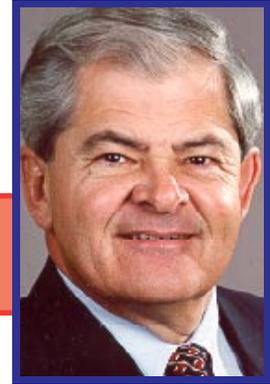


FROM COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

Billy Ray Smith



Changes and challenges are constant in Kentucky agriculture, especially in recent years.

The decline in burley tobacco quota has halted for the moment, but the advent of contract growing and the resulting demise of dozens of tobacco warehouses has imperiled the tobacco auction system that has served our farmers so well. Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome has attacked our world-famous horse industry, and army worms have ravaged our crops. Prices for many farm commodities remain at or near record lows.

Through all the challenges, though, many good things are happening on the farm that will shape Kentucky agriculture for years to come.

The Agricultural Development Board, of which I am vice chairman, has awarded millions of dollars in grants to help create new opportunities for Kentucky farmers. Many of the best ideas submitted to the Board have come from farmers working together on their county councils to find ways to help family farms in their communities increase their profits.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture has played a key role in charting a new course for Kentucky agriculture through initiatives in beef cattle marketing, fruit and vegetable production, aquaculture, international marketing, and many other areas. In mid-2001, the KDA reached out to consumers with a survey to help the Department fashion a “Buy Kentucky” program to promote Kentucky-made agricultural products.

Kentucky Agricultural Statistics will show you in black-and-white numbers the trends that are only beginning to change the way farmers do business. It is a valuable resource in this time of change and uncertainty.

Much progress has been made, but much remains to be done. The Department stands ready to lead Kentucky agriculture to a profitable future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Billy Ray Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BILLY RAY SMITH