

## **Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey Budget and Program Priorities for FY'09**

The Governor requested that all departments submit a status quo budget to his office. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship ("IDALS") requested a status quo budget of \$38,000,025. The Governor recommended to the Legislature that IDALS' status quo request be funded except for a reduction of \$175,000 from the Grape and Wine Commission Fund.

### **Agricultural Diversification Growth and Protection**

- The internet ***Pesticide Sensitive Sites Registry*** is being developed. While pesticides are regulated and safe for agricultural use, some pesticide products contain chemicals that may severely injure or destroy specific crops or honeybees should chemical drift occur. Applicators will be able to quickly locate sites that are most susceptible to drift and plan their application times and spray patterns to coincide with weather conditions.
- The ***Farm to School Program*** is an exciting program. The goal of the program is to link schools with Iowa farmers to provide fresh foods for meals and snacks. With childhood obesity at an all time high, the Farm to school program is a perfect place to introduce children to healthier eating. A Farm to School Council has been appointed and they will be a very important link in making this program successful.
- The ***Choose Iowa*** branding program is in the process of being established. The program will allow retailers to easily identify and promote Iowa food products to fill a growing customer demand for Iowa grown and processed products.

### **Water Quality and Soil Conservation**

- The ***closure of ag drainage wells*** continues with technical assistance to landowners and cost share assistance to establish alternative drainage outlets.
- ***Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program ("CREP")*** is a joint effort between IDALS and USDA to remove nitrates, protect drinking water and reduce hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico.
- ***"FARMS" (Financial And Reporting Management System)*** has been established to allow the public to access the most up-to-date IDALS program information, to access the local Soil Water Conservation District information and to contact IDALS for assistance from the convenience of the home.

### **Industry Regulation and Inspection**

- ***Motor fuel analysis and inspections*** continue to be a priority. As the biofuels industry expands in Iowa, the program will check octane and renewable fuels at retail sites and collect samples at production and wholesale sites.
- ***Dairy, meat and poultry and commercial feed (DDGs) inspections*** continue to ensure human and animal food safety.

### Sustainable Funding of Natural Resources Interim Study Committee

- IDALS supports the concept of finding a **sustainable funding source** for soil conservation programs and practices.

### Odor Interim

- IDALS, DNR and ISU were tasked by the **Livestock Odor Interim** to recommend a **plan to mitigate livestock odor**. The total cost of the plan developed is estimated at \$22.8 million over a five-year period. The Governor recommended \$1 million for the Odor Study.

### Agricultural Emergencies

- The Center for Agriculture Security is part of IDALS. The mission is disaster planning, training and coordination. A major component of the Center is the **Iowa Veterinary Rapid Response Team** ("IVRRT") with over 300 volunteer private sector members. The IVRRT team will respond and assist the State Veterinarian during a highly infectious disease incident or disaster.

### IDALS Future Projects

- **Enhanced Conservation Services** – expand the use of LIDAR state wide. This is technology for reducing survey and design time and insuring accuracy. Estimated cost: \$878,136
- **Soil & Water Commissioners' Expenses**. Increased funding would help offset travel and other expenses incurred by elected soil and water commissioners in all 100 districts. Estimated increase: \$150,000
- **Customer Service Improvements through Information Technology**. IDALS collects over \$8 million in fees annually, resulting in over 100,000 transactions. Unfortunately, these fees are collected from customers through costly, labor intensive and inefficient processes. IDALS is currently pursuing a technology grant from IowaAccess to combine numerous databases. This web portal would allow customers the convenience of paying their licensing fees online and would also allow customers to update information for all IDALS bureaus in one transaction rather than multiple transactions for each individual bureau. Estimated cost: \$310,000
- **Conservation Planning Assistance for the Sustainable Production of Biomass Feed stocks**. A cellulosic ethanol plant will open in 2010. Farmers will need acceptable alternatives to sustain soil productivity and protect water resources before entering into contracts to sell their biomass. Estimated cost: \$1,500,000
- **On Farm Demonstration and Soil Conservation Crop Management Practices**. Farmers would be recruited to participate in a network of on farm research demonstration and education focused on conservation management practices necessary for sustainable production of cellulosic ethanol. Estimated cost: \$750,000
- **Pesticide Safety and Environment Protection**. Due to increased number of aerial and ground applicator incidents and alleged exposure to humans, organic crops and other sensitive non-target areas, it is anticipated that an increased number of commercial applicator investigations will be initiated due to more aerial applications and greater public awareness. Estimated cost: \$750,000
- **Iowa Products Marketing Initiative**. Health concerns, food safety, transportation expenses, and support of local farmers are all factors explaining the increasing consumer demand for Iowa grown and processed products. Support would be increased for the Choose Iowa branding program, manager education and professional development, market awareness campaign, market improvement seed fund, on-farm market improvement plan. Estimated cost: \$100,000