

2008 Mid-South Ag Finance Conference set for Aug. 6

MARTIN, TENN.

David Kohl, internationally known speaker to farmers, lenders and agribusiness audiences will be the featured presenter at the seventh annual Mid-South Ag Finance Conference. The conference will be held on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Aug. 6. Dr. Kohl has been a presenter during each of the last six sessions and has provided the growing audiences with practical information.

"As one of the world's leading ag economists who serves on policy boards and manages his own farming operation, Dr. Kohl provides lenders and producers with the most up-to-date and practical information available," said Dr. Thomas Payne, holder of the Horace and Sara Dunagan Chair of Excellence in Banking at UT Martin.

This year, Kohl will focus on sustaining profits and maintaining investment value in a turbulent economy. The agricultural economy has been quickly and permanently changed, and participants will benefit from practical tools to maximize profit and minimize risk. His sessions on "Sustained Profitability: Agricultural Production" and "Lending in the Age of Turbulence and Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: Best Practices for the Producer-Lender Team" will provide ways to strengthen balance sheets and increase operating cash flows. He will draw on his 30 years working with lenders and serving as facilitator of the Farm Financial Standards Task Force as he provides benchmarks of financial performance and personal investment strategies. Conference participants will receive useful "take-home tools" on agricultural best practices, transition management and how to grow profits while managing risk.

This year's conference will also feature a ses-

sion on "There's Gold in Them There Fields (But For How Long)? The Future of Commodity Prices and Land Values." This session will be led by Dr. Matthew Roberts from Ohio State University. Roberts will address the opportunities and pitfalls of global competition, alternate uses and other factors affecting livestock, commodity prices and land values. He will draw on his trading experience and forecasting expertise as he outlines the political and economic forces that determine the sustainability of prices and the producers' bottom line. This information will equip both lenders and producers as they deal with globalization, alternative fuel, climate, global demand and crop selection issues.

Finally, in the wake of the subprime crisis and credit crunch, this year's conference will include a special session on "The Availability and Cost of Agricultural Loans in 2009."

"First-time and repeat attendees will find the ag finance conference useful with its new information and timely topics. Our intention in the planning and design of the conference is to provide relevant information that agriculturalists can use to make their operations even more successful," said Terri Brundige, president of BancorpSouth in Dresden, and member of the conference planning committee.

The Mid-South Ag Finance Conference is appropriate for ag lenders, farmers and other farm-related business owners. Members of the total management team, including spouses and other business partners, should also attend. The registration fee is \$150 for lenders, \$75 for farmers, and \$25 for spouses and students. Registration information is available by contacting Payne, at 731-881-7324, or visit the Website, www.utm.edu/agconference. Space is limited so registration is requested by Aug. 1. Δ