

KALP Newsletter

Spring 2009

In This Issue

[KALP Alumni Update](#)

[KALP Class IX to Begin](#)

[KALP Fundraising Efforts](#)

[Alumni Highlight: John Parr](#)

[KALP Advisory Board](#)

[Alumni Highlight: John Parr](#)

KALP Alumni Update

New Alumni Directors

The Alumni Group met in February and elected a new slate of Directors. If you have news and announcements to share with Alumni send the information to your class Director.

Class I

[Hoppy Henton](#)
[Jerry Brown](#)

Class II

[Richard Fellows](#)

Class III

[Alvin Lyons](#)

Class IV

[Harry Young](#)

Class V

[Todd Clark](#)

President's Corner

by: Daniel Green

We enjoyed a fun and informative alumni meeting in Louisville last month. Everyone seemed to have a great time visiting with old friends and making new ones, with plenty of time to discuss current issues facing agriculture and making plans for the future of the Kentucky Agricultural Leadership Program.

We all have many unforgettable memories from our time in the Program (several stories were shared at the alumni meeting at the expense of those that were not present), but we should also be finding ways to make new ones. A great deal of the discussion during the meeting centered on developing alumni events and programs to improve networking and provide ongoing benefits for class participants even after graduation. Several ideas were discussed ranging from a summer cookout to an annual trip.

The newly elected Board of Directors will be meeting soon to discuss these possible alumni programs and events. Please share any ideas you have with any of our newly elected Board members (listed under Alumni Update) so they can share these ideas at the next meeting.

Plans are already underway for Class IX and your help is needed to ensure the future success of the Program. You can help in two ways. Please assist the coordinators by identifying potential participants for Class IX and help with the effort to secure funding for future programs.

Each year the leadership program coordinators rely on alumni to help identify future participants. If you know potential participants whom you feel would benefit from this great program, please complete the nomination form that will be mailed around the end of the month.

The generous donations many of the alumni and agribusinesses have already made toward the KALP Endowment Fund. We are asking all alumni to share the names of any potential donors with Will Snell or Steve Isaacs and to consider making a donation yourself if you have not already done so. No amount is too small; we want to give all of Kentucky agriculture a chance to invest in this important program.

Please be watching the mail in the upcoming months for more information about the Class IX and the funding effort.

KALP Class IX to Begin in January 2010

by: Larry Jones

A new Kentucky Agricultural Leadership class will have their first seminar in January, 2010.

Late this summer we'll begin the process of selecting 20 agriculturalists to comprise Class IX. We'll be following a similar process as in years past by asking you later this summer to suggest nominees that you think would be excellent candidates for the program. Nominees will be encouraged to complete application

[Class VI
Bud Blair](#)

[Class VII
Daniel Green](#)

[Class VIII
Kent Moore
Colby Blair
Brennan Gilkison](#)

Alumni On the Move

[Angela Blank](#) (Class VIII) is the new KY Farm Bureau Director of Public Relations.

[Tim Cansler](#) (Class V) is founder and Chief Strategist for Meridian Growth Strategies, a public advocacy group in Washington, DC that focuses on public-private partnerships that help organizations and businesses grow.

[Daniel Green](#) (Class VII) is the new Chief Operating Officer with the Burley Stabilization Corporation.

[Denny Wilson](#) (Class III) is a financial advisor with Edward Jones.

Alumni Event Ideas Needed

Do you have a place you would like to see the alumni travel to on a summer tour? What about an issue or educational topic you would like the Alumni to address at the next meeting? If so

materials prior to conducting personal interviews this fall as the final stage in the selection process.

KALP Fundraising Efforts

by: Steve Isaacs, KALP Program Co-Director

\$850,000 of the \$1 million ADB award to establish an endowment that will be matched by gifts from leadership program alumni, other individuals, agribusinesses, and farm organizations.

Early efforts at raising this match have been quite successful. In addition to some alumni gifts received previously, the Kentucky Corn Growers Association has given \$50,000 to the endowment and another \$50,000 to help fund Class IX. Central Kentucky Ag Credit Association contributed \$25,000 to the endowment, the Kentucky Small Grain Growers Association has made a \$75,000 commitment to the KALP endowment, and Philip Morris International will contribute \$25,000 for Class IX.

Discussions are underway with several other potential donors, and we believe other significant gifts will be announced shortly. Ag Leadership alumni will be receiving additional information on how you can give or help make contacts. As we build a \$2 million endowment that can support KALP into the future our goal is to develop a long list of contributors that will include a wide range of companies, organizations, and individuals.

Join us in thanking the Ag Development Board, Kentucky Corn Growers Association, Central Kentucky Ag Credit Association, Kentucky Small Grain Growers Association, and Philip Morris International for their generous gifts to KALP.

KALP Advisory Board 2009-2010

by: Will Snell, KALP Program Co-Director

According to the terms and conditions outlined in our Ag Development Board grant, the directors of the Kentucky Agricultural Leadership Program will utilize a state-wide advisory board to assist in the selection process of future classes; outline curriculum goals; help determine seminar locations, programs, speakers, and evaluation; and provide financial oversight. The advisory board will insure that a dedicated effort is made to recruit a class that is diversified in terms of race, gender, farm size, commodities represented, and geographic region.

Our first meeting is set up for April 24th in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Our contract with the Governor's Office of Ag Policy states that the advisory board shall consist of the following members (with the current designated advisory board member in parenthesis):

- Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy (Roger Thomas) or his designee, who shall chair the committee,
- A representative from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (Sam Lawson),
- Three representatives from three different regional universities with agricultural programs (Dr. Tony Brannon, Murray State University, Dr. Kim Holmes, Kentucky State University, and Dr. Laurie Rincker, Eastern Kentucky University),

please send your ideas to one of the Board of Directors listed above!

Alumni Highlights

In each issue we are going to highlight an alumni's agribusiness or farming operation. If you have a story to tell or know a classmate that you think should be highlighted email [Kara Keeton](mailto:kara.keeton@kentuckyag.org) and share the story.

Share the News

Help us build the e-newsletter distribution list!

If you are still in touch with classmates be sure to forward the newsletter.

Events in KY Ag

April 15, 2009

"Meat" Your

- Three alumni from our Ag Leadership Program as selected by the membership at the annual alumni meeting (Eddie Gilkison (Class II), Michael Chalfant (Class VI), and Anthony Koch (Class VIII)).
- Three Kentucky Agricultural Leadership Program Directors; Dr. Larry D. Jones, Dr. Steve Isaacs, and Dr. Will Snell

We certainly believe that adopting an advisory board strengthens the overall program by allowing us to draw upon a wide range of expertise in offering valuable input as well as providing maximum state-wide exposure for the program.

Alumni Highlight: John Parr

Building on Tradition, JBEC Seeds



JBEC Seed founders and namesakes, Robby VanHook, Ben V., Caroline V., John Embry V, Emma P., & John Parr

Tobacco has been a way of life for John Parr (Class XIII) and Robby VanHook since they were boys growing up on their family farms in Bourbon County. The brother-in-laws became farming partners several years ago, and since have expanded their operation and tobacco experience as they began growing tobacco transplants on the farm.

Now the two young entrepreneurial young farmers have taken their love of farming and their years tobacco experience to the next level establishing JBEC Seed, a tobacco seed company.

"We are both farmers and we both have experience in tobacco and raising seed," said Parr in talking about the decision to start the company. "We felt if we were going to diversify our farming operation it should be in something we both have experience in doing, so we decided to take the chance and start raising tobacco seed."

Parr is quick to admit that venturing into the seed business was not a decision that the partners made overnight. They began discussing the idea in 2006 as they saw the changes taking place in the tobacco industry as a result of the buyout. Then after a couple of years of research and planning, the two felt the timing was right to launch the venture.

"We wanted to be able to produce a quality product at a fair price and be in a position that if a customer calls we can go out and help them with any problems," said Parr. "We aren't going into this to make millions; we just wanted to give back to the industry and at the same time try to create something for our kids to have

Neighbor Educational Tour a KCA event. For information contact [Alison Smith](#) at (859) 278- 0899.

May 14-16, 2009

National Barn Alliance Annual Conference a Preservation Kentucky event. For more information contact Joanna Hinton at (270) 358-9069.

Do you have events for the next newsletter? If so submit them to [Kara Keeton](#).

International Leadership Alumni Conference (ILAC) in Washington

The ILAC conference is scheduled for August 19-22, 2009 in Tri-Cities, Washington. The Washington Leadership Alumni Council hosts the event.

If you are an alumnus of an ag leadership program, you are invited to attend this event.

Registration and hotel information is available at www.ILAC09.com

down the road."

In fact, it is their children that were the inspiration for the company name, JBEC Seeds.

"This is a family business, so what a better name for a family business than one that comes from your kids names," said Parr laughing. "John Embry, Ben, and Caroline are Robby's kids and Emma is my daughter, so we took the first initial of their names and JBEC Seeds was created."

The 2009 production season will be the first that JBEC Seeds will have tobacco seeds available for sale. In this first year JBEC Seeds will offer several public tobacco seed varieties for sale including: 204, 206, Tennessee 90, Tennessee 86, 1408, and KT 200.

Parr explained that quality is the number one focus for the partners from the beginning. That is why they have taken extra care and overseen every step of the production process, from the hand pollination of the parent plants in the field to the extra times cleaning the seed.

"We've got to produce a quality product if we want to build trust with farmers," stress Parr. "Their entire crop starts with this seed and it has got to be the best it can be, and we are doing everything we can to make sure it is the best."

Parr went on to explain that they are sending the seed to California for pelleting by Incitec, using their elite coat pellet. Once the seed comes back to Kentucky it is sent to UK for a final germ test. All seed sold will be certified and have the blue sticker just like other tobacco seed companies.

In fact, the only difference Parr sees with the seed JBEC Seeds is producing compared to the same varieties produced by other companies is the price.

By keeping the packaging simple and relying on a grassroots ad campaign, the partners are trying to keep prices at an affordable level while still providing high quality seed.

"We are going to be able to provide a seed that is just as high quality as anything else on the market, but hopefully at a lower price since we do not have the overhead of expensive ad budgets and fancy equipment," said Parr. "Don't get me wrong the other seed companies have done a wonderful job over the years, but we feel a little competition doesn't hurt anyone, especially the farmers."

Parr and VanHook are looking forward to a chance to talk to farmers about their products, in fact encourage people to call them personally or email to learn more about JBEC Seeds.

"JBEC Seeds is about more than selling a product, as tobacco farmers ourselves we are here to help other tobacco farmers," said Parr. "We just hope that there are enough producers out there that are willing to take a chance on us this year."

To learn more about JBEC Seeds contact John Parr at (859) 227-5722 or via email at johncparrjr@att.net.

Article courtesy of [Keeton Communications](#)