

Conservation offices set for consolidation or closing

The closing of several Natural Resources Conservation Service county field office and consolidate operations with neighboring county offices has been announced.

Harold L. Klaege, State Conservationist for the Service said the move was to more efficiently and effectively manage operations while meeting a declining budget. The Conservation Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Proposed Consolidations

The following are the field office consolidations.

Chase County (Cottonwood Falls) will be consolidated with Lyon County (Emporia).

Comanche County (Coldwater) will be consolidated with Barber County (Medicine Lodge). Geary County (Junction City) will be consolidated with Riley County (Manhattan).

Gove County (Gove) will be consolidated with Logan County (Oakley).

Johnson County (Olathe) will be consolidated with Miami County (Paola).

Leavenworth County (Leavenworth) will be consolidated with Jefferson County (Oskaloosa).

Morton County (Elkhart) will be consolidated with Stevens County (Hugoton).

Wabaunsee County (Alma) will be consolidated with Pottawatomie County (Westmoreland) and will be relocated to Wamego along with the Farm Service Agency office. Woodson County (Yates Center) will be consolidated with Wilson County (Fredonia).

Timeline for Consolidation

Before consolidation can take place, the National Food and Agriculture Council must approve the proposal. Following its approval, no county field office could be closed for 120 days, so it would be hard to start consolidation much before October 1, according to Mr. Klaege.

In July 2006, Klaege announced to the Service's employees and county conservation district boards affected by the consolidation, and then the public, that a proposal for county field office consolidations had been developed because of forthcoming budget constraints.

Even though offices will consolidate, the county conservation districts in counties where is closing a county

field offices have indicated they are committed to maintaining a conservation office, according to Klaege. Through a partnership effort, Natural Resource Conservation employees will make regular visits to these district offices to provide technical assistance to producers as well as to the local conservation district.

Dollars Working Smarter

"Conservation workload is not a limiting factor in Kansas," said Mr. Klaege. "Kansas producers are conservation minded and want to put conservation on the ground."

"The limiting factor," he said, "is a sufficient staff to handle the workload and by managing the county field office's a little differently, we can make the dollars work smarter for our customers by putting staff in locations with the heaviest workloads."

Mobile Office Technology

"It is hard to move bricks and mortar," said Mr. Klaege, "but we started a pilot project this year that uses mobile offices so our field staff can go where the workload is. Mobility allows our staff to meet with

a farmer or rancher on the land and develop a conservation plan on-site."

Currently, 15 employees are assigned pickups equipped with portable tablet computers, scanners, printers, cell phones, and global positioning satellite receivers. With the latest technology, the Service employees are able to provide immediate access to natural resource data, such as soils, range sites, aerial photography, and Field Office Technical Guide information.

The Service staff, with the producer, can develop a plan, discuss it, make changes, print it, and get it signed on the spot.

"This technology," said Mr. Klaege, "is providing flexibility for our employees and enabling them to provide more technical assistance on the land."

Visit your local Service's field office to learn more about natural resources conservation or more information is also available on the Kansas Web site at www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov.



PAINTING PARKING STRIPES - Katie Marin is painting parking lines at the hospital as part of the Join Hands project. *Herald staff photo by Karen Krien*

Ag Talk With Jeanne

Glyphosate-based products - the generics and the original

By Jeanne Falk



There are a large number of glyphosate-based products in the market place today. Currently, there are nearly 45 glyphosate-based herbicides registered for use in Kansas, which had led to increased competition among products and generally lower prices.

To gain some understanding into the efficacy of these products, the weed science program at the University of Nebraska compared the efficacy of a variety of glyphosate-based products (both generic and brand name) on weed control over three years at six locations in Nebraska. Weed species included velvetleaf, common waterhemp (a pigweed species), sunflower, Kochia, Russian thistle, lambsquarters, and a mix of foxtail species.

Depending on the year or location, they tested these glyphosate-based products at two rates (label rates and half label rates): Roundup Ultra, Roundup UltraDRY,

Roundup UltraMAX, Roundup WeatherMAX, Touchdown w/IQ, Cornerstone, Clearout41 Plus, GlyphoMAX, Glyphos Xtra, and Glyphomax Plus.

All herbicides provided excellent weed control (greater than 90-percent control) regardless of the rate or brand name, according to Steve Knezevic, weed management specialist at University of Nebraska.

For example, there was no significant difference in the level of weed control for Roundup Ultra Dry and the generic Clearout41 Plus. The level of weed control was not significantly different for Roundup WeatherMax and the generic Clearout41 Plus, or any other herbicide tested.

In addition, these findings are similar to those reported by researchers in other states.

Several other factors can affect weed control with glyphosate, including use rate, presence of dust, applicator wheel tracks, spray wa-

ter volume, spray adjuvants, and tank combinations. Glyphosate absorption by plants is maximized by including nonionic surfactant in the spray solution.

Glyphosate products are formulated with varying concentrations of surfactant, so some products require additional surfactant, while others do not (commonly referred to as fully-loaded products). Thus, it is very important to read product labels for surfactant recommendations for each product.

In addition, AMS is a tank additive that binds to cations in hard water. This helps counteract the effects of hard water on glyphosate and enhances the absorption of glyphosate and control of certain weeds.

Finally, glyphosate has been an extremely valuable tool and has even helped shape current cropping systems. It is therefore important to use glyphosate wisely to help maintain its value in the future.

2007 harvest contest regulations explained

By Karen Krien

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The Harvest Countdown Contest has begun! There are six St. Francis businesses sponsoring the contest this year. They have entry tickets for anyone wanting to register their guess of the minute, hour and day of the first load of wheat brought into one of the St. Francis or Wheeler elevators.

There will be three people winning a total of \$100 in scrip money (\$50 first prize, \$35 second prize, and \$15 third prize).

Rules are:
• Guess the day, hour and minute of the arrival of the first load that has moisture content of 14 percent or less.

The contest allows anyone over 18 years who is not employed at the newspaper or related to someone who is to try to guess when the first load of wheat will be brought into one of the elevators in St. Francis and Wheeler.

• New this year, the winners of last year's contest are not eligible to win this year.

• The scrip money won will need to be spent in participating businesses.

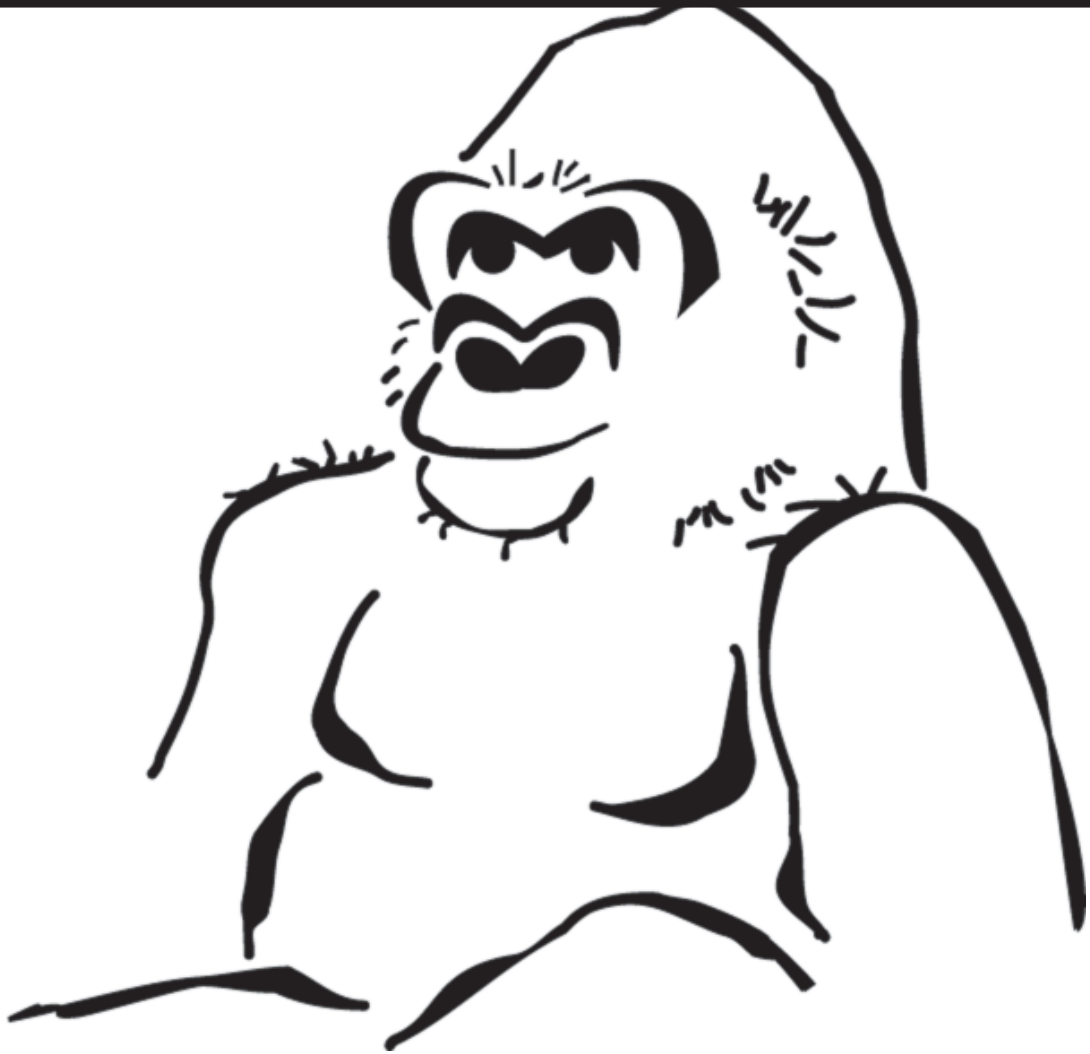
The *Herald* is sponsoring the contest but it would not be possible if it were not for the participating businesses: Pizza Hut, Hilltop Market, St. Francis Equity, Burr Retail Liquor, St. Francis Super's and The Saint Francis Herald. Boxes and entry blanks along with the contest rules are located in these businesses.

Look for the sign in the window and register your guess at the service counters. Be sure to check their merchandise and services while in the business.

Last year's first load

Last year, the first load of wheat was brought into the Wheeler Equity on June 14. The load, harvested south of Wheeler, was brought in by Harvey Neitzel. Winning the contest was Doug Bunjes, Wheeler, who registered his guess at K-Store.

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