



## A veto on school budget bill may be the best bet

We should know soon whether Gov. Sam Brownback will buy into a compromise plan to equalize money available to Kansas schools passed over the weekend by the Legislature, but for several reasons, we hope he gets out his veto pen.

Members of both houses struggled last week with bills designed to meet objections raised by the state Supreme Court to the way the state's present formula was working. Basically, the court said poorer districts were at a disadvantage because they could not raise as much money as more wealthy districts, those with a higher assessed valuation.

In the House, members toyed with a plan that would have taken money to pay for a \$141 million plan out of transportation and online classroom aid districts now get. In the end, however, they decided just to solve the problem at hand and the resulting bill passed 91-31, with many Democrats joining the Republican majority.

In the Senate, however, a willful majority decided this was an opportunity to effect some major changes in education policy, inserting provisions in its bill to end the tenure now offered to teachers after they complete three years on the job and ban spending state money to implement the state-written "Common Core" curriculum standards.

In a compromise reached over the weekend, the House agreed to the change in teacher tenure while the Senate dropped the ban on Common Core. The bill would solve the equality issue by boosting state aid to poorer districts, though details were sparse. This plan passed both houses, but with bare minimum support.

There are two things wrong with this approach: First, it complicates the situation by introducing unrelated, controversial issues into what should be a clean fix of the equality problem cited by the court. Debate on the plan now will focus on tenure, rather than the need to make all districts equal.

The second is an ethical issue: The tenure change has been plopped into the bill at literally the last minute of the session, with no committee hearing, no debate, no time for either side to have a say. This is the worst kind of legislation, something that ought to be banned by the state Constitution, but unfortunately, is all too common.

For both reasons, the Legislature should stick with something close to the House plan. The time to debate Common Core, tenure and other issues — things that provoke passion on both sides — would be in an interim study committee and next year, at the beginning of a full session.

It's in no one's interest to ram something like this through without a full review of all the pros and cons, without providing teachers with some kind of protection from arbitrary dismissal and without achieving some kind of consensus. Total agreement is not possible, but this kind of legislative slam-dunk is reprehensible.

Let's leave the reforms for reasonable consideration. A lot of people believe change is necessary, but this is not the way to accomplish it, without hearing all sides and considering all arguments.

Veto this bill, governor, and ask the Legislature to stick to the issue at hand. — Steve Haynes

## The Gardener



By Kay Melia

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### Try some Brussels Sprouts

If for some reason you happen to utter the words "Brussels Sprouts" to some unsuspecting soul, you're liable to get some kind of a quizzical blank stare in response. Either that, or the retort "don't you ever put any of those things on MY plate!"

Brussels Sprouts certainly isn't the most popular vegetable in the garden. In fact, I would guess that they probably rate at about second from the bottom, just ahead of arugula. But I'm afraid most gardeners rely on the reputation given to them by those who absolutely despise them. Really though, if you haven't tasted 'em, don't knock 'em!

If you have never tried them, then why not pick up a few and see what the rest of the family thinks.

I have a tendency to describe Brussels Sprouts to gardeners who ask about them as "little cabbages." But in retrospect, that's probably not fair to either Brussels Sprouts or cabbage. But Sprouts DO have a distinctive cabbage flavor, but much stronger. Like, "you never ate a forkful of cabbage that tasted like that!" I suspect it's a simple matter of flavor intensity that causes most gardeners to shy

away from them.

Brussels Sprouts are one of those crops that enjoys the cool air, so the transplants should be set out in the garden about now. However, they will withstand summer's heat better than many early season crops, so a little later planting time is acceptable. Keep in mind though that it takes about 80 days for the plant to produce. Many gardeners successfully put them out in the summer and try to time it so that they can get a couple of light freezes on them at about the time they mature. They are noticeably sweeter tasting after a freeze or two.

Aphids love Brussels Sprouts about the time they are setting on. A hard stream of water from the hose a couple times a week helps disperse them.

A couple of varieties of Sprouts work well in this area in case you grow your own plants. Franklin, or Long Island Improved are viable. If you buy the transplants, whatever your garden center offers will be fine.

Stacy Harris, a garden writer offers a recipe for preparing Brussels Sprouts that really sounds good, and I will try it soon. It's

called Creamed Brussels Sprouts.

1 quart (about a pound) of Brussels Sprouts

2 Tablespoons butter, melted  
3/4 cup whipping cream, heated to a boil

1/2 pound bacon, fried  
Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Trim stems and remove outside leaves of Sprouts

Blanch Sprouts for 3 minutes in boiling water. Drain. Arrange Sprouts in a single layer in baking dish. Pour butter over Sprouts and add salt and pepper.

Bake for 10 minutes while you fry the bacon and lay it on a paper towel.

Pour hot whipping cream over sprouts and bake for 15 minutes more, or until the Sprouts are fork tender.

Remove from oven and crumble bacon on top.

Serve while hot. If for no other reason, this recipe should encourage you to set out a few Brussels Sprouts plants, and do it soon! Always watch closely for aphids!



## Casey's Comments



By Casey McCormick

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### The recognizable Ronald McDonald

Most commercials on TV are a form of necessary evil. But, now and then, an original idea comes through.

Lately, Taco Bell is touting a new breakfast menu by getting endorsements from an unusual place. They have found a group of men named Ronald McDonald to endorse their product.

This irony got me wondering, "Who was the original Ronald McDonald?"

I supposed he was based on someone known neither by Ray Kroc, who built the industry giant, or brothers Dick and Mac McDonald who began the burger

restaurant in southern California.

But it seems the clown who so many associate with McDonald burgers came about from another clown.

Willard Scott, the folksy weather man for years on the Today Show, was a radio and TV personality in Washington, DC, during the 1950s and '60s. One of his roles was playing the hugely popular Bozo the Clown in that area.

But when the Bozo show was canceled, Scott was approached by the local McDonald's people who asked him to create a new character.

"There was something about

the combination of hamburgers and Bozo that was irresistible to kids...so I sat down and created Ronald McDonald," said Scott in his book, Joy of Living.

He played Ronald McDonald on three separate television appearances and the rest, as they say, is burger history.

One last little Chicken McNugget of entertainment; surveys of American kids show that Ronald McDonald comes in second only to Santa Claus in recognition and popularity.

## Ag Talk with Jeanne



By Jeanne Falk Jones

Agronomy Specialist

### PreSeason Irrigation with Low Well Capacities

As you drive around the countryside, you will see many irrigation pivots running. They are not watering wheat, but rather ground that is going to corn this spring. There are differing opinions on the use of pre-season irrigation.

Many of the irrigation systems today in the Central Great Plains no longer have the capacity to apply peak irrigation needs during the summer and must rely on soil water reserves to buffer the crop from water stress. Considerable research was conducted on pre-season irrigation in the US Great Plains region during the 1980s and 1990s. In general, the conclusions were that in-season irrigation was more beneficial than pre-season irrigation and that often pre-season irrigation was not warranted.

Because the well capacities have dropped and the market place has changed, the K-State Research and Extension Center in Tribune conducted research on pre-season irrigation, from 2006 to 2009. The

objective of this study was to determine whether pre-season irrigation would be profitable with today's lower capacity wells.

The study layout consisted of preplant irrigation (0 or 3 inches), 3 well capacities (0.1, 0.15, and 0.20 in/day capacity), and three seeding rates (22,500, 27,500, and 32,500 seeds/a). The pre-season irrigation was applied in early April because earlier studies showed that spring irrigation is more efficient than fall applied irrigation (70 percent for spring vs. 33 percent for fall). In season irrigation was applied weekly to meet crop needs, except when precipitation was sufficient.

Here are the results of the study. Corn yields responded positively to pre-season irrigation and increases in well capacity. This was generally from increases in kernels per ear. Pre-season irrigation increased grain yields an average of 16 bu/a. Although not significant, the effect was greater at lower well capaci-

ties. For example, with a seeding rate of 27,500 seeds/a, pre-season irrigation (3 in) increased grain yield by 21 bu/a with a well capacity of 0.10 in/day while only 7 bu/a with a well capacity of 0.20 in/day. As expected, grain yields increased with increased well capacity.

Grain yields were 29 percent greater when well capacity was increased from 0.10 to 0.20 in/day. Crop water productivity (CWP, grain yield divided by crop water use) was not significantly affected by well capacity or pre-season irrigation. Pre-season irrigation was profitable at all well capacities. At well capacities of 0.10 and 0.15 in/day, a seeding rate of 27,500 seeds/a was generally more profitable than lower or higher seeding rates. A higher seeding rate (32,500 seeds/a) increased profitability when well capacity was increased to 0.2 in day-1.

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A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. Ecclesiastes 7:1

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