

Growing in Agriculture

Tie Up Your 'Horse'

By Lucas Lentsch, South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture

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I recently picked up a good piece of advice – one that’s worth passing on. “Trust in the Lord, but tie up your horse.” This simple but powerful advice is relevant to the diverse issues of today. Everybody has a “horse” that needs looking after.

The horse for our grain farmers may be the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS). After generations of dependence on foreign oil, we made a commitment to homegrown energy. Our rural and urban communities across the Midwest have enjoyed the benefits of energy security. The supply of feed, food, fuel and fiber has never been greater. If energy independence and value-added agriculture still mean something to you, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s invitation for public comment on their proposal to reduce the RFS closes soon. Fuel your horse.

Adding value to our rural communities means growing local businesses. In South Dakota, we know this is often livestock enterprises that build barns, hire skilled services, and create jobs. It’s also local foods or specialty crops that have a place in our communities and provide opportunities. If expanding the opportunity for economic development means something to you, help the next generation grow whether it’s your family or neighbor. Grow your horse.

South Dakotans’ commitment to water and land stewardship has never been more important. Our agricultural ethos is built upon people embracing best practices and doing the right thing. As this country has alternated between droughts and floods, water has never mattered more. Where is it? How clean is it? Just as important, land stewardship covers many facets from soil health, erosion prevention, plant diversity and wildlife habitat to name a few. These commitments aren’t just for this year or next; it’s for all future generations. The work and stewardship of our producers never stops. Protect your horse.

It’s a new year with new challenges. Let’s take personal responsibility of our future and get to work on the issues that matter. Decisions are made by those who show up...and bring their horse.

Lucas