

Western Kansas farmers can earn cash for reducing carbon dioxide

GREAT BEND (AP) — Farmers in western Kansas will soon be able to earn credits — and eventually cash — for taking part in a program in which they keep the carbon dioxide in the ground to reduce emissions.

Farmers west of U.S. 81 can register the carbon dioxide that's trapped in the soil by trees, grasses and crops that scrub it from the air. They then can trade carbon units or credits to companies that are trying to cut their overall greenhouse gas emissions. A carbon credit is the equivalent of one ton.

Companies can cut emissions themselves. But in this process, they essentially are paying farmers to store carbon for them.

The concept is based on carbon sequestration, or the holding of carbon dioxide in the ground, said Charles Rice, a professor of agronomy at Kansas State University.

"The idea of carbon credits is that companies can offset carbon emissions by buying them elsewhere," said Rice, who will be in Great Bend on Monday for a discussion on carbon credits.

Great Bend farmer Don Kuhlman said he hasn't committed to the program yet. "I don't know enough about it," he said.

Carbon credits, like crops and livestock, are traded daily. The trading occurs at the Chicago Climate Exchange, or CCX.

Rafael Marques of CCX described it as an "exchange for reducing or trading greenhouse gases."

Companies such as Ford, DuPont and IBM sign on for four-year, pollution-cutting phases.

"They set targets," Marques said. "They can sell if they make these. If they don't, they have to buy."

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Great Bend

The voluntary program is legally binding once a company commits, Marques said. The first phase ran from 2003 to 2006 and the next goes from 2007 to 2010.

Companies that agree to four years must stay in the program for all those years.

Dave Miller of the Iowa Farm Bureau, a leader in carbon trading, said not every farmer can trade carbon credits at the CCX. He said a producer of any size must go through an "aggregator" or go-between to trade.

Farmers who want to participate must use no-till or reduced-till conservation farming practices. They also have to make a four-year commitment.

Miller said a typical western Kansas no-till dryland farm acre sequesters two-tenths of a ton of carbon per year. An irrigated acre stores half a ton per year, because of more plant growth.

The price has ranged from \$3 to \$4 per ton during the past couple of months. This amounts to roughly 60 to 82 cents per acre on dryland (about \$1,200 a year) and \$1.50 to \$2 on irrigated ground (about \$3,500 a year).

After the growing season has passed, producers are paid on an annual basis. The Iowa Farm Bureau is preparing to distributed the \$5 million generated in 2006.

She requires a man who loves kids



Dr. Joyce Brothers

● Ask Dr. Brothers

Dear Dr. Brothers: I have been all over the map looking for someone to marry and have children with. I've met a lot of men, some of whom I've loved dearly or been very attracted to, but they have turned out not to be interested in having a family, or at least not sure if they are. Is there any way to find out if a guy is "parent material" before I waste my time and emotions on him? My mom swears you can tell if a guy likes kids just by looking at his face, and that all my past boyfriends had "hard" faces. Could she be right? — B.N.

Dear B.N.: It's sometimes very difficult to set out to find someone to marry. Most men are more comfortable if they know that the women they are dating are interested in having fun, doing things together and discovering common interests.

It's not that most men don't want the same things you do, it's just that you are likely making them nervous about it. So calm down and try to enjoy men for themselves, first of all — not for what they might be able to do for you in terms of weddings and offspring.

It is interesting that your mom is judging your men as well. More pressure! Actually, one study, published in the *Journal Proceedings of the Royal Society: Biological Sciences*, asked young men how much they liked children. Then the scientists showed their photos to women and asked them to rate the men. The less "masculine" the man's face, the greater the parental potential felt by the women testers. Although the women liked the high-testosterone men for a short-term relationship, they felt that men with softer faces would be better with children. I don't know if there's anything substantive to this observation, but maybe your mom is on the right track!

girl I've been dating. But she has one fault — or maybe I'm the one with the fault. I'm not sure which it is, and maybe you can tell me. She has two of every animal: two dogs, two cats and even two ferrets. I like animals outdoors or in a zoo, but I am not what you would call a "pet person." I don't really want to get close to her pets, and she is starting to make remarks about how cold I am to other species. Am I lacking something psychologically, or is she the one who is a little wacky? — L.S.

Dear L.S.: Just because you really don't like a lot of animals running around the house doesn't make you off-balance, nor does the fact that someone else thinks a house isn't a home without plenty of companion animals mean she is a little cracked. There is such a wide range of opinions about pets — some influenced by cultural norms — that you really can't try to pin a psychological label on anyone for his or her position, as long as it isn't really extreme. So it might be a good idea to set labels aside and try to figure out a way for you and your lady to come together on this issue.

One goal might be to someday pick out a suitable pet together. But in the meantime you could work on making friends with just one of her pets. Give it a chance, don't be cold or standoffish, and see if the animal could find a little chink in your armor. Try to explain to your girlfriend that you are not against her pets, but that you really like hair-free furniture or a sweet-smelling room, and if these things need adjusting at her place, help her with them. That will really prove your love! Then ask her to help you make friends with one of her companion animals. It's a win-win strategy for all of you.

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Dear Dr. Brothers: I have a great