

AarhusKarlshamn Acquires Rapsona AB

Sweden-based AarhusKarlshamn (AAK) has acquired all shares in Rapsona AB. The newly acquired company, based in Järfälla, north of Stockholm, supplies restaurants, food service, bakeries, small convenience food producers, and other customers with a range of products based on vegetable oil. With estimated net sales in the region of SEK 70 million (\$10.4 million), the company has a strong position in its core business in the Swedish food industry.

“We are delighted with this latest development, which fits in very nicely with our strategy of advancing up the value chain. The acquisition will enable us to offer our customers a more complete product portfolio in line with their needs,” said Jerker Hartwall, AAK group president and CEO.

“This is a natural progression for Rapsona,” says the previous owner Georgios Vasmatzis. “Rapsona is now of a size that calls for a more structured environment to ensure continuous development.”

The newly acquired company will continue to operate under the name Rapsona AB. Georgios Vasmatzis will stay on as a member of Rapsona’s board of directors, and will be working with AAK to develop the company towards new goals.

ASA Outlines Priorities for Bioenergy Program for Biodiesel

The American Soybean Association (ASA) testified recently in Washington, DC, on implementation of Farm Bill Section 9005, the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels, at a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development and Rural Business-Cooperative Service public meeting.



ASA urged USDA to move expeditiously to implement the Bioenergy Program, provide payments to U.S. biodiesel producers in fiscal year 2009, and ensure that payments are provided on all gallons of domestically produced biodiesel.

“To realize that future potential and meet the objectives of greater US energy independence, rural economic development, and improving the environment, we need the Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels to support current domestic biodiesel production,” said ASA Board member Bob Henry, a soybean producer from Robinson, Kansas. “The Bioenergy Program could provide the support necessary to make U.S. biodiesel more competitive and ensure that the new Renew-

able Fuel Standard (RFS) is filled with domestically produced biofuels.”

The RFS for biomass-based diesel begins at 500 million gallons in 2009 and ramps up to 1 billion gallons in 2012. The Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels provides for payments to be made to eligible producers to support and ensure an expanding production of advanced biofuels. The Act provides \$55 million for FY 2009 and 2010, \$85 million for FY 2011, and \$105 million for FY 2012. In addition, the Act authorizes appropriated funding in the amount of \$25 million for each of FY 2009–2012.

“The ASA and National Biodiesel Board worked together to actively support the inclusion of the Bioenergy Program in the Farm Bill reauthorization,” Henry said “As the primary proponents of the program, we worked with Congress throughout the process in support of its inclusion in the final Farm Bill.”

While U.S. biodiesel is being produced from a diverse array of feedstocks, soybean oil is still used for up to 80 percent of U.S. biodiesel production. “A premium is paid for soybean oil over other feedstocks because of the high quality of biodiesel it produces,” Henry said. “The biodiesel market has helped to reduce the historical surplus level of soybean oil stocks and replaced the markets lost as a result of the shift away from trans fats.”

Creation of Global Biofuels Industry Far More Difficult than Previously Thought, Study Finds

Despite the emerging biofuels market, the creation of a global biofuels industry will be much more difficult to achieve than originally thought, according to findings of a recent study. The study was conducted by Accenture, a global management consulting, technology services, and outsourcing company.

Titled “Biofuels’ Time of Transition: Achieving high performance in a world of increasing fuel diversity,” the study reports that although biofuels could make up 10-15 percent of the future fuels mix in the next 10-20 years, getting to that level will be more difficult than previously thought, reflecting the challenges involved in creating full-scale markets in biofuels feedstock, production, transport, and distribution.

The study also identifies challenges in three areas that need to be overcome in order for the biofuels market to become a truly global industry:

- **Environmental.** The growth of biofuels is dependant on making a compelling case to motorists and businesses for the environmental benefits of biofuels. The food-versus-fuel debate might slow demand, but demand will exist as long as governments manage the sustainability issues.
- **Distribution.** There are distribution challenges related to integrating biofuels into the established fuels value chain, with tough decisions to be made around storing, blending and accommodating different grades of biofuels.
- **Infrastructure investment.** While it’s clear that the de-

velopment of an efficient biofuels market requires investment in the infrastructure needed to facilitate and support large-scale biofuels operations and trading, it is difficult to justify the up-front investment when the ultimate returns and size of the market are uncertain.

“Although the ultimate scale of the biofuels industry is yet unknown, we believe that biofuels will be part of the future fuel mix and also herald the evolution of a fuels marketplace,” said Melissa Stark, a senior executive in Accenture’s Energy industry group. “Our research shows that government policy and technology developments are the biggest uncertainties. Technology will continue to improve the economics of biofuels development, but the industry will also have to deal with competing technologies such as plug-in hybrid. And regulatory policies—including those that encourage cleaner fuel versus selecting a type of a fuel—will continue to grow.”

Stark went on to say, “Amid the ongoing debate and controversy over biofuels, one thing seems clear: they will be

here for the foreseeable future,” “The growing number of privately funded independents and agribusinesses—and even international and national oil companies—now developing and investing in biofuels and other alternative fuel strategies is testament to the significant momentum behind biofuels.”

New Research to Uncover Lesser Known Benefits of Canola Oil

Researchers at the University of Manitoba are working to uncover some of the lesser known functional benefits of canola oil, thanks to a Collaborative Research and Development Grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Canola Council of Canada, and Syngenta Crop Protection (Canada) Inc.

Researcher Usha Thiyam and her team of scientists will



investigate the nutraceutical and functional properties of antioxidants such as sinapic acid and tocopherols in canola seed, oil, and meal. By applying novel extraction techniques, they hope to optimize the extracts for use in a number of value-added applications such as oils with greater stability and enhanced nutrition.

“The Canola Council is very pleased to collaborate with NSERC and Syngenta on this project,” said Dave Hickling, vice president of utilization for the Canola Council. “Dr. Thiyam’s work complements some of the work that is already being done on the effects of canola oil on heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. We are looking forward to what she and her team can discover.”

“Syngenta recognizes the importance of building strong demand for canola and its products around the world,” said Judy Shaw, government and public affairs director for Syngenta Crop Protection Canada Inc. “We are pleased to join the Canola Council in keeping the ball rolling for new canola research.”

NSERC’s contribution of \$480,000 over three years is being matched by Syngenta and the Canola Council, for a total of almost \$1 million.

ADM Acquires German Rapeseed Crushing Plant

Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM) has announced that it has signed an agreement to acquire the assets of Campa Sued GmbH & Co KG, subject to clearance by relevant anti-trust authorities.

Campa Sued GmbH & Co KG, based in Straubing, Southern Germany, operates a rapeseed crushing plant that produces oil and meal for the food, feed, and bioenergy markets.

“As ADM expands its leadership position in agricultural processing, this acquisition strengthens our softseed activities in Central and Eastern Europe, where we previously had no processing presence,” said Joe Taets, managing director,

ADM Europe. “Campa’s location on the Danube River, with a presence close to the markets of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, will provide excellent additional market opportunities for ADM.”

Edward King Retires After 51 Years

After a remarkable 51 years with Industrial Filter & Pump Manufacturing Co. (Cicero, Illinois, USA), Edward King retired this summer. This company record is not likely to be broken soon.

King started with Industrial Filter in 1957, working in cost engineering and purchasing. He then moved into sales, first with rubber lining products, then with ion exchange equipment. As the promotions came, King went up the ladder in sales, ultimately becoming vice president of sales.

Industrial Filter started selling equipment for the vegetable oil-processing industry in the late 1950s–early 1960s. During his career, King earned an associate’s degree in engineering from a community college, a bachelor’s degree from Roosevelt University (Chicago), and an MBA from Dominican University (River Forest, Illinois). He also was an adjunct faculty instructor at Triton College, a community college in the Chicago suburbs, where he taught evening classes. It was there that he learned how to keep a class of students, who were taking courses after having worked all day, awake and motivated. King said this learning experience “really helped [me] in sales.” Asked what he felt was most important in his work with Industrial Filter, King replied without hesitation, “Customer satisfaction—and making a product that lasts.”

King and his wife Betty celebrated their 50th anniversary last month. Now, King says, he is planning to spend more time with family and pursue other interests.



AFIA to Host Trade Webcast

By Anne Keller

The American Feed Industry Association will present a webcast on November 13 from 1–3 p.m. EST entitled “From Your Floor to Their Door—Understanding the Trade Maze.”

This educational presentation on exporting procedures will feature Joyce Bowling, assistant director of the National Center for Import and Export of the Agriculture Department’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Bowling’s team represents the U.S. when negotiating trade requirements with other countries for animal products, such as feeds, feed ingredients, and pet food.

Designed to help exporters better understand the process of exporting, the webcast will focus on the responsibility of animal product exporters, explain who to contact within NCIE with questions related to health certificates and facility inspections, and provide receiving-country requirements, including important updates on current trade requirements with Canada, Mexico, and China.

Questions may be submitted by the participants before, during, or after the webcast. Following the broadcast, each participant will be sent a copy of the webcast in CD format.

Registration fees for AFIA members are \$275 per person; non-members \$550. The deadline for registration is November 11.

If you have questions, contact Veronica Pedrotty at vpedrotty@afia.org. For online registration, see the events link at www.afia.org.

Producers of “Ricela” Rice Bran Oil Receive National Award for R & D

A.R. Sharma, chairman of A.P. Solvex Group of industries based in Dhuri, Punjab, India, has received the 2007 award for Research and Development in the Medium Enterprises category, instituted by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India. The award was presented to him by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in a function held recently at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The award carries a cash prize, a certificate, and a trophy.

Briefing the media about his achievements, Sharma claimed that he made a pioneering effort in the country, to develop an eco-friendly, health-friendly and economical process for the production of refined rice bran oil—a unique cooking oil produced from the nutritious brown layer of rice known as rice bran.

Sharma, after his post graduation in law, in 1986, entered the industry engaged in the production of rice bran oil. In those days, almost all of rice bran oil produced in the country was used for making soaps and detergents. However, in countries like Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand, this oil had been used as a premium edible cooking oil. It was popularly known as “Heart Oil” in Japan because of its scientifically proven cholesterol lowering properties. Sharma was upset about the fact that a country like India, which is the second largest producer of rice in the world after China—contributing about 22% to

the total world production of rice—was using this precious oil mainly for non-edible purposes. He made it a mission of his life to revolutionize the rice bran oil processing in India.

In 1992, he, along with some of his friends, formed A.P. Solvex Private Limited. A small, 80-ton-per-day (TPD) solvent extraction plant for extracting crude rice bran oil was set up at Dhuri in 1993. In 1994, the company decided to set up a

refining unit for producing refined rice bran cooking oil and a 25 TPD refining plant was commissioned in 1995.

After a lot of hard work for a few months, Sharma was able to develop a unique process of physical refining for producing good quality refined rice bran oil. He filed a process patent in his name with the Government of India. Unlike light-colored refined oils produced through the conventional process of chemical refining, golden-colored refined oil is produced in this process without the use of harsh chemicals.

Today, A.P. Solvex Group of Industries has emerged as the largest rice bran oil refining group in India. For the past seven years, the parent company, A.P. Solvex Ltd., of Dhuri, has been receiving the “Shri B.K. Goenka Award” instituted by The Solvent Extractors’ Association of India, for being the largest producer of the oil.

Besides marketing the product in consumer packs under the brand name “Ricela,” the company is also supplying rice bran oil for other leading brands in the country.

Sharma, a former president of The Solvent Extractors’ Association of India (SEA), claims that the efforts of his group have revolutionized the rice bran oil scenario in India and today the country has emerged as the largest producer of refined rice bran oil in the world.



In honor of his company’s rice bran oil production, A.R. Sharma receives a trophy from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Bratney Rolls Out New Technology for Odorless Glycerin Production

Bratney Companies, the Des Moines, Iowa, US partner of Germany-based CIMBRIA SKET, provider of biodiesel production technology featuring the CD transesterification process and glycerin refining, has announced the availability of an improved glycerin refining process which removes all odors from its final product.

“With CIMBRIA SKET’s latest improvement to our industry-leading glycerin technology we can now offer refined glycerin which not only meets USP requirements but also is guaranteed to be odorless,” stated Paul Brown, Bratney Companies Biodiesel Industry Leader. According to Brown, comments from several clients were that glycerin from biodiesel has a tendency to be discriminated in the market due to its

odor. CIMBRIA SKET developed an innovative way to remove all odor from glycerin refined through their technology.

“This technology is part of CIMBRIA SKET’s commitment to maximizing profitability for their clients,” Brown explained. “Their process continues to have the best yield of USP-grade glycerin with the lowest operating costs in the industry. The new technology complements a low-cost solution with a way to maximize selling prices and open up markets with discriminating glycerin buyers.”

“Our partnership with CIMBRIA SKET allows us to bring the most widely used biodiesel production and glycerin refining technology to U.S. companies along with new processes such as the odorless glycerin refining capability we are now introducing,” Brown observed.

Government of Canada Invests \$3M in Oilseed Research

Christian Paradis, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Secretary of State (Agriculture) and MP for Mégantic-L’Érable, recently announced that the Government of Canada is contributing \$3 million in funding to the Industrial Oil Seed Network (IOSN) under the Agricultural Bioproducts Innovation Program (ABIP).

“The Government of Canada is committed to developing Canada’s bioeconomy while delivering results for our farmers and protecting our environment,” said Paradis. “This important research and development network will help increase the oilseed value for Canadian farmers and advance our biofuels industry.”

The IOSN will enable a group of experts to work together and exchange ideas and expertise in oilseed biology. Out of the total of \$3M in funding Linnaeus Plant Sciences Inc., in Vancouver, British Columbia, will receive \$2.55M to administer the network and fund non-government research activities.

IOSN will also involve researchers in the United States who will share their significant expertise in soybean oil so that it can be applied to Canadian oilseed crops.

The network will develop a new type of oilseed that will be used solely for the production of petroleum substitutes, in a variety of applications, such as fuel additives for use in heavy equipment and marine towing operations; bio-based hydraulic fluids; and bio-based oils in the construction industry, civic bus transportation, and lobster fishing.

“Oilseed crops have the potential to provide bio-based alternatives to a variety of petroleum products,” said Jack Grushcow, the president of Linnaeus Plant Sciences Inc. and the project lead for the ABIP Industrial Oil Seed Network. “The Industrial Oil Seed Network will transition non-food Canadian oilseeds crops from a low value commodity to a high value industrial feed stock that can substitute for petroleum in a variety of applications. We very much appreciate the support of the Federal government in helping us reach these goals.”

From this funding, a Thetford Mines-located company OLEOTEK will receive a total of \$235,000 as one of the participants in the network.

“Thetford Mines area has shown a great vision when it banked on developing the oleochemical channel, and I am very pleased that our government is once more supporting this move towards diversification,” said Paradis. “OLEOTEK is a leader in the region and its expertise is now accepted across the country. This success extends all over the area.”

“OLEOTEK is very pleased to have obtained this \$235,000 contract with Linnaeus Plant Sciences of Vancouver—a contract made possible by the contribution of the Canadian government,” said Francois Dornier, President of the Centers for the Transfer of Technology. “The contract will give OLEOTEK an opportunity to work with a multidisciplinary team throughout the country to achieve a sustainable development objective.”

A key part of the IOSN’s activities is helping capture val-

ue for the farm community. In addition to increasing the value of oilseed, several other economic development opportunities for the rural economy will be explored. These include blending, packaging and distribution business opportunities that will come from the increased usage of bio-based products.

Cargill, Tissue Technology, and ABF Freight System Partner to Support the Cedar Rapids Community

After record flooding earlier in the summer, Cargill has partnered with Tissue Technology, LLC, and ABF Freight System, Inc., to donate paper products and matching funds valued at more than \$4,500 to The Salvation Army in Cedar Rapids.

Tissue Technology, a Cargill business partner, donated 75 cases of facial tissues and 25 cases of dispenser napkins. ABF Freight System, a Cargill-preferred trucking company, covered the cost of transporting the tissue products from Green Bay, Wisconsin, to Cedar Rapids. Cargill is matching both donations with cash.

“Donations like this are really what make the difference in supporting our community. There are people still displaced by the floods who are in need of basics, and this need will continue for a long time to come,” said Donnell Hoppes, business manager of The Salvation Army of Cedar Rapids. “We’re

grateful for the support of companies like ABF, Tissue Technology and Cargill as we continue to help the community get back on its feet.”

Cargill has several operations in Cedar Rapids, but it was the company’s corn milling complex near the Cedar River that was hardest hit during the floods. The company is making this most recent donation in addition to previously provided disaster relief funds totaling more than \$86,000. Cargill plans to have the corn milling facility back up and running in October, and with it Cargill is launching a new business.

Starting in November, Cargill will begin manufacturing a new line of enhanced fiber additives for the tissue paper industry. Designed to increase the strength of soft tissue, paper and paperboard products while lowering manufacturing costs, the product line is sourced from renewable corn fibers. It presents an alternative to chemicals for achieving the paper properties so valued by consumers.

“We’re looking forward to continuing our commitment to the Cedar Rapids community with the start-up of this new business,” said Rosetta Anderson, quality and logistics coordinator for the new facility. “We saw this opportunity to work with ABF and Tissue Technology as a great way to let the community know that we haven’t forgotten what they went through. We look forward to being part of the neighborhood.”

Census Crush Recap

The Census Bureau recently reported an even lower July soybean crush than the National Oilseed Processors Association (NOPA) report had implied earlier in the month, pegging it at 3.79 million metric tons (MMT). This was more than 27,200 metric tons (MT) below market expectations and 299,000 MT below last year’s July crush.

The slowdown in the crush has drawn down soybean meal stocks from 385,000 MT at the end of June to 268,000 MT at the end of July. Soybean oil stocks also were drawn down from 1.32 MMT at the end of June to 1.26 MMT at the end of July. Domestic disappearance for soybean meal during July continues fall below year-ago levels by a considerable margin for the fourth consecutive month while soybean oil domestic disappearance during July was the highest monthly tally of the 2007-08 marketing year but still below year-ago levels. USDA’s projected 2007-08 crush of 49.8 MMT points to some easing in the tightness of the 2007-08 balance sheet.

From the American Soybean Association’s Soy Export Weekly Update.

Corn Genetics May Lead to Next Generation of Plant-Based Biofuels

Identifying the corn genes involved with plant cell wall generation and learning their function will help develop new, more productive sources of transportation biofuel, according to two Purdue University researchers.

Nick Carpita and Maureen McCann will study genes involved in the formation of cell walls in the group of plants



known as grasses, which includes corn. The goal is to find ways to produce more biomass containing more sugars that can be efficiently processed into biofuel.

“The close evolutionary and genomic relationships of maize or corn to other grasses will take us one step closer to some new, good sources of bioenergy,” said Carpita, a geneticist in the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology. “Maize cell walls and the genes responsible for wall formation are characteristic of all grasses.”

The research team will analyze the genes in both maize and switchgrass. Switchgrass is another plant investigated for biofuel production, but it also needs modification to increase yields.

Researchers already know that most plants use about 10 percent of their entire genome for cell wall construction, but very little is known about the specific functions of those genes.

“Maize has the same genes arranged in the same order and on the same chromosomes as the other grasses,” said McCann, an associate professor of biological science. “We’ll switch genes on and off as we identify them to see what they do. Once we know the genes and their functions, then we can assess which ones might make good targets for modification for enhanced biomass and sugars for processing into biofuel.”

A U.S. Department of Energy/U.S. Department of Agriculture research program to accelerate development of biofuels from plants funds Carpita and McCann’s genomic plant cell wall construction study with a \$1.2 million grant.

Dow AgroSciences Announces Agreement to Acquire Dairyland Seed Co., Bio-Plant Research Ltd.

Dow AgroSciences LLC has announced it is acquiring Dairyland Seed Co., Inc., the West Bend, Wisconsin, based business with plant breeding programs in hybrid corn, soybeans, and alfalfa, and Bio-Plant Research, Camp Point, Illinois, a business affiliated with Dairyland Seed with a primary focus on licensing of soybean, alfalfa, and wheat germplasm. Additional terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

“Dairyland Seed has a product portfolio and brand that strengthens our corn, soybean, and alfalfa business in the U.S. and globally,” said Jerome Peribere, president and CEO, Dow AgroSciences. “Furthermore, Dairyland Seed’s investment in research and development complements our increased invest-

ment in developing industry leading proprietary plant breeding programs.”

The agreement includes all crop genetics, brands, plant breeding programs in hybrid corn, soybeans and alfalfa as well as Dairyland’s research, processing, and production locations. Tom Strachota, currently CEO of Dairyland Seed, will remain with the business to lead Dairyland Seed as Dow AgroSciences’ general manager for the business. Chuck Simmons will continue to lead Bio-Plant Research Ltd. as its general manager. Dow AgroSciences will continue to independently market Dairyland Seeds under the Dairyland brand. Dairyland Seed will continue to be headquartered in West Bend.

“The seed industry has gone through some dramatic changes in the last 10 years. And while we’ve been highly successful, our family owners along with our board felt that in order to grow in the future and best utilize our world-class genetics, we needed to align with a leading company in the area of biotechnology, marker assisted breeding, and other emerging technologies,” noted Tom Strachota, CEO for Dairyland Seed Company. “Our goal was to find a partner who shared our values, our philosophies and our commitment to employees and we’ve found that with Dow AgroSciences.”

EBB Opposes Any Compromise Undermining the 10% Binding Biofuels Target

The coming weeks will be decisive for the future of renewable energy for transport in the European Union, with Members of the European Parliament and Member States set to make crucial choices about how much biofuels should be encouraged and under what conditions.

One idea that appears to be gathering speed with some legislators is to chop the proposed 10% target for renewable energy in transport into pieces, creating quotas for biofuels, electricity, and hydrogen, etc. This is misguided, according to the European Biodiesel Board (EBB). The EBB says that hydrogen and electricity are not renewable per se, much less sustainable. To be labeled as “renewable” EBB says that electricity and hydrogen would need to be produced using exclusively renewable energy sources and not fossil energy, as is the case for more than 80% of EU electricity and hydrogen today.

According to the EBB, in this context, dictating that up to half of the targets be met by electricity and hydrogen would mean transforming 40-50% of the transport obligation back into fossil energy on the pretext of addressing concerns about biofuels sustainability. An EBB press release stated that, “Those promoting such scheme are purposely confusing two very different concepts: on the one hand energy carriers such as hydrogen and electricity whose main added value is to avoid generating polluting emissions (for urban transportation only); on the other hand truly renewable energy sources such as biofuels that will help displacing fossil energy use.”

The EBB believes a 10% binding target for renewable energy for transport—with stringent sustainability criteria—is the only way to enable industry to make the investments needed to supply a meaningful quantity of sustainable biofuels and develop new, improved technologies by 2020. The organization said that the reality is that, by 2020, the 10% target will be mostly met by biofuels, but there will be room for other technologies, and it is the market that should decide how these develop within the framework of the EU's renewable energy policy.

GEAPS Gears Up To Expand Distance-Education Program

After offering five distance-education courses in 2008, the Grain Elevator and Processing Society (GEAPS) is gearing up for as many as nine next year.

“Our members have told us repeatedly that they want high-quality, real-world training and educational opportunities without having to travel to a conference, and we're responding,” said GEAPS International President Mark Daniels. “Our distance-education program continues to expand.”

The program, a partnership between GEAPS and Kansas State University, develops courses that are delivered online and by CDs that are mailed to students. No travel is required. This year, GEAPS-KSU offered courses on grain-quality man-

agement, facilities planning and design, safety management, and the basics of ethanol processing (twice). More than 140 students—mostly grain-industry professionals—enrolled in the courses and completed the work.

All of the distance-education courses are designed specifically for GEAPS members—professionals in grain operations and related fields.

Next on the distance-ed curriculum is “Electrical Safety,” a five-week, ten-lecture course set for January-February 2009. The course, to provide a basic understanding of electrical safety requirements of the grain and grain-processing industries, is being developed by GEAPS member Doug Forst, president of CMC Industrial Electronics, Burnaby, B.C., with input from KSU and an expert team of peer reviewers.

Also tentatively planned for 2009 are new courses on aeration system design, advanced ethanol production, quality-management systems, and the Federal Grain Inspection Service's grain-inspection system. The quality-management course is being developed by Iowa State University, and the FGIS orientation course by FGIS—both in conjunction with GEAPS members and KSU.

Also in 2009, the GEAPS-KSU program is planning to offer repeat courses on safety management of grain and processing facilities, basic ethanol production, facilities planning, and design and grain-quality management.

GEAPS' Distance Education Program Oversight Committee will review the 2009 program and determine a schedule.

Some South Plains Growers to Swap Cotton for Grain

By Cory Chandler

According to researchers, high demands for biofuels and higher grain prices have led to a decrease in cotton production on the South Plains and an increase in the production of corn and grain.

As grain prices spike on the back of biofuels demand and the Plain's burgeoning dairy industry brings an influx of hungry milk cows to the region, South Plains producers are increasingly giving cotton acreage over to crops such as corn and sorghum.

Or, at least, that's the trend researchers have found in the 26 Hale and Floyd county farms participating in the eight-year Texas Water Conservation Alliance (TAWC) study.

"That's the trend we're seeing—at least with this demonstration—but it may be fairly consistent across the South Plains," said project director Rick Kellison, a research associate at Texas Tech University.

Since 2005, participating producers have reduced cotton production by around 25 percent while increasing corn acreage by 50 percent and grain sorghum by 17.5 percent to take advantage of escalating grain prices.

The TAWC, a \$6.2 million undertaking partnering Floyd and Hale county producers with industries, universities, and

government agencies, aims to extend the life of the Ogallala Aquifer while maintaining profitability for farmers and communities.

It uses on-farm demonstrations to probe variations of crops and livestock grazing. The results will help determine production practices, technologies and systems that can maintain individual farm profitability while getting the most water efficiency.

