

OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

CLASS XVI

Scribe Notes
Seminar 6
March 2-9, 2013

Theme: “*Understanding National Government and Its Influence on Agriculture*”

March 2, 2013

Scribe: Jane Fuhlendorf

Summary:

The class traveled from their homes in Oklahoma to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania without incident.

Narrative:

Class members assembled adjacent to the United Airlines counter at the Will Rogers World Airport located at 7100 Terminal Drive in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Travel documents were distributed by Jane Fuhlendorf and Edmond Bonjour. Travel arrangements were planned by Edmond Bonjour in conjunction with Agrotours. Class XVI participants obtained boarding passes and re-assembled at the gate for on-time boarding. The departure of our connecting flight at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston was on-time as was arrival at Baltimore-Washington International Airport. After baggage was collected, participants boarded a charter bus and traveled approximately 75 minutes to Thurmont, Maryland for a pre-paid buffet dinner at Cozy Restaurant. The short half-hour drive to Gettysburg via charter was uneventful. Class members checked into the Quality Inn Motor Lodge and enjoyed a few hours of downtime.

March 3, 2013

Scribe: Steven Alspach

Class XVI of the OALP visited the Gettysburg Battlefield. We were joined by Ed Guy, a licensed Gettysburg guide, and he took us on a bus tour of the battlefield located north of Gettysburg. We began the tour on the northern end of the battlefield where Mr. Guy explained the confederate forces attacked from the north. To the south, in the distance, we could see Round Top and Little Round Top and it was explained to us that they were the key to winning the battle. General Robert E. Lee recognized that those two hills were the key real estate and he assigned General James Longstreet to take the position but Longstreet got lost and arrived too late to claim the hill. This gave the Union Army a great advantage in the battle.

The next stop of our tour was on top of Little Round Top where we could see the battlegrounds quite easily. From there you could look down right along the lines of the Union Army. It would have been a commanding position had the Confederates taken that hill.

Our final stop of the tour was near the Pennsylvania Memorial on the battlefield. It is located very near the site that Union Major General George Meade and his army held off the final charge of the Confederate Army that is named after Major General George Pickett. The failure of the charge was the defining moment of the battle and ended the threat from the Confederate Army as they retreated the following night.

Following the tour, we had lunch at General Pickett's Buffet Restaurant then departed Gettysburg for Lebanon, Pennsylvania to meet with Stan Bucher and we spent the rest of the day with our host families.

March 4, 2013

Scribe: Dianne Jeans

After our time with our host families, we reconvened at Umberger's, which was like an Ace Hardware Store at 8:45 a.m. A few of the classmates arrived early to look, shop and take pictures with their host family.

Weaver's Sawmill in Mt. Wilson had electrical problems and was unable to host a tour so that allowed us more time to tour Founders Hall at the Milton Hershey School, Hershey Foods, and shop at Hershey's Chocolate World.

Founders Hall was opened and dedicated on September 13, 1970 and was built over a three-year period in the late 1960s as a tribute to the School's founders, Milton S. and Catherine Hershey. As the school's most recognizable building, it contains offices for the administrators and business functions of the school. It also includes a Visitors Center where more than 50,000 guests per year learn about the school's mission through various displays and a short film about the Milton Hershey School. The building contains a 2,700-seat auditorium where students attend weekly chapel services, assemblies, and commencement ceremonies.

While our group encompassed this marble tribute to Milton Hersey, our guide, Ken Palovitz, told us about Milton's business failures and his business relationship with his Aunt Mattie. He explained how Milton's failures led to his success. His recipe for caramel made him a millionaire upon selling the recipe. Ken attended and graduated from the school during 1945-1950. He explained the stories that each mural tells about Milton and the school. He also explained about the flags that surround Founder's Hall atrium. We saw a short informative film about Milton and Catherine Hersey, the school's mission, and learned its history from the humble beginnings to the schools aspirations. We then toured the building and our guide gave a few insights of the day to day operation during the time he was a student verses how today's students day to day life has changed. He and his brother had dairy cows to milk twice daily with chores to follow. Such activities and responsibilities are nonexistent today. His experience at the school was of all male orphan students and today it is open to all children of any race, creed, or religion that come from a lower income family. Students must be between 4-15 years of age, have the ability to learn, be free of serious emotional and behavioral problems, and be born in the United States. Although preference is given to children born in Dauphin, Lancaster, or Lebanon counties in Pennsylvania and children from the rest of Pennsylvania in accordance with the School's Deed of Trust, current students come from many states. The school examines need, motivation, and personal character in making its final selections. Enrollment is not guaranteed and prospective students must demonstrate the capability to benefit from the programs the school offers. Students receive a high quality education, and access to excellent athletic, recreational and art facilities. Room and board are provided in a nurturing \$1.2 million group home that is age appropriate with a minimum of 9-12 other students in the home. Students receive many sets of clothing, shoes, medical and dental care, and assistance with continuing education after graduation to any college in the United States except of Hawaii. All of these things are available to the student at no cost to the student's family. From the 1900s to present, the school has graduated over 9000 graduates and their goal is to have an enrollment of 2000 students.

We saw the High School cafeteria in Founders Hall that provided lunch for high school students as well as staff. The cafeteria was updated from a medieval modify to a more modern and peaceful modify. Our guide explained the paintings on the wall and allowed us to look down at the campus.

Next we were escorted to the 2,700-seat auditorium where Ray Brace and Dave Morris gave us information about the Hersey product and how they obtain the ingredients for their products. They told us the cost of both production and raw materials. They also shared about what commodities are needed and how the Oklahoma Spanish peanuts and the drought is effecting there product and what measures they are doing to secure enough

Spanish peanuts. They also told how much of the Hersey profit goes to fund the school. They explained to us that it was Milton's wishes not to broadcast that a portion of the Hersey products was helping fund the school. He also did not want this information to be used to promote Hersey's products. The Hersey Cooperation doesn't make Snicker bars or plain or peanut M&M's any more but they make the other candy bars.

Before leaving on a farm tour of the Hersey School, Ken Palovitz saw that I was taking notes during the tour and he told me an unknown bit of information about Mr. and Mrs. Hersey. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hersey had reservations on the Titanic. Mrs. Hersey persuaded Mr. Hersey to stay and let her shop a few days more before returning to the states. What might have happened if they boarded the Titanic? The rest is history.

The farm and home tour was given by Ken McCall. The farm three years ago had 120 Holstein cows but now they have none. He told us that the students are able to have an animal for a 4-H project and for showing purposes. The student can keep 40% of the prize monies. He told us about the way it was when he was a student at the school, like the ice cream store selling \$1.00 ice cream cones, and the four acre orchid of apples and peaches was worked by the students. The work was required of the students. Now students work if they have had behavioral problem and they can perform the work only in certain weather conditions. He showed us the \$1.2 million group homes and that each family has ten passenger vans to drive students to their activities and appointments. He explained the major problem is now sink holes. He showed a newly built home that was near a sink hole and the home is now abandoned. He explained that the students have a ropes course available to them and he showed us the barn and workshop and how certain equipment is no longer required on the farm like the corn crib. All the milk needed to produce the Hersey products is now purchased from the surrounding dairies. He explained that he now is a one man show. He now uses no-till practices and a lot of his farm help doesn't exist. He has his wife help him around the farm and she also is a teacher at the school.

We Arrived at Hersey's Chocolate World at 12:15 p.m. Here is a link to a YouTube video to explain the animated ride (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6Mn8atjPtE&feature=player_embedded). After the ride we saw pictures taken of us during the ride that we could purchase if we so chose. Next we had a chance to purchase as many chocolate products that our wallets, credit cards, and luggage would allow.
www.hersheys.com/chocolateworld.com

We loaded the bus and headed to lunch at the Hoss's Steak and Sea House. We were given menus to look over while in route to make our selection from a list of entrees.

Next we headed to what I thought was the most exciting part of this trip – The King Family Farm. Stan Bucher told us a few things to observe. Do not take a picture of the King's with their face in the picture – only the back is acceptable. The home is quiet due to no television or radio; one can hear the clock ticking. The home was recently remodeled and Sadie King was very proud of her new home. The home is furnished with items that Elam made himself. The furnishings are limited and are practical.

Stan Bucher gave us a history lesson about the Amish religion from the beginnings of 1517 to the 1690. He told us about the customs of shunning, forgiveness, Rumspringa (a young man's time to explore the English), pot pie dinners, farming practices, farm equipment, diesel engine use, skills like cabinetry making, telephone use, and car use. He explained the difference of a good driving horse and a work horse. The Amish use driving horses as a social status as well as the cart which will have more chrome on the outside of the body. American icons such as Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny are ok in their church. The Bishop determines everything they do and wear. They can read "LIFE" magazine, read books, play board games, and play outside. They artificially inseminate their animals. A wedding ceremony starts at 9:00 a.m. and lasts until noon. Only a short amount of time is given to talking about their vows and about the couple – most of the ceremony is about why you shouldn't divorce each other.

When we arrived at Elam and Sadie King's home we were early. Both Elam and Sadie entered the bus and we were able to ask questions and they were able to meet and learn what each of us does for a living. Elam was

shocked at the amount of acres a few of us farm. Stan told us that Elam boards one of his horses about 30 miles from his home. Stan and Elam explained why Elam does that.

Sadie was very hospitably and showed us everything from the dairy cows, milking equipment, driving horse to work horses, and the cart and we had the chance to look inside and take pictures of it. Sadie was proud of her new remodeled home and she showed us where they lived during the remodeling and where church services were held. The bonus was when she took us for a tour inside her home. The family was very candid and Sadie answered our questions about arranged marriages to midwives. Sadie told us that she was 46 years old. She was surprised that many of us ladies were of the same age range. Our class presented the gifts to the family. The teenage daughter who was sewing on the electric sewing machine power by a car battery stopped sewing to enjoy the present presentation. Both Stan and Edmond were shocked that our class had access and a tour of their home. We loaded the bus and headed toward Washington, D.C.

Upon arrival to our hotel we checked in and headed to dinner on our own. Many of us ended up at the same restaurant.

March 5, 2013

Scribe: Meriruth Cohenour

7:35 – The group left the hotel for our first adventure on the Metro. This turned out to not be a smooth or organized adventure but we all arrived in one piece at relatively the same time so I suppose that it is marked a success. The locating of our next destination was also a success, even though we walked a full circle around a city block until we found it.

8:35 – We entered the National Association of Wheat Growers building and were escorted to a small but comfortable conference room. We were soon greeted by Will Stafford, program assistant and government affairs representative who interned at NAWG in college and never left.

Overview of NAWG:

- founded in 1950
- includes 23 states and is growing
- full state membership is entitled with two votes
- they set policy used to advocate in:
 - farm policy
 - risk management
 - international trade
 - commodity markets
 - research
 - environmental/sustainability
- use 3-4 lobbyists that work with other commodity groups as well
- targets countries in the EU in hopes they will let GMO products in

Stafford wrapped up his portion of the morning by telling the group that agriculture has less and less representation on The Hill each year and that agricultural programs are usually not very popular on The Hill.

9:10 – The president of NAWG, Bing Von Bergen, came in to talk to the group about the Farm Bill and how NAWG is involved.

Von Bergen's overview of the Farm Bill:

- We don't have a good start on a new one yet
- NAWG supports Congressman Lucas's efforts

- NAWG want a multi-leg safety net built in including:
 - Crop insurance
 - Reference price
- NAWG believes it is not their place to have a position on SNAP but they realize they need it for the bill to pass

9:30 – As we had some free time, Edmond suggested we do housekeeping and a bit of synthesis.

Joe Gribble, president of the AEAITC (ask Edmond about international trip committee) posed the question that never escapes a session, “When will we know about our international trip?” to which Edmond replied, “Hopefully by April.”

The impending snowmageddon was discussed, but no definite changes or plans were made.

Each person shared their host family story and their thoughts about the trip so far.

11:00 – The group broke for lunch and sightseeing on their own.

2:00 – Somehow the group found each other again and after a brief picture on the steps of the capitol were ushered into a meeting with Congressman Frank Lucas, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee.

Before he was called away to vote, Lucas discussed:

- His background
- In office since 1994 – about his district: “if there aren’t any trees, I represent it”
- Sequestration – a brief explanation and what is being done to remedy it
- Farm Bill – different proposals and failures, and plans to try again

Chief Economist for Lucas, Bart Fischer (an OSU grad) took over and discussed:

- Farm Bill – talked more in detail about the proposals
- Other bills the committee is working on
- How they have been effected by the fiscal cliff and sequestration
- Explained the 10 year budge window and why it has to happen
- How Congressional staff spend their time
- The importance of educating new members of the committee about agriculture
- He answered questions relating to SNAP and its effects on the Farm Bill

Brad Morris, staff assistant, and Colt Cameron, intern, were introduced and then took our group on a tour of the capitol.

4:30 – Our group returned to our previous room early as the reception was being set up.

5:00 – Reception with Oklahoma Congressional Delegation began. The turnout was small but the staffers that did show were enjoyable to talk with during the evening.

7:00 – The group was turned loose for dinner and sightseeing on our own.

March 6, 2013

Scribe: Brent Howard

The day started around 7:00 a.m. for most of us, with the impending snow storm moving into the Washington, D.C. area. At breakfast, which was scrambled eggs, hash browns, greasy biscuits, oatmeal, choice of cereals,

and juices or coffee, the word at the time was that nothing was called off yet. Everyone proceeded to get ready for our scheduled 8:30 departure from the hotel.

At 8:15 a secondary meeting was called, letting everyone know that the government had, in fact, shut down in anticipation of the “Snow-quester”. With the government shutdown, the supporting and lobbying agencies also shut down, so our planned meeting place at the National Milk Producers Federation was also closed. With some improvisation by our fearless leader, Edmond Bonjour, we were able to retain the conference room at our hotel and the speakers were all able to make an appearance, either in person or through teleconference. The following is a synopsis of what was discussed by the speakers.

At 10:00 a.m. Paul Shapiro (hereinafter “Shapiro”), Vice President of Farm Animal Protection for the Humane Society of the United States (hereinafter “HSUS”), was our first speaker. With the improvisation of the room, we did not have any computer or screen capability. Thus, the seating in the room was arranged in an ellipsis with Shapiro sitting in the southeast side of the room and the class making up a circle facing him. Our Chairman for the Day, Scott Stinnett, made introductions and Shapiro began speaking on a little of his background and the HSUS. He started with the statement that the main goal of his position was the “protection of farm animals.” He claimed that HSUS is the largest animal welfare organization in the U.S. and they give the most in donations of any single organization for shelter and care of pets, agriculture animals, and wildlife. (Editor’s note: This is probably true just based on the sheer size of HSUS’s budget. Even though only about 2% of funds go for care, it was later revealed that HSUS has an operating budget of about \$122M per year.) Further, in the history of HSUS, he said it was founded in 1954 for the purpose of prevention of inhumane slaughter of animals. Since founding, the focus is on the “care of all animals.” They are seeking current goals of alleviating “extreme” confinement of animals, improvement of animal care procedures, and “moving the ball forward” with animal producers (with this point, Shapiro discussed how HSUS was instrumental in marketing to change the practices of the veal industry, changing the dairy cow tail docking procedure, addressing gestation crates for swine, and HSUS’s “collaboration” with the egg industry to come to an agreement on caging of laying hens.) After a short five minute overview of the beliefs of HSUS, Shapiro opened up for questions and discussion from the class.

The Q&A was as follows:

1. Question raised by Chris Hitch: “What does the HSUS do with wildlife?”
Shapiro Answer: HSUS has established rehabilitation centers in Florida, Texas, and Arizona that provide care for orphaned animals and injured animals. His example of these care facilities was in Florida where they provided cleaning and rehabilitation for wildlife affected by the BP oil spill a few years ago. HSUS also seeks to influence public policy that adversely affects wildlife. For an example of this he stated the current initiative in California that would outlaw all lead shot in hunting. The reason for the initiative (Ed. Note: In his words) was that lead shot remained in injured or lost wildlife and when the endangered condors ate the eventually dead animal, they became poisoned.
2. Question raised by Janet Stewart: “What is classified as wildlife by the HSUS? Do you look at abandoned pet lions or bears?”
Shapiro Answer: HSUS does not support any type of wild or exotic pet ownership, so HSUS would like to have those types of pets not available for individual ownership both for the safety of humans and the animals.
3. Question raised by Chris Kidd: “What adjustments would HSUS like to see in production animal agriculture, if they could get everything they wanted?”
Shapiro Answer: HSUS does not have a set goal, other than “continual improvement” of animal production practices. If producers will just accept that the change is inevitable through the change of views by the public, then the producers need to ensure that they give the animals a modicum of respect that they deserve. Some of the examples of changes he would like to see that would be towards that “continual improvement” are covering chickens and turkeys by the Humane Slaughter Act, completely doing away with foie gras because of the issue with overfeeding ducks to infuse fat into their livers, and looking into castration of feed animals without the use of painkillers, or possibly doing away with the perception that castration was even needed at all, if the use of hormones could achieve the same results.

4. Question raised by Janet Stewart: “Have you looked at the financial impact of the local farms and farmers that have to implement your proposals and legislation?”
Shapiro Answer: HSUS’s goal is not to force farms out of business, but to improve animals’ welfare. HSUS knows that some of the policies have costs associated, but most, once implemented become “cost-neutral” (in their studies) over a certain period because of higher production or increased efficiency by the producer. In addition, most of the legislation has a staggered phase-in, with the example being the ten-year phase in for California egg producers to start capitalizing the costs for larger spaces for their laying hens.
5. Question raised by Justin Whitmore: “What protection do you have for producers once these plans are put in place? For example, with the California egg legislation, Oklahoma producers can ship eggs for a much lower price and it would drive the very producers who have agreed to the restrictions out of business. That could happen to American producers as a whole and all of our food might be shipped in from abroad that doesn’t even meet standards we have now.”
Shapiro Answer: Well, the California voters are the ones that enacted that restriction on egg producers to ban caged eggs, so it must be wanted. As far as protection, there isn’t any, but HSUS feels that consumers want to buy the higher cost product if they know that the animal was treated humanely. He stated there were studies in Europe where sales of “clearly labeled” cage-free eggs vastly increased in sales over the cheaper, traditional production eggs. He believes that American consumers are ill-informed as a result of misleading and flashy packaging by marketers. If there was a more uniform labeling requirement for these higher standards, he feels that consumers would choose the more humanely treated product, even if it was more costly. Back to the California egg producers, the law states that producers in other states would have to meet the same standards to see products in the state. So that market will protect those producers.
6. Question raised by Karen Eifert Jones: “Does the California cage-free egg law apply to restaurants too, or just for the raw product?”
Shapiro Answer: The California law does not apply to eggs that are processed or served cooked, so McDonald’s and other restaurants do not have to comply. The legislation that was agreed to by the egg producers and HSUS that has been presented to Congress would apply the same standard to all states and all eggs.
7. Question raised by Meriruth Cohenour: “Where does HSUS stand on the horse slaughter issue?”
Shapiro Answer: HSUS just supports the general American view that horses are companion animals and should not be slaughtered for human consumption. If the issue arises that a horse has become too old or weak, there is not any law against euthanizing the horse, and HSUS supports that as a more humane option than slaughter.
8. Follow-up question by Meriruth: “What about now that the ban is in place and those weaker animals are shipped to Mexico or Canada for slaughter? The transportation is much harder on the horse and the facilities in the other countries probably don’t match standards required here in the U.S.”
Shapiro Answer: HSUS has investigations at the foreign plants and they will continue to monitor the well-being of the animals there. Also, HSUS agrees that transporting is tough on the animals. HSUS believes that the problem is not from the animals themselves, but from overpopulation as the result of too much breeding by the American public. A lot of blame should also be directed at the horse racing and riding industry which promotes the use of these animals as entertainment for people. There is no easy answer in the short term, but less breeding for use would be the long-term goal. Agriculture sends the message that we are okay with “x” happening in the use of these animals, and it reflects the growing chasm between rural and urban America. (Ed. Note: I am not sure where the transition in this comment is to tie into the above answer, but this is a quote he said here and I feel that it reflects on the overall problem with our industry connecting with the population in ways that HSUS is willing to exploit.)
9. A discussion then raised by Chris Hitch toward Shapiro: “You guys (HSUS) are constantly moving your standards. I personally have a problem with your issues with gestation crates because I am a swine producer and with sows, they will harm and kill each other and the gestation crates prevent that. The sows set a pecking order and the weaker ones would not even be able to eat if they were not separated out. Can you say how much square footage is needed for a sow? How much are you going to require of

producers? Your whole organization is misleading because you claim to be the humane society, but all you do is cause problems for the very producers that treat their animals well. You spread lies from your video tapes and paint the whole industry with a broad stroke that what happens when one individual has a bad day is how all producers are doing every day. You guys are liars and I cannot see why any producer would ever want to work with you. (Applause from Class.) It seems that your ultimate goal is to have everyone become vegan and give animals the same rights as humans.

Shapiro's (visibly agitated) Answer: You made a lot of accusations there and I want to address the four main points from them. First, you claim that our name is misleading. We are the largest single organization donor for the care of animals in the United States. That is a fact. We do care about the care of animals and we are just looking at all ways all animals can have better lives. Second, you claim that we want everyone to become a vegan or a vegetarian. While being vegan is my choice and the choice of a lot of our supporters, most do eat meat and do not want that to change. We receive support from all walks of life and we, as an organization, are very much a "big tent" in that we welcome support from anyone that thinks animals should be treated fairly. While there may be factions of our supporters that feel that meat should not be produced and consumed as it is today, we respect their views but that is not our organization's view. As to your comment that our investigations are misleading, that is absolutely false. If the allegations in those videos were false, we would have been sued for defamation, and that has never happened. All the acts that get released are acts that a production worker has actually done to an animal. We do not stage those acts, as has been alleged; we just get most of them reported because co-workers are themselves upset that this type of abuse happens. Your last concern was to actually name the square footage that we think should be optimal for sows. There is not a number, but we have producers that are using RFID tags to ensure that the weaker sows are getting food when needed and if a stronger sow just torments weaker ones, then our producers are able to just move the problem pigs out and the remaining ones can live in a group. Pigs are social animals, like people, and keeping them separated is not something that would be healthy for them. By enacting better handling techniques and better educating the workers to look for those dominating sows, you could do away with the gestation crates. We are striving for continual improvement and what we say now may not be what it is improved to in the near future.

10. Re-focused question raised by Chris Hitch: "If you strive for a 'continuing improvement' what do we have to do, as producers, to pass muster?"

Shapiro Answer: It will always come down to what the American public will be willing to accept in their food products. Looking back at veal, once the public saw the horrible conditions of the veal industry, demand plummeted because the public said that was not something they would support.

11. Question raised by Meriruth Cohenour: "Back to the horse slaughter issue, is HSUS willing to use its own funds to help with the root problem of the issue, which is that these old and feeble horses cannot get the nutrition they need by their owners?"

Shapiro Answer: Yes, HSUS will do things that are reasonable to address the root problem. We have extensive guides for horse folks. We also run two horse rescue facilities in the United States. But the main issue is that we cannot rescue our way out of the horse overpopulation. The population needs to change that these animals are not to be just pets that can't be cared for over their entire 30 year life. I do not work with the horse side of the organization, but we could probably look into other things that HSUS could do, if you or other producers would talk with us.

12. Question raised by Rusty Roush: "You say that HSUS wants to work with producers, but producers are so rigid in working with HSUS because we know that any inch we give is just going to lead to the next step. You "investigations" are accusatory. What actual efforts do you have to work with producers rather than hidden cameras?"

Shapiro Answer: There is a lot of room for common ground between the HSUS and agriculture producers. There will never be an end because HSUS's goal is for continued improvement. As an example of where we work with producers, the Maine Farm Bureau worked with HSUS on a gestation crate issue for pigs and the cage-free issue for chickens. There is a lot of money to be made by groups that seek just to combat the HSUS. The problem that producers face is that the HSUS is 'loved' by most Americans and going against the HSUS is a losing proposition for animal agriculture.

13. Follow-up question by Rusty Roush: “Well, who fired the first shot between the producers and HSUS? From what I know, HSUS chose to run accusatory ads with video rather than reporting it to authorities or supervisors in a position to make actual change.”
Shapiro Answer: You are probably right that we ran the first videos, but they were released because the changes that needed to take place were not happening in the system from regular reporting.
14. Question submitted by Jennifer Jensen: “In Oklahoma, HSUS-supported legislation was passed that required the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture to oversee the regulation of commercial pet breeders. Prior to the law, private boards oversaw these breeders. The shift in the legislation is now costing taxpayers of Oklahoma about \$250,000 per year in new administration costs. Why isn’t the HSUS contributing to fund these issues that HSUS supports?”
Shapiro Answer: HSUS is not a foundation that doles out money for the projects it supports. This legislation was passed by the Oklahoma Legislature, so, at some level, it should become a responsibility of the Oklahoma citizens to pay. In the scheme of state budgets, \$250,000 is hardly any money anyway.
15. Question submitted by Justin Whitmore: “Back to HSUS’s work with wildlife, there is a growing problem with the wild horse population and the costs associated with shipping them to places and paying producers to feed them through taxpayer money. What does HSUS suggest for this problem?”
Shapiro Answer: The area of HSUS that deals more with that may have better answers, but I know that we have looked into studies that would work by shooting air darts with contraceptives into the female horses.
16. Question submitted by Chris Kidd: “HSUS sends the message that what happens in your videos is how every producer operates. Why doesn’t HSUS start by saying that we found this problem, but know that it is not the normal for ag producers?”
Shapiro Answer: While I can say that the abuse on our tapes is probably not the normal, most situations would be unacceptable by the American public. Animal producers also bring some of this heat back on themselves because they do not come out and oppose the acts as presented and instead choose to attack the HSUS for being whistleblowers. HSUS does not intend to hurt most producers and will review videos to ensure they avoid sending out a perception that is untrue or misleading.
17. Question raised by Scott Stinnett: “I am a high school ag teacher in a very urban school district. Most of the kids at my school only get exposure to agriculture through my class or through what they see in the media. Is HSUS doing anything to help educate on proper animal agriculture practices to the younger generation?”
Shapiro Answer: At this time, HSUS does not focus on children’s education, although there are flyers out and the website does have a children’s page link. It is something that we could look into if we had teachers and producers that would work with us to get the message out.
18. Question raised by Jennifer Jensen: “HSUS Director John Goodwin was quoted as saying ‘My goal is the abolition of all animal agriculture.’ How does that work with your stated goal earlier of ‘continued improvement’ in animal agriculture?”
Shapiro Answer: First, that is a former director and he is no longer with HSUS because he had goals that were beyond what we were supporting. I think there is room for improvement. When you look at the obesity and health problem in the United States, you can tie it in to the overconsumption of meat by the public. If we could just show that there are other, healthier ways for Americans to get proteins needed for meals, we would have a healthier population by making changes with animal agriculture. HSUS policy is certainly not to do away with animal agriculture, but we want to ensure that other protein sources are known and viable.
Jensen “So your goal is NOT to create a vegan society?” Shapiro Response: No, that is not our goal.
19. Question raised by Edmond Bonjour: “Can you please explain the role played by Joe Maxwell in spreading compliance and working with HSUS throughout Missouri?”
Shapiro Answer: Joe Maxwell is a former lieutenant governor for Missouri and was raised on a farm and continues to farm. He is now our Vice President for Outreach and Engagement with rural producers and he is on many councils and boards in the ag community. We use Joe to work with ag producers who are certified or want to be certified to get “High Welfare” products to the public. These products have a higher demand than normal products and get a better return for the producer. However, for whatever

reason, Joe is not welcomed by the producers and is treated like a Benedict Arnold because of his work with HSUS.

20. Question raised by Joe Gribble: “Is HSUS satisfied with the improvements in slaughterhouses?”

Shapiro Answer: There can always be continuing improvement, but it really depends upon the animal. Right now, with cattle, the processes are adequate, *when used properly*. The problems arise when someone who doesn’t know how to use the stunner is put in the kill floor and does not get a direct kill the first time. This is an improvement on the old days when it was literally just using a sledgehammer, but there still could be better ways. For pig slaughter, it has improved from what it was, but we think an area of immediate improvement could be the use of nitrogen gas at the start of the process rather than the current CO₂ to render the animals unconscious. The nitrogen gas has less harmful tendencies on the animal (Editor’s note: This guy does know that they are literally less than five minutes from death, so how much harmful tendencies are there?) and in other studies will result in the same unconsciousness without harming the animal. For poultry, the HSUS is very unsatisfied with the current practices. The poultry animals are shackled when they are alive, hung and run through a machine that is supposed to render them unconscious, then slice their throat, then run them through scalding hot water. We have seen that up to five percent of the animals miss the rendering unconscious or throat slicer and are then subjected to the scalding water while alive, and essentially drown and boil at the same time. This is just unacceptable, and HSUS would like to see some process where all of the poultry is rendered unconscious prior to any type of handling.

21. Question raised by Justin Whitmore: “I have seen studies released that say that one in seven Oklahomans do not have access to healthy food. Don’t HSUS’s policies just drive up the cost of access to safe meat and won’t more people suffer because of your policies?”

Shapiro Answer: That is one of the paradoxes of life in the US. We have one of the most obese populations in the world, but it is a result of so many people being malnourished through junk food. I do not think that our policies will drive up hunger; instead we hope that people would see the healthier options as more viable. If people ate cheaper proteins, like lentils or nuts, instead of a hamburger, then we may see less obese, malnourished people. Also, if you look at our current government system, meat is really so cheap, and actually below the cost it is in other nations, because of the government subsidies to feed crops like corn.

22. Question raised by Tracy Peyton Miller: “Is HSUS doing any studies on “pain” levels in animals to see if the policies you are pushing are actually worthwhile?”

Shapiro Answer: We are not funding any studies ourselves, but there is much academic research on the subject. Earlier when I mentioned the nitrogen gas as opposed to CO₂, that was an academic study where they put feed in a place where a rat could access it. Once it was there, they would pump in CO₂ and other gases to render the rat unconscious, but not dead. The rats that were subjected to nitrogen would eat until they just passed out, when the gas was removed; they would wake up and eat again and had no issues returning to the same chamber to eat in later studies. With CO₂, the rats would go into convulsions when exposed to the high levels of gas. When the gas was removed, the animals would recover, but would not return to the same chamber for feeding. We feel that shows there is pain with certain methods and other options are available.

23. Question raised by Casey Sharber: “There are other issues than animal agriculture. One that is in my mind is shark fin soup eaten by Asians. Does HSUS look into the practices for these restaurants and fisheries?”

Shapiro Answer: HSUS is against shark fin soup because they catch these fish; mutilate them by cutting off the fins, then throw them back into the ocean. We want to change the public perception of the soup.

24. Question raised by Jennifer Jensen: “Another point I found was that HSUS CEO, Wayne Pacelle, was quoted as saying that Michael Vick “would be a good pet owner.” This quote was after Vick had been convicted of dog fighting and abuse and after a donation was made on his behalf by the Philadelphia Eagles of \$50,000 to HSUS. Doesn’t it seem like HSUS will just endorse anyone who can buy their way into the organization?”

Shapiro Answer: There a few issues to address with that situation. Michael Vick did a lot of things that are deemed wrong by us and the majority of society. He did these things because it was the culture in

which he was raised and African Americans still look to that old culture. HSUS was one of the leaders in the investigations in exposing his animal abuse activity. He was convicted of crimes and he served his time. While he was in jail, our group reached out to him to see if he would help educate the African American culture so that these dog fighting rings were not popular or glamorized. He agreed and he did change his views. He is now a great spokesman for HSUS in inner cities, where there is a large African American population. If I were to go into those types of schools, no one would listen to what I had to say, but a successful football player is very influential.

Shapiro then gave the following concluding remarks: I am very grateful for being invited and having the chance to speak to those involved in animal agriculture. There is ample room for HSUS and animal producers to work together to achieve common goals in the care and raising of animals. Thank you.

11:50 a.m. Discussion ended and we broke for lunch on our own around the hotel area.

1:05 p.m. We met back in the hotel conference room. Snow storm never really developed in Washington, D.C. proper. Rain and wind with some sleet, but government had been shut down in anticipation since 5:00 a.m. Our next speaker was Kay Johnson Smith (hereinafter “Kay”) with the Animal Agriculture Alliance (“AAA”). She came in person and spoke to the group in the same semi-circle discussion format as Paul Shapiro.

Kay began the discussion acknowledging that she knew we had just been spoken to by Paul Shapiro and asked if he tried to pass his smooth-talking and lies off on our class. She then gave a history on AAA, saying it was formed to give all producer organizations a unified voice against smears by activist groups. The AAA is currently made up of 28 different group voices, such as meat cattle producers, swine producers, dairy farmers, etc. and individual and corporate members. A little history on Kay is that she grew up one generation removed from the farm and she has been in state government or lobbying since graduation from college.

The purpose of AAA is to combat the influx of bad publicity of the ag industry from outside groups such as PETA and HSUS. Speaking specifically of HSUS, she gave a background of her storied history fighting Paul Shapiro and others for HSUS, stating that while HSUS had a budget of about \$120 million per year, AAA was trying to be the unified voice of the producer on about \$600,000. AAA is trying to work to build coalitions within and among the industries. They are fighting fights that are veiled threats by people with influence, such as the “meatless Monday” that was promoted on the Food Network. They also work with producers to fight at a more local level, such as when HSUS works to get supermarkets to ban certain meat types in stores.

Kay said that AAA would be greatly helped if ag producers would realize that the people that seek to influence the flow of their product are the most vocal, and if producers would just get involved and get vocal themselves, they would not run into as serious of issues with the population. Producers need to make publicity a part of their business model and need to be proactive in getting information directly to the consumer.

Kay then reiterated that AAA works on a budget of only about \$600,000, which is mainly donations from its members and the ag producers, and they are fighting a misleading organization (HSUS) that operates annually with \$120 million. She would like to see more donations and involvement and always would welcome more donations to increase her staff and influence.

2:30 p.m. After a short break to rearrange the room and set up a teleconference call (via use of Cheri Long’s iPad), we met back in the hotel conference room for FaceTime with Johnny Broussard of the U.S. Rice Federation.

The focus of his presentation was on the rice producers within the U.S. and rice’s impact on nutrition and the economy. He gave us a few statistics. Rice has an economic impact in the U.S. of about \$17 billion and directly or indirectly relates to about 128,000 jobs. There are six states that have commercial rice production. These are mainly Gulf States, but also include Arkansas and California. The average consumption of rice in the U.S. is 27

pounds per person per year and the U.S. averages about 20 billion pounds of production. The U.S. only produces about 2% of the world's rice.

The Rice Federation is made up of four segments representing different activities: 1. Rice producers, 2. Millers and merchants, 3. Seed developers and producers, and 4. Rice Council. The purpose of the Federation is to promote and protect its industry.

The Federation works with Congress and agricultural programs. A major concern is regulations at this time. EPA rules are also bad for the industry as it relates to wetlands and if rice field should be covered. For the domestic market, the largest use is retail outlets, which make up about 60% of the production. About 40% goes into processing.

The rice industry is working on sustainability, which would involve using less land, water and other inputs, but still be able to produce as much or more crop. Mr. Broussard finished at about 3:30 and the group had another break and rearranged the room back to the circle format.

3:45 p.m. Our last speaker of the day, Kristina Butts (Hereinafter "Kristina") from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) came to the hotel conference room to address us directly. By this time, the sleet/rain had stopped and there was no accumulation in Washington, D.C. proper, although there reports of western areas which had received snow up to eight inches.

Kristina started with a short history of the NCBA, stating it was a contractor with the beef checkoff. The main headquarters were in Denver and the lobbying office was in Washington, D.C. All of the policies that the NCBA supports or opposes are voted on by the members. She then went on to address five areas where the NCBA was working in Washington, D.C. to influence legislation in favor of its members. They were as follows:

1. The Farm Bill is a major event that the NCBA is working on this session and the last two sessions. The NCBA wants to ensure that there is more funding for emergency recoveries and research for animal health and higher production. The NCBA is also supportive of the NAPP program and does not want to see it cut.
2. The Animal Drug User Fee Act (ADUFA) is a piece of legislation that NCBA is working toward passing. If the legislation is not passed, then the cost of USDA inspections of animal pharmaceuticals will be borne by the pharmaceutical companies, which will be directly passed on to the consumers.
3. The NCBA is working on current drafts of immigration bills as well. The issue with immigration relates to producers who need qualified workers, but cannot get them from U.S. applicants. Under the current policies, guest worker visas are only short-term and work great for produce farmers, but industries with longer-term employment needs, like cattlemen, the visas are too short. This issue causes conflicts of interest with different state members of the NCBA, because producers in states near the Mexican border are hard to convince that the violence that spills across the border will be resolved with immigration reform.
4. The NCBA is also working on regulations related to the Clean Water Act. They want to ensure that the term "navigable water" stays in the regulations and the Act since its removal would result in EPA regulations applying to ponds, puddles, and ditches.
5. The last major item that NCBA is addressing at this time is just keeping trade promotion front and center with American trade partners. The U.S. still produces the safest supply of beef in the world, and the NCBA is doing what it can to remove hindrances such as tariffs or lack of understanding of our food supply.

Kristina then opened the floor for questions. The main question related to the previous speakers was along the lines of what the NCBA does to stay ahead of animal activist groups. Kay said they were major opponents of the agreement with the HSUS and the egg industry because the proposed legislation was going to be the first time that the federal government regulated how producers could produce a farm product within the states. She

reiterated that if this first step was allowed, HSUS would then come after the other industries. She said there were issues directly related to cattle production, such as the dairy cow tail docking issues and castration. The NCBA was doing what it could, but needed producers to actually get out and give themselves a voice. She finished at about 5:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m. The OALP Class met up with the Washington State Agriculture and Forestry Leadership Program (the sister-state program to our OALP). We met at Bertucci's Pizza, which was near DuPont Circle. The members of the classes seemed to mingle well.

Around 9:15 p.m. Formal activities ended for the class and we were dismissed until the next day.

March 7, 2013

Scribe: Jennifer Jensen

OALP Class XVI arrived at Mt. Vernon at approximately 9:15 am, and class members were free to explore the estate until 10:15 a.m. for the mansion tour.

Summary per the brochure available to tourists:

George Washington acquired Mount Vernon in 1754 and spent the next 45 years of his life expanding his home to reflect his status as a Virginia gentleman. The Mansion is detailed to look as it did in 1799, featuring a large collection of furnishings owned by the Washington's as well as many period pieces. Vibrant wall colors – based on scientific paint analysis – demonstrate the Washington's' wealth and sense of fashion. The first and second floors are open daily; the third floor is open during the holiday season.

Brief history: George Washington's father moved the family to southern Virginia in approx. 1735. Then in 1759 Washington married Martha and they proceeded to have two children. In 1787, two wings were added to the mansion, but the Revolutionary War intervened and the continuation of building the mansion was put on hold.

Tour of Mansion

Pictures are not permitted. Beginning in the dining room, the room features a hand carved plaster ceiling, including details of farm tools and wheat. Ears of corn are detailed over the doorway going out towards the Potomac River, because it was the second crop grown and transported via the river. Washington thought the river was the expansion to the rest of the world. In the Piscataway State Park area, fish were plentiful in the spring, where nearly one million were caught. Slaves were often fed the fish. Guests then enter the oldest part of the family home, where there are two parlors, the formal and best rooms. Here, George Mason and Thomas Henry were guests. The rooms were blue and bright green to impress the guests. The key over the entry door indicates freedom. Transitioning into the guest and family member bedrooms, the tour guide said the Washington's had over 600 guests in one year. The mansion had 21 rooms – no bathrooms – and 13 fireplaces. Slaves were responsible for keeping the fireplaces running all day and night.

We then enter the 'suite of rooms', which was the master bedroom and Martha's private space where she organized domestic affairs. Unfortunately, Washington died in the master bedroom on Dec. 14, 1799, due to a massive throat infection that closed his breathing. He was 67 years old. The bed in the house is the same bed in which he died.

Washington's general study (office) includes a quote, "This is the man, first in war, first in peace." Here, Washington conducted business. The room includes books behind glass, filing system, a fan chair where Washington would sit and pedal while air blew on him, letter press, and trunks. The space includes a picture of Lawrence Washington, Washington's older half-brother.

Colored Soldiers

Washington was compassionate to slaves and colored soldiers. In fact, a colored soldier named Billy Cooke took care of the general. Washington often used his personal resources for illness. He honored marriages and

allowed slaves to rear children. In 1798, Washington owned 316 slaves, of which 40 were rented out. At that time, if a person owned 20 slaves, he was considered wealthy. Washington actually stopped participating in the slave trade.

Clagett Farm

Clagett Farm consists of 285 acres, grass fed beef, vegetable Community Supported Agriculture, and native trees and shrubs. Southern Maryland has a lot of agritourism sites, and this farm has management practices that adopt less acres and cattle, in return for a higher retail end and price – quality over quantity.

Mr. Yates Clagett is Prince George's County (Brandywine, MD) Farm Bureau President. He originally farmed tobacco, but now educates producers on how to graze their cattle on grass. Considering the landscape, most producers graze one cow on one-half acre of grass. The shift in production practices looks like this: in 1992, all agricultural products were tobacco; in 2010, less than 1% of agricultural products were tobacco.

Southern Maryland Grazers Network

The average farm size is approximately 150 – 200 acres, with large fields consisting of 100 acres, but most average field sizes are 15 acres. Summer annuals include millet, cow peas, sorghum sudan, spring oats in the fall, forage turnips and radishes. Twenty-six pairs (cows and calves) are rotated every 1 to 2 days. Mineral blocks are used to subsidize the forage.

Michael Heller, Farm Manager, explained that finishing grass beef is particular. The breeds that finish best on grass in Maryland are Red Angus and Red Devon. The animals are sold as 'natural' and the only treatment is pour-on de-wormer. They are however not advertised as organic. To avoid disease the herd is closed, as other animals are not purchased and brought in. An animal will finish at 1,000 lbs. with adequate marbling. Heller said heifers finish better than steers. The farm grosses \$45,000 annually after butchering costs. Additional notes: calving occurs in February; bulls are purchased in Virginia for approximately \$3,500 and are used for two years.

Yates said there is not a USDA certified butcher within a two hour radius. Therefore, the network applied for and received a grant for a freezer trailer to pick-up the meat. The trailer is 8x12 that is rented to producers for \$75 per day. The producers can distribute meat to a grocer or distribution point. Yates sells by the quarter, half, or whole for \$6.75 per lb. Again, the animal will usually finish between 900-1000 lbs. and provide 4-500 lbs. of beef. He will gross \$3000 per animal. Each animal must be processed at less than 30 months of age; most are 24-26 months. Producers within the network work together to meet Southern Maryland Grazers' standards.

Vegetables

Twenty acres of organic vegetables provides produce to 275 families through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) for 26 weeks. Vegetables gross \$75,000 annually, while nursery products gross \$70,000 annually.

Maryland Agricultural Issues

Per the Maryland Agriculture Certainty Program, farmers would voluntarily agree to meet relatively high standards for pollution runoff and hire third-party inspectors to verify the results. In return, they would be spared from new regulations for 10 years. Virginia previously passed a similar, but weaker version. The law is not favored by all, as environmental groups say the law would hinder progress to cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay.

Per Yates, the Chesapeake Bay Nutrient Management Plan is nearly 100% compliant. The goal is to get the Bay back to the state it was in the 1700s, and get the ecosystems back to their natural state. (Historic foods from the Bay include crabs, fish, and rockfish.) Currently, 40% of nitrogen in the Bay is from agricultural field run-off, while another 31% is from automobiles and small trucks. However, no-till farming practices and cover crops, along with sound conservation plans, are helping to reduce nitrogen. Currently, Maryland tax payers assist with

best management practices; currently, the Bay is the most studied place in the world. Yates explained that agricultural practices are some of the least expensive ways to reduce nitrogen. Geese and deer have severely affected nutrients in the Bay.

In order to demonstrate the effect of nitrogen on the Bay, the farm has five representation plots to show non-point source solutions. The demonstrations include suburban lawn; urban; agriculture with bean/corn; hay with corn, rye, and cotton strips; and no-till cover crops. (Note: Maryland spends \$20 million per year to plant cover crops. Cover crops are the cheapest way to soak up nitrogen. Rye is most aggressive and currently pushed; wheat and barley are also common.) Regarding the plots, students then hose each site to test the run-off. The conventional agriculture plot and suburban plots are comparable with nitrogen run-off. Other nitrogen factors include horses and chickens. Maryland has the highest number of horses per capita acre.

Monsanto Dinner at City Club

Monsanto personnel in attendance included:

- Michael Dykes, Vice President, Government Affairs. Michael is a contract lobbyist who has 12 people working for him in Washington, D.C. and another 23 throughout the U.S.
- Katharine Emerson, Manager, Government Affairs. Katharine manages political affairs pertaining to Sustainable Yield Partnerships.
- Mike Holland, Director, Regulatory Affairs
- Scott Kuschnider – government affairs and soybean issues
- Jim Travis, has worked for Monsanto for 10 years in regulatory affairs, including open markets and worked for the Ag Committee. He helped with the 2003 Farm Bill.

Ag Appropriations Bill – Monsanto was sued because the government had not completed an environmental impact statement for alfalfa, which resulted in the first biotech case due to wildlife.

Farmer Assurance Provision – Monsanto has been working on this for two years now. Other topics of interest include: Insect resistance wheat, studying RNA that helps with fungal problems, and corn/soybean applications.

Monsanto vs. Bowman

Background: Mr. Bowman is an Indiana farmer who grew and harvested seeds he bought (as grain) from a local grain elevator that were under patent owned by Monsanto. Bowman used this source of seed for his second annual crop. The seeds contained Monsanto's Roundup-Ready genes, and Bowman applied Roundup to control weeds without signing a use agreement or paying royalties to Monsanto. Bowman's attorney argued that Monsanto's patent did not extend to its seed's progeny, claiming "patent exhaustion" after the second generation. Monsanto states a farmer cannot plant a second generation seed to make a third.

Monsanto patents many of the seed varieties they develop. Patents are necessary to ensure payment for products and for the high investment of research. Dykes also explained that patents continue to foster innovation. When farmers purchase a patented seed variety, they sign an agreement that they will not save and replant seeds produced from the seed they buy. A very small percentage of farmers do not honor this agreement. Monsanto does become aware, usually through their own actions or through third-parties, of individuals who are suspected of violating patents and agreements. When violations are found, they are most commonly able to settle the cases without going to trial. In many cases, these farmers remain their customers. Sometimes, however, Monsanto is forced to resort to lawsuits, such as the Bowman case.

Accidental Drift – Monsanto understands this is a natural occurrence and will happen. Farmers also understand this phenomenon and are not punished for nature's behavior.

Final thought from Monsanto – If you can quantify risk, must quantify loss.

March 8, 2013

Scribe: Steven McIntyre

It was our last full day in Washington, D.C. and it seemed that everyone was tired, but excited about the day. We started with breakfast in our hotel from 7:00-8:00. We then traveled a short distance by metro to the American Farm Bureau Federation building. The morning schedule was full of speakers with the afternoon and evening free.

Our first speaker of the morning was Matthew Erikson, an economist with AFBF since October 2010. Matthew grew up on a 1500-acre farm in Illinois that has been in his family for five generations. He graduated from the University of Purdue.

He opened our meeting with an explanation of how the AFBF creates policies, which begins at the grassroots level with farmers and ranchers presenting to state agencies and then to the Federation.

They have identified five priorities that need immediate attention.

- 1) Water resources and infrastructure
- 2) Farm Bill – promote passage of a farm bill in 2013
- 3) Renewable fuels – defend and development incentives
- 4) Clean Water Act – oppose any new legislation that may expand the definition of “navigable waters”
- 5) Tax Reform

The class asked several questions about the Clean Water Act, Farm Bill, and tax reform.

He finished the meeting with a short PowerPoint presentation over the current financial state of the U.S. We discussed how the sequester works and where the cuts will fall, along with the effect a growing national debt will have on our country over the next 75 years.

Our second speaker of the morning was Michael Alston. He is the Deputy Administrator for Insurance Services with USDA/Risk Management Agency. Mr. Alston is a Michigan State graduate and Desert Storm veteran.

He opened with information on how the sequestration would affect the USDA, which he projected would definitely include USDA employee furloughs. He stated the he is scheduled for a 22-day furlough without pay in 2013. He did not believe that crop insurance would be affected this year, but expects that it will be in 2014.

In addition, he talked about the importance of crop insurance and the lack of utilization of crop insurance in Oklahoma. We discussed cover crops to maintain moisture, double cropping, uninsurable crops as well as the future of the RMA program that he said was fully funded for 2013, but not sure what 2014 would bring.

Mr. Alston discussed and answered questions on current Farm Bill issues that might have an impact on crop insurance, with the primary discussion on Shallow Loss and the possible authority given to the USDA to develop new insurance products.

Our third and final speaker of the morning was Jeff Cohen, Deputy Associate Administrator for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or better known as “SNAP.”

Mr. Cohen opened our meeting with a brief history of the SNAP program which began in 1967 along with the following statistics and facts:

- 1) 47.7 million people on SNAP, as of November 2012 or about one in seven Americans
- 2) \$74.5 billion in benefits paid in 2012
- 3) 97% of the benefits issued are used within the first 30 days
- 4) Only 75% of those that qualify to receive benefits are using the program
- 5) 76% of the households using SNAP are for children (under 18), the elderly, or disabled

- 6) 15% of households on SNAP report zero income
- 7) 33% of households on SNAP report zero net income
- 8) There are 240,000 authorized retailers across the U.S.

He stated that they have two priorities:

- 1) Giving access to those who truly need the program
 - a. To qualify for the SNAP program you must complete an application, a resource and income test, as well as provide verification of the information
- 2) Integrity of those who participate in SNAP
 - a. The program has shifted to issuing benefits on debit cards which has been a tremendous help in identifying fraud – the number one type of fraud has been the selling of benefits for one-half of the value to non-participants or retailers

The class had several questions about the integrity of the program, qualifications and if there was any education of SNAP participants to help them get back on their feet. This led to a lot of good discussion and information about the program.

We ended the morning with a quick tour of the AFBB building.

March 9, 2013

Scribe: Patty Dewitt

The OALP Class XVI traveled home on Saturday, March 9, 2013. We left our hotel at 6:00 a.m. after an early morning breakfast. We had synthesis on the bus – Edmond asked specifically if the class would comment on the Gettysburg visit and if HSUS was beneficial to the class.

Both our flights were on time and we arrived back in Oklahoma City a little after 2:00 p.m. Bags were collected and we parted ways until April.