

# **2016 KFB**

Country Ham Breakfast and Charity Auction

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KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU NEWS Volume 15 | No. 7 September 2016

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#### Cover photo by Tim Thornberry

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ne of my favorite things about agriculture is seeing the fruits of our labor and the satisfying feeling of knowing the hard work we have put into our growing season pays off at harvest time.

Many of you are getting ready to experience that as we move closer to the harvest season. While it hasn't been an easy year in terms of crop production, we remain optimistic about the outcome.

In much the same way as we work to ensure a quality harvest, we have also been working hard

in our agriculture advocacy efforts at KFB. And we are seeing rewards from those efforts as we move through this year.

I recently had the opportunity to attend the first meeting of the Kentucky Water Resources Board, a direct result of legislation supported by our organization and the work of the Water Management Working Group.

It is quite a gratifying feeling to know the efforts of our members, in supporting House Bill 529, paid off in the creation of this Board which will work to alleviate water issues before they become a problem.

Other priority issues adopted by KFB this year that have proven to be fruitful include the funding for the Grain Center for Excellence through the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund which will not only benefit our grain producers but agriculture as a whole and ultimately all of Kentucky through its research efforts.

We also saw the continuation of support to KADF, something that has been a catalyst in the diversification of the state's agricultural industry. This investment has helped to grow and strengthened our ag sector and serves as a national model.

While we can take satisfaction in knowing our work has proven to be successful, as farm families, we know our work is never really done and in the coming months, looking forward to 2017, we will have plenty on our plates.

It's not too early to think about a new Farm Bill. It seems as though we just finished up the last one but talks will begin next year. In fact, the American Farm Bureau Federation is already reaching out to states to get input.

As you know it's never an easy task to reach a general consensus for this piece of legislation that is so critical to our farm sector, all the more reason to begin that conversation now.

It's also time to think about Kentucky's next General Assembly session. There are many issues of interest to our members that could be undertaken during this next session including tax and regulatory reform, just to name a couple.

As we have recently moved through our Policy Development meetings, I know many of you are looking forward to bringing forth ideas that will ultimately become policy issues for 2017.

While it is good to look at our accomplishments, as agriculturalist we continually look toward the next season to make improvements, to maintain sustainability and to develop policy that will make our industry and our state better now and for the foreseeable future.

May we all have a successful harvest as farmers and as advocates.

Mark Haney President Kentucky Farm Bureau



# 2016 County Annual Meetings All times are local

### Adair County

September 20, 2016, 7:00 p.m. Lindsey Wilson College Cramner Dining Hall

### Anderson County October 10, 2016, 5:30 p.m.

Eagle Lake Convention Center

### Ballard County August 18, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Blue Grass Restaurant

Bath County September 26, 2016, 6:30 p.m. Bath County Agriculture Center

### Bell County September 29, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Bell County Farm Bureau Office

### **Boone County**

2016, 6:00 p.m. Boone County Enrichment Center (Lower Level) Florence

### Boyd County

October 10, 2016. 6:30 p.m. Franks Community Building -fairgrounds

### **Breathitt County**

October 6, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Breathitt Co High School

### **Breckinridge County**

September 27, 2016, 6:30 p.m. State FFA Camp, Hardinsburg

### Caldwell County September 26, 2016, 6:30 p.m. Caldwell County U K Research Center

Casey County October 6, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Pork Producers Building, Ag Expo Center

### **Clinton County**

September 8, 2016, 6 p.m. Clinton County Fairgrounds Crittenden County September 13, 2016, 6:30 p.m. Crittenden County Ed Tech Center

Franklin County October 4, 2016, 6:30 p.m. Franklin County Extension Office

**Fulton County** Oct 6, 2016, 7:30 p.m. Fulton County Farm Bureau Office

**Garrard County** September 19, 2016, 6:30 p.m. Forks of Dix River Baptist Church

Hickman County August 29, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Hickman County U K Extension Office

Jackson County September 19, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Jackson Energy Farm

LaRue County September 22, 2016, 7:00 p.m. LaRue County Farm Bureau Office

Lawrence County October 18, 2016, 6 p.m. Down Home Grill, Louisa

Letcher County September 19, 2016, 4:00 p.m. Letcher County Farm Bureau Office

Livingston County September 30, 2016, 7:00 p.m. Livingston Central High School cafeteria

Logan County September 17, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Logan County Extension Office.

Lyon County September 16,, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Lee Jones Convention Center, Eddyville

Magoffin County September 12, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Magoffin County Extension Office

### Marion County

October 10, 2016, 7:00 p.m. Knights of Columbus Hall

### **Martin County**

October 7, 2016, 9:00 a.m. Martin County Farm Bureau Office

Marshall County September 26, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Marshall County Farm Bureau Office

Mason County October 5, 2016, 7:00 p.m. Mason County Extension Office

Morgan County October 20, 2016 6:00 p.m. Margaret Stacy Building, West Liberty

Owen County October 7, 2016, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Owen County Farm Bureau Office

Pike County

September 15, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Hilton Garden Inn

Pulaski County October 11, 2016, 6:30 p.m. Southwestern High School

Washington County September 8, 2016, 6:30 p.m. Mackville Community Center

Wolfe County September 27, 2016 6:00 p.m. Wolfe County Extension Office

Woodford County September 20, 2016, 7:00 p.m. Versailles Baptist Church



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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Fritz Giesecke	2nd Vice President
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# Comment

If there's one thing that is for certain when it comes to farming, it's nothing is for certain. For those of us making a living in agriculture, our livelihood is effected by the weather, an ever-changing market environment and an overabundance of rules and regulations generally passed down by people who don't farm.



Despite the incredible odds that seem to be

against us, we persevere year-in and year-out which only means one thing to me.

Farmers are the most productive, most patient and most optimistic people in the world. But, in my mind, they are also the most important.

Where would we be if no one produced our food? Perhaps it is the first thing we ask when talking to others about our industry.

So much misinformation about agriculture exist in the marketplace today, it's hard to get a handle on all of it. But the people in charge of producing our food should be the ones who change this trend of misleading marketing maneuvers.

This growing season has been a challenging one to say the least. Excessive rains and storms have caused damage to many of our crops in all sectors of our industry.

But there are few growing seasons that are perfect. We recognize that and accept it and thanks to a variety of efforts made to keep agriculture strong, our producers will endure, as we always have.

With innovations in biotechnology, we have crops that can withstand many harmful elements that would have otherwise meant lost productivity and decrease yields.

In times of crop losses, we have support from crop insurance and revenue protection programs made available through the Farm Bill.

Kentucky has reinvested half of the Master Settlement Agreement dollars into agriculture creating a more diversified farm economy while creating opportunities for the next generation of farmers.

In our advocacy efforts, we must remind those in and out of our profession how important all these factors are to maintain a level of productivity to ensure we have an adequate food supply domestically and worldwide.

There is an ever-present line of people and organizations waiting to have their say in agriculture issues who know little about it except what they may have heard or read.

The fact is, the world cannot survive without the efforts made, in good years and bad, by our farm families. I make no apologies for what I do and neither should any of our producers.

What we should do however, is engage those who insist on selling us gluten free grapes and keep the general public informed of correct information about the food we grow and what they consume.

Next year will see discussions about a new Farm Bill by a growing number of legislators with no ties to the farm.

Advocacy is more important now than ever. As we inform our rural and urban neighbors about what we do as farmers, think about the answer to that question. Where would we be if no one produced our food?

> Eddie Melton Kentucky Farm Bureau First Vice-President





Back, L to R: John Sparrow, Eddie Melton, Fritz Giesecke, Commissioner Ryan Quarles, Governor Matt Bevin, Jonathan Noel, Mark Haney, David Beck Front, L to R: Ronnie Drennan, Beth Drennan, Miss Kentucky Laura Jones, Luther Deaton Jr.

entucky Farm Bureau's (KFB) annual Country Ham Breakfast and Charity Auction has been a highlight and tradition of State Fair events for more than five decades. This year was no different as a sell-out crowd of over 1,600 made their way to the Kentucky Exposition Center's South Wing to witness the auction and partake in a meal featuring plenty of country ham and Kentucky produced food.

This year's Grand Champion Ham, which weighed in at 17.38 lbs. was produced by Broadbent B & B Foods of Kuttawa, Kentucky and brought a top bid of \$600,000 from first time bidder Central Bank.

Luther Deaton, Jr., Chairman, President and CEO of Central Bank said for 53 years, Kentucky Farm Bureau has provided a platform that encourages philanthropy across the Commonwealth.

"Every day, the people of our business work to give back to their own communities, and we look forward to donating our bid today to deserving Kentucky charities," he said. "Rarely do you find an event that simultaneously showcases the best of Kentucky agriculture and charitable giving. We are proud to be a part of this historic event."

All money raised through the auction is donated directly to the charity of the winning bidder's choice. The proceeds from this year's event will be donated to several charities and organizations including University of Kentucky Athletics, Gatton College of Business and Economics at the University of Kentucky, University of Kentucky Hospital, God's Pantry Food Bank, Sunrise Children's Services, and Kentucky Community and Technical College.

In addition to the auction and the food, several top state and national officials make their way to the Ham Breakfast. This year, attendees heard from several dignitaries including Governor Matt Bevin, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senator Rand Paul, Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles, and Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer.

Miss Kentucky 2016, Laura Jones,

was also on hand to display the prized ham for the breakfast guests.

KFB President Mark Haney served as host of the morning's ceremonies and highlighted the KFB's work throughout Kentucky. He told the crowd that KFB exists solely to serve member families, Kentucky, and her people in helping to make the state a better place to live.

"It's about giving and our organization understands giving," he said. "We're a federation of volunteer leaders who want to give not only at the state level but in the local communities; folks who serve every day and don't ask for a pat on the back or any recognition, they just want to help their communities and make it a better place for their children and their grandchildren to live."

Since the Kentucky Farm Bureau Country Ham Breakfast began in 1964, the event has raised nearly \$10 million for local charities and nonprofit organizations. During that first breakfast, the champion ham sold for \$124.

### KFB AND THE KENTUCKY STATE FAIR





















### **2016 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

### CRITTENDEN COUNTY FARM BUREAU

**\$1,000 each** Dylan Hicks, Dylan Hollis, Megan Sherrell, Jayden Willis

### LETCHER COUNTY FARM BUREAU

\$1,000 each

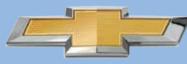
Holly Thomas, McKenzie Gibson, Alison Hobson, Courtney Jackson, Blake Watts, Melissa Bartley, Alexis Staumbaugh, Ted Allen, Erinly Cornett

\$500 each

Karen L Amburgey, Melody L Coots, Donella Madden, Sabrina Taylor, Grace Landis



The YF&R program helps young members shape the future of agriculture, as well as their individual futures, with leadership development and personal growth opportunities. Through three competitions, members are able to showcase their leadership experience, communication skills and successful farm plans as they compete against the best of the best Farm Bureau has to offer.









As part of the YF&R competitions, winners in the Achievement Award, Discussion Meet and Excellence in Ag areas will receive their choice of a **2017 Chevrolet Silverado** or **GMC Sierra truck**, courtesy of Chevrolet. Three national finalists in each competition will receive a **Case IH Farmall 50A tractor**, courtesy of Case IH, as well as a **\$2,500 cash prize** and **\$500 in STIHL** merchandise.

For more information about YF&R competitive events contact your state Farm Bureau or contact AFBF at yfr@fb.org or 202-406-3600.





# **KFB Young Farmer Summer Outing**

he Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) Young Farmer Summer Outing came to Owensboro this year filled with many tours and learning opportunities, the allimportant Discussion Meet, and the announcement of the Outstanding Young Farm Finalists along with other family activities.

Over 370 young farmers from 61 counties participated in this year's event.

Kent Moore, Chair of the KFB State Young Farmer Committee said the annual outing is a good time to reconnect with farm families across the state while gaining leadership skills and learning from the many tours offered each year.

"This event offers so many opportunities for our Young Farmer members from our participation in the KFB Discussion Meet, our policy development session, and the agricultural tours. This has become one of the premiere events for Young Farmers and something we all look forward to each year," he said.

Day one of the outing included Discussion Meet orientation the and preliminary rounds, an opening luncheon and a trip to nearby Holiday World for the families.

Second day activities included the Eggs and Issues Breakfast, the announcement of the Outstanding Young Farm Family (OYFF) top three finalists and the final four participants in the Discussion Meet to be held during this year's annual meeting.

The three OYFF finalists are Ben and Katie Furnish of Harrison County; Bradford and Karen Hines of Hart County and Matt and Amanda Gajdzik of Shelby County.

The four Discussion Meet finalist will be Kyle Skidmore of Bullitt County, Kirby Green of Daviess County, Lilly Robertson of Logan County and Kyle Kelly of Owen County.

The OYFF will be named during this year's annual meeting to be held November 30-December 3. The winner will then compete for the national award



Kent Moore, KFB Young Farmer Committee Chair.

given during the 2017 American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) annual conference.

The four Discussion Meet finalists will participate in the state event held during this year's annual meeting to determine who will vie for national



honors during the annual AFBF conference.

KFB's First Vice-President Eddie Melton and Executive Vice-President David Beck spoke to participants noting their support of the Young Farmer program. Melton said the program is important to KFB and KFB is important to agriculture while Beck emphasized how valuable it is for young farmers to be strong agriculture advocates.

Scott Christmas said how pleased he was with this year's turnout.

"We set a record for the number of counties that sent their young farmers to this year's outing," he said. "This just goes to show the value our county Farm Bureaus put into this program and the readiness of a new generation to move Kentucky's agriculture industry forward in the future."

As part of this year's summer outing, attendees also got a chance to visit area farms and agricultural businesses by way of a series of tours including stops at Trunnell's Family Fun Acre and Farm Market, Reid's Orchard, Cecil Farms, Kuegel's Dairy, O'Bryan Family Farm, Kuegel Tobacco Farm, Owensboro River Port Authority, Hill View Farms, Matt Castlen Farm and Steel, and the Crop Production Services Research Farm.

Sponsors of the Young Farmer Summer Outing included Monsanto and Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company.



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# Webster County's Cameron Edwards Participates in **AFBF's PAL**

entucky Farm Bureau (KFB) Young Farmer Member Cameron Edwards has seen his share of leadership programs having been involved in Farm Bureau for more than a decade. In doing so, the 2014 State Discussion Meet winner has taken his skills to the national level as a participant in the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) Partners in Agricultural Leadership (PAL) program.

According to information from AFBF, PAL is designed to further encourage and enhance leadership and advocacy skills built through participation in the American Farm Bureau Federation Discussion Meet, the AFBFAchievement Award, the AFBF Excellence in Agriculture Award, the AFBF Young Farmer and Rancher (YF&R) Committee or chairing a state YF&R Committee. In essence, the program takes those who have already begun their involvement leadership in training to the next level.

Edwards, who also won Kentucky's Excellence in Agriculture competition in 2015, said those participating in PAL come from a diverse background in agriculture, something that lends itself to an array of ideas to share.

"We learn about how to develop as advocates for agriculture, at every phase of engagement" he said. "The program focuses on developing our ability to present our stories and the real



PAL team visiting 3rd generation papaya farm on Oahu.

stories of agriculture, to the media, to stakeholders and to legislators alike."

The program's multiple module format allows the participants to learn how agriculture tries to engage across the country and

even how we as an industry engage globally. One of the key components to the training is the international module where team members get to share ideas with agriculture partners in other countries. "Ultimately we have to find ways to continue to grow beyond our own borders in our communication and cooperation, both as an industry and as an organization. We have to build relationships with other governments if we're going to create an atmosphere

where we can promote American agriculture anywhere," he said.

PAL also teaches participants to take on the domestic issues facing today's agriculture industry. Edwards said one of the biggest topics the group dealt with in his training has to do with biotechnology because of the turbulent time GMO's face in this current social environment.

"Cultural perceptions verses actual hard facts are hurting American farmers so we're tasked with finding new and creative ways to tell our story, so that the people of the world are hearing from family farmers who are growing and producing their foods and ultimately being the best stewards of the resources we have," he said.

Edwards credited Farm Bureau with being the only organization of its kind to offer this kind of information and training to its individual members.

"The reason for that is, we are a grassroots organization and the ultimate ability of this organization to grow and to be a voice for agriculture comes from its membership whether it is from one of the larger state Farm Bureaus such as in Kentucky or a smaller membership state; we all have that same strong voice," he said.

Edwards not only feels as though he is growing as a leader and advocate for agriculture but is doing what he can to promote PAL to other young farmers in Kentucky.

"At the end of the day, the Young Farmer programs are only going to continue to grow and I feel like the direction in which Farm Bureau is going is one of engagement for all individuals no matter the age group," he said. "We have such a tremendous base to draw from in Kentucky for the PAL program and I would like to see someone from here involved every year. KFB is one of the strongest member states and we need to make sure we always have individuals vying for PAL and ultimately making us stronger here and at the national level."

Having just returned from an engagement session in Hawaii, Edwards is fueled with the drive to continue to grow both personally and as an organization. In seeing the great work that smaller member states are able to do in the fight for agriculture it only emboldens him to push forward and promote the tremendous programs and resources that we here in Kentucky have available to us as members, he added.

"Our staff in Kentucky is tops in the country, in my opinion, and I look forward to any situation where I can use these skills to promote Kentucky farmers and Kentucky Farm Bureau," said Edwards.

Edwards plans to continue his growth in this leadership program which will conclude at the AFBF Advocacy conference in Washington DC in February, 2017.

"After PAL it's my hope to earn a role to make a positive impact on the organization. I have benefitted for years from the opportunities that Farm Bureau has given me, I'm ready to find new ways to start giving back and the first step in that journey is promoting these great programs and resources to FB members of Kentucky," he said

Edwards sums up what agriculture means to him.

"It's so much more than just a business; it's faith, it's family, it's commerce; everything all rolled up into one industry and no one is untouched by it," he said. "In a world that is divided in so many ways, we in agriculture have the opportunity to be the binding force that brings us all together."

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# Trans-Pacific Partnership: Where does it go from here?

The United States is the world's largest producer and exporter of soybeans which rank first in Kentucky crop receipts.

o say the proposed multi-national trade agreement known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is controversial is an understatement of gigantic proportions.

The trade deal has been years in the making and would involve 12 countries in the Pacific realm. Supporters of the agreement, including the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) say the agreement will boost exports, along with the U.S economy and create job opportunities.

From an agricultural standpoint, an economic analysis conducted by AFBF notes TPP will tear down trade barriers, help level the playing field for U.S. agricultural exports to those member countries, and with ratification, will boost annual net farm income in the United States by \$4.4 billion and exports by \$5.3 billion dollars, compared to not approving the pact.

But ratification appears to be stalled by an election year that has seen its share of negativity toward the agreement from an abundance of opponents. David Salmonsen, AFBF Senior Director, Congressional Relations said he thinks there is still support in Congress for the deal.

"I believe that there is support for TPP, especially among those in Congress that represent agriculture," he said. "Farm Bureau, and agriculture generally, along with the business community, is working to generate support for TPP so that Congressional leadership will put the TPP implementing bill to a vote this fall."

But, Salmonsen added that leadership has indicated a vote may not come until after the November election for the agreement.

"The agreement is done and it is very positive for U.S. agriculture, with increased market access for our products and improved standards and rules for trade in food and agriculture. A vote this year is what we are working towards," he said. "Delay only helps our competitors, such as the European Union, which is now negotiating deals with our TPP partners, such as Japan."

Salmonsen pointed out that the way the TPP is structured, it cannot go into force until the U.S. ratifies it, but that does not mean the participating countries are not able to conclude trade agreements with other countries without U.S. participation.

If indeed this is the case and the U.S. fails to act, he said it will not be seen as a favorable action by TPP partner countries that are looking to the U.S. for economic and strategic leadership.

AFBF President Zippy Duval said, in a recent teleconference, support of the TPP is a priority of the organization and will remain so.

"We know that it's going to be an uphill battle but this is a priority issue of our Board and it is also important to our farmers and ranchers," he said. "So we are going to continue to push forward because we think there is a small window of hope during the Lame Duck (session)."Duvall also said it's important for Farm Bureau members to remind their neighbors how important TPP is to agriculture.

"The farm economy is bad across this country and this is one thing this Congress could vote on and it wouldn't cost our taxpayers one dollar," he said.

Last January, during the AFBF National Convention, Chief Agricultural Negotiator for the

U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Darci Vetter held a press conference where she said 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.

From a state perspective, Kentucky Farm Bureau President Mark Haney said ratification of the agreement would have a positive effect on farmers across Kentucky no matter the size of their operation.

"Kentucky is home to 76,500 farms, comprised mainly of small family farms. But each one is important to the state's economy and each one has a role to play in growing our export market," he said. "TPP will mean added support to these operations big and small and in a time when net farm income has declined, a trade agreement of this magnitude is critical to the well-being of all of our farm families."

# Kentucky Water Resources Board Meets for the First Time

Ver the past three decades, Kentucky has experienced at least five significant droughts resulting in immeasurable crop and livestock losses and often pitted urban and rural users against each other. Last year Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) initiated a Water Management Working Group (WMWG) comprised of a diverse group of experts from the agriculture, natural resources and governmental agency sectors to devise plans to combat water issues proactively as opposed to reacting to a situation once it has occurred.

The WMWG has initiated many forward steps in opening up critical conversations about water issues including the suggestion of House Bill 529, legislation that established a state board to oversee such issues.

The Kentucky Water Resources Board (KWRB) is the result of this new law and is administered by the state's Energy and Environment Cabinet to assist in conducting research and developing recommendations to enhance the quality of water resources accessible for agricultural production in the state.

The creation of this Board not only represents a more permanent group put in place to help manage these water resources, but also is indicative of KFB's stance in looking to the future needs of its members and all citizens of the Commonwealth, said Steve Coleman, WMWG Chair.

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

Kevin Jefferies, Vice-President of Oldham County Farm and a member of the WMWG will also serve as one of the new KWRB members. He said in a year that has seen its share of rain, dry conditions may be the last thing on most people's mind, but that could change quickly.

"In the years I have been involved in agriculture, I have often seen many growing seasons turn from wet to dry in a hurry, so being prepared is the best thing we can do for agriculture and all parties with a vested interest in water issues," he said.

Coleman emphasized that in addition to the passage of HB 529, efforts made by the WMWG were proving successful in bringing a host of agencies together to examine all issues related to water and in doing so, the group's work has been recognized in other states.

"Within our own state and even those around us, there has been a tremendous increase in awareness on how to better manage our water resources," said Coleman. "To me, that is the great value in all of this, seeing this great interest." Better water management benefits all businesses, industries and, ultimately, all Kentuckians. The work conducted by the WMWG and now, the Kentucky Water Resources Board, will provide a unique opportunity for Kentucky to demonstrate its willingness to meet such an issue head-on, in a bi-partisan way while setting the bar for other states to work in the same manner.

In July of 2016, the first meeting of the newly appointed Board, consisting of 11 members appointed by the governor, convened representing a variety of stakeholders including Kentucky Farm Bureau and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. KFB President Mark Haney and Executive Vice-President David Beck attended the meeting.

Haney said seeing the work of the board and the many KFB members who showed their support during the passage process of the bill was very gratifying.

"You get a great sense of pride seeing the efforts of so many, who came together to support this idea, come to fruition," he said. "This board will become a national model when it comes to being proactive in solving water issues before they become problems."

Beck said the creation of the board is not only good for agriculture but for all Kentuckians.

"At the end of the day, better water management would be a benefit to all businesses, all industries and, ultimately, all Kentuckians," he said.



## Kentucky Ag Development Funds Help Sharpsburg Couple Create Farm to Fashion

t first glance, Lan Mark Farm, tucked away in the rural area between Bath and Bourbon Counties, seems far removed from the world of high-fashion.

But that's not exactly true. Lanette Freitag and her husband Don Bowles have taken their years of knowledge in raising alpacas, llamas and sheep for fiber and created a "Farm to Fashion" movement that rivals any fashion runways.

But it's not exactly an overnight success story ripped from the pages of Vogue. Freitag was raised in Columbus, Ohio but her love for agriculture came during visits to her grandmother's Kentucky farm; visits she made often.

It would be years later, with the help of a transfer from her corporate job and the memories of how wonderful she felt on the farm, that brought her back to Kentucky permanently and into a life on her own farm.

Utilizing all it had to offer would be Freitag's method of operation much the way her grandmother taught her. That has worked well for her. Freitag said she wants to take anything she grows there, and make it wonderful.

The business of breeding llamas began in 1987 followed by alpacas and sheep and Freitag wanted to use the fibers from those animals to make the farm sustainable. "Some of the llama fiber was just as good as the alpaca fiber and the sheep breeds are so varied and so different," she said. "The rare sheep breeds we

had in country because of our founding fathers produced fabulous fibers and could be used for wonderful things."

But it wasn't exactly easy using those fibers to their fullest potential and was

a problem faced by the couple. Freitag, however said she knew the farm was where she is supposed to be and she was determined to make it work.

In doing so, she became familiar with the Master Settle Agreement funds and the efforts being made by Kentucky to reinvest the dollars that would be coming to the state by way of the agreement.

Freitag's first thought was to apply for Kentucky Agricultural Development Funds to create a marketing company that would provide a connection between farmers and crafts people, eventually producing a new product venue for both.

"I was trying to work with artists and crafters to make this reality come true and these ag products come to life," she said.

But it wasn't a marketing company that netted her those first



development aq dollars. Through the persuasion of a former aq development board member, she would develop a wool mill on her farm that received funding and plant that first Farm to Fashion seed.

although Freitag didn't realize it at the time.

She recruited wool producers from other counties to become involved to help fulfill the terms of the grant and she began to create items such as wool hats. While all that was good, the thing that became the game-changer at Lan Mark Farm was a collection of small needles that Bowles, who has a background in engineering, brought home one day used to blend wool fabric.

"I knew we needed a felting machine (which blends fibers of one fabric into another) with those types of small needles and I could instantly envision that," said Freitag.

In making that vision a reality,

Bowles would first create tools utilizing multiple needles as a precursor to the idea of their FeltLOOM®. Freitag emphasized that while there were other felting machines available, this one was created with the idea of one person, in particularly a women, being able to operate it as opposed to it being a large industrial-type apparatus.

With another grant, this one from the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation and, in working with the University of Kentucky's Center for Manufacturing, their vision of this new type of a felting machine was born, created and patented; something that would change the lives of Freitag and Bowles forever.

The next step was to take the machine to various industry shows around the country and demonstrate just what it could do and to sell it to others in the business.

In the beginning, Bowles used part of the wool mill to serve as the manufacturing center but today, Bluegrass Manufacturing works with FeltLOOM® and other vendors to build the felting machine at their facility. Since its creation in 2003, the couple has sold 200 around the world, in 13 dream. KADF would, yet again, play a role in providing funds for that project.

"It was a forgivable loan which meant I had to buy things from other Kentucky producers to sell or use in the new facility and a portion of that would go back toward the loan," she said.

One of the uses of the newer facility is for teaching purposes; helping others learn about the fiber industry which includes seeing what the FeltLOOM® can do and to bring together those who Freitag and Bowles have worked with.

To celebrate with those who have purchased their invention, the couple invites them to the farm each year for an event that includes a fashion show, an idea that came from collaboration with another local designer and served as the beginning of "Farm to Fashion."

"The purpose of 'Farm to Fashion' is to show that local producers have what it takes right here in Kentucky to be a part of the bigger fashion world," said Freitag. "They don't have to be in New York to prove how good they are."

As part of the celebration, models wearing creations made on the Felt Loom parade across the balcony of the lodge rivaling the runways of other "fashion" centers.



different countries and now the couple is building a dealer network for them.

As the business grew, Freitag and Bowles realized they needed another structure or lodge to further their "They come from all over the world; from South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. I've even had them come



from Taiwan," Freitag said of her guests.

And while the world may be coming to Sharpsburg once a year to learn, collaborate and to celebrate, it is still the memory of a grandmother Freitag recalls, and watching her grow so many things on the farm...that makes it wonderful.

Warren Beeler, executive director of the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy, the agency that oversees KADF, said the Freitag/Bowles operation is a perfect example of what ag development dollars can do.

"Lan Mark Farm is a miraculous success story for the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund. What began as a small, unique project has transformed into a business that produces fine garments worn on the runways of New York in the most glamorous of fashion districts," he said. "Additionally, the looms are in high demand and being sold all over the world to the some of the most prestigious designers. The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board is honored and proud to be part of the Lan Mark Farms success."

This year's style show is open to the public and will be Friday Sept.16 at 7:30 p.m. in Carlisle, Kentucky at the Neal Building.

For more information, contact Freitag through info@feltloom.com.

To see the Bluegrass and Backroads segment go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-afi-TUYyY

MEASURE THE CANDIDATES FORUM



## U.S. Senate "Measure the Candidates" forum focuses on state and national issues

entucky Farm Bureau's (KFB) Board of Directors got a chance to hear U.S. Senate candidates Rand Paul (R), the incumbent senator from Kentucky and Jim Gray (D), who is currently serving as mayor of Lexington, discuss their visions of state and national issues related to agriculture during the Measure the Candidates forum held in Louisville.

The two candidates fielded questions from KFB leaders and explained their positions on a number of issues during their meeting at the farm organization's state office.

KFB President Mark Haney served as moderator during the forum-type discussion. He said the meetings continued a strong KFB tradition that began in the 1940's.

"It's a very effective forum we started and have used for candidates at all levels," he said. "Agriculture remains one of the largest economic contributors in Kentucky and therefore we feel it should be important to candidates running for local, state and national offices to be involved."

Under the forum's guidelines the candidates gave opening and closing statements and first fielded questions on topics that included farm policy, regulatory reform, fiscal policy, water and international trade.

At the end of the forum, board

members were invited to ask questions of each candidate and press conferences were held immediately following the events.

Sen. Paul told board members he would continue to advocate for crop insurance and work to make the H2A program better for farmers.

"I think as part of looking at the Farm Bill again, we should look at the H2A program and try to make it easier, more seamless, maybe consider making a multi-year visa, so I think there are some things we can do," he said. "There shouldn't be any reason why we don't all get together and just fix the H2A program."

Paul also said he would support repealing the Waters of the U.S. rule.

"The original concept of the Clean Water Act was a good one. It said you couldn't discharge pollutants into a navigable stream. The problem is, that over about a 40 year period we defined your backyard as a stream and dirt as a pollutant and that's a real problem," he said. "I will introduce and sponsor and vote for any legislation to get rid of the Waters of the U.S."

Mayor Gray said as a candidate for the U.S. Senate, he is focused on what's best for Kentucky and agriculture is clearly a big part of that.

"As Mayor, I have highlighted the importance of agriculture in our city.



That's why we started the Bluegrass Farm to Table program and our Bluegrass Double Dollars project directly supports our local farmers," he said. "I recognize that sustainable agriculture must continue to be a viable career choice for young people as we adapt to new technologies. Agriculture is not our father's or grandfather's business anymore. The future is through knowledge and technology but within the framework of traditional farming values."

Gray also said, regarding GMO's, whatever is done especially with labeling, it should be done fairly and across the board so that one state doesn't benefit at the expense of another state.

He added that, in terms of trade agreements, he has been involved in international trade through his business almost all of his life.

"I've seen the value of international trade and the value of trade agreements so I believe in fair trade but I don't believe in bad trade," said Gray. "I think we have to look carefully at the agreements and then do what is best for Kentuckians."

Video of the entire Kentucky Farm Bureau "Measure the Candidates" forum is available at kyfb.com/livestream.



# Down the Backroads

By Carilynn Coombs

Since I can remember, the middle of August was reserved for making the four hour drive from Graves County to Louisville to attend the Kentucky State Fair. My family always made the trip on the first weekend because that's when the dairy show began along with all of the 4-H and FFA exhibits.

It was always an adventure to bring our tents and sleeping bags, making the fairgrounds our home for a few days. As good as a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is, it always tasted better at the fair. I saw many of my friends from school and we all had such a good time together. We laughed and played, ate a lot of peanut butter and collected memories, although we didn't realize it at the time, like they were shells on the beach.

It didn't really matter if we didn't win the coveted first place ribbon. What mattered was the thrill of the show; the feeling of great satisfaction knowing we had given

our all to get there. That was the real prize.

Things aren't much different now, except my family, and extended family, now bring our own dairy cows and spend even more time, each year, at the State Fair. I see many of the friends I have grown up with and their children camping out and experiencing what we did as kids.

Carrying on a tradition is so very important to the fair and agriculture in general. That's what we are doing now and so many years ago. It's what been done since the fair began; encouraging the next generation of agriculturalists.

But the beauty of the fair, in addition to it being a place of tradition, it is a place that has embraced change, as well. There are different foods and attractions such as Krispy Kreme burgers and the Kentucky Beef Virtual Tours blended with the traditions of livestock shows and the commodity tent.

It is a place to reunite with friends whom you have shown animals with for so many years and a place to meet some of the next generation of those showing their animals.

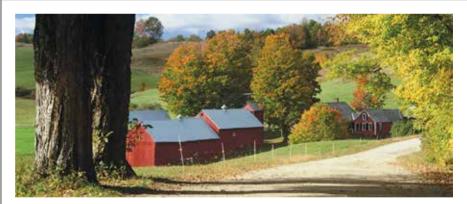
It's a time to collect new memories and recall old ones.

Many things have changed since I began coming to the fair as a child. But we all change a bit with time.

One thing that has remained the same however, coming to the fair is as great an experience now as it was all those years ago.

There is no better cap to the summer than the Kentucky State Fair. Hope you had a great experience, too.

For more agricultural news and information, go to kyfbnewsroom.com.







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# Markets 🕍

### RECORD CORN AND SOYBEAN PRODUCTION EXPECTED

In its August Crop Production report, USDA forecast record large vields and production for the U.S. corn and soybean crops. Kentucky's corn crop could also set new records for yield and production. Corn production in Kentucky is forecast at a record-large 246.7 million bushels -- up 10 percent from the 2015 crop and 3.6 million bushels higher than the previous 2013 record crop. The Kentucky corn yield is estimated at 175 bushels per acre (bu/A) - a new record yield, surpassing the previous record of 172 bu/A set just a year ago. While Kentucky's soybean crop will not set new records, it will be the second largest production year on record at 85.9 million bushels behind last year's record 88.7 million bushels. The average yield of 48.0 bu/A is down 1.0 bushels from 2015 and is 2.0 bushels short of the 50.0 bu/A record set in 2013. Producers should harvest 1.79 million acres, down 20,000 acres from 2015.

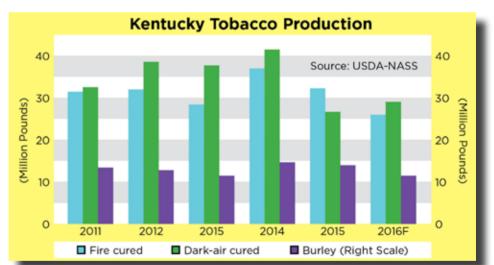
U.S. corn production is forecast at a record-large 15.2 billion bushels, up 11 percent from 2015 and over six percent above the previous record crop produced in 2014. A record average yield of 175.1 bushels per acre is forecasted; this is up 6.7 bushels from 2015 and 4.1 bushels greater than the previous record set in 2014. U.S. soybean production and average yield are forecast at new record highs. An average yield of 48.9 bu/A exceeds last year's record yield of 48.0. The 2016 production estimate of 4.06 billion bushels exceeds last year's record crop of 3.93 billion bushels.

### APPLE EXPORTS DROP AFTER RECORD 2014/15 YEAR

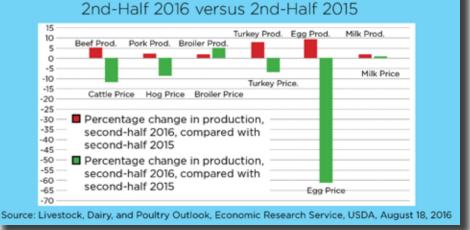
Most apples produced in the United States are consumed in the domestic market, but exports have been growing steadily over the past few decades, according to a USDA-ERS report. Export volume rose from an average of 607 million pounds in the 1980s to a record 2.3 billion pounds in the 2014/15 marketing year (August-July). Fresh apple exports for 2015/16 will be down substantially from 2014/15; exports through the first 11 months of the current marketing year totaled only 1.62 billion pounds. The long-term growth in exports reflects changes in both supply and demand. Domestic demand for apples faces growing competition from counter-seasonal imports of fruits such as grapes, berries, and stone fruits, which are increasingly available in the winter months. On the supply side, production grew faster than domestic demand. Production surged in 2013 and 2014, peaking at 11.81 billion pounds. Last year's apple production fell sharply to 10.00 billion pounds. USDA is forecasting the 2016 crop at 10.42 billion pounds. USDA discontinued fruit production estimates for Kentucky a few years ago, but there are many growers throughout the state. Check out the Kentucky Farm Bureau Certified Roadside Farm Market listing at kyfb.com/roadside.

### **U.S. BEEF EXPORTS TO INCREASE IN COMING MONTHS**

U.S. beef exports ended the first half of 2016 with the June export value reaching the highest monthly level of the year at \$545 million, according to USDA data compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation. For January-June 2016, beef exports totaled 1.19 billion pounds, an increase of three percent over the same period in 2015. The value of this beef totaled \$2.9 billion, down 10 percent from last year. Though first-half 2016 beef exports grew little, USDA economists expect shipments to gain momentum, increasing approximately 22 percent year-over-year in July-September and seven percent in the fourth quarter of 2016. Total U.S. beef exports are forecast at 2.45 billion pounds in 2016, up about eight percent over 2015. Beef exports in 2017 are forecast at 2.58 billion pounds, up five percent relative to 2016.



### Production and Price Forecasts







\*Offer valid on purchases made between 8/3/2016 and 10/28/2016. Subject to approved installment credit with John Deere Financial. <sup>1</sup>Fixed Rate of 0.0% for 60 months and 54,000 OFF implement bonus OR in lieu of financing offer, get 54,000 OFF on 5065E and 5075E MFWD Open Station Tractors. <sup>2</sup>Fixed Rate of 0.0% for 60 months and 31,500 OFF implement bonus on 35 Exreis Tractors. Inplement bonus is in addition to Low Rate financing and requires the purchase of 2 or more qualifying John Deere or Frontier implements. Some restrictions apply; other special rates and terms may be available, so see your dealer for details and other financing options. Valid only at participating US dealers.

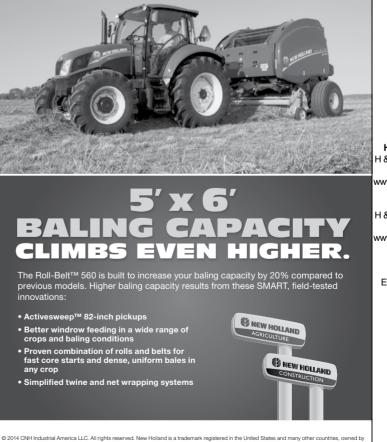
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SEPTEMBER 2016

### **COUNTY CORNER** Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities





### Allen County

Allen County Farm Bureau Legislative Appreciation and Elected Officials cookout. Pictured from left to right in the first row are Bart Jones, County Director, Sarah Jones, County Director, Al Pedigo, County President, Marlin Moody, County Director and John Pedigo, County Director. Second row: Tracy Oliver, PVA, Roman Perry Jr., Magistrate, Ron Cook, Magistrate, Rickey Cooksey, Magistrate, Dennis Harper, Magistrate, Tim Thomas with Senator McConnell's office, Jon Crosby with Senator Rand Paul's office, State Representative Wilson Stone, State Senator David Givens.



### **Boone County**

Boone County Farm Bureau President Bob Schwenke presents the Boone County Farm Bureau scholarship certificate to Emily Wells, Senior at Walton-Verona High School. Emily will be attending the University of Louisville in the Fall. Pictured from left: Melissa Walker (Emily's Mom), Emily Wells, Bob Schwenke, Molly Senger (KFB Insurance Agent, Boone County-Florence Office).



### **Clay County**

Clay County Farm Bureau Legislative Appreciation Dinner. Pictured from left: Sen. Robert Stivers, Bige Hensley, Margaret Hensley and Frank Jones.



**Cumberland County** 

Cumberland County Farm Bureau Customer Appreciation Day.Pictured from left: Dorothy Smith with Air Evac, Kim McCoy, County President, Belinda McCoy, County Director, Kim Muer, County Vice President, Chelsey Anderson, County Extension Agent and County Director, Todd Morgan, Agency Manager.



### **Butler County**

Butler County Farm Bureau Customer Appreciation Day. Pictured from left: Jack Clark, Agent, James Runion, Agency Manager, Dee Russ CSR, Debi Phelps, CSR, Macy West, Co-op student, Sarah Ray with SERVPRO, Shane Wells, Butler County Farm Bureau President, Joe Rogan, Area Program Director, Ky Farm Bureau.



### Casey County

Casey County Farm Bureau president, Tim Goodlett along with the agency manager Todd Hoskins and ASMM, Ryan Midden helped serve a few of the 450 members that passed through during the Casey County Membership appreciation day.

COUNTY CORNER



Woodford County Woodford County Field Day. Pictured from left: Logan Mitchell, Donald Mitchell, and Darrell Varner.



### **Garrard County**

A group of seniors at Lancaster Senior Citizen Center (seated) sit with their new AARP Realpad tablets, provided through a generous donation from Garrard County Farm Bureau Federation. Pictured are Carolyn Iverson (standing, far left) who organized the donation through her Graduate project at UK, and Senior Citizen Center Director Brittany Wash (standing, far right) invited directors to see the tablets in action. Farm Bureau Directors standing in the middle are, from left, Travis Newman, Scott Barnes, Larry Woods.



### **Bracken County**

Bracken County Farm Bureau summer fish fry. Pictured from left: Larry Smith agency manager, Shane Wiseman, Alex Barnett, Bill Asbury, Howard Baker, Marcus Wiseman and Les Newman Bracken County President.



### **Shelby County**

Shelby County Measure the Candidate meeting for State Representative.



### LaRue County

LaRue County Farm Bureau Faith, Family, Farm & Food Appreciation dinner where over 300 county and state leaders enjoyed local foods and speakers.



### **Meade County**

Meade County Farm Bureau hosted a farm-city breakfast in July. Over 200 folks gathered to hear guest speaker Warren Beeler and participate in the local 4-H youth country ham auction.



**Franklin County** 

August Congressional Recess meeting with Congressman Andy Barr at Franklin County Farm Bureau office.



### Logan County

Elected officials attend the annual Farm Bureau Picnic. From left are Jeremy Robertson, Logan County Farm Bureau President; Tim Thomas, Field Representative for Senator Mitch McConnell; Martha Jane King, KY State Representative and Magistrates Barry Wright, Drexel Johnson and Thomas Bouldin.



**Clinton County** 

Over 250 members served during the 3rd annual customer appreciation day in Clinton County.



### **Monroe County**

Monroe County Farm Bureau Elected Officials Appreciation event. Pictured from right to left on the front row are Monroe County President Terry Bryant, State Representative Bart Rowland, Mayor of Gamaliel Bob Greer and Fountain Run Mayor Larry Shaw. Also pictured in the front row on the left, District 4 Women's Chair Vickie Bryantand Sandy Simpson Field Representative for Congressman Ed Whitfield in second row, center.



### **Bourbon County**

Bourbon County Farm Bureau President Jeff Carter and Sen. Mitch McConnell at Chamber of Commerce meeting.

### Graves County

Randall Heath received the Farmer of the Year Award at the Graves County Farm to Table Breakfast sponsored by the Mayfield/Graves Chamber County of Commerce. River Valley Ag Credit was sponsor of the Farmer of the Year award.Pictured from left, Kyle Yancy, River Valley Ag Credit, CEO, Randall Heath and his wife, Frieda.





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The state of the dairy industry in Kentucky



FB Candid Conversations presents a discussion about the topical issues facing the agricultural industry in a question and answer format with a member of Kentucky's agricultural community. In this column, issues facing the dairy industry are discussed with Carl Chaney, a longtime dairyman and coowner of Chaney's Dairy Barn, a dairy/ retail/restaurant operation in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

### For those unfamiliar with dairy operations, briefly describe a typical day on the job.

In the past, my day typically began about 4:40 in the morning and I tried to be at the barn ready to bring in the cows by 5:00 a.m. We are a small family farm and we milk about 60 cows so we're not worried so much about how many cows we can put through the parlor in an hour. That never was a concern of ours; it was always about taking care of the cows. Once we had finished with the milking, we got everything cleaned up; did whatever else needed to be done on the farm or at the farm store until we milked again around 4:00 p.m. and started that process all over again. After we fed the cows and did the cleaning we got finished around

7:00 that evening unless we had a cow calving or crops to put up. About two months ago we put in a robot to milk the cows and we can sleep to about 5:30! Now we are milking three times a day. This investment is working well for us along with a new compost bedded pack barn. We are getting more milk from the cows because they are more comfortable.

### Dairy farmers are having a hard time making ends meet due to low milk prices. At those current dairy prices, is there any way to actually make a profit?

The majority of dairy farmers are getting less for their milk right now than what they could have gotten for it 30 years ago. I don't know of anything that costs less now than it did 30 years ago. While fuel prices have dropped. they're still higher than in 1986 and feed prices are still relatively high. While all farmers are different, the average cost of production per 100 pounds of milk is around \$19. The average price received for that milk is probably around \$14-\$15 per 100 pounds. You can figure out that math easily and see that for every 100 pounds of milk I'm they are selling, selling; they arel'm losing money. It's one thing to get up every day and

be paid for it but it's another to get up every day, work hard and you have to pay to work. That's what a lot of dairy farmers are doing right now. This is why a lot of farmers do other things, like hay, tobacco and grain. We went into the value added side of it where we can sell ice cream and do farm tours.

# Haven't prices traditionally fluctuated according to supply and demand?

Milk prices are cyclical (meaning they rise and fall in cycles according to different economic situations) and they always drop, come back and drop again but it seems like when they drop, they do so for longer periods than when they stay up. If you have an overabundance of a product, you lower the price and you get it moved. But, from the dairyman's side, when my price drops, it seems like it's six to eight months before the price in the store drops and I don't understand that. From what I do understand, milk prices have come down in the store but farmers have been getting lower prices for over a year. But sometimes dairy farmers are their own worst enemies. We continue to get better at production, we feed our cows better we keep them more comfortable and we are producing more milk.

### Is diversification the answer to the dairy industry's problems?

We wanted to do something different with our dairy because there are houses being built all around us. So, we are not going to be able to increase our herd size. But we needed to look at what else we could do to continue a cash flow. We are working toward a sixth generation on the farm and we wanted to make sure we could figure out a way to leave the farm to our children and for them to leave it to their kids. That's when we decided to make ice cream. We have been doing that for 13 years and in two of those years. had it not been for the store, we would have had to sell the cows because milk prices were so terribly low there was no way to keep a cash flow and keep the farm in operation. In that respect, the ice cream store has saved the dairy. Unfortunately, we're going through another spell like that.

### Does the saying, "Get big or get out" apply to today's dairy business or is there still a place for smaller family dairy farms?

Larger farms can often absorb some of the cost per cow it takes to operate. There is efficiency in size for some farmers, where if you get bigger some of your cost is spread out. But I'm worried that even those folks are going to be struggling this time. You have to grow if you have three children that were raised on the dairy and someday want to take it over. You can't feed three families on 100 cows. The problem is. the dairy farmer is getting older and older and many of their children don't want to come back to the farm. It isn't easy but it is a way of life that we have been associated with and proud to be that. There's nothing better than the product we produce and my children were so involved and wanted to keep the dairy going to keep it going and do anything they needed to do in the years ahead to make sure we have it.

### As a dairy producer, what are your thoughts about where you are in the business and what lies ahead?

For our family, having the value added products and the tours are ways we are trying to make a living and we have been very fortunate in that respect. That part of the business has helped us weather some of the problems in the dairy industry. Last year we had over 8,000 students come here so we can show them what agriculture is all about. At the end of the day they go home knowing that milk, ice cream and cheese they get at the store comes from the cows first. This year we will produce 20,000 gallons of ice cream. It has been a blessing for us. But it's difficult to see some of the dairy farm managers, and we have some fantastic managers out there, struggle right now. Overall, it's not an easy problem to fix, but I hope we can figure out something in the months and years ahead or many dairy producers will go out of business. They're doing everything they can to stay because there's a common thread among the dairy farmers of today. They all love their animals and they love what they're doing.





## 4-H Students seek the "Cure" for Country Hams

My Grandaddy says he always..." That's probably a phrase you don't hear youngsters using very much, but when Commonwealth 4-H kids start getting country hams ready for the Kentucky State Fair, it pops up frequently.

Country hams are a strong tradition in Kentucky and it's one being perpetuated thanks to the Kentucky 4-H Country Ham program which is reinforcing that tradition while encouraging some creativity.

*"We have people that try different things every year,"* says Leslie Bullock, a Franklin County extension agent who works with the 4-H program.

She notes the experimentation might be as simple as cutting away fat or shortening the hock or even where the hams hang in the barn.

"They all try different things, whether it be from experience or from people telling them 'this is the best way to do it.'"

Franklin County teams with Woodford and Anderson counties each year to conduct the program, hanging the hams in a small, dedicated barn behind the Woodford County extension office. State Fair prep takes place in the basement of the Woodford offices.

The whole process starts about February each year as the University of Kentucky meats lab sources hundreds of hams for projects in each county. Each student gets two "green" hams to work with. One will eventually be the State Fair entry, while the other is prepared as a back-up, should a problem arise with one of the hams during the curing process.

If all goes well, both hams are available to the student, for private use or to be offered for sale after the competition. Some counties include



prize winning hams in their annual 4-H/ FFA livestock sales.

Woodford County extension agent Sarah Redmond says they encourage participants to sell at least one ham to get back the investment they made at the beginning of the project or to prepare for next year's contest.

"They can have that money to buy more hams next year or invest in another 4-H project," she says.

"People contact the extension office every year wanting to buy the hams," Bullock points out.

A lot of work goes into preparing the end product, but there's another element to the project that gets just as much attention. During the fair, the students give a short speech before a panel of judges and have the opportunity to earn a separate ribbon for exhibiting their ham knowledge and public presentation skills. "Every year we have two topics, one for junior level and one for senior level," says Franklin County participant Emma Boebinger. "You have to give a three to five-minute speech in front of two or three judges."

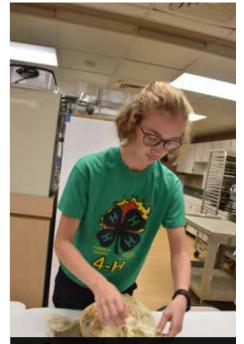
Bullock explains that there are three separate ways to win.

"You have a placing on your speech, a placing on your ham and then there is an overall category, too."

Not only do participants have to cure the hams and write the speeches, there's a classroom element as well.

"They all have to have six hours of education through the 4-H livestock project," Bullock explains.

Any project that combines food safety, animal science and communications sounds like a real Blue Ribbon winner.



Emma Boebinger, Franklin County 4-H, prepares to clean a ham



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