Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]

From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 2:15 PM
To: Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]
Subject: FW: NEWS - AgriSol project doesn't appear defensible (DSM Register Letter to Editor)

Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University
Cell phone: (515) 490-2941

From: Koppin, Sheila Doyle [BOARD]
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2012 10:55 AM
To: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Subject: RE: NEWS - AgriSol project doesn't appear defensible (DSM Register Letter to Editor)

Very good – thanks much, Ann.

From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2012 10:49 AM
To: Koppin, Sheila Doyle [BOARD]; Katie Mulholland; Beck, Jeneane [BOARD]; Berg, Brad [BOARD]; Brunson, Marcia R [BOARD]; Clayton, Aimee [BOARD]; Cook, Timothy B [BOARD]; Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]; Gonzalez, Diana [BOARD]; Racki, Joan [BOARD]; Saunders, Keith [BOARD]; Sayre, Patrice; Smith, Dianne [BOARD]
Cc: Donley, Robert [BOARD]
Subject: RE: NEWS - AgriSol project doesn't appear defensible (DSM Register Letter to Editor)

All,

Just an FYI. Wendy Wintersteen posted a statement on ISU’s involvement in the project on her web page.

See: http://www.ag.iastate.edu/features/2012/Message_from_Dean_Wintersteen/

Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University
Cell phone: (515) 490-2941

From: Koppin, Sheila Doyle [BCARD]
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2012 10:40 AM
To: Katie Mulholland; Beck, Jeneane [BOARD]; Berg, Brad [BOARD]; Brunson, Marcia R [BOARD]; Clayton, Aimee [BOARD]; Cook, Timothy B [BOARD]; Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]; Gonzalez, Diana [BOARD]; McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]; Racki, Joan [BOARD]; Saunders, Keith [BOARD]; Sayre, Patrice; Smith, Dianne [BOARD]
Subject: NEWS - AgriSol project doesn't appear defensible (DSM Register Letter to Editor)
AgriSol project doesn't appear defensible

3:57 PM, Jan. 15, 2012 | Comments

The Dan Rather article, “A Land Grab University,” (Dec, 25) was certainly embarrassing for Iowa State University. The massive AgriSol Energy for-profit project planned for Tanzania seems to be neither morally nor ethically defensible.

Iowa State University is involved with Board of Regents member (and former hog confinement mogul) Bruce Rastetter, who wants to plow up hundreds of thousands of acres of land so that corn and soybeans can be planted with giant equipment. And there is a 99-year lease with a cost of 25 cents per acre per year.

Now we find out that there are more than 100,000 people who have been living on and farming that land for 40 years who would be forced to move. And somehow this giant project benefits small local farmers?

It is all very cozy. Rastetter gives lots of money to Terry Branstad, who then appoints Rastetter to the Board of Regents, and now Iowa State is attempting to lend credibility to Rastetter’s project. I hope we get more information on this scheme.

— JoAnn Hardy, Mason City
Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University

Cell phone: (515) 490-2941

---

Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University

Lisa and Beth,

Here is the link to ISU’s statement on recent media attention regarding Tanzania.
http://www.ag.iastate.edu/features/2012/Message_from_Dean_Wintersteen/

As I mentioned today there is an incredible amount of misinformation being printed about David Acker’s role.

After you read this statement, please let me know if you feel I should send this to other legislators. I’d appreciate your feedback.

Thank you,

Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University

Cell phone: (515) 490-2941
Rather's criticism of ISU project without merit

January 5, 2012, Des Moines Register

Iowa State University is world renowned for its agricultural knowledge, training and technical capabilities. I came to this country over 40 years ago from Uganda and promptly began classes at ISU. Since that time, I have observed ISU's impeccable record of sharing that knowledge.

Recently, Dan Rather denigrated ISU in the Des Moines Sunday Register by making false claims about an agricultural project in Tanzania ("A Land Grab University?" Dec. 25).

ISU, working with Iowa-basec AgriSol Energy, was involved in a project designed to combat hunger, increase agricultural production and create new markets for Tanzanian crops. The project, developed in cooperation with the Tanzanian government, is on vacant land the government is redeveloping after nearly 40 years as a refugee camp. Under a United Nations program, the former refugees were granted Tanzanian citizenship and relocated.

The project will provide access to modern farming methods, inputs, tools and equipment so local farmers can feed Tanzanians and develop sustainable agricultural commerce — similar to another successful ISU project in my homeland. Further, AgriSol plans to invest over $100 million in the project, which will serve as a model for modern agriculture in Africa.

ISU is no longer involved, for reasons unrelated to its merits, but the project deserves public support and fair and accurate news reporting. Rather's essay was neither fair nor accurate, and it will be a shame if his
sensational journalism undermines support for a project that could help create a secure food supply for millions of Tanzanians.

— Suku Radia, West Des Moines

*Ann McCarthy*
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University

Cell phone: (515) 490-2941
Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]

From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 2:14 PM
To: Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]
Subject: FW: Suku Radia's letter to editor

Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University
Cell phone: (515) 490-2941

From: Wintersteen, Wendy [AEX S]
Sent: Thursday, January 05, 2012 8:27 AM
To: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Subject: Re: Suku Radia's letter to editor

No – I didn't receive it last night.

Wendy

Wendy Wintersteen
Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Director, Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics
Experiment Station
138 Curtiss Hall
Ames, IA 50011
515-294-2518
wwinters@iastate.edu

From: "McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]" <amccart@mail.iastate.edu>
Date: Thu, 5 Jan 2012 07:14:23 -0600
To: Wendy Wintersteen <wwinters@mail.iastate.edu>
Subject: Fwd: Suku Radia's letter to editor

Please do me a favor and let me know if John McCarroll or his staff already sent this to you last night.

Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]" <amccart@mail.iastate.edu>
Date: January 5, 2012 6:36:02 AM CST
To: "Geoffroy, Gregory L [PRES]" <geoffroy@mail.iastate.edu>, "Leath, Steven"
Rather's criticism of ISU project without merit

January 5, 2012, Des Moines Register

Iowa State University is world renowned for its agricultural knowledge, training and technical capabilities. I came to this country over 40 years ago from Uganda and promptly began classes at ISU. Since that time, I have observed ISU’s impeccable record of sharing that knowledge.

Recently, Dan Rather denigrated ISU in the Des Moines Sunday Register by making false claims about an agricultural project in Tanzania (“A Land Grab University?” Dec. 25).

ISU, working with Iowa-based AgriSol Energy, was involved in a project designed to combat hunger, increase agricultural production and create new markets for Tanzanian crops. The project, developed in cooperation with the Tanzanian government, is on vacant land the government is redeveloping after nearly 40 years as a refugee camp. Under a United Nations program, the former refugees were granted Tanzanian citizenship and relocated.

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— Suku Radia, West Des Moines

Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University

Cell phone: (515) 490-2941
Ok my cell is really 490-2941.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 4, 2012, at 5:03 PM, "McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]" <amccart@mail.iastate.edu> wrote:

Bridget,

Would you please give me a call? 490-2947 I have one question about one of the data requests below.

Thank you.

Ann

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 4, 2012, at 2:40 PM, "Godes, Bridget [LEGIS]" <Bridget.Godes@legis.state.ia.us> wrote:

Ann – here is what I’ve been asked to forward to you as a request for information.

Let’s start with copies of any contracts, agreements, memoranda of understanding, or similar documents between ISU and AgriSol and/or any Tanzanian entity, public or private. Also copies of any correspondence, including emails, and notes of any meetings or phone conversations involving Bruce Rastetter and any ISU official or faculty member regarding any and all projects in Africa. In particular, I
would like to see any and all records relating to the involvement of any ISU faculty member working on this or related projects, including the amount of compensation and the source of funds used to pay such compensation, how such a faculty member was selected or recruited, and the duties and activities of same. I would like to see records of any payments to or received from Rastetter, his companies, or "endowments" in regard to any Africa project. Ditto for any payments from or to any African entity, public or private.

Thanks Ann – see you next week.

Bridget

Bridget Godes
Policy Analyst, Senate Democratic Staff
Iowa State Capitol
Des Moines 50319
515-281-3433

From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R] [mailto:amccart@iastate.edu]
Sent: Friday, December 30, 2011 10:26 AM
To: Godes, Bridget [LEGIS]
Subject: Re: DMR guest editorial: Dan Rather: A land grab university? (ISU & Bruce Rastetter)

Bridget,

I don't know that we have additional comment but will check.

What type of additional info would you like?

Thanks and Happy New Year to you as well.

Ann
Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 30, 2011, at 9:36 AM, "Godes, Bridget [LEGIS]"
<Bridget.Godes@legis.state.ia.us> wrote:

Ann – Does ISU have a formal response or additional information about this issue?

Thanks and happy new years.

Bridget Godes
Policy Analyst, Senate Democratic Staff
Iowa State Capitol
Des Moines 50319
515-281-3433
Dan Rather: A land grab university?

Written by
DAN RATHER

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: DAN RATHER, the longtime CBS reporter and anchorman, now reports for HDNet, a television network available on some cable systems and on the Internet at www.HD.net.

Back in September, "Dan Rather Reports" broadcast a story about Iowa State University's role in a controversial African land deal. An Iowa-based company called AgriSol Energy was planning to grow corn and soybeans on hundreds of thousands of acres in western Tanzania.

ISU claimed that they were working with the company to make sure that the massive for-profit venture was also a socially responsible one. According to an AgriSol news release, ISU's involvement ensured that the project would "effectively and efficiently serve the interests of the local communities and the country."

However, our investigation found that the land AgriSol planned to farm — with ISU's help — is already occupied by more than 100,000 people. They are refugees living in two settlements known as Katumba and Mishamo.

Last summer, we visited Katumba and found a thriving, self-sufficient community. In the almost 40 years since the settlement was established, its people have put down roots and turned what used to be a remote forest into highly productive — and highly desirable — farmland.

But the Tanzanian government had decided to evict the people of Katumba and lease the land to AgriSol for the development of a large-scale farm.

Critics called the deal a "land grab" that would be catastrophic for thousands of small farmers — just the kind of people that AgriSol claimed its project would benefit.

When we raised this issue with Ildi Simba, the chairman of AgriSol Energy Tanzania, he showed no concern for the fate of the refugees. "Whether those people will be moved to here or there is not our business," he said. "That is for the government."
The annual rent the company would pay the Tanzanian government for a 99-year lease? Just 25 cents per acre.

A top administrator at ISU has responded to our report in an interview for the university newspaper. Asked about the refugees, Associate Dean David Acker was emphatic. "That's an awful thing to even consider," he said. "If you did find a set of business people who were willing to have anything to do with kicking refugees off the land, who would want to have anything to do with them? Not me personally, not Iowa State."

Unfortunately, the facts tell a different story.

Acker himself was in charge of ISU's work with AgriSol and, as he is doubtless aware, ISU faculty visited the refugee settlements to do preliminary research for the AgriSol project in March and November 2010. What's more, ISU is mentioned in the memorandum of understanding between AgriSol and the Tanzanian government. The agreement specifies that AgriSol would be "working closely with Iowa State University" and also makes clear that the project would move forward only after the "resettlement and removal of all former refugees."

Our investigation also raised questions about the reasons behind ISU's involvement with AgriSol. AgriSol founder Bruce Rastetter is a major donor to ISU and his multi-million-dollar endowment pays the salary of an ISU faculty member who worked on the project. Rastetter also sits on the Iowa Board of Regents, which oversees ISU. Critics charged that Rastetter was using the university's name and reputation to further his own business interests.

Since our investigation, ISU has scaled back its involvement with AgriSol to an "advisory capacity." Meanwhile, in the face of mounting criticism, AgriSol announced that it was suspending development efforts in the refugee settlements and focusing on land elsewhere in Tanzania. But Acker's claim that ISU "never considered working in those areas [where the refugees live], and would never consider it" is simply untrue.

We've come to expect such evasions of responsibility from private companies, but it's especially disconcerting to see them coming from a publicly funded, land-grant university. Iowa State University is one of America's most respected agricultural schools and, as such, its administrators and faculty should be held to a high standard of transparency and accountability. It's fair for Dean Acker to highlight ISU's change of heart on the AgriSol project, if indeed they have
had ore. But the people of Iowa — not to mention the
refugees of Katumba — deserve an honest explanation for
ISU's part in this deal, and not just shameless denials.
From: Meyer, Brian G [AGCOM]
Sent: Wednesday, January 04, 2012 4:35 PM
To: Michel, Tammy J [PRES]
Cc: Geoffroy, Gregory L [PRES]; Leath, Steven; Hoffman, Elizabeth [EVPP]; McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]; John McCarrroll; Wintersteen, Wendy [AEX S]; Acker, David G [AEX S]
Subject: Re: Response to Land Grab University Article

Tammy,

Attached is the response to the Jan. 3 request (4625). Please let us know if you have questions or comments. Thanks,

Brian

Brian Meyer
Director of College Relations
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Communications Service
Iowa State University
304 Curtiss Hall
Ames, IA 50011-1050
(515) 294-0706 Fax: (515) 294-8652
bmeyer@iastate.edu
http://www.ag.iastate.edu/
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/IowaStateU.AgLifeSciences

From: Michel, Tammy J [PRES]
Sent: Tuesday, January 03, 2012 10:00 AM
To: Wintersteen, Wendy [AEX S]; Acker, David G [AEX S]
Cc: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Subject: Response to Land Grab University Article
Importance: High

Please prepare a response to the attached article as requested below and return to me by January 5th.
Thanks,

Tammy

Tammy Michel

Office of the President
Iowa State University
1750A Beardshear Hall
Ames, IA 50011-2035
(515) 294-0585

Details for Request

Requestor

Bridget Godes

Request Log Number

4625

Subject

Land Grab University Article

Details

Does ISU have a formal response or additional information about this issue?

See attached article.

Date/Time Due

1/5/2012 12:00 AM

Agency

Senate Democratic Caucus Staff

Topic

Regent Specific

Assigned Institutions

Iowa State University

Created By

Jean Friedrich
Iowa State University’s strategic plan emphasizes applying the land-grant university mission of science, education, and extension and outreach to meet global challenges of the 21st century.

Since 2003 Iowa State University has partnered to create a successful program in rural Uganda providing education to smallholder farmers and families on food production, human nutrition, child survival and clean water availability. With eight years of experience, Iowa State has learned how agricultural education can be a powerful tool to combat hunger and poverty. The program in Uganda is conducted by the Iowa State University Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods.

In 2010, representatives of AgriSol contacted Iowa State University regarding the development of a small farmer education program similar to the Uganda project. As in Uganda, this project would again focus on human nutrition, child survival, clean water and improving food production.

In February 2011, Iowa State participated in a workshop in Tanzania for Tanzanian representatives in government, business and academia. The Tanzanians identified a number of key needs and possible responses that would need to be considered in developing educational programs for small farmers to help them address hunger and poverty. Their ideas included demonstration farms, training to upgrade skills and educational programs on HIV/AIDS.

In May 2011, Bruce Rastetter began his appointment to the Iowa Board of Regents. After assessing the change in Mr. Rastetter’s role, the university decided it would no longer directly participate in the project and would only serve in a limited advisory capacity. This was done specifically to address any perceptions or questions on potential conflicts.

Iowa State University has not signed or executed any agreement or contract with AgriSol, and has no financial stake, investment or commercial interest in the project.

Mr. Rastetter has financially supported an agricultural program at Iowa State University. In 2007, four years before he was appointed to the Board of Regents, he made a $1.75 million commitment to establish an endowed professorship in entrepreneurship and to renovate space for the entrepreneurship program.

Iowa State strongly believes that responsible public-private partnerships strengthen the work that’s necessary to improve quality of life, within the state of Iowa and globally. The university’s mission is creating, sharing and applying knowledge to make the world a better place.
Dan Rather: A land grab university?

Written by
DAN RATHER

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: DAN RATHER, the longtime CBS reporter and anchorman, now reports for HDNet, a television network available on some cable systems and on the Internet at www.HD.net.

Back in September, “Dan Rather Reports” broadcast a story about Iowa State University’s role in a controversial African land deal. An Iowa-based company called AgriSol Energy was planning to grow corn and soybeans on hundreds of thousands of acres in western Tanzania.

ISU claimed that they were working with the company to make sure that the massive for-profit venture was also a socially responsible one. According to an AgriSol news release, ISU’s involvement ensured that the project would “effectively and efficiently serve the interests of the local communities and the country.”

However, our investigation found that the land AgriSol planned to farm — with ISU’s help — is already occupied by more than 100,000 people. They are refugees living in two settlements known as Katumba and Mishamo.

Last summer, we visited Katumba and found a thriving, self-sufficient community. In the almost 40 years since the settlement was established, its people have put down roots and turned what used to be a remote forest into highly productive — and highly desirable — farmland.

But the Tanzanian government had decided to evict the people of Katumba and lease the land to AgriSol for the development of a large-scale farm.

Critics called the deal a “land grab” that would be catastrophic for thousands of small farmers — just the kind of people that AgriSol claimed its project would benefit.

When we raised this issue with Ildi Simba, the chairman of AgriSol Energy Tanzania, he showed no concern for the fate of the refugees. “Whether those people will be moved to here or there is not our business,” he said. “That is for the government.”

The annual rent the company would pay the Tanzanian government for a 99-year lease? Just 25 cents per acre.

A top administrator at ISU has responded to our report in an interview for the university newspaper. Asked about the refugees, Associate Dean David Acker was emphatic. “That’s an awful thing to even consider,” he said. “If you did find a set of business people who were willing to have anything to do with kicking refugees off the land, who would want to have anything to do with them? Not me personally, not Iowa State.”
Unfortunately, the facts tell a different story.

Acker himself was in charge of ISU’s work with AgriSol and, as he is doubtless aware, ISU faculty visited the refugee settlements to do preliminary research for the AgriSol project in March and November 2010. What’s more, ISU is mentioned in the memorandum of understanding between AgriSol and the Tanzanian government. The agreement specifies that AgriSol would be “working closely with Iowa State University” and also makes clear that the project would move forward only after the “resettlement and removal of all former refugees.”

Our investigation also raised questions about the reasons behind ISU’s involvement with AgriSol. AgriSol founder Bruce Rastetter is a major donor to ISU and his multi-million-dollar endowment pays the salary of an ISU faculty member who worked on the project. Rastetter also sits on the Iowa Board of Regents, which oversees ISU. Critics charged that Rastetter was using the university’s name and reputation to further his own business interests.

Since our investigation, ISU has scaled back its involvement with AgriSol to an “advisory capacity.” Meanwhile, in the face of mounting criticism, AgriSol announced that it was suspending development efforts in the refugee settlements and focusing on land elsewhere in Tanzania. But Acker’s claim that ISU “never considered working in those areas [where the refugees live], and would never consider it” is simply untrue.

We’ve come to expect such evasions of responsibility from private companies, but it’s especially disconcerting to see them coming from a publicly funded, land-grant university. Iowa State University is one of America’s most respected agricultural schools and, as such, its administrators and faculty should be held to a high standard of transparency and accountability. It’s fair for Dean Acker to highlight ISU’s change of heart on the AgriSol project, if indeed they have had one. But the people of Iowa — not to mention the refugees of Katumba — deserve an honest explanation for ISU’s part in this deal, and not just shameless denials.
Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University

Cell phone: (515) 490-2941

From: McCarron, John F [U REL]
Sent: Friday, December 30, 2011 1:04 PM
To: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]; Geoffroy, Gregory L [PRES]; Leath, Steven; Wintersteen, Wendy [AEX S]; McCarron, John F [U REL]
Subject: Re: Fwd: DMR guest editorial: Dan Rather: A land grab university? (ISU & Bruce Rastetter)

Ann --- I recommended a response to the Rather opinion piece. I believe Dr. Leath and President Geoffroy were intending to discuss the idea. John M.

From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Sent: Friday, December 30, 2011 10:31 AM
To: Geoffroy, Gregory L [PRES]; Leath, Steven; Wintersteen, Wendy [AEX S]; McCarron, John F [U REL]
Subject: Fwd: DMR guest editorial: Dan Rather: A land grab university? (ISU & Bruce Rastetter)

All,

Asking Bridget what type of additional information she seeks. I've not heard additional ISU comment on this issue.

Will keep you posted.

Thank you,

Ann
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]" <amccart@mail.iastate.edu>
Date: December 30, 2011 10:24:07 AM CST
To: "Friedrich, Jean [BOARD]" <jfried@mail.iastate.edu>
Cc: "Donley, Robert [BOARD]" <bdonley@mail.iastate.edu>, Keith Saunders <keith-saunders@uiowa.edu>, "Beck, Jencane [BOARD]" <jbeck@mail.iastate.edu>
Subject: Fwd: DMR guest editorial: Dan Rather: A land grab university? (ISU & Bruce Rastetter)
Jean,

Please send this up to campus for a formal response.

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Godes, Bridget [LEGIS]" <Bridget.Godes@legis.state ia.us>
Date: December 30, 2011 9:29:04 AM CST
To: ""McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]"" <amccart@iastate.edu>
Subject: FW: DMR guest editorial: Dan Rather: A land grab university? (ISU & Bruce Rastetter)

Ann – Does ISU have a formal response or additional information about this issue?

Thanks and happy new years.

Bridget Godes
Policy Analyst, Senate Democratic Staff
Iowa State Capitol
Des Moines 50319
515-281-3433

Dan Rather: A land grab university?

Written by
DAN RATHER

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: DAN RATHER, the longtime CBS reporter and anchorman, now reports for HDNet, a television network available on some cable systems and on the Internet at www.HD.net.

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**A top administrator at ISU** has responded to our report in an interview for the university newspaper. Asked about the refugees, Associate Dean David Acker was emphatic. "That's an awful thing to even consider," he said. "If you did find a set of business people who were willing to have anything to do with kicking refugees off the land, who would want to have anything to do with them? Not me personally, not Iowa State."

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Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]

From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 2:10 PM
To: Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]
Subject: FW: NEWS - Iowa State receives criticism for involvement in potential land grabbing (Iowa State Daily)

Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University
Cell phone: (515) 490-2941

From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2011 9:48 AM
To: Wintersteen, Wendy [AEX S]
Subject: FW: NEWS - Iowa State receives criticism for involvement in potential land grabbing (Iowa State Daily)

FYI.
Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University
Cell phone: (515) 490-2941

From: Koppin, Sheila Doyle [BCARD]
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2011 9:38 AM
To: Katie Mulholland; Berg, Brad [BOARD]; Brunson, Marcia R [BOARD]; Clayton, Aimee [BOARD]; Cook, Timothy B [BOARD]; Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]; Gonzalez, Diana [BOARD]; McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]; Racki, Joan [BOARD]; Saunders, Keith [BOARD]; Sayre, Patrice; Smith, Dianne [BOARD]
Subject: NEWS - Iowa State receives criticism for involvement in potential land grabbing (Iowa State Daily)

Iowa State receives criticism for involvement in potential land grabbing

By Kaleb Warnock, kaleb.warnock@iowastatedaily.com | Posted: Tuesday, December 6, 2011 6:00 am

Several advocacy groups and media organizations including Dan Rather Reports and the Oakland Institute have released reports condemning an international land development project involving Iowa State University. The Oakland Institute, a human advocacy organization released a report critical of Iowa State's role in the project.

Several Iowa-based companies are working on a controversial land investment deal in the Sub-Saharan African country of Tanzania. AgriSol Energy LLC and Summit Group are attempting to work out a deal with the Tanzanian government that would allow them to lease land in the western part of the country for agricultural development.

Iowa State University conducted research in early 2011 to offer advice to help the potential for success in the program. However, the project has continually been referred to as a "land grab," or a scheme that aims to take land out from under Tanzanian people and leave it to large companies for the taking.
The investment companies claim that they aim to develop the fertile land in the rural areas of the western region of the country. There has been strong criticism from NGOs and media outlets due to the accusation that refugees or peasant farmers are currently occupying the land AgriSol hopes to acquire.

AgriSol Energy Tanzania Limited, a joint venture between AgriSol Energy LLC and Serengeti Advisers Limited, claims that the land investment is for the benefit of the local economy and aims to make Tanzania an agricultural powerhouse.

"Our objective is to create a large-scale agriculture zone dedicated to producing staple crops and livestock that will help stabilize local food supplies, create jobs and economic opportunity for local populations, spur investment in local infrastructure improvements and develop new, transparent markets for agricultural products," said the AgriSol the website.

It also claims that profits gained from the farms will provide for co-op organizations and community investment.

However, Anuradha Mittal, executive director of the Oakland Institute, vehemently believes that the investors' intentions are not within the best interests of Tanzanians.

"If you look at the business plan, even if they just planted with corn, at the prices of corn this year, they would be making a net profit of over $300 million a year," she said. "And that they have all kind of strategic investor status that they are demanding, that means they don't have to pay import duties, they don't have to pay property taxes, they can repatriate their profits. So basically you leave nothing in the country."

Mittal is not alone in her skepticism of the project. Several experts in the field of agricultural development are also not confident in its success.

"For one thing, there's no question that this is a land grab," said Dennis Keeney of the Institute for Agriculture anc Trade Policy and former head of the Lepold Center. "They're getting huge tracts of land that will not be beneficial to the Tanzanian people."

He was wary of the effect farming will have on the land as well, especially given the fact that row crops like corn and soybeans are extremely hard on soil.

"Odds are they're going to have a hard time supporting an irrigated crop like corn or soybeans," he said. "The secondary effects are always different than what you think they might be.

ISU Professor Emeritus Neil Harl, who is an expert in agriculture law and has worked extensively in agricultural development projects, was also willing to weigh in on the issue. One of his primary criticisms is that there is a lack of transparency within the business plan, and it is difficult to tell what the role of the companies will be.

"If [AgriSol] would please give a little more insight into the objective of the project, we would be more at ease, particularly in light of the involvement of an educational institution," Harl said.

According to Harl, one of the most important questions as to whether it is designed for long term. First, it is not clear what design is and second, whether it aims to maximize returns for interests or to help Tanzanians.

Harl stated that the crops are typically for export, and that capital is rarely funneled back. Another criticism of his is that there is very little infrastructure in the country, especially with regards to irrigation, roads and railroads — all of which would have to be built by tax money, levying an even heavier burden on the Tanzanian people.

"This is a bit worrisome to these people. How is this project going to benefit them, if it does?" he said. "It isn't creating a model of typical displaced person can use."

AgriSol countered the argument, claiming that they would work directly with the farmers according to their website: "Yes, small farmers will be consulted curing the next phase of our project's development. We have just completed our feasibility analysis and preliminary planning, which included a series of listening sessions and a workshop led by us, to solicit local input from political, university and technical leaders at the national, regional and district levels. Twelve key needs were identified by our fellow Tanzanians at that workshop and will be incorporated into our program."

Accordingly, Mittal is critical of Iowa State's role in the project.

"This is an investment where investors are going in with a state university very actively involved in it with this investor, and they'll be to displacing people who have been living there for 40 years," she said. "There are a few things that stand out. One is the business plan. They're paying almost nothing, it's like 50 cents or whatever for the land."

In its report on the project, the Oakland Institute claims that as many as 160,000 people are going to be relocated on by of the project.

"People are not happy about being moved. They are being told they will have $200 when they move, and that's when they'll become a citizen," Mittal said. "Their citizenship is based on them agreeing to moving away and dismantling their own homes. So there's no relocation plan other than something that sounds very harsh."

Keeney, too, was worried about the fate of the potentially displaced people.

2
"They're just going to have to go wherever they're told. It's not going to be a good outcome," Keeney said. "It just seems to be the way people treat those they have power over."

David Acker, associate dean of global agricultural programs at Iowa State, sees things much differently. He was the prime contributor in Iowa State's role on the project and begins by stating that the term "feasibility study" is inaccurate, because Iowa State played a different role in the project.

"I think 'feasibility study' is not the correct word. I would describe it as 'pre-planning activities.'"

His previous work in Tanzania led him to want to work alongside the Tanzanian people and therefore to spend time in the country doing research. Acker conducted listening sessions with the Tanzanians and developed a list of 12 areas with the Tanzanians that they thought that agribusiness should have in order to be socially responsible.

The list included programs like community trust funds and AIDS education, which he presented to AgriSol. When it came to actual land studies, however, they had hired consultants outside of Iowa State, according to Acker.

"That interested me because it's a new model," he said. "My own heart of hearts, what I wanted to do was to figure out a way to bring some investment to Tanzania that would help Tanzanians. Okay, it's going to make some money for investors, otherwise hey, that's why they call them investors. They don't want to go and give money away. They're looking for a way to make money, but they want to file money back in."

However, Acker is critical of Oakland report because he claims that the areas containing refugees were not being considered by AgriSol.

"If these plots were ever under consideration, they are not now," he said. "That's an awful thing to even consider. If you did find a set of business people who were willing to have anything to do with kicking refugees off the land, who would want to have anything to do with them? Not me personally, not Iowa State."

The acquisition of the land is also controversial due to Tanzanian laws on land ownership. Currently, Tanzanian law prohibits ownership of land within its borders by anyone who is not a Tanzanian citizen. AgriSol plans to avoid the issue by leasing the land from the government instead of purchasing it.

The final piece of the puzzle is the conflict of interest presented by Bruce Rastetter's role in the projects and his position as president pro tempore of the Iowa Board of Regents.

"At first I was very concerned because they were stepping in a role they couldn't win," Keeney said. He claimed that Iowa State's decision to step back from the project was a result of the potential fallout of the conflict of interest being exposed to the public.

"They were worried about the curtain coming up on this one and it not looking good," he said. "Whether or not ISU would have done it, whether he was involved or not is another questions; we may never know the answer."

However, he was not completely against the project. He also claimed that it could potentially help the Tanzanians. Ultimately, though, he feels that even with the decreased role of Iowa State, the project is still a bad idea.

Rastetter would not speak with the Daily regarding the project, but in a disclosure statement issued by Rastetter on this past May, he admitted that there was a conflict of interest.

"I am a shareholder in Agrisol Holdings, which is working with the College of Agriculture [and Life Sciences] at Iowa State University on a Tanzania Ag Project. Previous to becoming a regent, Agrisol provided a scholarship commitment and travel expense reimbursement for travel to TZ. I additionally have three gifts to Iowa State University and the University of Iowa."

Given the conflict of interest, Iowa State chose to step away from direct involvement in the project, only offering to provide basic advisory information in the future.

"Iowa State had to look at its role and say, 'As much as we'd like to be involved with this, it would be a conflict of interest, or at least perceived as a conflict of interest if we were working on an investment that one of the regents was involved with,'" Acker said.

However, Iowa State will still be able to provide information on past projects to help advise investors, just as it would with other NGOs and other companies.

"We can't be involved anymore and that's a key point. What can we do to be helpful that doesn't involve a direct involvement?" he said. "We would basically share any of the information we have on Uganda and our approach there, hand over the blueprints; it's public information."

However, he is still confident in the project.

"Even if we think it's a good project, there's no way we could be involved directly in it," Acker said. "I have my personal regrets because I feel like we could have done something good, but I think we did the right thing by stepping back."
Acker also wanted to counter the argument that there were currently no plans, on behalf of Iowa State or AgriSol, to be involved in other areas. According to Acker, AgriSol was given list of 30 parcels of land in Tanzania, place with refugees was on list, but they discarded them like other places because they had found the the Tanzanian government had not given then adequate information after doing their own investigation.

"That's probably the sorest point because that became the focus of Dan Rather. It's white a black eye for the AgriSol people," he said. "They're investors, and they want to make money; there's no question about that. But to be considered to be kicking poor people off the land — you can dislike an investor, but I think they felt that that was kind of a cheap shot."

Acker said that he and the university would be very happy to work with any party as long as they have a commitment to sustainable rural livelihoods, but certainly would not be anyone who would kick people off of land.

"All I can say is from Iowa State's point of view is that we have never considered working in those areas, and would never consider it," he said. "Our commitment was to sustainable rural livelihoods of vulnerable farmers, vulnerable farm families. I didn't see our role being involved in the profit aspect of it."

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Dan Rather Reports

Episode Number: 631

Episode Title: Trouble On The Land

Description: American universities are involved in what some say is a land grab in the poorest parts of Africa. Plus, the new governor of Michigan comes forward with a controversial program to add jobs.

TEASE:

DAN RATHER (VOICE OVER)

TONIGHT, TROUBLE ON THE LAND.

THE STORY OF AGRISOL -- AN AMERICAN COMPANY TRYING TO DEVELOP A MASSIVE FARM IN ONE OF THE POOREST PARTS OF AFRICA. IS IT A GOOD DEAL FOR THE PEOPLE OF TANZANIA OR A LAND GRAB?

SIMBA

Mechanized agriculture will produce more food, certainly much much more than our local needs.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT WILL THE HARVEST BE FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST?

MITTAL

AgriSol is demanding that the government of Tanzania change its rules, that even if there is food shortages, they should be able to export food.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

PLUS, A RADICAL RE-THINK ON JOBS. A NEWLY-ELECTED POLITICIAN SAYS WHAT THIS COUNTRY NEEDS IS MORE IMMIGRANTS.

GOVERNOR RICK SNYDER

I am absolutely focused on finding jobs for Michiganders and encouraging legal immigration with advanced degree people is absolutely consistent with that. 'Cause they're job creators.
RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WE’LL BRING YOU THE NEWS, TONIGHT, ON DAN RATHER REPORTS.

ACT 1: TROUBLE ON THE LAND

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

GOOD EVENING. IT MAY BE HARD FOR MANY AMERICANS TO BELIEVE, BUT SCIENTISTS THINK WE COULD BE HEADED FOR A GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS. THEY ESTIMATE THAT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DECADES, THERE WILL BE AN ADDITIONAL TWO BILLION MOUTHS TO FEED ON THE PLANET.

THAT’S EXPECTED TO DRIVE UP THE PRICE FOR STAPLES LIKE CORN AND SOYBEANS. AND THESE CROPS ARE ALSO INCREASINGLY IN DEMAND TO MAKE LIVESTOCK FEED AND BIOFUELS.

TO MANY, THIS IS A RECIPE FOR DISASTER. BUT TO SOME, IT’S A BUSINESS PLAN. WITH FOOD PRICES ALREADY AT RECORD HIGHS, A NEW CLASS OF INVESTORS IS SCOURING THE GLOBE, LOOKING TO MAKE BIG BETS ON AGRICULTURE. AND THEY’RE TURNING THEIR ATTENTION TO ONE OF THE LAST, GREAT UNDEVELOPED PLACES ON EARTH.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WELCOME TO THE NEW FRONTIER FOR HIGH-RISK INVESTORS. WORLD STOCK MARKETS MAY BE VOLATILE. REAL ESTATE BUBBLES HAVE POPPED. BUT SOME THINK THEY CAN HIT IT BIG BY SNATCHING UP FERTILE LAND IN AFRICA.

EXACT NUMBERS ARE HARD TO COME BY. BUT IN 2009 THE WORLD BANK ESTIMATED THAT THERE WERE OVER 70 MILLION ACRES WORTH OF DEALS IN PROGRESS ON THIS CONTINENT. LAND IS CHEAP... AND MANY GOVERNMENTS HERE ARE EAGER TO ATTRACT FOREIGN MONEY WITHIN THEIR BORDERS.

BUT THIS IS ALSO A CONTINENT MARRED BY FAMINE AND DROUGHT.

AND MANY INVESTORS SAY THEY’RE NOT JUST HERE TO MAKE MONEY -- THEY SAY THEY ALSO WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. THEY ARGUE THAT BY BRINGING IN MODERN AGRICULTURE, THEY WILL HELP AFRICA FINALLY GROW ENOUGH FOOD TO FEED ITSELF.
A FEW MONTHS AGO, OUR REPORTING TEAM OF LUCIAN READ AND ADAM BOLT TRAVELED TO TANZANIA TO BEGIN AN INVESTIGATION INTO ONE OF THE LARGEST WESTERN-BACKED LAND DEALS IN AFRICA. ITS BACKERS PROMISE TO TURN A REMOTE CORNER OF THE COUNTRY INTO AN AGRICULTURAL POWERHOUSE... BUT CRITICS WERE CALLING THE DEAL A “LAND GRAB”.

TANZANIA IS LOCATED ON THE EAST COAST OF AFRICA. ITS COMMERCIAL CAPITAL, DAR ES SALAAM, IS A BUSTLING METROPOLIS OF NEARLY TWO AND A HALF MILLION.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THIS COUNTRY HAS BEEN WAY UP IN RECENT YEARS, AND THE ECONOMY HERE HAS BEEN GROWING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS. BUT THE POVERTY RATE HAS BARELY MOVED -- AND THAT HAS RAISED A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT WHO BENEFITS WHEN OUTSIDE COMPANIES COME IN.

ONE PERSON TRYING TO ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS IS JEFFREY SACHS, WHO HAPPENED TO BE IN DAR ES SALAAM AT THE SAME TIME WE WERE. THE FAMOUS AMERICAN ECONOMIST AND EXPERT ON THIRD-WORLD DEVELOPMENT FOUND A FEW MINUTES TO SIT DOWN WITH US BETWEEN MEETINGS.

SACHS

We’re in a juncture where hunger is intense, where climate risk is profound, where food scarcity world-wide is leading the threats of land grab. This is the time to get it right.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SACHS COMPARES THE CURRENT WAVE OF AFRICAN LAND DEALS TO PREVIOUS SCRAMBLES ON THE CONTINENT... FOR EVERYTHING FROM DIAMONDS TO OIL. BUT HE SAID THE RIGHT KIND OF PRIVATE INVESTMENT COULD MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE. IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW THE DEALS ARE STRUCK.

SACHS

If it’s done properly, and if African governments take care of their countries and their populations, this can be a big benefit. If they in effect give away these valuable resources, then what happens is these scarce resources benefit some other part of the world. And Africa is left even worse off than it was before.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)
BUT THINGS ARE RARELY BLACK AND WHITE, AND IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO TELL A BAD DEAL FROM A GOOD ONE. THE REALITY ON THE GROUND CAN BE VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU FIND IN AN INVESTMENT BROCHURE OR POWERPOINT PRESENTATION.

AND THAT'S WHY WE HEADED SOME 800 MILES WEST OF DAR ES SALAAM, TO A REMOTE PLACE CALLED KATUMBA - A REFUGEE SETTLEMENT ESTABLISHED IN THE EARLY 1970S, WHEN OVER 100,000 PEOPLE FROM NEIGHBORING BURUNDI FLED A VIOLENT CIVIL WAR.

KATUMBA IS ONE OF THE LONGEST RUNNING REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS IN THE WORLD. BUT IT DOESN'T FIT THE CONVENTIONAL IMAGE OF A REFUGEE CAMP.

INSTEAD OF ROW AFTER ROW OF TATTERED WHITE TENTS, THERE IS A THRIVING VILLAGE COMMUNITY.

INSTEAD OF AID TRUCKS LINED UP AT THE GATE, THERE IS A BUSY VILLAGE MARKET THAT DRAWS PEOPLE FROM MILES AWAY. THE REFUGEES FARM, OWN THEIR OWN BUSINESSES AND EVEN PAY TAXES TO THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT.

WE CAME TO KATUMBA BECAUSE WE HEARD THAT AN AMERICAN COMPANY WAS COMING TO TOWN. THE COMPANY IS CALLED AGRISOL ENERGY AND IN AUGUST OF LAST YEAR IT SIGNED A PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT WITH THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT TO TURN KATUMBA AND A NEIGHBORING SETTLEMENT KNOWN AS MISHAMO INTO MASSIVE COMMERCIAL FARMS...HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF ACRES THAT WILL GROW CORN AND SOYBEANS.

IN THIS PRESENTATION, FROM THE DUBAI-BASED HEDGE-FUND THAT'S BACKING THE DEAL, THE AREA OF KATUMBA WAS DESCRIBED AS AN "ABANDONED REFUGEE CAMP".

BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, KATUMBA IS ANYTHING BUT ABANDONED... AND THAT'S JUST THE FIRST TWIST IN A STORY THAT STRETCHES ALL THE WAY FROM THIS REMOTE REFUGEE CAMP IN EAST AFRICA... TO THE CORN FIELDS OF AMERICA'S HEARTLAND.

THE ADDRESS PROVIDED ON AGRISOL'S WEBSITE WILL LEAD YOU HERE, TO SUMMIT FARMS IN ALDEN, IOWA. IT'S A 40,000 ACRE LIVESTOCK AND ROW CROP BUSINESS OWNED BY ONE BRUCE RASTETTER... WHO'S ALSO FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF AGRISOL ENERGY LLC.
WE CAME HERE TO IOWA TO INTERVIEW RASTETTER ABOUT THE PROJECT IN TANZANIA. BUT AFTER WE GOT HERE, HE BACKED OUT. HE ALSO WOULDN'T LET OUR CAMERA THROUGH THE GATE AT SUMMIT FARMS.

IT TURNS OUT RASTETTER'S A CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE IN IOWA. HE'S A MILLIONAIRE BUSINESSMAN AND MAJOR POLITICAL POWER BROKER. ALTHOUGH HE WOULDN'T TALK TO US, WE DID FIND THIS VIDEO, SHOT IN 2001. IN IT, HE TALKS ABOUT THE RISE OF LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE -- IN HIS VIEW, IT'S BEEN A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.

RASTETTER

Technology's made farm life easier, produced an abundant food source. It's the highest quality in the world for Americans to eat. So the positive side's been super and as well as for the American consumer it's been, and the world it's been a great deal to solve world hunger.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AT THE TIME, RASTETTER WAS THE OWNER AND CEO OF HEARTLAND PORK. IT WAS IOWA'S SECOND LARGEST PRODUCER -- AND THE COMPANY STIRRED UP A LOT OF OUTRAGE HERE OVER THE WAY IT DID BUSINESS. NOW, SOME OF RASTETTER'S CRITICS FROM BACK THEN ARE QUESTIONING HIS INTENTIONS IN TANZANIA.

ADAM MASON

He has an extreme knack-- for basically getting while the gettin's good-- making a lotta money and then turning-- turning around and walking away.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ADAM MASON IS STATE POLICY DIRECTOR AT IOWA CITIZENS FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT -- A GROUP THAT FOUGHT THE EXPANSION OF SO-CALLED "FACTORY FARM" OPERATIONS LIKE HEARTLAND PORK.

MASON

This is an industry that ran family farmers out of business, that pollutes our air, pollutes our water and-- and has ruined so many folks' quality of life.
RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HEARTLAND RAISED ITS PIGS IN LARGE CONFINEMENT BUILDINGS SIMILAR TO THIS. EACH ONE CAN HOLD THOUSANDS OF HOGS -- AND PRODUCES MILLIONS OF GALLONS OF WASTE.

MASON’S GROUP HAD CONCERNS OVER HOW ALL THAT WASTE WAS BEING HANDLED. AND HEARTLAND PORK WAS JUST ONE OF MANY COMPANIES THEY BATTLED WITH OVER THE ISSUE.

RASTETTER HAS SAID THAT HIS COMPANY GOT PAINTED WITH A BROAD BRUSH. HE CALLED HEARTLAND A FAMILY COMPANY -- THERE’S NO QUESTION IT PROVIDED HUNDREDS OF JOBS. AND RASTETTER SAYS HE LED THE INDUSTRY IN ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.

RASTETTER

One of the things I think is important for our company to do is raise the bar on environment conservation. For agriculture, for our company, and for our growers.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MASON COULD NOT DISAGREE MORE... AND HE CALLS RASTETTER’S NEW PROJECT IN TANZANIA A “WOLF IN SHEEP’S CLOTHING”.

MASON

To us, it looks like they’re trying to go in and make as much money as they can-- all under the guise of helping Tanzanians. We don’t believe that’s the truth.

PETERSEN

Being a gambling man coming down on good odds he’s guessin' he can make a whole bunch of money over there, too

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

A DECADE AGO CHRIS PETERSEN WAS A SMALL HOG FARMER WHO SAYS HE WAS DRIVEN OUT OF BUSINESS BY BIG OPERATIONS LIKE RASTETTER’S.
HE IS NOW PRESIDENT OF IOWA FARMERS UNION, AN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO SMALL FARMING AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE. AGRISOL HAS SAID ITS PROJECT IN AFRICA WILL BENEFIT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY -- BUT PETERSON DOESN’T BUY IT. AND HE HAD SOME WORDS OF WARNING FOR THE SMALL FARMERS OF TANZANIA.

PETERSEN

Be very careful. You might be turned into workers instead of farmers. They’re gonna have a lot of what went on over here. The wealth is gonna be extracted. The scraps will be left to keep the workers working.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

FOR SOME IOWANS, HEARTLAND PORK IS REASON ENOUGH TO DOUBT RASTETTER’S INTENTIONS IN AFRICA. BUT AGRISOL HAS A VERY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON ITS FOUNDER’S BUSINESS TRACK RECORD. IN A RECENT PRESS RELEASE, THE COMPANY CALLED RASTETTER “...A LEADER IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT...”. AND HIS COMPANY SUMMIT FARMS IS ACTUALLY PART OF AGRISOL’S PITCH TO THE TANZANIANS.

WHEN YOU SEE WHAT FARMING LOOKS LIKE IN TANZANIA TODAY, IT’S EASY TO UNDERSTAND WHY A LARGE, MECHANIZED OPERATION LIKE SUMMIT MIGHT HAVE SOME APPEAL HERE. WHEN IT COMES TO AGRICULTURE, TANZANIA IS DECADES, IF NOT CENTURIES BEHIND THE UNITED STATES. OVER 70% OF FARMERS STILL WORK THEIR FIELDS BY HAND.

AGRISOL HAS BOASTED THAT YIELDS AT SUMMIT FARMS ARE TEN TIMES WHAT THEY ARE HERE. AND IN JULY 2010, RASTETTER BROUGHT A DELEGATION OF TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO IOWA TO SHOW OFF THE BENEFITS OF MODERN AGRICULTURE. DR. RAJAB RUTENGWE HOLDS THE TOP GOVERNMENT POST IN THE DISTRICT WHERE MOST OF THE LAND THAT WAS OFFERED TO AGRISOL IS LOCATED. HE WAS IMPRESSED BY WHAT HE SAW IN IOWA.

RUTENGWE

We could see left and right the corn farms, soybean farms, livestock farms, energy plants. All this were just new to us.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)
A MONTH AFTER THEY GOT BACK FROM IOWA, TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SIGNED A PRELIMINARY CONTRACT WITH AGRISOL.

RUTENGWE

Those leaders in Agrisol, they are here to help us and improve our food security situation.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AGRISOL SAYS SUPPORT FROM THE PEOPLE OF TANZANIA IS IMPORTANT. AND THE COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS THE FACT THAT ITS PROJECT ALSO HAS A LOCAL FACE. IDDI SIMBA IS THE DIRECTOR OF SERENGETI ADVISERS, A TANZANIAN INVESTMENT FIRM THAT HAS A 25 PERCENT STAKE IN THE DEAL.

SIMBA

It will be the first project ever in this country that will have a foreign investor with genuine local investors who have put in money, time and intellect into it. And not just errand boys, we are not errand boys.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SIMBA ASKED US TO MEET HIM IN AN UPSCALE HOTEL IN DOWNTOWN DAR ES SALAAM. HE SAID HIS INTEREST IS MORE THAN FINANCIAL... HA SAYS HE’S ALSO THERE TO LOOK OUT FOR THE NEEDS OF HIS COUNTRY.

SIMBA

Commercial, mechanized agriculture will produce more food. So we can in fact, for the first time in our history, secure our own food requirements.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SIMBA IS ALSO A FORMER MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY IN THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT. AND THAT MAY BE HOW AGRISOL GOT THE ATTENTION OF MIZENGO PINDA... TANZANIA’S PRIME MINISTER. PINDA’S BECOME AN OUTSPOKEN SUPPORTER OF THE AMERICAN INVESTORS. AND IT SO HAPPENS THAT MUCH OF THE LAND THAT WAS OFFERED TO THE COMPANY IS IN PINDA’S HOME DISTRICT.

PINDA
I have about 27 villages in that area, I know how they are producing their food. They cannot go beyond feeding themselves. We cannot live like that in this 21st century.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IN PARLIAMENT, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS STOOD UP MORE THAN ONCE TO DEFEND THE AGRISOL DEAL. WHILE SOME CRITICS WITHIN THE COUNTRY HAVE CALLED IT A LAND GRAB BY FOREIGNERS, PINDA SAYS THE COUNTRY HAS MORE THAN ENOUGH LAND TO GO AROUND.

PINDA

The land that is around us, that is empty, is not being developed at all, is huge. Forty-four million hectares of land, only capable of developing 20%, ok, of that mass land, poor as we are.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

44 MILLION HECTARES WORKS OUT TO ABOUT 100 MILLION ACRES, OR ROUGHLY THREE TIMES THE SIZE OF IOWA. DURING THE COURSE OF OUR REPORTING, WE WERE TOLD OVER AND OVER ABOUT THE WEALTH OF AVAILABLE LAND IN TANZANIA.

BUT IF THERE IS SO MUCH EMPTY SPACE, WHY DID THE GOVERNMENT OFFER AGRISOL LAND WHERE PEOPLE ALREADY LIVE?

THAT PART OF OUR INVESTIGATION, COMING UP NEXT.

ACT 2: TROUBLE ON THE LAND

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THIS IS KATUMBA, THE REFUGEE SETTLEMENT IN TANZANIA THAT AGRISOL TOLD PROSPECTIVE INVESTORS WAS “ABANDONED”.

THERE ARE 70,000 PEOPLE HERE AND ANOTHER 60,000 IN A NEARBY SETTLEMENT. THEY CAME DECADES AGO FROM BURUNDI AND TURNED THIS AREA INTO PRODUCTIVE FARMLAND.

SEMBULI (TRANSLATED FROM SWAHILI)

Our parents got here in 1974. There was no water. This stream was not here. They started cutting down the trees and clearing the forest. There was a very big forest here.
SEMBULI MASASA CAME HERE WITH HIS PARENTS WHEN HE WAS TEN YEARS OLD. NOW HE’S 49, AND HAS SEVEN KIDS OF HIS OWN. UP THE HILL FROM HIS SUGARCANE FIELD, HE RUNS A SMALL PLANT NURSERY FOR HIS NEIGHBORS.

TODAY, THE BURUNDIAN REFUGEES ARE SOME OF THE MOST PRODUCTIVE FARMERS IN TANZANIA - PRODUCING MORE THAN 40% OF THE FOOD IN THIS DISTRICT, ON JUST 4% OF THE LAND.

THEY GROW A RANGE OF CROPS - FROM PEANUTS TO PINEAPPLES. BUT IF AGRISOL DEVELOPS THIS LAND, THESE FIELDS WILL BE PLANTED WITH CORN AND SOY... THESE VILLAGES WILL BE LEVELED... AND EVERYONE LIVING HERE NOW WILL HAVE TO GO.

WHEN OUR REPORTING TEAM WALKED THROUGH A VILLAGE MARKET IN KATUMBA, THE CAMERA ATTRACTED A LARGE CROWD. AND EVERYONE WHO TALKED TO US WAS WORRIED ABOUT HOW THEY WOULD SURVIVE AFTER LEAVING THE SETTLEMENT.

RESIDENT OF KATUMBA (TRANSLATED FROM SWAHILI))

We won’t have anything at all. We’ll have to start from scratch.

NEARLY EVERYONE HERE WAS ACTUALLY BORN IN TANZANIA -- BUT THEY’VE NEVER HAD THE LEGAL RIGHT TO CALL IT HOME. NOW, IN EXCHANGE FOR LEAVING KATUMEA, THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO GRANT THE REFUGEES CITIZENSHIP. THAT DECISION HAS BEEN PRAISED INTERNATIONALLY.

THIS UNITED NATIONS VIDEO WAS SHOT IN APRIL 2010, WHEN TANZANIA’S MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS VISITED KATUMBA TO MAKE THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

LAWRENCE MASHA

Effectively they will have all the rights every Tanzanian who, that was born a Tanzanian or was naturalized a Tanzanian under different circumstances will have.

AT THE TIME, IT WAS GREETED WITH CELEBRATION IN THE SETTLEMENT.
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE THE REFUGEES KNEW THE DETAILS OF THE GOVERNMENT’S RELOCATION PLAN. THIS 40 YEAR OLD COMMUNITY WILL BE BROKEN APART AND SCATTERED ACROSS TANZANIA. EACH PERSON WILL RECEIVE 200 DOLLARS TO START A NEW LIFE. THE GOVERNMENT DECIDES WHERE IN THE COUNTRY EACH FAMILY WILL GO, AND HAS SET QUOTAS TO LIMIT HOW MANY REFUGEES CAN SETTLE IN A NY ONE PARTICULAR AREA. ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT’S DOCUMENTS, THE REFUGEES ARE EVEN REQUIRED TO DISMANTLE THEIR OWN HOMES BEFORE THEY LEAVE.

THE ONLY OTHER OPTION IS TO GO BACK TO BURUNDI -- A PLACE MOST OF THEM HAVE NEVER SEEN.

SEMBULI

It’s like someone climbing a tree and finding a poisonous snake. And below him there’s a crocodile in the water. So if he stays on the tree the snake will bite him. If he goes into the water the crocodile will get him. That’s the situation we’re in.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ALTHOUGH SOME UN OFFICIALS PRIVATELY FOUGHT THE PLAN TO REMOVE THESE REFUGEES FROM THEIR HOMES, LEGALLY-SPEAKING CLOSING THE SETTLEMENTS WAS TANZANIA’S DECISION TO MAKE -- AND THE GOVERNMENT SAYS IT’S A MATTER OF SECURITY. ACCORDING TO IDDI SIMBA, ONE OF AGRISOL’S TANZANIAN BUSINESS PARTNERS, THAT’S WHERE THE DISCUSSION SHOULD END.

SIMBA

That piece of land will be for the company and for agriculture. Now whether those people will be moved to here or there is not our business. That is for the government.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT THE LINE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE INVESTORS IS A LITTLE BLURRY. SIMBA HIMSELF IS A FORMER TOP OFFICIAL. AND THEN THERE’S LAWRENCE MASHA, THE MAN YOU SAW IN THE UN VIDEO. MASHA WAS IN CHARGE OF THE REFUGEE CAMPS WHEN THE RELOCATION PLAN WAS CREATED. NOW HE’S A LEGAL ADVISOR TO AGRISOL ENERGY.

MITTAL

When you displace this population it raises the issue of where do these people go and farm next?
RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ANURADHA MITTAL IS THE HEAD OF THE OAKLAND INSTITUTE. THAT'S A CALIFORNIA-BASED NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PROMOTING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE WORLD. MITTAL TOLD US SHE'S LOOKED INTO OVER 50 AFRICAN LAND DEALS IN THE PAST YEAR -- AND SHE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH GOOD TO SAY ABOUT ANY OF THEM. BUT SHE SINGLED OUT THE AGRISOL PROJECT AS A PARTICULARLY EGREGIOUS EXAMPLE.

RATHER

When we spoke to Agrisol's business partners in Tanzania they said what happens to the refugees should not be their concern. What's your response to that?

MITTAL

Well, you know, they cannot get away — in fact, that's actually one of the things I was also told by Mr. Rastetter. Now you're hoping to make a lot of money by moving into an area where somebody already lives. To put on the entire responsibility and the blame onto the government is extremely irresponsible especially when the people who are involved in it talk about it being a socially responsible investment.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IN JUNE, THE OAKLAND INSTITUTE RELEASED A SCATHING REPORT ABOUT THE AGRISOL DEAL, ALONG WITH HUNDREDS OF PAGES OF INTERNAL COMPANY DOCUMENTS.

RATHER

How did you get a hold of this material? It was supposed to be company and government, if not secret, certainly not for public view.

MITTAL

Well, I had met with Mr. Rastetter and the Agrisol team. They knew that I was looking for investments that could be showcased, that could be supported, that we could say, "This is a good way of private sector working in partnership with the government." They knew me as a person who knew many philanthropic organizations, many well-to-do people who want to be involved in projects that result in the good for the community and nations in Africa.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)
AGRISOL WAS HOPING TO GET HER ENDORSEMENT, BUT SHE SAYS THAT WHEN SHE SAW THE DETAILS OF THE PROJECT, SHE FELT COMPELLED TO MAKE THE INFORMATION PUBLIC.

AND MITTAL SAYS THE PROBLEMS GO FAR BEYOND THE REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS. ONE OF THE DOCUMENTS SHE RELEASED IS THE AGREEMENT THAT AGRISOL SIGNED WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN TANZANIA.

IT IS NOT A FINAL CONTRACT, BUT IT SHOWS THAT AGRISOL IS PLANNING TO PAY JUST 25 CENTS AN ACRE IN RENT TO THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT.

MEANWHILE, THE DOCUMENTS SUGGEST THAT AGRISOL IS ASKING THE GOVERNMENT FOR A WIDE RANGE OF INCENTIVES AND CONCESSIONS -- SUCH AS BUILDING A RAIL LINE TO ONE OF THE PROJECT SITES.

AGRISOL IS PITCHING THE DEAL AS A WAY FOR TANZANIA TO FEED ITSELF, BUT MITTAL WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT A SENTENCE THAT SHE FOUND IN A STUDY COMMISSIONED BY THE COMPANY. IT RECOMMENDS THAT AGRISOL OBTAIN A GUARANTEE FROM THE GOVERNMENT THAT IT CAN EXPORT THE FOOD IT PRODUCES.

MITTAL

Agrisol is demanding that the government of Tanzania change its rules, that even if there is food shortages in any of the regions of the country, they should be able to export food. And by the way that’s one of the clauses that most of the foreign investors ask for.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IN AN EMAIL TO OUR INVESTIGATIVE TEAM, RASTETTER’S PUBLIC RELATIONS REPRESENTATIVE ASSURED US AGRISOL WILL GROW FOOD TO MEET TANZANIA’S NEEDS FIRST... ALTHOUGH HE ALSO SAID THAT AS INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE COUNTRY IMPROVES -- MAKING IT EASIER TO GET PRODUCTS TO PORT -- “THE SITUATION MAY CHANGE”.

HE ALSO TOLD US THE COMPANY WILL SET UP A TRUST, WHERE PROFITS FROM THE PROJECT WILL GO TO SCHOOLS, MEDICAL CLINICS AND OTHER COMMUNITY NEEDS. AND THE COMPANY HAS SAID IT WILL HELP LOCAL SMALL FARMERS, BY TEACHING THEM NEW METHODS AND GIVING THEM ACCESS TO ADVANCED SEEDS AND FERTILIZER. THEY WILL BE ABLE TO GROW CORN AND SOY FOR AGRISOL TO PURCHASE.
OF COURSE, THE SMALL FARMERS AT THE REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS ARE BEING MOVED OUT, AND THE TANZANIAN VILLAGERS LIVING NEARBY Didn’T SEEM TO KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE PENDING DEAL THAT WILL SUPPOSEDLY BENEFIT THEM.

WE VISITED ONE OF THE VILLAGES CLOSEST TO THE LAND THAT’S BEEN EARMARKED FOR AGRISOL. THE TOP ELECTED OFFICIAL THERE TOLD US NO ONE FROM THE COMPANY OR THE GOVERNMENT HAD EVER COME TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT THE PROJECT.

ISANJANDUGU VILLAGE CHAIRMAN (TRANSLATED FROM SWAHILI)

I am not sure because we haven’t been involved. And no one told us what’s coming.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HE SAID HE’S ONLY HEARD RUMORS -- AND WHILE HE SAW BOTH PROS AND CONS TO HAVING A MASSIVE COMMERCIAL OPERATION IN HIS BACKYARD, HE ALSO HAD SOME QUESTIONS FOR BRUCE RASTETTER AND THE OTHER AMERICAN INVESTORS.

ISANJANDUGU VILLAGE CHAIRMAN (TRANSLATED FROM SWAHILI)

Why wouldn’t you consult with us? You have to involve us because we are your neighbors.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AGRISOL HAS BEEN IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT SINCE 2008. BUT IT TURNS OUT VERY FEW PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY SEEM TO HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THE PROJECT UNTIL A FEW MONTHS AGO -- AFTER THE OAKLAND INSTITUTE PUT OUT ITS REPORT.

WE ASKED IDDI SIMBA, AGRISOL’S LOCAL BUSINESS PARTNER, WHEN HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE THE RIGHT TIME TO INVOLVE LOCALS IN THE PROCESS.

SIMBA

It will be at the time when we already have the deal.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SIMBA SAID THERE IS A LOT ABOUT THE DEAL THAT’S YET TO BE FINALIZED.
SIMBA

What is the use of me spending my time going to talk to them telling what we intend to do when in fact we don’t have mandate even to do that.

MITTAL

You don't hide things that you're really proud of. You let the world know about it-- say, if this is so amazing, if it's going to result in all this incredible economic benefits, how come people don't know about it?

RATHER

Well what's your answer to that question? Why was it hidden?

MITTAL

Well the reason it is hidden is, it's a net loss for the people of Tanzania.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AGRISOL HAS NOT BACKED DOWN FROM ITS CLAIM THAT THE PROJECT WILL HELP TANZANIA. AND THE COMPANY SAYS YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THEIR WORD FOR IT.

IOWA STATE IS ONE OF AMERICA'S OLDEST LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES AND A LEADER IN AGRICULTURE. IN FEBRUARY 2010, AGRISOL FOUNDER BRUCE RASTETTER ASKED ISU TO JOIN HIS PROJECT IN TANZANIA. HE WANTED THE UNIVERSITY TO HELP DESIGN AND RUN A PROGRAM TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF TANZANIAN SMALL FARMERS.

IN A RECENT PRESS RELEASE, AGRISOL SAID THAT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY WOULD MAKE SURE THEY “...EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE COUNTRY”.

BUT THERE'S A TWIST. RASTETTER IS A MAJOR DONOR TO ISU AND IS NOW A SENIOR MEMBER ON THE BOARD OF REGENTS THAT OVERSEES THE UNIVERSITY.

WE SPOKE TO A NUMBER OF CURRENT AND FORMER FACULTY AT IOWA STATE WHO ARE CONCERNED THAT RASTETTER IS USING HIS INFLUENCE TO GET THE UNIVERSITY'S ENDORSEMENT FOR HIS PROJECT IN TANZANIA.
KEENEY

It's nice to have Iowa State involved, because they've got this great reputation. I mean, that kind of helps cover what is really going on. You don't know.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

DR. DENNIS KEENEY IS PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF AGRONOMY AND AGRICULTURE AND BIOSYSTEMS ENGINEERING AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY. HE TOLD US HE'S NEVER SEEN SOMETHING QUITE LIKE THIS.

KEENEY

I don't think anybody's ever had a board of regents president owning a massive project overseas and then asking the university to do part of the work. I just don't think that's-- that's-- that's part of anything we've seen before.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

DR. NEIL HARL IS PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF ECONOMICS AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY AND FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL FINANCE. HE SAYS HAVING THE UNIVERSITY IN ON THE DEAL IS AN OBVIOUS BENEFIT TO AGRISOL.

HARL

If the university says, "We're going to do this to benefit you and your country," I think they're inclined to believe that. If it's said by a private sector firm they're less likely to believe that. There's a question here as to whether this is to help a worthy cause to raise the income levels of the Tanzanian people, or is this a project to-- produce ethanol and other products-- as cheaply as possible and for the benefits to flow to the private sector firm, Agrisol? We don't know.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

RASTETTER, HIMSELF, HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE IS A POTENTIAL CONFLICT BETWEEN HIS FINANCIAL INTEREST IN AGRISOL AND HIS POSITION ON THE BOARD OF REGENTS.

AND RASTETTER DID DISCLOSE THIS POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST TO THE BOARD, BUT NOT UNTIL JUNE 17 -- A FEW DAYS AFTER THE DES MOINES REGISTER RAN THIS FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE ABOUT THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING AGRISOL. AND RASTETTER DIDN'T RECUSE HIMSELF FROM
DECISIONS CONCERNING IOWA STATE’S ROLE IN THE TANZANIA PROJECT UNTIL SEPTEMBER 13, THE DAY AFTER HE CANCELED HIS INTERVIEW WITH US.

AND RASTETTER’S POSITION ON THE BOARD OF REGENTS ISN’T THE ONLY POTENTIAL CONFLICT.

IN 2007, HE GAVE MORE THAN $1.75 MILLION DOLLARS TO ENDOW A CHAIR AT IOWA STATE. IT’S CALLED “THE RASTETTER CHAIR IN AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP” AND IT’S CURRENT OCCUPANT IS KEVIN KIMLE. SEEN HERE SHAKING HANDS WITH BRUCE RASTETTER. KIMLE HAS BEEN HEAVILY INVOLVED WITH THE UNIVERSITY’S WORK FOR AGRISOL.

KEENEY

You’re on that edge o’ who is-- who is your boss, who are you answering to? And if you don’t have success, who are you answer to?

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

RETIRED IOWA STATE PROFESSOR KEENEY SAYS PUBLIC ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS MUST MAKE SURE THEIR DEALINGS ARE TRANSPARENT.

KEENEY

The other thing that concerns me is that whether Iowa State can be an open source of information on this. Can they really say, "This is what we’re doing with Rastetter. This is what we’re doing in Tanzania."

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

NO ONE IN IOWA STATE WHO IS INVOLVED WITH THE UNIVERSITY’S WORK WITH AGRISOL WOULD TALK TO US ON CAMERA. BUT IOWA STATE DEAN WENDY WINTERSTEEN RESPONDED TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS WE SUBMITTED. LAST WEEK SHE WROTE TO TELL US THAT THE UNIVERSITY “…WOULD NO LONGER DIRECTLY PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT...”. INSTEAD, IOWA STATE WILL SERVE IN WHAT SHE TERMED “…AN ADVISORY CAPACITY”. THAT WAS THE FIRST NEWS THAT IOWA STATE’S ROLE IN TANZANIA HAD CHANGED.

AND THAT’S NOT THE ONLY DEVELOPMENT THAT SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE WE STARTED OUR INVESTIGATION.
IN AUGUST, SHORTLY AFTER OUR TRIP TO TANZANIA, AGRISOL ANNOUNCED THAT ITS CURRENT PLANS NO LONGER INCLUDE THE REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS OF KATUMBA AND MISHAMO. INSTEAD, THEY SAY, THEY'RE FOCUSING ON LAND ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY -- ALTHOUGH THEY'RE ALSO LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT. RASTETTER SAID, THROUGH HIS PR REPRESENTATIVE, THAT AGRISOL IS STILL VERY INTERESTED IN THE LAND ONCE THE REFUGEES HAVE BEEN RESETTLED.

BUT WHEN WE CONTACTED THE TOP GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL IN THE DISTRICT WHERE THE SETTLEMENTS ARE LOCATED TO ASK ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE PROJECT, HIS RESPONSE WAS MORE DIRECT. HE WROTE “…WE ARE MOVING AHEAD WITH THE PROJECT. THERE IS NO GOING BACK. THE PROJECT IS BENEFICIAL TO EVERYONE WHO IS SENSIBLE.”

THE TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO SHUTTING DOWN THESE SETTLEMENTS. AND THE UNITED NATIONS RECENTLY RE-AFFIRMED IT’S SUPPORT FOR THE RELOCATION PLAN.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

WE WILL CONTINUE TO REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS INVOLVING AGRISOL AS THEY UNFOLD IN TANZANIA AND IOWA. NOW WHEN WE RETURN, THE IDEA OF CREATING AMERICAN JOBS USING NON-AMERICAN WORKERS. THAT STORY COMING UP NEXT.

ACT 3: START-UP MICHIGAN

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

WE HAVE BEEN DOING A SERIES OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS ON THIS PROGRAM ABOUT UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION POLICIES AND THE COMPETITION FOR JOBS IN A TOUGH ECONOMY. BUT TONIGHT WE TAKE YOU TO A PART OF AMERICA THAT IS TRYING SOMETHING DRASTIC TO JUMP START ITS BELEAGUERED JOB MARKET.

THE SCENE: THE RUST-BELT STATE OF MICHIGAN. THE MESSAGE: THAT IMMIGRANTS HAVE ALWAYS HELPED POWER AMERICA’S ECONOMY, CREATING BUSINESSES WITH THE SAME ENERGY AND DRIVE THAT LED THEM TO UPROOT THEIR LIVES AND COME TO OUR SHORES IN THE FIRST PLACE.

NOW, SOME PEOPLE IN MICHIGAN SAY THAT THE FUTURE OF AN ECONOMY MADE IN AMERICA MAY REST IN LARGE PART ON THE SHOULDERS OF MEN AND WOMEN BORN OVERSEAS.
RATHER (VOICE OVER)

LOOKING NOW, IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE THESE STREETS WERE ONCE HOME TO ONE OF THE MOST INNOVATIVE CITIES IN THE WORLD. AT THE TURN OF THE 20th CENTURY, DETROIT WAS THE SILICON VALLEY OF ITS DAY -- A PLACE TO TURN NEW IDEAS INTO VAST FORTUNES ... A SPARKLING JEWEL CAPTIVATING THE IMAGINATIONS OF AMERICANS AND FOREIGNERS ALIKE.

MUCH LIKE SILICON VALLEY, IN THE EARLY 1900s, IMMIGRANTS MADE UP ONE-THIRD OF DETROIT'S POPULATION.

BUT TODAY, MUCH OF THE CITY IS A GHOST TOWN -- AND THOSE THAT STILL LIVE HERE ARE FACING THE WORST JOB MARKET IN THE CITY'S HISTORY. ONE IN FIVE DETROITERS IS LOOKING FOR WORK -- AND THE STATE ITSELF HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN THE COUNTRY.

THE STATE'S NEW REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR CAMPAIGNED ON BRINGING JOBS BACK TO MICHIGAN. BUT NO ONE EXPECTED THIS PLAN...

RICK SNYDER, GOVERNOR OF MICHIGAN

It's the continual reinvention of the United States. And by getting more immigrants here in a legal fashion, particularly with advanced degrees, it's just a great opportunity to create jobs and keep our kids in a wonderful position.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THAT'S RIGHT -- MICHIGAN GOVERNOR RICK SNYDER SAYS THAT TO SOLVE THE STATE'S JOBS CRISIS, IT NEEDS TO BRING MORE IMMIGRANTS.

IT'S PROBABLY NOT THE KIND OF SENTIMENT YOU'D EXPECT TO HEAR FROM THE LEADER OF A STATE MIRED IN A 10-YEAR RECESSION.

SNYDER

Simply fixing Michigan is not good enough. It is time to reinvent our state.

RATHER

Governor, tell me about what I'll call "the plan," the immigration plan. What is it, why is it, and why do you think it'll work?

SNYDER
Well, I think it’s important for our future, we’ve been in a recession for a decade where much of the country’s just been for several years. It’s how do you really, reinvent ourselves? And one of the keys, if you look at history and how we built this wonderful country, was immigration. And so one of the focal points in particular is, is we already educate so many wonderful-- students from outside the country. Is there a way to help keep them here?

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

EVERY YEAR, MICHIGAN SPENDS MILLIONS OF ITS OWN TAX DOLLARS EDUCATING THE 23,000 FOREIGN STUDENTS WHO ATTEND ITS COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES … AND EVERY YEAR, ALMOST ALL OF THOSE FOREIGN STUDENTS LEAVE MICHIGAN, DIPLOMAS IN HAND … HEADING TO OTHER STATES, AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

GOVERNOR SNYDER LIKES TO REMIND PEOPLE THAT MANY OF THE MOST FAMOUS AND SUCCESSFUL NEW AMERICAN COMPANIES… GOOGLE, EBAY, INTEL, YAHOO, YOUTUBE AND COUNTLESS OTHERS -- WERE ALL STARTED BY IMMIGRANTS … AND SOME OF THOSE IMMIGRANTS WERE EVEN EDUCATED IN MICHIGAN.

RATHER

Well, how is it supposed to work as a practical matter?

SNYDER

They’ve actually started the process, saying, “First of all, what students do we have here from outside the country, particularly in science and engineering-- masters and Ph.D. programs”-- to talk about what counties they’re from, what opportunities there are and then to talk about different programs for entrepreneurship. The-- the other piece I wanna do, though, too is talk to the communities that we already have here that are-- ethnic communities to say, “Do they have outreach back in their countries-- to actually bring and attract people to Michigan?” Because I think we’re a great economic opportunity that we can all win.

JOSEPH VALENTI, TEAMSTERS

I’m not sure exactly who he’s talking about. But we chased out 300,000 skilled technicians and professional people. Now he’s talking about bringing immigrants in here.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

JOSEPH VALENTI, PRESIDENT OF DETROIT’S LOCAL TEAMSTERS UNION, HAS A QUESTION MANY MICHIGANDERS ARE ASKING: WHY WOULD THE GOVERNOR LOOK TO OUTSIDERS WHEN SO MANY CITIZENS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE THE STATE IN SEARCH OF JOBS?
VALENTI

Take the Michigan people that left, that were forced out of here. Why don't you offer them the jobs first? Then if no one wants them or no one can fill them, then you go where you have to go. But why not offer you own people the job first?

RATHER

To those who say, "Wait a minute, Governor. Your state has high unemployment, Detroit has exceptionally high unemployment, and you're talking about bringing in non-Americans to, in effect, take jobs?" How can you reconcile that?

SNYDER

Um, actually, it's a simple answer. Those goals are absolutely consistent. I am absolutely focused on finding jobs for Michiganders, more and better jobs for Michiganders, and encouraging legal immigration with advanced degree people is absolutely consistent with that. 'Cause they're job creators. They actually create net jobs.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IMMIGRANTS WILL CREATE JOBS, THE GOVERNOR BELIEVES... BECAUSE THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BECOME ENTREPRENEURS...

A STUDY BY THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION CONFIRMS THAT. IT SHOWS THAT IMMIGRANTS IN MICHIGAN ARE NEARLY THREE TIMES AS LIKELY AS NATIVE BORN RESIDENTS TO START A BUSINESS -- BUSINESSES THAT WILL NEED TO HIRE MICHIGANDERS...

STEVE TOBOCMAN, GLOBAL DETROIT

Here, the foreign born are really powering the economy. You're-- six times as likely to start a high tech firm in Michigan if you-- were born abroad. You are seven to eight times as likely to file an international patent.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

STEVE TOBOCMAN WAS A STATE SENATOR FROM 2003 TO 2008. DURING HIS TIME IN THE LEGISLATURE, HE WATCHED IN HORROR AS MICHIGAN LOST ALMOST A MILLION JOBS.

AFTER LEAVING OFFICE, HE MADE IT HIS MISSION TO CREATE A VIABLE PLAN FOR MICHIGAN TO BRING SOME OF THOSE JOBS BACK HOME.

TOBOCMAN
32.8 percent of the high tech firms created in the state of Michigan over the last ten years were created by immigrant founders. That's an incredible statistic, to have a third of the high tech firms in Michigan, in a state that’s only six percent foreign born.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SO TOBOCMAN, A DEMOCRAT, SPENT TWO YEARS CREATING THIS 214- PAGE REPORT CALLED “GLOBAL DETROIT” … WHICH ULTIMATELY BECAME THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE NEW REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR’S IMMIGRATION INITIATIVE - A SIGN THAT THIS ISSUE CAN CREATE STRANGE POLITICAL BEDFELLOWS.

TOBOCMAN

You can’t have large economic growth without new population. Look at Toronto, a city that was almost the boring sister of Detroit when I was a child 40 years ago; why is it such a hot bed of growth? Well, it’s 50 percent foreign born.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

TOBOCMAN SAYS: HE STUMBLED ON THE IDEA OF IMMIGRATION AS FUEL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AFTER TAKING A HARD LOOK AT HIS OWN NEIGHBORHOOD IN SOUTHWEST DETROIT …

THIS CORNER OF THE CITY WAS JUST ANOTHER VICTIM OF URBAN BLIGHT…WITH FEW JOBS AND RESIDENTS FLEEING -- UNTIL, TOBOCMAN SAYS, AN INCREASE IN IMMIGRANTS HELPED TURN IT AROUND…

TOBOCMAN

There was tremendous benefits to the non-immigrant community by having these new immigrant clusters. They were new retail opportunities, job opportunities. Streets were cleaner, safer. Vacant houses were being acquired, rehabbled, and moved into. And so those who are in struggling neighborhoods, who have seen-- tax dollars leave their communities, who have seen-- blight and-- vacancy come to the community. They are often the biggest beneficiaries from new migrants into urban areas.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

TOBOCMAN’S GOALS INCLUDE EDUCATING PEOPLE LIVING IN MICHIGAN ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF WELCOMING IMMIGRANTS, ADVERTISING MICHIGAN TO IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN OTHER STATES, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, KEEPING IMMIGRANTS ALREADY ATTENDING MICHIGAN’S UNIVERSITIES IN THE STATE AFTER THEY GRADUATE…

TOBOCMAN
We have 23 and a half thousand international students in the state, which is a phenomenal opportunity for the state. It is a $600 million annual export product that we rarely talk about.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AN EXPORT PRODUCT THAT MICHIGAN NEEDS TO DO A MUCH BETTER JOB HANGING ON TO.

ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS PROONENTS BELIEVE IT IS SO IMPORTANT TO RETAIN THESE STUDENTS IS BECAUSE SO MANY OF THEM ARE GRADUATING WITH DEGREES IN SCIENCE AND MATH.

TAKE THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN’S COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING -- MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ARE FOREIGN BORN.

THOMAS ZURBUCHEN, AN ASSOCIATE DEAN AT THE COLLEGE, SAYS THAT THAT STATISTIC MIGHT SAY SOMETHING ABOUT WESTERN STUDENTS’ ASPIRATIONS.

THOMAS ZURBUCHEN, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Many students from the United States, but also Western countries in Europe see engineering, especially Ph.D. educations, as educations that are not worth doing. They seem to be too hard for them and they seem to de-- be too narrow for them in many ways.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ACROSS THE U.S. IT IS FOREIGNERS, NOT AMERICANS, WHO MAKE UP THE MAJORITY OF MANY HIGH-LEVEL MATH AND SCIENCE PROGRAMS.... FOR EXAMPLE, WELL OVER HALF THE DOCTORATES AWARDED IN COMPUTER SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS IN THE U.S. GO TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.

ZURBUCHEN, AN IMMIGRANT HIMSELF FROM A TINY TOWN IN SWITZERLAND, SAYS HE BELIEVES HIS BACKGROUND HELPED PROPEL HIM TO WHERE HE IS TODAY -- HE’S NOW AN AEROSPACE ENGINEER ... AS WELL AS THE FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN’S CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

ZURBUCHEN

These immigrants, whether they’re from-- foreign countries or from other environments really do have an advantage. The most important advantage is they already moved. They already took a risk so that's why I do believe that-- many of these-- immigrants are especially-- motivated to be entrepreneurs.
RATHER (VOICE OVER)

UNFORTUNATELY FOR MICHIGAN, ALMOST ALL OF THESE STUDENTS ULTIMATELY PURSUE THEIR CAREERS ELSEWHERE ...AND THAT HAS LEFT THE STATE -- EVEN WITH ITS SOARING UNEMPLOYMENT RATE -- WITH JOB OPENINGS ...

ZURBUCHEN

We don't have enough people to be programmers, for example. I could fill-- easily fill something like 30 to 50 programming jobs today just in my environment here-- based on the open jobs we have right now.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THIS BRAIN DRAIN, SAYS ZURBUCHEN, IS PARTICULARLY DEVASTATING BECAUSE INFORMAL SURVEYS AT THE UNIVERSITY SHOW THAT A MAJORITY OF FOREIGN STUDENTS WOULD LIKE TO STAY IN MICHIGAN, BUT RESTRICTIONS ON IMMIGRANT VISAS AND BETTER JOB OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE MICHIGAN PUSH THEM AWAY.

ZURBUCHEN

We take that innovation and-- chase it away as opposed to basically-- taking them-- these students aside and saying, "Look, you're one of our lead innovators. We invested close to a quarter million dollar in you to give you that Ph.D. education. It has often been said that the best we could do is staple a green card to every Ph.D. certificate that we can find. I totally believe that's correct.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

COMING UP, ONE IMMIGRANT WHO DECIDED TO STAY IN MICHIGAN AND WHAT HE THINKS IT WILL TAKE TO GET OTHERS TO DO THE SAME. THAT'S NEXT.

Act 4: START-UP MICHIGAN

MAHENDRA RAMSINGHANI, MANAGING DIRECTOR, FIRST STEP FUND

You know one question I wanted to start off by asking everybody is, you know, why do you think immigrants come to America? Any answers? Anybody wants to take a guess?

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MAHENDRA RAMSINGHANI IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF THE KIND OF IMMIGRANT MICHIGAN GOVERNOR RICK SNYDER WANTS TO BRING TO HIS STATE.
RAMSINGHANI (SPEAKING AT CONFERENCE)

You know, one of my American friends said, “You are really not an American until you’ve had a Big Mac.” Okay, now I’ve been a good old vegetarian most of my life. So we go through a drive-thru, I eat a Big Mac and for 48 hours, I cannot eat anything more after that, so...

RAMSINGHANI (SPEAKING AT CONFERENCE)

You know, of course the economic opportunity is great, of course the venture capital statistics, you know, entrepreneurship, etc. etc... But the real reason I believe people come to America is because the people of America are so welcoming and so accepting of everyone.

RAMSINGHANI

You know, whenever immigrants come to a certain part of the country, you know, that place tends to become somewhat of a home. You know, you build your roots, you get integrated into the community, so what happens is you build this-- you become part of this fabric.

RAMSINGHANI (VOICE OVER)

RAMSINGHANI AND HIS WIFE, DEEPA, WERE BORN IN INDIA. THEIR FIVE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER ARIA WAS BORN IN AMERICA. RAMSINGHANI HAS AN MBA...HE AND HIS WIFE RECENTLY BECAME AMERICAN CITIZENS... AND THEY ARE COMMITTED TO BRINGING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY TO THE PLACE THEY NOW CALL HOME.

RAMSINGHANI

The bottom line is that, you know, Detroit needs-- all the help it can. And-- you know, we feel like, you know, here's a chance to do our part in-- helping Detroit, whether our daughter will stay here, I don't know. At least we're here for now and continuing to do our part to-- you know, help-- Michigan recover.

RAMSINGHANI (VOICE OVER)

DEEPA IS AN ENTREPRENEUR WHO FOUNDED A GROUP OF WEBSITES THAT FOCUS ON ECONOMIC GROWTH IN MICHIGAN. HER HUSBAND MANAGES A VENTURE CAPITAL FUND THAT INVESTS EXCLUSIVELY IN DETROIT AREA START-UPS. AND THEY ARE BOTH BIG BELIEVERS IN WHAT THE PEOPLE OF MICHIGAN CAN ACCOMPLISH.
RAMSENGHANI

I’ll lay this, I’ll throw this gauntlet out to anybody in America that if they are-- an entrepreneur and if they want to come to Detroit, we’ll fund their company tomorrow.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WE TAGGED ALONG WITH RAMSENGHANI AS HE CHECKED IN ON SOME OF THE NEWEST BUSINESSES HE’S HELPED FINANCE …

JAKE SIGAL

Hey, what’s up Mahendra?

RAMSENGHANI

Good to see you again.

SIGAL

Good to see you man.

RAMSENGHANI

Things are going well?

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AND THEY REALLY RUN THE GAMUT … THIS IS LIVIO, AN INTERNET RADIO COMPANY STARTED BY A 28-YEAR-OLD TRANSPLANT FROM OHIO…

SIGAL

You know, you can’t build a car without little companies making the bolts and I think that, you know, we are a bolt now in the automobile. And instead of being a piece of steel that’s cast, we are a piece of software, you know, that’s updated over an iPhone.

RAMSENGHANI

As we look at this set of options and…

RATHER (VOICE OVER)
COLIANT CORPORATION IS A MOTORCYCLE ACCESSORIES COMPANY FOUNDED BY AN OLD CHRYSLER ENGINEER WHO JUST WANTED TO FIGURE OUT A GOOD WAY TO CHARGE HIS CELL PHONE WHILE RIDING HIS BIKE...

RAMSENGHANI

Vimal, good to see you again. Zaher, welcome.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

RAMSENGHANI’S OTHER INVESTMENTS RANGE FROM A COMPUTER CHIP DESIGN FIRM FOUNDED BY THESE INDIAN AND ISRAELI PARTNERS...

LINDSAY ASPERGEN

But I think in Detroit, you know, something definitely has to change...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

TO A COMPANY THAT IS RECYCLING DETROIT’S DERELICT BUILDINGS.

RAMSENGHANI

Our goal is to make sure we are serving the entrepreneurs and helping them to form the pillars of the economy or form the next General Motors, if you will.

This is James Moore. James has started this company, Jimmy Kicks.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THERE’S NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE LIKE RAMSENGHANI IN MICHIGAN...

RAMSENGHANI

You know, she’s out there talking to people, trying to expand the business...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE STATE IS NEAR THE BOTTOM OF VENTURE CAPITAL INVESTMENT. BUT HE SAYS, THAT’S THE SPECIAL THING ABOUT AMERICA. IT IS STILL A PLACE WHERE SOMEONE CAN ARRIVE KNOWING NOBODY, AND IN A FEW SHORT YEARS, MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE.

RAMSENGHANI
The reason everybody wants to come to the country is because this is truly the land of opportunity. I chose to come to America because I know this is a place where you can do a lot more. You can make a much bigger impact. This is a place that has always welcomed immigrants.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

AN IMMIGRANT'S STORY FROM AMERICA'S HEARTLAND AND A REMINDER THAT AMERICA CONTINUES TO BE A BEACON OF HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY. AND THAT'S OUR PROGRAM FOR TONIGHT. FROM NEW YORK, FOR HDNET, DAN RATHER REPORTING. GOOD NIGHT.
From: Koppin, Sheila Doyle [BOARD]
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2011 1:14 PM
To: SPayne@ifbf.org; Hacker, Annette M [U REL]; McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Subject: FW: Email Test

All,

For your use, I was able to get from Lucian Read with Dan Rather Reports the transcript for the episode related to Agrisol (see attached).

Sheila

From: Lucian Read [mailto:lucienread@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2011 12:58 PM
To: Koppin, Sheila Doyle [BOARD]
Subject: Re: Email Test

Sheila,

The transcript is attached. The episode should be on iTunes in the next day or two.

Best,

Lucian

On Wed, Sep 28, 2011 at 1:57 PM, Koppin, Sheila Doyle [BOARD] <sdoyle@iastate.edu> wrote:

Lucian,

Thanks for your call. Please respond to this email. Thank you.

Sheila

Sheila Doyle Koppin
Regent Communication Officer
Board of Regents, State of Iowa
The link below contains last night’s half-hour program. Regent Rastetter and Agrisol are mentioned throughout; Iowa State is mentioned at about 26 minutes in. At that point, you will see shots of Jack Trice Stadium, Beardshear, Agronomy Hall and the Food Science Building, then interviews with ISU profs emeriti Dennis Keeney and Neil Harl. Rastetter Chair Kevin Kimle and Dean Wintersteen are mentioned.

Among others interviewed:
* a representative from Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
* a small-scale pork producer
* the director of a Tanzanian investment firm
* Tanzania's prime minister
* Others in Tanzania
* head of the Oakland Institute

Our office had knowledge of this piece but no involvement in it. A Rather producer had requested permission to film on campus, but permission was not needed as this is a news organization. Location agreements are only required for films, documentaries, commercial projects, etc.

The link will expire in seven days, so either download the file or ask us to burn a DVD if you wish to retain a permanent record.

Annette
http://360mediawatch.com/download.php?vid=20765
Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]

From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 2:09 PM
To: Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]
Subject: FW: NEWS - TV report to probe Rastetter Africa project (DSM Register)

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Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University

Cell phone: (515) 490-2941

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From: Hacker, Annette M [U REL]
Sent: Tuesday, September 27, 2011 8:52 PM
To: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Subject: RE: NEWS - TV report to probe Rastetter Africa project (DSM Register)

Yes, I believe they posted it online yesterday. By tomorrow sometime, we should have a dub of the show.
Annette

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From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Sent: Tuesday, September 27, 2011 8:10 PM
To: Geoffroy, Gregory L [PRES]; McCarrick, John F [U REL]; Hacker, Annette M [U REL]
Subject: FW: NEWS - TV report to probe Rastetter Africa project (DSM Register)

Interesting. I just now aware of this e-mail.

Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University
Ames, IA

Cell phone: 515 (490)-2941

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From: Koppin, Sheila Doyle [BOARD]
Sent: Monday, September 26, 2011 9:08 PM
To: Dooley, Robert [BOARD]; Je Murphy; Berg, Brad [BOARD]; Brunson, Marcia R [BOARD]; Clayton, Aimee [BUAKU];
Cook, Timothy B [BOARD]; Evers, Thomas A [BOARD]; Gonzalez, Diana [BOARD]; McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]; Racki, Joan [BOARD]; Saunders, Keith [BOARD]; Sayre, Patrice; Smith, Dianne [BOARD]
Subject: NEWS - TV report to probe Rastetter Africa project (DSM Register)

TV report to probe Rastetter Africa project
4:32 PM, Sep 26, 2011 | by Philip Brasher | Comments
Bruce Rastetter’s plan to take Iowa-style agriculture to east Africa will be subject of an in-depth TV report tomorrow night. “Dan Rather Reports” traveled to Tanzania and to Iowa to investigate Rastetter’s plan for the 800,000-acre mega farm. The Des Moines Register reported on the project back in June.

The report, airing at 8 p.m. ET, will focus in particular on the plight of the 125,000 refugees who now live on the land Rastetter has planned to use.

“We walk with no peace in our hearts,” refugee and farmer Sembuli Masasa told Dan Rather Reports. “We are miserable to know that we will be moving.”

Still, according to the program, Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda, remains a backer of the project. “Surely one would not be naive to accept an investor into an area, provided it’s well balanced, provided it has a effect on people around (and) enable (them) to have access to a better market. Definitely it would be a very good idea,” Pinda told the program.

The report will also look into the connection between the project and Iowa State University, which was enlisted to design a project for poor, small-scale local farmers.

Watching the program won’t be easy for Iowans because Dan Rather Reports runs on HDNet, a high-definition channel that’s carried by DirecTV and the DISH network but not by cable provider Mediacom.

View a clip of the piece here:
Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]

From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 2:08 PM
To: Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]
Subject: FW: AP Article on Bruce Rastetter

Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University

Cell phone: (515) 490-2941

From: McCarron, John E [U REL]
Sent: Monday, August 01, 2011 3:45 PM
To: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Subject: RE: AP Article on Bruce Rastetter

Thanks....very comprehensive article.

John M.

From: McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Sent: Monday, August 01, 2011 3:40 PM
To: McCarron, John E [U REL]
Subject: FW: AP Article on Bruce Rastetter

And did you see this one?

Ann McCarthy
State Relations Officer
Iowa State University
Ames, IA

Cell phone: 515 (490)-2941

From: Koppen, Sheila Doyle [BOARD]
Sent: Monday, August 01, 2011 9:51 AM
To: Berg, Brad [BOARD]; Brunson, Marcia R [BOARD]; Clayton, Aimee [BOARD]; Cook, Timothy B [BOARD]; Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]; Gonzalez, Diana [BOARD]; McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]; Murphy, Joseph D [BOARD]; Racki, Joan [BOARD]; Saunders, Keith [BOARD]; Sayre, Patrice [BOARD]; Smith, Dianne [BOARD]
Subject: AP Article on Bruce Rastetter


chicagotribune.com

AP-IA--Rastetter-Iowa Politics, 1st Ld-Writethru,1225
By RYAN J. FOLEY
Associated Press
8:25 AM CDT, July 31, 2011

IOWA CITY, Iowa

Iowa entrepreneur Bruce Rastetter created one of the nation's largest hog production companies and then became a national leader in ethanol production. Now he's leaving his mark on another big Iowa industry: presidential politics.

Rastetter, a 55-year-old millionaire who grew up on a farm near tiny Alden in northern Iowa, has become one of the most sought-after GOP donors by presidential candidates hoping to win the first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses and unseat President Barack Obama. His influence is so great that Iowa Republicans are watching closely to see whom he will back.

"He's definitely on the A-list of folks," said Iowa Agriculture Secretary Bill Northey, who has received support from Rastetter.

Rastetter was among the group of Iowa Republican businessmen who traveled in May to New Jersey to try to persuade Gov. Chris Christie to jump in the race. And a conservative advocacy group that Rastetter helped found and that a longtime associate runs, the American Future Fund, has emerged as one of the most powerful in the country. An invitation to his annual summer party and cookout in August has even become a hot commodity among presidential candidates.

Rastetter has a vast business and political network and close ties to Iowa Republican Gov. Terry Branstad, who says the businessman helped persuade him to come out of political retirement to run for a fifth term last year. Rastetter then poured more than $160,000 into Branstad's campaign, becoming his largest donor before being appointed after the election to the Iowa Board of Regents, where he'll help govern Iowa's public universities.

In July, Rastetter was elevated to president pro tem in a leadership shakeup orchestrated by Branstad.

Rastetter's summer party will bring together Rastetter's network -- everyone from hog farmers who worked for him to politicians to Wall Street financiers. It will be held Aug. 6, precisely one week before the Iowa Straw Poll in Ames, an early test of campaign organization.

"They'd love to be invited," Branstad says of the presidential candidates, with a laugh. "I suppose it's up to Bruce who he wants to invite."

So far, Rastetter isn't saying. He has expressed interest publicly only in Christie, who has declined overtures to run. Christie did agree to come to Iowa on Monday for an education reform summit hosted by Branstad.

It's not entirely clear what motivates Rastetter. Friends insist he's simply a business-minded conservative who feels strongly about the future of the state and nation. Some environmentalists and Democrats question whether he's motivated by profit, with a goal of weakening regulations and greasing the skids for his business deals.

Rastetter, who did not respond to several interview requests for this story, has a knack for picking winners in politics and business.

All 13 candidates to whom he donated in 2010 -- 11 state lawmakers in addition to Branstad and Northey -- won
their races, according to the National Institute on Money in State Politics. Branstad recalled how Rastetter assembled a group of farmers, business leaders, lawmakers and lawyers at his log home in Hardin County to ask him to run for governor in 2009.

"He said, 'I think you've got the experience and the leadership ability. We really think you're the right person to lead the state at this very critical time.' He promised that he would be there to assist and he was," Branstad said.

Rastetter's associates are also big donors. A longtime Rastetter spokesman who runs the American Future Fund, Nick Ryan, chipped in more than $67,000 to Branstad's campaign. Bruce's brother, Brent Rastetter, who owns a company that constructs hog confinement facilities, gave Branstad an additional $31,000 and was appointed earlier this year to the Iowa Environmental Protection Commission.

It is not clear how much money Rastetter has put into the American Future Fund, which claims it is a nonprofit group that does not have to disclose donors. The Des Moines-based group spent millions targeting Democrats and supporting Republicans in congressional races during the 2010 election cycle.

Melanie Sloan, executive director of a watchdog group called Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, said Rastetter represents a new breed of ultra-rich individuals who can secretly exert influence by pouring unlimited amounts of money into campaigns.

"He's learning how to play the system," said Sloan, whose group has filed a complaint with the Internal Revenue Service claiming the American Future Fund violated its tax-exempt status by engaging in political advocacy.

Adam Mason, an organizer with Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, a group that says it works for "social, economic, and environmental justice," said his group has long been troubled by Rastetter's business operations and political influence. He said Rastetter's hog business put family farmers out of business, and that he fought proposals to increase regulation of hog operations that critics say pollute the air and water.

"The more troubling thing is, trying to run the state in his own vision isn't enough for him," Mason said. "We see him moving to bigger pastures."

Rastetter graduated from high school in Alden, a town of 900 people about 60 miles north of Des Moines, before attending the University of Iowa and earning a political science degree in 1978. He went to work as a feed salesman before founding Heartland Pork Enterprises in 1994, which grew into the 13th largest pork producer with a stable of 61,000 sows that produced millions of hogs. The business was bought by Christensen Farms, becoming the fourth largest in the nation, in 2004.

By then, Rastetter had his eyes on the heavily subsidized ethanol industry.

In 2003, he co-founded Hawkeye Energy Holdings Co., which would grow to operate four large ethanol plants across Iowa and become one of the largest producers in the U.S. Business colleagues say he was a forceful advocate for state and national policies to increase ethanol production. But when the ethanol business hit bad times, the plants filed for bankruptcy. After they emerged, a subsidiary of Koch Industries purchased all four plants.

Rastetter has turned his attention to a new venture, Agrisol Energy, which has announced plans to work with the government of Tanzania to develop large-scale farming operations there. Some critics have called the project a greedy land grab, but Rastetter and the company say they are trying to spread new farming technology and techniques that will help increase food production in Africa and help local farmers.
Branstad says he chose Rastetter, who is single, for the Board of Regents because of his passion for education. Rastetter has made one of the largest donations to Iowa athletics -- $5 million to help the Hawkeye football team build new training facilities in 2008 -- and has given more than $2 million to Iowa State University to support an agricultural entrepreneurship program. His personal foundation also gives out college scholarships to students who study agriculture.

Rep. Annette Sweeney, a Republican who heads the House Agriculture Committee, went to the same Lutheran church as Rastetter, growing up in tiny Buckeye.

"Even growing up as kids, if he saw something he was interested in he made sure he studied up on the issue and tried to achieve his passion," she said. "I see that he just wants to make the state of Iowa work. He wants Iowa to be the best that it can be because he's very interested in wind energy, the agriculture sciences, education as a whole."

AP-WF-07-31-11 1615GMT
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Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]

From: Koppin, Sheila Doyle [BOARD]
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2012 11:09 AM
To: Evans, Thomas A [BOARD]; Clayton, Aimee [BOARD]; Donley, Robert [BOARD]; McCarthy, Ann M [GOV R]
Cc: McCarroll, John F [U REL]; Hacker, Annette M [U REL]
Subject: FW: open records request

FYI — see public records request below from AP reporter Ryan Foley.
Sheila

From: Koppin, Sheila Doyle [BOARD]
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2012 11:07 AM
To: 'Foley, Ryan J.'
Subject: RE: open records request

Hi Ryan,

I'll pass along your request. However, since today is a holiday, it's likely your request won't be reviewed further until tomorrow. We'll let you know if we have questions.

Sheila

From: Foley, Ryan J. [mailto:RJ-Foley@ap.org]
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2012 10:52 AM
To: sdoyle@iastate.edu
Subject: open records request

Hi Sheila,

Here's an open records request. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Jan. 16, 2012:
This is to request access to public records maintained by the members of the Iowa Board of Regents and the board office staff. Specifically, this is to request:
_ all public records held by regents and staff, including correspondence, reports and memos, related to Iowa State University's involvement in a land development in Tanzania.
_ all public records related to Regent Bruce Rastetter's involvement in that project, including any documents that would raise concerns about a conflict of interest.
Because I'm a reporter working on a story of global interest, I ask that you expedite my request. If records can be released faster in piecemeal fashion, I ask that you do so.
If this request is likely to cost more than $50 to fulfill, I ask that you notify me in advance.
Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Ryan

Ryan J. Foley
Correspondent, The Associated Press
103 E. College St, Suite 208
Iowa City, IA 52240
319-337-5615 (office)
319-400-2213 (mobile)
319-337-6126 (fax)
@rjfoley (twitter)

Associated Press

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