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KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU NEWS
Volume 15 · No. 2
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Cover photo by Tim Thornberry

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For any of you who attended our annual meeting last December or any of our other gatherings this year, you have heard me speak of the importance of advocacy. I don't think I can emphasize that enough.

As we move through this time when our General Assembly is in session and with a presidential election already happening at the primary level, being good advocates for agriculture is so very important, especially at a time when we have seen on-farm income drop.

As more and more consumers-our customers-become less and less familiar with farming practices, it is up to us to get the right information out to them.

Our opponents are certainly not afraid to speak up and we shouldn't be either. But let's base our advocacy on solid science, positive reinforcement and factual evidence as opposed to being marketers trying to persuade a public with less than accurate information.

Our farm families produce the safest, most affordable food in the world and we indeed are feeding the world. Imagine what the planet's food supply would look like without the American farmer.

Ironically, the very people and organizations that speak against us, depend on us to feed them, as well, and will continue to do so as we see our world populations grow.

Kentucky Farm Bureau members are well positioned to be leaders in our pro-agriculture endeavors not only at the state level but from a national perspective.

Our recent Congressional Tour included nearly 250 of our members and guests making the trip To Washington D.C. to hear updates from our federal legislative delegation but also to let them know of the issues we support.

We also had the chance to meet with our state lawmakers during the recent Food Checkout/ Legislative Drive-In Day. This annual event has proven to be invaluable in efforts to convey our support for certain ag-related issues and to keep our legislators informed of just how important the agriculture industry is to Kentucky.

I ask each of you to be informed about the issues as we move forward, to be involved in your communities as we talk about these issues and to have the courage to stand up and speak out when you hear inaccuracies about our great profession.



Mark Haney
President
Kentucky Farm Bureau



Kentucky Farm Bureau's (KFB) Beef Expo enjoyed another successful year. Gross sale totals were \$1,206,625 and all sales averaged \$2,730. The junior show had 461 head, up from 379 in 2015. Kentucky youth exhibited 205 animals, up from 154 in 2015 and 32 sale heifers were shown in the junior show, up from 18 in 2015. Awards were presented to representatives of Kentucky's beef breed associations by KFB leadership and

Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles. Pictured are: Kyle Young (Red Poll), Fritz Giesecke (KFB), Fran McCall (KFB), Johnnie Cundiff (Red Angus), Greg Blaydes (Limousin), Jacob Miller (Charolais), David Slaughter (Gelbvieh), Earlene Thomas (Hereford), Maurice Korthaus (Shorthorn), Jason Crowe (Angus), Doug Parke (Simmental), Joe Fraley (Pen Sale), Mark Haney (KFB), Kyle Skidmore (Beefalo), and David Beck (KFB).



Kentucky Farm Bureau Beef Expo



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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When I attended my first county Farm Bureau meeting back in 1977, I never imagined that I'd have the privilege to serve as your president one day. My Farm Bureau journey is truly a testament to how this organization invests in young people and gives farmers and ranchers the tools we need to protect our livelihood. One of the greatest joys of Farm Bureau leadership for me has been getting the chance to give back and pass on what I have learned to the next generation.



It has certainly been a whirlwind since we all met in Orlando, but there's no time to waste in keeping up the important work of our great organization. I've enjoyed meeting with many of you over the last few months, and look forward to getting out to visit more of our members across the country to hear directly from you about the issues you are facing on your farms and ranches. I'm eager to bring your stories to Capitol Hill and represent U.S. agriculture there, but I'm not the only one our lawmakers want to hear from.

The fact is: Farmers and ranchers need to be the ones telling our story or someone else will. We each have been given a voice, but it's our responsibility to speak up and use it. That's what my father taught me when I was a young farmer just starting out and complaining about regulations and milk prices. "You're not going to solve those problems inside your fencerows," he said. "You've got to get outside your fencerows." My dad encouraged me to attend my first county Farm Bureau meeting, and with the journey that followed, I got a lot farther outside my fencerows than I ever expected. But I have learned over and over again that what my dad said was right: We can't solve the problems facing agriculture if we're not willing to step outside our comfort zone.

I am proud of the thousands of Farm Bureau members who are investing their time in this important work. Last year alone, 2,415 Farm Bureau members from across the country took their messages straight to Capitol Hill and met with lawmakers to tackle the issues facing agriculture. Our state and national staff work tirelessly fighting for you, but representatives want and need to hear from the people in their home districts.

We also need to get out there and share our stories with consumers. People don't trust what they don't know. And they don't trust agriculture because they don't understand it. Most Americans have never been to a farm and didn't even grow up near one, but they are ready to learn more about where their food comes from. We need to open up the lines of communication. We need to connect through our shared values, explain how we take care of our land and animals, and tell people about the important steps we take to ensure our food supply is safe.

And there's one other thing consumers need to hear about: How unjust regulation is making our lives so difficult. We know many of our members are afraid to speak openly about their battles with the EPA, Army Corps and others. We also know the media can be our ally in these struggles – if only we speak up and let journalists tell our story in the first place.

Being an advocate for agriculture is not an easy job, but thankfully farmers are used to hard work. And more than that, we're not afraid of a challenge. Step outside your fencerows. We must be faithful with our opportunities today if we want to preserve our freedoms for tomorrow.

Vincent "Zippy" Duvall
American Farm Bureau President

Kentucky Farm Bureau Sponsors State Conservation Essay and Poster Contest



2016 State Poster Contest Winners — Left to Right 1st, 2nd & 3rd

In its ongoing efforts to promote education throughout the state, Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) once again served as the principle sponsor of the Jim Claypool Art and Conservation Writing contest hosted by the Kentucky Division of Conservation (KDC).

Johnna McHugh serves as the coordi-

nator of the program and is the assistant director at KDC. She said the longevity of the contest along with the number of entries received every year is a story within itself.

“The essay contest started in 1944 and the art contest was added in 1974,” she said.

Contests topics vary each year and focus on four areas that rotate annually including forestry, water, soils and wildlife, which was the theme for the year.

“The title of this year’s contest was ‘The Wild Side of Kentucky’ and with the help of KFB, we put out a call that brought entries from across the state,” said McHugh. “We had 102 counties that participated in the art contest with 47,082 entries and we had 93 counties participates in the writing contest with a total of 17,665 entries.”

Teachers at each of the schools from which the students attend picked their top three winners. From there the final entries went to the local conservation district for further judging before the top essays and top posters where sent to the Division of Conservation in Frankfort. There, volunteer judges from an array of backgrounds convened to make the final choices.

McHugh said it’s always a surprise to learn how many entries are received each year but it shows the vast interest there is in the contests.

“Some teachers build this into their curriculum each year knowing ahead of time what the topic will be but I also send out, to the conservation districts,

Art winners:

- State Winner – Hannah Ates, Ohio County
- State 2nd – Helaine Alsabrook, Anderson County
- State 3rd – Abigail Adams, Henry County
- Area 1 – Kelly James, Caldwell County
- Area 2 – Cam White, Logan County
- Area 3 – Tagen Byers, Breckinridge County
- Area 4 – Kara Waurio, Shelby County
- Area 5 – Josiah Hays, Mason County
- Area 6 – Malia Alford, Garrard County
- Area 7 – Cooper Garmon, Russell County
- Area 8 – Victoria Penix, Lawrence County
- Area 9 – Whitney Combs, Knott County

Essay winners:

- State Winner – Ian Brockman, Breckinridge County
- State 2nd – Lauryn Agathen, Taylor County
- State 3rd – Skylar Volz, Spencer County
- Area 1 – Hannah Carroll, Clinton County
- Area 2 – Maggie Gillum, Todd County
- Area 3 – Harrison Froedge, Monroe County
- Area 4 – Lilly Mooney, Bullitt County
- Area 5 – Carter Heller, Mason County
- Area 6 – Hailey Brogle, Boyle County
- Area 7 – Abigail Jones, Knox County
- Area 8 – Amber Dotson, Montgomery County
- Area 9 – Zachary Hall, Letcher County

web pages that have activities and lesson plans to share with the teachers,” she said. “This really gives those teachers an opportunity to show students conservation in Kentucky.”

McHugh added that by participating in the contests, students are able to broaden their knowledge. She used this year’s theme as an example.

“When you think about wildlife in Kentucky, most people think about deer but there is more to wildlife here than just deer,” she said. “Participation in the contests creates a great time to get that word across.”

McHugh added, the competition is a good way to reach students when they are younger and have an open mind about conservation.

“Really, everyone needs to be mindful about conservation and I think that comes across in the posters and essays,” she said.

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Fire at Blue Grass Stockyards not Slowing Forward Progress of Kentucky Cattle Industry



A recent sale at the Blue Grass Stockyards (BGS) Stanford location was, by all appearances, a normal business day with the exception of an increase in the number of cattle being sold. That has been the case for many of the BGS facilities across the state due to a devastating fire that destroyed the main facility in Lexington.

While the fire wiped out an historic, 70 year old venue, it failed to destroy BGS as a nationally recognize livestock market or its significance to the industry, said Bluegrass Livestock Marketing Group Chief Operating Officer Jim Akers.

"We got up the next day, put our boots on, and went to work, because we had to," he said. "While we didn't plan for the Lexington facility to burn down, we've been through a myriad of biosecurity exercises and multiple other scenarios that answered the question what do we do if we can't do business at this particular spot."

Akers said they simply implemented a plan which had already been created; something that has made this transition more manageable and helped to keep business going as close to normal as possible.

Akers pointed out because of their dedicated employees and a number of BGS locations around the state, getting cattle to these other markets has been relatively seamless so far even with an increase in the number of animals being

The fire wiped out an historic, 70 year old venue, but failed to destroy Blue Grass Stockyards as a nationally recognize livestock market or its significance to the industry.

sold. He also noted that the people running the stockyards are all farmers, either at heart or in reality and crisis management is something they do every day.

A more permanent sales schedule has been put in place until reconstruction is complete. Akers said there has never been any doubt about rebuilding. Recently the owners applied to place the stockyards on a pre-owned piece of property in the Northwest quadrant of the intersection of I-75 and Ironworks Pike in far Northern Fayette County.

Rebuilding is important from many aspects not only to Kentucky cattle producers but the entire industry.

"This place, to the entire industry, the whole country, was historically one of two or three extremely important points of price discovery," said Akers. "We recognize that while we're taking care of our customers and merchandising those cattle, we also provide a vital function to the entire industry by doing that price discovery and setting those baselines for all the contract deals that get put in place."

Kentucky's ag community shows support

The support BGS has received from state's agriculture industry has been

swift and plentiful beginning with a visit from Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Quarles and Governor Matt Bevin. Quarles said KDA has been in communication with Blue Grass Stockyards and is ready to assist in any way it can.

"Blue Grass Stockyards is one of the leading cattle sales facilities in the eastern United States, and KDA will work with ownership and management to assure that our producers continue to have access to markets in the midst of this tragedy. It is important that we do all we can to keep the chain of commerce running smoothly," he said.

UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Dean Nancy Cox emphasized how critical BGS is to the cattle industry of this state as well as related businesses near its present location.

"This business serves the Commonwealth's largest cattle herd east of the Mississippi and has been a trusted conduit for most cattlemen in Kentucky. This is also a selling point for cattle across the southeast, making Lexington a hub for cattle sales, very much like Keeneland is a hub for the Thoroughbred market," she said. "This business has an impact on the community through sales generated and serves as a 'business cluster' whereby a collection of businesses including trucking, feed, veterinarian, equipment and other businesses depend on the presence of yards."

David Lemaster, Kentucky Cattlemen's Association President said BGS has stood as an instrumental force behind Kentucky's cattle industry for decades.

"While a historic landmark was lost, their reputation and unwavering dedication to cattlemen of Kentucky continues," he added. "We have full confidence that the rebuilding phase will only enhance marketing opportunities available to producers across the state."

Kentucky Farm Bureau 2nd Vice President Fritz Giesecke said while such a loss is difficult for all those involved, it's not something that should slow the state's cattle industry.

"It is never easy to see a loss like the one incurred at Blue Grass Stockyards. The organization has played such an

important role in Kentucky's cattle industry for generations and it would be easy to think that with such an event, there would be a disruption in the flow of our cattle market. But I haven't seen that happen. The Bluegrass organization is strong and diverse and buyers and sellers have been very cooperative in utilizing their other locations," he said.

As KFB Beef Cattle Advisory Committee Chair, Giesecke, said he has seen the efforts KFB state and national policy improvements have made as related to Kentucky's cattle industry. He has also seen firsthand how the industry has grown and improved over the last two decades due to improved genetics and great investments made possible through the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund.

"I feel confident, as we move further away from this fire event, we will continue to see our cattle industry grow and Blue Grass will remain a major force in keeping it that way," said Giesecke.

Mark Haney, President Kentucky Farm Bureau said he knows the importance of livestock marketing facilities to the industry.

"That venue has been a part of the state's cattle business for decades and played such an important role in building Kentucky's cattle industry into one of the best in the country," he said. "We at Kentucky Farm Bureau offer our encouragement, support and prayers to the owners, managers and employees of the stockyard as they move forward to re-establish the facility and to those surrounding businesses that were affected as a result of the fire."

Haney added that while KFB remains solidly in support of Kentucky's cattle producers, especially those affected by this tragedy and will continue to be active in ensuring the industry remains strong for members and all state producers, as all move forward in the days, weeks and months to come.

So far, Akers said prices have remained good and feedback from customers at the other locations has been very positive. The significant history of the Lexington stockyards is deep and the facility will be missed but the industry that BGS has been so instrumental in fostering is moving forward thanks to good decisions and investments made in Kentucky cattle.



A sales schedule has been put in place at other BGS facilities like this one in Stanford until reconstruction is complete.

Pain Formula Eases Aches And Pains

Betty Brooks, Buhl, Idaho:
"I put Pain Formula on my knees about 10:00 a.m. this morning, it's now 9:00 p.m. and I'm still pain free. I've had knee surgery and tried just about every product on the market, but this works. I could feel it working as soon as I put it on."

Jack Zimmerman from Elysian, Minnesota is a disabled Afghanistan war veteran. He stepped on an IED in 2011 & lost both of his legs. **"After I spend a day in my wheel chair I end up with a lot of back, neck, & shoulder pain. Within a half hour of applying Stuart's Pain Formula I am pain free. Now, I can tolerate a whole day in my wheel chair."**

Warren Ward of Pemberton, Minnesota says his knees ached so terrible at night that he couldn't get to sleep without taking pain killers. **"An orthopedic surgeon told me both my knees were shot, I had bone rubbing on bone, and I needed knee replacement surgery. Then someone told me about**

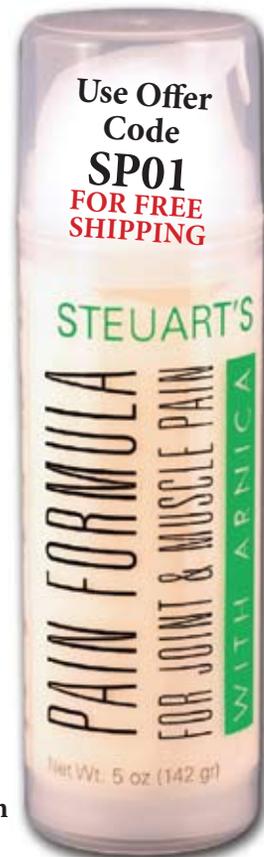
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Kentucky Farm Bureau Goes to Washington

Nearly 250 of Kentucky Farm Bureau's (KFB) volunteer leaders recently made their way to the nation's capital to continue the organization's grassroots policy development process and present their 2016 national priority issues to the Kentucky federal legislative delegation. During a series of strategic discussions with each of the state's Congressional leaders, members conveyed these priorities set during the KFB annual meeting held last December.

"Traveling to Washington, D.C., empowers our grassroots leaders and gives them the opportunity to meet their member of Congress one-on-one," said Joe Cain, KFB's Commodity Division director and coordinator of the meetings with Kentucky's Congressional Delegation. "Establishing that kind of relationship with your representative is especially beneficial – for both sides – when issues arise."

County leaders were first briefed on the current political environment in Washington by the staff of KFB and American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF).

Dale Moore, AFBF Director of Public Policy spoke to members about an assortment of issues facing the ag industry and answered questions. He said Kentucky is in a position to have great input in national ag-related issues.

"Kentucky is one of the largest gatherings as a single group that we have come to Washington," he said. "It's not a matter of strength in numbers but it's the quality of the folks that take time to make this trip."

He also said when looking at the strength of the Kentucky Congressional delegation and their leadership on Capitol Hill, knowing that the KFB group is in town speaking with those leaders, it not only makes his job easier but Farm Bureau more effective.

As the group prepared to meet with its Congressmen and Senators, they also heard from Mark Rose, Director Financial Assistance Programs Division



Nearly 250 KFB members made their way to the nation's capital to meet with legislative leaders and discuss national policy during their annual Congressional Tour. Kentucky's senior Senator and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell accepted a copy of the 2016 KFB Policy Book from the organization's President Mark Haney.

for the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service, who spoke with them about how the conservation service can assist with the development of water resources; a key priority issue set forth by members for 2016.

Kate Hall, Managing Director for the Council for Biotechnology Information discussed GMO labeling with the group. She said while the topic of GMO's is generating much attention in Washington, and will likely continue to do so, the best people to speak about

the issue are farmers.

"It's incredibly important for farmers and those in agriculture to talk about what they do with their friends and their neighbors," she said.

Hall also said that most people really aren't familiar with GMO's, a situation that creates an opportunity to give them good positive information about genetic engineering and other aspects of agriculture that tend to be "demonized by people who are driving their own agenda."

Both of Kentucky's U.S. Senators – Mitch McConnell (R) and Rand Paul (R) –



AFBF President Zippy Duvall spoke with KFB members during their Washington D.C. trip.



Left: AFBF President Zippy Duvall spoke with KFB members during their Washington D.C. trip. Sen. Mitch McConnell, right, and Sen. Rand Paul held a question and answer session with KFB members.

and all six of the U.S. Representatives from Kentucky – Andy Barr (R), Brett Guthrie (R), Thomas Massie (R), Hal Rogers (R), Ed Whitfield (R) and John Yarmuth (D) – had the opportunity to address the KFB group offering updates on the work being done at the federal level.

Legislators spoke on a number of issues including challenges facing the ag industry such as GMO labeling and EPA water regulations, as well as triumphs such as passage of SB 179 and the black buzzard deprivation permits issued through grassroots efforts originated by KFB.

Each of Kentucky’s Congressmen reserved time to meet individually with the KFB leaders from their home districts. Senators McConnell and Paul also reconvened with the group later in the day for a question-and-answer session and a lengthier discussion on their work and efforts in Washington.

“Our Congressional Tour not only provides Kentucky Farm Bureau members with a deeper understanding of the inner workings of Washington, but it also allows them to share their concerns about how the decisions and policies made in D.C. impact agriculture and rural life back home,” said Cain.

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KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

Cover Crop Research:

Creating Better Soil and Bigger Yields



Chris Pierce regularly checks soil samples on his Pulaski County farm to monitor conditions based on his cover crop research.



Chris Pierce doesn't really see himself as a research scientist even though the results of his work with cover crops have brought forth many new discoveries.

The no-till grain producer from Pulaski County has spent the last five years planting a variety of cover crop blends that have ultimately benefited him during the normal planting season.

"I think we are changing the characteristics of the soil and improving the soil structure, just from what we're seeing," he said. "We're also lowering our chemical applications. We're using less residual herbicides and we're not doing

any blanket applications of insecticides anymore. Only when we find the pest in the field are we really making the application of insecticides."

The idea of spending input dollars on a crop that will never be sold in the marketplace might not be appealing to some farmers, especially at a time when many row crop prices have dropped. But Pierce has found that he can better manage things like soil erosion, fertility and, moisture retention which ultimately mean higher crop yields. He thinks the investment is paying off.

"What I hear from people right now, where budgets are tight, most don't



Pierce looks over and makes adjustments to equipment prior to planting season.

want to spend money on a crop they are not harvesting, and without seeing those benefits firsthand, it's a leap of faith in adopting these type of methods," he said.

So far the leap Pierce has taken is paying dividends. Water infiltration has been one of the most noticeable benefits Pierce has seen so far. During recent snows and rains, he noticed the water runoff that was present was that of clear water, an indication he's not losing any soil.

"We're always experimenting with new blends of cover crops and everyone's goals will vary but for us, moisture conservation was our number one goal, he said. "Now, as we move forward we're looking at weed control and fertility."

Pierce pointed out that just because the cover crops have helped with fertility, that doesn't mean he won't have to use fertilizer and in the case of a drought, it doesn't mean his soil moisture will be sufficient to get through a huge dry spell. But the results have been very

promising, at this point in time.

One other thing Pierce credits as giving him an advantage when it comes to getting the most out of his crops is the fact that he does his own scouting. Crop scouting is an important part of the growing season allowing a farmer to get an up-close look at his or her crops but often it is done by a scouting service or is now being done through the use of technologies that include drones.

Pierce would rather make his evaluations by seeing things for himself.

"I'm not an agronomist; I'm just out there every day paying attention and asking a lot of questions to my extension specialists and industry agronomists," he said. "An old farmer told me that your footprints are the best fertilizer you can put in your field."

Being attentive to his land is something Pierce has grown up with having learned from the past three generations of family farmers; it's second nature to him. With that in mind, his entire farm is going through a soil nutrient survey this year to get an exact picture of where that 4,000 acres stands from a soil health perspective.

"With the price prospects of the market, we're looking at lowering our input costs. If there are places we can lower our applications of chemical fertilizers without giving up yield, we're going to try and manage our costs that way," said Pierce.

From a purely agricultural sense, he said his use of cover crops has allowed him to be more flexible in his crop rotations and to better follow the crop markets.

"By having this cover crop in place to break up my rotations, we can go corn on corn or bean on bean and be much more flexible according to current markets," said Pierce.

But there is more to this practice than just making a farm more profitable.

"I feel like I'm approaching this as being a necessity. Living in a world that is detached from agriculture, we do this to be good stewards and to be educational to a public that doesn't understand and is critical of our vocation at times," he said. "I'm just being a good neighbor and community minded. I want this land to be farmed by future generations."

Kentucky Farm Bureau Campaign Management Seminar

There are many programs unique to Farm Bureau, be it related to farm advocacy, education or public policy. But one of the most distinctive is its Campaign Management Seminar.

This year, Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) continued the program which began as an American Farm Bureau Foundation (AFBF) initiative.

The two day gathering brought political candidates together in an effort to help them better communicate their message to their perspective constituents and the media through a series of speakers and hands-on activities.

Julia Rollins, a KFB Area Program Director who helped facilitate the event along with one of her counterparts Brad Wilkinson, said CMS is a hands-on seminar employing a combination of materials developed by experts from both parties and perfected over the past 30 years in partnership with AFBF and state Farm Bureaus.

“The CMS provides candidates an understanding of the theory behind campaign decisions from the time they announce their candidacy through Election Day, and each day in between,” she said. “It gives candidates the opportunity to go through a real world simulation to see how decisions can impact an election.”

Over the years, several office holders including members of the Kentucky General Assembly have gone through the seminar. Rep. Wilson Stone (D-KY 22nd District), who has severed in the House since 2009 said the seminar gives first-time candidates a chance to learn about campaigning that experienced candidates know.

“It’s a way to gain experience without actually having experience,” he said. “The CMS is unique and there is nothing that I know of like it that is designated primarily for rural folks, those who have not sought public office before, people of all ages and vocations, and those who want to help their communities and really get involved.”

Stone added that the seminar helped



Candidate participants listen to presenters during the KFB Campaign Management Seminar and practice their speaking points as part of the seminar activities.

in his quest for office and provides information of how to move a campaign forward along with the basic information needed by those seeking public office.

“There are not a lot of organizations that offer this non-partisan information about how to run an effective campaign,” said Stone. “I certainly would recommend it.”

Rep. Jonathan Shell (R-KY 71st District), another CMS alumni, said he felt good about the information he received during his time at the CMS.

“It was invaluable to my election,” he said. “It was a good reality check. When going into something new, especially something like politics, you don’t know exactly what to do and after going through it, I felt as confident, to be able to run a campaign, as I had felt about anything that I’d ever started to accomplish. I’ve been to several of these campaign classes and this is the best one

that I have found.”

John Flanagan, a current candidate for public office recently completed the seminar. He said he has already put some of the things he learned to use.

“I have taken advantage of many suggestions and lessons learned in this seminar and incorporated them into my campaign efforts including business cards, push cards, videos and on-air and videotaped interviews,” said Flanagan. “I feel as though I now know what “right” looks like. Thanks to the Farm Bureau Campaign Management Seminar.”

Bryan Alvey, KFB Director of Local Affairs and Policy Development served as coordinator of the seminar. He said the event is very effective in presenting campaign strategies and other essential information to help candidates and campaign managers alike.

“The seminar is structured in a way that attendees can get a real sense of what an actual campaign is like and how to navigate their way through certain situations,” he said. “Ultimately, I think they get a real feel for the experience before they ever knock on the first door or shake the first hand.”

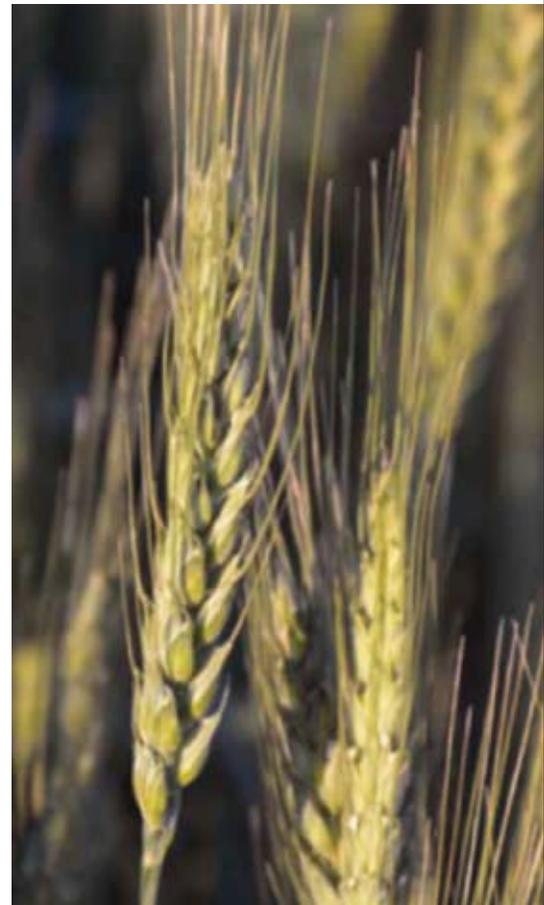


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County Corner

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities

HARLAN COUNTY

Harlan County Farm Bureau Federation donated five large turkeys to the Cumberland Hope Center located in Everts Kentucky. Pictured are: Don Miniard, President of Harlan County Farm Bureau; Nathan Boggs, Secretary of Harlan County Farm Bureau; Bobby Thomas, Reva Middleton, Rachel Barnett, Jennifer Witt, Kim Burkhart.



FAYETTE COUNTY

Cody Rakes, left, Fayette County Farm Bureau board member, accepted the Fayette County Farm Bureau Outstanding Young Agriculturalist award from Carrie Johnson-McIntosh, Fayette County FB executive director.



SHELBY COUNTY

Shelby County Farm Bureau members met with Congressman Massie at the Shelby County Farm Bureau office in December to discuss Farm Bureau issues.



ANDERSON COUNTY

Anderson County Farm Bureau President Stewart Gritton presented board member Randy Chrisman a check for \$1,000 for the Eric Chrisman Memorial Scholarship Fund that will go to a senior at the Lawrenceburg Christian Academy.



LETCHER COUNTY

Letcher County FB Board members and County Judge Executive Jim Ward recognizing food check out week. Pictured are Letcher County FB President, H (Howard) Stanfill, Women's Chair, Wanda Crowne, Ward and Young Farmer Chair, Diane Watts.



OWEN COUNTY

Owen County Measure the Candidate program for State Representative House 62. Pictured from left: Phillip Pratt (R), David Chappell, Owen County Farm Bureau President, and Chuck Tackett (D).



KFB President's and Vice



Andrew McCrea

Despite snowy weather, the 2016 Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) President's and Vice President's Conference brought a large crowd to Louisville to hear an array of speakers providing valuable information for local Farm Bureau initiatives in the coming year. There were

225 volunteer leaders representing 114 counties present at the conference.

Day-one activities included keynote speaker Andrew McCrea, a nationally syndicated radio broadcaster from northwest Missouri. McCrea still works his 3,500 acer ranch in addition to his many speaking engagements.

He offered advice to attendees during the KFB presentation on how to better tell their local success stories to a broader audience. McCrea suggested they offer those stories or share them in a way that will encourage others to share them, as well.

He also commented on the changing times in which we live and how changes affect people in different ways.

"In my mind, there are two different types of change; change is disturbing when it's done to us, but sometimes we forget that change is exhilarating when it's done by us," said McCrea.

From a local perspective, Mathew Gajdzik, the Shelby County Farm Bureau vice-president said he came to the conference to talk to other vice-presidents and presidents from around the state to get an idea of what activities or programs

President's Conference



that are working or not working in their counties and to get ideas for what could be tried in his home county.

"I think it's very important to get together at this conference to exchange ideas and get direction from the state (office)," he said. "The more people we can get together, the more ideas we can come up with. The grassroots approach to policies that are taken to Frankfort and Washington are very important at the farm level but it's something you can't do by yourself."

Larry Swetnam, the Fayette County Farm Bureau president said coming to the conference gives him a chance to discuss different activities with his counterparts in other counties.

"We get ideas we can take back home and occasionally, we'll do something we can share with other counties," he said.

"The networking is a fantastic method of sharing information to improve the benefits to the membership."

Both general sessions included panel discussions featuring county Farm Bureau presidents and vice-presidents who shared ideas and projects that had worked in their areas.

KFB President Mark Haney told members being good advocates for agriculture is more important now than ever before.

During remarks presented to attendees on day-two of the meeting, Haney challenged them to be informed, involved and to have the courage to speak up against incorrect information. He also told members how urgent it is to know the most important issues in their respective areas.

Facing page: Local FB presidents and vice presidents made their way to Louisville to hear from KFB staff, guest speakers and their peers in an effort to gather information they can use in their home counties. There were 225 volunteer leaders representing 114 counties present at the conference.

Above: Panel discussion including this one with local FB leaders provided information about projects that had been successful in their counties. At the podium is Boone county FB President Bob Schwenke.

Beef exports up, imports down in 2016

USDA economists expect 2016 will see a sharp improvement in the United States' beef trade balance. U.S. beef exports in 2015 are estimated at 2.27 billion pounds, down 12 percent from 2014 due in part to a stronger U.S. dollar, high domestic beef prices and increased competition from Australian beef. USDA forecasts 2016 beef exports may increase nine percent to 2.47 billion pounds. Supporting increased exports will be higher U.S. beef production, lower beef prices, stronger global demand and less foreign competition. U.S. beef production for 2016 is forecast up four percent at 24.58 billion pounds. The 2016 average price of Choice-grade steers is forecast at \$133-142 per cwt, down from \$148.12 last year. On the beef import side, the strong U.S. dollar and increased supplies from Australia and New Zealand in 2015 boosted U.S. imports 14 percent year over year to 3.37 billion pounds. However, USDA expects U.S. beef imports in 2016 to be lower as a result of decreased import demand for lean processing beef from Australia and overall higher U.S. beef production. Total beef imports for 2016 are forecast at 2.85 billion pounds, down 16 percent from 2015. As a result of higher exports and lower imports, the U.S. beef trade balance will improve by 66 percent – from a net importer of 1.104 billion pounds in 2015 to a net importer of 370 million pounds this year. The last year that beef exports outpaced imports was 2013.

County corn yields improved in 2015

Kentucky's 2015 corn production totaled 225.3 million bushels, down just 620,000 bushels from the 2014 crop. This was accomplished with 120,000 fewer acres and a 14.0 bushel/acre higher average yield. USDA's recently-published county production data (only 75 counties estimated by USDA-NASS) shows 2015 corn yields had an extremely wide range (103.2 to 192.7 bu/acre), similar to that experienced in 2014 (97.7 to 199.1 bu/acre). However, there were fewer counties with really poor yields and more counties with high yields. Wayne County had the state's highest yield of 192.7 bu/acre, followed closely by Hancock County with 191.9 bu/acre. Another 13 counties averaged 180.0 bu/acre or more. In 2014, only six counties had corn yields of 180.0 or better. Interestingly, seven of these top fifteen counties are located on the Kentucky-Tennessee border, from Wayne County over to Fulton County. And three of these seven counties -- Trigg, Simpson and Logan -- were in the bottom 15 county yield list for 2014, but made a much needed turnaround in 2015. The counties with the lowest yields were mostly in the eastern half of the state.

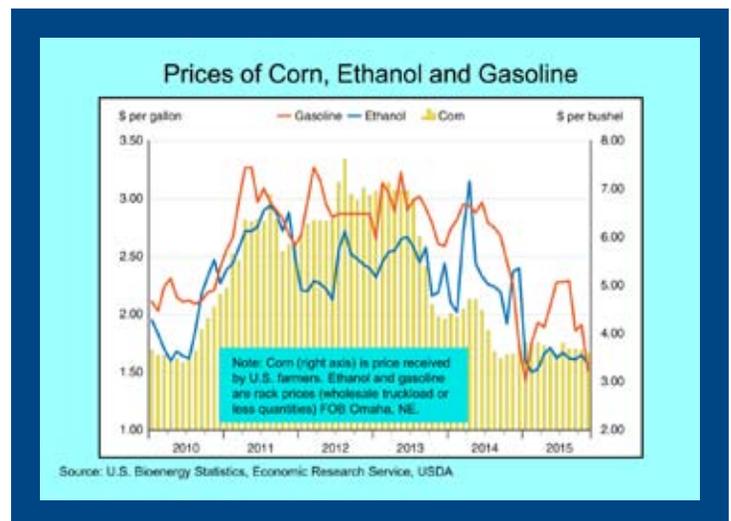
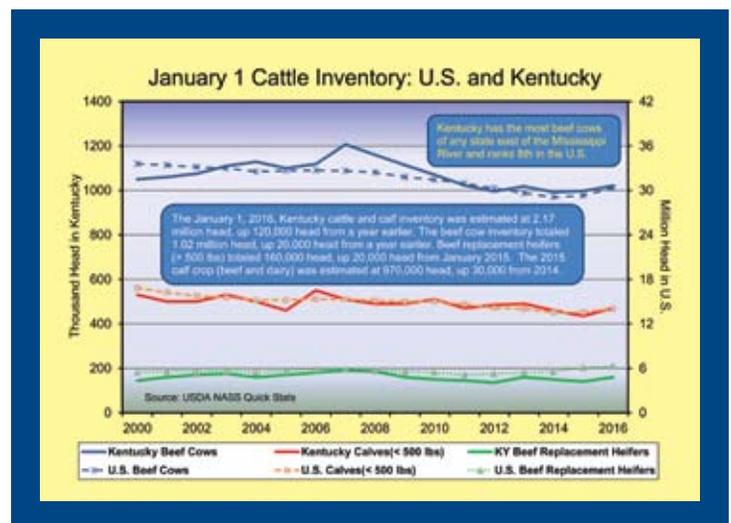
In terms of total corn production, Christian County led the way with 13.78 million bushels, followed by Union County, 13.61 million bushels; Henderson County, 12.77 million bushels; Daviess County, 11.11 million bushels; and Logan County, 10.12 million bushels.

More sheep and lambs on Kentucky farms

The January 1, 2016, inventory of all sheep and lambs on Kentucky farms was estimated at 53,000 head, ten percent higher than estimated a year ago, according to USDA. All breeding sheep and lambs increased 11 percent to an estimated 42,000 head, consisting of 33,000 breeding ewes, 2,000 breeding rams and 7,000 replacement lambs. All market sheep and lambs were estimated at 11,000 head, up 1,000 head from a year earlier. Last year's lamb crop totaled 43,000 head, up 3,000 from 2014.

All meat and other goats in Kentucky were estimated at 59,000 head, down 1,000 head from January 2015. Milk goats at 5,000 head, were down 700 head from the previous year's estimate.

U.S. inventories of sheep and lambs increased 0.8 percent (5.320 million head) and the number of meat and other goats fell 1.4 percent (2.095 million head).



AFBF Seeking Speakers for 2017 Annual Convention & IDEAg Trade Show

Calling all speakers! The American Farm Bureau Federation is seeking presentation and workshop speaker submissions for the 2017 AFBF Annual Convention & IDEAg Trade Show through April 15. The event takes place Jan. 6-11, 2017, in Phoenix, Arizona.

Speakers are sought to present the latest innovations in agriculture to some of the best and most creative minds in the country. The AFBF Annual Convention & IDEAg Trade Show is a premier destination for agriculture education, policy development, industry relationships and cutting-edge innovations, reaching 6,000 farmers and industry leaders from across the United States!

Selected speakers will share their knowledge during 15- to 60-minute sessions with Farm Bureau farmer and

rancher members, industry leaders and agricultural professionals. Presenters also will have the opportunity to network and exchange ideas with Farm Bureau leaders and other speakers.

Farm Bureau aims to provide specific, action-item focused workshops that offer attendees knowledge they can take back and apply to their own businesses and daily lives. Desired workshops will engage the audience and are intended to serve as a platform for innovation in the areas of farming, ranching, rural communities, business management and cutting-edge technologies in addition to current trends and the future of agriculture.

The deadline for submitting proposals is April 15. Download the request for speakers submission form at <http://annualconvention.fb.org/> or email conventions@fb.org with questions.

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News from the American Farm Bureau Federation

TPP Coalition Expands Leadership and Activity

FBN News

THE OFFICIAL E-NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

The U.S. Coalition for TPP announced an expansion in its leadership as it works to advocate for passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement, signed by the United States and its 11 TPP partners on February 3. The expanded Coalition leadership now includes the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Business Roundtable, the Emergency Committee for American Trade, the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. These five organizations issued the following joint statement:

“Our five organizations have joined together as co-leaders of the U.S. Coalition for TPP for the next phase of its efforts – pushing for the expeditious passage of the TPP. We are intensifying our broad education and advocacy efforts on the Hill and around the country as the Administration and Congressional leaders work to address the next steps that are required to secure passage of the TPP. The TPP is a strong agreement that will eliminate barriers to U.S. exports and set in place standards that will improve American competitiveness in a region where the United States has lost market share. Industries and companies, large and small, across America know that standing on the sidelines hurts the U.S.

economy and American farmers, manufacturers, services providers and workers. It is critical that America move forward as soon as possible to open markets and level the playing field with our TPP partners.”

Sixth Circuit Court Rules it Has Jurisdiction Over WOTUS Lawsuits

A three-judge panel of the Sixth Circuit has decided that jurisdiction over the legal challenges to the “Waters of the U.S.” rule lies in that court — not in the district courts as industry groups and most state governments have argued. The court’s decision came in the form of three separate opinions, one by each of the three judges involved, and each with a different view of the law on this complex issue. Given the diversity of opinions among these three judges, and given the importance of the issues at stake, it seems highly likely that one or more parties will file a petition for rehearing by the full Sixth Circuit. Meanwhile, the temporary stay of the WOTUS rule previously issued by the Sixth Circuit presumably will remain in effect.

It seems almost certain that state governments or industry groups — or both — will seek rehearing by the full Sixth

Circuit, and it seems likely that the issue could go on to the U.S. Supreme Court. However the jurisdictional question is finally resolved, the parties — especially the plaintiffs—have a strong interest in achieving certainty that they are in the correct court before proceeding with the time-consuming and costly process of litigating the merits of the WOTUS rule.

Any petition for rehearing must be filed within 45 days. If the Sixth Circuit or the Supreme Court ultimately rule that the appellate court does not have jurisdiction, the various legal challenges will proceed in the federal district courts, the nationwide stay of the rule will end, and many of the plaintiffs presumably will ask those district courts for temporary relief from the WOTUS rule.

Farm Bureau Donations Benefit Hungry Americans

The farm and ranch families of Farm Bureau raised more than \$1.1 million and donated a record of more than 48 million pounds of food to assist hungry Americans as part of Farm Bureau’s “Harvest for All” program. Combined, the monetary and food donations also reached a record level of the equivalent of more than 49 million meals.

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Spencer County FFA Invitational



As 2016 FFA Week events came to a close, more than 550 members from 24 different state charters came to Taylorsville to participate in the Spencer County FFA Invitational competition.

This annual gathering, in its 12th year, has served as a “practice” for FFA participants to ready themselves for the all-important regional competitions that will decide who makes it to the state conference.

Long-time Spencer County FFA Advisor Bland Baird, while now retired, still helps with the Invitational. He said the event is a good way to practice in competition-like conditions.

“It’s also a good leadership activity for

the participants, they get to meet other students, and it helps in their abilities for public speaking, interviews and to think on their feet,” he said.

One example is seen in the impromptu speech competitions where students speak on an array of topics they are familiar with but only find out their specific subject 20 to 30 minutes before they compete.

“It’s somewhat knowledge-based but

the main thing is, it promotes public speaking which will help just about anyone in an interview or being able to speak in front of people,” said Baird.

Darryl Matherly, the current FFA advisor and agriculture teacher at Spencer County said for students who have never participated in these types of speaking competitions, the Invitational helps to calm a lot of nerves they may have in preparation for regionals.

Left from top down: More than 550 FFA students from 24 chapters made their way to the Spencer County FFA Invitational competition in an effort to ready themselves for regional events. FFA State Treasurer Taylor Nash, top, gave instructions before the competitions began. Benjamin Pinkston, bottom, who serves as the Mercer County chapter president, Bluegrass Region vice-president and is one of the 2015 Outstanding Farm Bureau Youth award winners prepared for his competitive events.

Above: Kaylee Brown, the Lincoln County chapter reporter, found a quiet spot to prepare for her competitions.

He also said while FFA and other Career and Technical Education activities help all students, those leadership and speaking skills they learn through their chapter competitions is of the upmost importance.

As is the case in Spencer County, many of the students involved in FFA don't come from farming backgrounds, but that doesn't mean they aren't connected to agriculture.

Bethany Mattingly, an ag teacher and FFA advisor from Louisville's Seneca High School said her chapter's involvement at the Invitational event included parliamentary procedures, as well as impromptu speaking competitions. She noted that her students will learn from any mistakes made at this event, to help better prepare them for upcoming regional competitions.

Mattingly also said that while many people are surprised that a "city" school has FFA, Seneca students are involved in a number of FFA and agriculture-related activities.

"We do a lot with the community and the students do a lot to make sure others understand there is agriculture everywhere you go, not just in rural areas," she said.

Those activities include school gardens and participation in a program that teaches elementary students about farm animals and current agriculture practices such as composting.

For Seneca FFA students, many like the science aspect of agriculture; something that leads them to research areas of the industry, biotechnology, forestry and greenhouse operations, for example, said Mattingly.

"There are lots of opportunities, even in urban areas that can really make an impact," she said.

Opportunity is a key word for FFA members as they compete and prepare for their futures. Benjamin Pinkston, the Mercer County FFA chapter president, Bluegrass Region vice-president and one of the 2015 Outstanding Farm Bureau Youth award winners has already seen benefits from participating in such competitions as he participated in this year's Spencer County event.

He said while everyone wants to win, the important aspect about this competition is how helpful it is, especially for younger participants, to get a feel for the real thing.

"Going to the regionals, it is a really important time for all of chapters; that's where it really counts," he said.

Pinkston, who plans on attending the University of Kentucky in the fall to study agriculture economics, also noted that FFA members learn more than just how to participate in competitions.

"First, FFA builds communication skills. I've gone from being very shy to learning to enjoy speaking in front of people and working with teams and other individuals," he said. "FFA also gives insight into the ag industry, one of the biggest and most vital industries in the world. I don't come from the farm but FFA has given me that insight in what is happening in agriculture."

Pinkston added that it's going to be the people not growing up on farms that will be future leaders in the ag industry, so it's very important to be involved in FFA and to make the most of it.

This popular competition will likely be around for some time to come in a place where FFA has been a part of the community since 1933. The Spencer County chapter has long been known for its success both at the state and national competition levels. This year marked the third in a row the chapter won the national FFA dairy contest. Currently the chapter is in the process of raising funds for a trip to the world dairy judging finals to be held in Scotland this June.

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3. As a means of breaking down residual material after harvest
4. Fall application strengthens the root system on alfalfa, winter wheat and grasses to avoid winter kill!

The decision to use SumaGroulx on my corn and soybean crop came after several years of debating whether to use it or not. The idea of using SumaGroulx meant taking a risk and trying something different. It took many years of seeing and hearing about SumaGroulx before taking the first step of trying some myself and I was so happy to see that my yields were much better by using this product. My soybeans were an average of 7 to 17 bushel better and my corn was 8 to 15 bushel better when I used SumaGroulx in 2013. I don't have the expense of fertilizer now and was so impressed that I became a dealer for SumaGroulx for the year 2014. I am so excited about the savings and yield increase that I want to share my knowledge and use of it with the farming world.

- Steve Koroleski • 5 - K Ag Supply • Kinde, MI



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2015 INDEPENDENT TESTING RESULTS

TESTING ENTITY	BRAND	TRIAL/CITY	STATE	YIELD RANK	TOTAL ENTRIES	YIELD BU./A.
University of Kentucky	493R4™*	Group 4 Late/SUMMARY	KY	1st	75	72.0
University of Kentucky	522L4	Group 5/Hancock	KY	1st	24	59.5
University of Kentucky	424L4	Group 4 Early/Hancock	KY	2nd	72	59.6
University of Kentucky	493R4™*	Group 4 Late/Calloway	KY	2nd	71	76.9
University of Kentucky	474L4	Group 4 Late/Hancock	KY	3rd	71	68.8
University of Kentucky	522L4	Group 5/SUMMARY	KY	4th	24	62.5

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