



More than 5,000 Attended AgNite Celebration

From the 690-pound blocks of cheese to the thousands in attendance, AgNite was a mega-event to showcase America's food and agriculture industry. The Minnesota Agri-Growth Council hosted AgNite on Sept. 2, at the historic Minneapolis Depot during the Republican National Convention. The event's goal: to celebrate America's food and agricultural industry with thousands of key policymakers, convention delegates, media and top industry leaders.

The nonpartisan event was made possible through the support of more than 50 sponsors, including Minnesota-based Platinum sponsors **AgStar Financial Services, CHS, Hormel Foods, Land O'Lakes** and the **Minnesota Corn Growers Association**.

More than 5,500 guests enjoyed the evening and learned about the industry through multimedia displays illustrating the stories of AgNite sponsors throughout the 60,000-square-foot-venue. The Minnesota flavor of AgNite was evident through a number of in-kind product offerings from organizations with state ties, including pies from **The Schwan Food Company**, three 690-pound blocks of cheese from **Associated Milk Producers, Inc.**, pork chops on a stick from the **Minnesota Pork Producers Association**, **Gold'n Plump** chicken, vodka from Phillips Distilling Company and Opulent; and **Kemps** ice cream. Other in-kind décor included potted flowers from **Syngenta**, flower arrangements from Bachman's, and potted corn, soybeans and wheat from the **University of Minnesota – Extension Service**.



Giant blocks of cheese along with a vast array of treats, from ice cream to Minnesota-made vodka, tantalized guests' tastebuds.

"AgNite was an impressive evening celebrating the successes and innovations of our country's food and agriculture industry," says **Daryn McBeth**, president of the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council.

AgNite achieved its objectives, according to **Steve Krikava**, director of government relations for Land O'Lakes, Inc.

and an Agri-Growth board member. "AgNite positioned the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council as a spokesperson for the food and agriculture industry on a national level," says Krikava. "Agri-Growth's ability to organize, raise money and successfully conduct an event of this magnitude really raised the profile of Agri-Growth and of the food and agriculture industry. We all shared in the prestige of the AgNite event."

Roger Moore, a corn and soybean farmer from Blue Earth, Minn., and immediate past president of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association, says, "With more than 5,000 people there, it was a great chance to network with people from all sectors of agriculture as well as with people from the political convention. We had the opportunity to tell people what Minnesota agriculture is all about and to talk about ethanol and biofuels. It was a successful event for Minnesota corn growers."

Joe Duggan, vice president corporate relations and marketing for Pheasants Forever, a bronze sponsor, also felt positive about AgNite. "I was very impressed with how well attended AgNite was. I talked with people from all over the state and country. The Ambassador to Japan and his wife even stopped by our display and talked with me," he says. "It was exciting that so many of the AgNite guests were already members of Pheasants Forever or had attended banquets supporting Pheasant's Forever in their local communities.



Enthusiastic guests crowd the historic Minneapolis Depot during AgNite.

We work closely with farmers and landowners because what happens in agriculture has a big impact on wildlife conservation efforts."

"Judging by attendance and enthusiasm, AgNite was a great success," says **Jim Green** President and CEO of Kemps. "It was a great venue for reaching out and networking with old and new friends." The ice cream booth was a popular stop for the guests. Kemps served 3,500 scoops of ice cream during AgNite.

Media Attention Positive

Media coverage of the event has been favorable with stories appearing in local, regional and national publications including: *Forbes*, *UPI*, *National Journal Roll Call*, *Congressional Quarterly* and various ag trade publications. Three Twin Cities TV outlets aired live feeds from the event. "The media were appreciative of our inviting them to this event. AgNite has been mentioned in more than 200 stories in broadcast, web and print media," says Agri-Growth Communications Director **Leslie Shuler** who worked closely with the staff from **Himle Horner** to connect media with expert sources from Agri-Growth's

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- 2008 Annual Meeting Registration
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**MINNESOTA
AGRI-GROWTH
COUNCIL**



The Minnesota Agri-Growth Council is a unique trade association whose mission is the promotion of Minnesota agriculture with elected officials, the general public, media, and the farm community. The Agri-Growth Council's 200 members represent the entire food and agriculture sector, from agribusinesses and processors to producer-based commodity organizations. The Council is based in St. Paul and has been working to promote Minnesota agriculture since 1968.

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Member IN FOCUS

Name:

Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station

Web site: www.maes.umn.edu

Location: Headquartered on the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus, the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station funds research in five University of Minnesota colleges and at Research and Outreach Centers across the state.

Founded: In 1878 the Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$2,000 to purchase land for an experiment station and \$1,000 per year for operations. In 1887 the Hatch Act created a national system of state agricultural experiment stations.

Scope: Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station funding supports approximately 300 research projects conducted by more than 300 faculty. Experiment Station research projects employ more than 600 field research and laboratory assistants, technicians and postdoctoral research associates. A partnership with University of Minnesota Extension shares the results of this research with Minnesotans.

Funding: The Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station receives approximately \$45 million in state funding and \$18 million in federal funding.

Q & A with Bev Durgan, Dean, University of Minnesota Extension and Director, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station

What is new with your organization?

Agricultural problems go global quickly. Winds blow rust spores from Africa to South America to the United States. Insects and other pests hitchhike with international travelers. Migratory birds carry diseases across international borders. Helping Minnesota agriculture respond rapidly to the threats from the far corners of the earth has led to a mini-building boom of biosafety facilities on the St. Paul Campus. No other U.S. land grant university has the combination of quarantine and biosafety laboratories to study emerging agricultural problems. These new facilities allow scientists to find solutions to deal with soybean aphids, emerging dangerous pathogens like Ug 99 rust in wheat and devastating livestock diseases.

What are key trends affecting agricultural research?

Research on renewable fuels, food safety and production systems are opening up new areas of study at the same time that the world needs to increase agricultural productivity. The agricultural research questions being asked are growing in both scope and complexity. One way we deal with these challenges is through partnerships. University of Minnesota agricultural research is a cooperative effort between the Minnesota legislature, Minnesota agricultural leaders, commodity groups, federal research funding agencies and University of Minnesota faculty members. Partnerships with advisory boards and researchers in other states help build our capacity to discover solutions. Another challenge is that the agricultural scientists at universities and in private industry are marching closer to retirement every day. There is not a large crop of young scientists coming up through the system to replace them. This is part of a national shortage of engineers and scientists and could be a big problem for agriculture and our national economy. Skilled individuals are needed to make the discoveries of the future.

What are your legislative priorities?

The world is asking Minnesota growers to increase production to feed the growing demand for food and fuel. At the same time, Minnesota growers are asking our researchers and Extension educators for help in controlling the cost of livestock feed, crop inputs and other costs associated with farming. Our legislative priority is to secure adequate funding for our drive to discover answers to the most important questions facing Minnesota.



Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, U of M St. Paul Campus

U.S. Senate Candidates and Agriculture

Candidates for Minnesota's U.S. Senate seat were asked the same agriculture-related questions. Here are their responses. Independent candidate Dean Barkley was also invited to respond. His responses were submitted after the deadline.

FARM BILL

What are your thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of the most recent farm bill? What type of policy do you envision to help keep the agriculture industry, particularly in Minnesota, strong?

COLEMAN:

Although about 80% of Farm Bill funding pays for nutrition and conservation, without our farm families no amount of investment could achieve the important goals of meeting the nutrition needs of children, low-income families and seniors and creating a cleaner environment.

So, the main strength of the Farm Bill is that we protected the farm safety net, including crop insurance, while making improvements, such as higher loan rates and target prices. We provided a revenue program that could help farm families in this period of high production costs. We improved the sugar and MILC programs. We included a supplemental disaster program and my proposal to improve and expand the farm storage facility loan program. And we provided more than \$1 billion in new investment in renewables.

The weakness in the Farm Bill is that, given today's energy and production costs, we need to see higher loan rates and target prices and a stronger revenue protection program. We need stronger requirements for local ownership of renewable energy to safeguard local investment. We need to make certain that earned income qualifies for wind energy tax credits. And we need to pass the Rural Renaissance Act to provide grants and low interest loans for water and wastewater and other critical infrastructure.

FRANKEN:

I applaud the commodity title because it will have an enormous economic impact for Minnesota farm families by ensuring the viability of our state's agriculture industry — on the land and for those in off-farm processing and distribution jobs. Supporting 367,000 jobs, the agricultural and food industry is Minnesota's second largest employer; it's the backbone of our economy and we've got to keep it strong.

The farm bill was overall a good piece of legislation, but I was disappointed that **Sen. Klobuchar's** proposal to prevent non-farmers from getting farm bill payments, as well as the Dorgan-Grassley proposal to limit payments to \$250,000 per farmer weren't included in the final bill. Family farmers need

the support, not millionaires or people who just buy former farm land as an investment.

I'll work to add provisions that protect farmers in volatile times, like triggers to automatically raise target prices and loan rates when input costs go up. I would work with banks and the Farm Credit System to plan for changing credit needs that farmers and grain elevators experience when prices change frequently and unpredictably. I want to see a vibrant farm program, strong rural communities, and an economy that works for all Minnesotans.

ENERGY

Today's high energy costs are creating higher operation costs for farmers, agribusiness and food companies alike. How do you propose to tackle this issue, while keeping in mind the country's energy demands?

COLEMAN:

We must use every tool available to bring down energy prices. Ethanol, biodiesel, wind, clean coal, nuclear, conservation, and domestic oil and gas production.

I am part of three efforts to bring energy prices down, gain independence, and transition to renewables.

The first bill authorizes oil and gas production on the OCS, creating new supplies and tamping down speculation.

The second bill will be offered by 16 Senators — Democrats and Republicans. Our bill, paid for by closing tax loopholes and tax breaks for oil and gas, would transition 85% of all new vehicles from petroleum to renewables within 20 years while making record investment in conservation and energy efficiencies and by authorizing OCS oil and gas production.

The third bill would do for energy infrastructure what Eisenhower did for transportation using federal revenues from OCS oil and gas development to finance wind transmission, CO₂ pipelines, nuclear energy, plug-in hybrid factories, biofuel pipelines, and E-85 corridors.

Finally, it is important to note that while some are just now calling for an Apollo Project on energy, Minnesota farmers launched that rocket some time ago — and it is still climbing — thanks to the 2005 and 2007 Energy Bills and their hard work.

FRANKEN:

The rising cost of fuel affects all Minnesota farmers — cutting into profits each time they fill up the tank of the tractor or combine, purchase fertilizers, or buy feed for their livestock. On the very first day of my campaign, I called for an "Apollo Program" to fundamentally change our energy policy and end our reliance on foreign oil. This Apollo Program will provide financial support for



Norm Coleman (R)



Al Franken (D)

research into new forms of renewable energy and development of currently-identified sources to make them more efficient. I'm talking about corn ethanol and other biofuels, but I'm also talking about solar and wind power.

Especially here in Minnesota, wind power provides a huge opportunity. For example, I wish the farm bill would have allowed farmers to take tax credits on earned income for putting up a wind turbine. Right now, these tax credits only apply to investment income, and almost no family farmers have enough investment income to take advantage of that. On a larger scale, constructing wind farms creates jobs for sheet metal workers, machinists, and truck drivers. Communities with wind farms are more likely to attract and keep young folks. Our rural landscape is full of energy resources just waiting to be tapped — in the ground, in the sky and most importantly, in the hands of Minnesota's farmers.

FOREIGN TRADE

What are your views on foreign trade and its impact on farmers, agribusiness and food companies in Minnesota?

COLEMAN:

Minnesota ranks fifth nationally in farm exports so ensuring that our farmers have access to foreign markets to sell their products is critically important. Toward this end, I have consistently supported trade agreements that have improved America's balance of trade, particularly for our farm goods. Unfortunately, because current WTO trade negotiations have resulted in little, if any, new market access so far, it has become necessary for me to join with a bipartisan group of Senators to make it very clear to U.S. trade negotiators that Congress will not approve a new WTO trade agreement if it is not a net gain for American farmers.

FRANKEN:

Minnesota farmers and workers and businesses are the best in the world and the engine of our state's economy, so I strongly support trade agreements if they work for Minnesota. We need to keep markets open for our goods. But during this administra-

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tion, George Bush and Norm Coleman have had a different standard: they support trade agreements if they work for the big corporations whose executives fund their campaigns. I'm not a protectionist, but I am a fair trader, and I'll stick up for Minnesota in the Senate.

Our trade agreements need to have labor, environmental, and safety standards – and those standards need to be enforced. I think we should have a joint committee in Congress with the power to do real oversight to make sure that our trading partners live up to agreements. Forgive me if I don't trust the executive branch to monitor itself, but something about the people in there now doesn't inspire a lot of trust.

Look, trade is good. We need trade agreements to open up markets for our products and our agricultural exports. But we have to find a balance. Here's how I'll evaluate trade agreements in the Senate. Is it fair to Minnesota workers, Minnesota farmers, Minnesota businesses, and middle class consumers? Does it reflect our American values? We've passed too many trade agreements that don't meet those important tests. Minnesota's middle class families deserve better than the Bush-Coleman approach.

TRANSPORTATION

Minnesota's food and agriculture economy needs a sound, reliable transportation infrastructure system to meet its growing demands. How will you address these needs (waterway, rail, port, highway)?

COLEMAN:

Working together, we got Minnesota the second biggest funding increase in the nation in the last Highway Bill by eliminating discrimination against ethanol. We got a 46% increase for Minnesota, and \$70 million for 17 key Minnesota highway projects. We passed immediate relief in the wake of the I-35W bridge disaster. We worked to pass the Water Resources Development Act – over the President's veto – in order to improve navigation on the Mississippi River and to provide critical flood projects for Minnesota communities like Roseau, Goodview, Willmar, Grand Rapids, and townships in Douglas County. We also worked to provide flood projects for Breckenridge, East Grand Forks, Stillwater, Granite Falls, Montevideo, and Browns Valley, to name just a few. Completing Highway 14 – one of the most dangerous stretches of road in the country – has been a priority for me. We put Minnesota in the top five among States in total USDA rural development funding -- \$3.5 billion over the last seven years. And, we passed the Rural Renaissance Act in the Senate twice in order to provide more grants and low interest loans for rural infrastructure. I have always stood-up for rural Minnesota needs and that commitment will never waver.

FRANKEN:

A healthy economy has a sound infrastructure so that goods and workers can reach their destinations, but our infrastructure has been neglected for far too long. Here in Minnesota, that truth was proven with tragic consequences. Not only are our bridges, roads, ports and waterways crumbling, but our schools and hospitals are as well. By addressing these infrastructure needs, we can create thousands of jobs. I also want to start making plug-in electric hybrid cars and wind turbines here in Minnesota, as well as a mass transit system – I'm talking rail, light-rail, inner-city rail. This is a massive opportunity for employment and economic growth.

I've proposed a new stimulus package that will provide \$2 billion in immediate funding for short-term deferred infrastructure projects – projects that we've identified but have yet to fund. Let's put people to work and fix our roads and bridges. And let's invest in energy-efficient transportation options. We can make our commutes easier and more efficient, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and help our farmers and businesses prosper.

RENEWABLE FUELS

Do you support the current renewable fuels standards? Explain why.

COLEMAN:

Yes. Absolutely. I worked to create the first Renewable Fuels Standard in the 2005 Energy Bill and I worked to expand the Renewable Fuels Standard in the 2007 Energy Bill. Biofuels have helped cut gas prices by 20 to 35 cents per gallon. Biofuels have also reduced our dependence on foreign oil, displaced about 7.2 billion gallons of gasoline this year alone, and cut greenhouse gas emissions by about 13 million tons last year, all with very little impact on food prices which have increased due to a host of other reasons unrelated to biofuels. And biofuels have unleashed economic opportunity and jobs in rural Minnesota, both on and off the

farm. Meanwhile, we have worked to address the concerns of Minnesota livestock producers, including a feed-cost adjuster in the new MILC program and Section 32 program purchases for livestock producers. I stand by the Renewable Fuels Standard.

FRANKEN:

Renewable energy and energy independence are actually inextricably linked. I believe that by focusing on renewable energy – made here in the U.S. – we're also focusing on energy independence.

We need leadership in Washington to invest in wind and solar energy, tidal, geothermal, biomass, and the next generation of biofuels: cellulosic ethanol. By transitioning to alternative energy sources, we decrease our demand and our dependence on oil. We revitalize our manufacturing sector and create high-paying, skilled jobs. A renewable energy economy should be an economic bonanza for rural Minnesota. This is the challenge of our time – and it's also an incredible opportunity.

Congress has only just begun to develop energy policies that will move us in the right direction towards energy independence and addressing global warming. The 111th Congress will need to accelerate the progress on clean energy policies, by adopting legislation to cap and mandate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. An average reduction of 2% each year would achieve the goal of an 80% total reduction by 2050. To reach an 80% reduction by 2050, permits to emit carbon should be auctioned – not given away. Auctioning off permits is the most effective way to cut emissions, drive investors to clean energy options and push the market to demand least-cost alternatives such as efficiency. I actually kind of like the Danish model which allows the permitting fees to be reinvested in those same companies to make the necessary improvements.

Read the rest of the Q&A on workplace/immigration and the environment, by visiting www.agrigrowth.org/Legislative_Updates.html

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UPI interviews Daryn McBeth before the doors open.

membership before, during and after the event. "We believe the connections we made during AgNite will help Agri-Growth be a go-to-point for media as they work on stories about key Minnesota food and ag issues," says Shuler.

To learn more about AgNite, visit www.agrigrowth.org/agnite and read the AgNite blog, which includes photos, podcasts, commentary and stories illustrating America's food and agriculture industry – all captured throughout the six-hour AgNite experience. The blog was produced by **Chuck and Cindy Zimmerman** of ZimmComm New Media, LLC.

Registration Form

The Minnesota Agri-Growth Council Annual Meeting will be held **Thursday, Oct. 30**, at the St. Paul RiverCentre.

In the table below, indicate the number of tables and individuals who will participate.

ITEM	RATE	QUANTITY	\$ TOTAL
Individual Member/Affiliate	\$100		
Individual Non-Member	\$120		
Student	\$40		
Table of eight	\$750		
Total			

Please make name badges for the following participants.

Name	Affiliation
1.	
2.	
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7.	
8.	

Payment information

Billing Information				Payment options	
Your Name				Select one: <input type="checkbox"/> Invoice me using the contact information at left. <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed is my payment with check payable to Minnesota Agri-Growth Council <input type="checkbox"/> Please bill the credit card indicated on this form	
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Please note that NO Cancellations will be accepted after Oct. 16, and "No shows" will be billed.



Minnesota Agri-Growth Council, Inc.

408 St. Peter Street
Suite 20 Skyway
St. Paul, MN 55102

Address Service Requested



Save the Date Annual Meeting

Thursday, October 30, 2008
St. Paul RiverCentre



Minnesota Agri-Growth Council

2008 Minnesota Agri-Growth Council Annual Meeting
American Agriculture: Feeding the World
October 30, 2008 | St. Paul RiverCentre

ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING – MEMBERS ONLY

9:30 a.m. Welcome, reports and elections

10:30 a.m. Agriculture Economy Outlook – **Michael Swanson**, Ph.D., chief agriculture economist, Wells Fargo

11:30 a.m. Break

LUNCHEON BANQUET AND SPEAKERS PROGRAM

12:00 p.m. Welcome – **Chairman Joe Swedberg**, Hormel Foods
AgNite highlight video

Recognition of **David E. Johnson**, longest serving Agri-Growth Council board director
Distinguished Service Award presentation

Keynote address – U.S. Congressman **Collin Peterson**, U.S. House Agriculture Committee chair

1:45 p.m. Break

2:00 p.m. Annual *State of the State on Agriculture* address – **Governor Tim Pawlenty**

2:45 p.m. Panel Discussion: *American Agriculture - Feeding the World*. Moderator: **Michael Yost**, administrator, Foreign Agriculture Service, USDA. Panelists will include high level leaders from food and agriculture industry companies and associations.

4:00 p.m. Remarks, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture **Ed Schafer**

4:45 p.m. Conclude – **Joe Swedberg**, chairman

5 – 6 p.m. Reception