

SDARL Class VI Seminar #4
Washington, D.C.
Feb. 19 – 26, 2011

Saturday, Feb. 19

Travel Day!! A portion of the class flew in from Rapid City with the remainder flying from Sioux Falls. Everyone met up in Chicago and continued on to Washington DC. They arrived safe and sound at the final destination at the Embassy Suites that evening. Time to rest up for a big day of touring the city tomorrow.

Sunday, Feb. 20

Sunday was our personal day to tour the city and enjoy the history. Some people went to mass at the largest Catholic Basilica in North America while others went their own direction. Many people toured such sites as the Holocaust museum, Smithsonian museums, Newseum, Arlington Cemetery or just walked around and took it all in. Three class members had their small group meeting, which included visiting with a staff member of the Humane Society of the United States over lunch. The members reported back that the meeting was a great success with finding a middle ground between us and them. That evening the class toured many of the major monuments and memorials throughout the city. They concluded the evening with an excellent supper and conversation about the day. Tomorrow kicks off Day 1 of the Washington DC seminar with a tour of the world headquarters of DuPont in Wilmington, DE.

GSM: John Schallenkamp, Lealand Schoon
Reporter: Joey Hanson

Monday, Feb. 21

Our day starts early in the morning heading for the Amtrak to go to Wilmington, DE where we will tour the world headquarters of DuPont. After arriving in Wilmington, we were greeted by a bus that took us to the headquarters. Upon arrival we met up with our tour guide Lisa Schwartz, Operations Specialist for DuPont. The security was heavy around the plant and we all had to be accompanied to our location. Our first presenter was Enno Krebbers, Intellectual Properties Research scientist who gave us the history of DuPont and Pioneer. He explained how DuPont started in gun powder and dynamite production back in the late 1800's. They then shifted their attention to nylon which they invented in 1934. After that their focus was on electronics in the 70's and agricultural herbicides in the 80's. They are constantly looking for new ideas and innovations to create. DuPont's largest portion of sales is ag at \$8.3 billion. Their research is driven based on increasing food production, decreasing dependence on fossil fuels and protecting lives.

Enno also gave us some history about Pioneer. It was founded in 1926 by Henry Wallace and they were the first company to develop hybrid seeds for corn. Pioneer is continually working on increasing the genetic platform of tomorrow's hybrids by gene shuffling to optimize trait efficacy and by their intensive trait and breeding programs.

We had three main stops on our tour. Our first stop was to look at their \$800,000 electronic microscope which was used to look at the different cell layers of plant tissue. This machine helps them get a better understanding for the biology of the disease. We used 3D glasses to view some of the images on the computer. We were able to see what type of damage a live soybean cyst nematode does to a soybean root system. These types of microscopes are rare and very expensive and usually only used by the medical field.

Our second stop was at the entomology lab where they tested their traits that they used in their corn and soybean seed to protect against different insects. The speaker told us about the range

of insects that they focused on and how it changed every year depending upon insect thresholds.

Our last stop was down at the soybean transformation lab. We were able to see their gene-insertion gun in action. This started with a .22 caliber but then was converted to using helium to insert the particle. We also went and saw their growth chambers where they grew out their soybeans to full maturity in a near perfect environment to analyze the plants throughout their life. We finished up our tour with an excellent Chinese lunch and a wrap up from our tour guide Lisa. After departing DuPont and heading back to DC via the Amtrak, we were allowed a night on our own to see more of the sites.

GSM: Rebecca Rink, Clint Ridley

Reporter Joey Hanson

Tuesday, February 21, 2011

On February 21st, the Class VI SDARL class met at the American Bankers Association (ABA) and were hosted by John Blanchfield and Seaver Sowers. John and Seaver are ag banking specialists for the ABA. They guided us through an opening discussion outlining history and operations of the ABA. The ABA was founded in 1875 and is an advocate for the banking industry.

Dr. Keith Leggett, Senior Economist for the ABA, identified the following key points he wished to communicate.

1. The worst (of the recession) is over.
2. Sustained recovery is 5-6 years away.
3. Stimulus and budget deficit are issues that cannot be ignored.
4. Current problems in the housing industry will provide significant challenges to the economic recovery.

Dana Brooks, Senior VP for the National Milk Producers Federation, spoke of proposed legislation that would provide a margin based insurance program for the dairy industry. This would replace the current priced based system.

Our next presenter was Dana Peterson, CEO of National Association of Wheat Growers. She informed us that wheat provides approximately 20% of the world's consumed calories and is grown in nearly every country. She spoke of the timeline for developing new wheat varieties, which is 10-13 years and most of the seed research is done by land grant universities.

Colin Woodall was our next speaker. He is a lobbyist for the National Cattlemens Beef Association (NCBA). EPA regulation was his primary concern, specifically centered around proposed dust legislation, ammonia concerns and watershed runoff. He also spoke of trade, technology and transportation issues facing the beef industry.

We broke for lunch at noon, which was kindly provided by the Farmer Mac organization.

Dallas Tonsager, an Olham, SD native and Under Secretary for USDA Rural Development, discussed his current responsibilities resulting from his recent appointment by the Obama administration. Rural Development provides small communities with access to capital for a variety of projects such as hospitals, housing and public utilities.

Katy Ziegler-Thomas, representative for Growth Energy, spoke of her role as an advocate for the ethanol industry. She stated that out of 187 current ethanol lobbyists in Washington, D.C., only

16 were lobbying in support of the industry. This has made it difficult to win support for pro-ethanol legislation.

Chandler Goule, VP of Government Relations for the National Farmers Union, spoke of the organization's support for the proposed GIPSA legislation as well as uncertainty regarding a possible new farm bill. He spoke passionately about the NFU's unwavering support for renewable fuels and his frustration regarding the recent budget cuts affecting agriculture. Mr. Goule stated that agriculture received 22% of the proposed budget cuts despite being only 2% of the federal budget.

Next up was John Doggett from the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA). The top 4 concerns of NCGA were:

1. Support for ethanol.
2. Trade agreements with Korea, Columbia and China.
3. Uncertainty regarding the farm bill.
4. Regulatory actions proposed by the EPA.

He spoke of the shortage of qualified legislative aids with agricultural knowledge and the importance of public service from our young people back home. Brian Dierlam gave a very interesting presentation regarding Cargill's view of current ag issues. Animal welfare was a major concern for the company and a driving force in their decision to allow the Oprah show access to one of their beef processing facility. He spoke of the positive response Cargill received from the show and how he believed it accurately represented their operations. He challenged the class to guess what was the only part of a beef carcass that was taken to the landfill after processing. After many guesses, the class conceded and was told it was the..... tail switch!

Blachfield and Sowers closed the day with several fearless predictions.

1. There would be not one, but several, pending government shutdowns over the budget issues.
2. Interest rates will be going up.
3. The Republican presidential nominee will be relative unknown.
4. Stability of mid-west agriculture will "drive the new farm bill policy bus".
5. No new farm bill in 2012 but rather an extension of the 2008 farm bill.
6. Money does matter and ag is not exempt from possible budget cuts.
7. The USDA will get skinny and close several county offices in favor of more web-based operations.

The final activity of the day was a walking tour of Lafayette Square by local historian, John Blachfield. Class VI would like to thank John Blanchfield, Seaver Sowers and the American Bankers Association for their hospitality and continued support of the SDARL program.

GSMs: Chase Adams and Ryan Wagner
Reporters: Travis Ellison and Mike Reecy

Wednesday, February 23, 2011

USDA, SD Congressional Staff visits, Capitol Tour & supper with Washington Ag & Forestry Education Foundation

Our day began with the traditional management team meeting with Dan Gee. Sal Roseland and Glen Crawford as GSMs and Mary Ellen Cammack as reporter, comprised the

Wednesday team. The group arrived at USDA, greeted by Kathryn Hill, Office of Communications. After snapping a quick group photo, we met with Carolyn B. Cooksie, Associate Administrator, Farm Service Agency (FSA). Ms. Cooksie was raised on her family's tobacco farm in Kentucky and has been a 36 year career employee with USDA. She expressed that at this time FSA has a very limited budget and all funds are going to operating loans at this time. Currently there are \$340 million of approved farm ownership loans, on hold. Ms. Cooksie also believes that the next farm bill must eliminate the current term limits on loans through FSA. Over the last three years FSA ag loans have increased by 40%.

Tom St. Clair, Deputy Director, Office of Global Analysis and Paulette Sandene, Foreign Agriculture Service presented an overview of global crop analysis. The United States began estimating foreign crop production, after a serious crop failure occurred in the Soviet Union, during the early 1970's. The objective was to create a more even "playing field" to prevent dramatic waves in prices and supplies of world crop commodities. Monthly worldwide production estimates are made, as weather situations are monitored. Climate and weather data from China tends to be very reliable, while the validity of China's statistics is questionable, according to Ms. Sandene.

Lynn Tjeerdsman, Assistant Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs, FSA presented an overview of the FSA on the Farm Bill. Mr. Tjeerdsman purchased his first farm in 1976, and has 15 years experience in farming, as well as being a SD native. Only \$14 Billion of the current farm bill is for production agriculture, and \$86 billion is for food assistance. He also stressed that agriculture needs to be pro-active, establishing watersheds, and CRP on fragile lands. March and April signup for CRP is questionable, at this time with food prices rising and high commodity prices. After February 25, Mr. Tjeerdsman will be leaving USDA to assume a position with Sen. Thune for the Ag Farm Bill.

Climate Change was discussed by William Hohenstein, Director, Climate Change Program Office, explaining that this information is integrated into many divisions of USDA. The new climate change plan, 2010 covers effects, adaptation, mitigation and decision support. Under developed countries will be the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, due to lack of adaptability. In the United States, snowfall and snow pack reduction along with reduced rainfall will create water stress. Animal agriculture may experience higher temperatures, adding to heat stress but may also bring less winter cold stress.

For our mid day meal we had the privilege to have our meal in the USDA executive dining room, thank you Kathryn Hill ! Following our lunch, we met with the following staff: Josh Tonsager, Sen. Johnson; Brendan Plack, Sen. Thune; and Renee' Latterell, Rep. Noem. The discussions focused primarily on the current funding situations and upcoming farm bill. We then proceeded on our Capitol building tour, which unfortunately was a bit short due to the building closing at 4:30 PM.

Bertucci's Brick Oven Restaurant was the location of our evening meal, meeting with the Washington Ag and Forestry Education Foundation group. Needless to say we had lively conversations, comparing programs, DC visit and agricultural practices.

GSM: Sal Roseland and Glen Crawford
Reporter: Mary Ellen Cammack

Thursday, February 24, 2011

SDARL Class VI was up bright and early in order to get prime seats for the 2011 Ag Outlook Forum. The room was packed with a record setting attendance of 2,000 people.

Highlights of the forum included Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman of the Senate Ag Committee, Secretary of Ag Tom Vilsack, and former President Bill Clinton.

Former President Bill Clinton emphasized a need to share our technology with developing countries in order to get everyone feeding themselves. He talked about the Clinton Climate Change Initiative and its work in Africa and Latin America. He also emphasized a need for a global "extension service".

The best take home message of the day came from Sec. of Ag Vilsack when he said "the safest bet in America is our farmers". That says it all.

Next on the agenda was a visit to the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Jacqueline Byers talked about counties, how they were formed and why, county government structure and administrative and fiscal authority.

Next up was Erik Johnston who detailed NACo and how they serve their members, their priorities and the role they play in representing the needs and concerns of county government in DC.

Trudy Rice talked to us about community leadership, the many levels of leadership involvement, building social capital and building synergies.

Following the NACo group and wrapping up our day was a spirited conversation with Don Carr and Sheila Karpf of the Environmental Working Group (EWG). The EWG is well known as being the group responsible for the publishing of the farm subsidies. EWG consists of 23 staff members and is 2/3rds funded by foundations. EWG is a proponent of a farm safety net, feels that tax payers should not be funding any farms or ranches and is strongly against intensive corn production due to its "adverse affect on water quality".

GSM: Sarah Jorgensen and Todd Mortenson
Reporter: Noelle Harding

Friday, February 25, 2011

After a brief instruction from Dan, members left for the classroom visits by taxi on a rainy morning. Prepared to share our passion for South Dakota and farming, bags of corn, beef jerky, some posters, books, and an inflatable cow filled our bags.

Shepherd Elementary School is a regular elementary school with 360 students from Pre-K until fifth grade. The school is certified International Baccalaureate and offers French and Spanish classes. Students are from different ethnic authentications.

After attending a dance performance and recognition of knowledgeable students of the month, we were welcomed by Principal Jamie Miles. We separated into groups of two, to visit with the classrooms.

The students seemed to enjoy our visit. Many were impressed with the cowboy hats that some of us were wearing. Travis's class was excited to hear about mountain lions. Corey had answered the question "how to get meat out of a cow". One of his students had asked him if there were

"Hamburgers and Fries" in South Dakota. After Corey's positive reply, the child decided he would love to live in our State.

Business Manager June Confer explained about the new approach in teaching at Shepherd Elementary. This is based on conversation and questions about topics. Students need to choose how to find out about the subject, and how to show what they learned.

That afternoon we split up in groups of two again, to meet with special interest groups. Class VI met afterwards at Capitol Hill Brewing Company for supper, where we shared our afternoon's experiences.

- Kelly, Rebecca and Noelle talked to the "Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine" and had a good informative conversation. The committee is against use of animals for research and consumption of meat. This is either based on a nutritional view, as well as animal rights philosophy.
- Sarah, Jim and Mike had a constructive discussion with the "Animal Welfare Institute". Goal of this institute is to implement humane slaughter and have animals held in free range facilities. Their view is not based on animal rights.
- Lealand and J.D. talked to "Crop Life of America", who focus on use of chemicals, fertilizer and biotechnology. This group works with EPA. on rules and regulations such as spray drift, endangered species and the clean water act.
- Marlin and Codi visited with the American Meat Institute. This institute is an advocate for our nation's meat and packers' industry. They oppose ethanol. Marlin and Codi have had a good and educational discussion with Mr. Brown.
- Danci and Glen met with "Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington", which was founded in 2003 with the objective to get congressional money spent correctly. This group strives for transparency in government spending and watches for earmarks to prevent abuse of funds. One of the mysteries they deal with is the lost emails of the Bush Administration.
- Corey and Jon S. talked to a representative of forestry of the Sierra Club. Sierra Club focuses currently on carbon footprints, air particles (also a current topic of EPA), and the grey wolf issue. Corey and Jon found that Sierra Club has a realistic and big view on nature conservation.
- Sal and Olga have visited with "Citizens against Government Waste", who are easy to contact at 1-800-BE-ANGRY. Their goal is to reach a balanced government budget, though eliminating many subsidies, earmarks and watch for mismanagement. Part of their database of considered mismanagement is being published annually in a PIG book. CaGW focuses on any department of the government. Sal and Olga found the "angry citizens" very friendly and open for conversation.
- Ryan and Susi met with "American Rivers". Current topics of this movement are climate change, river protection, water supply and water quality. They also work on flood control and fish management. American Rivers is currently not represented in South Dakota.
- Ron and Joey had a good conversation with The Nature Conservancy, Worldwide Office, who focuses on biodiversity. It has been a constructive meeting, with future cooperation possibilities.
- Shane, Tyler and Clint went to the office of "Farm Animal Rights Movement". They were kindly requested to take off their leather shoes, and welcomed with meat-replacing snacks. Ultimate goal of FARM is the end of animal agriculture. FARM has referenced to reports to argument their opinion.
- Chase and Connie were welcomed by Chris Farrell at the Judicial Watch office. This is a watchdog for civil procedures. Judicial Watch wants transparency in government and watches subsidies closely.

- Kari and John talked to Larry Elworth and John Larmett of the Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.). These representatives of E.P.A. were glad to talk to producers and hear about their views. The current dust issue has been discussed. Main message is to be involved in E.P.A. policies.
- Todd, Tammy and Jon N. have met with Josh Balk of Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) last Sunday for lunch. The atmosphere was very friendly and informative on both sides. Todd, Tammy and Jon found Josh most open for discussion and keeping the door open for discussion on animal welfare topics.

Friday night we attended a performance of Capitol Steps, a comical satire show about current politics. This last activity on our schedule was definitely a great success.

Saturday February 26 2011

The last day of the D.C. trip was all about going home. All members flew to Chicago O'Hare, where West River class members easily caught a connecting flight to Rapid City. East River members were less fortunate, all flights to Sioux Falls appeared to be cancelled that day. Separated in different travel groups, some with almost a 24 hour delay, members were all able to eventually return home safe and sound.

GSM: Kari VanderWal, Jon Nelson

Reporter: Olga Reuvekamp