COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Board of agriculture experts to meet at MU on Friday

By GH Lindsey
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COLUMBIA — It’s a precarious time for the world food supply.

More than 170 million people wake up hungry every day. Last summer brought the worst drought the Midwest had seen in more than 50 years, and another dry summer is expected this year. And on top of those challenges, the global population is projected to reach 9 billion people by 2050.

“We can’t afford not to be well prepared.” MU Chancellor Brady Deaton said.

In order to address these issues and others, agriculture researchers and specialists will gather at MU on Friday for a meeting of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development.

The meeting will be held at 8 a.m. at the Fred W. Smith Forum in the Reynolds Journalism Institute. The board’s primary purpose is to advise the U.S. Agency for International Development on how to best use its resources to fund agricultural development and research in the hopes of ensuring a stable food supply and ending hunger around the world.

“I’d like to address the needs of hungry people, for children to be more well-fed, for people to have more stable incomes and for communities to have a great sense of food security,” Deaton said. “They should be able to know that they can get up in the morning and eat.”

Deaton offered to host this board meeting at MU because of the university’s strong agriculture programs and the board’s mission to engage with land-grant universities. Past board meetings have taken place in Washington D.C. or Des Moines, Iowa.

The agency has more than $100 million in research funding to support its mission, Deaton said.
Addressing the problems of international hunger and food insecurity is important because it is the one of the most basic human needs, said Carol Oliver, a member of the local chapter of Heifer International.

"There are so many problems in the world and hunger is at the root of so many of them," Oliver said. "Without sustenance people are not able to fix their other problems."

The board includes three past winners of the World Food Prize, considered the “Nobel Prize of agriculture,” and three heads of public, land-grant universities, along with representatives from private volunteer organizations and the private sector.

The agricultural development board’s purview is not limited to just the farm. The U.S. development agency and the board take into account the entire food chain, from farm to table, and also is involved with research that can improve food security in developing countries, the board’s executive director Susan Owens said.

“The food isn’t just sitting out there,” Deaton said “We recognize the interdependence of these areas, much like interdisciplinary research at a university.”

In addition to attending the meeting Friday, members of the board will be speaking with groups around campus to talk about international engagement. For example, Gebisa Ejeta, the winner of the 2009 World Food Prize for his research into drought-resistant sorghum, will speak with graduate and postdoctoral students in MU’s Interdisciplinary Plant Group.

Former Heifer International president and current board member Jo Luck was also scheduled to give a public talk Thursday, but had to cancel due to family health issues. Two representatives from Heifer, Cleo Kottwitz and Mel West, will speak in her place at 4 p.m. in the Adams Conference Room in the Veterinary Medicine Building.

Deaton, who was appointed chair of the board by President Barack Obama in April 2011, has had a lifelong interest in agricultural economics and food production issues. He taught vocational agriculture in Thailand during a stint in Peace Corps and has multiple degrees in the field.

“Growing up on a small farm in eastern Kentucky, I saw people there who didn’t do it right and they had problems with health, nutrition and income instability,” Deaton said. “I also had an early experience in the Peace Corp that gave me a first-hand view of how that can be applied at the village level.”
Senate approves tax cut measure

Cuts would slash $500M.

By Rudi Keller

JEFFERSON CITY — Sen. Kurt Schaefer joined all but one Senate Republican on Tuesday to support a tax cut that would reduce state general revenue by nearly $500 million over five years.

The cuts wouldn't affect next year’s budget but would slash more than $200 million from general revenue in fiscal 2015. The cut would grow by $75 million to $80 million each year, according to the estimate that accompanied the bill. General revenue collections will be about $8 billion next year.

Schaefer, who is chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said he supported the bill because he sees fat in state government.

"I don't know why anyone is equating an income tax with automatic cuts in public education because I don't see it," said Schaefer, R-Columbia.

The bill passed 23-11. Only Sen. David Pearce, R-Warrensburg and chairman of the Senate Education Committee, broke rank to join opposition Democrats. Gov. Jay Nixon has come out strongly against the bill, calling it an effort to shift the tax burden to the state's poorer residents.

With the University of Missouri System expecting its first appropriation increase after three years of cuts, Schaefer said it has more to worry about from Nixon than from GOP tax cuts: "The General Assembly has given it more funding for the last four straight years in a row than the governor was willing to release," Schaefer said. "And the governor withheld for the last four years without any shortfall in the budget and carried over money for the following years."

The largest year-to-year surplus under Nixon was $168 million after fiscal 2011. He withheld $249.7 million in "extraordinary" withholdings that year but not from UM. After the devastating tornado struck Joplin in May 2011, Nixon promised up to $150 million in state aid. In the end, state costs were lower.
Republican supporters called the bill passed yesterday an effective response to cuts made in Kansas that would drive business in western Missouri across the state line.

"I believe cutting taxes on individuals and businesses will drive our economy to succeed," the bill's sponsor, Sen. Will Kraus of Lee's Summit, said as the Senate prepared to vote. He called the bill a balanced, phased-in approach.

The bill would cut the top income tax rate by 0.15 percent per year and reduce the minimum income covered by that rate. When fully effective, the top income tax rate would be 5.25 percent. The bill also would allow business owners who include receipts in their personal income to exclude half that amount.

Other changes include a cut in the corporate tax rate and a sales tax exemption for sales at amusements and recreations such as bowling alleys and sporting events.

The bill would increase the sales tax by 0.1 percent for five years. At the end, the total state sales tax rate would be 4.725 percent. It would also end the tax exemption on textbooks.

Sen. Paul LeVota, D-Kansas City, on the Senate floor predicted that a familiar pattern would emerge — Republicans would cut taxes, then appropriate based on predictions that did not include the cuts. "Then revenues won't come in, and the money will be withheld."

Schaefer, in his third year as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, said Republican budgets have been responsible. Nixon has withheld money unnecessarily to build a cushion for the coming year instead of following legislative direction, Schaefer said.

With a Department of Social Services budget of $9.4 billion compared to a higher education budget of $850 million and a public schools aid program of $3 billion, the state's priorities are wrong, Schaefer said.

The school funding formula is more than $650 million short of the money state law says it should receive.

"If it was up to me, I would cut a lot more stuff and fully fund the formula," Schaefer said. "And if people think that's inappropriate, then we need to change the formula."
Kelly uses budget to get governor’s attention

Issue involves his withholding.

By Rudi Keller

JEFFERSON CITY — Rep. Chris Kelly is upset with Gov. Jay Nixon and using the state Department of Health and Senior Services to get his attention.

Kelly wants Nixon to release $200,000 for the Missouri Area Health Education Centers program and has cut $200,000 from the department's administrative budget for the coming year in retaliation. And yesterday, Kelly filed an amendment to cut $100,000 more if he doesn’t get what he wants.

"My area of communication is about the provision of health care for rural Missouri, to which they have been completely unresponsive," Kelly said.

The program Kelly wants funded helps introduce students from junior high and high schools to medical professions. The money is part of $5 million in extraordinary withholdings from general revenue appropriations still in force, said Linda Luebbering, state budget director.

Kelly aimed his cut at the Department of Health and Senior Services. When Rep. Jill Schupp, D-Creve Coeur, questioned the size and need for the cut, Kelly said it was the only way left to him to get a message to Nixon.

"We all know the concept of asking them nicely to communicate is an abject failure," Kelly said.

The appropriation was included in that department’s budget, although it is a program coordinated by the University of Missouri School of Medicine with Saint Louis University and the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine as partners.

State support for the seven rural and two urban centers has dwindled from $1.5 million to nothing unless the appropriation is released, said Weldon Webb, associate dean for rural health at the MU School of Medicine.
The school has a program to identify students from rural areas and keep them identified with their home areas to promote their return to provide care. The centers help teens see and understand what it means to work in health care, Webb said.

The cuts are "crippling this program in the recruitment of kids into rural and urban underserved areas," Webb said.

He called the program a "pipeline" into medicine. Students have opportunities to shadow providers and are provided mentoring to make sure their grades and coursework qualify them for pre-med programs. The program also shows students the opportunities in other medical professions, Webb said. "Many of these kids don't even think about a health care career."

State general revenue receipts are growing faster than expected, and Luebbering conceded that $200,000, or even the $5 million remaining, is not a large amount in the overall budget. "We are not concerned about general revenue itself," she said.

But lawmakers budgeted for a $30 million increase in lottery earnings this year, and it is not occurring, she said. That strains general revenue.

"If we let that $5 million go, we may have to restrict something else," she said. "If general revenue comes up enough, we will."
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Pros, cons of gun control debated at MU

By Caitlin Kerfin
March 13, 2013 | 8:58 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — An MU law professor and a senior fellow from the Cato Institute argued the pros and cons of federal gun control legislation in front of a packed auditorium at the MU School of Law’s Hulston Hall on Wednesday afternoon.

The panelists were professor Richard Reuben and fellow Ilya Shapiro. Rodney Uphoff, the school’s Elwood Thomas Professor of Law, moderated the debate but also voiced his opinions.

The Mizzou Federalist Society decided to host the debate given that gun-control legislation is being considered in Congress and a barrage of executive orders issued by President Barack Obama in the wake of December’s school shootings in Newtown, Conn.

The Federalist Society comprises conservative, libertarian and politically moderate law students who strive to preserve federalism, separation of powers and judicial fidelity to the text of the Constitution, according to the Law School’s website.

On Wednesday, Shapiro argued the more conservative view of gun regulation, while Reuben took a more liberal stance.

A matter of perception

One of the main points of contention was whether tighter requirements on backgrounds checks for those who buy guns are necessary.

"We need to enforce what's on the ground before we introduce more provisions," Shapiro said. He said the government doesn't do enough now to crack down on those who sell guns to people who fail background checks. "Stuff isn't being enforced."

"We do have lots of regulations. Sure, pass your background check law, pass your ban of magazines over 30 or 20 — whatever's constitutional," Shapiro said. "That will not affect
anything — at all. Let's get that over with, and then we can actually start dealing with the problem."

On Tuesday, Democrats pushed a bill through a U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee requiring nearly universal background checks for firearms buyers, despite solid Republican opposition, according to the Associated Press. The proposal faces a difficult path through Congress, where GOP lawmakers say it would have little impact on crime and warn that it is a precursor to a federal registry of gun owners.

The bill would require background checks for transactions between private people. They now are mandatory only for sales by licensed gun dealers.

Shapiro believes the regulations proposed are "fluff" and would fail to address the real issues of gang-related violence, drug crime and mental illness.

Reuben agreed that some of the proposals would be “feel good” legislation but that more needs to be done.

"The issue I have with much of what Shapiro said is that it leads to a result of no regulation," Reuben said. "It ends up leading to no regulation, and that's fine if you don't perceive that there's a problem. But I do, and I think that's why it's an issue right now is that there's a perception that assault weapons are a problem."

Uphoff said he agreed that the regulations being discussed probably wouldn't put "a serious dent into the problem of crime control."

"We have other things we have to deal with but we as a nation love to pass feel good stuff," he said.

**Assault weapons**

In Congress, a proposal by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., to ban assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines was scheduled for a committee vote on Thursday according to the Associated Press. That bill is expected to win panel approval but die in the full Senate when the chamber considers gun legislation, probably in April.

"As far as I can tell for practical purposes an assault weapon is anything that scares Dianne Feinstein," Shapiro said.
The panelists avoided a direct debate about the definition of assault weapons but did argue their stances on whether that class of guns should be banned. One model that did come up was the AR-15.

"It looks like one of those scary guns in movies to people that don’t know about guns, which is why it has to be banned," Shapiro said with a note of sarcasm.

The issue with the AR-15 isn’t functionality. It's cosmetic, he said. He noted that an AR-15 normally comes with a scope and a tripod and can appear intimidating.

Reuben, however, thinks people need to work toward a definition of assault weapons that both sides can agree on so that lawmakers can address the problem. There are a number of weapons that go beyond what one needs to protect him- or herself against a life-threatening assault in the home, he said.

Shapiro and Reuben agreed the black market could still arm criminals with assault weapons, regardless of any ban. Reuben, though, said he thinks a ban would push the price of black-market guns up, making it harder for criminals to get them.

Daniel Hartman, president of the Federalist Society, said he was pleased with the turnout and the tone of the debate.

“Both sides were presented fairly with equal amount of time for each to speak.”

*Some of the information in this story was contributed by the Associated Press.*

*Supervising editor is Scott Swafford.*
St. Louis Native Witnesses Pope Francis Being Introduced

ST. LOUIS, MO. (KPLR) – A University of Missouri student who is studying abroad in Rome was at the Vatican when the new Pope was introduced.

Eric Savio is a senior and a St. Louis native.

“I feel fortunate to have been here to see two Popes, and I also will never forget seeing the new one introduced,” he said. “I just kind of walked into this amazing opportunity.”

Savio said the feeling of being there for the historic event was something he will never forget.

“Everyone was cheering really loud and then it got quiet when he came out,” he said. “Then he started to speak and there were more cheers.”

Eric said he and his friends stood in the cold for hours.

“It was raining, but a little while before he came out it just stopped,” he said.

On Thursday, Eric is leaving Rome.

“If it would not have happened now I would have missed it,” he said. “I am just glad I was here.”

Eric is Catholic and said Pope Francis is a symbol of a new start for the church.

“He has new ideas, and that just makes it exciting,” he said.

Eric is scheduled to return to Missouri in May.
LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Dehumanizing terms are used in abortion debate

The letter "Emergency contraception works by delaying ovulation" (March 11) twice improperly used the term “fertilized egg.” It is part of the dehumanizing terminology of embryonic stem cell research and abortion proponents.

A fertilized egg has a very, very short life. That is because as Dr. Randy Prather, a University of Missouri professor, recounted about 10 years ago, the instant that a sperm penetrates and fertilizes the egg, the new entity immediately undergoes remodeling and reprogramming with its full genetic base contributed by both parents. At that instant, conception occurs and a new human life emerges — not at implantation some time later. A due date is calculated from conception, not at implantation.

That new entity is a human embryo at day one in the zygote stage — which lasts through day 3 of age. Calling that new human being a “fertilized egg” obscures and obfuscates its humanity. And it implies that not even an embryo yet exists.

In 2006, Amendment 2 proponents in Missouri improperly redefined what human cloning is, and then legalized that false definition of cloning. They called a human embryo in a later stage of development a blastocyst. Again implying that a human embryo does not yet exist. But it really is a human embryo in the blastocyst stage. This stage lasts until about the 150 cell-stage, which is right before implantation in the uterus.

Thus, those proponents could extract that embryo’s cells, which killed it, and ostensibly not kill a human being. Words do matter.

A.F. Kertz • Glendale
Death Notices

- **Julia Davis, 82**  
  Former dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Minnesota,  
  March 8, 2013, in Iowa City.

- **Merton Joseph Peck, 87**  
  Professor emeritus of economics, Yale University, March 1, 2013, in Gainesville, Fla.

- **Richard Hatley, 76**  
  Former professor and department chair of educational administration, University of  
  Missouri at Columbia, March 6, 2013, in Blue Springs, Mo.