

# Kentucky

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at AFBF Annual  
Convention**

**The Young Farmer  
Winter Leadership  
Conference**

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KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU NEWS  
Volume 17 | No. 1  
February 2018

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It was good to see so many of our state members at the recent American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention. Collectively, there is so much we can accomplish as an organization at all levels and we saw that in action at the meeting.

President Donald Trump spoke to thousands of Farm Bureau members during the closing General Session, concluding his remarks with the signing of executive orders that will help get broadband coverage to more and more rural areas.

This has been a priority issue for Kentucky Farm Bureau, other state Farm Bureaus, as well as a national priority. And I believe our advocacy efforts helped to move this initiative forward.

But it takes more than a single group to bring some issues, especially these big ticket priorities, to fruition. It takes working with each other, legislators at all levels, other organizations and government agencies to get certain projects from the idea and discussion stages to completion.

From a state perspective, we have seen priorities such as the Kentucky Water Resources Board, the Breathitt Veterinarian Center, and the Grain and Forage Center of Excellence go from being an idea or a suggestion to being an accomplishment.

These were all big initiatives that will produce positive results for farm families and rural communities for generations to come. But they didn't happen overnight; nor would they have occurred without the help of many agencies and organizations working together to make these projects realities.

As we move through this winter season and Kentucky's legislative session, KFB and our friends and partners are at work for our members trying to achieve even more as it relates to our current list of priority issues.

While we, as farmers, may not be planting in our fields, we as agriculturalist are planting the seeds of advocacy at the local, state and national levels to move these grassroots proposals along, until we see them completed. In doing so we recognize how much effort goes into these accomplishments and understand the value of working together to make things happen.

By leading where we stand in our cities and counties, on farms and in rural communities, we can accomplish so much more; more than we can imagine. When we bring our organizations, commodity groups, lawmakers, state agencies and all those with a vested interest in keeping farm families successful together for a common goal, great things can happen. And they have happened, but there is still work to be done in this ongoing process.

As we progress in our efforts to move priority issues forward, may we always remember that by working together, we can do so much more. While it is hard work at times, it is work well worth doing for the benefit of our farm communities everywhere.

**Mark Haney**  
President  
Kentucky Farm Bureau



2018 DISTRICT MEETINGS

(ALL TIMES ARE LOCAL)

DISTRICT	DATE	TIME	PLACE
District 1	March 19	7:00 p.m	Majestic Pizza & Steak House, Mayfield
District 2	March 5	6:00 p.m	Ballard Convention Center
District 3	March 22	6:00 p.m	Rough River Dam State Resort Park
District 4	March 26	6:30 p.m	Barren River State Park Lodge
District 5	March 27	7:00 p.m	Marion County Extension Office
District 6	March 8	7:00 p.m	Henry County Extension Office
District 7	March 22	6:00 p.m	Russell County Auditorium / Natatorium
District 8	March 5	7:00 p.m	Madison County Farm Bureau Office
District 9	March 19	6:30 p.m	Blue Licks State Park
District 10	March 6	6:30 p.m.	Wolfe County Extension Office
District 11	March 29	6:00 p.m.	Pine Mountain State Resort Park

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Kentucky Farm Bureau is a voluntary organization of farm families and their allies dedicated to serving as the voice of agriculture by identifying problems, developing solutions and taking actions which will improve net farm income, achieve better economic opportunities and enhance the quality of life for all.

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## comment

COLUMN



### The Importance of Being Involved

While growing up on a farm in northern Kentucky, my parents always instilled the importance of being involved and giving back to our rural community. So, with my passion for agriculture and interest in leadership, involvement in Farm Bureau was a natural fit.

While a student at the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, I began participating in the Kentucky Farm Bureau Young Farmer summer outings and winter leadership conferences.

It was during one of these conferences that my boyfriend and I set a goal. We wanted to develop our careers to make an impact in agriculture. As a part of that plan we were hopeful that participation in the Excellence in Agriculture competition was in our future.

Eight years after setting that goal, getting married, and giving birth to two sons, that goal was realized. We were recognized as the Kentucky Farm Bureau Excellence in Agriculture Award winners in 2016.

But what did it take to achieve that goal from the time we set it to the moment we achieved it? Much of that success came from understanding the value of being involved and giving back.

As a grassroots organization, Farm Bureau serves all 120 Kentucky counties in so many different ways. Supporting youth in our communities through scholarships and grants, creating a meaningful network and culture of lifelong learning for our young producers, and being “the Voice of Agriculture” for our community along with our local elected officials helps this organization in its efforts to support farmers at every stage of their operation. Involvement can come on so many levels including locally, statewide, or nationally.


However, our passion for agriculture and for serving others cannot stop with that local involvement; it must be fostered in our most precious resource; our children. While attending the Kentucky Farm Bureau Annual Meeting this past December to compete in the finals of the Discussion Meet competition, this revelation became so clear to me.

During the Young Farmer luncheon, our three year old and 18 month old sons sparked new friendships while “carpet farming” with tractors and animals during the meal and most of the luncheon programing.

While at times we tried to quiet them and get them to focus on the programing, it became clear that they were discovering something we as adults often take for granted. The value of building relationships with farmers across the state not only makes us better farmers but also better leaders.

Even at the foot of those banquet tables, my three year old taught me a valuable lesson in how to “LEAD where you STAND” as he played with his “Farm Bureau friends.” Through all of my Farm Bureau experiences, this is a lesson I hope I never forget.

**Miranda Chaplin**  
2017 KFB Discussion Meet, Winner  
2018 AFBF Discussion Meet, Sweet 16 Finalist





# KFB

## Well Represented at American Farm Bureau Convention

**M**ore than 500 Kentucky Farm Bureau members made their way to Nashville for the 99th Annual American Farm Bureau Federation Convention and Trade Show to hear from national agriculture leaders and have a voice in national farm policy, as well as support state competition winners and gain the opportunity to hear from a sitting Commander in Chief.

President Donald Trump, who is the first president to visit the AFBF Convention in 26 years, spoke to a capacity crowd as part of the closing General Session touching on a number of issues including rural communications, economic development, regulations, labor and trade. He also praised farmers for their enduring values.



Left: KFB President Mark Haney addressed state members and guests during the convention.  
Right: AFBF President Zippy Duvall spoke to Farm Bureau members during the convention's opening General Session.



*We are witnessing a new era of  
**patriotism, prosperity and pride**  
— and at the forefront of this exciting  
new chapter is the **great  
American farmer.***

— President Donald Trump

*"We are witnessing a new era of patriotism, prosperity and pride—and at the forefront of this exciting new chapter is the great American farmer," he said. "Farmers embody the values of hard work, grit, self-reliance and sheer determination."*

At the end of his address, the President signed two executive orders that fund and streamline the expansion of rural broadband.

According to information from the White House, the first of these two orders instructs the Department of Interior to dedicate a portion of its assets for rural broadband installation. The second order will streamline the installation process by requiring agencies to use standardized forms and contracts for installing antennas on federal buildings, thus improving process efficiency.

In addition to the President, convention attendees heard from USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue, Canadian Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay, keynote speaker and country music superstar Reba McEntire and AFBF President Zippy Duvall during general sessions while a host of agriculture experts from government and business held breakout sessions on a variety of topics from NAFTA to the latest livestock outlook for 2018.

During the annual business session, voting delegates unanimously re-elected AFBF President Zippy Duvall and also approved policy resolutions related to issues such as trade, regulatory reform, crop insurance, and biotechnology, to name a few.

From a state perspective, KFB state competition winners fared well during the convention. Young Farmer & Rancher Achievement Award winners Ben and Katie Furnish of Harrison County finished third





nationally, while Discussion Meet winner Miranda Chaplin of Bourbon County made the top 16 in her competition. The Excellence in Agriculture winners Jay and Trisha Campbell of Logan County also represented KFB in an outstanding manner while competing at the convention.

Organizationally, KFB took home several honors presented at this year's convention. Each year state Farm Bureaus are presented awards in different categories related to several programs and initiatives.

KFB was honored with an array of AFBF Awards of Excellence in all four categories given, including: Advocacy; Engagement and Outreach;

Leadership and Business Development; and Membership Value.

KFB President Mark Haney said he was proud of the efforts made by the organization.

*"It is my pleasure to accept these awards on behalf of our organization. However, these awards are earned by the combined efforts of our volunteer leadership and staff," he said. "It takes a true grassroots approach to be the Voice of Kentucky Agriculture at the county, state, and national level. When we are united with one voice, the entire organization becomes stronger and more effective in our effort to advocate on behalf of Kentucky farm families."*

KFB Leadership and Board Members listened to delegate information during the convention's Business Session.

..... Other notable quotes from AFBF Annual Convention .....

“

*As I've said since I became the Secretary of Agriculture, traveling to more than 30 states and six foreign countries, the one thing I will never do is apologize for the greatness of America. We are an exceptional nation and we should never apologize; we have no reason to apologize.*

*And one of the biggest reasons we are the envy of the world is gathered right here in this room – the farmers of America. You feed this country and the world, with all of your labors every day...The bonds of faith are directly tied to our liberty. Every time you plant a seed in the ground, you are exhibiting your faith in a bountiful harvest. There is nothing more American than that.*

**Sonny Perdue**  
USDA Secretary

“

*Let's not blow up NAFTA, but that doesn't mean that changes shouldn't be made. Good friendships don't mean that you don't have hard conversations to right-size agreements that may be 20 years old.*

**Ted McKinney**  
Undersecretary of Trade and foreign agricultural affairs for the Agriculture Department

“

*The closer the U.S. and Canada work together to address common challenges, the more we can grow our economies. No two nations depend on each other for economic prosperity more than the U.S. and Canada.*

**Lawrence MacAulay**  
Canadian Agriculture Minister

“

*As I have traveled, I have discovered that even some within agriculture don't understand what's at stake if we lose our trade agreements. Trade should not be a dirty word. Because without those global markets our already-depressed farm economy would go down even more. We sell about half of what we produce to foreign markets around the world. If we lose those markets, where is that agricultural production going to go? Ag trade is an American success story.*

**Zippy Duvall**  
AFBF President



# 2018 Kentucky Farm Bureau Beef Expo

Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville, KY | March 2–4, 2018

	SHOW	SALE	OTHER EVENTS	
ANGUS	9:00 am Friday	12:00 pm Saturday	NEW EDUCATIONAL BREAKOUT SESSIONS	Friday: 10:00 am & 1:00 pm Presentations on: Cattle Phenotype in Relationship to Mineral Nutrition & Beef Marketing
BEEFALO	2:30 pm Friday	9:30 am Saturday		
CHAROLAIS	12:00 pm Saturday	4:00 pm Saturday	TRADE SHOW	Friday / Saturday: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm Sunday till end of junior show
GELBVIEH	1:00 pm Friday	11:30 am Saturday		
LIMOUSIN	10:00 am Saturday	3:30 pm Saturday	YOUTH JUDGING CONTEST	Saturday, Check In: 6:45 am Contest: 8:00 am Awards: 3:00 pm
HEREFORD	1:00 pm Friday	1:00 pm Saturday		
RED ANGUS	10:00 am Friday	10:00 am Saturday	KENTUCKY JR HEIFER SHOW	Saturday, Check In: 10:00 am – 1:30 pm Saturday, Show: 4:30 pm
RED POLL	4:00 pm Friday	9:30 am Saturday		
SHORTHORN	10:00 am Saturday	1:00 pm Saturday	KENTUCKY AND OPEN JUNIOR STEER & MARKET HEIFER SHOW	Saturday, Check In: 5:00 pm – 7:30 pm Sunday, Show: 8:00 am
SIMMENTAL	4:00 pm Friday	11:00 am Saturday		
PEN HEIFER	2:00 pm Friday	2:00 pm Saturday	OPEN JUNIOR HEIFER SHOW	Saturday, Check In: 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm Sunday, Show: 8:00 am

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# Water: The Common Denominator

KFB PRIORITY ISSUE MOVING FORWARD THROUGH COLLABORATION

Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." That quote appropriately describes the efforts that are being made by Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) and some of its partners in both government and agriculture sectors to move forward on the issue of water resource management.

KFB's Water Management Working Group (WMWG) began a process more than three years ago that brought together experts in a number of fields from a number of agencies to develop recommendations to enhance the quality and quantity of water resources available, especially in the agriculture sector.

In doing so, the idea of legislation that would create a statewide water resources board was born and recommended by the WMWG. HB529, which established that board, was passed by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2016.

Specifically, the Kentucky Water Resources Board (KWRB) is administered by the Energy and Environment Cabinet and assists the cabinet in conducting research and developing recommendations to enhance water resources accessible for agricultural production.

That board consists of members from a variety of stakeholder agencies and organizations including KFB. Steve Coleman, retired Director of the Kentucky Division of Conservation, chairs the WMWG and serves as the KFB representative on the KWRB. He said since its inception, the WMWG has developed a body of expertise and knowledge, collecting information that will be very valuable to state ag producers as they deal with the day-to-day issues of water management.

"We have come a long way with not only the research side of this but now, also getting down to implementation and actually having specific best-management practices that landowners can learn about and adopt for their

farms to improve their efficiency in water management," he said.

In moving forward on the implementation of projects, a presentation was recently made by the KWRB to the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADB) to discuss funding opportunities which would help implement plans and research efforts as part of its strategy in taking these projects to public and private farm operations which will ultimately benefit farm families across the state.

During the presentation, Pete Goodmann, Director of the Kentucky Division of Water, Charles G. Snavelly, Secretary of the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, and KFB President Mark Haney addressed the KADB explaining the value of such research not only for agriculture but for all Kentuckians.

Haney told board members that water is the one thing that is common between all farm operations and resilient water management practices are essential to the success of those operations.

"There is perhaps nothing more valuable to our farm families than adequate water supplies on hand at the times when they need it the most," he said. "The work the WMWG and the KWRB have done and will continue to do, will help to ensure those valuable water supplies are available. This research is critical not only to the agriculture industry but ultimately to all citizens. Water is our common denominator."

Goodmann said the Cabinet and the Kentucky Farm Bureau recognize the importance of water resiliency in protecting and sustaining Kentucky's agriculture and its economic future.

"The Water Resources Board's 'On Farm Water Resiliency program' seeks to develop and implement water-management practices to improve water resilience on farms, promote innovation in on-farm water management, and increase on-farm water control and availability," he said.

"The program's goal is to institutionalize and normalize water management practices so that Kentucky's diverse agriculture operations become more sustainable and profitable."

The collaboration that has existed between all vested parties during this time of renewed water management resource interest, has been spurred by the creation of and recommendations from the WMWG, said David S. Beck, KFB Executive Vice President.

There is perhaps nothing more valuable to our farm families than adequate water supplies on hand at the times when they need it the most.

— Mark Haney,  
KFB President

"The idea of needing resilient water resources is nothing new but often in places where water supplies are abundant as they are in Kentucky, it is easy to become complacent when thinking about water issues until there is a crisis," he said. "This should never be the case especially when our state's economy depends so much on a vibrant agriculture industry. We feel the work taking place now with so many agencies and organizations will benefit Kentucky's overall economy now and in the foreseeable future. This whole project is proof that when we work together for a common goal, great things can be accomplished."

Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet Secretary Charles Snavelly will be featured in the March Candid Conversation of KFB News.



## KFB Board hears from UK about Grain and Forage Center of Excellence's Efforts on Water Resource Management

Dr. Nancy Cox, Dean of the University of Kentucky (UK) College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and KFB Board Member, along with UK Grain and Forage Center of Excellence's Director Dr. Chad Lee spoke to KFB's Board of Directors recently to discuss the work taking place at the Center related to water resource management.

Cox first thanked the board for their support of the center and said since the Princeton, Kentucky facility opened in 1925 it has tried to give back and be of service to the agriculture community.

"There have been a lot of great discoveries over the years and we see this Grain and Forage Center of Excellence as a partnership with Farm Bureau and commodity organizations, and as an ag community center," she said. "We are excited about this opportunity especially with the emphasis on water that KFB has initiated. We have come to a really good place right now in terms of being ready to put projects on the ground."

Lee said with water being so critical to everyone, the research being conducted at the center focus on several issues specifically related to water resources.

"One of those is how do we grow a crop if we don't have enough water, and what are some of the ways to ensure having adequate water when we need it; finally, how do we help

ensure that the water that comes off our fields is clean and suitable to flow downstream," he said.

Another water resource research effort has focused on irrigation.

"In a typical year we almost always go dry for a short period during the season, but enough to take down yields slightly. Last year we got 40 inches of rain at our research location during the growing season and we only need about 24 or 25 in a normal year," he said. "Yet, with just a little irrigation, about an inch of water, we gained yield last year. Even though we got a lot of rain in a season last year, we didn't always get it when we needed it."

Lee added that by making soils more resilient, making crops more resilient during gaps between water, and in some cases, irrigating when possible; all these things can help with efforts to ensure an adequate crop and

an adequate use of nutrients and other inputs being applied to the fields.

"We also recognize that in any given year, there are periods we have excess water that may not be used at all on our farms and we can probably capture a bit of that from time to time and use some of it to help us ensure a good crop," he said.

Lee said Kentucky is in a good place when it comes to these research efforts and the collaboration seen here as it relates to the agriculture sector.

"The ag community in Kentucky is phenomenal and I'm glad to be a part of it. This center has been a partnership from the beginning and will be a partnership all the way through. The Grain and Forage Center of Excellence was an idea that began with farmers and conversations about how to improve agriculture and research for agriculture for another generation," he said.




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# Faith Guides Taylor County Family and their Riding Therapy Facility

Upon meeting the Garrison family from Campbellsville, Kentucky, one would know immediately they are a family of faith. And it is that faith that has guided them to and through a labor of love that created the Riding Enhanced Around Therapeutic Horses (REATH) Center, a horseback riding therapy facility.

Their story began with their daughter Sabrina's birth, who was born with a grade four hydrocephalus, or more commonly known as a stroke. The ailment left her with a mild case of cerebral palsy affecting her left side, and her parents looking for ways to help in her therapy efforts as she got older.

"Sabrina had gone through some type of therapy since she was born beginning with a program known as 'First Steps.' When she turned three, we began to look for something else because she aged out of that program and we always wanted to give her every opportunity that we could," said Marchetta.

With no real therapy programs for children near their home, the Garrisons began to look elsewhere for something that would help. It would be a magazine

It really is like a magical kind of thing and taking it to this next step seems to be the way God is pointing us. But public interest will also be important in getting an indoor arena built.

– Sammy Garrison

article about therapy riding in another town that would spark their interest in a new program for Sabrina.

"I had a horse growing up so this really peaked my interest," said Marchetta.

Although the facility they had read about was two hours away in Shelby County, the family checked it out anyway, discovering this was something they should try.

"From the day we got there, it was just something we knew we should be doing, and God was leading us to do that," said Marchetta.

While riding therapy was something that Sabrina enjoyed and adapted to, making the drive was not always easy. Because of that, the idea came to the Garrisons that maybe they could start their own facility to not only benefit their daughter but other people in their area, as well.

"My initial reaction when Marchetta asked me about beginning a center like the one in Shelby County was, 'Are you crazy!' I apologized about that remark later, then we talked about it and prayed about it," said Sammy. "I knew Marchetta was passionate about it and I was passionate about Sabrina getting the best care that she could possibly get and we decided this was what God was leading us to do."

The Garrisons said, through much discussion and prayer, the decision was made to create the center, somehow, someday. And with that decision, they spent a year and a half to write a business plan and obtain 501C3 status. Marchetta also became a certified instructor through PATH (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship).

"Things just began to fall in place for this to happen," she said. "All we really had to start with was the back yard. We bought five acres from my parents, then the barn came and there is just story after story of how it began to happen."

REATH has grown gradually since its beginning to include a barn/supply/office facility and a fenced, outdoor riding arena.

"It's unbelievable the things that have happened and the way this is growing," said Marchetta.

In equine terms, the therapy is similar to dressage where the rider

and horse go through a series of movements. With PATH, the "students" are also learning about horsemanship. The current outdoor arena, which also includes a ramp for riders who may be confined to a wheelchair, is perfect for this type of riding as long as the weather is warm and dry enough.

With that said, the Garrisons are looking at a next phase; an indoor facility that would allow participants to come year-round regardless of the weather.

"We've always said when it's time for us to have an indoor arena, it's going to come and we feel like that is getting ready to happen," said Marchetta. "But the idea for this expansion has really come from the people involved here at the center. They have just been so supportive and want to do all they can to make this place grow and thrive."

The community has also been supportive, many of whom got a chance to see the facility by way of a fall festival held at the center last October.

"We have seen great success here with our riders and the community support," said Sammy. "It really is like a magical kind of thing and taking it to this next step seems to be the way God is pointing us. But public interest will also be important in getting an indoor arena built."

Much of the success of REATH so far has been due in large part to the fact that the center has remained so sustainable. The Garrisons pointed out that the program is debt-free and when there has been a need, whether it is for the animals or the center infrastructure, that need has always been met.

Sabrina is still utilizing the program while beginning her career as an Occupational Therapy major at Eastern Kentucky University. She said being a part of a riding therapy program has taught her many things.

"I've definitely learned about the horse such as how they act to a particular situation. But as far as the therapy goes, simple tasks that most people take for granted, I wouldn't have been able to do or at least done as

well had it not been for the program," she said.

The riding program has also helped her with balance issues, added Sabrina. She said the horses are special to her and she will always have a special place in her heart for them. In fact, she plans to minor in a program at ECU called Horses, Humans and Health.

"As a child, I questioned why I was born with this impairment. This was difficult for me as I saw myself being different than others in my school classes," said Sabrina. "However, as I grew up, I realized that if it were not for my impairment, I would not be going into a career in Occupational Therapy. With this degree, I can not only help those in a clinical setting, but also help those who come to the REATH Center."

Sammy said they believe God has His hand around all of this and it is His plan.

"When Sabrina was born and we discovered what had happened to her, we asked ourselves what we had done to deserve this," he said. "Now, after all that has happened with Sabrina and this facility, we ask the same question but in a totally different way. What have we done to be a part of the REATH Center and to deserve it."

Christina Coe and Jenny Newton are just a couple of the many people who have been involved with REATH. Both have children who have benefitted from the program.

Coe said after spending several months of riding lessons for her son Samuel she continues to be amazed.

"When Sam began riding, he was unable to hold himself upright on the horse. Now he sits with a posture that would make any competition rider proud. I could never verbalize how much of a difference this has made in our lives," she said.

Newton has a similar story. She said her daughter Sophia has made great strides since beginning riding at the center.

"On her first ride she could not hold herself up at all on the horse much less say any commands. However, over the past six months we have all watched in awe of the significant improvements that horse riding therapy has done for her week by week," said Newton.

For more information, go to about REATH, go to thereathcenter.com.

## The REATH Center



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# Final Marketbasket Survey of 2017 Shows Continued Decline in Food Prices

Kentucky Farm Bureau's (KFB) latest Marketbasket Survey indicates food prices dropped once again during the fourth quarter of last year. This continues a trend seen throughout the last two years of the survey.

Each quarter, 40 basic food items are price-checked throughout the state in an effort to gauge current food-price trends. Since the end of 2016, surveyed food items have dropped by a total of \$3.79 or just over three percent.

During the fourth quarter of last year, overall surveyed items dropped by \$1.52 over the previous quarter. The 40 items cost a total of \$114.11 as compared to \$115.63 in the third quarter and \$117.90 during the time frame of 2016.

Quarterly declines by category came from fruits and vegetables, grains, dairy and pork while slight increases came in the beef and poultry categories.

The declines seen statewide for these specific food costs are in contrast to the Consumer Price Index from last year. The CPI food index rose 1.6 percent in 2017. That index was mixed according to last December figures with slight increases for meats, poultry, fish, and eggs and small declines in dairy and related products along with fruits and vegetables.

### MARKETBASKET SURVEY SPECIFICS:

The price for rib-eye steaks increased by \$0.78 per pound while sirloin steaks dropped in price by \$0.65 per pound. Overall beef category items saw a modest increase of \$0.34. Both large and extra-large eggs increased in price by \$0.10 and \$0.18 cents per dozen respectively, while cut-fryer prices decreased by \$0.21 per pound. Apples dropped \$0.56 per pound while a 10 pound bag of potatoes declined by \$0.42.

### AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS IN FOOD PRICES:

Whether or not U.S. grocery prices fluctuate from one quarterly survey to the next, Kentuckians and all Americans continue to enjoy some of the lowest food prices in the world. Shoppers in the U.S. spend only about seven percent of their disposable income on food each year. Those costs remain far lower than any other country in the world thanks to many of the agricultural efficiencies utilized in America. Today the average U.S. farmer produces enough food and fiber to provide for about 154 people – a significant jump from an average of 19 people per farmer back in 1940.

Yet while more food is now being produced on less land, the farmer's share of the retail food dollar in America is down. According to the USDA's Food Dollar Series, a farmer earns less than 17 cents per dollar spent on food, down significantly from the 31 cents earned in 1980.



## Collaborative Effort Brings Meal Kits to Kentucky

Thanks to a joint effort between the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA), the state Finance and Administration Cabinet, the federal government, and Kentucky food banks, 314,496 meal kits from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were shipped to Kentucky and used to help feed the hungry.

The surplus meal kits were originally purchased at the federal level for disaster victims. Late last year the General Services Administration (GSA) informed all state surplus programs that FEMA would be transferring these meals.

Upon this notification, the Division of Surplus Property in the Finance and Administration Cabinet informed Bill Wickliffe, director of the KDA's Food Distribution Division. Ultimately KDA staff contacted leaders of God's Pantry in Lexington and Feeding America Kentucky's Heartland, the agencies that distributed the meals, to ask if they would be interested in the surplus food. Quarles also wrote a letter to the GSA asking the agency to give Kentucky's food banks priority to receive the meal kits.

"As part of our Hunger Initiative, we are always looking for ways to provide wholesome meals for our less fortunate friends and neighbors," said Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles. "This was a combined effort to bring these much-needed resources to Kentucky."

Since coming to office, Quarles has made alleviating the hunger issue in Kentucky a priority through KDA's

Hunger Initiative. KDA also created the Hunger Task Force comprised of various stakeholders including Kentucky Farm Bureau to work collaboratively in finding ways to combat Kentucky's hunger problem.

It is estimated that one in six Kentuckians suffer from some form of food insecurity. Working with the state's agriculture industry was a natural fit to counter this problem and this initiative has set a standard for other states to follow, noted Quarles.

"Farmers in Kentucky are generous people and we are fortunate to be in a state where it is in the culture to help out those who are less fortunate," he said. "This initiative proves that you can move the needle on an issue just by getting the right people in the room and we're proud to announce that over the past year, the rate of food insecurity in Kentucky has decreased by one percent."

In keeping with the collaborative effort theme, Finance and Administration Secretary Bill Landrum praised his team for working together to make this event a reality and a success.

"We have some great public professionals that work in Surplus Prosperities headed up by Dewey Blevins and Gary Thornton. They had the opportunity to coordinate with GSA along with FEMA and did that for about \$20 a meal, which averaged out to about \$65,000 for the total number of meals which have a value of nearly \$2 million," he said. "This was an absolute, wonderful

success story and enabled local, state and federal organizations to work together and curb hunger for our communities."

Michael Halligan, CEO of God's Pantry Food Bank said the fact that there is a hunger problem in this state is still unknown to many people.

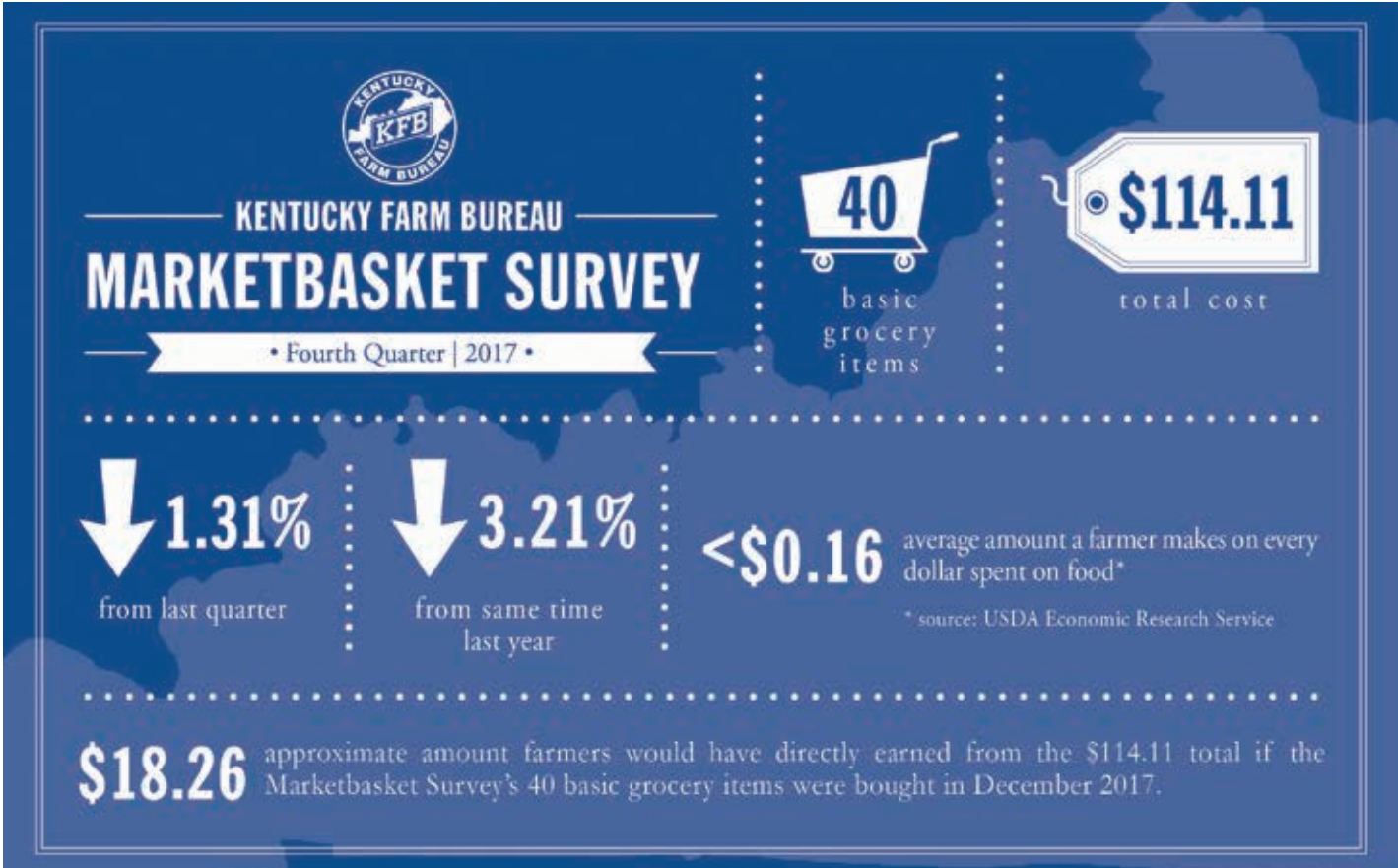
"In Central and Eastern Kentucky there are a quarter of a million people who are at risk of hunger, and often we think about hunger as generational poverty. The reality is, the vast majority of those who we see are in and out of hunger for a variety of different reasons," he said. "And often people don't realize it could be their neighbor across the street or someone down the block who looks just fine but is scraping by just to make ends meet."

Halligan emphasized that many of those needing assistance are finding themselves in this situation for the first time and are often reluctant to step forward and ask for help.

"One of the things we try to do in food banking is, while we talk about fighting hunger, the reality is, we are delivering hope," he said.

The meals, which were purchased by the food banks, came just in time to be delivered to families throughout much of the state before the holidays.

"I am deeply proud of our employees for their efforts, and I'm grateful to Secretary Landrum and his team for helping us spread a little extra Christmas cheer to Kentucky's hungry," said Quarles.





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# COUNTY CORNER

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities



## BOYD COUNTY

President Ray Sammons of Boyd County Farm Bureau receiving his jacket at the 2017 KFB Annual Meeting. Pictured with Sammons is KFB Insurance Company Executive Vice President & CEO John Sparrow, left, and KFB Executive Vice President David S. Beck.



## HARLAN COUNTY

Young Farmers working with students at the 4H Reality Store in Harlan. 400 Students participated. It created a reality check for many students and helped them value the importance of hard work at school and in their future career. Students received careers and income based on their gpa, and they spend the money at the reality store. They had to pay regular bills such as the following: utilities, rent, insurance, automobile, and taxes. It helped them to understand that working hard in school will hopefully help them get a good career and will result in a good income.



## CRITTENDEN COUNTY

Marty Hill and Crystal Wesmoland, co-chairs of Crittenden County Women's Committee, shared information about how farm products are used with Crittenden County elementary students at the Fall on the Farm event held at the school.



## CRITTENDEN COUNTY

Crittenden County Farm Bureau President Stephen Hill presented Crystal Wesmoland a check for \$1000.00 for the Crittenden County Backpack Program which provides food for students in all three schools in Crittenden County. These backpacks include weekend meals and daily supper bags. Currently this program services over 130 students weekly.



## CLARK COUNTY

Clark County Ag Day was held Oct. 5. Those attending had a chance to tour the Aquaculture Facility at Winchester Municipal Utilities, see Jeremy Jones of J&W Farms present a combine grain demonstration and a soil erosion demonstration by local Soil Conservation. Attendees also enjoyed a dinner prepared by Clark County FB board members.



## JEFFERSON COUNTY

George Gagel was presented an award by KFB Executive Vice President David S. Beck in honor of his 52 years of service to Jefferson County Farm Bureau.



## UNION COUNTY

Local students participated in the Union County Safety Day held at John Arnold Arena October 5.

# Applications for Kentucky Farm Bureau's College Scholarships available now

With high school seniors beginning their last semesters, thoughts turn to the future. For many students, this means college – and finding a way to pay for tuition. Later this spring, the KFB Education Foundation will award college scholarships ranging from \$400 to \$4,000 to 95 high school seniors pursuing a four-year degree.

To be considered, students must complete the application available for download at [kyfb.com/scholarships](http://kyfb.com/scholarships) and return the requested material to KFB postmarked by February 28, 2018. Qualifying students will have at least a 3.5 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) or a minimum 23 ACT score, be the child of a KFB member, and finish high school within the year in which they apply.

The Foundation's goal is to assist as many individuals as possible in attaining their educational pursuits. There is no better investment for the organization than to invest in our members and their children.

– David S. Beck,  
Executive Vice President of  
Kentucky Farm Bureau.

KFB also offers additional scholarships, ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000. To be considered for these college scholarships, students must meet the varied criteria outlined for each, complete the appropriate downloadable application available at [kyfb.com/scholarships](http://kyfb.com/scholarships) and return the requested material to KFB postmarked by April 28, 2018.

*"The Foundation's goal is to assist as many individuals as possible in attaining their educational pursuits," said David S. Beck, Executive Vice President of Kentucky Farm Bureau. "Post-secondary education costs continue to rise and Farm Bureau scholarships help defray some of the expenses associated with obtaining a degree. There is no better investment for the organization than to invest in our members and their children."*

KFB's Education Foundation, created to help Farm Bureau members and their families reach their goal of obtaining post-secondary education, was formed in 1953. During the last 64 years, the Education Foundation has awarded thousands of scholarships – worth nearly three million dollars – to both traditional and non-traditional students.

To learn more about these and several other college scholarships offered by Kentucky Farm Bureau, visit [kyfb.com/scholarships](http://kyfb.com/scholarships).

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# Markets

**TOBACCO CROP SIZE REVISED**

Last month, USDA revised its Kentucky tobacco production estimates from its October Crop Production report. The burley yield was lowered 50 pounds to 2,050 pounds per acre; this is up 300 pounds from 2016. This lowered burley production in Kentucky by 2.4 percent to 129.15 million pounds; this compares to 106.75 million pounds in 2016. The dark-fire cured yield estimate was raised 200 pounds to 3,300 pounds per acre, resulting in a 37.95 million pound crop. The 2016 crop yielded only 2,300 pounds per acre, resulting in a 21.85 million pound crop. The 2017 dark-air cured tobacco crop yield was raised 100 pounds to 2,700 pounds per acre, or 1,100 pounds higher than the 2016 yield. The crop estimate rose 3.9 percent to 16.20 million pounds – more than double 2016’s 7.68 million pound crop.

**GRAIN STORAGE CAPACITY EXPANDS**

U.S. on-farm storage capacity totaled 13.5 billion bushels on December 1, 2017, up 0.5 percent from a year earlier. Iowa led all states with 2.10 billion bushels of on-farm storage capacity followed by Minnesota and Illinois with around 1.5 billion bushels. These states along with Nebraska, North Dakota and Indiana accounted for 60 percent of

the nation’s on-farm storage capacity. Kentucky’s on-farm storage totaled 205 million bushels, unchanged from 2016. Off-farm commercial grain storage in the U.S. totaled 11.2 billion bushels on December 1, 2017, up 1.5 percent from last December 1. Iowa, Kansas, Ohio and Indiana each added 20 million bushels or more of storage capacity. Kentucky added four million bushels of capacity for a total of 84.0 million bushels at 155 facilities – the same number as reported a year earlier.

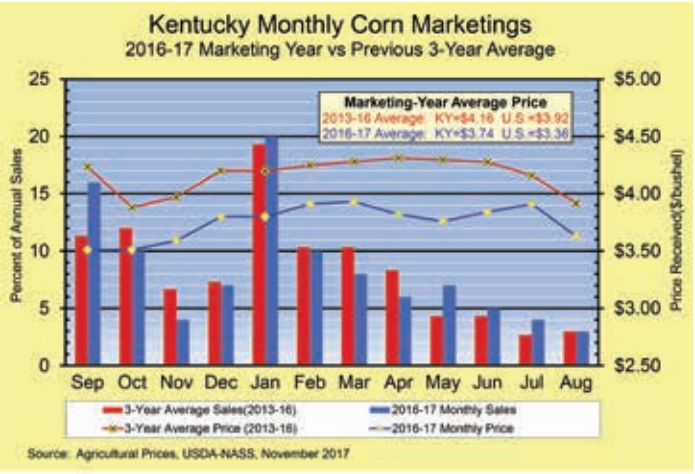
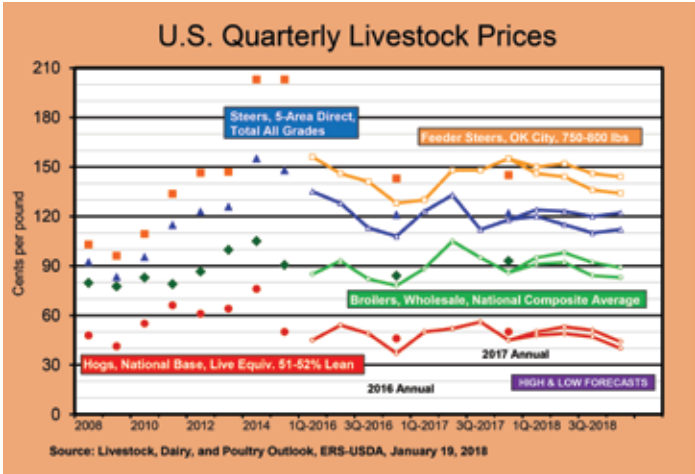
**U.S. SOYBEAN EXPORTS LAGGING**

U.S. soybean exports lag behind last marketing year. Accumulated exports for September through late December were 14 percent behind the year-ago pace. This is nearly five million tons below the 33 million ton mark reached in 2016. This slower pace is due to China where U.S. trade is more than 20 percent below last year. In contrast, shipments to other markets, while roughly a third of the volume to China, are up eight percent. The slowdown in U.S. exports is primarily a result of last season’s record crop in Brazil, which boosted total supply by nearly 18 million tons. With record supplies available for export, Brazil exported over 11 million tons in the final 4 months of 2017, more than a three-fold

increase over the same period in 2016. Much of this increase was business to China, which replaced potential trade from the U.S. With the 2018 Brazilian harvest just weeks away, the prospects of a near-term uptick in U.S. sales to China are limited, according to USDA.

**PORK INDUSTRY GROWTH CONTINUES**

The latest Quarterly Hogs and Pigs report shows that the U.S. hog production sector continues to expand. The inventory of breeding animals at 6.18 million head increased one percent over the year-earlier inventory. The breeding herd has essentially been increasing since the significant reductions of 2008-2010. Productivity of the breeding inventory, as measured by pigs per litter, continued to increase in the fall quarter. The rate of 10.74 pigs per litter was the highest recorded since the series began in 1970. U.S. hog production expansion is largely a response to increased processor demand for hogs. U.S. processors are expanding in response to historically strong margins and perceived profit opportunities from domestic and foreign consumer demand for pork. Kentucky’s December 1, 2017 breeding inventory totaled 45,000 head, down two percent from a year earlier.



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# CANDID CONVERSATION

BRIAN LACEFIELD

State Executive Director for the USDA Kentucky Farm Service Agency

**K**FB Candid Conversation presents a discussion about the topical issues facing the agricultural industry in a question and answer format with a member of the agricultural community. In this column, Brian Lacefield, State Executive Director for the USDA Kentucky Farm Service Agency (FSA) discusses some of the programs available to farmers through that agency.

**For those who may not be familiar with you, tell our readers a little about yourself.**

*I grew up in Princeton, Kentucky, the son of educators; my father is Garry Lacefield, retired UK Forage specialist. After high school, I went to Western Kentucky University. While there, I decided to study agriculture and got a Master's Degree in agri-business and ag economics. I also attended the University of Florida where I received my Master's Degree in Food & Resource Economics. At first I thought I wanted to be a college professor but then realized that I wanted to work with people one-on-one helping them with their finances. My first job outside of college was with the University of Kentucky's Farm Analysis Program and I think my real education came from working with farmers as a part of this program. I learned a lot while there and after five years I was presented the opportunity to go to work for Planters Bank, where I spent six years working with many guaranteed loans and direct projects with FSA on the loan side. Following that, I became chief financial officer of Agri-Chem and general manager for Commonwealth Agri-Finance, both divisions of Hopkinsville Elevator Cooperative. After that, I came back to banking as FNB Bank's Trigg County market president before the opportunity came for this present position as FSA State Executive Director. With each stop, I worked with several of the FSA programs and I think each*



Brian Lacefield

*place better prepared me for the position I'm in now, and hopefully be able to help lead this agency with experience I can draw from while in the private sector and extension.*

**At its core, what does the Farm Service Agency do primarily?**

*When you think of FSA, we're here to implement the farm bill. And regardless*

*of what the farming economy looks like, it's an incredibly important piece to our agriculture ventures. When looked at, the farm bill is really a food security bill when you tie in the nutrition programs with the farm programs. I think the bill is crucial for our society but it is also crucial to keep our farmers in this business. Looking at FSA specifically, there are really two sides to the*

*agency; the farm program side and the farm loan side. The program side is where we administer things like the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs which are price support systems. We also have many other programs that deal with things like conservation and market loss assistance. On the loan side, we have programs like direct loan and guaranteed loan programs to help farmers obtain financing or a different structure of financing when they may not be able to get standard or regular commercial credit. We're not here to ever compete with a lending institution. The FSA and our loan programs are to be a partner with the banks and the Farm Credit system to try and figure a path forward for a farmer, or to restructure some debt, or to get that beginning farmer their first farm purchased.*

**In today's agricultural environment, what programs or loan services are most in demand at this point in time?**

*Every FSA program we have is very important and all there to serve a purpose. I think our price support system with ARC and PLC are incredibly important for maintaining a safety net to where we have some type of floor on the prices so we can continue to get producers to plant crops. Our loan programs are the lifeblood. CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) is crucial right now as we see more and more merit being placed into conservation programs and that will obviously affect production which will affect supply which will eventually affect price, while protecting one of our biggest resources, our land. Our farm storage facility loans are really good this year particularly. We saw some really wide basis at harvest and anytime you can take advantage and to invest in a storage facility allowing you to efficiently handle a crop, it's always a good thing. We are at a point right now where we have extremely tight margins, so we do anything we can do to improve the situation such as by having the ability to better market our crops through storage abilities, or take advantage of low interest farm loans. Emergency loan programs are*

*something else we have that can come into play in the event of disasters. The worst thing you can do is to try to drag an unpaid operating loan into another crop year and these emergency loans can help put that old debt over to the side and chip away at it allowing farmers a path forward and live to fight another day.*

**FSA is known for assisting young farmers who may have had difficulties in obtaining farm loans from other banking institutions. In your estimate, how important is it to help this new generation of farm families?**

*I think that it is crucial that we help folks get started but it is so capital intensive to begin. Thankfully we have great programs to help get financing. One of the problems is, some loan limits don't meet where land prices are today and how expensive equipment is, so we have multiple programs to get direct loans or programs to work with banks. Another great tool in the toolbox that we have in this state is the Kentucky Ag Finance Corporation. When working with them, FSA and a bank, it's a great loan structure with a very competitive interest rate to help that beginning farmer to have something that is actually serviceable; something that helps them generate a return off the farm to make the payments and gives them a path forward. And we have to do this. We have an aging farm population so we have to have a generation coming behind so if they want to help carry this on, they can step in take over operations. They need to be learning along the way developing their skill sets and managing abilities so they can grow and expand as opportunities come along.*

**What should our ag industry understand as we move through this farm bill year?**

*We are in an environment where we all have to live on less, and when there is less money being made, we're all going to participate in it. We want the producer to understand that we realize they are doing with less, but so is the landowner and the implement dealer; bankers and all ag businesses are all*

*having to tighten our belts a bit and figure a way to manage out of it. One thing we need to make sure has a place in the farm bill is crop insurance. I would always talk with our elected officials about the importance of that from a banker's perspective. Keeping capital moving in rural America is important. When you are a lender, and you are loaning money, and the collateral for that loan is crops, you're going to discount that significantly unless you have a crop insurance program underneath it. I hope we do see the continued support of this important program.*

**From your perspective as KY FSA Executive Director, as we move toward a new farm bill, what would you say to our producers?**

*I think all of our programs are successful when they are all working and everything is going in the right direction. We've worked through several farm bills with several different pluses and minuses in all of them. That is the challenge of trying to write a federal farm bill; there's not going to be something that works perfectly for every group. But we have, for the most part strong programs and we have a unique situation in Kentucky in that we have ag leaders who do a good job working together to advance agriculture. We have an extremely strong Farm Bureau; I'm very proud of our Agriculture Commissioner and our Governor's Office of Ag Policy; our Ag Development Board; the Kentucky Ag Finance Corporation, as well as Farm Credit and the many great agriculture lenders, businesses and commodity groups. When we talk about success, I look at all of these and think about what to do to help our industry and our state. For producers, I encourage them to educate themselves, attend meetings, ask a lot of questions and don't always get your advice from the coffee shop. What might work on your neighbor's farm might not work exactly right on your farm. And while we have a great group of legislators at all levels, don't assume they always know what is going on from a farming perspective. Make sure you let them know.*





KFB's President Mark Haney, left, and Executive Vice President David S. Beck met some of the members of Eastern Kentucky University's Collegiate Farm Bureau who came to the YF Conference thanks to Madison County Farm Bureau.

## The 2018 Young Farmer Winter Leadership Conference

Each winter young farm families from around the state gather to hear from Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) leadership about a number of topics; to tour interesting ag-related facilities and businesses; and to enjoy a weekend of networking and fellowship.

The KFB Young Farmer Winter Leadership Conference provided just that once again, to a capacity crowd, many of whom were attending for the first time.

Jackson Tolle, Director of the KFB Young Farmer Program said it's always good to see those returning families who are familiar with these outings, but it's important to continually see new participants for a number of reasons.

"Our agriculture industry is in need of young farm families to continue a legacy

set forth by the great agriculturalists that have come before us. Seeing the more than 325 participants that made their way to this year's winter conference is encouraging on that and a number of levels," he said. "First, they see how important being a part of KFB is to them. And by hearing from our leadership, they also see how important they are to our organization. It is also good to know that our county Farm Bureaus are taking an active role in helping these young farm families participate in these types of events by sponsoring them."

Tolle added that when county Farm Bureaus participate, it fortifies the mission of KFB to be the Voice of Agriculture.

Participants heard a similar message from KFB leadership telling

the group how vital it is to be involved at all levels to advocate for agriculture and rural communities, as well as to know how important these young farm families are to the industry and to the organization.

John Pedigo of Allen County is serving as the 2018 Young Farmers Committee Chair. He said Kentucky agriculture is lucky in that so many young people are interested in farming.

"Our Young Farmer members are so involved and willing to step up and step out to advocate for our industry and they do so because of their involvement in Farm Bureau," he said. "They understand the importance of learning all they can and networking with other farmers. They get to do both at these conferences."



Mason County Farm Bureau sent two young farmers to this year's conference who were attending for the first time; Chris Hopper and Tucker Pumpelly along with their families.

Hopper, whose farming enterprise consists of a purebred Hereford operation specializing in Hereford genetics, said he wanted to learn more about the Young Farmer program.

"I want to learn what it has to offer a young producer such as myself, and I want to network with other producers across the state," he said. "Networking is a big thing for us in meeting other people in the cattle business and building relationships that we will have throughout our careers; relationships that help us grow in our farming operation."

Hopper is not only a first-time attendee to the Young Farmer Conference, he is also a first generation farmer.

Pumpelly runs an alfalfa/orchard grass business along with a cow/calf operation. He said farming and Farm Bureau have been a part of his life having a father and grandfather who were also farmers while his father also serves as the FB agency manager in Mason County.

"Farm Bureau is an organization that does many things including helping local communities, working with its



More than 325 attendees heard from various speakers during the YF Conference including KFB YF Committee Chair John Pedigo, bottom right, and KFB President Mark Haney, top left.

young farm families and helping them to build leadership roles where they live," he said. "I wanted to be more of a part of that and meet others my age to learn from them in our efforts to grow our farming business."

Shelby Trimble, Mason County Farm Bureau President said it's important to have young farmers ready to take the lead in the industry.

"After attending last year's Presidents and Vice Presidents Conference, I became more interested in the Young Farmer Program in listening to what some of these younger farmers had to say," he said. "We need these young people to take over for those of us who are ready to retire and this conference is a good place for them to learn more about the organization and learn from each other."



# First Tax Reform in More Than 30 Years Passes Congress

For the first time in more than a generation, tax reform legislation has been passed by Congress and recently signed by the President. The long awaited bill has been one of the top priorities for the administration over the past year. Farm Bureau policy at both the state and national level has called for tax reform for a number of years, as well.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act as it is officially known will go into effect in 2018 and, by some estimates, will pave the way for bigger pay checks that tax payers will see by February.

From an agricultural prospective, farm families stand to benefit from the new regulations on a number of different levels. American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) President Zippy Duvall said the tax reform package will result in lower taxes for the vast majority of farmers and ranchers.

*"This tax overhaul includes many changes to the tax code, most notably lower individual tax rates that will benefit farmers and ranchers," he said. "Ninety-four percent of farmers and ranchers pay taxes as individuals, and those rates are coming down."*

Duvall noted that the bill also maintains the important deductions and credits that farmers already rely on to manage their businesses. In addition, he said starting next year, farmers and ranchers will be able to take a 20 percent deduction off their business income.

*"That's new, and it will reduce the taxes farmers owe," he said. "The bill also doubles the estate tax exemption to \$11 million per person, which will provide relief to the vast majority of farmers and ranchers."*

## ADVOCACY AT WORK

During the process of negotiating the bill, members of Congress heard from their constituents both showing support and concern about specifics contained in the legislation. Many of those calls came from Kentucky Farm Bureau members, something U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell acknowledged.

*"Hearing from countless Kentuckians – including many members of the Kentucky Farm Bureau – I fought to ensure that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act would be a good bill for Kentucky farm families," he said. "I made sure that Kentucky farmers received fair treatment throughout this process, especially on matters like pass-through relief, full expensing, beneficial cost recovery mechanisms, and the death tax."*

McConnell added that the bill will help ease the burdens on Kentucky's agricultural communities to help them thrive.

*"I appreciate the KFB's support of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and I was proud to work with them on this historic legislation," he said.*

KFB President Mark Haney said there are many things in the tax bill that

are extremely important to farmers and the communities in which they live.

*"Any time that we can get more money available and in the hands of our 478,000 member families through tax savings, it affects every community in the state of Kentucky; not just in our urban areas, or in our county seats, or the business areas of those counties, but in every community, so we think this is very important," he said.*

Haney also recognized the advocacy efforts made by KFB members to ensure their concerns were heard.

*"Our members have never been shy about voicing their opinions on issues that affect their farms and rural communities, as they did when this legislation was being debated in Congress," he said. "This is a wonderful example of how KFB works at the grassroots level to remain the Voice of Agriculture."*



Sen. Mitch McConnell spoke to KFB Board members and the press during the organization's annual meeting.



## Planning today to meet Kentucky's future water needs.

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# Down the Backroads

By Tim Thornberry

Throughout my life there have been many people who have taught me the art of communicating, not necessarily intentionally but mostly by circumstance. I discovered how to relate to others primarily by listening to the way they were relating to me. And some of those most important lessons came at the hands of my father when he taught me to drive. I discovered two primary forms of communications while sitting in a 1962 Plymouth Valiant with a manual, three-speed on the column transmission. There was the direct-message method which left no doubt about what was being conveyed to me at a specific point in time, and there was the more subtle, roundabout way of an explanation, which I preferred but wasn't always available.

My father had a firm grasp of both and exhibited them often during our time together behind the wheel. The first thing I learned was, I did not at that time, nor would I ever know as much about the proper operation of an automobile as my father. He let me know that using the direct method of communication. The second and possibly the more important thing I learned was, in order for me to communicate well with him, I had to first be willing to listen to what he had to say. I am still trying to teach that lesson to my youngest son. *"Always drive defensively because you never know what other drivers are going to do,"* he would say. While that sounds like a strictly tactical driving message, I would find, later in life that

statement could relate to any number of subjects. There were key words in his lessons that helped me distinguish which method of communicating he was using. Words like "never", "always", "stop" and "now" were generally associated with direct messaging. His indirect communications usually came in the form of phrases such as, "I wouldn't do that if I were you," and "This ain't Daytona and you ain't Richard Petty." The latter of course referring to my negligence of the posted speed limits. I never knew my dad was such a stock car fan until he taught me to drive.

Another thing my dad taught me about communications had to do with urgency. The louder his voice became, the more important the message. And, as a rule, those times when he used his louder voice were the times he demonstrated the direct form of communications, as well. Somehow we made it through driving lessons with the Valiant intact and a driver's license in hand. My dad had a few more gray hairs and I had a whole new vision of communicating with others as well as an expanded vocabulary.

Today, getting our messages across to others has taken on a whole new look within our digital world as compared to 40 years ago. But we still do it for the same reason; to convey a message from one person to another. And in doing so, we should practice the "Plymouth Valiant" method of communication which is to listen as if your father is talking, understand there is more than one way to get your message across, and the louder one speaks the more important the message is, at least to them.

But above all, I have taken one main lesson with me in all that I do, whether it relates to driving or communicating. As one travels down the backroads remember; "This ain't Daytona and you ain't Richard Petty."

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