

CONTACT: Mary Bowen • (785) 532-4435 • mjbowen@ksu.edu • www.mab.ksu.edu

Kansas State University's Master of Agribusiness offers professional development conference

MANHATTAN, KAN., July 28, 2011 – Three topics come up frequently when speculating on the future of the food and agriculture industry: energy prices, food security and agricultural policy. The Kansas State University Master of Agribusiness (MAB) program is hosting an event to interact with experts in the agribusiness industry on these timely topics.

The fourth MAB Professional Development Conference will be September 22-23 in Manhattan, Kan., at the Clarion Hotel. The agenda includes key topics addressed from different perspectives: the changing energy situation, global food security and agricultural policy, as well as a roundtable panel discussion on the future of the food and agriculture industry.

"We are pleased to put together a program that addresses some of the most pressing issues facing agribusinesses today. For example, energy markets affect everything from how companies produce their product, to transportation and shipping costs. Attendees will be able to network with each other while hearing from industry experts," said Dr. Allen Featherstone, Professor of Agricultural Economics and Director of the Master of Agribusiness program at K-State.

To open the event on the afternoon of Thursday, September 22, a member of the U.S. Energy Information Administration will provide an overview of the current global energy situation. Following the overview, attendees will hear from Marsha Webster, CFO of Hawkeye Gold, LLC., on renewable energy sources; Dean Oskvig, President and CEO of B&V Energy, on oil sands and other new technology being used to discover and extend traditional energy sources; and an update of the changing energy situation and needs in India by Dr. Rajinder Sidhu of Punjab Agricultural University.

After dinner Thursday evening, Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh, Professor of Agricultural Economics at K-State, will discuss current agricultural policy issues in Washington, D.C. Well-known for his tell-it-like-it-is approach, Flinchbaugh combines his experience in agriculture, economics, and politics to create a straightforward and entertaining discussion.

Global food security will be the focus of the Friday morning sessions. Dr. Featherstone will give a breakdown of food security issues. To gain a better understanding of the global situation, Dr. Pavel Sorokin of Moscow State Agro-Engineering University, will share a Russian perspective on feeding an increasing global population; Terry Garvert, Specialty Foodgrains Team Leader - Grain and Oilseed Supply Chain North America, Cargill, will discuss the outlook for future grains and oilseed production; and Dr. Daniel Conforte, Massey University, will talk about the development of dairy and livestock trading programs between South America and China.

A roundtable panel discussion will end the event and tie these issues together, while offering more thoughts on the future of the food and agriculture industry.

In addition to providing professional development and continuing education, there will be plenty of opportunity for networking with agribusiness colleagues at the event. Wendell Hockens, MAB Graduate from the Class of 2001, is looking forward to gaining a greater understanding of these complex issues while networking.

“Business professionals attending the upcoming MAB Professional Development Conference will learn about topics affecting the food and agriculture industry in a setting that promotes ‘thinking out of the box’, a free exchange of ideas and learning about trends that may have escaped attention in your day-to-day activities. You will also have the opportunity to renew friendships and make new acquaintances by networking with the other professionals attending the conference,” Hockens said.

The event is open to agribusiness professionals interested in learning more about the current global agriculture industry. Registration fee for the conference is \$200 and includes meals and materials. Interested individuals can register online at www.mab.ksu.edu.

K-State’s Master of Agribusiness is an award-winning, distance-education degree program that focuses on food and agribusiness management. Students and alumni work in every sector of the food and agribusiness industry and are located in 40 states within the United States and in more than 25 countries.

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