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WEEKLY COLUMN

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Notes from the Georgia State Senate

By: State Senator Bill Heath



Senator Bill Heath (R- Bremen) joined over 135 agriculture legislators at the 8th Annual Legislative Ag Chairs Meeting in San Diego, CA from Jan 23-25, 2009. Sen. Heath has recently been honored with his election to vice-president of this organization. The invitation only event is the premier opportunity for agriculture legislators from around the US , Canada , and Mexico to meet and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing agriculture.

Attendees toured California avocado and flower farms on Friday, spent all day Saturday in workshops and concluded Sunday with an overview of federal issues and implementation issues for the 2008 Farm Bill. The meeting topics are developed by the Advisory Board and provide a broad opportunity to learn, discuss and share up to the minute information on issues facing farmers, ranchers and their legislators every day.

Highlights this year included:

- Educating Consumers: Ag's Future Depends on it.
- Organic Farming, Genetics and the Future of Food
- Family Farm Viability
- Ag Competiveness: What are the Major Issues Facing Agriculture
- Innovative Rural Health Care Options
- Sustainable Biofuels
- Immigration and Ag Labor

“The National Ag Chairs Summit is the most important meeting of the year for me,” said Sen. Heath. “It is a unique opportunity to learn about ag issues in other parts of the country and hear from the top experts in the field. I always go home after this meeting knowing that I will be able to put this information to good use, serving my constituents and my state.”

National Ag Chairs Summit is sponsored by State Ag and Rural Leaders (SARL) with support from the Council of the State Governments (CSG), National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) and Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI).

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Sen. Bill Heath Sen. Bill Heath serves as Chairman of the Retirement Committee and Governor Sonny Perdue’s Floor Leader in the Senate. He represents the 31st Senate District which consists of Haralson and Polk counties and portions of Bartow and Paulding counties. He may be reached at 404.651.7738 or by email at billheath@billheath.net.