



Utah Farm Bureau to Host Midyear Conference in Park City, July 17-18, Focusing on Energy

The Utah Farm Bureau Federation will hold its annual Mid-Year conference, July 17-18, 2008, under the theme 'Energy and the Farm – Harvest, Conserve and Preserve', at the Park City Marriott hotel. This year's event will focus on escalating energy costs, impacts on farm and ranch production, and public policy implications for all Americans, both as food producers and consumers.

"Oil prices up nearly forty-percent in a single year and fertilizer costs doubling in about the same time have hit America's farmers and ranchers hard," said Leland Hogan, Utah Farm Bureau President. Hogan, head of the state's largest general farm and ranch organization, says the skyrocketing fuel and fertilizer costs are quickly making domestic food production a national security issue.

Americans continue to enjoy abundant, safe and affordable food and fiber. However, American agriculture production is heavily dependent on carbon-based energy resources for fuels and fertilizer. With diesel fuel surpassing \$4.00 a gallon and fertilizer increasing more than 200-percent due to growing demand for natural gas, the "American Agriculture Miracle" is being jeopardized.

Lt. Governor Gary Herbert will attend the conference to discuss Utah's energy policy. Energy efficiency on the farm and renewable energy options will also be highlighted. Additionally, Jason Chaffetz and Bennion Spencer, candidates for the Third Congressional District, will tell Farm Bureau members why they are best qualified to represent them in Congress.

With Utah agriculture heavily weighted to animal and poultry production, the hotly-debated topic of converting food to fuel and the growing impact on America's livestock and poultry feeding industries is of great concern to Utah Farm Bureau members. Jim Sartwelle, Livestock Economist for the American Farm Bureau, will present both sides of the issue.

Representatives from the food retailing and trucking industries will also present on how energy prices are affecting those areas and what needs to be done about it.

"As American consumers, we need to recognize that the food we enjoy, and often take for granted in our corner grocery store, travels more than 1,200 miles on average before it reaches our kitchen table," Hogan said. "This demonstrates the vulnerability of our food production system. However, food producers are not alone. The U.S. transportation sector is also struggling, especially in the trucking industry, because of skyrocketing fuel prices."

"Farm Bureau believes America has the natural resource base and ability to develop our energy resources, as well as alternative and renewable fuels to address the current energy crisis," Hogan said. "Americans want to do the right thing; however, a vocal minority of environmental extremists and elitists are controlling public policy in a way that shackles our energy future."

The Utah Farm Bureau is excited to welcome Niger Innis, spokesman for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) headquartered in New York City, for a keynote address. He will discuss the consequences of U.S. energy policy on America's economically-disadvantaged citizens and minorities. Mr. Innis has

spoken out against the environmental movement's goal of making the energy rich public lands of Utah their exclusive playground. However, escalating gas prices are quickly making that a reality.

“We are also concerned about providing abundant and affordable energy for low-income, fixed-income and elderly Americans,” Hogan said. “This nation has the ability to develop our energy resources to meet the needs of the American people and in an environmentally responsible manner.”

Additional topics that will be covered at the conference will include suggestions on developing greater energy efficiency on local farms and a presentation from Kathleen Clarke, former National Director of the Bureau of Land Management and current Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture for the State of Utah, on the food strategy survey from the Utah Department of Agriculture & Food.

The conference will conclude with breakout sessions on public land water rights, the Rocky Mountain Power rate proposals, an Executive Water Task Force update, and a greatly anticipated presentation on emergency preparedness.

For an agenda or for more information on the conference, please contact Matt Hargreaves, Utah Farm Bureau Director of Communications, at 801-233-3003 (office), 801-455-4320 (cell) or matt.hargreaves@fbfs.com. Media members wishing to attend the conference should contact Matt Hargreaves ahead of time.