

NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MINNESOTA AGRI-GROWTH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING FEATURES DISCUSSION FROM TOP POLITICAL LEADERS

ST. PAUL, Minn. (Oct. 30, 2008) – The Minnesota Agri-Growth Council Annual Meeting Speakers Program featured some of the country’s top political figures – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture **Ed Schafer**, U.S. Congressman and House Agriculture Committee Chair **Collin Peterson** (D-Minn.), and Minnesota Governor **Tim Pawlenty**. The Council is a nonpartisan advocacy organization for Minnesota’s vast agriculture and food industry.

The meeting, with the theme “American Agriculture: Feeding the World,” drew nearly 400 food/agribusiness industry leaders, farmers, members of Congress, congressional staff, news media and other guests at the RiverCentre in downtown St. Paul, Oct. 30.

As the keynote speaker, Congressman Peterson shared details on how he pulled together the many interests involved in the Farm Bill. He also commented on the economy, indicating that government spending needs to be watched. The Minnesota Agri-Growth Council also named Peterson as its 2008 Distinguished Service Award recipient, recognizing him for his persistence and determination in making the recent Farm Bill a reality.

Governor Pawlenty delivered his annual State of the State Address on Agriculture. The Agri-Growth Annual Meeting serves as venue for this tradition, which is in its sixth year.

The afternoon program also included the panel discussion – American Agriculture: Feeding the World, which featured moderator USDA Foreign Agriculture Service Administrator **Michael Yost** and panelists: Ambassador **Kenneth M. Quinn**, president of The World Food Prize Foundation; **Randy Russell**, Washington lobbyist and chair of the Friends of the World Food Program; **Jack Bernens**, head of industry relations for Syngenta; and former Senator **Rudy Boschwitz** (R-Minn.), humanitarian/hunger relief advocate.

Secretary Schafer also spoke, sharing how the USDA is addressing hunger and malnutrition in the United States and abroad.

The official members meeting preceded the speakers program. The meeting featured a special presentation on the agriculture economy by Michael Swanson, Ph.D., chief agriculture economist for Wells Fargo. The board also re-elected six directors, including Jim Bareksten, CHS; Allen Anderson, retired CHS vice president; Mike Zumwinkle, Cargill; Steven Krikava, Land O’Lakes; Mike Helgeson, Gold’n Plump; and Mark Davis, Davigo, Inc. David E. Johnson, former president and CEO of Cenex/Land O’Lakes Agronomy Company, retired from the board as the longest serving director.

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The Annual Meeting is sponsored in part by ADM, CHS, Faegre & Benson, Hormel Foods, Minnesota Regional Railroads Association, Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, AgStar Financial Services, Stoel Rives, CF Industries and Land O'Lakes. Other sponsors include Syngenta, Wells Fargo, Seneca Foods, Bayer CropScience, Gold'n Plump, Gislason & Hunter, Minnesota Farm Bureau, Qwest and Farmers Union Industries, LLC.

The Minnesota Agri-Growth Council (www.agrigrowth.org) is an advocate for the state's food and agriculture industry. Founded in 1968, the Council is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that represents the shared interests of its 200-plus members, which include food and agriculture businesses, organizations and producers, as well as the service industries that support them.

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