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Farm Bureau members can take satisfaction in the results from AFBF's annual survey of young farmers and ranchers. Those young men and women tell us they believe agriculture has a promising future and is worth choosing as a career. In regard to the primary concerns of the young farmers and ranchers, no particular issue was widespread among the group. This tells us we've done a pretty good job dealing with issues that could impact their farm operation.



Equally encouraging is the attitude about communicating with consumers. Nearly seven out of 10 said they consider that an important part of their job as a farmer. The large majority (74 percent) is using social media platforms to accomplish this. At a time when consumers are more curious than ever about the source of their food, the willingness to share information is a wise decision by these young farm families.

Predictably, their biggest concern is the availability of land. Just 10 years ago, only five percent of young farmers considered it a challenge. But with urbanization and the loss of farmland, as well as the deficiency of protection for landowners' rights, the availability of land has become a critical issue facing young farmers and ranchers, as 22 percent cited that as their top concern. That's especially relevant for Kentucky, which lost more than 900,000 acres of farmland between 2007 and 2012, according to the U.S. Census of Agriculture.

Next in line is availability of labor and the constant threat of burdensome government regulations. Each was cited as the top concern of 12 percent of the respondents.

Getting a foot in the door is another concern for young farmers. While traditionally most farms were passed one generation to the next, this is rapidly changing. Today, 30 percent of young farmers have entered the industry on their own. And they need our help. Adequate incentives should be available for beginning farmers to obtain farm credit. And tax incentives need to be in place for people who sell or lease their land or other assets to beginning farmers.

Despite these challenges, our young farmers and ranchers are optimistic about the future of agriculture. So much so, that 91 percent of them see it as a lifelong profession and most would like their children to follow in their footsteps.

That's great news for Farm Bureau, which works hard to support and encourage young farm families.

Mark Haney

President

Kentucky Farm Bureau

KFB Beef Expo sets another record

Buyers spent a record \$1,141,175 on 448 lots at the 2014 Kentucky Farm Bureau Beef Expo February 28-March 2 at the Kentucky Exposition Center.

The average of \$2,547.27 per head also set a record, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Division of Show and Fair Promotion reported. The total was 5.4 percent higher than that of

the 2013 sale, and the average was up 7.9 percent over the previous year.

"The success of this year's Beef Expo shows the strength of Kentucky's beef cattle industry," said Agriculture Commissioner James Comer. "I want to commend the Show and Fair Promotion staff for their efforts to keep the Beef Expo growing."

Comer joined the members of KFB's Executive Committee for the awards presentation ceremony. KFB is the primary sponsor of the event and KDA's Shows and Fairs Division plans and administers the event.

The Beef Expo surpassed \$1 million in sales for the third consecutive year. Consignors came from 16 states.

KFB succeeds with deer control bill

The General Assembly passed a KFB-backed bill aimed at tackling the problem of a huge deer population in Kentucky that is hindering both farmers and motorists.

House Bill 348, a bipartisan measure with House Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom McKee as the lead sponsor, cleared the House and Senate unanimously. The new law establishes a process to make it easier for landowners to eradicate wildlife that are causing problems. The proposal would allow a landowner to have a designee to remove depredating wildlife. Current law restricts that to just the landowner or tenant.

House Bill 448 also enables landowners to dispose of the animal on their farm without a permit or tag, streamlines the process of removing the carcass from the farm to have it processed or donated to charity and stipulates that inedible parts (such as antlers) may not be used for any purpose.

KFB worked with the Kentucky Division of Fish and Wildlife and Kentucky League of Sportsmen to develop the legislation.

KFB Public Affairs Director Jeff Harper described the bill as "a good step toward alleviating a serious safety and economic problem in rural and urban areas." He noted that the organization last year received more complaints about the deer population than any other issue.

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comment

C O L U M N

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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A new Farm Bureau program can be a great help to our county organizations seeking to build bridges of understanding between farmers and consumers.

This year-round program is called "Our Food Link" and is designed to provide consumers of all ages and backgrounds with a variety of information about our agriculture industry. For Farm Bureau leaders, it's another tool for the practice of "advocacy."



AFBF's Women's Leadership Committee spearheaded this initiative. State Farm Bureau organizations are excited about its potential for assisting County Farm Bureaus with the vital function of telling agriculture's story. There's never been a more important time to do this; surveys reveal that consumers have very little knowledge about agriculture but want to know where their food comes from and how it is produced.

Perhaps most troubling are survey reports showing that as many as two out of five consumers believe that the way food is grown or raised has worsened. That clearly presents a need for Farm Bureau to communicate the real story.

"Our Food Link" tackles that challenge through activities ranging from outreach at supermarkets or farmers' markets to hosting interactive booths at community events, speaking with lawmakers and other community leaders, visiting classrooms, coordinating community beautification projects and much more. As an avid user of social media, I'm especially excited about the "Adopt-a-Farmer" program which can build partnerships through online connections.

To get involved, simply go to fb.org, click on "program" at top right and scroll down to "Our Food Link." There, you will find many ideas and resources. You will learn about countless ways to build meaningful relationships with non-farm people. And more often than not, you will enjoy the experience.

In today's society, farmers must go further than producing our food. They also must listen to customers' concerns and strive to give them a better understanding about what they do.

Terry Gilbert
KFB Director

Chairperson, AFBF Women's Leadership Committee



CONGRESSIONAL TOUR

Coming on the heels of the long-awaited passage of a farm bill, this year's Congressional Tour had a more positive tone as dozens of KFB members from throughout the state mingled with the state's delegation. With the new farm bill in place, KFB leaders now are talking about such issues as reforming farm labor programs, curbing unwarranted environmental regulations and changing various tax policies.

Kentucky's eight members of Congress had plenty on their minds as they spoke to the KFB contingent -- both as a group at the traditional breakfast and in ensuing breakout meetings with constituents. Their topics included immigration reform, foreign trade, the estate tax, health care, energy policy, environmental regulations, Country-of-Origin labeling, banking, industrial hemp, the fed-

eral budget, political discourse and, of course, the farm bill.

The Congressional Tour agenda also involved briefing sessions, tours to popular sites and visits to legislative offices on Capitol Hill. As is the tradition, the concluding event was a question-and-answer session with Senators Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul.

Following are capsules from the comments made by the lawmakers at the breakfast meeting:

Senator Mitch McConnell

The Senate Minority Leader explained several farm bill battles that he waged on behalf of Kentucky agriculture. The most highly-publicized was an amendment to allow for pilot projects in producing industrial hemp. This already has led to an initiative among the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and the

Above, the group assembled for the customary photo at the capitol.

University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, McConnell explained.

He then mentioned how he and other tobacco-state members defeated an effort to exclude tobacco from the farm bill, plus worked to resolve a dispute over this year's tobacco buyout program payment, which USDA was seeking to reduce under the sequestration law applied to other programs.

The senior senator expressed frustration over failure to get the Obama administration to grant Trade Promotion Authority that could lead to lead to export growth for Kentucky products.

"We've got a serious jobless problem and virtually everything they (the administration) do is making it worse," McConnell said. "We've had a hard time

getting this administration to do something for jobs.”

He affirmed continuing support for abolishing the estate tax. Before concluding, McConnell noted that he has served on the Agriculture Committee throughout his many years of service in the Senate.

Senator Rand Paul

The first-term Republican opened with this: “I’ve got some good news and some bad news for you. The good news is the government is open. The bad news is the government is open, borrowing \$1 million per minute.”

The bulk of Paul’s remarks were centered on stories illustrating government overreach, particularly within USDA and EPA. After relating how a Missouri rabbit producer had been required to get a permit for a natural disaster evacuation plan for the animals, Paul said: “We’ve let things get out of hand.”

In regard to the Clean Water Act, he said: “We now interpret dirt to be a pollutant and your backyard as a wetland.”

He had the audience’s full attention with stories of a heavy-handed government and bizarre regulatory requirements, including one report about some elderly Mississippi residents who received jail sentences for violations of a quirky environmental law.

“The whole idea of our Constitution was to restrain government, not restrain you,” he said.

He vowed to continue the battle against big government.

Congressman Hal Rogers

The Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee attended the event for the 34th time. He began by expressing his pride that KFB President Mark Haney also hails from Pulaski County. “He is highly respected and well liked at home,” Rogers told the group.

“I hope you breathed a sigh of relief when we finished that farm bill,” he continued. “The most important thing is you have a five-year bill.”

The Somerset Republican bemoaned the impact that entitlement program spending is having on the federal deficit.

“When I came here 34 years ago entitlements were only one-third of the (federal) spending. Now it’s a complete turnaround — we only appropriate one-third of the budget and entitlements are the rest. We’ve cut \$200 billion out of federal spending in the past 3 /12 years -- the biggest cuts since the Korean War - -and it’s still not enough. Congress needs to get the spine to tackle this,” he said.

He drew laughter when informing the group that he had a budget meeting that morning and “the first speaker is the IRS Commissioner; I can’t wait to get there.”

Rogers also blasted the EPA, calling the agency “brazen” and “out of control.” He noted that his committee had dramatically reduced the EPA’s budget in recent years.

Congressman Ed Whitfield

The 1st District Republican serves on the Energy Committee and devoted most of his time to related issues, especially the Obama administration’s positions on coal and climate change. He criticized the administration for “taking an alarmist approach” on climate change. He pointed to a comment from Secretary of State John Kerry, who said during a speech in Indonesia that “climate change can now be classified as a weapon of mass destruction.”

“That’s a disservice,” Whitfield said of Kerry’s remark.

He noted that a Wall Street Journal poll asking respondents to rank 15 issues in order of importance had jobs at number one and climate change at number 15.

Whitfield said Kentucky’s coal industry is fading fast under the Obama administration.

“We can’t build a coal-powered plant in America right now because of their regulations,” he said. “This administration also has placed pressure on the international banking community to refrain from financing coal-powered plants.”

He stressed that the coal issue could impact all Kentuckians in the form of higher electricity costs. The effect would be most damaging to farmers and small businesses that operate on a thin margin.

Congressman John Yarmuth

The Louisville Democrat said he was miffed about the “spin” war surrounding issues like the Affordable Care Act and the minimum wage. After mentioning that he is a former journalist, Yarmuth expressed his concern about the political discourse emerging from national politics.

“I’m really, really alarmed about the way we discuss politics in this country,” Yarmuth said. “We play into the media to deliberately spin; we need to be honest with you when we talk about these issues.”

He said the Affordable Care Act has been vastly mischaracterized through a host of stories “about people disadvantaged by the ACA.” While there are indeed some negatives, a close look into most of the instances cited would reveal a more positive situation than reported, said Yarmuth.

He noted that he is among a small group of House members who have continually worked on the immigration reform issue. The lack of action on the issue has been frustrating, he added.

“There is no organized opposition to immigration reform and we can’t get it done,” he said incredulously. “Why? Well, there is an advocacy industry, and as soon as you veer away, you are under attack.”

Yarmuth finished his remarks with the subject of anti-government sentiments.

“We saw that when the government shut down, people didn’t like that. They want government. So let’s stop bashing the government and figure out how to make it work better.”

Congressman Brett Guthrie

The Bowling Green Republican spoke about the trials and tribulations involved in moving a farm bill through Congress. Of the many delays and conflicts that resulted in a bill that was three years overdue, he said “it wasn’t necessarily partisan; it was the differences between all the groups. A lot of times we get caught between our political means and those groups.”

Guthrie said the experience was valu-

See Congressional Tour, page 17

CONGRESSIONAL TOUR



Above, Third District Congressman John Yarmuth had breakfast with constituents.

Right, Second District Congressman Brett Guthrie speaks with a group that includes (to the left of Guthrie) Fritz Giesecke, Scott Travis and (second from left) Larry Thomas.



Below right, Fourth District Congressman Thomas Massie speaks with constituents following the breakfast. Seated in the blue shirt is KFB Director Alex Barnett of Harrison County.

Facing page top, Fifth District Congressman Hal Rogers visits with Thomas Keeth of Johnson County. At right is Gerald Hart of Whitley County.

Center left, Senator McConnell addressed the group at the concluding meeting.

Center right, Senator Paul speaks from the Senate Russell Office Building.

Bottom left, Sixth District Congressman Andy Barr greets a constituent. At right is KFB Director Larry Thomas of Hardin County.



Bottom right, First District Congressman Ed Whitfield meets with a group that includes KFB Directors Russell Poore (to the right of Whitfield) and Glenn Howell (to the left)





This issue of KFB News begins a series on water issues in Kentucky. The first installment deals with the link between farming and watersheds, as well as the system for monitoring streams. Subsequent articles will address regulatory standards, nutrient management planning and various ways to protect water quality.

Water is an increasingly scarce and valuable resource. Competition among agriculture, industry and cities for limited water supplies is already constraining development efforts in many communities. As populations expand and economies grow, the competition for limited supplies will intensify and so will conflicts among water users.

The largest demand for the world's water comes from agriculture. More than two-thirds of the water withdrawn from the earth's rivers, lakes and aquifers is used for irrigation. As competition, conflicts, shortages, waste, overuse and degradation of water resources grow, it becomes more and more important that we protect the quality of water. The cost of drinking water likely will rise if more treatment is required to make it usable.

Kentucky has received widespread acclaim for its Agriculture Water Quality Program enacted by landmark legislation in 1994. This innovative approach provides a strategy for farmers to protect the state's water resources and is fueled by a cost-share program to help farmers implement recommended "best management practices."

Kentucky Farm Bureau strongly supports this program and encourages farmers to follow their ag water quality plan and update it, if necessary. Assistance is available through Conservation Districts.

Protecting watersheds is vital



By Kristi McCabe

A Dix River Watershed Project enabled Will Stallard to put a feed pad on his Boyle County farm.

Kentucky has more miles of navigable water than any other state in the mainland U.S. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, every Kentuckian lives in a watershed and relies on it as the sole source of water. Watersheds are defined as the area of land where runoff flows to a common stream. For farmers, protecting streams from harmful substances such as farm chemicals, soil and animal waste must be a priority within their operations. Farmers across the state, in fact, have joined forces with the Kentucky Division of Water, local Conservation Districts, and the National Resources Conservation Service in an effort to protect and maintain the watersheds on or around their property. Paulette Akers, manager of the Kentucky Division of Water's Watershed Management branch, works with citizens and other agencies to promote education about watershed management and to provide technical support for monitoring of Kentucky's waterways.

"We help coordinate watershed watch groups across the state and help people write plans for their own watersheds," said Akers. "We provide assistance to farmers and help them see the connection between agriculture and watersheds. One thing we tell people is that if it's on the ground, it's in your water. The idea of a watershed is that every drop of water that lands somewhere in the state also runs somewhere in the state. We want to help ag folks understand that although it's their property, the water doesn't stay on their property. It is all interconnected."

Akers emphasized that the Kentucky Division of Water wants to try and help farmers be as profitable as possible, while protecting Kentucky's waterways.

"It may be the case that they need an alternate water supply," said Akers. "We want to help them with that. Our primary goal

is to protect this valuable resource, and we want to work with farmers to achieve that goal."

It became evident in the late 1960s and early 1970s that water pollution had become a significant problem. That was truly underscored when the Cuyahoga River in Ohio caught fire.

Congress passed the landmark Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1972 which requires that the nation's waters be fishable, swimmable, and drinkable, and focuses on monitoring the effects of runoff pollution. The Environmental Protection Agency is primarily responsible for enforcement.

While the CWA primarily targeted heavy industry and waste disposal practices, the technological advances in agriculture moved the industry into focus to curb potential effects from the increasing use of chemicals and the advent of confined animal feeding operations. Mounting concern about the growth of CAFOs in Kentucky prompted farm groups to work with the State Division of Natural Resources and other environmental groups to develop a program for the state. That led to the 1994 passage of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act.

Widely regarded as landmark legislation and strongly supported by KFB, the Ag Water Quality Act requires farmers to develop plans to protect watersheds, implementing so-called "Best Management Practices" that were adopted in tandem with the program. A cost-share program was established to assist with implementation of on-farm practices.

Over the years more and more programs surfaced to promote a volunteer approach to curbing agriculture's impact on watersheds. One such initiative involves the Dix River, a 79-mile-long tributary of the Kentucky River that runs through central Kentucky. The river's watershed is largely agricultural land, but it also runs



The Ohio River is much cleaner as a result of the Clean Water Act.

through communities. In recent years, a local group called the Dix River Watershed Council worked with the Kentucky Division of Water and Third Rock Consultants to create a watershed plan. A Federal 319 grant made possible by the Clean Water Act provided the necessary funds for the project, and it began in a small part of

the watershed called Peyton Creek.

Since this area had a high concentration of livestock, funding was provided for education and the implementation of fencing, alternative water sources, animal waste facilities, shade structures and stream buffers. These measures helped remove live-

The monitoring system

The responsibility for monitoring the condition of Kentucky's waterways lies with the Water Quality Branch of the state Division of Water. The ambient monitoring program required under the Clean Water Act determines current conditions and compiles long term data via a fixed network of 72 year-round monitoring stations as well as rotating stations and ambient data on lakes and reservoirs. Additional ambient stations are included in the division's Groundwater Monitoring network.

The agency has other responsibilities, including "probabilistic monitoring" of randomly selected streams/lakes that support aquatic life and are used for drinking water and/or recreational purposes. A network of reference streams are identified and monitored to be used to help determine the health of like streams in particular watersheds.

"We are considered the scientific part of the (Water) division," explained Clark Dorman, who is Branch Manager, "but staff from across the division as well as from other state, federal and local agencies contribute to water quality data collection."

The agency seldom has direct contact with farmers, but its work provides an assessment of

agriculture's impact, if any, on water quality. Large-scale animal feeding facilities (CAFOs, AFOs) fall directly under the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act, which requires discharge permits for specific types of operations. Kentucky farmers operating on 10 acres or more are considered nonpoint sources and fall under the Kentucky Agricultural Water Quality Act which mandates that particular farming practices take measures to protect water quality.

Dorman said monitoring finds problems, but pinpointing exact sources is a different matter.

"It's rare that we analyze a sample and can pinpoint exactly where a problem is coming from; it's usually a combination of things involving several potential responsible parties, including landowners, private industry and municipalities. We can collect data that says we have problems, but then it usually becomes complex in identifying the problem source."

He praises the Ag Water Quality Law as "a good approach" but voices concern that some farmers are not following their water quality plans.

Asked to assess the condition of Kentucky's waters, Dorman said: "It's a mixed bag. Generally speaking, the waters of the Commonwealth are safe to use. Yet people

need to be cautious about how these waters are used. For example, many of our waters are still impacted by human and animal waste. Harmful algal blooms are an emerging issue. Citizens need to be aware of the conditions and influences on the waterbodies in which they recreate and utilize for drinking water."

Dorman is among those who cite the Clean Water Act as a landmark development for environmental protection strategies. But today, the challenges are different, he says.

"We've done a great job addressing the problems of the 1970s - - the spewing pipes, the rivers on fire and so on. Now we are dealing with far more complex issues involving the interaction of pollutants, habitat alterations and the potential effect."

The agency urges landowners to do their part to protect water quality, with measures like riparian buffers to prevent runoff into ditches and streams.

"Farmers are both the stewards of the land and businessmen. This is a tough balance to maintain. Ultimately, clean and healthy waters are good for business and good for your neighbors downstream. The average landowner can make a difference," says Dorman.



The Watershed Council focuses on public relations, as well.

stock waste from the water. The Peyton Creek project was so successful that the Conservation District decided to continue to work on a larger part of the watershed.

Boyle County farmer Will Stallard participated in the project, and was very pleased with the outcome.

“I am a fifth-generation farmer in Boyle County,” said Stallard. “My great-great grandfather purchased this track of land in 1922, and my wife and I bought it in 2010. We raise cattle, tobacco, and hay.”

Stallard said that after he purchased the family farm, his first step was to address a need for fencing and to attain a better water supply.

“We got involved with the EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) project,” said Stallard. “Within that project, we set up water tanks and paddocks for rotational grazing. After that project was completed, we found out about the 319 grant, which was being used to improve the Dix River watershed. We decided to participate in this project, and put in a feed pad.”

Stallard named numerous benefits.

“We were having trouble feeding our cattle in the winter; we didn’t have a specified feeding area,” Stallard explained. “There were some runoff issues with our bale feeders. The feed pad helped address some of those issues, but it wasn’t a fix-all. We were still seeing some deep mud and manure build-up where the feed pad was located. However, we were able to spread out the mud a little more and save the manure to apply it back onto fields in places needed, as determined by soil testing.”

Stallard said his involvement in the project gave him an opportunity to implement best management practices, and to ensure that the water that sustains his business and his family is clean and safe.

“I think it’s important for people to know that we are selling a product, and that product is beef,” Stallard explained. “We are not only taking care of the animals we raise, we are also taking care of the environment. We want to be good stewards of the resources we have been given, and sustain them for future generations.”

Stallard went on to say that he and his family appreciated the help of the Conservation District in Boyle and Lincoln counties, in leading the way to improve the Dix River watershed.

“Without the foresight of those folks, we may not have been able to do as much as we have now done to protect our natural resources,” said Stallard. “They demonstrated true leadership by securing grant money and helping all of us protect and maintain our water.”

Marvin (Bo) Renfro, Lead District Conservationist for the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), said watershed management is an effort on everyone’s part — both agencies and landowners — to strengthen their efforts in addressing water quality needs.

“When there is a need to clean up the environment, landowners have to be conservation-minded through the completion of a project,” said Renfro. “Many times farmers get a bad rap, but they are very much aware of maintaining good water quality because they have to water their livestock and drink the water themselves. Farmers are good stewards of the land; they want to protect the water sources that provide their livelihood.”

As watershed management projects continue to crop up all over the state, Renfro and others concerned about Kentucky’s water quality hope that farmers will take advantage of available funding and participate in these programs.

“It’s almost like a catch-on situation,” said Renfro. “When one person does something in the neighborhood, the idea catches on and grows. When funds become available, it’s time to take advantage of that funding and act. You may not have all the money you need in the beginning to improve water quality in the watershed, but hopefully as time goes on these small efforts will combine to make a huge impact.”

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2. *Watershed Planning Guidebook for Kentucky Communities: 1st Ed., 2010.* Compiled by the Kentucky Waterways Alliance, Kentucky Division of Water.

WOMEN'S



Above, Committee Chairperson Betty Farris of Butler County presided over the first general session. She urged the women to help develop future leaders.

Right, The KFB Women donated items to the Ronald McDonald House.

Bottom left, Shelby County farmer Mary Courtney had an inspiring message about getting priorities straight.



LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The annual Women's Leadership Conference was held last month in Lexington, punctuated by a mix of motivational messages from featured speakers. The goal, as Women's Leadership Committee Chairperson Betty Farris said in her welcoming remarks, was to strengthen leadership skills and encourage more activity at the county Farm Bureau level.

"Every time we ask you to do something for us, you amaze us," said Mrs. Farris, referring to the transfer of state and national programs to the local level.

KFB President Mark Haney also thanked the group of women from throughout the state. The Pulaski County farmer said he was pleased with the current status of the organization and the progress it is making in key areas such as the young farmer program and social media.

The featured speaker for the opening session was Linda "L.J." Himmel, AFBF's Director of Policy Implementation Programs. "I want to talk about the power and influence that one woman can have," she began. She then cited some highly influential and accomplished females from farm backgrounds, including Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rogers and Senator Blanche Lincoln. She spoke in detail about Congresswoman Rogers, who was a Farm Bureau leader in Washington when elected to Congress in 2004. She had three children while serving in Congress.

Women should be heartened by a highly-recognized study showing that the female brain has several characteristics superior to the male brain. Those characteristics provide women with outstanding abilities to communicate, defuse conflict and forge close friendships, Ms. Himmel said.

"Women are great communicators; it's in their hormones," she said. "You can use your talent to the benefit of your farm, your community and agriculture as a whole. Agriculture truly needs more women in leadership roles."

She urged the women to use their communications skills to connect with elected officials and "tell agriculture's story" to consumers.

Later in the agenda, Shelby County farmer Mary Courtney gave an inspiring mes-

sage about setting priorities. She explained how she and her husband, Shane, worked tirelessly to build their farming operation from scratch, but did so at the expense of devoting sufficient time to their children. "We were too focused (on business) to focus on what is really important," she said.

The Courtneys, who were selected as KFB's Outstanding Young Farm Family for 2013, subsequently cut back on their farming operation.

"It's okay to set limits," she told the Farm Bureau women. "Don't do for everybody else and put your own heart on the back burner. Stop and smell the roses."

The conference also featured workshops and tours of area attractions, including a thoroughbred horse farm and a farm winery.

The final keynote speaker was heralded motivational speaker Chad Hymas, who is a member of the National Speaker Hall of Fame.

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"The buzz ..."

KFB Director Joe Paul Mattingly had his head shaved to raise funds for child cancer research supported by the St. Baldrick's Foundation. Representing Marion County Farm Bureau, Mattingly helped raise \$350. His son, Daniel, and grandson, Caleb, also got clipped. All told, around \$29,000 was raised in Marion County.

KFB MARKS "AG DAY"

KFB joined the Agriculture Council of America (ACA) and farming organizations across the country to celebrate National Agriculture Day on March 25. The day is set aside annually to highlight the many ways that the work of our agriculture industry improves the quality of life for everyone.

To deliver a positive message about agriculture, volunteers from nearly 60 county Farm Bureaus read the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's 2014 accurate ag "Book of the Year" to elementary school students. The book, "The Beeman," written by retired Virginia elementary schoolteacher Laurie Krebs, introduces young readers to the lesser-known world of bees, bee-keepers and the pollination process – and how it all relates to the world of agriculture.

CONGRESSIONAL TOUR

Continued from page 7

able in terms of learning about farm policy and farm politics. “It’s difficult. It’s frustrating. But it shows the process can work.”

He added: “I got my instructions from you, and it was how do we handle food stamps – make some reforms — and then having a strong crop insurance program.”

Most people, he said, would be astounded by the widely diverse number of special interests involved in the farm bill process.

“There were complicated things in the bill that had unintended consequences. There were winners and losers.”

With food stamp spending commanding the majority of the bill’s cost, it’s difficult to make the public understand that the farm bill is really about food security for the nation, Guthrie said.

To underscore his point, Guthrie pointed to the turmoil in the Ukraine.

“The Ukraine – they are big wheat producers. Do you think their wheat market is working today?”

Congressman Thomas Massie

The first-term Republican from Lewis County opened with a joke that drew much laughter. He told about House members having a magnetic card they use for automated voting on the House floor. He said he mistakenly handed it to a waitress as payment for his meal and she returned saying the card was rejected. “I told her I had paid my bill; she said, ‘no sir, this card has \$17 trillion on it.’”

Massie, who is known as a fiscal hawk, said the farm bill “was the first bill I’ve ever voted on that actually cuts spending.” He said he is part of a group advocating “the penny plan,” in which if all government programs were cut by one percent each year, there would be a balanced budget in five years.

Massie then explained his support of the Country of Origin labeling provision that is in the farm bill. He said he understood concerns about hikes in food costs, but that “people want to know where their food comes from.”

Cattle producers, he added, should be

in favor because without labels lower quality beef could be mixed with higher quality in order to lower the retail cost. That would penalize quality products.

He noted his support for the industrial hemp issue, quipping “think rope, not dope.”

He also was highly critical of EPA, saying the agency “is attacking our way of life in Kentucky.”

Massie also alluded to the disconnection in Washington D.C.

“Part of the dysfunction in Washington D.C. is they just aren’t listening to the people in Kentucky,” he said.

Congressman Andy Barr

The Sixth District Republican began by citing statistics showing agriculture’s importance to his district. Nationally, it ranks 54th among the 435 Congressional Districts in the annual value of farm products sold, he said.

He noted that he had voted in favor of

three different versions of a farm bill because he understands the importance of protecting the farm economy. He said he had learned much about farm policy through an agriculture coalition he had formed to advise him. The group has had two meetings. “The best way to learn what to do about policy is to listen to the farmers of Central Kentucky,” he said.

He went on to mention his involvement with resolving a dispute over crop insurance guidelines for tobacco and the tobacco buyout program payments. In the crop insurance dispute, he filed a bill in order to get USDA’s attention to change its policy, he said.

Barr serves on the Financial Services Committee, where he said he has learned that the so-called Dodd-Frank law is forcing rural banks to pull back on farm loans. He called Dodd-Frank “disastrous” legislation.

He informed the group that he has assumed the chairmanship of the House “horse caucus.”

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Record yields in 2013

Kentucky's 2013 corn and soybean crops were the largest ever thanks to record state yields of 170.0 bushels for corn and 49.5 bushels for soybeans. USDA-NASS recently published the county production estimates which show that top yields were reached all across the Commonwealth. This was especially true for soybeans, where twelve counties achieved average yields of 53.0 or higher. The top county, Adair, averaged 57.1 bushels/acre. The other counties at the top were Boone, Casey, Clark, Fayette, LaRue, Lewis, Owen, Pendleton, Shelby, Webster and Union. The top corn yield of 194.0 bushels was in McLean County. Five other counties achieved average yields of 180.0 bushels or higher – Ohio, Shelby, Simpson, Union and Wayne.

The top three counties in total production were Union, Christian and Henderson for corn and Graves, Henderson and Daviess for soybeans. USDA's preliminary estimates put the value of the 2013 corn crop at \$1.106 billion, or 53 percent greater than the 2012 crop, and the 2013 soybean crop's value at \$1.047 billion, up 23 percent from 2012's crop value.

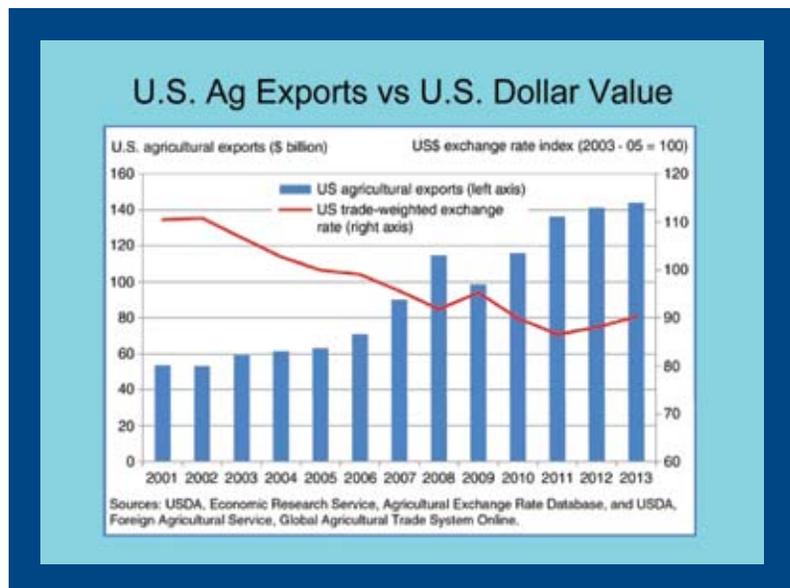
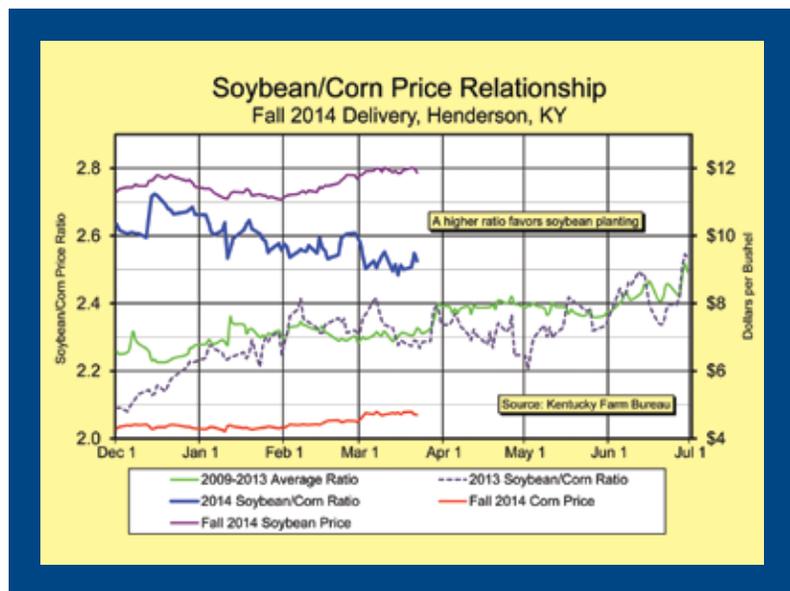
Numbers rising in farm milk production

Record high milk prices and lower grain and forage costs have moved the milk-feed price ratio to an expansionary level of 2.55, as reported in USDA's Agricultural Prices report. However, dairy producers have been slow to expand the dairy herd and for milk production to increase – up only 1.1 percent in January-February. Consequently, USDA economists did not change the 2014 forecasts of milk cow numbers and annual milk production in the latest supply-demand update. U.S. milk production for this year is forecast at 205.7 billion pounds, up 2.2 percent from last year. Year-over-year gains are expected to increase as the year progresses, reaching a four-percent production increase by the fourth quarter.

USDA has raised its forecast of how much milk and dairy product prices will exceed 2013's average prices. The midpoint of the average annual 2014 price forecast for "all milk" is \$21.70/cwt, up 55 cents from the February forecast and up \$1.69 from the 2013 average price. For cheddar cheese, USDA raised the 2014 forecast by four cents/pound to \$1.89/pound; this compares to \$1.768 average price for 2013. The average butter price forecast increased a nickel to \$1.65/pound for 2014, an increase of 10.5 cents from last year's average butter price.

Broiler growth less than expected

According to USDA, broiler integrators had been expected to expand production in 2014 primarily due to a decline in feed costs and relatively high prices for competing meats. However, the expansion has been less than expected. Broiler meat production for January 2014 decreased 2.8 percent from the previous year, as a result of 4.1 percent fewer birds slaughtered. USDA's estimate for 2014 broiler meat production is 38.7 billion pounds, a decrease of 175 million pounds from February's estimate. With this change, U.S. broiler meat production in 2014 would be 2.4 percent higher than in 2013. The weekly numbers of broiler eggs being placed in incubators and chicks going to growout farms point toward only small increases in the number of birds available for slaughter through spring.



Taking stock

Meeting targets issues for farm market operators



Sharon Spencer of KDA gave a program update, flanked by KFB Director Russell Poore of Logan County, who moderated the meeting. Mrs. Spencer also is President of Franklin County FB. Poore operates a farm market and is chairman of KFB's Roadside Farm Markets Advisory Committee.

KFB's Certified Roadside Farm Market Program has moved in tandem with a reshaping of Kentucky's farm economy, expanding gradually to the 105 members for this year. KFB President Mark Haney, whose family operates one of those markets, says quality is more important than

quantity, but there is indeed opportunity for future growth.

"I'm more interested in the quality of our markets," the Pulaski County farmer said in his welcoming remarks at last month's educational meeting for program members and others, "but we recognize there's an opportunity for

growth. The food market is really untouched for us. There is great opportunity to connect with consumers from our farms. People want to source their food from people they know."

The agenda focused on labor issues and a presentation from one of Alabama's most successful agritourism businesses. The group of around 30 farm market interests also received updated information on the KFB program and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's marketing and promotion programs for farm markets.

Haney pledged KFB's continuing commitment "to try to help you be successful."

"A lot of us have been in this for a long, long time," he said. "We always have something new to embrace and new challenges to tackle. We want to expand, to take our game up a notch or two by delivering to consumers."

Labor issues were hot topics, as evidenced by a lengthy discussion about federal and state requirements for farm market workers under the various employee classifications. Handling the questions was a panel comprised of Karen Garnett of the U.S. Department of Labor, Jeff Wiley of the Kentucky Department of Labor and Rick Alexander of the Agriculture Workforce Management Association, the organization that handles the H-2A program in Kentucky.

The meeting is part of the services provided to program members. Next event is the annual summer tour of markets and agritourism spots, with Oregon as the destination. The annual promotional brochure, which has been completed redesigned into booklet form, will be available soon, said Program Coordinator Kara Keeton.



A good crowd of program participants attended the meeting.

Young farmers concerned about land

Securing adequate land to grow crops and raise livestock was the top challenge identified again this year in AFBF's annual outlook survey of participants in the Young Farmers & Ranchers program. That challenge was identified by 22 percent of respondents, followed by economic challenges, particularly profitability, which was identified by 15 percent of the respondents.

Other issues ranked as top concerns by young farmers and ranchers included burdensome government regulations and red tape, 12 percent; availability of farm labor and related regulations, nine percent; water availability and urbanization of farm land, seven percent each; and health care availability and cost, six percent.

The 22nd annual YF&R survey revealed that 91 percent of those surveyed are more optimistic about farming and ranching than they were five years ago. Last year, 90 percent of those surveyed said they were more optimistic about farming compared to five years ago.

The 2014 survey also shows 93 percent say they are better off than they were five years ago. Last year, 83 percent reported being better off.

More than 91 percent considered themselves lifetime farmers, while 88 percent would like to see their children follow in their footsteps. The informal survey reveals that 87 percent believe their children will be able to follow in their footsteps.

The majority of those surveyed (69 percent) consider communicating with consumers a formal part of their jobs. Many use social media platforms as a tool to accomplish this. The popular social media site Facebook is used by 74 percent of those surveyed. Twenty-two percent of respondents said they use the social networking site Twitter, 16 percent have a farm blog or webpage and 13 percent use YouTube to post videos of their farms and ranches.

"Our Food Link" is underway

Farmer and rancher members of Farm Bureau from around the country officially kicked off the organization's new "Our Food Link" program in conjunction with a conference for state leaders of Women's Leadership and Promotion & Education programs. Our Food Link activities range from outreach at supermarkets or farmers' markets to hosting interactive booths at community events, speaking with lawmakers and neighbors about food and visiting classrooms to help students understand agricultural topics. Other program ideas include: an Adopt-a-Farmer program, fun runs, garden projects and "Zest 'n Zing" or other foodie events.

"Our Food Link" activities may also include the collection of food and monetary donations for Ronald McDonald House Charities or other charities.

"Our Food Link is a year-round program that county and state Farm Bureaus use to provide consumers of all ages and backgrounds with information about today's agriculture," explained Terry Gilbert, a KFB Director from Boyle County who is chair of the AFBF Women's Leadership Committee. The committee spearheads the program with participation open to all Farm Bureau members.

The "Our Food Link" planning toolkit and publicity tools may be downloaded at AFBF's website.

Pilot Program promotes water quality credits

American Farmland Trust (AFT) has partnered with the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) and other collaborators in a pilot program to help farmers in the Ohio River Basin participate in the first-ever interstate water quality credit trading program to fund on-farm installation of conservation practices.

Water quality trading is a market-based approach which allows facilities to meet required pollution reductions by paying farmers for the installation of conservation practices like heavy use protection areas for livestock, conversion of cropland to hayland and pastureland and the use of cover crops that reduce pollution by specific amounts. Those pollution reductions are then converted to verified credits that can be bought and sold.

Under the EPRI program, AFT engaged farmers from the beginning to develop the program, identified and worked with county conservation districts to understand the needs of farmers and provided technical support in determining how much each conservation practice will reduce pollution loads.

Examples of the types of conservation practices installed under the program in Kentucky include livestock operations near creeks that are proposing to install heavy-use protection areas.

AFBF pushing privacy bill

AFBF is pushing the Farmer Identity Protection Act (S. 1343, H.R. 4157) would prohibit EPA from disclosing the private and confidential information of livestock and poultry producers to the public, as the agency did in 2013 in response to a Freedom of Information Act request by several environmental groups.

EPA's earlier massive data release contained tens of thousands of lines in spreadsheets often including personal names and other information such as phone numbers and addresses. This involved more than 80,000 farmers in 29 states.



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