

SOUTH AFRICAN TO KEYNOTE BIOENERGY CONFERENCE

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KIRKSVILLE, MO – Auburn University agronomist David Bransby says that agriculture will be an increasingly important player in the energy market, and the energy economy will impact production decisions of farmers throughout the world as this trend develops. “There are 2.5 barrels of oil energy equivalent in one ton of biomass; at an oil price of \$100/barrel, that values biomass at \$250 per ton, and this will impact farmers’ planting decisions.”

Bransby will deliver the keynote address at a Bioenergy Conference to be held December 5, 2008, at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri. The conference is being organized by University of Missouri Extension and Truman State University’s Agricultural Science department, with funding provided by a Professional Development Program grant from USDA’s North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NCR-SARE).

The conference will offer professional development training on a number of bioenergy topics, including grassy and woody biomass feedstocks for cellulosic biofuel production and for co-firing with coal to produce electricity; an overview of wind energy production in the Midwest, focusing on what landowners should know about wind energy leases; financing bioenergy projects; and building community and regional support for bioenergy projects.

Bransby’s research focuses on production of switchgrass and other annual and perennial species for energy and fiber crops, as well as production of annual and perennial crops for forage production. Bransby has degrees from the University of Natal, University of Missouri, and University of South Africa.

Conference organizer Bruce Lane, Adair County Missouri Extension Livestock specialist said, “While we know that agriculture has a role to play in America’s energy future, corn-based ethanol and soy-based biodiesel are not long-term solutions to the United States’ energy needs. Agriculture should be part of a sustainable energy future, and this conference will feature cutting-edge information on renewable energy alternatives.”

The conference is targeted to high school and college agriculture faculty members, extension personnel, natural resource and conservation agency personnel, community leaders, and anyone interested in a sustainable energy future. Conference registration is \$50 and includes a resource notebook, DVD, lunch, and refreshments. Additionally, a waiver of the registration fee plus a travel scholarship of \$200 will be awarded to each of 40 applicants who plan to use this information in educational or outreach activities.

View the full conference program and download a registration/scholarship application at <http://bioenergyconference.truman.edu>. Registration deadline is November 7, 2008.

Scholarship application deadline is October 24, 2008 and recipients will be notified by November 7, 2008.

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