

Farm Bureau sets ag summit

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U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack will speak at a special summit on agriculture called by the Iowa Farm Bureau to be held July 23-24 at the Scheman Building at Iowa State University in Ames. Vilsack will speak at the opening day session on July 23.

Other speakers range from experts such as economist Danny Klinefelter of Texas A&M University and Jeff Plagge, president-elect of the American Bankers Association, to Iowa State University weather agronomist Elwynn Taylor.

A panel from the Senate and House Agricultural Committees and Daniel Mitchell of the the CATO Institute, are among the nationally recognized monetary, policy, trade and economic experts scheduled for the July IFBF economic summit.

“The Farm Crisis of the 80’s taught farmers that no industry is invincible to a downturn, and with Iowa’s thriving farm sector insulating much of our state from the worst hits of the recession, we have to look towards new expertise, new risk management tools, to make sure farming doesn’t go the way of the auto industry,” says Iowa Farm Bureau Federation (IFBF) President Craig Hill.

Iowa Farm Bureau director of research and commodity services David Miller said “there are commonalities and differences in place today that we also saw prior to the 1980’s Farm Crisis; then and now, we’ve seen land prices and commodity prices double or triple in a relatively short period of time.”

Miller added “although most of today’s farmers have better cash flow and less debt because of low interest rates, there are other risks which threaten Iowa’s agricultural prosperity, which center around unprecedented federal debt and the very real possibilities of farm program cuts, which affect the sustainability of many types of farming. Today, our market strength is more tightly connected to global markets, global weather disasters, global trade and those are the things that bring new vulnerabilities to the business of farming.”

The price of the two-day summit is \$50 for Iowa Farm Bureau members and \$150 for non-members.

Information about the summit, lodging, on-line registration forms and a complete listing of the panelists and schedule can be found at www.iowafarmbureau.com. Registration deadline for the IFBF economic summit is July 17.

Dan Piller covers agriculture and energy for the Des Moines Register.