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KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU NEWS

Volume 15 • No. 1

February 2016

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Cover photo by Tim Thornberry

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While winter may seem to be a slow time for the agriculture industry, producers know it presents an opportunity to renew and prepare for the coming growing season. For Kentucky Farm Bureau, it's a time to be involved in policy issues taking place at the state and national levels.

Kentucky's General Assembly is in full swing and we are watching closely the activity connected with policy issues brought forth during our December annual meeting. This is a budget year and many of our policy issues are directly related to the budget.

At the top of the list is the assurance that 50 percent of the Master Settlement Agreement revenue continues to go to the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund (KADF).

We have seen the benefits this funding has made in the diversification efforts of the state agriculture industry. Late last year, the University of Kentucky released the findings of a study that estimated \$2.03 in farm income was generated for every dollar invested in KADF projects.

More specifically, the study found that the \$198 million invested in programs and projects from 2007 through 2014 resulted in 465 products being created and the creation or expansion of 77 markets. Also, the investment of \$42 million in state and county projects resulted in an estimated \$86 million in additional farm income and approximately 708 new jobs were created by the board's investments.

It's not difficult to see what positive effects those investments have made and will continue to make in the future. Now, more than ever, those dollars are critical to the well-being of Kentucky's agriculture communities at a time when net farm income has fallen.

Other policy issues include ensuring the Kentucky Department of Agriculture is adequately funded and the securing of funds for the Grain Center of Excellence at Princeton.

One very important issue we will address from both a state and national perspective is about water. We have adopted policy that will help address the water needs of agriculture over the long term and will watch closely how proposed EPA regulations overseeing Waters of the U.S. plays out at the federal level.

Leading the charge for national policy will be the newly elected American Farm Bureau President Vincent "Zippy" Duvall. It is important to show him our support as we move forward on issues that will affect every farm and ranch in the country and that he understands the issues faced by Kentucky producers.

It's also important to have our voices heard in Frankfort as this session moves forward and as we look toward a presidential election this fall. Of all the uncertainty we see in the world, one thing is for sure, Kentucky Farm Bureau will continue to serve as the "voice of agriculture" and strongly support all that is in the best interest of our members.



Mark Haney
President
Kentucky Farm Bureau

District Meeting Schedule

| | | | |
|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| District 1 | March 17 | 7:00 p.m. | McCracken County FB |
| District 2 | March 1 | 6:30 p.m. | Ballard Convention Center |
| District 3 | March 24 | 6:30 p.m. | Rough River Dam State Resort Park |
| District 4 | March 28 | 6:30 p.m. | Barren River State Park Lodge |
| District 5 | March 17 | 7:00 p.m. | Woodford Co Extension Office |
| District 6 | March 14 | 7:00 p.m. | General Butler State Park |
| District 7 | March 21 | 7:00 p.m. | Aspire Center |
| District 8 | March 7 | 7:00 p.m. | Madison County FB |
| District 9 | March 15 | 6:30 p.m. | Blue Licks State Park |
| District 10 | March 14 | 6:30 p.m. | Wolfe Co Extension Office |
| District 11 | March 10 | 6:00 p.m. | Pine Mountain Grill |

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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

Being the Commissioner of Agriculture for Kentucky has been a childhood dream of mine, and it is a great honor and privilege to serve as your next Commissioner. Having grown up on a farm, I understand the challenges and struggles that we will face as a community in the coming years. As your Commissioner, I am committed to facing these challenges head-on and running a Department of Agriculture that is efficient, transparent, and one that will make all Kentuckians proud.



My transition team and I are building an experienced and dedicated team at the Department. I am especially excited about our new chief of staff, Keith Rogers. Keith is an exceptionally talented individual who has decades of experience in both state and national agricultural affairs. From heading the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy to his recent stint as executive director of the Kentucky 4-H Foundation, Keith is uniquely qualified to lead our team in advancing the interests of Kentucky agriculture. I'm proud to have him on board.

Just as previous commissioners have emphasized, the Department of Agriculture will be a vocal advocate for Kentucky farm products. From hemp to horses, Kentucky has a proud agricultural tradition. We will continue to highlight not only our state's agricultural products but also the economic impact agriculture and agribusiness have on the Commonwealth.

In the coming weeks and months, we will introduce and implement an agenda for the Department that focuses on growing our markets and consumer base for all products. Our plan will continue to ensure a safe and reliable food supply that Kentuckians and people across the nation have come to expect from us. And on a more basic level, we hope to educate Kentuckians on how food travels from your farm gate to their dinner plate. It is important we communicate the positive narrative of our industry.

We are excited to begin working on improving the lives of all farmers across Kentucky. Whether that entails maintaining safety standards or serving as Kentucky agriculture's biggest cheerleader, our department is here to help.

We look forward to working with all of you over the coming years, and please know that our door is always open. We all have the same goal: to make Kentucky agriculture the finest industry in our state. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any ideas you may have to accomplish our mission. Happy New Year, and may 2016 be a prosperous year for Kentucky agriculture.

Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles

Kentucky delegates help set national agricultural priorities at American Farm Bureau Federation annual convention



Voting delegates from Kentucky and other Farm Bureaus around the country weighed in on the nation's top agricultural issues and identified priority topics for 2016 at the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) 97th annual convention held in Orlando, Florida.

Kentucky Farm Bureau's (KFB) 24 voting delegates represented Bluegrass State farmers as the AFBF 2016 national ag policies were adopted.

Kentucky's national priority issues, developed at its own annual meeting last month, included federal crop insurance programs being maintained at current levels; opposition to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) exceeding legislative authority in the implementation of the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act programs; support of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) providing technical assistance for the development of additional water resources for irrigation and livestock use; and support reform of the H-2A program to streamline the process making it more reliable, economical and simple for farmers to participate.

"Setting policy is the number one pri-

Members of the Kentucky Farm Bureau Executive Committee – KFB President Mark Haney (left), KFB First Vice President Eddie Melton (center) and KFB Second Vice President Fritz Giesecke (right) – prepare to vote on the American Farm Bureau Federation's 2016 policies and priorities during the 97th AFBF annual convention in Orlando, Fla.



Vincent "Zippy" Duvall

ority at the AFBF annual convention each year," said KFB President Mark Haney, of Pulaski County, who heads the delegation from Kentucky. "Through policy development sessions, we have the

opportunity to shape and influence how agriculture will be viewed in Washington, D.C., in 2016. It is crucial for Kentucky's farming interests to be well-represented in those discussions, and extremely satisfying to return home knowing we have accomplished that goal."

KFB's volunteer leaders will also take their list of national priority issues to Washington, D.C., later this month for one-on-one meetings with each of Kentucky's congressmen and both senators.

AFBF President Bob Stallman, speaking at his final annual convention as head of the organization, urged members to share their stories with the world, on social media and elsewhere.

"You know, we farmers used to complain that no one paid any attention to what we did—that people thought their food just came from the grocery store—and that we in agriculture didn't have enough ways to get our message heard," he said. "Well, people are sure paying attention to farming and food production now! And in this age of social media, we no longer have to depend on others to tell our story for us. We have unlimited opportunities to engage—

one-on-one or with thousands of followers—and have real conversations about agriculture.”

With Stallman’s departure, delegates selected a new president and vice president to lead AFBF. Vincent “Zippy” Duvall, a poultry, cattle and hay producer from Greene County, Georgia was elected to a two-year term. He previously served as president of the Georgia Farm Bureau for nine years. Scott VanderWal, a third-generation family farmer from Volga, South Dakota will serve as vice president. He has served as president of the South Dakota Farm Bureau since 2004.

“Mr. Duvall and I have been friends for many years and I feel confident he will make an outstanding leader for AFBF in guiding our organization’s support of national agricultural issues,” said Haney. “He will also be in tune to what the issues are at home, something that is very important to Kentucky agriculture.”

In addition to the state’s voting delegates who participated in leadership elections and helped establish AFBF’s 2016 national priority issues, nearly 400 KFB members traveled to Orlando to participate in a variety of industry-based seminars and support Kentucky’s representatives competing for national recognition in a variety of contests. Altogether, more than 6,000 Farm Bureau members from across the country attended the AFBF annual convention.

Highlights from the Kentucky delegation include:

Scott and Shea Lowe were Kentucky’s representatives in the Young Farmer & Rancher Achievement Award competition. This award recognizes young farmers and ranchers who have excelled in their farming or ranching operations and exhibited superior leadership abilities. Participants were evaluated on a combination of their farm’s overall growth and financial progress, and their demonstration of leadership skills within and outside of Farm Bureau. The Lowe’s were top 10 finishers.

Cameron Edwards of Webster County represented Kentucky in the Young Farmer & Rancher Excellence in Agriculture contest. This award recognizes young farmers and ranchers who do not derive the majority of their income from an agricultural operation, but who actively contribute and grow through their involvement in agricul-

ture and enhance their leadership abilities through participation in Farm Bureau and other similar organizations.

Randy Adams of Anderson County represented the state in the Young Farmer & Rancher Discussion Meet. This competition simulates a committee meeting in which active discussion and participation are expected. Participants were evaluated on their ability to effectively and persuasively exchange ideas and information.

KFB was honored with an array of honors during the convention including six Awards of Excellence for demonstrating outstanding achievements in meeting its members’ needs in each of the following categories: Education and

Outreach; Leadership Development; Member Services; Membership Initiatives; Policy Development and Implementation; and Public Relations and Communications.

KFB was also honored with the 2016 American Farm Bureau New Horizon Award for its efforts in getting a federal statewide depredation permit allowing farmers to take black vultures that were attacking on-farm livestock.

Additionally, the organization received a President’s Award for Policy Development and Implementation, presented to states for each membership-sized group that achieved quota and demonstrated superiority in the Awards for Excellence categories.

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Kentucky Farm Bureau wins American Farm Bureau New Horizon Award for helping farmers protect livestock from black vulture attacks



The Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) won the 2016 American Farm Bureau New Horizon Award for its efforts in helping Kentucky farmers protect livestock from black vulture attacks.

Livestock losses due to black vulture depredation has become a very serious issue in Kentucky as the cattle industry here has grown to be the largest of any state east of the Mississippi.

Last year Kentucky livestock producers lost nearly 200 calves and cows to black vulture attacks – almost triple the number from 2013.

Kentucky Farm Bureau applied for, and received, a federal statewide depredation permit allowing farmers to take black vultures that were attacking on-farm livestock.

KFB President Mark Haney accepted the award on behalf of the organization and said, “We are grateful the American Farm Bureau recognized the importance of this program. Kentucky Farm Bureau has once again found another

Kentucky Farm Bureau President Mark Haney, left, received the American Farm Bureau Foundation (AFBF) New Horizon Award for its efforts in helping Kentucky farmers protect livestock from black vulture attacks. Presenting the award was outgoing AFBF outgoing President Bob Stallman.

innovative way to work with legislators and government agencies to accomplish our mission: identify problems, develop solutions, and improve net farm income.”

The program is administered by KFB which is the only non-government entity that has been approved by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services (USFWS) for a black vulture depredation permit.

KFB was successful this past year in getting USFWS to grant a statewide black vulture depredation permit originally allowing for 350 takes and affording producers experiencing depredation the opportunity to apply for a Livestock Protection Depredation Sub-Permit at no cost. In addition, an amended permit was recently issued allowing an additional 350 takes for a total of 700.

Applicants agree to follow all rules and regulations required by USFWS in the original statewide depredation permit, including: use of non-lethal measures to try and deter black vulture depredation, use of shotguns and steel shot in the lethal taking of depredating black vultures, the reporting of takes on a monthly basis, and the use of black vulture carcasses as effigies in areas where depredation is occurring. Black vulture lethal takes are approved only in areas where livestock is threatened and depredation is occurring.

This program represents an important step forward in protecting Kentucky’s livestock population. The economic impact of this program is huge for farmers and consumers alike.

“A black buzzard will not feed a hungry child,” said Randy Chrisman, KFB board member and cattle producer. “In fact, black buzzards make it even harder for me to feed that child necessary protein at a price their family can afford.”

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In early 1809, Thomas Lincoln bought a 300-acre farm near Hodgenville, KY at Nolin Creek in Larue County. The property was named Sinking Spring Farm for the “magnificent spring that bubbled from the bottom of a deep cave.” On February 12, 1809 Abraham Lincoln was born.

About the same time, Gideon Ragland acquired his original property in Larue County.

In 1811 Thomas Lincoln and his family moved to Knob Creek Farm, about 10 miles northeast of the Sinking Spring Farm. Abraham Lincoln was later to reflect “my earliest memories are of the Knob Creek place.”

In December 1816, the Lincolns moved north, settling in the Little Pigeon Creek Community in what was then Perry County and is now Spencer County, Indiana.

The Raglands remained in Larue County. Today, nine generations later, three generations of Raglands still farm in the area.

Family farms and sustainability are two of the most highly valued attributes of contemporary agriculture and the Raglands

A statue of Abraham Lincoln sits in Hodgenville’s town square in recognition of the Larue County being his birthplace.

exemplify both, although perhaps not in the romanticized fashion that some might expect.

Caleb Ragland and his wife LeAnne are the most recent generation to participate in the operation, which consists of some 4,500 acres of row crops. “We produce corn and winter wheat, then double-crop soybeans after our wheat,” Caleb explains. “We’re using the winter wheat to, hopefully, improve soil health and reduce erosion on some of the more rolling acreage.”

Ragland continues, “As farmers, we care more about the land than anybody else really can, in my opinion. We’re dependent on it for our livelihood and we’re doing all we can, not only to maintain fertility and conserve topsoil, so that the land is more productive for us and for future generations.”

Currently, those future generations are represented by the

Lincoln's Neighbors

By Ray Bowman

couple's three sons; Charlie, Corey and Carter.

"We grow two to three hundred acres of corn each year with no commercial fertilizer," Caleb beams. "We feed corn to our pigs, the pigs make manure, the manure fertilizes the corn and we feed the corn to the pigs as the process starts all over again."

The pigs currently number about three thousand sows managed in a housing system that protects the animals from extreme weather and limits exposure to disease-causing pathogens through a stringent biosecurity protocol. The result is some 75,000 piglets produced each year.

Those numbers probably catch the attention of detractors that quickly label it a "factory farm" operation. Ragland quickly points out that the enterprise is run completely by family, whether immediate or extended. Caleb's father David and one of his brothers work with him day to day and occasionally grandfather Howard still climbs aboard a tractor to lend a hand. The family extension includes more than a dozen neighbors hired from the community to keep things running smoothly.

For the last four years, the Raglands have joined LaRue County's Farm Bureau and the rest of the county's agriculture community to hold the AGstravaganza showcase.

Both Caleb and LeAnne quickly recognize the necessity for transparency and outreach to a consumer base that has limited exposure to the process of food production.

"It was an adjustment moving out to the country because I grew up in a neighborhood in Florida with houses all around," LeAnne acknowledges. "I've grown to like it here and feel a little claustrophobic now when I go back to the city."

Given her experiences, LeAnne has taken on an advocacy role to help bridge the gap. "I feel like I have that connection with people who are still in the city," she says. "I'm trying to reach that group in the 'moveable middle' that may not understand what we're doing and trying to open conversations."

Caleb and LeAnne serve on Kentucky Farm Bureau's Young Farmer committee and Caleb is a producer director for the Kentucky Soybean Board's Central Bluegrass Area.



The Ragland Family

KFB Ag Facts

Kentucky's swine industry is a significant component of state ag sector



While the swine industry represents a small percentage of the overall agricultural cash receipts in the state, the number is still significant. The University of Kentucky College of Agriculture estimates 2015 totals to reach \$129 million.

Of the top five swine producing counties in Kentucky, two of those are located in Congressman Brett Guthrie's (KY-02) district. He said the revenue hog operations produce is significant to the rural communities in which they are located.

"My district has a rich agricultural history and is home to top swine-producing counties, including Warren and Nelson counties that contribute greatly to our agriculture industry and local economy," he said. "These operations are generating revenue that not only benefit farmers, but also businesses and organizations in Kentucky's second district."

Dr. Dennis Liptrap, board president

Kentucky ranks 21st nationally in swine production and there are more than 1,200 farms in the state with hogs and pigs.

of the Kentucky Pork Producers (KPP) said, while there is sustainability and growth among larger producers, the smaller operations are also seeing their numbers expand.

"I see a lot of growth in smaller producers who are marketing directly to consumers," he said. "That side of the industry is finding resurgence and growth which is good to see because we see young people entering the business."

Much of that smaller direct market surge can be attributed to the local food movement seen here and across the country, noted Liptrap.

As for commercial growers, Liptrap said many are building new structures and adding sows to their operations as that segment of the industry continues its expansion.

He also said that as the industry has grown it has become more efficient from a production standpoint as well as an environmental perspective.

"All Kentucky swine producers are regulated from an animal waste standpoint at standards more stringent than those at the federal level," he said. "They're also more efficient. We're producing a pound of pork with less inputs and a smaller carbon footprint on the overall environment."

As with many forms of agriculture, educating a public that is becoming more and more generationally removed from the farm is an important task of the KPP.

"We represent pork producers but we also strive to be a source of information for the general public," he said. "Even if they are only one generation away from the farm, today's operations are much different than in the old days."


Using that efficiency pork producers have obtained is key as farmers work to meet a growing challenge of feeding an ever increasing world population, emphasized Liptrap; something that will lend itself to more growth in the industry. In addition to it being a very lean form of meat, Liptrap pointed out it is a good buy in the grocery store.

He added, it's reasonable to think there will be continued positive growth in the swine industry, one that is dominated by family owned and operated entities.

"I think that is one of the unique things about Kentucky in that even our large producers are still family operations, owned by Kentucky folks that were born and raised right here," he said.

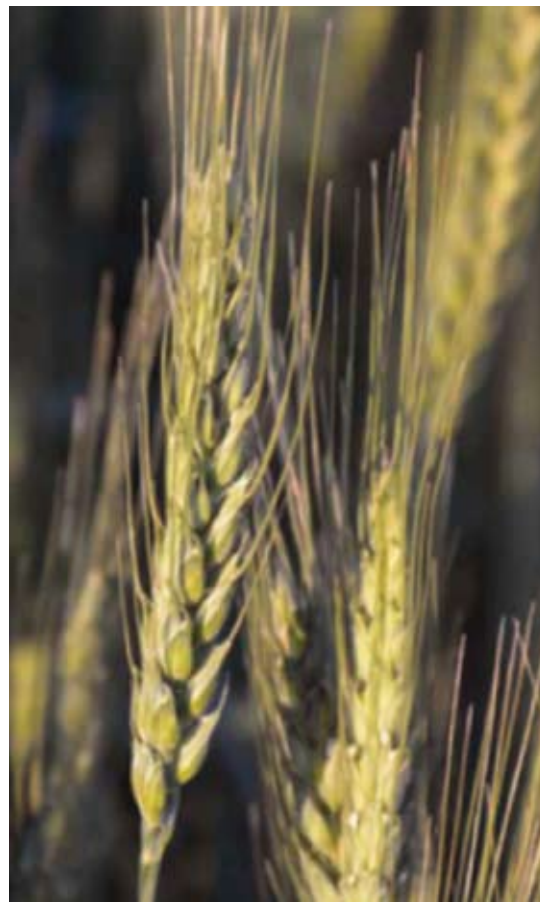


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Technology on the Farm

While there are some methods of farming that have changed little over the years, such as in tobacco production, there is no doubt advanced technology is changing the way producers grow their crops even in those Kentucky tobacco fields.

Whether it's through the use of modern equipment or plant genetics, farmers are more productive than ever and are gathering a toolbox full of new technology tools to help them in their efforts to be as successful as possible.

Kevin Jeffries, along with his brother-in-law Mike McCall and nephew David McCall, operate Grand Meadow Farms, a grain and cattle operation in Oldham County. He has found a great use for unmanned aerial devices better known as drones.

"We became interested in this type of technology about two years ago and now use them extensively," Jeffries said. "For instance, in the spring, when we are planting, we use one to fly over the fields to look for problems."

He noted that the drones can detect an issue that might not have otherwise been noticed, something that can help prevent yield loss later in the year.

"In agriculture, the infrared spectrum available on certain cameras is very important because you can see the different color reflections off the crop and that will tell things like if there is a nitrogen problem or if phosphorus and potassium levels are not right," said Jeffries.

Spotting those color shifts within the crop is just one example of what some of the drone technology brings to producers; something not visible with the naked eye.

Jeffries pointed out that many problems visible through aerial detection may have gone un-noticed even by walking the field.

Another use of the drones, for Jeffries, has been to check for crop damage caused by wildlife.

"We discovered some areas that needed replanting this season because we found deer damage in some of our soybeans," he said.

While some of the drones available on



the market can be costly, Jeffries said their use can make an operation more cost effective in finding issues before they cost the producer money.

Drones, while getting much of the marketing attention, aren't the only forms of high-tech devices being used by farmers. According to information provided by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), "precision agriculture technologies" are used by about 60 percent of U.S. farmers and ranchers.

"GPS and auto-steer guidance systems are two types of precision agriculture used to increase crop yields, lower costs and reduce chemical use, which benefits the environment," noted AFBF. "The two types of technology work together, helping farmers identify precisely where to plant seeds (and how many) and if needed, apply variable rates of pesticides and fertilizer."

Kevin Jeffries operates the drone he uses as part of the day to day operations for Grand Meadow Farms.

And it appears the surface is just being scratched as new technology emerges constantly.

Drone use, for example, is growing and new models can do more and more. Last year, federal approval from the FAA came for a particular drone model capable of carrying payloads such as fertilizer. Crop spraying by way of aerial systems has been used in other countries such as Japan but this action marked the first for the U.S. Proponents have long contended that this type of fertilizer or pesticide application is more cost effective and precise from a logistics standpoint.

Jeffries, who currently serves as vice-president of Oldham County Farm Bureau, said aerial applications of fertil-

izers or pesticides from drones would greatly benefit farms which are located near more urban areas. He has spoken to many groups about the use of this technology including participation in a panel discussion at the 2014 Farm Bureau Annual Meeting.

Jeffries acknowledged that while multiple producers have invested in this type of technology, many have been waiting to see what further action or

regulations would be taken by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regarding drone use.

The FAA has set forth its first announcement of regulations that pertain to drones. The agency announced, “a streamlined and user-friendly web-based aircraft registration process for owners of small unmanned aircraft weighing more than 0.55 pounds (250 grams) and less than 55 pounds (approx.

25 kilograms) including payloads such as on-board cameras.”

“You have to be safe with these and avoid other aircraft and areas that prohibit their use but for use on the farm, this and other types of advanced technology could prove to be a milestone in agriculture production,” Jeffries said. “We are always trying to become more efficient and this technology will allow us to be just that.”

NFMS — Getting an up-close look at ag technology



For those “ag-techies” out there looking for a chance to see the latest and greatest in on-farm technology, the National Farm Machinery Show is likely the biggest display of new equipment in the country and the best place to see all that’s new under one roof.

This year marks the 51st year for NFMS, which is coming off a record setting year in attendance as more than 310,000 people made their way to the event in 2015.

This year, expectations are for more of the same as some of the newest technology for the farm will be on display from the more than 850 exhibitors.

“One of the greatest things about the NFMS is getting a close-up look at all the latest and greatest farm equipment on

the market,” said Steve Kelly, Executive Director of Expositions for the Kentucky State Fair Board. “There is always something new, technology-wise, each year.”

Much of that technology is packed inside new design combines and tractors, which will be out in full-force this year, but at a time when budgets are tight, technology advances don’t necessarily have to cost a fortune.

Kelly noted using advanced technology on the farm doesn’t necessarily have to be expensive.

New computer programs are being developed much more frequently today, which do everything from making record keeping easier to allowing farmers to see problems in fields without ever leaving the barn.

“Small, inexpensive drones are a good

example of how farmers are now watching for potential problems in the field that could affect yields at harvest time,” he said. “And before this technology, many of those issues weren’t detected until it was too late. In essence, these investments will pay for themselves, in many cases, the first growing season.”

Kelly also pointed out that while it is nice to experience all of the “big, new” equipment on display at the NFMS, many producers will benefit from the many seminars that are held during the event.

“Many of those learning opportunities deal with technology advances that farmers already have including home computers and smart phones,” he said.

This year’s NFMS runs February 10-13, 2016 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville.



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County Corner

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities

GREEN COUNTY

Green County Farm Bureau held a Member Appreciation Day on September 24 at the Green County Farm Bureau office in Greensburg. Pictured from left to right Amy Curry- Green County Farm Bureau CSR, Kristy Jewell- Green County Farm Bureau CSR Mike



Lee with Avizion Tammy Davis- Green County Farm Bureau CSR, Federation Secretary Mitchell Wright - Green County Farm Bureau Agent Kevin Rigdon- Green County Farm Bureau Agency Manager Larry Clark- Green County Farm Bureau President Mark Haney- Ky Farm Bureau President Fritz Giesecke- Ky Farm Bureau Second Vice President Tia Whelan- Ky Farm Bureau Insurance AUS Representative Chris French- Ky Farm Bureau Insurance, Agency Support and Marketing Manager Dwight Greenwell, Ky Farm Bureau Federation, Director of Member Services.

FAYETTE COUNTY

The Fayette co Farm Bureau and guests visited with President Mark Haney at Haney's Appledale Farm on 11-1-15.



SHELBY COUNTY

Ferenc Vegh (Shelby County Farm Bureau agent) speaking at Shelby County Farm City banquet.



PIKE COUNTY

Chair women, Sharon Slone, (left), and Marquette McClanahan, (right) and Allison Childers, (center) with Mayflower Unity Baptist Church, accepting donation of \$200.00 from Pike County Farm Bureau for the church's Back Pack program. The program provides non-perishable food to local students to ensure they will have nutritional food to eat on weekends. Just one more way that Pike Co. Farm Bureau is supporting the needs of the people in our area.



WARREN COUNTY

At the Warren County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting on September 19 at South Warren High School in Bowling Green the County Outstanding Youth and Variety contest participants posed for a picture.



KENTON COUNTY

Kenton County has FFA members of Simon Kenton HS come and participate with their annual meeting. Here is the FFA with the Kenton Co board.





The Annual Muhlenberg County Farm Bureau Ag Day

For nearly two decades 6th grade students in Muhlenberg County have gotten a close-up look at the world of agriculture and some of its many career opportunities by way of the annual Muhlenberg County Farm Bureau Ag Day.

This year, approximately 400 students made their way to the Muhlenberg County Agriculture and Convention Center to take part in the activities. During the course of the event, students were led through a series of 16 different stations to learn about a variety of subjects including poultry production, equine care and what it takes financially to operate a farm, to name a few.

Mark Haney, President of Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) addressed the students before they began their activities. He told them there were many things they could relate to, like a birthday cake, that have a direct relationship to

agriculture.

“Most of the ingredients that go into making a birthday cake come from agriculture production,” said Haney. “It’s important to know that in order to begin to get an understanding of how vital agriculture is to each of us whether we live on a farm or not.”

Mary Kate Kordes, who serves as the Muhlenberg County Farm Bureau Women’s Chair as well as a director on the KFB Board, said the event has helped to introduce the ag industry to scores of young people who might not have otherwise had that opportunity.

“Ag Day serves the students in multiple ways including showcasing agricultural career opportunities in our county and teaching a generation who may not have been associated with agriculture, what farming is really all about,” she said. “This event also presents a learning environment the children seem to

really enjoy and if they are having fun while learning, I think this experience will be something they will always remember.”

Kordes added that the volunteers who come to share their experiences with the students are invaluable in making each Ag Day a success.

Kelly Melton, the curriculum specialist for Muhlenberg North and South Middle Schools, said students at the middle school level don’t always have an opportunity to participate in an ag related project or program so this event reaches that specific group at an opportune time.

“It’s a good time, at this grade level, to have the students involved in the project because they are going to start talking about careers and thinking about their future,” she said. “Talking about farming and the agriculture industry in Kentucky opens some doors for these youth to



Facing page: Sixth grade students, accompanied by local FFA students, visited a series of learning stations during the Muhlenberg County Ag Day event.

Above: Each learning station focused on different topics ranging from poultry production, equine care and what it takes financially to operate a farm, to name a few.

Right: KFB President Mark Haney spoke to the students about the importance of understanding how agriculture positively affects their lives.



think about their career paths.”

In addition to visiting the different learning stations during Ag Day, the students also got a firsthand look at FFA as local chapter members served as guides who escorted the students from one station to another. The FFA members also answered questions the students had about the organization.

Bailey Peterson, Muhlenberg County High School (MCHS) FFA vice-president and Pennyriple Region reporter got her first glimpse of FFA during her ag day experience a few years ago. After the event, she said she couldn’t wait to be a part of it.

“I thought it was a great experience and I’m really glad Farm Bureau provided us with that,” said Peterson. “I’ve now been involved in Ag Day for three years and I see these young students learning about agriculture in our county and what FFA is all about.”

Peterson grew up on a farm and recently spoke of the experience during the Kentucky Farm Bureau Outstanding Youth competition held during the organization’s annual meeting.

“The students who don’t have a background in agriculture usually don’t understand that farming is so much more than just milking a cow or gathering eggs,” she said. “They actually get a taste of that during Ag Day.”

Jay McElwain, President of Muhlenberg County Farm Bureau, is an ag teacher and FFA advisor at MCHS. He said the whole experience is a win-win situation for both the 6th graders and the high school students.

“The event serves as a huge recruiting tool for FFA because the 6th grade students get to see what their involvement would be like in high school,” he said. “The chapter members share with the younger students what they do as FFA

members including scholarship opportunities.”

McElwain added that being involved in FFA will not only benefit these students who are interested in ag-related careers but, because of the leadership skills they learn, their involvement will serve them well no matter what occupation they choose.

Kordes said the community reaction to Ag Day has always been tremendous noting the positive support that comes not only from the ag community, but from the local education system, as well.

“We are lucky to live in a community that sees the value in agriculture,” she said. “While we may not impact every student that participates, many will use this learning opportunity to become better students, better informed about our local ag industry and, hopefully one day, better community leaders.”

Kentucky hog herd up sharply

Kentucky's breeding and market hog inventories are up sharply from a year ago, according to USDA's December Quarterly Hogs and Pigs Report. The December 1 breeding inventory totaled 43,000 head, up 23 percent from a year earlier. At 372,000 head, Kentucky's market hog inventory was 22 percent larger than was estimated for December 1, 2014. December 1 inventory estimates have not been this large since the year 2001 for breeding stock and 2000 for market hogs. USDA's estimates identify 2011 as the year when December 1 inventories bottomed – 35,000 head of breeding stock and 275,000 head of market hogs. Kentucky's smallest annual pig crop came the following year in 2012 with 662,000 pigs; this compares to 792,000 head produced in 2015, which was ten percent greater than 2014's pig crop. For the year ending December 1, 2015, Kentucky's average number of pigs per litter was 9.78, compared to 10.38 pigs per litter for the United States. Both of these estimates are new record highs; Kentucky's previous record was 9.77 set in 2011.

The U.S. hogs and pigs inventory on December 1, 2015, totaled 68.3 million head. USDA reports this is the largest hog inventory since quarterly estimates began in 1988. The market hog inventory, at 62.3 million head, is also a record high for 1988-2015. U.S. producers set a new record with a quarterly litter rate of 10.53 during September-November 2015.

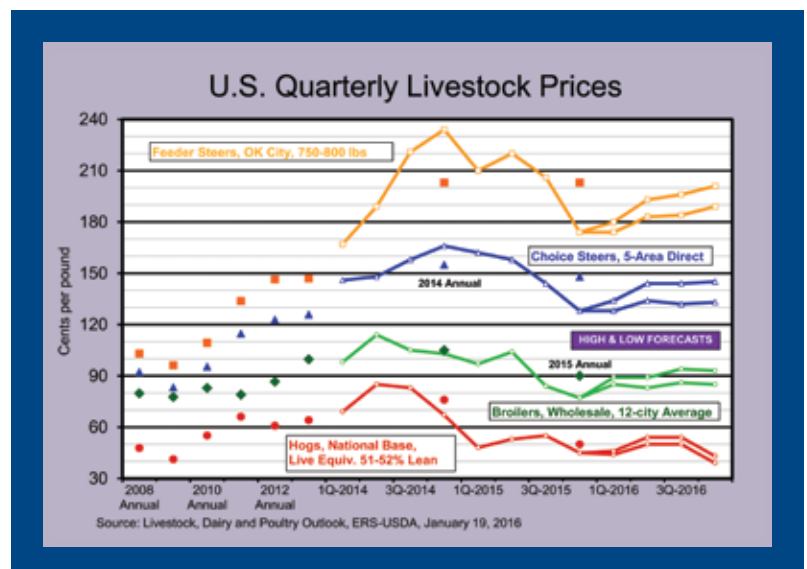
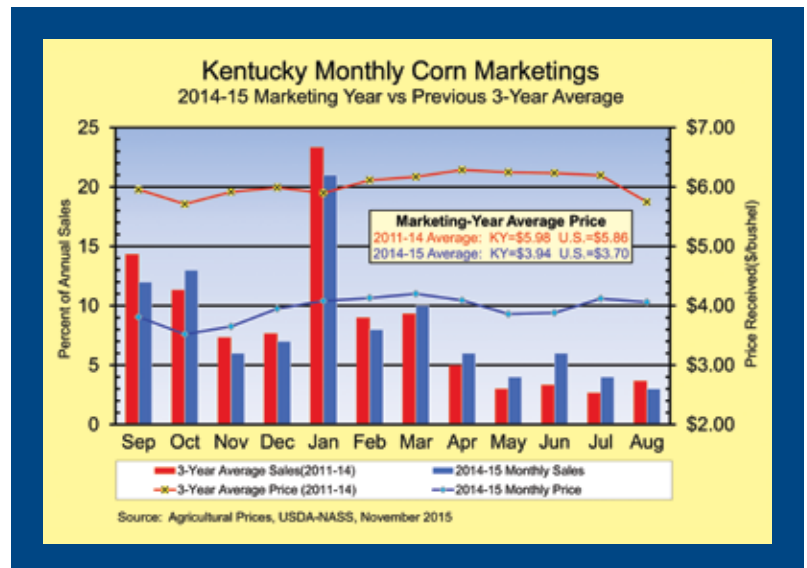
Improving egg supply breaks prices

While table egg production remains below year-ago levels, producers have been taking steps which should lead to expanded output in 2016. Table egg production totaled 6.57 billion eggs in November, down 11 percent from a year earlier. The decrease in production was a combination of a lower number of hens in the table egg flock (down nine percent) and a lower average rate of lay (down two percent) to 23.4 eggs per month. Production of egg-type hatching eggs totaled seven million dozen in November, up six percent from a year earlier. This increase was due to a nine percent increase in the number of hens in the egg-type hatching flock to 3.4 million birds. USDA forecasts egg production will exceed year-earlier levels by the second quarter of 2016. Total 2016 production of 7.04 billion dozen would be four percent greater than last year.

The improving outlook for egg supply pushed prices lower in December and led USDA to lower its 2016 price forecasts significantly. The average wholesale price for 2016 is now forecast at \$1.41-\$1.51 per dozen, a decrease of 12 percent from the previous forecast and down 19 percent from last year's \$1.82. These prices compare to \$1.42 in 2014, \$1.25 in 2013, and \$1.17 in 2013.

Oil value of U.S. soybeans trending higher

Since reaching a low in September, the share of oil's value in soybeans had climbed to near 33 percent in December. While still below the 20-year average of 35 percent, it marks the highest value-share for soybean oil since May 2013, according to USDA. With large soybean stocks available to crush, soybean meal is readily available, albeit at lower prices. The soybean oil price, which reached a 10-year low in late 2015, has begun to rise in conjunction with other vegetable oils. Reduced global supplies of rape and sun oil, along with slower growth in palm oil production, hold the potential for a tighter market and continued price strengthening for all oils. Demand for soybean oil is strong in part due to its relative abundance, the narrowing of its price premium to palm oil, and the increased use in biodiesel. Congress recently restored the \$1.00 per gallon biodiesel blending credit through 2016. USDA forecasts 5.50 billion pounds of soybean oil will be used in domestic biodiesel during the 2015/16 marketing year. This is a nine percent increase over 2014/15 and accounts for 28 percent of total domestic use.



Fourth Quarter Marketbasket Survey

The decline in the costs of food continued its year-long downward pattern as the average price of retail food items across the Commonwealth decreased as indicated by the most recent Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) Federation's Marketbasket Survey.

The survey is taken quarterly and denotes the average total cost of 40 basic grocery items. During the final quarter of 2015, the average price fell 1.8 percent from \$121.64 recorded in the third quarter to \$119.43, an average drop of \$2.21.

This latest decline marks the fourth quarter in a row where retail food prices have fallen in Kentucky.

Overall, the cost of the surveyed items fell \$9.71 or 7.5 percent since the beginning of 2015.

The continued drop in food prices across the state is in contrast to last year's increases that were indicated in all four of the KFB Marketbasket

Surveys. The final quarter of 2014 showed the average price of surveyed items to be \$129.14.

While economists are slow to credit lower food prices with lower commodity prices, KFB Commodity Division Director Joe Cain said it is conceivable to think the two are connected.

"Just as we have seen the decline in oil prices bring prices down at the gas pump, at some point lower commodity prices should show up in the grocery store," he said. "That's good news for consumers but unfortunately that means our farmers are seeing lower revenues."



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Harlan County Farm Bureau Forestry Day

In an effort to teach students the value of Kentucky's vast woodland and forestry industry, Harlan County Farm Bureau (HCFB) implemented a plan last fall to reach all 5th graders in the county through a forestry field day.

HCFB partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Kentucky Division of Forestry, Pine Mountain Settlement School, Corum Tree Farm, and the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association to offer students the opportunity to get an up-close look at forestry during the first ever Harlan County Farm Bureau Forestry Day.

During this field trip, every student experienced hands on educational activities including but not limited to: tree identification, discussion of opportunities in the forest industry, the heritage of the forest, protecting the echo system and how to determine tree values in the estimation of board feet.

The students, working in small groups, spent the first half of the day at Pine Mountain Settlement School and the other half at the Corum Tree Farm. Pine Mountain Settlement School Outdoor Education staff took the students on a tour of the campus woodlands and ended up with sessions in the classroom. During their visit to the tree farm, students were taught forestry management, tree identification, and how to determine tree value in the estimation of board feet.

The farm tour instructors included four professional foresters from the Division of Forestry, five members of the HCFB Board of Directors and three of their Young Farmers.

"Many hours of planning went into developing this program, and many resources were spent over the four days," said HCFB President Don Miniard. "We feel like it was worth the effort taken by all involved in bringing it to fruition and we hope the students will grow up to become strong advocates for forestry programs that help maintain productive sustainable forest resources."



He added that forestry programs help to insure that woodland owners receive fair treatment in the market place and with state and federal governments.

"With forestry programs in place, we can be more effective in dealing with important issues such as property taxes, forest health, government cost-share programs, market news services, insurance and reinvestment of tax dollars in renewable resources," said Miniard.

According to information from the University of Kentucky College (UK) of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Department of Forestry, in 2014, the estimated direct economic impact of Kentucky's forest and wood industry was \$8.3 billion with a total impact of \$12.8 billion.

UK Extension Professor Jeff Stringer said there is an opportunity to make those numbers grow especially in Eastern Kentucky.

"A recent study, that is part of the Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) initiative, specifically found the forestry sector in that region of the state could provide about \$1.5 billion in additional direct economic contributions and result in 7,498 jobs," he said. "If induced and indirect contributions are factored in, the economic contributions could rise as high as an additional \$2.3 billion."

Stringer added that while agriculture and the forestry industry are often viewed as being two separate entities, most of the state's timberland (78 percent) is located on private land and produces a great opportunity for further diversification on Kentucky farms.

"Many of our state farmers are taking



Harlan County 5th grade students participated in the Harlan County Farm Bureau Forestry Day event held last fall. During this field trip, every student experienced hands on educational activities in an effort to learn more about topics such as tree identification, discussion of opportunities in the forest industry, the heritage of the forest, protecting the echo system and how to determine tree values.

advantage of the tree crop they have on their land from a production standpoint," he said. "But there is so much more potential there with approximately \$250 million worth of trees (standing timber) that are typically purchased from Kentucky's private forest owners annually."

Because of the potential and the market that already exist from Kentucky's forest industry, Miniard said the sooner young people learn the facts about tree farming, the better the chances are this industry will continue its growth.

"These students seem so eager to learn about one of our greatest natural resources and the hope is, through events like the Harlan County Farm Bureau Forestry Day, that a new generation will step forward, become involved and continue the growth of this industry, not only here in Eastern Kentucky but throughout the state," he said.

The Importance of Agriculture Exports

Perhaps no group of individuals knows just how small the world has become as well as American farmers. Exports have become so extremely important to producers whether their operation is of a large scale or small. In fact, the U.S. leads the world in ag exports.

Chief Agricultural Negotiator for the U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Darci Vetter held a press conference at this year's American Farm Bureau Federation annual convention where she emphasized the importance of those exports as well as the importance of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) to agriculture, in general.

She said that 20 percent of farm income is related to exports so maintaining and expanding the opportunity to export U.S. agricultural products is critical to American agriculture's bottom line.

"It's more critical than ever, when we're facing challenging times with lower prices," she said. "I like to think about agriculture and trade, as with trade being a critical part of our ag safety net."

In a one-on-one interview with Kentucky Farm Bureau News, Vetter emphasized how valuable the TPP is to the network of family owned farms in the state and across the country.

She also said, overall the TPP is a great deal for U.S. agriculture and, across the board, it touches every ag product without exception. Vetter added that the agreement includes high value markets like Japan and gives first-time access to many U.S. agricultural products such as dairy, poultry and eggs to that country.

"I would say the high standards of this agreement and the mixture of developed and developing economies that are signing on to this means it's going to have huge normative value," she said.

If indeed the TPP is going to become the "norm" in similar trade agreements, it has to get through Congress in the midst of a presidential election year. Showing its support, the AFBF Board of Directors voted last December to support the agreement noting it promised to expand opportunities to some of the



fastest growing markets around the world.

Vetter said the TPP is likely one of the most significant agricultural trade agreements to come along in the past 20 years but getting to the final agreement did not come without a few bumps in the road; tobacco being one of those areas that came with some issues.

"In the tobacco area, there was a concern by a number of countries at the table that tobacco companies would use the investor state dispute settlement provisions of the agreement to challenge a country's ability to implement tobacco control and anti-smoking laws that they had agreed through international convention to implement," she said.

Vetter pointed out that while a number of countries said it would be easier to just exclude tobacco from the whole agreement, it took significant effort to show this was a very specific and narrow problem and a solution was crafted to address that problem.

"I feel very confident that tobacco growers throughout the country have a very good deal in the TPP where they will see increased market access for all of their products," she said.

Kentucky still leads the way, nation-

Chief Agricultural Negotiator for the U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Darci Vetter spoke to reporters during a press conference at this year's American Farm Bureau Federation annual convention.

ally in the production of burley tobacco, it is still the number one cash crop on many farms and is important to local rural economies.

Vetter said in thinking about ag exports as the cornerstone of the country's ag safety net, if those foreign markets stay open and the amount of access can be increased, it has a significant impact potential in boosting prices. She added that farmers are definitely in tune with events taking place in other countries and what it means to their commodity prices.

"I think farmers, in some ways more than other small business people, understand that the globe really affects their return," she said. "I hope, frankly, that they can be ambassadors for this agreement and talk about how important it is that we keep those markets stable and that we enact good rules and transparency in other countries that make it less likely that barriers to our exports will pop up."

News from the American Farm Bureau Federation



President's veto of anti-WOTUS resolution salt in farmers' wounds, Farm Bureau says

Calling President Barack Obama's veto of a resolution (S.J. Res. 22) to disapprove of the Waters of the U.S. rule "salt in the wounds of farmers and ranchers," American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall said farmers and ranchers were mystified as to why Obama continues to support the fatally flawed rule.

"The Government Accountability Office found the rule was issued with the help of illegal 'covert propaganda' by EPA. Ninety-two members of Congress, 22 states, numerous cities and counties and dozens of industry groups have all stood up and said no to this rule. Courts have ordered the rule temporarily halted because of the harm it will cause. But, somehow, the president and the EPA just keep pushing. But we won't stop either. We will not rest until this rule is gone," Duvall said in a statement.

The American Farm Bureau Federation told Senate Agriculture Committee leaders that it supports the goals of the Improving Child Nutrition Integrity

American Farm Bureau expresses support for Senate child nutrition legislation goals

and Access Act of 2016.

In a letter to Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), and Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), AFBF said the legislation "improves flexibility for school lunch programs and reinforces dietary guidelines which include dairy, meat, fruits and vegetables, and grains."

"Lifelong healthy eating habits begin with children having healthy choices and school food programs are pivotal in shaping those healthy dietary habits," Farm Bureau's letter stated. "This child nutrition legislation will enhance efforts of federal nutrition programs to provide nutritious meals and teach healthy eating behaviors."

The letter stated that Farm Bureau is pleased that the proposed legislation includes provisions to boost milk and dairy product consumption through the

Newly elected AFBF President Zippy Duvall of Georgia and Vice-President Scott VanderWal of South Dakota held a press conference to wrap up the recent AFBF annual convention.

National School Lunch Program.

"The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends three dairy servings per day and offering milk with each school meal helps to meet that goal," Farm Bureau said. "School meal offerings should include milk or dairy products for the essential nutrients they provide to growing children, such as protein, potassium, vitamin D and calcium."

The letter also highlighted AFBF's long-established support for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, expressed support for provisions allowing schools to transition to the program standards under the hardship exemption and emphasized support for the "Buy American" provision of the federal school lunch program.

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USDA Secretary at AFBF convention

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack held a town hall meeting during the recent American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) annual convention taking a number of questions from attending members.

Vilsack began by saying how important and beneficial the relationship between AFBF and the USDA is to the agriculture industry.

“Over the time that I have been secretary, it has been a good, positive relationship... and it's been a successful relationship,” he said. “I think it's safe to say that without Farm Bureau's advocacy and aggressive efforts, we would not have had the 2014 Farm Bill and certainly we benefited, I think, from having a farm bill.”

Vilsack also said trade discussions would not be where they are today had it not been for AFBF's involvement.

“Farm Bureau was very important and critical to getting the trade promotion authority through the Congress which in turn allowed us to complete the Trans Pacific Partnership negotiations,” he said. “Now we face a serious and significant effort to get this trade bill through.”

Vilsack continued by telling attendees they need to understand, and thinks they do understand, how important that trade deal is to agriculture.

“The Asian market is the fastest growing market. It's the place where there's going to be significant growth in the middle class consumer that's going to want high quality products that American producers can provide,” he said. “It's not only important for the economic benefits for American agriculture but it's also important for our national security.”

Vilsack pointed out the importance of having relationships that enable the building of valuable coalitions allowing for a balance in that part of the world.

“It's going to make us safer and a better place,” said Vilsack.

After answering questions from the audience, Vilsack concluded by saying he appreciates the contributions Farm Bureau members make in their communities, seeing firsthand how active the organization has been in places where he has lived.

“We're going to do everything we can at USDA to try and be helpful and we're going to continue to have that strong relationship (with) the American Farm Bureau Federation,” he said.

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