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KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU NEWS

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[www.Thephotolane.com](http://www.Thephotolane.com)

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**P**lanting season is near and farmers are ready for trade agreements that create more markets for what they produce. The "local foods" concept might be the hottest thing in agriculture today, but there's no mistaking the importance of the world marketplace.

Kentucky's agricultural economy is very much tied to the international market. Our two signature industries, horses and tobacco, have long been dependent on foreign buyers. In recent years, the world market became more important for our grains, poultry, beef and pork products. Exports now account for around 25 percent of Kentucky's agricultural cash receipts. Nationally, almost a third of our ag production goes to foreign markets.

But as well as American agriculture is doing in the export business, there's room for growth. What would pave the way is Trade Promotion Authority legislation that's supposed to be high on the Congressional agenda this year.

American businesses rely on trade agreements to remove barriers and create a fair marketplace. But we must come to negotiations with a clear agenda and the authority to back it up. The U.S. is on the verge of completing one of our most ambitious trade agendas in decades. TPA is essential to completing these agreements, including the Trans Pacific Partnership with 11 other countries across the Asia/Pacific region and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the European Union.

U.S. agriculture is ready to capitalize. But the U.S. needs to stand firm and show other countries that we're ready to act on final offers at the negotiating table. TPA creates an important partnership between the administration and Congress to advance trade agreements.

Strengthening our infrastructure is another key element to export growth. We need to shore up the decaying railway system that brings commodities from the heartland to the ports. Ditto for our system of locks and dams on major waterways like the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.

These are among the issues critical to farmers as they seek to meet the challenge of feeding more and more people globally.



**Mark Haney**

President

Kentucky Farm Bureau

# “Waters” rule drawing more fire

The controversial “Waters of the U.S.” proposed rule from the Environmental Protection Agency made its way to a House subcommittee on March 17 with AFBF voicing concerns along with several other farm organizations. The heat is so hot on EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers that EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy says the agency now refers to the proposal as “Clean Water Rule.”

AFBF General Counsel Ellen Steen told the House Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry that the WOTUS rule will create enormous uncertainty and vulnerability for farmers and ranchers nationwide.

“It is impossible to know how many farmers, ranchers and forest landowners will be visited by [EPA] enforcement staff or will be sued by citizen plaintiffs’ lawyers – and it is impossible to know when those inspections and lawsuits will happen,” Steen said. “But what is certain is that a vast number of common, responsible farming, ranching and forestry practices that occur today without the need for a federal permit would be highly vulnerable to Clean Water Act enforcement under this rule.”

She said several statutory exemptions demonstrate a clear determination by Congress not to impose Clean Water Act regulation on ordinary farming and ranching activities. However, agency and judicial interpretations over the past several decades have significantly limited the agricultural exemptions that have traditionally insulated farming and ranching from Clean Water Act permit requirements.

“Much of the remaining benefit of those exemptions would be eliminated by an expansive interpretation of ‘waters of the United States’ to cover ditches and drainage paths that run across and nearby farm and pasture lands,” Steen testified. “The result would be wide-scale litigation risk and potential Clean Water Act liability for innumerable routine farming and ranching activities that occur today without the need for cumbersome and costly Clean Water Act permits.”

Steen explained that because ditches and ephemeral drainages are ubiquitous on farm and ranch lands – running alongside and even within farm fields and pastures – “the proposed rule will make it impossible for many farmers to apply fertilizer or crop protection products to those fields without triggering Clean Water Act ‘pollutant’ discharge liability and permit requirements.”

“A Clean Water Act pollutant discharge to waters of the U.S. arguably would occur each time even a molecule of fertilizer or pesticide falls into a jurisdictional ditch, ephemeral drainage or low spot – even if the feature is dry at the time of the purported ‘discharge,’” Steen told the subcommittee. For this reason, farmers’ options under the rule are limited.

Steen added: “They can either continue farming, but under a cloud of uncertainty and risk, they can take on the complexity, cost and equal uncertainty of Clean Water Act permitting or they can try to avoid doing anything near ditches, small wetlands, or storm-water drainage paths on their lands. It’s a no-win situation.”

The panel also heard objections from the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association and the National Cotton Council.

An AFBF campaign last year resulted in the filing of more than a million comments about the proposal.

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Kentucky Farm Bureau is a voluntary organization of farm families and their allies dedicated to serving as the voice of agriculture by identifying problems, developing solutions and taking actions which will improve net farm income, achieve better economic opportunities and enhance the quality of life for all.

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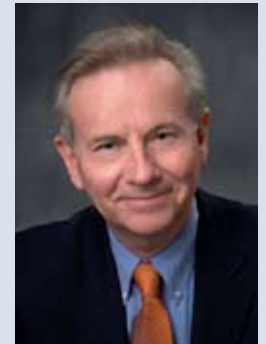
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# comment

## C O L U M N

A demographic study of farming and ranching in Wyoming forecasts there will be no operators under the age of 35 by the year 2033. The study in *Rangelands*, a publication of the Society for Range Management, found that the average age of farmers has increased in every county in Wyoming since 1920, and will reach 60 by the year 2050. Based on these results, the authors predict a bleak farming future for Wyoming and the rest of the country where trends are similar.



Believe it or not, the fear of not having enough farmers and ranchers has been around as long as the first county Farm Bureau, founded a little over a hundred years ago in Broome County, New York. The concern back then was that too many young men were leaving the hard life of farming to seek gainful employment in the big cities. Farm Bureau was formed out of a desire to make farming more socially and financially rewarding.

The exodus from farms and ranches continued, however, but became far less worrisome because of mechanization and the tremendous increase in farm productivity. In fact, the pendulum swung the other way. During much of the 20th century there were too many people trying to make a living from farming, and too much land was in production.

The aging of the farm workforce became noticeable in the 1950s and has continued relatively unabated ever since. The average age of farmers was 48.7 years in 1945, the first year it was officially reported in the Census of Agriculture. The average age now is 58.3 years. The share of farmers age 65 and older was 14 percent in 1945; it is now 33 percent. Only 6 percent of farmers are under the age of 35.

Do all these numbers spell big trouble for the nation's agriculture? Not necessarily. The entire American workforce is aging. By the year 2020, 25 percent of the labor force will be over 55, up from 12 percent in 1990. Agriculture, real estate and education are the three employment categories with the highest number of workers over 55. An older agricultural workforce is nothing new, at least not in the last half century.

Generally speaking, today's 65-year-old is better educated, healthier and more willing to extend their working years than seniors in the past. It seems fair to say that a 58-year-old farmer today is comparable to a 48-year-old farmer in 1945.

According to the Stanford Center on Longevity, agriculture will need to rely on a larger share of older workers and use them as well to train young workers. The U.S. birth rate is projected to average 4.6 million per year from 2015 to 2060, that's more than the peak year of the baby boom.

American agriculture has a recruiting job to do, but it has never been in a better position to convince future generations to become farmers and ranchers.

**Stewart Truelsen**

**Truelsen Media Services**

**(Retired AFBF Communications Specialist)**

# Roadside Markets meeting



Sharon Spencer, farmers market specialist at the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, and KFB Director Russell Poore of Logan County listen to a question from a market operator. Mrs. Spencer also is President of Franklin County FB. Poore, who presided at the meeting, is chairman of KFB's Roadside Farm Markets Advisory Committee.



The educational meeting attracted around 30 farm market operators.

With interest in local foods at an all-time high, farm market operators are eager to reach those consumers, as well as new marketing channels. Looking for ideas, around 30 farm market operators attended an educational meeting last month at the KFB office in Louisville.

The half-day program featured presentations on human resources management, assistance with environmental standards compliance, cost-share assistance, effective marketing strategies and utilizing federal programs. Another segment had market operators sharing success stories.

All but one of the attendees were participants in KFB's Certified Roadside Farm Markets Program.

University of Kentucky horticulture specialist Dr. Tim Woods framed the situation by noting the "national phenomenon" of interest in local foods. Farm markets can capitalize on the demand, he said, by focusing on "core value" elements that emphasize good citizenship, heritage, economy and consumer needs.

"The local farmer as an artisan is appealing to consumers," he said.

Dr. Woods also recommended "farm estate branding." He praised the "Kentucky Proud" program operated by KDA but said "local branding" could provide an added boost.

A good local food systems model should focus on the combination of "local, small and quality," he added.

Tobacco's downturn plus the availability of financial assistance from the agricultural development fund has sparked tremendous growth in farm markets and agritourism enterprises in Kentucky. Amelia Wilson of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture said there are around 400 agritourism sites. The 20-year-old KFB program has 98 markets enrolled for this year.

The annual educational meetings are part of KFB's program. The next special event will be the summer tour of agritourism venues. This year's tour goes to the Finger Lakes region of New York.



# Water Management Group reviewing available resources

**KFB**'s "Water Management Working Group" held its third meeting on March 25, with officials from several agencies outlining services and challenges relative to addressing water resource issues. The group also appointed an "agriculture drought mitigation sub-committee" to begin work on recommendations for a state plan.

Presenters included the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority, U.S. Geological Survey and Kentucky Geological Survey. Additionally, KFB Director Tripp Furches of Calloway County gave a presentation on well development for an irrigation system.

At the end of the four-hour meeting Committee Chairman Steve Coleman told the officials that "our role should be to support your recommendations. We see things you present to us that are helpful. Ag producers are looking to this group to lead them through the process" of dealing with water resource problems.

Working group member Pat Henderson, a KFB Director from Breckinridge County, agreed, saying farmers need to be made better aware of where to obtain information and various forms of assistance. Said Coleman: "There's a lot of information out there that people aren't aware of."

The 20-member group has established goals that include identifying financial and regulatory challenges, assessing financial resources and educating farmers on water management strategies. The group includes representatives from KFB, the Kentucky Division of Water, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Governor's Office of



The working group met in KFB's board room.

Agricultural Policy, UK College of Agriculture, Food & Environment, Kentucky League of Cities, Kentucky

Association of Conservation Districts and Kentucky Rural Water Association. The next meeting is April 29.

## Legislature approves funds for ag projects

**A**t press time, the state legislature, at the end of an overnight session, passed a bill to provide funds for agriculture projects. House Bill 510, sponsored by House Appropriations and Revenue Committee Chairman Rick Rand of Trimble County, will provide \$5 million for the Soil Erosion Water Quality Cost Share fund, \$5 million to State Agricultural Development Accounts, \$6 million to County Agricultural Development Accounts and \$5 million to the Kentucky Ag Finance Corporation. This is for Fiscal Year 2016.

The funds come from last year's resolution of a dispute over the Master Settlement Agreement that resulted in

a \$57 million payment to the state. The remaining funds are "parked" for now and will be appropriated in next year's legislative session, said KFB Public Affairs Director Jeff Harper. (He and colleague Bryan Alvey worked through the night at the capitol building on the issue.)

The final agreement came out of a House-Senate Conference Committee. Representative Rand chaired the House side and Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Paul Hornback of Shelby County headed the Senate conferees. The development is especially good news for the Water Quality Cost-Share Fund, which currently does not have available funds.

# More records at KFB Beef Expo!

**R**ecords were shattered at the 29th annual KFB Beef Expo as sales totaled \$1.39 million, breaking last year's record of \$1.14 million and crossing the \$1 million barrier for the fourth consecutive year. The 445 lots averaged \$3,127, topping the previous record of \$2,547 in 2014.

The sale topper was the reserve champion Angus female, which Emilee Taylor of Lexington bought for \$16,500. The grand champion Angus female fetched the second-highest bid of \$11,200 from David Hobbs of Vine Grove. Seven lots sold for \$10,000 or more. The 49 Simmental lots averaged \$4,473 to lead all breeds. The Gelbvieh sale averaged \$4,394 for 28 head and the Angus sale averaged \$4,332 for 42 head.

Consignors from 18 states brought animals to the Beef Expo.

The junior show attracted 379 head, of which 154 were Kentucky animals. A youth judging contest and a trade show also took place.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture and Farm Credit Mid-America joined KFB in sponsoring the event.



Representatives from the various breed shows posed with Agriculture Commissioner James Comer and KFB's Executive Committee following the presentation of show premiums.



Area Program Directors Brad Wilkerson and Stacy Lowe worked a shift at the KFB display in the trade show.



# Corralled

## SHOWING CATTLE STEERS PULASKI COUNTY GIRL TOWARDS A CAREER

**KFB** supports livestock shows with two things in mind: (1) Promoting the respective industries; and (2) Enticing young people to pursue careers in the livestock industry. In regard to the latter objective, there's no better example than 14-year-old Reba Prather of Pulaski County, a ring regular in the red angus show at the KFB Beef Expo.

Reba, who first set foot in a show ring when she was 3, says her experiences are driving her toward a career as an embryologist.

"This is all I've ever wanted to do," she said while attending to her cows at the Kentucky Exposition Center.

Reba had three head entered from her family's farm near Nancy plus another 13 from Cundiff Farms, another Pulaski County operation owned by good friends Johnnie and Jann Cundiff. She has been handling their show cattle for years, with numerous awards. She says her finest moment was a reserve honor at last year's Kentucky State Fair. She's also won a showmanship award at that show and has placed in the National Western Stock Show in Denver.

Reba plays basketball for Southern Middle School, but that hobby is second fiddle to cattle.

"After school, if I'm not practicing basketball, I'm at the barn," she said.

Her mother, Vickie Prather, says any success is well-deserved because "she is totally committed to this."

Mrs. Prather said Reba was hooked from the start.



Reba and Vickie Prather at the KFB Beef Expo.



Reba Prather shows a red angus heifer at the KFB Beef Expo.

"We had friends who showed; we took her into a ring when she was just three and she just has always loved to be around cattle. If she's not at school, you'll probably find her at the barn. It's a

year-round thing for her."

"I love the animals; I like the shows because you make friends and meet people," said Reba. "The State Fair is great. This is a nice show too."

Reba will attend Southwestern High School next year and then plans to pursue that career in animal science.





# Planting seeds

## FULTON COUNTY FB CULTIVATES “AG TECH CAREER DAY”



**I**t seems only fitting that Fulton County High School would have a day to recognize agriculture -- beyond its campus in Hickman are thousands of acres of fertile Mississippi River bottomland spawning row crops. Indeed, agriculture easily is the leading industry in this county at the southwest tip of Kentucky.

To underscore agriculture's importance, Fulton County FB leaders and representatives from area agribusinesses conducted a first-ever “Ag Tech Career Day” to inform the school's 160 students about careers in the industry. The event encompassed the entire school day as the students rotated from classroom-to-classroom for various presentations, plus got to take rides in farm equipment brought to the parking lot by county farmers. The huge tractors, sprayers and trucks were such a popular attraction that students from the adjacent elementary school eventually came over to join in the fun.



Fulton County FB President Glenn Howell presided over a presentation on marketing. Fulton County FB Insurance Agency Manager Shannon Waltmon handled the topic of careers with Farm Bureau, explaining the tie between the Federation and Insurance Company. Board Members Jeremy Jones and Chuck Murphy also participated along with committee member Brian Major. Women's Committee Chairperson Penny Fleming was a key organizer. Her son, Matt Moss, who is a swine producer, handled a presentation on animal sciences.

Howell, a large-scale row crop producer who serves on KFB's Board of Directors, said the event would give the students a better idea about the agriculture industry as a whole. He commended School Principal Ellen Murphy for her cooperation. "We have a great working relationship," he said.

Lucas Goodman, a local farmer and KFB member who was assisting with the equipment segment, said that although farming is dominant in the county, "less and less of these kids are coming from farms."

While most local youngsters understand agriculture's importance, many are unfamiliar with how the industry operates and is structured, said Goodman.

"They don't know the details," he said.

Ms. Fleming, a former school board member, said she was gratified by the support from the agribusinesses. The list of cooperators included equipment dealers, crop services, a grain dealer, Tyson Foods, Shaefer Oil Company and a seed company.

"A lot of work went into this," she said.



Clockwise from top left:

Students from the adjacent elementary school came over to the high school to check out the farm equipment. Here they stopped for a photo.

Fulton County FB Insurance Agency Manager Shannon Waltmon discussed the tie between the Federation and Insurance Company.

Fulton County FB President Glenn Howell participated in a presentation on marketing.

Swine Producer Matt Moss, with a piglet as a prop, spoke to the students about the animal sciences industry.

Fulton County FB Women's Committee Chairperson Penny Fleming (left) and Fulton County High School Principal Ellen Murphy were among the coordinators. Ellen is the wife of Fulton County FB Director Chuck Murphy, who worked at the event.





"Ag Adventures" facilitator Tonya Murphy

# Ag in Classroom Program sows knowledge

By Ray Bowman



Students use mortars and pestles to grind wheat into flour.

Where farm chores or even visits to relatives on the farm once served to preserve a connection with agriculture, today's youth likely never have the opportunity for such direct exposure. Rather than taking the kids to the farm, the Kentucky Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom Program brings the essence of the farm to the kids with the "Agriculture Adventures" program.

The program came to Robert B. Turner Elementary School in Lawrenceburg on March 17, the day before National Ag Day and part of National Agricultural Literacy Week. March also was National Nutrition Month – the Ag in the Classroom program emphasizes an understanding of both food and fiber production and nutrition.

An assembly program first introduces students to the idea of



where their food comes from by discussing the ingredients needed to make a pizza. A moderator, identified as “Chef Parmesan” (Agriculture Adventures facilitator Tonya Murphy) engages students in a number of activities that quickly bring them from the concept of all food originating with soil to the production of raw products necessary for making the finished product.

The student body is then separated into smaller groups who tour a number of educational stations, such as the one with the dairy cow representation. The stations provide games to reinforce the message of the necessity of agriculture as well as hands-on activities, such as grinding wheat in a mortar and pestle to make flour.

Though recently reinvigorated, Kentucky Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom was originally formed in 1992 by a group of ag leaders who realized more educational emphasis was needed to reconnect students with the basics of food production. The KyAEC took shape in the mid-1990s during the administration of former Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Ed Logsdon.

Last November, Jennifer Elwell was named Executive Director of Kentucky Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom, Inc. Elwell was brought on board to promote the organization's programs and resources while expanding comprehensive education programs that showcase Kentucky agriculture. Her new role also includes facilitation of communications and training programs for Kentucky educators.

The mother of a daughter and son, Elwell realizes the urgent mission of the organization.

“I find so much joy in sharing the positive impacts of our farming community with others, and I am excited to be facilitating new programs that will bring the agriculture community together in a more unified effort,” Elwell remarked upon her appointment.

In addition to Agriculture Adventures, other programs fall under the KyAEC umbrella.

- The membership-driven Agriculture Literacy Network is a new program, created to assist farmers and farm educators in providing and promoting quality education programs.

- The Kentucky Department of Agriculture Mobile Science Activity Center is a 44-foot long trailer with 10 iPad interactive workstations for a classroom of students to conduct activities and investigations related to agriculture and the environment. KyAEC partners with KDA by providing the trailers/equipment and managing supplies. KDA staffs the program and provides the vehicles.

- Students in grades K-12 are eligible to compete in the annual Kentucky Agriculture Poster and Essay Contest to celebrate agriculture in Kentucky. The 2015 Contest Theme was “Kentucky Agriculture: Growing the Next Generation of Farmers” The winners were announced and honored Friday, March 13, in advance of National Agriculture Literacy Week.

Kentucky Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom receives support from the Commonwealth's livestock and grain organizations, as well as KFB, the Kentucky Agriculture Development Fund and Farm Credit Mid-America. KyAEC works closely with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

Learn more about Kentucky Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom at <http://www.teachkyag.org>.



Anderson County Agriculture Extension Agent Tommy Yankey helps students identify seeds.



Students play an agriculture-themed board game.

# County Corner

## Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities

### LETCHER COUNTY

County President Howard Stanfill presented a check to Diane Watts at opening of the Letcher County Homeless Shelter that she initiated. Diane is on the board of Letcher County Farm Bureau.



### MARTIN COUNTY

KFB Insurance Agent Brian Davis read to first graders at Eden Elementary School in recognition of National Agriculture Week.



### MASON COUNTY

Shelby Trimble and Sally Walton worked at the FB booth during Farm Family Night at Maysville Community College. Shelby is a board member and Sally is chairperson of the women's committee.



### CRITTENDEN COUNTY

County President Stephen Hill and his wife, Marty, presented the National Ag Day book to Librarian Regina Merrick of the Crittenden County Public Library. Marty is co-chairperson of the women's committee.



### LIVINGSTON COUNTY

Sharon Furches, a member of KFB's Water Management Working Group, spoke about that project during a conservation meeting at the county extension office. The meeting was sponsored by Livingston County FB. Sharon serves on KFB's Women's Leadership Committee.



### RUSSELL COUNTY

Kathy Rexroat and Judy Rexroat read to a first grade class at Salem Elementary School during National Ag Literacy Week. They also distributed activity worksheets to fourth and fifth graders.





## HARRISON COUNTY

County President Randy Wade (far right) presented a \$1,500 donation to the volunteers at the Harrison County Food Pantry. The funds stemmed from a membership drive.



## FAYETTE COUNTY

The annual equipment auction was held at the Kentucky Horse Park. Here, an auctioneer sells the smaller items. Once again the event attracted thousands of visitors from multiple states. It has raised more than \$700,000 for college scholarships over the years.



## WASHINGTON COUNTY

Women's Committee Chairperson Grace Hardin read to students at North Washington Elementary School as part of National Ag Literacy Week.



## BATH COUNTY

Former KFB President Marshall Coyle (center) was inducted into a local agricultural Hall-of-Fame. At left is County Extension Agent Gary Hamilton and at right is County President Michael Staton.



# Survey reveals opinions on genetically modified food

A survey by the Pew Research Center affirmed what many farm interests have been saying for years: That the general public is misinformed about genetically modified foods.

The survey involved interviewing both scientists from the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the general public with the same set of questions to see how views differed between the two groups on a wide range of sci-

tific topics, including genetically modified foods. More than 2,000 citizens and 3,748 scientists were polled.

The results show a big gap between perceptions. The majority of scientists (88 percent) responded it was safe to eat genetically modified foods, while the majority of the general public (57 percent) said genetically modified foods were unsafe to consume. The 51 percentage point divide was the largest

opinion difference in the survey, which included several other scientific issues. Furthermore, 67 percent said they believed scientists do not have a clear understanding about the health effects of genetically modified crops.

Those most likely to believe that GM foods are unsafe were women and minorities. Pew reported no significant difference between Democrats and Republicans.

Those in the general public survey were asked: "When you are food shopping, how often, if ever, do you look to see if the products are genetically modified?" Some 25 percent said they look for such labels, another 25 percent said they look sometimes, 17 percent said they do so "not too often" and 31 percent said they never look for GM labeling.

Predictably, food companies and farm groups have used the survey results to underscore their position about the GM foods issue. Bottom line: They are proven to be safe by science, but misinformation and scare tactics from special interest groups have created a misconception.

In order to build a bridge between scientific knowledge and consumer education, members of the Council for Biotechnology Information — including BASF, Bayer CropScience, Dow AgroSciences, DuPont, Monsanto Company and Syngenta — collaborated together to build a new website designed specifically to answer any and every question on genetic modification—GMO Answers.

GMO Answers draws on more than 100 volunteer experts to answer submitted questions, including "conventional and organic farmers, agribusiness experts, scientists, academics, medical doctors and nutritionists."

"Join the conversation and ask your questions about GMOs and biotechnology," the GMO Answers website stated. "Be skeptical. Be open. We want to hear from you."

The GMO Answers are at gmoanswers.com or on their Twitter, Facebook or Pinterest pages.

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# UK is a market for local foods

By Lee Meyer

UK Department of Ag Economics

An increasing number of farmers are looking at the local food market for sales opportunities. While this market is growing, it presents a variety of challenges.

Many producers think of farmers markets as the primary outlet for local food, but farmers markets also present challenges. For example, they are labor intensive, seasonal and patrons expect a wide variety of products.

Another outlet is the institutional market, and a new player has entered this arena. Aramark, the contract manager for UK food services, has contracted to buy a substantial volume of Kentucky products. This is potentially a great opportunity for local farmers and food processors.

UK Dining will not be a "direct" market. Almost all of their produce, meat and processed product purchases will come

through one of their supplier partners; primarily Sysco and Piazza Produce. Sellers to UK Dining will need to meet industry standards for food safety and liability. For example, third party audits of GAP certification are a norm, along with a several million dollar liability insurance policy. While these expectations may challenge producers, they are the industry norm and will be increasingly demanded by all buyers. UK Extension, along with partners like the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and KCARD, will provide training and assistance to help producers adapt to these expectations.

UK Dining has about 30,000 transactions per day, which is a potentially huge market for Kentucky food products. Farmers, of course, recognize the seasonality conflicts as students are on campus from late August to early May, while much of our peak fruit and vegetable production is during summer. Meat products are less challenging, but bring the different challenge of how to find a market for all of the cuts in a beef or hog carcass.

The actual size of the UK Dining market also could be a challenge. Many producers would not have enough volume to meet the ongoing demand of this market.

These farmers may want to explore the catering market, which typically has a focus on high quality, but smaller volume. Catering menus are highly flexible and can be a great place for collaboration between chefs and farmers.

An indirect route to the UK Dining market is through a food processor. Two Kentucky processors who sell to UK are Custom Food Solutions and KHI. Both firms buy raw ingredients and then freeze or process them, creating a storable product based on Kentucky-grown inputs.

Will UK Dining have a significant impact on the demand for local and Kentucky Proud products? While insurance and certifications are important, the key is probably going to be pricing, which is still being developed. Farmers will be assessing price offerings and comparing them to other markets and production costs. UK Dining will be looking at the value they are getting, their need to buy local to meet the UK contract plus competing products.

Farmers interested in learning more and/or seeking assistance have many resources at their disposal, starting with the extension specialists. **Following are some other potential outlets:**

## UK Dining:

Leisha Vance, Sustainability Manager

[BuyLocal-UKDining@lsv.uky.edu](mailto:BuyLocal-UKDining@lsv.uky.edu)

## UK Extension:

Tim Woods

[tim.woods@uky.edu](mailto:tim.woods@uky.edu)

Kevin Heidemann [kevin.heidemann@uky.edu](mailto:kevin.heidemann@uky.edu)

## KDA:

Josh Lindau

[Joshua.lindau@ky.gov](mailto:Joshua.lindau@ky.gov)

## Ky. Center for Ag & Rural Development:

Aleta Botts

[aleta.botts@gmail.com](mailto:aleta.botts@gmail.com)

## The Food Connection:

M. Scott Smith

[mssmith@uky.edu](mailto:mssmith@uky.edu)



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## Kentucky selected for "Farm-to-School"

**K**entucky is one of three states that will partner with The Walmart Foundation and the National Farm to School Network to expand efforts to get more local foods into schools. The Seed Change project will "jump start" programs that get local foods into schools and enhance food education for more than 1.8 million school children in Kentucky, Louisiana, and Pennsylvania, the National Farm to School Network reported.

A total of 100 farm-to-school sites in the participating states each will receive \$5,000 grants to implement farm-to-school activities, the network's statement said. Applications for mini-grants will be accepted later this spring. Two model school districts in each state will serve as demonstration sites and training hubs for other school districts.

The three-state initiative is funded by a grant from the Walmart Foundation.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Farm to School Program connects school food service systems with local farmers and food producers. The program helps students learn to appreciate the importance of local foods and grow into well-informed consumers who demand local foods as adults.

Kentucky schools in the KDA program served local foods to an estimated 364,000 children in approximately 702 schools in the 2011-2012 school year. A total of 84 school districts are members of Kentucky Proud.

The Kentucky Farm to School Program runs the Farm to School Junior Chef competition, in which high school cooking teams throughout the Commonwealth compete for scholarships while learning basic cooking techniques and being educated about the importance of local foods.

For more information on the Kentucky Farm to School Program, go to [www.kyagr.com](http://www.kyagr.com) or contact Tina Garland at (502) 382-7505 or [tina.garland@ky.gov](mailto:tina.garland@ky.gov).

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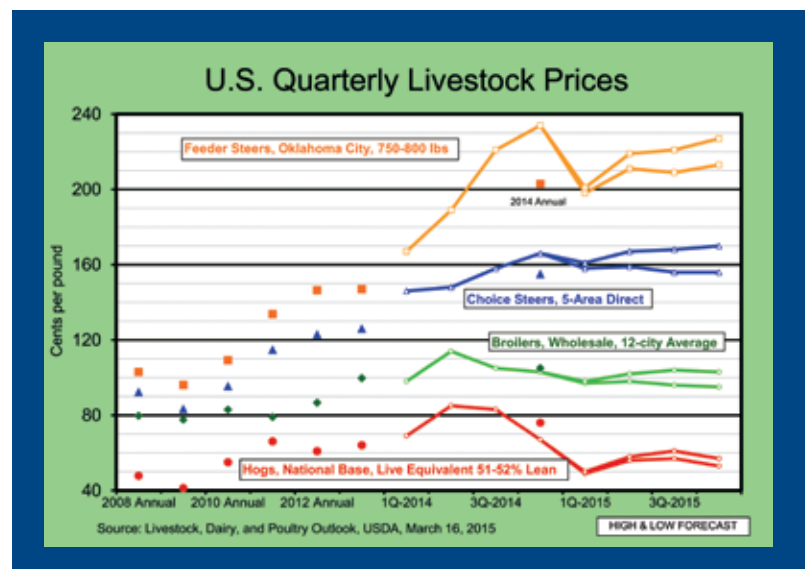
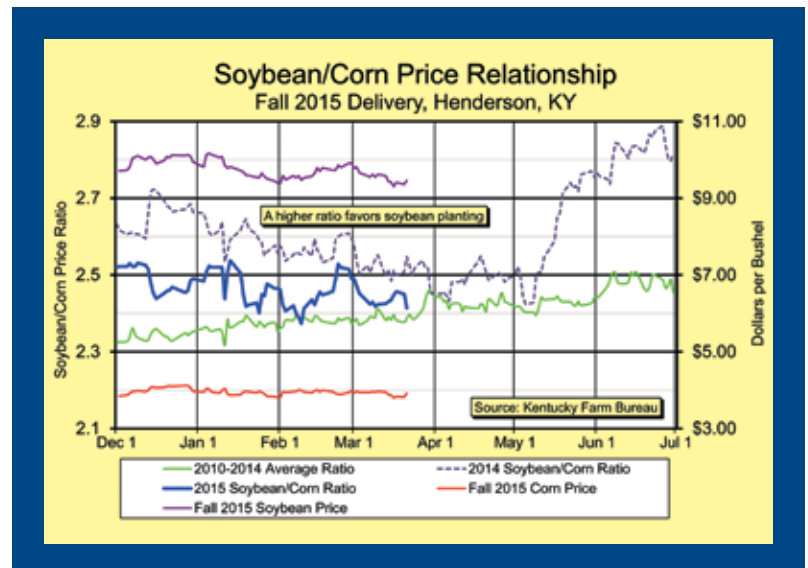
Kentucky's 2014 soybean production estimate from USDA is a record 84 million bushels, up one million bushels from the 2013 crop. Since the average yield of 48 bushels/acre (bu/ac) was two bushels below a year ago, the record crop resulted from a 5.4 percent increase in harvested acreage. For Kentucky's six crop districts, the average yield ranged from 44.3 bu/ac in the Purchase district to 50.7 bu/ac in the Bluegrass district. Yield estimates for the 69 counties reported by USDA-NASS ranged from 35.3 bu/ac to 57.1 bu/ac. Not surprisingly, soybean yields were lowered in many of the same counties which suffered sharp losses in corn yields – from Warren County west along the Tennessee border into the Purchase area. Of the ten counties with the lowest yields, eight were in this zone. Logan, Calloway, Marshall, Trigg, Simpson, Graves, Christian and McCracken counties had average yields of 35.3, 38.3, 39.8, 40.3, 40.7, 41.5, 41.5 and 42.5 bushels/acre, respectively. The counties with the five highest average soybean yields are east of I-65. Boyle, Metcalfe, Clinton, Pendleton and Harrison counties had yields of 57.1, 56.9, 56.5, 56.3 and 56 bushels/acre, respectively. In terms of total production, Henderson County led the way with 4.57 million bushels, followed by Daviess County, 4.07 million bushels, and Graves County, 3.56 million bushels.

## USDA predicts rise in broiler output

USDA forecasts broiler meat production in 2015 at 40 billion pounds, up four percent from 2014. The increase is expected to come from both a greater number of birds slaughtered and higher average weights. Broiler integrators are expanding production due in part to relatively low feed costs. The growth in the number of eggs in incubators and the number of chicks placed for growout has been relatively steady at 2.5-2.8 percent, with higher bird weights accounting for the remainder of the increase. In January, the average live weight increased two percent from a year earlier to 6.12 pounds; increasing live weights have been a continuing source of growth in broiler meat production, averaging higher on a year-over-year basis for the last 30 months. With higher broiler meat production expected throughout 2015 compared with 2014 plus higher stock levels, wholesale prices for most broiler products are expected to face downward price pressure. USDA forecasts the 12-city national broiler price to average 96-102 cents per pound for 2015 – this compares to 104.90 cents in 2014 and 99.7 cents in 2013.

## Milk prices lower in 2015

Although feed prices have generally declined since the second quarter of 2014, milk prices have declined proportionally more since September, resulting in a decrease in the milk-feed ratio from 2.97 in September to 2.09 in January. Feed price forecasts remain conducive to expansion of the milk supply, with the USDA corn price forecast for 2014/15 at \$3.50-\$3.90 per bushel and the soybean meal price forecast at \$350-\$390 per short ton. While the rate of growth has slowed, milk per cow and milk cow numbers are forecast by USDA to increase this year. Compared to 2014, the 2015 milk per cow forecast of 22,640 pounds per year is up 1.7 percent, while milk cow numbers are expected to rise 0.7 percent to 9.325 million head. Milk production for 2015 is forecast at 211.1 billion pounds, 2.5 percent higher than the 2014 level. A reduction in commercial dairy product exports will weigh on dairy product prices as well as milk prices. USDA's Class III milk price forecast of \$15.95-16.55 is down from \$22.34/cwt received in 2014. The 2015 all-milk price forecast is \$17.05-17.65 compared to \$23.98/cwt for 2014.





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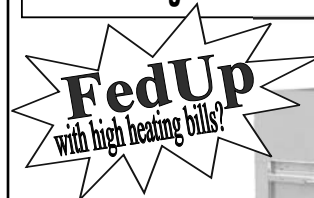
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