

Kentucky

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2017 Kentucky
Harvest Update

Kentucky State Fair
in Review

The Farm Bill and Finances:
A Candid Conversation

SEPTEMBER 2017

solar generation



Cooperative Solar

solar power from your local electric cooperative



KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU NEWS
Volume 16 | No. 7
September 2017

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Cover photo by: Tim Thornberry
Burley tobacco in Harrison County

Interior graphics by Melissa LaRoche

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With the diversification that has come to Kentucky agriculture over the past 20 years, has come a multitude of harvesting periods depending on what crops or produce you're growing. But for the most part, this time of year is still considered our traditional harvest season.

We see tobacco hanging in barns across the state, a wheat crop that is in the books, and combines in the field beginning to bring in this year's corn harvest. Soybeans will soon follow and let's not forget about this year's hay crop that is so valuable to our farm families.

By all indications, 2017 looks to be a banner year. According to the latest information from our friends at the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Kentucky's soybean crop will increase by 10 percent over last year's if predictions hold. In fact, with an estimated 52 bushels per acre and a total production of 98.3 million bushels, this would be a record harvest.

Kentucky's corn growers are also looking at a good crop. While overall production is expected to decrease slightly from last year, the estimated yield of 171 bushels per acre is an increase of 12 bushels over the 2016 corn harvest.

Tobacco producers are looking at a better year expecting to rebound from a very tough growing season in 2016. Kentucky burley production is supposed to increase by 12 percent overall from last year's numbers with a yield increase of 250 pounds per acre. Dark fire-cured tobacco production is forecast to increase by 46 percent while the dark air-cured tobacco crop could likely increase by 76 percent over last year.

Our production methods seem to get better every year and our farm families continue to produce for the ever-increasing need of food, fiber and fuel. But one thing hasn't changed; the necessity for quality workers during specific times of the year helping to get crops planted and, as is the case now, getting them harvested.

For the most part, we get much of that needed workforce from migrant laborers. With that said, adequate labor has been a tough issue for Kentucky's agriculture industry as well as for farmers and ranchers throughout the country. And without improvements to our existing immigration laws, that situation is likely to continue.

Kentucky Farm Bureau supports immigration reform that includes restructuring the current guest worker H-2A program to streamline the process making it more reliable, economical and simple for farmers to participate.

This is a priority at both the state and national levels for Farm Bureau. Without a solid, workable system, harvest season becomes a nightmare for our producers who depend on their crops to stay on the farm.

Being strong advocates with a unified voice throughout the year is a must and hopefully will lead to a better system and less worry during this season and all seasons.

Mark Haney
President
Kentucky Farm Bureau

2017 County Annual Meetings

All times are local

Ballard County

August 29, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
Blue Grass Restaurant

Breckinridge County

September 26, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
Breckinridge County Extension office

Bullitt County

September 16, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
Bullitt County Extension office

Caldwell County

September 26, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Princeton UK Research Center

Calloway County

September 6, 2017, 7:00 p.m.
Calloway County Farm Bureau office

Floyd County

October 19, 2017, 7:00 p.m.
Jenny Wiley State Park

Franklin County

October 3, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Franklin County Extension office

Fulton County

August 25, 2017, 2:00 p.m.
Fulton County Farm Bureau office

Garrard County

September 26, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Forks of Dix River Baptist
Church Life Center

Grant County

September 8, 2017, 5:00 p.m.
Alpine Hills Dairy Farm, Crittenden

Grayson County

September 27, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
Centre on Main in Leitchfield

Hardin County

September 15, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Central Hardin High School

Harlan County

September 16, 2017, noon
Harlan Co Farm Bureau office

Hickman County

August 21, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
Hickman County Extension office

Jefferson County

November 7, 2017, 7:30 p.m.
Jefferson County Farm Bureau office

LaRue County

September 21, 2017, 7:00 p.m.
LaRue County Farm Bureau office

Lawrence County

October, 17, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
Down Home Grill, Louisa

Livingston County

September 29, 2017, 7:00 p.m.
Livingston County Extension office

Lyon County

September 15, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
Lee Jones Convention Center

Marion County

October 9, 2017, 7:00 p.m.
Knights of Columbus in Lebanon

Marshall County

Date TBA 6:00 p.m.
Marshall County Farm Bureau office

McCracken County

October 3, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
St. John's Knights of Columbus Building

Nelson County

October 10, 2017, 7:00 p.m.
Nelson County Civic Center

Owen County

September 15, 2017, noon until 4 p. m.
Business meeting at 4:30 p.m.
Owen County Farm Bureau office

Pike County

September 21, 2017, 6-8pm
Hilton Garden Inn in Pikeville

Pulaski County

October 10, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Southwestern High School

Spencer County

September 25, 2017, 7:00 p.m.
Spencer County Extension office

Taylor County

September 11, 2017, 7:30 p.m.
Taylor County Farm Bureau office

Washington County

September 28, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Mackville Community Center

Woodford County

September 19, 2017, 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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comment COLUMN



At the recent Kentucky Farm Bureau Country Ham Breakfast, I enjoyed spending time with KFB members to hear your concerns. Kentucky's farmers and farm families are a major driver of our state's economy, and with your help, I will continue to advocate for our shared agricultural values in Washington.

Under my leadership, the Republican Senate is working to undo the regulatory damage of the Obama Administration. With a new Administration, we are supporting jobs, economic growth, and the middle class. One of these regulations, the "Waters of the U.S." rule, threatened Kentucky agriculture by extending the federal government to just about every pothole, ditch, and puddle throughout the country. I proudly sponsored legislation to overturn this regulation, and I fully support the Trump Administration's efforts to stop it. In addition, your Republican-led Congress has passed 14 separate pieces of legislation that have reversed major Obama-era regulations.

I'm also committed to comprehensive tax reform, which represents the single most important action Congress can take to put our economy back on the right track. Together, congressional leaders and members of the Administration have identified overarching principles for tax reform, which include providing relief to families and businesses through simplifying the tax code, allowing unprecedented capital expensing, prioritizing permanence, and encouraging the return of jobs and overseas profits. As you know, I am also a firm opponent of the death tax, which will continue to be a part of the tax reform discussion moving forward. In short, we are working to make your taxes lower, simpler, and fairer.

Throughout my career, I have been a fierce advocate for free and fair trade. Last Congress, I led the passage of a six-year Trade Promotion Authority bill, which gives the President the ability to negotiate strong free – and fair – trade deals and allows them to receive an up-or-down vote in Congress. More recently, I contacted U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to reiterate the economic benefits of the robust growth of Kentucky's exports over the last decade. I emphasized the importance of maximizing opportunities for Kentucky exports, including from our farmers, as the Administration considers updating our international trade policies.

Additionally, as the U.S. Senate begins negotiation of the 2018 Farm Bill, I assure you that I will continue to advocate for farm families and rural communities. The Senate Agriculture Committee has held a number of hearings to review our current agriculture programs and policies and to highlight which programs work and which need to be updated. Throughout this process, the concerns of Kentucky farmers remain foremost in my mind.

I have served on the Agriculture Committee since I was first elected to the Senate, and it is a position I'm honored to still hold today. I will continue to advocate for your priorities in Washington, and I appreciate all that KFB does to support me in that endeavor. Please share your thoughts by writing a letter, emailing through my website (mcconnell.senate.gov), or calling my office.

Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate Majority Leader



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Record High Potential Exists for 2017 Soybean Production

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS) August Crop Production report shows state soybean production is forecast to be 10 percent higher than 2016. This month's report is the first of the season to forecast row crop production.

"Prospects for corn, soybeans and tobacco look promising at this point in the growing season," said David Knopf, director of the NASS Eastern Mountain Regional Office in Kentucky. "Favorable weather conditions have provided adequate soil moisture, heat and limited disease pressure. With the start of harvest still a couple weeks away, it's too early to get really excited about the yields, but crop condition ratings have been as good or better than last year throughout the growing season."

Soybean production for Kentucky is forecast at 98.3 million bushels, an increase of 10 percent from 2016.

"Conditions remain favorable for soybean production," Knopf said. "If the yield forecast holds, it will be a record high yield and production."

Soybean yield is estimated at 52 bushels per acre, up two bushels from a year ago. Acreage for harvest as beans was estimated at 1.89 million acres, up 110,000 acres from the previous year. U.S. soybean production is forecast at 4.38 billion bushels, up two percent from last year. Based on Aug. 1, conditions, yields are expected to average 49.4 bushels per acre, down 2.7 bushels from last year. Area for harvest is forecast at 88.7 million acres, unchanged from June but up seven percent from 2016.

"Tobacco yield prospects in 2017 have rebounded from the 2015 and 2016 crops," Knopf said. "The two previous years' crops suffered from too much rain."

Kentucky burley tobacco production is forecast at 120 million pounds, up 12 percent from 2016. Yield is projected at 2,000 pounds per acre, up 250 pounds from the 2016 crop. Harvested acreage was estimated at 60,000 acres, down 1,000 acres from last year's crop. For the burley producing states production is forecast at 160 million pounds, up 14 percent from last year. Burley growers plan to harvest 80,500 acres, up one percent from 2016. Yields were expected to average 1,984 pounds per acre, up 237 pounds from last year.

Production of Kentucky dark fire-cured tobacco is forecast at 32 million pounds, up 46 percent from the previous year. Dark air-cured tobacco production is forecast at 13.5 million pounds, up 76 percent from last year.

OTHER CROP PRODUCTION FORECASTS

Corn production in Kentucky is forecast at 215 million bushels, down three percent from the previous crop. Yield is estimated at 171 bushels per acre, up 12 bushels from the 2016 level. Acres for harvest as grain were estimated at 1.26 million acres, down 140,000 acres from 2016. The U.S. corn production is forecast at 14.2 billion bushels, down seven percent from 2016. Based on conditions as of Aug. 1, yields are expected to average

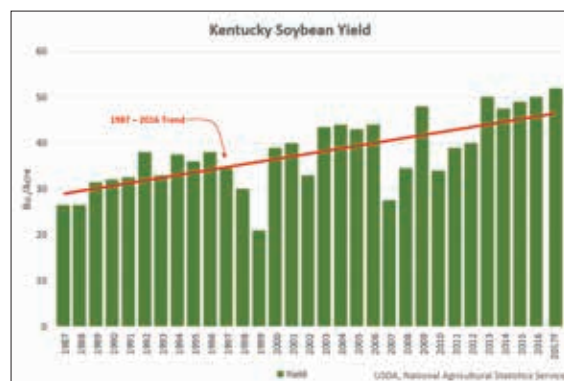
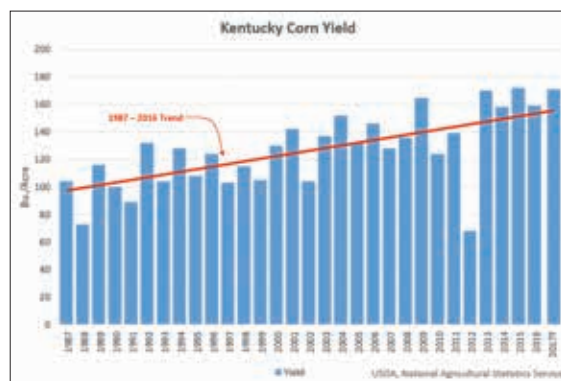
169.5 bushels per acre, down 5.1 bushels from 2016. Area harvested for grain is forecast at 83.5 million acres, unchanged from the June forecast but down four percent from 2016.

Kentucky farmers expect to harvest 25.5 million bushels of winter wheat during 2017. The expected crop for 2017 would be down 20 percent from the previous year. Growers expect a yield of 75 bushels per acre, down five bushels from 2016 and down two bushels from July. Farmers expect to harvest 340,000 acres for grain. Winter wheat production for the Nation was forecast at 1.29 billion bushels, down 23 percent from 2016. The United States yield is forecast at 50 bushels per acre, up 0.3 bushels from last month and down 5.3 bushels from last year. The expected area to be harvested for grain or seed totals 25.8 million acres, down 15 percent from last year.

Production of hay by Kentucky farmers is forecast to be down from last year due to lower yields. Alfalfa hay production is forecast at 450,000 tons, 17 percent below the 2016 level. Other hay production is estimated at 5.04 million tons, unchanged from last year.

All reports are available on the NASS website: www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Calendar/reports_by_date.php.

For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Kentucky Field Office at (800) 928-5277, or visit: www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Kentucky/.



KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU at the State Fair

2017 Miss Kentucky Molly Malney

2017 Kentucky State Fair and KFB:

The Tradition Continues



Central Bank took home the Grand Champion Country Ham with a high bid of \$325,000.

It just wouldn't be the same State Fair without a Kentucky Farm Bureau Day. This long-time tradition has become a staple at the 11-day celebration with the annual KFB Country Ham Breakfast and Charity Auction kicking off a day of events. Afterwards, the recognition of the top Pride of the Counties exhibit, the Gospel Music Showcase, the KFB Picnic and the organization's participation in the 4-H and FFA Sale of Champions, completes the list of the day's activities.

KFB has a presence every single day of the fair; most notably at the entrance to Freedom Hall with Freddy Farm Bureau, the official greeter of the fair and a tradition all his own. This year marked the 60th anniversary of Freddy's presence at the event. The occasion was observed on opening day with a celebration that included a host of speakers, members of the press, countless dignitaries, including the entire State Fair Board and of course, cake for everyone.

The event was topped off with remarks from Freddy himself. He told the crowd how much fun he has had visiting with the millions of fairgoers he has met over the years.

"While many things have changed since the late 1950's, when I arrived, one thing has remained the same; I am here to make everyone I see feel welcome and to provide a little information about the fair, Farm Bureau and agriculture to those who inquire," he said.

Freddy has done just that and KFB Day showcases all those things that are important to the fair and to the state.

The 54th Annual Ham Breakfast is an example of that. This year's event not only brought together yet another sell-out crowd to enjoy a meal of Kentucky-produced food, the country ham auction for charity brought a top bid of \$325,000 for the Kentucky State Fair's Grand Champion Country Ham.

KFB President Mark Haney kicked off the remarks portion of the program. "Along with other agriculture

organizations, we are committed to improving lives in rural Kentucky. We love Kentucky, because we believe in Kentucky," he said. "We believe in our people. We believe in the core values that Kentuckians have. We believe in the work ethic of Kentucky's farmers. We believe in the importance of Kentucky to the nation, and to the world."

In addition to the 1,600 attendees being served a Kentucky Proud breakfast, they heard from top elected officials, including Governor Matt Bevin, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles and Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer.

But the star of the show, as is the case each year, was the Grand Champion Ham and the auction that traditionally highlights the breakfast. Coming in with the highest bid was Central Bank which has taken away the prized ham for the second year in a row. This year's ham weighed in at a record 21 pounds and was produced by Broadbent B & B Foods of Kuttawa,



Photo on left: Miss Kentucky Molly Matney. Top Photo right: The Lindsey Family won top honors at the KFB Gospel Music Showcase. Bottom photo right: Woodford County was recognized as having the best Pride of the Counties exhibit.



Kentucky. Broadbent has produced the winning ham 17 times, a record in itself.

Luther Deaton, Jr., Chairman, President and CEO of Central Bank placed the winning bid. He said the business believes in philanthropy and giving back to the community whenever possible.

"For many years we have been working alongside the Kentucky Farm Bureau as they make Kentucky a better place to live. I'm excited that we have been able to participate in today's event that (KFB) graciously hosts," he said after the breakfast had concluded.

Central Bank has chosen to donate the proceeds from the winning bid to the Gatton College of Business and Economics at the University of Kentucky, University of Kentucky Athletics, the University of Kentucky Hospital, and the Garvice Kincaid Scholarship Foundation.

Since the Ham Breakfast began in 1964, the event has raised more than \$10 million for local charities and nonprofit organizations.

From country ham to county pride, KFB leaders paid a visit to the Pride of the Counties area to present an award to the best exhibit. Each year counties from across the state bring an array of

items, crafts and displays to the fair that represents their home communities.

Woodford County took home the top honor this year. KFB's Executive Committee along with KFB Insurance CEO and Executive Vice-President John Sparrow presented the award. He said each year county residents who volunteer to staff the exhibits make their way to the fair in an effort to show all that's good in their hometowns.

"The Pride of the Counties area literally takes visitors to communities across the state to experience the sights, sounds and all things that make each individual community unique," he said. "KFB Insurance is proud to sponsor this award each year and we are even more proud to be a part of these communities, having offices in every county in the state."

Of course, no Kentucky State Fair is complete without some of the best music to be found anywhere. Each year KFB sponsors a gospel music event that is one of the most attended at the fair. The Gospel Music Showcase featured talented musicians and groups competing for the top honor. This year, the Lindsey Family, a singing group from Green County

won the competition, performed at the KFB picnic and will also perform at this year's annual meeting.

In addition to the music, this year's KFB picnic brought Farm Bureau members together to enjoy a good meal, to hear from KFB leadership and enjoy an afternoon of friendship and fellowship. Attendees also heard from the 2016 Outstanding Farm Bureau Youth's Randa Morris, of Garrard County and Jacob Patterson, of Pulaski County.

David S. Beck, KFB Executive Vice-President told the picnic crowd how important Farm Bureau members are to the organization and how glad he was to see so many in attendance.

"Our members are the heart of this organization and the State Fair is a great place to showcase all that is good in Kentucky," he said. "And KFB is certainly a part of all that is good in Kentucky."

Beck also recognized and expressed appreciation to the Kentucky State Fair Board, management and staff, as well as Agriculture Commissioner Quarles and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture staff, "for all they do collectively to execute an 11-day Kentucky State Fair promoting an understanding and promotion of Kentucky agriculture."

Sale of Champions:

A Long History of Best Animals and Top Exhibitors at State Fair



McKalyn Shelton, of Bourbon County, holds her Grand Champion Steer for a photo op during the Sale. Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance, Hinton Mills, Heritage Farms, Paris Stockyard and Boehringer-Ingelheim were purchasers of the steer.

For many of the folks who make their way to the Kentucky State Fair each year, they come to enjoy the food, the music, exhibits, the rides and the atmosphere in general. But for the thousands of young people who are there to participate in the many agriculture animal shows, this is Super Bowl time for them. They have worked hard since last year's fair to make it back with hopes of not only doing well or winning their class, but making it to the Sale of Champions.

According to information from the Kentucky State Fair, each year, "Eight 4-H and FFA exhibitors sell their champion livestock to hometown and national supporters. The animals represent the Grand and Reserve Grand Champions in each of their respective species as selected during the Fair's livestock show."

As the auction begins, the group of exhibitors line up across the sales ring holding their championship banners and are introduced to the packed New Market Arena. There is normally a standing-room-only crowd on hand to watch as each young person brings out their animals one at a time to be auctioned.

Over the years, ag organizations and individuals have stepped up to participate and bid on these champion

animals. This year, their participation helped the sale top more than \$102,000.

Long-time Kentucky State Fair Board Member Bill Tolle of Mason County first brought the suggestion up about involving these organizations and businesses to make the show better for the youth involved.

"The sale is different now than it used to be. There used to be two shows; a 4-H and FFA sale. But after a not-so-good sale in 1992, I went to Harold Workman, who was the Fair Board Chairman at the time, and said there needed to be a change and the first thing we need to do is combine the two shows," he said.

Tolle, who served on the Board from 1990 until 2016, also suggested to Workman that the State Fair had a responsibility to those young people to provide money for the sale.

"One way or another, we needed to go out and contact people and businesses to get donations," he said.

Tolle said Workman fully supported him and the idea. Since then the sale has grown each year to the point it is today.

"The sale has been averaging over \$100,000 for the last 15 or 20 years and that means these young people, probably 1,500 to 2,000 of them, have received over \$1.5 million," he said.

Proceeds of the sale break down like this: 60 percent goes to the exhibitor of the specific animal; 30 percent goes to the class winners in the species; and 10 percent of each sale is divided equally between the Kentucky FFA and Kentucky 4-H.

"Every bit of the money goes back to the students and helps both the 4-H and FFA programs," said Tolle. "I've always said our most important commodity is our young people because they are the future of agriculture and the future leaders of this country. We definitely need to promote and support these young people."

In addition to the support Workman showed to the initiative, Tolle said it has been successful because of the support given by the participating individuals and businesses, noting their generosity has been great over the years.

Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) is one of those organizations that has been a long-time supporter of the Sale of Champions.

KFB First Vice-President Eddie Melton was on hand this year during the sale to bid on behalf of KFB Insurance which, along with Hinton Mills, Heritage Farms, Paris Stockyard and Boehringer-Ingelheim purchased the Grand Champion Steer exhibited by McKalyn Shelton of Bourbon County.



Photo on left: Kasey Craig, of Jessamine County, waits along with her Grand Champion Lamb to enter the sales ring. Photo on top right: All eight of the 4-H and FFA Champions were introduced before the sale. Photo on bottom right: KFB First Vice-President Eddie Melton received a little bidding help from his granddaughter during the Sale.



He said these students exemplify the character that is created in a young person who is involved in showing, and agriculture in general.

"The young people who participate in these shows and in their other agricultural related projects learn so much including responsibility, leadership, a work ethic and a compassion for others along with their animals," he said. "It's an honor to represent KFB Insurance and their long-term involvement in this program. It's good to know through our support, along with other organizations and individuals, these students have the skills to remain champions in everything they do."

Shelton said it is the dream of all those coming to show at the State Fair to make it to the Sale of Champions.

"I've shown cattle for eight years and probably the biggest thing I have learned from it is responsibility," she said. "You have to be with them a lot and it's a very time consuming project but if you put the effort into it, your hard work with pay off like it has for me."

This year marked the first time Shelton has made it to the top sale at the fair.

"It has been a lifelong dream of mine and from the first day I started I always said I wanted to be in the Sale of Champions," she added.





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WAVE Seeks to Make Agriculture an Economic Driver in River Counties



Many rural communities have felt the sting when a long-time local business closes shop, leaving these small towns reeling emotionally and economically from the loss of jobs and a sense of security.

The Mississippi River counties of Fulton, Ballard, Carlisle and Hickman have likely endured more losses than most as several companies in the area, with long histories connected to those communities, have closed over the past several years for various reasons.

The job losses have left voids in the local economies and some of the highest unemployment rates in the state. But these river communities have a silver lining in that they are often among the top agricultural producing counties in the state.

Couple that with being located next to the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, one of the busiest water transportation areas in the world, and a highway system that has expanded over the last few years, opportunity seems to be knocking; at least that is what local officials are hoping for.

The West Kentucky Alliance for a Vibrant Economy (WAVE) initiative was

born out of this desire to be proactive in the area's approach to economic development. One resource to help in this initiative is the use of the local agriculture industry as an economic driver in the wake of these business losses. And it just may be what is needed to shore up the local economies.

Recently, an event, that is to become an annual affair, took place to bring attention to the area and to showcase agriculture as that potential economic leader.

Justin Puckett, the Kentucky Farm Bureau agency manager in Ballard County said all four of the river counties' Farm Bureaus stepped up to the plate to help sponsor the WAVE River Counties Ag Day as a way to showcase the area and the good things going on there, as it related to its rich agriculture region and the potential for new businesses.

"We have so much hidden beauty in this area and so many resources that we want the world to know about," he said. "With the backing of Farm Bureau, we went to work."

That work brought not only Farm Bureau to the table but 60 different agriculturally related businesses were

on hand for the Ag Day event along with several hundred attendees from across the area.

WAVE actually got its start nearly a year ago when community and business leaders came together to search ways to get their local economies moving again. Since then, many discussions have taken place and ideas have come about to remedy the situation. In doing so, this dialogue has stretched from the fertile fields in the West to the Governor's Office which has been supportive of the initiative.

Bob Wilson, who is the Director of Pupil Personnel with Ballard County Public Schools, helped with the Ag Day celebration and has been involved in WAVE. He described the initiative's mission with the word "growth."

"It's growth in our river counties and to promote the resources we have, and we do have a lot of great resources here, including the confluence of the rivers to four major interstates within 30 minutes of our location," said Wilson. "We also have great educational facilities throughout the river counties. Our county schools do well academically. We have Murray State University which



nationally, has the seventh largest enrollment in its agriculture college of all non-land grant universities and West Kentucky Community and Technical College, one of the top three technical colleges in the country."

Wilson added that because of the job losses, many of the young people are graduating from schools in the region and leaving the area in order to find more opportunities.

"For the most part, I really think our young people want to stay in our four river county communities but they can't because we don't have the jobs to keep them," he said. "And once we lose them, we lose generations of families who never come back."

Wilson thinks with the WAVE initiative and with the help of local governments and state officials, this situation can be turned around.

Puckett said he thinks agriculture is likely the most overlooked resource in the area, for those outside of the ag community.

"When you start talking about economic development I think it is vastly overlooked and we, in agriculture, can reach out to and educate people about the opportunities in partnering with the industry and how it can evolve and be an economic success for everyone," he said.

But when it comes to agriculture being a leading industry in this region, Puckett noted that doesn't necessarily mean it's all about physical farming.

"As ag labor gets smaller because technology becomes more advanced, we will need to lean on that fact to grow those other jobs in agriculture," he said. "Technology seems to be the future in the industry."



Top photos: Sixty different agriculturally related businesses were on hand for the River Counties Ag Day event along with several hundred attendees from across the area. Bottom photo: Bob Wilson addresses the crowd at the first annual River Counties Ag Day.

Wilson said this area is open for any and all businesses to come to the area but points out that agriculture is the background and the backbone of the communities in the area.

"There are so many products that come from agriculture and we are looking for that niche to expound on; and what we can do with the vast array of ag products in our river counties" he said. "Of course now, we're starting to see that Murray State University School of Agriculture is one of the leaders in the nation of hemp production with test

plots in Ballard and Hickman Counties. We are certainly looking at that. We are open and we are willing because we want to build our economy and keep our communities vibrant."

At the end of the day, WAVE leaders and the communities in these counties as a whole, hope this initiative will connect the world of agriculture and the world of economic development in an effort to bridge a gap between the two and introduce these new found opportunities not only to the region but to the world.

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Kentucky Agriculture Leaders Bring Message to GSP Students

Each year, Governor's Scholar Program (GSP) students spend a portion of their summer in a state university setting as a part of a program meant to enhance their civic and leadership skills. These students are nominated by their high schools and represent the top of their respective classes.

Murray State University (MSU) hosted approximately 350 GSP students this summer and, in addition to their regular activities, presented them an opportunity to hear from some of Kentucky's top agricultural leaders in a one-night, question and answer session.

David S. Beck, Executive Vice-President of Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB), Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles and Warren Beeler, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy (GOAP) spoke to the students regarding involvement in the agriculture industry and the importance of leadership and education.

MSU Dean of the Hutson School of Agriculture Dr. Tony Brannon served as moderator of the discussion. He began by asking how many of the students were involved in agriculture. After seeing only a few hands go up, Brannon then asked how many were affected by agriculture. Nearly every hand rose making clear Brannon's point; everyone is affected by agriculture.

Quarles began the conversation by telling students how effective U.S. agriculture is from a production standpoint.

"We don't need a lot of people to grow food and that is a direct result of how efficient, how productive and how good our farmers are here in the United States," he said. "To put that into perspective, about one percent of the population in this country farms and we not only feed America, we feed the world."

Quarles pointed out how important it is to have an abundant, safe food supply telling students that the rules of a society break down quickly in countries where there is not enough food.

He noted that it's important to stay



Pictured from left: David S. Beck, Warren Beeler and Ryan Quarles.

connected with the roots of agriculture as well as teach younger people about the industry and civic responsibility through programs like 4-H and FFA.

"One of my first trips to Washington D.C. was with 4-H and one of my first trips across the globe was with FFA," said Quarles. "So, by the time I went to the University of Kentucky, I had an interest in politics."

He emphasized to the students the importance of becoming familiar with their policy makers, because a small idea may turn into something big that changes society. "I suggest that you not sit on the sidelines but actually be involved," he said.

Quarles also told the students that as agriculture changes in this state, there will be a reliance on the next generation.

"We have to have a new crop of young people getting interested," he said. "It's my vision to make Kentucky the go-to place for emerging ag innovation, for ag technology."

Beeler also stressed to students how important it is to have young people involved in the agriculture industry in a world full of technological advances.

"We need engineers and geneticists. We need scientists and people who know how to think. Is anyone in this room

interested in robotics or computers? You need to understand that is agriculture," he told the students.

Beeler also relayed several examples to them about how today's technology is used on the farm and the needs of the future, as it relates to the agriculture industry.

"If the numbers hold true of what the population is going to be in the future, we need to produce 70 percent more than what we produce today. We need some help," he said. "Do you know what scares me about this job I have? Am I smart enough? Am I opened-minded enough to see agriculture as it is changing and walking through the door. What's interesting about this job is not what we know; it's what we don't know."

Beck began his discussion by congratulating the students on their achievement of being accepted into the Governor's Scholar Program and talked about the importance of agriculture in everyone's life as well as good leadership.

"Of the billions of people in the world today, we all have something in common no matter what we do or where we live; we have to eat," he said. "So we have to have the ability to feed ourselves and in the future we'll need to do it with fewer inputs such as land, water and labor."

Beck added that it will take research and scientific advances in order to do that; all the more important to have bright young people become involved in the agriculture industry.

"We've made great advances in food production in this country. But we must be able to feed ourselves; we have to maintain the ability to do that," he said. "I have the confidence that we will, through technology and research."

Beck also noted that a concern for him, as a public policy person is, will over regulation of the industry keep this necessary, high level of production from happening.

"We have to have regulations at all levels but I have seen many good ideas proposed by government contain language that would hurt agriculture if passed," he said. "So we need to have people in the industry and advocating for it who are knowledgeable."

In discussing leadership, Beck told students that often it takes courage to stand up for what they believe in.

"I encourage you, regardless of your profession; regardless of what career you choose; regardless of where you decide to make your home; define the things you are passionate about and what you think you can do to make a difference. Have the courage to step up and get involved," he said.

FROM THE STUDENTS

While most of the GSP students who came to Murray State for the summer weren't "agriculturally involved," they were able to walk away from this session with information about why the industry is important to everyone.

Nathan Zou is a student at Kentucky Country Day School in Jefferson County and one of the non-ag related students who attended the convocation session. He said the many different subjects presented as part of the overall Governor's Scholars Program has been very educational.

"I was kind of excited to learn we were going to hear about agriculture. To be honest, I first thought it would be just about people farming," he said. "But I actually took notes when Commissioner Quarles talked about food security being an issue related to national security. I hadn't really considered that food is the most basic of things a country needs."

It was something I just took for granted."

Zou added that the session opened his eyes about the impact agriculture has, not just for the people who are in the business, but for all the people it affects.

Ty Allen, a student at Madison Southern High School in Berea, also attended the session and was one of the few who comes from an agricultural background. He said it was amazing to have all those students, not familiar with the ag industry, together to hear from these industry leaders.

"People need to understand how involved in agriculture they really are. Everything a farmer does is derived from the consumer and as young people we are consumers," he said. "I try my best to

be an advocate for agriculture but there are always ways for me to improve."

Allen, who was also an IFAL participant this year, added that he thinks some of the students that attended this session will become ag advocates, as well.

The Governor's Scholars Program began in 1983 out of a concern by state leaders that the "best and brightest" students were leaving Kentucky to explore educational opportunities in other state without first understanding how great their opportunities were at home. Each year approximately 2,000 applications are received for the program with 1,000 being selected.

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Markets

2ND HALF 2017 CATTLE PRICES TO WEAKEN

USDA economists are forecasting weaker cattle prices during the second half of 2017. The larger than expected number of calves placed in feedlots in the second quarter should increase marketings late in the third quarter and early in the fourth quarter. Thus, the third-quarter price for 5-area Choice steers is forecast at \$113-\$117 per cwt and at \$110-\$116 per cwt in the fourth quarter. Similarly, with more cattle available outside feedlots and lower fed cattle prices, the average price for feeder steers weighing 750-800 pounds is forecast lower in the third and fourth quarters to \$146-\$150 and \$141-\$147, respectively.

U.S. LOSING CORN EXPORT MARKET SHARE

In last month's Feed Outlook, USDA reported that more than 80 percent of the world's corn is produced by eight countries; the United States is by far the largest producer with a 35-percent share. China is the next largest producer, with a share of 21 percent. The U.S. is also the largest corn exporter, even though it is projected to export only 13 percent of its corn production. However, some major exporters produce much less corn than the U.S. but export a much larger share of their corn output because of low domestic use. Brazil, Argentina, and Ukraine are projected to account for 9,

4, and 3 percent of world corn output in 2017/18, while their world corn export shares are much higher at 22, 18, and 14 percent, making them the largest corn exporters after the U.S. These three countries are projected to collectively account for more than half (55 percent) of world corn exports, supplanting the United States which used to have more than a 50-percent share in world corn trade. For perspective, at the beginning of this century, Brazil, Argentina, and Ukraine together produced less than 10 percent of the world's corn, with a collective share in global corn trade of about 20 percent. In the last decade, the combined corn area in Brazil, Argentina, and Ukraine has tripled. This point is reinforced by the fact that Ukraine, Argentina, and Brazil are expected to export 75, 69, and 37 percent of their respective corn output.

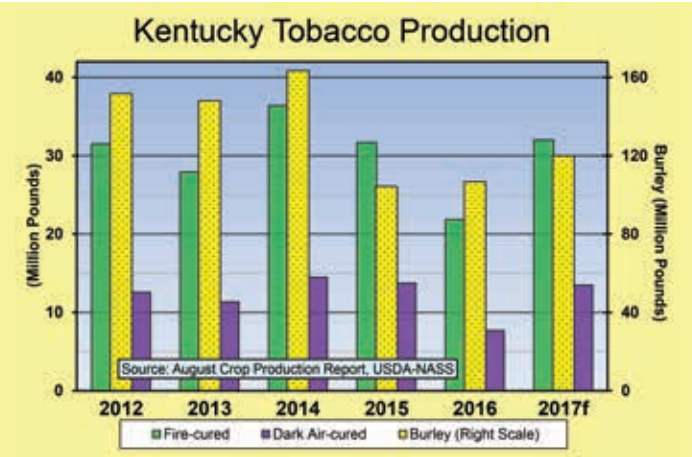
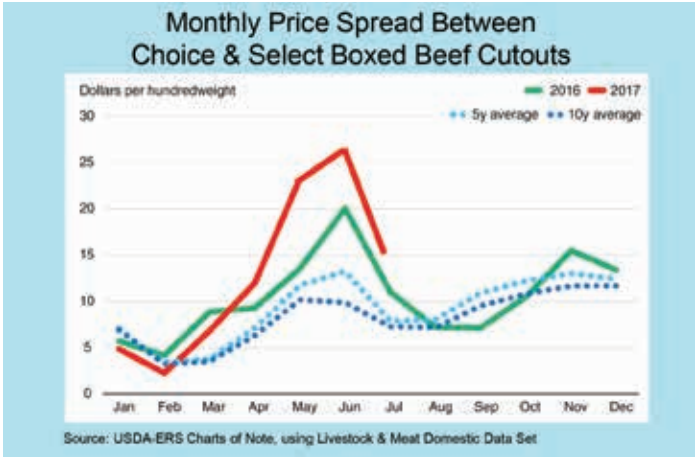
PER CAPITA FOOD USE OF WHEAT DROPS

Since 2014/15, total wheat food use in the United States has been on the decline. In 2014/15, U.S. food use was estimated at 958 million bushels, or 134.7 pound per capita flour consumption. In each subsequent year, both aggregate food use and per capita consumption have declined. In 2016/17, wheat food use is estimated at 949 million bushels, or 131.7 pounds per capita. In recent years, population growth in the U.S. has not been

enough to offset declining per capita consumption, the result of changing tastes and preferences. Wheat food use for the 2017/18 marketing year is projected at 950 million bushels.

FARMLAND CASH RENT NEAR STEADY

According to USDA, cash rent for Kentucky agricultural cropland for 2017 averaged \$145 per acre, up \$2.00 from 2016. The bordering states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Tennessee had average cropland rents of \$218, \$195, \$152 and \$98.50 per acre respectively. The national cropland average was \$136 per acre, unchanged from 2016. Pasture cash rent for Kentucky was \$25. Pasture cash rent in Illinois was \$38 per acre, Missouri was \$31 per acre and Tennessee was \$20 per acre. The national pasture rent was \$12.50 per acre, down \$0.50 per acre from 2016. Iowa had the highest pasture rent at \$54. USDA also released its Land Values 2017 Summary which shows land values near steady with 2016 values. The average value of U.S. cropland in 2017 is unchanged at \$4,090. Kentucky's cropland has an average value of \$3,850 per acre, up \$80 from last year and \$300 higher than estimated in 2014. The average value of U.S. pasture in 2017 is up 1.5 percent to \$1,350 per acre. Pasture in Kentucky is valued at \$2,760 per acre, up 1.1 percent from 2016.



Down the Backroads

By Tim Thornberry

Having spent several hours walking around the recent Kentucky State Fair, I experienced many sights including countless fairgoers taking selfies with Freddy Farm Bureau, the tears of a first time winner at the World Championship Horse Show and a champion ham that brought nearly 2,000 people and bidders together in an effort to help charitable causes across the state. And I have to mention the great food, some of which can only be found at the state fair. It truly is a unique and wonderful experience.

But my favorite part of the whole event has to be the show animals and the students who work so hard to get to this level. Having worked with our youngest son in showing pigs and horses (what a combination!) I know how much time, effort and energy they put in and what a thrill it is for them to be at the state fair.

Their job starts months before show season working with their animals daily; grooming and training and practicing with them; learning the rules of showmanship; animal care including proper diet; and working with others.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned in the show ring however, is how to win gracefully and not-win with dignity. Really, none of these students lose. But tangible blue ribbons can't be given to everyone.

Blue ribbons of a different kind come every day one of these young people gets up early, before school, to check on their animals. It comes at county fairs; a different one every week where they are qualifying just to get to the state fair. It comes when the weather is cold and they are out in the barn and when the weather is hot and they are still out in the barn.

Blue ribbons come at the end of the road when many of these animals

are sold in youth livestock sales across the state after show season which helps those students build their college funds. Because of those long days, weeks and months of making their animals and themselves the best they can be, these students learn valuable life lessons.

This year the state fair's Sale of Champions brought the winners from each show breed to the sales ring as is always does and, as always, the response was tremendous. Businesses and agriculture organizations support these young people year-in and year-out demonstrating every year how

caring this family called agriculture is.

From the minute a young person decides raising and showing their farm animals is something they want to do, they become champions. From the first time they step into a show ring, they become winners. From the first time they sell an animal, shed a tear and move on to the next season, they understand the animal agriculture cycle and how important it is to everyone.

I can't wait to see what great things these young people will do as they leave their show careers and head to their next great accomplishment, down the backroads.



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Maintaining Adequate Water Resources Remains a Top Priority at KFB

Over the past three decades, Kentucky has experienced at least five significant droughts resulting in immeasurable crop and livestock losses, often pitting urban and rural users against each other.

With that in mind, 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. This group's mission has been to devise plans that would combat water issues proactively as opposed to reacting to a situation once it has occurred.

Since that initiative began almost three years ago, much has happened to move water resource issues forward. The 2016 General Assembly session included legislation, which passed both chambers without any dissenting

votes, to create the Kentucky Water Resources Board (KWRB).

Specifically, HB 529 created the Board which is administered by the state's Energy and Environment Cabinet assiststhecabinetinconductingresearch and developing recommendations to enhance the quantity and 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.

Since then, the WMWG has been active in recommending programs and further initiatives as water resources remain a priority to the state's agriculture community.

WMWG Chair Steve Coleman, a retired Director of the Kentucky Division of Conservation, said the group is looking to recognize best practices on the farm related to water resource management.

"We are focusing much of our attention on identifying those on-farm best management practices that are very advantageous to capturing, trapping or holding water on the farm so it's available throughout the growing season or whenever the water is needed for that particular operation," he said.

With such a diverse group of individuals and organizations comprising the WMWG, networking opportunities have developed in its efforts to examine water management initiatives.

"We have a list of projects we are working on with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the University of Kentucky (UK), looking at 53 different best management practices that could be of aid or address a water concern to all farming operations," said Coleman. "We hope to soon have that list finalized somewhat, even though it will always be a work in progress."

Since its creation the KWRB worked

to put together a number of priority projects in an effort to pursue specific funding from various resources.

"From well-water monitoring and Kentucky Mesonet soil profile monitoring for drought concerns to looking at soil moisture issues and developing a statewide water management plan, there is a variety of plans that have been prioritized by the KWRB," said Coleman.

He credits many of the advancements on the water resources front with the hard work put in by the WMWG and its members whose efforts have coincided directly with the work of the KWRB.

"Today we may be very blessed with an abundance of water but those things can change drastically," said Coleman. "Being more efficient and better stewards of the water resources we have will pay dividends not only to agriculture but to all of the Commonwealth in the years to come."

David S. Beck, KFB Executive Vice-President said water resource management and working with the KWRB continues to be a priority at KFB.

"We see this as an opportunity to move Kentucky forward regarding sufficient future water needs and at the same time we continue to work with our Congressional delegation and agencies in Washington to secure funding to put together an effective partnership," he said. "For this initiative to reach its full potential, it's going to take cooperation and support at both the state and federal levels."

Beck said KFB has been pleased with the level of interest shown for the initiative so far and believes positive things will happen as it moves forward.

He also said the recent funding initiative from KFB to the UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Grain and Forage Center of Excellence will be a key component in helping that facility conduct research and educational opportunities that relate to being better prepared to have sufficient water.

"This is something that not only benefits rural communities but all citizens of Kentucky," said Beck.

COUNTY CORNER

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities



ANDERSON COUNTY

Pictured from left are Anderson County FB President Tim Dietrich and Agency Manager Chuck Thurman. Dietrich presented a gift to Thurman for his retirement effective August 25.



BOYD COUNTY

Boyd County President Ray Sammons showing FB member benefits at the local county fair.



CUMBERLAND COUNTY

The annual Cumberland County Farm Bureau Customer Appreciation Day was held on July 3.



GARRARD COUNTY

Congressman Brett Guthrie attended an Appreciation Dinner at the Garrard County Farm Bureau. He gave an update on important issues happening in Washington D.C.



OHIO COUNTY

Ohio County's annual meeting included guest speaker David S. Beck, KFB Executive Vice-president.



SHELBY COUNTY

Congressman Thomas Massie and John Wills of Shelby County FB during the KFB Congressional District 4 meeting.

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CANDID CONVERSATION

Bill Johnson, Farm Credit Mid-America

KFB Candid Conversation presents a discussion about the topical issues facing the agricultural industry in a question and answer format with a member of the agricultural community. In this column, Bill Johnson, President and CEO of Farm Credit Mid-America, talks about the importance of advocacy for financial programs in the farm bill. Farm Credit Mid-America is an agricultural lending cooperative owned and controlled by their customers and one of the largest associations within the Farm Credit System. Farm Credit Mid-America serves nearly 100,000 customers throughout Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee.

How do you approach advocacy at the national level?

To demonstrate our strong support for this farm bill on a national basis, we brought Farm Credit directors, leaders and customers from all over the country—over 600 people—to Washington to meet with representatives and senators. We had young farmers with us who shared what it's like to begin farming. They explained the challenges they're facing and how the farm bill affects things like having crop insurance as a safety net, which is really critical to all farmers. But when you think about young and beginning farmers, there's just a lot less ability for them to withstand a loss. Crop insurance is crucial to their farming operation's success and also impacts their ability to get credit.

From a financial standpoint, what are some of the more important components contained in the farm bill?

When you think about the financial aspects of the farm bill, crop insurance is a key piece that allows Farm Credit to continue to lend and help manage the risk for young and beginning farmers and farms of all sizes. With the change



in farm programs, crop insurance is now the safety net and is essential to farmers sustaining viable operations. Another thing we talked about is the importance of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and their loan programs. We

work with FSA, as well as several other lenders, in providing guarantees on loans to young and beginning farmers or farmers specializing in certain kinds of livestock. It is vitally important that these FSA guarantee programs get funding,

which is always a challenge. There are also some limits that were put on those programs originally, which are just not large enough for different types of operation today. Many years ago when these loans were first enacted, the limits allowed for loans that were good sized at that time. But today, the limits are outdated and do not allow for adequately meeting many farmers' needs. The importance of having the FSA programs adjusted to catch up with the growth of agriculture was another part of the conversations we had with legislators.

What else do you see as being important to farmers from a legislative angle?

An area that is very important to Kentucky is rural infrastructure, including adequate roads, highways, communications systems, rural health facilities and educational facilities. All of these are vital to our rural communities and small towns across the state. There's been a lot of talk in Congress about how we get reinvestment in rural areas. An infrastructure bill or part of the farm bill (related to infrastructure needs) would be a critical piece of helping the economy grow, especially in rural areas across our Commonwealth.

What is one of the most important reasons to get a farm bill in place?

Getting a new farm bill in place is vitally important because it will provide certainty and security to the agricultural marketplace, to farmers and ranchers and ultimately to the food supply for all our citizens. The reason so many of us traveled to meet with representatives and senators on Capitol Hill was to help our legislators understand the importance of getting an agreement on the farm bill, and putting it in place for the next several years. This is essential to the continued success of our country's farmers, ranchers and rural communities, now and into the future.

What is one of the biggest challenges you see in talking with federal legislators about the farm bill and rural issues?

One of our biggest jobs is educating legislators and their staff about the issues important to agriculture and our industry. We have high respect for

Farm Bureau and the work they do to educate our policy makers on how the farm community supports the lifestyles of people in cities throughout our nation with food, fiber and fuel. Advocating for agriculture and our industry helps people without a farming background understand the importance of agriculture and its impacts on our overall economy.

We have high respect for Farm Bureau and the work they do to educate our policy makers on how the farm community supports the lifestyles of people in cities throughout our nation with food, fiber and fuel. Advocating for agriculture and our industry helps people without a farming background understand the importance of agriculture and its impacts on our overall economy.

—Bill Johnson

What's an example of a program specific to Farm Credit that helps beginning farmers?

We have a program called "Growing Forward" which is specifically designed to help young and beginning farmers and those farmers in emerging areas of agriculture get started. It's one thing to provide loans. It's another to do the things that will help young and beginning farmers be successful. Our program has certain requirements. For example, in order to make an application and be a part of this program, applicants must agree to develop a business plan, which

is a critical component to an operation's success. They also agree to participate in our educational programs that feature professors from our land grant universities and other industry leaders to provide training and help them learn how to improve their operations. Then we go a step further and actually take their financial information and work with them individually to apply the concepts they are learning while they are in the classroom. Participants are able to network with other young and beginning farmers and have conversations on everything from how to grow a small business and run a beginning operation to some of the trials and challenges they face. As part of the program, we have specialized underwriting criteria to allow us to take some additional risks with these customers. We also provide some pricing benefits and unique loan terms to help them get their operation started. The farmers in this program are the best spokespeople for it and that's why we bring some of them to Washington with us. They share their stories and how this program has made a difference in their farming operations.

What are some of the specifics you focus on with young farmers?

We focus on a strong working relationship between the loan officer and the farmer which allows us to work together to identify and understand some of the challenges they are facing. It is sometimes difficult to have those conversations but it helps us look for options early in the process. Often and early is what we teach our relationship managers; to have those conversations while you still have options. Other pieces of that partnership include having good financial records, reaching out to their loan officer for guidance as well as reaching out to other partners such as extension and university resources. We also encourage them to look for experienced farmers nearby who might be a mentor to them. Many of our long-time farmers would love to help someone just beginning to handle a challenge they may have faced. Focusing on these areas with young farmers is also something we do for our experienced farmers, especially with our current economic challenges in the agriculture industry.



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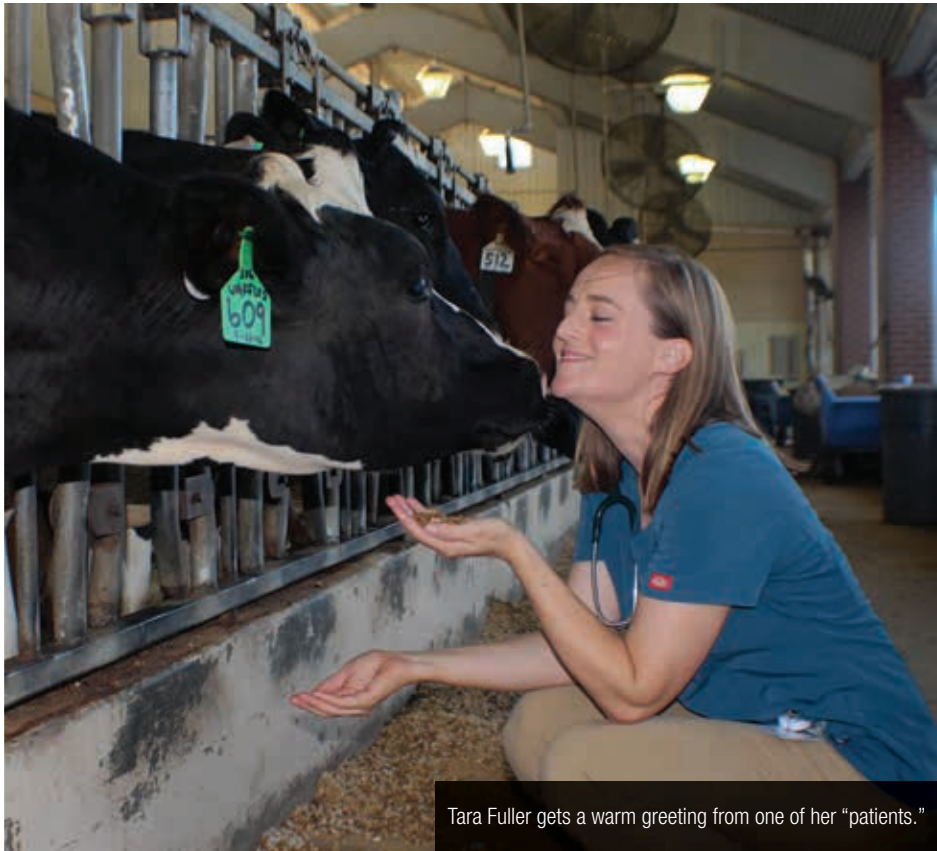
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Atypical Road Leads Coast Guard Veteran Back Home to Kentucky



Tara Fuller gets a warm greeting from one of her "patients."

Many agricultural organizations utilize college interns throughout the summer months, including Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB), the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) and the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy (GOAP). These students gain the chance to get real-world work experience while the organizations benefit from the efforts these summertime employees bring to the job. Tara Fuller was one such intern at KDA this past summer bringing a very different background to her work in Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles' office, specifically in the Office of the State Veterinarian. While there has been other pre-vet/undergraduate interns serving in that capacity, she is the first veterinarian student. But her road to vet-school and KDA wasn't typical. She is a self-proclaimed "city kid" having grown up in Lexington and with little knowledge of the farm. After high school, her next move was to the U.S.

Coast Guard Academy. While attending the Academy, Fuller became interested in a program that would change this city kid into an animal science advocate. "I've always loved animals even though my immediate family was not really connected to farming. I enjoyed my biology classes and genetics in high school, but at the Coast Guard Academy, there is not a direct pre-veterinary option for animal science. It's more of an engineering program," she said. "They did, however, have a major called Marine & Environmental Sciences that had allowed me to focus on oceanography, fish biology, marine pollution, meteorology, etc." That major would serve as a catalyst into what would take Fuller toward her future vocation, but first she would spend the next six years serving her country as a Response Officer, starting as an Ensign in Guam and eventually promoting to Lieutenant in Seattle. It was after her completion of her service in Seattle that Fuller decided

to take her love of animals to Alabama and Auburn University where she received her second undergraduate degree in Animal Sciences, and acceptance into the University's College of Veterinary Medicine. Fuller has been able to learn about all animals at Auburn including large animals and those associated with agriculture. "I took casual horseback riding lessons as a child and really loved them, I read every book I could about horses and dogs in the school library. I was obsessed with James Herriot. But I definitely did not have the chance to grow up around large animals the way many of my College of Agriculture classmates at Auburn had," she said. That appreciation for animals and science has not only given Fuller a chance to learn about the animals from a physical sense but also about the industry that involves so many of them. Fuller said there was a steep learning curve for her when discovering some of the modern practices about farm animals such as their feeding habits and the forages and supplements that go into their diets. "I have to give credit to my professors for taking the time to answer my numerous questions outside of the classroom. I spent many hours in the office of animal nutritionist Dr. Steve Schmidt, as he patiently explained why and how you can feed cows urea," she said. "Like many Americans, I had grown up assuming cows just ate grass, hay, and corn." "In our classes, we have also talked about some of the misconceptions of animal agriculture such as 'antibiotic free meat'. I do wish the public had more solid information such as the fact that no meat product in the U.S. is allowed to be sold where the animal has antibiotics in its system," she said. Fuller pointed out the use of antibiotics is often necessary and humane to relieve any suffering or illness and to keep animals healthy. "I think it's important to give animals access to the very best health care,

which may include antibiotics," she said. "It looks good on a label to say 'no antibiotics used,' but humans are not getting antibiotics in any meat from any grocery store. If you have a young animal that is sick and suffering, it can benefit from medication, and the medication will clear its system long before the animal grows large enough to be processed into our food supply." Fuller has brought that conversation to others as she has learned through her studies, becoming somewhat of an educator as she becomes a veterinarian. "I don't know of a veterinarian nowadays who can successfully practice without caring about education, helping their clients navigate the information they may find on the Internet, for example," she said. "It's important to take that extra step and help people who might see enticing cures or quick diagnostic information online understand that there is a more complete picture to be found. You want to share your depth of scientific knowledge with them to help them make sense of what is being advertised for their pets or their herd." While serving at KDA in the intern program, Fuller got to see some of that real world experience having worked specifically in Kentucky State Veterinarian Dr. Robert Stout's office. "I was able to do many different things every day, and got to see a lot of Kentucky. I worked with different veterinarians with different specialties. I worked with cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry; really a little bit of everything," she said. Fuller also got to work with the state's apiarist Dr. Tammy Potter during her internship. She said it was the first time she had worked with bees and emphasized how valuable Potter has been to the industry. "Bees are often forgotten as food animals, but they are part of our food chain! I'm not sure many vets have had training or experience in maintaining bee hives," said Fuller. "But I think that's something that's definitely going to be more necessary in the future." After seeing so many different species this summer, Fuller still has a hard time narrowing down her favorites. "I would like to start out in a mixed animal practice, because no matter what animals I think

I prefer right now, I have a feeling actually working with them in the real world could be different than working with them at school," she said. "I would like to work with all species before I decide if I want to specialize." The opportunity to serve as an intern at KDA actually stems from Fuller knowing Commissioner Quarles from their days in 4-H camps as youth. After seeing him speak at Auburn University in spring 2016, she learned of the intern opportunities. Quarles said Fuller is a great example of a student with little farming background taking an interest in animals and becoming a true advocate for the industry.

"Tara's intelligence, curiosity, and solid work ethic have enabled her to excel in a field that was completely new to her," he said. "She was an outstanding addition to our staff during her internship at the KDA, and I know she will be an excellent veterinarian in a time when there is a critical need for a new generation of vets, especially for large and food animals." Fuller said after she graduates from Auburn, she would love to come back to Kentucky to practice. "I had forgotten just how much I love Kentucky since I haven't lived here in quite some time," she said. "It is a beautiful place and the people are so friendly. I would like to come back when I graduate."

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FARMING TECHNIQUES MAY CHANGE, BUT THE FUNDAMENTALS OF RUNNING A PROFITABLE FARM REMAIN THE SAME

By Matt Davis, Vice President – Agribusiness, Farm Credit Mid-America

THREE TRAITS OF A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to successful farm management. From crop production to marketing, agriculture has grown vastly more complex. Still, for the many factors that have changed, there are three commonalities that pave the path to profitability.

1: A crop production plan that fits the farm

While the actions of Mother Nature weigh heavily on yield opportunities, farmers still play a key role in maximizing yield potential. Selecting the right seed and crop inputs, combined with effective in-season management are primary factors for maximizing yields.

Reaching maximum profitability is a different story. Each field has a distinct history and characteristics that will determine its profit potential. And in a pure commodity production environment, the market determines prices and returns available at the farm level, which are currently at or near cost of production.

The key is to know what the market is offering and what each field is capable of producing, then creating a plan to maximize the return for each field. It could be a maximum yield approach, a minimum cost approach or somewhere in the middle. Being profitable with commodities requires being above average in some way, whether that's in production output, input costs, marketing revenue, efficiency or some other profitability factor.

2: True understanding of production costs

Regardless of your business, a good rule of thumb is not to sell your product until you know the cost of production. That's especially true in agriculture.

Many farmers calculate costs by the acre, but that may not be accurate enough. Grain isn't sold by the acre; it's sold by the bushel. Your goal should be to know the production costs of every unit for

sale. That requires a thorough understanding of all costs, including fixed costs – not just direct crop input costs.

The next step is to determine a realistic desired market price. It's easy to get busy in the fields and put off creating marketing plans or to waver from plans that only exist in your head. Having your plan written down and reviewing it regularly can help keep your targets top of mind as prices fluctuate.

Last, it's important to implement your plan. Marketing can be an emotional task, so sticking to your plan helps overcome some of that emotion when it is time to make the sale. Strong emotions can lead to missed opportunities.

3: Well-balanced family living expenses

Balancing family living expenses with business profitability is a concern many farmers share.

Larger houses, vacation homes, recreational vehicles and other forms of leisure create fun, memorable experiences for your family, but can add stress if they begin to stretch your financial resources. Assets purchased with available cash during good times are easier to maintain. But when assets are financed, it may be difficult to sustain extra payments and recurring maintenance costs while trying to trim the family budget to help the farm cover its overhead expense.

Creating a family budget at the beginning of the year will help you determine if your operation can support your living expenses. If something doesn't add up, you'll be better prepared to adjust your lifestyle or seek off-farm income sources to maintain it.

With so many responsibilities involved in running a farm, it can be easy for family budgeting to lose priority. Rather than thinking of budgeting as something that limits your family's quality of life, it may be helpful to consider it as something that protects your family's quality of life for years to come.

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