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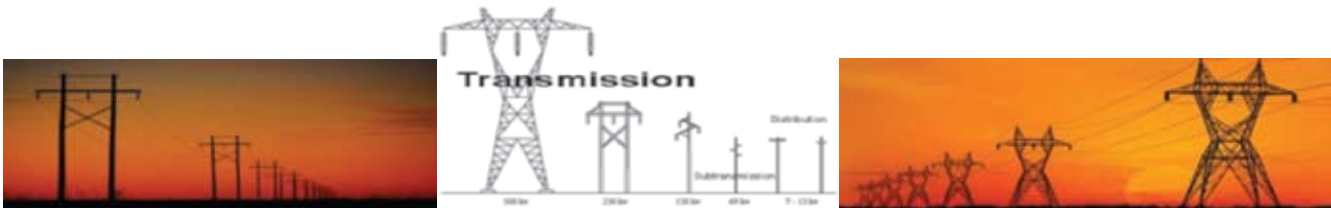
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KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU NEWS
Volume 15 • No. 3
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Kentucky Farm Bureau has always been very active in supporting a number of issues during legislative sessions, as we continue to urge our lawmakers to support our priorities and bills that are good for agriculture and rural America.

One of our key endeavors this year has dealt with water and, more specifically, getting HB 529 passed. This bill will create the Kentucky Water Resources

Board. As we near the end of the 2016 General Assembly, it was refreshing to see our grassroots advocacy efforts pay off with the passage of this legislation which will improve coordination among all interested parties involved in the Commonwealth's water resources planning, management, and development.

I want to thank our members for stepping up and making their support of this bill known to state legislators. This is a perfect example of how our efforts, to positively impact agriculture, are alive and well.

Adequate water resources are critical to our agriculture industry and being proactive before difficult situations, such as droughts, arise makes good sense. We saw extreme bipartisan support of this bill and I want to thank each member of the General Assembly who supported it, as well.

Some other legislative issues we have watched and supported include maintaining the 50 percent allocation of the Master Settlement Agreement funds to the Agricultural Development Board for the purpose of improving the net farm income of individual farmers in production agriculture; support continued funding of the Soil Erosion & Water Quality Cost-Share Program; support an efficient, well-administered and adequately financed Kentucky Department of Agriculture; and support of the UK Grain Center of Excellence in Princeton.

I would also like to take this opportunity to mention a change that has taken place at the KFB Mutual Insurance Companies. Long-time executive vice-president and CEO Brad Smith has transitioned out of that role and will officially retire May 1. Brad has been a good friend to agriculture and an important component of our insurance endeavors. We have seen great strides made during his tenure and we thank him for his dedication to KFB and wish him well in his retirement.

Taking Brad's place is John Sparrow who has served the last three years as COO. John, who has been with Farm Bureau since 1989, begins his new role at what has traditionally been a busy time of year for the insurance industry with spring storm season approaching.

We certainly wish for him a calm spring and welcome him into this new role.

I feel optimistic about our future both for the Federation as well as the Insurance Company. I urge our members to stay the course and remain vigilant in our advocacy for agriculture so that we may all weather any storms we encounter.



Mark Haney

President

Kentucky Farm Bureau

State Officials Keeping Kentucky Poultry Industry Secure

There seems to be no end to the growth Kentucky's poultry industry is enjoying as it tops the list of state commodities with a value of over \$1 billion. The Commonwealth also ranks 7th nationally in broiler production.

With that said, keeping birds safe is paramount among producers especially when it comes to avian influenza. Last year, many poultry producers in other states, most notably in Iowa, suffered extensive losses due to a severe outbreak. Those here became

a little more nervous as restrictions on bird sales and movement in Kentucky were put in place by the state veterinarian's office due to the discovery of the disease in southern Indiana last winter.

At that time, State Veterinarian Robert C. Stout said, in a statement, "Poultry is Kentucky's leading agricultural commodity, and we will do everything we can to keep our commercial and backyard poultry industries secure."

In late February, some of those restric-

tions were lifted as the threat of bird flu diminished but Kentucky producers aren't letting their guard down.

Jamie Guffey, executive director of the Kentucky Poultry Federation said security is always on the minds of those in the poultry industry.

"We are still on a heightened sense of alert as far as bio-security goes especially since a low pathogen avian flu has been found in wild ducks across the state," he said. "We are just trying to do what we can to keep it out of our backyard and small flocks as well as our commercial industry."

Stout noted, in a press release from last January, that a poultry producer's livelihood depends on the health of their flocks and that it's absolutely imperative to keep those flocks healthy in order to maintain consumer confidence and keep international trading channels open.

Not only is the market growing for poultry in this country but so have markets overseas, prompting exports of poultry products to grow significantly over the past two decades.

Indiana officials were quick to react to the discovery of a highly pathogenic H7N8 avian influenza which had been discovered in turkeys in Dubois County which is located about 60 miles north of Owensboro, Kentucky.

Guffey commended the officials in Indiana for their quick reaction to the situation.

"We watched closely what they were doing, we assisted with some things, and in follow-up meetings we learned exactly how they handled the situation," he said. "They did an excellent job of identifying the problem, controlling the problem and eradicating the disease. We want to follow that model they created to better our abilities when and if a disease outbreak of any kind happens in Kentucky."

Guffey noted that the poultry industry in the state continues to grow as discussions with companies about expansions continue and as construction on new structures is taking place.

"We're excited about the possibilities of growing the industry but we're always on guard and in a full court press right now, always looking to get better," he said.





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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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comment C O L U M N

By the time this magazine makes its way to mailboxes across the state, I'll be wrapping up almost 30 years of service with the Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance Companies. I've been blessed to serve in many roles during that time, including as the company's Chief Executive Officer. Reflecting back on my time at Kentucky Farm Bureau, I thought I'd share a few observations.



The insurance company formed late in 1943 with the specific goal of meeting the insurance needs of our farmer members. What a blessing that was and still is today. Being connected to the local communities and county leaders is such a benefit. The leadership, local engagement and support they've provided have contributed much to our success.

Understanding the importance of staying connected to county Farm Bureaus, the insurance company later chose to offer its services to all member families throughout Kentucky. That decision, paired with a sound business model, an emphasis on core values, and the hard work of many, enabled us to grow even more. As a result, today we hold a leading market share in Kentucky.

How is this possible? One key to our success is that we've kept the focus on service to the member. This is the true purpose of our existence. In carrying out that mission, the relationships we have with our members, and each other, sets us apart.

Additionally, when you're with Farm Bureau, you're automatically part of every community. It takes a lot of people to serve so many communities in that personal, family-oriented way, but our agents, their staff, and all our employees have contributed greatly to our success.

Finally, I've found our people, regardless of the role they play, inspiring. I've been in many of our agencies across the state and worked daily with employees in the state office and in the field. They are professional, hard-working, and service-oriented individuals, all the while exhibiting the values that make this organization special.

As I wrap up my career, to everyone, I say thank you. Thank you for everything you've done to help Kentucky Farm Bureau, as well as the Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance Companies, be successful. I'm blessed to have spent most of my career here, and for that I'm very grateful. I'm proud to have been your teammate, I wish Farm Bureau much success in the years ahead, and I hope to forever be a part of the Kentucky Farm Bureau family.

Bradley R. Smith

Retired CEO KFB Insurance Companies

Kentucky Farm Bureau Efforts Lead to HB 529 Passage



While approximately three-quarters of the earth is covered in water, a very small percentage of that is considered to be consumable. Factoring in the growing world population, the threat of water shortages, especially in times of drought, becomes a real concern in many regions of the world.

The United States is not immune to that problem and a classic example can be found in California which is experiencing a fifth straight year without ample rainfall.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, over 99 percent of that state is suffering from some level of drought and nearly 40 percent is considered to be at the exceptional drought level, the most intense of the measuring categories.

Recognizing the issues taking place in the west and the problematic possibilities water shortages could cause anywhere in the country, Kentucky Farm Bureau's (KFB) Water Management Working Group (WMWG), a 20-member task force, came together in 2015 specially charged to develop recommendations that will enhance the quality and quantity of water resources accessible for agricultural production in the state.

Its mission is to research the emerging critical issue of inadequate water supplies available for agricultural pro-

The Water Resources Board will assist in conducting research and developing recommendations to enhance the quality of water resources accessible for agricultural production in the state.



Steve Coleman, WMWG chair, oversees a recent group meeting.

duction, examine potential actions to solve this deficiency and make recommendations for bringing new and reliable water sources to key areas of farm production in Kentucky.

Steve Coleman, who chairs the WMWG and is the retired Director of the Kentucky Division of Conservation, said taking a proactive stance on water issues is of the upmost importance not only to the agriculture community but to the state as a whole.

"To put it simply, none of us can survive without a safe, plentiful water sup-

ply. In looking forward at possible solutions to water issues that could arise, we stand a much better chance of handling situations such as drought conditions than trying to react once they have occurred," he said.

Coleman also said there never needs to be a situation where agriculture is pitted against its urban neighbors over water.

"Working well together is the best possible situation we can be in if and when the need arises to take action over water issues," he said.

As a direct result of WMWG's proactive work and recommendations, HB 529, was introduced on a bipartisan basis during this year's General Assembly session to improve coordination among all interested parties involved in the Commonwealth's water resources planning, management, and development.

The legislation will promote economic development opportunities through the strategic and efficient use of water resources by ensuring a long-term adequate supply of on-farm water resources for agriculture, thus alleviating pressure on rural/urban water supplies.

Specifically, HB 529 creates the Kentucky Water Resources Board which would be administered by the Energy and Environment Cabinet and will assist the cabinet in conducting research and developing recommendations to enhance the quality of water resources accessible for agricultural production in the state.

Rep. Rick Rand and Rep. Steven Rudy served as the main sponsors of the bill which passed both the House and Senate by a unanimous vote.

During its discussion before the Senate Agriculture Committee, Chair Sen. Paul Hornback said the bill was very important to agriculture.

"For those of us that are in agriculture and those of us in rural areas, even though we have an abundance of water here in Kentucky, this is going to be, in the future, the most important resource that we have," he said. "With regula-

tions that are coming down like Waters of the U.S. and a lot of things are over burdensome, for Kentucky to be out in the forefront and to start looking and for Farm Bureau to start looking at issues that may arise in the future and being on the forefront of that, I appreciate that and want to thank you from a lot of my fellow farmers.”

In their testimony to the committee, Rand and Rudy emphasized the importance of being pro-active in matters related to water use.

Rand told committee members, “We don’t want to paint ourselves in the corner because, as we have more development in the country, more growth in our urban areas, it puts pressure on our farms.”

Rudy said with water being “our most precious resource,” this water resource board will allow agriculture to continue to have a seat at the table in matters related to quality and quantity of water.

Sen. David Givens, Senate President Pro Tem, said in the legislative process, there are some things that are important and there are some things that are really important; he count this (HB 529) among those that are really important.

“For us to be able to regulate our own waters is so vitally important to the ag economy and the future of the Commonwealth and, not just from an agricultural standpoint,” he said. “People much wiser than me refer to water as the next oil. Being able to control that within the boundaries of our state is vital.”

KFB President Mark Haney said he appreciated the support from legislators, as well as KFB members in working to get passage of the bill.

“We are so thankful for the support the entire General Assembly has shown for HB 529 which reinforces how important it is to be proactive in water resource issues,” he said. “I also want to thank our members who worked tirelessly to get the word out about the need for this legislation. This effort represents the true success of grassroots advocacy in stepping up to speak out for agriculture.”

David S. Beck, KFB Executive Vice-President, said while a unique aspect of the proposed legislation is its connection directly to the agricultural industry, the creation of the Kentucky Water Resources Board will have positive impacts throughout all economic sectors of the state.



From left: KFB's Jeff Harper, Rep. Rick Rand and Rep. Steven Rudy testify in front of the Senate Ag Committee in support of HB 529. Rand and Rudy served as the main sponsors of the bill.

“At the end of the day, better water management would be a benefit to all businesses, all industries and, ultimately, all Kentuckians,” he said. “With passage of this bill, it will provide a unique opportunity for Kentucky to demonstrate its willingness to meet such an

issue head-on, in a bi-partisan way. It sets the bar for other states to work in the same manner.”

Beck also noted KFB's appreciation of the unanimous support shown by the General Assembly in moving this legislation forward.



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Kentucky Farm Bureau Members from Across the State Visit Frankfort to Advocate for Agriculture



Governor Matt Bevin (left) is presented a food basket of Kentucky products during the KFB Legislative Drive-In/ Food Check-Out Day by Betty Farris (right), Chair of the KFB Women's Committee.

Scores of Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) members made their way to Frankfort recently to meet with their state legislators during the KFB Legislative Drive-In/Food Check-Out Day.

Traditionally the event has taken place on two separate days; one reserved as an opportunity for KFB members to inform their respective legislators of the organization's priority issues and any legislation they support; the other as a time to bring awareness to food costs in the state and across the country.

This year marked the first time the

two long-time events were held on the same day.

"This event is one of the single most important days of the year for our members as they meet with their legislators to discuss priority issues, current legislation and ag-related topics that affect them on a daily basis," said KFB President Mark Haney. "It also allows our members to deliver food baskets to their lawmakers as a way to showcase locally produced goods and the afford-

ability of our food supply, the least expensive and safest in the world."

The USDA's Economic Research Service estimates that Americans, on average, spend about 10 percent of their incomes on food each year which means it would take seven weeks to earn enough money to pay for a year's supply of food.

As they made their way to the various legislative offices, members discussed several priorities approved at last

December's annual meeting including maintaining the 50 percent allocation of the Master Settlement Agreement funds that are reinvested in Kentucky agriculture, the support of an efficient, well-administered and adequately financed Kentucky Department of Agriculture, and support of the Grain Center of Excellence at the University of Kentucky Research and Education Center at Princeton, to name a few.

Members also discussed their support of the newly filed HB 529, legislation that will improve coordination among all interested parties involved in the Commonwealth's water resources planning, management, and development.

The legislation will promote economic development opportunities through the strategic and efficient use of water resources by ensuring a long-term adequate supply of on-farm water resources for agriculture, thus alleviating pressure on rural/urban water supplies.

Haney has discussed the necessity for such a board over the past few months and said there is a need for a drought mitigation plan here in Kentucky that is specific to agriculture.

"There needs to be an entity put in place to be able to manage and advocate for water structures here in Kentucky whether it is community-type or individual water structures on the farm," he said.

Last year, a Water Management Working Group was formed by KFB to specifically address water issues. Haney noted that as water continues to be an issue, the work this task force has completed and will complete is vital to the success of agriculture in Kentucky.

Rep. Rick Rand (D- District 47) and Rep. Steven Rudy (R District 1) served as the main sponsors of the bill which passed the House and Senate by unanimous votes.

Both legislators visited with some of their constituents who were participating in the Legislative Drive-In/Food Check-Out Day event.

Both legislators visited with some of their constituents who were participating in the Legislative Drive-In/Food Check-Out Day event.

Rand, who chairs the House Appropriations and Revenue Committee, which oversees the state budget, said this legislation was a perfect example of how well the grassroots approach of bringing forth issues to lawmakers works. He also

noted how small farms are really a network of small businesses.

"When we're talking about a family farm, we're talking about tens of thousands of family farms across the state and they're all small businesses," said Rand. "They have to be run and managed like a business and so we need to think about them in that way. We're talking about a \$6 billion business across the state and I like to think about agriculture in those terms."

Rand added that one of his duties is to work with the Agriculture Development Funds which go through the budget.

"I think the Ag Development dollars have probably changed the face of agriculture in Kentucky even more than I could have dreamed," he said. "We work very hard to make sure those dollars continue to flow back to our local communities so we can diversify and support the important agricultural programs that help our economies at the state and local levels."

Rand also noted that elected representatives are always looking for connections with the people they represent

and Farm Bureau does an excellent job of advocating from the grassroots level.

Rudy said advocacy is very important especially in educating the public on ag-related issues.

"The last census in Kentucky was the first that noted there were more people living in the cities than out in the country," he said. "But agriculture, which is going to have to feed not just Kentucky but the world, is so vital and it's incumbent among us as legislators who represent the rural areas to make sure the urban legislators understand that importance."

Rudy added that HB 529 is an example of that as the legislation passed unanimously out of the House Agriculture and Small Business Committee, which is comprised of representatives from both rural and urban areas.

This year's KFB Legislative Drive-In/Food Check-Out Day brought members representing 90 counties to Frankfort with more than 130 food baskets delivered to lawmakers as well as Gov. Matt Bevin.

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KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

GMO Labeling from a Local Perspective



A bill proposed by U.S. Senate Ag Committee Chair Pat Roberts, that would have preempted state GMO labeling laws and instead, create a national, voluntary regulation, has failed to get the necessary 60 votes to make it to a Senate vote and is currently awaiting further action.

AFBF President Zippy Duvall wasted no time in letting the Senate know his feelings in the matter after this latest action.

"It is inexcusable that today's Senate vote on a voluntary federal GMO labeling bill that preempts a damaging patchwork of state measures fell short," he said after the March 16 vote. "While we appreciate Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell scheduling this floor vote today, we will continue our fight for this vital piece of legislation, along with Senate Ag Committee Chairman Pat Roberts and others, to secure a law that supports consumers, America's farmers and ranchers and our nation's system of affordable, productive agriculture."

Duvall continued, "To say we are angry with those senators who abandoned farmers and ranchers and turned their backs on rural America on this vote is an understatement. Their votes opposing this measure ignored science,

threw our nation's food system into disarray and undermined the public's understanding of the many benefits of biotechnology in feeding a growing and hungry population."

Vermont passed legislation that would go into effect this July which creates a mandatory labeling of any product that contains a GMO product. If the law is allowed to take place, any producer, anywhere, would have to comply with the rule in order to sell goods in that state.

From a local perspective, producers in Kentucky have experienced a diversification in their farming operations over the past two decades that has resulted in a multitude of value-added products which have been sold across the country and around the world.

The ability to reach such a wide market has helped countless farm families remain on their farms, some of which have been passed down for generations.

While many see a state law such as the one in Vermont as being pertinent only to producers in that state, it has the potential to affect food producers and manufacturing companies across the country including a direct effect on state producers.

Because of the introduction of GMO crop varieties, farmers here and across the country have lessened their carbon



Top: Kentucky's soybean crop ranks 1st in state crop receipts.

Above: AFBF President Zippy Duvall

footprint on the land and cut the use of chemicals on their crops. The use of GMO crops has become the norm in the industry. In Kentucky alone, 93 percent of the state's corn crop is of GMO varieties and 94 percent of the soybean crop is GMO.

Jack Trumbo, a corn and soybean producer from Shelby County, Kentucky said, because of the introduction of biotechnology into grains production, farmers have become extremely environmentally friendly.

"That's one of the best things you can say, it doesn't damage the environment," he said. "And these products are some of

the most tested of anything on this planet. The Department of Agriculture, the EPA and FDA, none of those folks will let us do anything that isn't okay so this has been approved through a lengthy process."

In addition to these environmental stewardship benefits, GMO use has resulted in costs savings with fewer chemicals and water resources being used in production.

Trumbo said bio-tech crops have also created a more plentiful food supply but there exists too much misinformation about the technology.

"I have had the opportunity to travel all over the world and I know what a hungry person looks like," he said. "We have all this food to feed the world and some people think we are trying to send them poison with GMO crops."

Proponents of bio-tech crops have long argued the issue at hand is not to deny the consumer the right to know what goes in their food but to produce a better, safer food supply for consumers. The growth of the local food movement is proof of the good relationships farmers have built with their local customers.

What is the issue however, is the cost and confusion a patchwork of state laws would create if laws such as the one in Vermont are allowed to take effect.

According to information from the Coalition for Safe Affordable Food, if the Vermont legislation is enacted, costs to consumers would increase in Kentucky by approximately \$1,218,782,900 annually or \$1,084 per family.

"We don't need a patchwork of laws where each state has something different. It would drive the food companies crazy and no one would be able to buy anything with any assurance of what's in it," said Trumbo.

KFB President Mark Haney said producers in Kentucky have worked diligently to diversify their operations to meet the demands of consumers and have reached a point where their products are moving beyond the boundaries of the state and into more mainstream markets across the country.

"A voluntary, national regulation related to GMO labeling would allow the marketing efforts these farmers are making to continue while giving the consumer all the information they desire about what is in their food," he added.

The future of the bill remains in question at press time. An alternative to Roberts' bill is possibly in the works.

"We remain hopeful they will have a chance at redemption by correcting this situation that will otherwise lead to increased food costs for consumers and stifle agricultural innovation, which remains a strength of our nation," concluded Duvall. "We must not let anyone forget that rural America and our farmers and ranchers do matter."

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2016 Women's Leadership Conference



KFB's Jeff Harper gave a legislative session updated during the Women's Leadership Conference.

This year's Women's Leadership Conference brought 235 Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) women members from 82 counties together to discuss a number of issues, participate in an assortment of breakout sessions and hear from KFB leadership.

Betty Farris, who chairs the KFB Women's Committee, said one of the first things that comes to her mind regarding the conference is the leadership skills it provides to the ladies.

"We try to offer workshops and speakers along with innovative ideas for the ladies to be able to develop better or more adaptable leadership skills they can take

back to their counties and districts," she said.

Farris emphasized those skills include leadership in advocacy and developing beneficial county projects.

"The women work with so many programs in their counties that their leadership skills are very important," she added. "They need to be able to get their message across and explain situations in a way that will encourage other people to listen."

The local women's committees have long been a big part of KFB and are present in nearly all Kentucky counties. Farris said the roles of these committees are numerous and differ from county to county.

Some of those activities include Food



Local Farm Bureau Women's Committee members from across the state attended the 2016 Women's leadership Conference held in Lexington.



AFBF's Johnna Miller discussed advocacy during her sessions at the Women's Leadership Conference.



KFB Women's Committee Chair Betty Farris addressed the conference.

Check-Out Day demonstrating the safe, affordable food farmers provide consumers; Ag Literacy Week, where volunteers help to teach students correct agriculture-related facts through activities including classroom reading; and the promotion of the many youth activities such as KFB's Outstanding Youth program and the KFB Variety Showcase.

This year, Johnna Miller, the Director of Advocacy and Media Training from the American Farm Bureau Federation spoke to attendees about being good advocates for agriculture. She said a way to combat misinformation about agriculture is to have enough people share the good positive facts.

"Sometimes we haven't been great about sharing the good news and we have to get better about that," she said. "Most farmers and ranchers in this country live in rural areas and they might not come in contact with as many people as often, yet they can have just as big a voice, if not a bigger voice, if they are on social media."

The discussion of those social media outlets was just one of the many ways Miller shared concerning advocacy efforts.

Miller also said, in pointing out to consumers that farmers share many of their same concerns such as providing safe food for their families, taking proper care

of animals, and being good environmental stewards, goes a long way in getting that positive agriculture information out to the public.

"Sharing that you have those same values along with your personal story, that's when people are more likely to listen to you," she said.

Farris said the conference helps to let others know the importance of the different activities in which the women participate. Attendees also get to network with each other to take home new projects and ideas.

"We need to promote what we do, why we do it and the benefits of why we do it," said Farris.

Farmers still cashing in on Kentucky's cash crop

By Ray Bowman

There was a pretty dramatic change in the face of Kentucky agriculture in October of 2004 when the tobacco buy-out brought to a close the system of federal price supports that had been in place since the era of the New Deal.

All manner of dire predictions were made about the future of burley in the Bluegrass State, but the reality is that the Commonwealth is still the largest burley producer in the United States, and second only to North Carolina in total tobacco production.

In 2013, Kentucky growers were responsible for 187 million pounds and in 2014 the number jumped to 214 million according to the web site Statista (www.statista.com)

In 2015, the weather was less than kind to tobacco producers, with rain affecting the planting and harvesting of the crop and everything in between. As the year drew to a close, the USDA was predicting a yield of 158 million pounds in Kentucky. Steve Pratt, General Manager of the Lexington-based Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association, felt the number might be closer to 130 million. "I've had other people tell me they thought it would be less than that," Pratt says. "It depends on who you talk to, but right now it's just a guess until it's all said and done."

The Cooperative represents not only Kentucky, but West Virginia, Indiana, Ohio and Missouri. "The majority of burley is grown in Kentucky," Pratt emphasizes.

A report from the University of Kentucky projects the value of Kentucky's tobacco crop for 2015 and 2016 might fall below \$350 million as compared to a post-buyout high of \$448 million in 2014. (<http://www.uky.edu/Ag/AgEcon/pubs/extoutlook151601.pdf>)

Contract volumes may see little change from 2015 to 2016 due to an improved global balance between supply and demand, according to the report.



Above: Burley tobacco growing near Midway in 2015.



Left: Farmers' Tobacco Warehouse located in Danville

Following the buy-out, production shifted from a quota-based system that relied on auction sales to a contracting system whereby producers enter into an agreement with buyers for a projected amount of leaf at a price indicated by the contract.

The ring of the tobacco auctioneer's chant has all but disappeared due to the shift to the contract system, however it can still be heard in less than half a dozen warehouses around the Commonwealth. Before the buy-out, tobacco warehouses were ubiquitous in the burley belt, with cities like Lexington and Shelbyville boasting multiple sale facilities. The opening of the sales, usually occurring around Thanksgiving, were festive occasions drawing celebrities and politicians and, in some instances, parades.

The 2015 opening of sales at Farmers' Tobacco Warehouse in Danville drew several dozen onlookers and a few local

dignitaries to see the perpetuation of a tradition. Outside, the local beef producers fired up a large grill to serve hamburgers to those in attendance.

Pratt observes that the iconic warehouses still provide a very necessary service. He explains that a producer with a contract for 10 thousand pounds will customarily plant more than the number of acres needed to meet the projected yield in case there should be problems with weather, disease or pests that make the crop fall short of expectations. "For those people that don't have a contract for all the tobacco they have, the auctions provide an outlet."

"Tobacco remains very important culturally as well as economically to Kentucky," notes Dr. Ann K. Ferrell, assistant professor of folk studies and anthropology at Western Kentucky University and author of the book "Burley: Kentucky Tobacco in a New Century."

"I don't think people necessarily know that, economically, it's still very important to many, many farmers and therefore many communities," Farrell observed.

Kentucky Tobacco Remains No.1 for Some Farm Families

There is no doubt Kentucky agriculture has a long history in producing the best tobacco in the world and growers have done so for generations.

Even as markets have changed, there are still farm families that depend on it to be the main source of income for their operations.

Scott and Shea Lowe are an example of that. Their dark, fire-cured tobacco is the number-one cash crop on their Calloway County farm and they've made it that way being first generation producers.

While that is a little unusual, the Lowe's have learned quickly and grown their acreage steadily over the last 14 years.

"There is more labor and time spent in dark fired tobacco, obviously to fire-cure it takes more time and you have to handle it easier but it's a unique crop and highly profitable to grow," said Scott.

He also said the market demand for dark tobacco has actually seen an increase benefiting an area of the state where the vast majority of the nation's crop is being produced. Kentucky not only ranks first nationally in burley production but first in fire-cured tobacco, as well.

Scott pointed out it takes experience to learn how to produce the crop well and in the beginning their operation began in a small way.

"It takes years to master growing it and lots of trial and error especially in my case being a first generation farmer," he said. "I started my first tobacco crop in 2002 with two acres and now, we're at 100 acres."

And in an era of contract-growing, Scott said he, of course started small, but the tobacco companies have liked his crops and the Lowe's have been able to increase those contracts steadily.

"There are going to be years when you see decreases and those when you see increases. This year is going to be a decrease-year for the companies mainly because there was a lot of tobacco grown over contracted pounds in 2015," he said.

Scott noted that this decline is likely a



bump in the road for maybe a season or two but he feels optimistic about the market in general and while the number of tobacco producers has decreased since the federal quota buyout in 2004, he said he would not hesitate to increase the farm's production by 50 to 100 acres.

The Lowe's grow row crops and raise cattle but, on a per-acre basis, dark tobacco is "way more profitable," said Scott. "As far as the dark tobacco industry and the location of the dark tobacco industry in West Kentucky goes, it's still the main crop for the agriculture community."

Scott and Shea Lowe, the 2015 KFB Young Farm Family of the Year attended the AFBF Nation Convention and were among the finalists for national honor.



The Lowes harvesting last year's tobacco crop.

KFB Ag Facts

- Kentucky ranks 1st in burley tobacco production, 1st in fire-cured tobacco production, 1st in dark air-cured tobacco production, and 2nd in total tobacco production nationally.
- Tobacco is one of Kentucky's top 5 agriculture exports.
- In 2014, 91,700 acres of tobacco were harvested producing 214.3 million pounds of tobacco, with an average yield of 2,337 pounds per acre.
- In 2014, 10,700 acres of fire-cured tobacco produced 36.4 million pounds, 76,000 acres of burley produced 163.4 million pounds, and 5,000 acres of dark air-cured tobacco produced 14.5 million pounds.

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Grain Insurance Fund protects Kentucky producers

Thanks to the Kentucky Grain Insurance Fund, grain farmers across the Commonwealth are protected against the financial failure of grain elevators and other licensed businesses that buy or store their grain in the state.

"Kentucky has a very good track record when it comes to the financial stability of its grain industries," Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles said. "The fund hasn't been tapped to pay a claim to a farmer in almost 16 years, since October 2000. The fund is valued at \$4.8 million, so our producers can rest assured that it will be there if they ever need it."

Every licensed grain business must have a surety bond in place ranging from \$1,500 to \$1 million, depending on the amount of business that they do.

If a grain business becomes financially insolvent and unable to pay a farmer, the bond is used. The Grain Insurance Fund would kick in when the value of the bond was exhausted.

The Fund is supported by an assessment of ¼ percent (.0025) of the value of grain purchased from producers. Since the value of the fund is well above a required value of \$3 million, the assessment currently is not being collected.

The Kentucky Grain Insurance Corporation board of directors, which oversees the fund, met on March 9 to certify that it was worth more than \$3 million. Its value has risen to nearly \$5 million due to interest earned and 16 years of no payouts. The farmer-owned money is held by the Kentucky Office of Financial Management.

If a producer is unable to be paid for grain by a licensed Kentucky business, he or she should call the Grain Licensing and Regulation branch of the KDA's Division of Consumer and Environmental Protection at (502) 782-9207 and file a claim.

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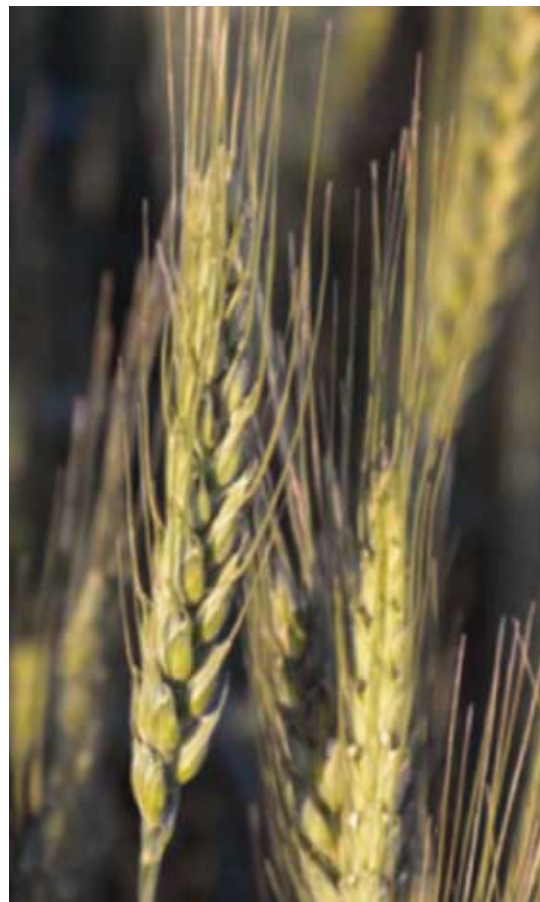


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¹ Offer available through 4/1/17. Available on qualified 2015 and 2016 Chevrolet vehicles. This offer is not available with some other offers. Only customers who have been active members of an eligible Farm Bureau for a minimum of 30 days will be eligible to receive a certificate. Customers can obtain certificates at www.fbverify.com/gm. Farm Bureau and the FB logo are registered service marks of the American Farm Bureau Federation and are used herein under license by General Motors.
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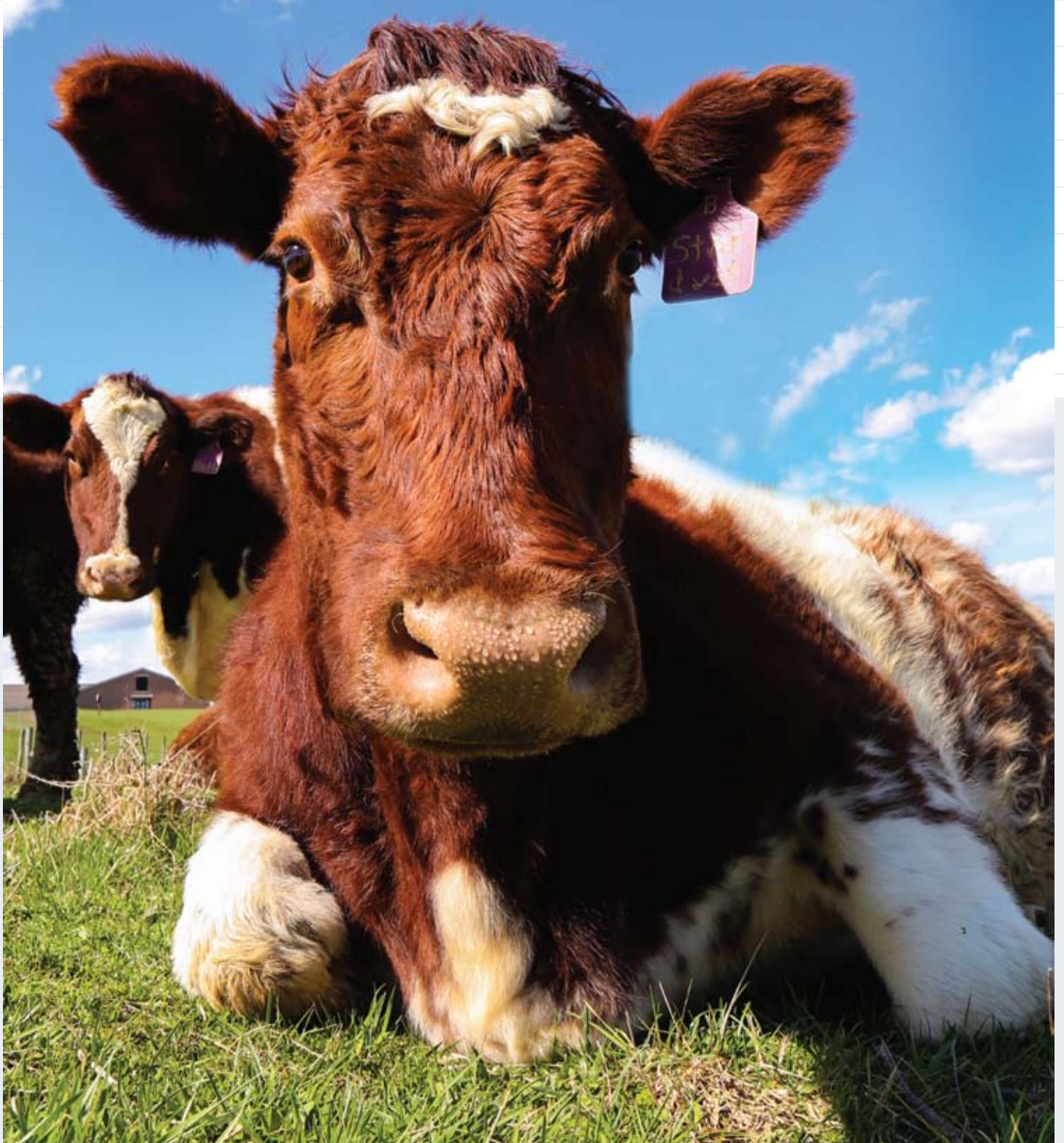
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For Cattle Producers, Kentucky is Cow Country





Kentucky beef cattle producers have reason to be proud. The Bluegrass State is the largest beef cattle producing state east of the Mississippi. Kentucky ranks 8th nationally in beef cattle production and cattle and calves rank 4th among Kentucky commodities for cash receipts, topping the \$830 million mark.

While the cattle industry here has become nationally recognized from a production standpoint, it is also known for some of the biggest and best livestock shows in the country, as well. Kentucky Farm Bureau's Beef Expo is an example of that.

This year's event was another for the record books. According to information from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, sales exceeded \$1 million for the fifth consecutive year and were the second highest on record.

"In a challenging economic time for beef cattle producers, this was an excellent Beef Expo," Commissioner of Agriculture Ryan Quarles said. "The success of this year's event is a testament to the quality of Kentucky cattle and the national reputation of the Beef Expo. Congratulations to the buyers,

sellers, exhibitors, juniors, and everyone who had a hand in putting on this year's Expo."

Specifically, sales for the event totaled more than \$1.206 million, second only to last year's \$1.39 million. The 442 lots averaged \$2,730 per head, also the second-best in Beef Expo history behind only the 2015 average of \$3,128. Cattle from 15 states were shown at the Beef Expo.

The 19 Gelbvieh lots brought an average of \$4,432 to lead all breeds. The Angus were next at \$4,302 for 41 lots. The sale topper was the grand champion Gelbvieh bull that fetched a high bid of \$21,000.

In the junior show, 461 animals were led into the show ring, including 205 from Kentucky.

This year marked the 30th anniversary for the Beef Expo. Wendell Bruce, a long-time cattle producer and Vice-President of the Beef Expo Board has seen all of them. He said this show is an indication of the quality of beef cattle being produced in the state.

"This show is very beneficial to the state's cattle industry. The Beef Expo was started for two or three reasons," he said.

Sales at this year's KFB Beef Expo exceeded \$1 million.

"First, it gives a producer a chance to sell those registered animals not needed on the farm. Secondly, it gives a producer the opportunity to buy outstanding genetics needed to bring into the farm and does not have. And third, it gives producers the chance to compare what they're producing with those from other places in Kentucky and elsewhere."

Bruce pointed out the economic benefits of the expo, saying that \$1 million-plus turns over about 6.6 times before it leaves the area, infusing an impact of over \$6 million to the area's economy.

He also noted that the cattle being shown, bought and sold are continually getting better.

"The breeders of Kentucky are to be commended as well as those that come from out-of-state for exhibiting outstanding cattle and, consequently, the buyers are responding," said Bruce.

He also expressed his thanks to all the volunteers and the sponsors including Kentucky Farm Bureau, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and Farm Credit Mid-America.

Export share of meat and poultry production to rise

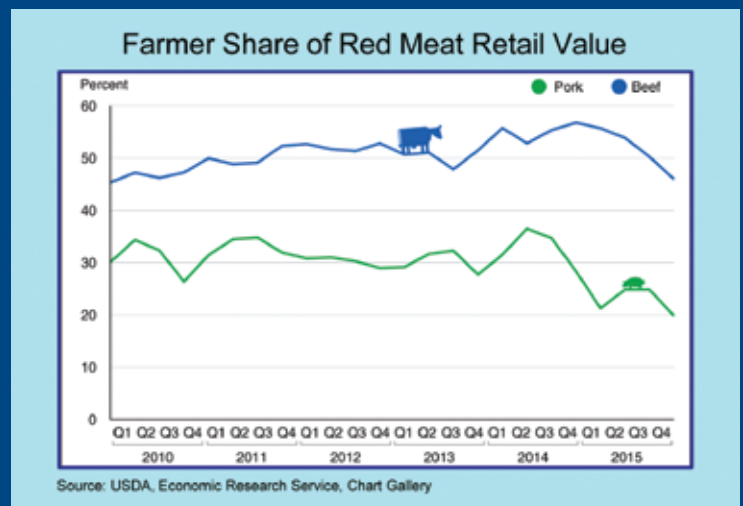
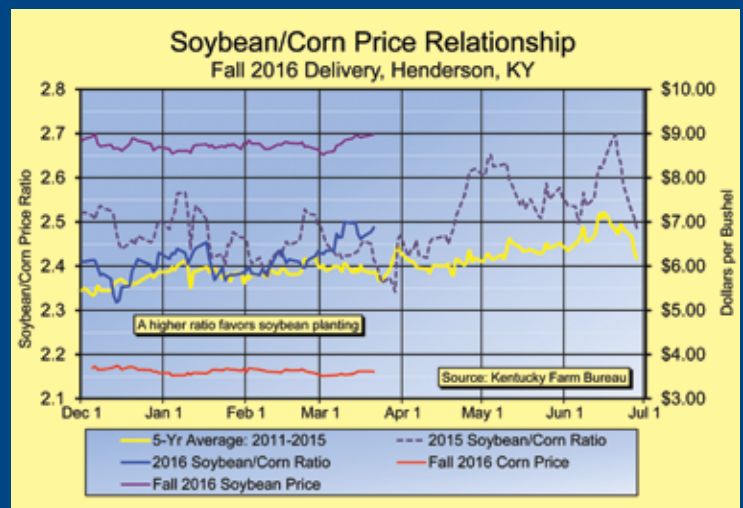
USDA expects the export share of red meat and poultry production to rise in 2016 to 16 percent, compared to 15 percent in 2015. Red meat and poultry exports as a share of production were down in 2015 from their 5-year averages, reflecting the combination of a strengthening U.S. Dollar, the slowing global economy, and trade restrictions on poultry put in place as a result of the U.S. outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). In 2016, production of red meat and poultry is expected to increase, while exports are expected to grow even more, resulting in higher export shares for beef, pork, broilers and turkey. USDA's estimated export shares (percent) for 2015 and 2016, respectively, are 9.6 and 10.1 for beef; 20.2 and 20.4 for pork; 15.8 and 16.4 for broilers; and 9.5 and 10.9 for turkey. In contrast, dairy's export share (skim solids milk equivalent) will drop from 18 percent in 2015 to 17 percent.

Record canola meal imports pressure soybean prices

Since the beginning of the 2015/16 marketing year, nearby soybean futures have generally traded in a sideways pattern – mostly between \$8.60 and \$9.00. But soybean meal and soybean oil futures have trended strongly – albeit in opposite directions. The nearby soybean oil futures price has risen about 24 percent since early September, but the nearby soybean meal futures value has dropped about 14 percent. In the March Oil Crops Outlook, USDA economists explain that U.S. domestic soybean crushing has been constrained by greater substitution of U.S. soybean meal with imported protein meals, particularly from Canada. Processors in Canada benefit from a weaker Canadian Dollar and the availability of a record-large Canadian soybean crop. Domestic use of soybean meal in the U.S. is forecast at 33.3 million tons, while imports are only expected to be 375,000 tons. The real competition from Canada comes from imported canola meal. USDA raised its U.S. import forecast by 200,000 tons to a record 4.20 million tons; through January, U.S. imports had already surged 13 percent ahead of the 2014/15 record pace. This has applied pressure to soybean meal prices; the average price dropped from \$280 per ton in January to a February average of \$274 – an 8-year low. USDA lowered its forecast of the 2015/16 average price to \$270-\$300 per ton (High-protein, FOB Decatur, IL). This compares to \$368 for 2014/15 and \$490 in 2013/14. The U.S. also faces competition from record soybean exports from Brazil and record-large soybean crush in Argentina.

Kentucky's 2015 crop values mostly lower

Four of the five principal crops produced in Kentucky experienced decreases in value for the 2015 crop year compared to the 2014 crop year, according to USDA-NASS's Kentucky Field Office. All hay was the only crop which increased in value – going from \$508 million in 2014 to \$680 million for the 2015 crop. The 34 percent increase in value resulted from a 12 percent increase in the average price, from \$120.00 per ton to \$134.00 per ton, and a 20 percent jump in production. Corn remained the highest valued crop for Kentucky at \$856 million, a decline of nearly four percent from the previous year. The average price dropped 3.5 percent to \$3.80 per bushel. In second place, soybeans were valued at \$816 million, down more than six percent from 2014's \$872 million. The average price dropped \$1.30, or 12.4 percent, to \$9.20 per bushel. All tobacco ranked fourth in value. Although the average price increased 2.4 percent to \$2.14 per pound, the value of the 2015 tobacco crop dropped 28 percent to \$321 million. The 2015 wheat crop was smaller than 2014's and the average price of \$5.35 per bushel was nearly five percent less, resulting in a crop value of \$172 million, down almost 16 percent from the 2014 crop. The combined value of these 2015 crops was \$2.85 billion, down from the prior year's \$2.92 billion.



Farm Bureau Files Statement on FY 17 Agriculture Appropriations

A **FBF** submitted a statement for the record to the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture regarding agricultural appropriations for fiscal year 2017. The statement outlines several areas for funding, including opposition to reopening the 2014 farm bill; programs that promote biotechnology and animal health; research priorities; programs that expand international

markets and safeguard U.S. agriculture; programs that enhance and improve food safety and protection; programs that ensure crop protection tools; programs that strengthen rural communities and rural housing; programs that support wildlife services; and programs that encourage renewable energy.

The agriculture appropriations bill provides funding for a wide array of federal programs, mostly within the

Agriculture Department. These programs include: agricultural research; education and Extension activities; natural resources conservation programs; food safety, marketing and inspection activities; rural economic and community development activities; telecommunications and electrification assistance; and various export and international activities conducted by the agency.

My American Farm Outreach Grants Launched

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture has launched this year's My American Farm Outreach Grant Program. Middle- and high-school students who are interested in using My American Farm resources to reach out to elementary school students about why agriculture is important in everyone's life are encouraged to participate.

The resources found online at <http://myamericanfarm.org/> will provide middle- and high-school students with appropriate tools to share the messages that agriculture is everywhere, there are many careers in agriculture, and farmers feed the world, care for animals and are stewards of the land. The outreach events should utilize at least one My American Farm interactive game, one lesson plan and one video from the set of available

resources. Classrooms also are encouraged to bring in a community/industry representative to share about how agriculture affects their everyday lives.

Upon completion of outreach events, 10 selected classrooms will receive \$1,500 to use for further agricultural literacy efforts. Applications are available online at <http://www.agfoundation.org/projects/2016-my-american-farm-outreach>.

The My American Farm educational resource is a special project of the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. The site and resources are made possible through the generous support of title sponsor, DuPont Pioneer. To take advantage of the free My American Farm resources, games and activities, visit <http://myamericanfarm.org/>.

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County Corner

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities

BARREN COUNTY

Barren County Farm Bureau held a Legislative Appreciation Dinner and hosted the 23rd District State Representative candidates on February 26 in Glasgow. Front row pictured left to right are candidates Steve Riley, Joe Trigg, Danny Basil and Freddie Joe Wilkerson. Back row



pictured left to right are Brad Bailey, Barren County Farm Bureau Director, State Senator David Givens, Mark Lord with Congressman Brett Guthrie's office and Jay Coleman, President Barren County Farm Bureau.

FLOYD COUNTY

Sherry Akers, Clair Friar, and Christa Akers distributed bread at a Floyd County grocery store during Food Check-Out Week.



MASON COUNTY

Mason Farm Bureau set up a booth highlighting member benefits during the Farm Family Night event held at Maysville Community College. There were 850 people from all over the region in attendance.



LAWRENCE COUNTY

Lawrence County ANR agent partners with KFB to celebrate National Ag Week in Lawrence Co 2nd grade.



ANDERSON COUNTY

Anderson County Farm Bureaus Women's Committee presented the county judge executive and Lawrenceburg's mayor with a basket of Kentucky Proud foods to mark Food Check-Out Week.



BUTLER COUNTY

Butler County Farm Bureau bus trip to the National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville.



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KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU



The Kentucky Farm Bureau Minute

In telling the story of Kentucky agriculture and Kentucky Farm Bureau, KFB's Matt Hilton and Bob Shrader have created "The Kentucky Farm Bureau Minute," a weekly one minute video showcasing the many activities in which KFB is involved and the latest in agricultural happenings from across the state.

A new "Minute" is aired each Monday highlighting recent and future events, programs and member benefits, KFB priorities, unique people and places, and issues related to rural communities.

Hilton said this format reaches anyone who has access to a computer, smart phone or any social media connection.

"Every week we feature something different, whether it's related to an issue in Frankfort or a farm in Franklin," he said. "And we try to do it in a way that everyone has access to it. The videos are featured on our social media outlets including Facebook and Twitter, as well as through a vast email directory."

The videos are also placed on the KFB website.

"I think we have discovered a great way to keep our members informed and tell our story to scores of Kentuckians, as well as anyone in the world with Wi-Fi accessibility," said Shrader. "As the methods by which we obtain our information have changed, I think the "Minute" is a timely and efficient way to keep up with those technological advances."

"The Kentucky Farm Bureau Minute" can be view at: facebook.com/kyfarm-bureau; youtube.com/kentuckyfarm-bureau; twitter.com/KYFB.

To be added to the email directory, send your contact information to minute@kyfb.com.

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Eastern tent caterpillar egg hatch was reported in Scott County

This year's first observed hatch is seven days earlier than 2015, reflecting the warm spring temperatures," said Lee Townsend, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment extension entomologist. "The hatch is not synchronized; tiny larvae will continue to emerge over the next two weeks from eggs laid last summer on wild cherry, flowering cherry, apple and related trees. This is a hardy insect so predicted low temperatures in the 30-degree Fahrenheit range late this week should not affect their survival."

Eastern tent caterpillars spend the winter as tiny, fully developed insects in distinctive egg masses that encircle twigs of wild cherry and related trees. It is one of the first insect species to become active in the spring and is well adapted to survive Kentucky's erratic winter and early spring weather.

Populations of eastern tent caterpillars have been increasing steadily over the past four to five years.

This trend is likely to continue, producing locally high numbers in some areas, Townsend said. The rise in numbers is normal and mirrors the cyclical aspects of insect populations in general. Eastern tent caterpillar cycles are roughly 10 years in length. After two or three high years, the numbers usually drop again due to diseases or natural enemies.

When mature, the large, hairy caterpillars wander from their developmental sites along fence lines. Consumption of large numbers of caterpillars by pregnant mares precipitated staggering foal losses in the Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome outbreak of 1999-2001. MRLS can cause late-term foal losses, early- and late-term fetal losses and weak foals. UK researchers conducted studies that revealed horses will inadvertently eat the caterpillars, and the caterpillar hairs embed into the lining of the horse's alimentary tract. Once that protective barrier is breached, normal alimentary tract bacteria may gain access to and reproduce in sites with reduced immunity, such as the fetus

and placenta.

Townsend said horse owners and farm managers with pregnant mares should begin to monitor fence lines containing wild cherry and other host trees in about 10 days. They should look for small tents produced by developing caterpillars.

If practical, farm managers should plan to move pregnant mares from areas where these trees are abundant to minimize the chance of caterpillar exposure. The threat is greatest when the mature tent caterpillars leave trees and wander to find places to pupate and transform to the moth stage.

Eastern tent caterpillars are also a significant nuisance to people living near heavily infested trees. The caterpillars may wander hundreds of yards in

search of protected sites to spin cocoons and pupate.

To get rid of active caterpillars, Townsend recommends pruning them out and destroying the nests if practical. Farm managers can use any one of several biorational insecticides registered for use on shade trees as needed. Spot treatments to the tents and the foliage around them can be applied according to label directions, which vary by product.

For more information about how to assess trees for egg masses, the UK Entomology publication, Checking Eastern Tent Caterpillar Egg Masses is available at <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef449>

— Courtesy UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

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