

Under Secretary Buchanan has been a tireless worker for energy and the proper place for the research, education and extension capacities of REE and the land grants in the energy development programs of then US. As part of this effort he developed Bio Energy Awareness Days, as a way to highlight the research education and extension programs of the land grants and of REE. The first of these programs was in 2007, and largely a Federal Government activity, and well received.

The Second Annual Bio Energy Awareness Days (BEAD II) was much broader and involved participation from land grants and other higher education institutions and the private sector through co-sponsorship from the 25X'25 Alliance. This event was held from June 19-22, 2008 during the Summer Solstice and was organized by USDA/REE with the support of the National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy. Exhibits and events were held at the USDA Whitten Building, as well as the U.S. National Arboretum.

The first feature of BEAD II was the Grand Challenge competition for colleges of agriculture at land grants and other institutions of higher education. The challenge was to look into the future 10 years and envision what the energy economy would be like, and then to indicate how the university (and its partners) would service the new energy economy. In addition, there was a responsibility to indicate how the university would move from its current position and change its profile to service the energy economy. Ideas were elicited for all programs; extension, education and research. Universities submitted a 10 page paper describing their vision, and the applications were judged by members of 25X'25 and USDA/REE. There were 13 winners from around the country, including non-land grant universities. Products identified in these visions included everything from corn and soy to wood chips, algae and other feed stocks. Much interest was drawn to the Whitten Building lawn for the exhibits by the Grand Challenge winners, private sector and Federal agencies.

The second feature was exhibits of technologies by universities that are under development or have been developed for the agriculture and energy age. These exhibits were presented at the National Arboretum and included 31 universities. Exhibits ranged from extension programs related to the development of switch grass to a pilot gasifier system on a mobile platform to an exhibit related to growing feed stock along roadsides as a way of increasing the potential for production yields. Presenters of these exhibits were given recognition by the 25X'25 Alliance and USDA/REE.

The third feature was a "Power Plant Garden" at the U.S. National Arboretum that contains 21 plants with energy potential or known production capacity and were planted with signs describing the growing areas and how the plants can be processed into energy. This is a living demonstration that was dedicated during BEAD II, but will be permanent at the National Arboretum.

The awards ceremonies and recognitions included a number of important key speakers from USDA, DOE and the 25X'25 Alliance. From USDA, the speakers there was Deputy Secretary Conner, who also conducted a news conference kicking off the BEAD II events, REE Under Secretary Buchanan, RD Under Secretary Dorr, DOE Under Secretary for Science Orbach, and the U.S. National Arboretum Director Elias. From the 25X'25 Alliance speakers included Duane Acker former President of Kansas State University and Former USDA Under Secretary of Science and R. Bruce Arnold, Consultant for Biomass Utilization for Pulp and Paper, Director of Pulp Assets at Scott Paper Company.

Plans are currently under way for BEAD III. The universities are enthusiastic to participate, and the private sector and government agency exhibitors that were at the Whitten Building are ready to participate again. REE is in the process of gathering suggestions from the participants via a questionnaire to make BEAD III an even better event than BEAD II. Stay tuned!!