

Innovation leads to new sunflower oil enterprise

By RON WILSON
Huck Boyd National Institute
It's the State Fair—time to walk the midway and get a delicious corn dog, fresh out of the fryer. But this particular corn dog is special, because it was cooked in a healthy, all-natural cooking oil that was produced and processed right here in Kansas. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Last month, we learned of Wes Bainter and his construction company, Bainter Construction, in Hoxie, Kansas. Wes is an innovator and inventor. One of his innovations has led to a new sunflower oil enterprise. But this enterprise was first targeted at the field, rather than the frying pan.

In early 2007, fuel prices spiked up to record levels. The high price of diesel was especially challenging for farmers who use it in crop production. Wes said, "We decided that with the high

fuel prices, we needed to design, manufacture, and market a fuel system where farmers could make their own fuel."

He figured farmers could use a portion of their fields to produce oilseed crops which would yield vegetable oil that could replace commercially-produced diesel as a fuel. The resulting biofuel would be a locally grown, renewable source of energy for those farmers. Wes designed an extraction and filtration system that farmers could use to process their vegetable oils.

His processing system was a hot seller when fuel prices were high, but when the economy turned down and oil prices fell, Wes looked for other ways to utilize his innovative system. He realized the sunflower oil had more value as a food than as a fuel.

So Wes researched the possibility of developing and selling

an all-natural sunflower oil for human consumption.

"That's a big step," he said. "Fuel is fairly simple, but to take it to a cooking oil level requires much higher standards."

So Wes refined and improved his filtering system. The K-State Food Science Institute tested his product and verified its quality, shelf life, flashpoint and other factors. Wes is now producing and marketing this product through his newest business, Bainter Sunflower Oil LLC.

Sunflower cooking oil has numerous advantages, he said: "It leaves food crispier, lasts longer, has a higher flash-point, is good-tasting, and is a heart-healthy product."

In fact, olive oil is the only vegetable oil which is better from a health standpoint, Wes added. Sunflower oil is high in Vitamin E and low in trans-fats.

Bainter Sunflower Oil is a 100 percent pure, all-natural product made with Kansas grown sunflowers. It has no additives or preservatives. Wes contracts with area sunflower growers for something called mid-oleic seeds. The seeds are processed in a crushing facility west of town. The bottling is done at the company's headquarters in the rural community of Hoxie, population 1,207 people. Now, that's rural.

The sunflower oil is marketed directly to consumers through the company's Web site, www.baintersunfloweroil.com, and to grocery stores and supermarkets throughout the region. It is now going to 40 stores in Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado. Wes figures the company's business in 2009 was about 20 times that of 2008. Bainter Sunflower Oil was introduced at the Kansas State Fair in 2009 and looks to be a major cooking oil at the fair in 2010.

Wes Bainter has nine patents, but for him the sunflower oil and his other businesses are important because of what they mean to the community.

"Hoxie has a great school system and great roads, but we need to be proactive to build our communities so people will come," he said. "We've created a grass-roots

business with local growers to help the local economy."

His attitude toward challenges is summarized in his frequent saying, "If it's easy, we're not interested." Of his many inventions and global business, Wes said, "It's all a blessing. I'm not very smart, but God is."

It's time to leave the State Fair, where we've enjoyed an all-natural Kansas product which comes from Hoxie, Kansas. We salute Wes Bainter and all those involved with Bainter Sunflower Oil and his other enterprises. They are making a difference by creating private sector economic growth in northwest Kansas. In the long run, that's even better than a corn dog.

Farm storage facility loans are available

County Executive Director, CED Erin M Clason, reminds Norton County farmers of Farm Storage Facility Loans available through the Farm Service Agency.

"At a time when commercial storage facilities are at maximum capacity and charging premium rates nationwide, on-farm storage provides producers with an attractive alternative," Clason said.

The Farm Service Agency offers seven, 10 or 12 year, low-interest loans to qualifying producers to build new or upgrade existing storage facilities and related essential, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment. Loan opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- New conventional-type cribs or bins, oxygen-limiting and other upright silo-type structures, and flat-type storage structures designed for whole grain storage,
- Perforated floors, safety equipment, electrical equipment and concrete components considered essential for a fully functional storage facility,
- Remodeling existing storage facilities.

According to Clason, marketing flexibility is the primary benefit gained from on-farm storage facilities.

"Privately owned facilities give producers control over where and when they sell their crops, increasing their odds of receiving the best price for their crop," Clason said.

Farm storage facility loans must be approved prior to site preparation, equipment purchase or construction, and must be secured by a promissory note and security agreement.

Special provisions apply for loans exceeding \$50,000.

The maximum loan amount will be 85 percent of the net cost of the applicant's needed storage or

handling equipment. A minimum down payment to the supplier or contractor is required to bridge the gap between the net cost of the storage facility and the loan amount.

Fixed interest rates on farm storage facility loans are equivalent to the rate of interest charged on U.S. Treasury Securities of comparable maturity on the date the loan is approved.

As of April 2010, the annual interest rate is 3.125 percent for a seven year loan.

"Knowing you have on-site storage gives producers peace-of-mind, allowing time to develop progressive, lucrative marketing strategies," Clason said.

For detailed applicant and facility eligibility criteria regarding Farm Storage Facility Loans, and to schedule an appointment to file an application, contact the Norton County office at (785) 877-5156 or visit FSA on the web at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

New Physician Helps Keep Patients Closer to Home



Help has arrived for those patients in Western Kansas suffering from kidney disorders. This summer Hays Medical Center hired its first in-house nephrologist, Johanna "Joni" McCullagh, M.D. The addition of Dr. McCullagh, medical director of the Nephrology Center program, means advanced kidney care is now available for patients closer to home.

Dr. McCullagh and the Nephrology Center staff provide a variety of services, including caring for patients with:

- Kidney failure
- Hypertension and hypertensive kidney disease
- Diabetes and diabetic nephropathy
- Inflammation, scarring or hardening in the kidney
- Cystic kidney disease (polycystic)
- Inflammation of blood vessels in the kidneys
- Kidney stones

- Management of dialysis patients, transplant patients and those with end stage renal disease

One of the biggest benefits of this addition to Hays Medical Center is that the hospital now has greater capacity to care for patients in need of regular dialysis. While the hospital previously treated dialysis patients, they can now treat more patients—and patients who need a higher level of care—eliminating the burden and stress of travel for additional families in the area.

Dr. McCullagh, a Wichita native, grew up in Kansas City and completed her education

at the University of Kansas School of Medicine. She completed both her residency in Internal Medicine and her fellowship in Nephrology and Hypertension at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

Dr. McCullagh is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and holds memberships with the American Society of Nephrology, American College of Physicians and the American Medical Association.

Wanting to stay within driving distance of family and friends, Dr. McCullagh and her family were excited to make the move to Hays.

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Mobile Echo Monday (785) 877-3351	Urology Every fourth Monday (785) 877-3351

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