the social and economic turmoil associated with water management decisions reduced” according to Commissioner Cheryl Hukill, Chair of the Board.

“This project implements a vision going back to and initiated by previous Boards and the effort is a credit to the foresight of the residents of Klamath County,” said Commissioner Al Switzer. “This is cutting-edge technology and we sincerely expect others to use this tool.”

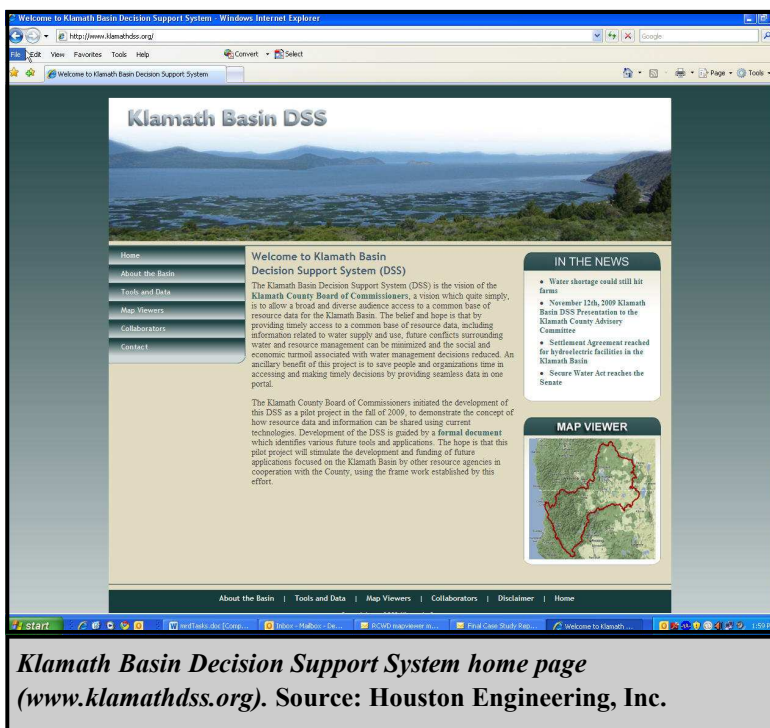
Commissioner John Elliott is also firm believer in this effort.

“This project is going to save people and organizations time and allow them access data and making timely decisions by providing seamless data from one location,” said Elliott. “People beyond the Klamath Basin will finally be able to see all the activities which are happening

in the Klamath Basin to improve resources and conserve water. We are being proactive as a County.”

The Klamath County Board of Commissioners initiated the development of this DSS as a pilot project in the fall of 2009, to demonstrate the concept of how resource data and information can be shared using current technologies. The project is expected to stimulate the development and funding of future applications focused on the Klamath Basin by other resource agencies in cooperation with the County, using the frame work established by this effort.

“Our next effort is to help find a means to improve and implement better water supply forecasting for the basin” according to Commissioner Hukill.



Klamath Basin Decision Support System home page (www.klamathdss.org). Source: Houston Engineering, Inc.

ABC Hosts Annual H2Open Golf Tournament

The Agri-Business Council of Arizona (ABC) on Friday, October 29, 2010 will present the 19th Annual H2Open Golf Tournament. The tournament will take place at the Francisco Grande Hotel and Golf Resort (2684 W. Gila Bend Highway) in Casa Grande.

All proceeds from the tournament help ABC defray the cost of doing business. ABC is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and facilitating agribusiness interests.

“The annual H2Open Golf Tournament is the primary fund-raising event for ABC and provides a fun way for related interests to network and enjoy a morning of golf,” said ABC Executive Director Chris Udall, a member of the Family Farm Alliance Advisory Committee.

If you have any questions, please contact ABC at 480-558-5301 or email at info@agribusinessarizona.org.



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Nutrients and Water Quality: A Region 8 Collaborative Workshop

Salt Lake City, Utah February 15-17, 2011

Agencies and universities in the six states of EPA Region 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY) will host a three-day workshop in February 2011 exploring the science and institutional context regarding nutrients and water quality.

Why this Workshop?

Nutrients are a concern due to degradation of important water resources and the associated health and environmental risks. The science and policy surrounding nutrients is complex, affecting the management of wastewater, stormwater, drinking water and agriculture. This workshop will provide an opportunity for stakeholders and agencies to work together to develop a shared understanding of the science and to better understand the challenges associated with developing and implementing nutrient controls while preserving other important stakeholder values. We seek participation of those engaged in nutrient research, policy and management, and those affected by nutrient control issues - reflecting a diversity of states and roles.

Call for Participation/Presentations

We seek presentations to address key questions that are pertinent to this issue - presentations from the full spectrum of stakeholders, not only scientists. Please refer to the list of questions and topics we plan to address and information about participation and/or submitting a presentation proposal at www.cwi.colostate.edu/nutrients



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