

Research favors big donors

GREAT BEND (AP)—Research at Kansas State University favors huge farm corporations that are big donors to the land-grant university, Kansas State law professor Roger McEowen told farmers at a legislative tour on agricultural concentration.

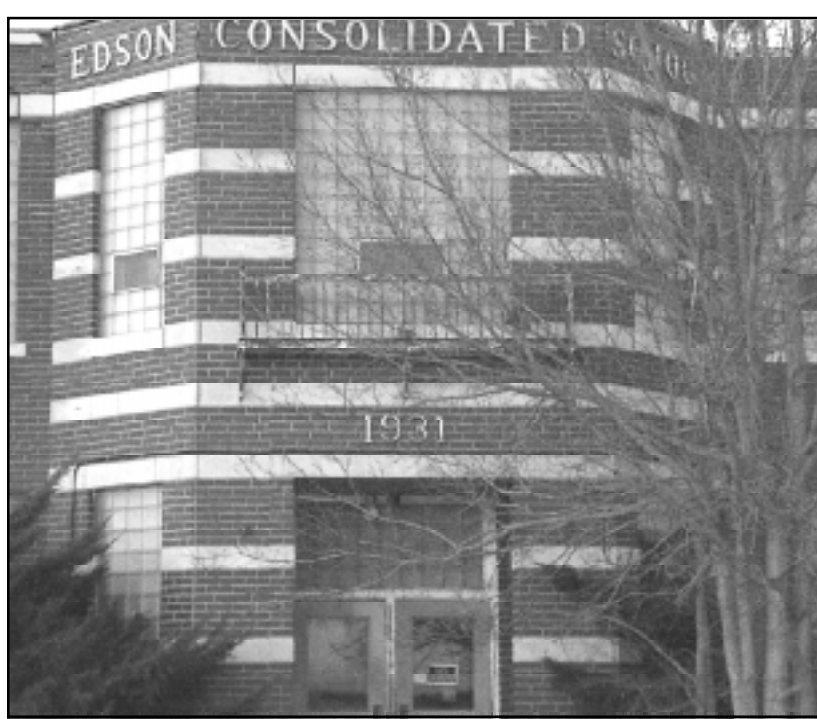
"I am concerned research results are skewed on the side of the hand that is feeding them," McEowen said Thursday.

Ranchers and lawmakers alike were upset over a presentation in which Kansas State agricultural economist Jim Mintert touted the advantages of ag concentration.

Mintert told the group that in the last century the percentage of people involved in production agriculture in this nation fell from 90 percent to less than 3 percent. That allowed the industrial revolution to occur and made possible great strides in nutrition, life expectancy and income levels, he said.

His presentation so riled other speakers and attendees that the listening tour — originally designed to discuss the effects of concentration on the livestock and grain industries — quickly expanded to a discussion about whether Kansas State was fulfilling its role as a land-grant university established to help family farmers.

"His whole presentation was offensive — it was so flawed it was offensive," said St. Francis cattle feeder Mike Callicrate. "Who would believe quality of life correlated with concentration in agriculture?"



The Edson School was built in 1931 and is seen as it appears now. The gym which is owned by the Goodland school district was added later and is on the east side of the school. Members of the Goodland school board are to decide in March whether to keep the gym or sell it.

Photo by Janet Craft/The Goodland Daily News

Gym might be sold

EDSON, from Page 1

about an hour a day to clean the gym after each practice, Selby said, noting that the heat is turned down for the weekend to save on heating costs.

He said the combined gas bill to heat the gym for October, November and December of 1999 was \$634. For the same three months in 2000, the gas bill came to \$1,751. That is an increase of nearly \$1,117. Most of the increase is due to a rise in utility costs, which is affecting the district's utility bills at every school.

The total electric bill for those same three months in 1999 came to \$193.

The electric bill for October, November and December of 2000 was \$320. So there was an increase of \$127.

If the school district decides to keep the gym, Selby said, they would need to put in a new water well because the water is bad, repair the roof because the skylights leak after a hard rain and repair the floor.

He said the school brings in bottled Culligan water for drinking purposes and only uses the water for toilets and showers.

Selby said all of this plays into the school district's decision as to whether to keep the gym, sell it on the open market or sell it to the Edson group.

School finance proposals made

FINANCE, from Page 1

Coffeyville. "I guess we're still waiting."

Legislators have tinkered with the school finance formula since its inception to deal with complaints from large and medium-sized school districts, districts with declining student enrollments and districts with a high percentage of poor students.

The Vision 21st Century task force recommended a \$450,000 study to determine the cost of an adequate education.

It viewed its proposal for new spending as a stopgap measure.

Its plan — and the proposals from the State Board of Education — would require cuts in other government programs or a tax increase.

That reality is one reason Graves has decided against proposing a plan in his State of the State address.

House Majority Leader-elect Shari Weber, R-Herington, said support in the Legislature for a tax increase is minimal.

Senate President-elect Dave Kerr, R-Hutchinson, said: "Most of the big ideas on increases in school finance would require a tax increase and I haven't seen any real desire for increasing taxes."

Some Republicans, like Kerr and Weber, aren't troubled that Graves has decided to wait on outlining a specific plan.

Kerr doesn't believe a major rewriting of the law is necessary.

"The current formula is neither complicated nor is it grossly unfair," Kerr said.

"And, if it has minor unfairnesses built into it, those can be easily amended out of it."

And Rep. Kenny Wilk, the new

School's finance formula explained for this year

FORMULA, from Page 1

TOPEKA (AP)—The state sets the budget for each of its 304 school districts under a 1992 law.

For the current school year, the budget for each district is \$3,820 per student. That figure is multiplied by a student enrollment figure to get a district's total base budget.

But the enrollment figure is not the actual number of students in a given district.

That head count is adjusted to account for several factors, includ-

ing the number of children who ride buses to school and the number receiving free or low-cost lunches.

The enrollment figure used to figure a district's budget is larger than its actual student head count.

School districts also get additional money based on their size.

Districts can exceed their state-set budgets by up to 25 percent, if they can persuade residents to increase property taxes.

And the formula doesn't include some items, such as aid for special education programs.

chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, suggested that the Legislature increase education spending this year but wait to rewrite the school finance law until 2002.

"I think this a year to — no pun intended — educate the Legislature," said Wilk, R-Lansing.

"Next year is the year we should take a stab at it if we're going to do anything."

But Garner scoffed at Wilk's suggestion and said legislators should be talk-

ing about how to find more money for schools as soon as possible.

"Until somebody gets serious about the revenue side, we'll just keep studying it and studying it," Garner said.

Schmidt, the new senator, is reluctant to criticize Graves, his former boss, saying, "He's been at this longer than I have."

Still, he added: "There's a majority in the Legislature ready to cast tough votes, but there has to be somebody to lead us to those votes."

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