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LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG FARM FAMILIES

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Cover photo by Tim Thornberry
Henry Mendes, a student at Royal Spring Middle School got a chance to hold a lamb during the "Meet a Farmer" event.

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President's COLUMN



Having just returned from the annual Congressional Tour in Washington, D.C., I'm always amazed and encouraged at the level of participation we have for this trip and other advocacy opportunities.

More than 300 KFB members made their way to the nation's capital for this event. We continually bring one of the largest of Farm Bureau groups in the country to Washington each year to meet with our Congressional delegation.

I can tell you from experience, that means a lot to these legislative leaders, to see so many people from their state taking the time to meet with them, hear from them, and speak to them about the issues that are affecting their farming operations back home.

And there is much to talk about. We are still advocating for better broadband coverage in our overall efforts to help rural development initiatives across the Commonwealth. Our rural communities are such valuable assets to the economy in Kentucky but being connected, digitally, in a consistent manner is crucial to farms and businesses located in these rural areas.

International trade is also something vital to each and every farm, large and small, in every state, and not just something to be thought of in broad national terms. What happens in China, or South America or Canada or Mexico affects our operations at home.

Trading opportunities that arise in Europe are of interest to me, in my community, and it should be to all of us who live and work on the farm or in rural America.

Looking for new trading partners in different parts of the world should be something we do without a single doubt. We can grow it, but we can't eat it all. So, international markets are just as important as the local farmers market.

Knowing what rules to play by when it comes to water resources, as set by the EPA, is something we need to know about and discuss in every county in this state.

Moving forward on immigration reform could not be more important to those of us needing and utilizing a sustainable, legal workforce.

If 325 million people in this country want to eat food that is grown here, then all these national and international issues should be of importance to them and every farm family; it's as simple as that.

I can't tell you how proud I am to be a part of the fourth largest Farm Bureau in America, as we continue to be a strong advocacy force for our farms, our communities and the citizens of Kentucky when it comes to these and other "national" issues. We have a seat at the policy table. Let's continue to fill those seats and make our voices heard, because if we don't someone else with a different agenda will.

Mark Haney
President
Kentucky Farm Bureau

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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



Things sure have changed a lot since I was a kid.

As I was growing up, we always had a few milk cows. To buy milk at the grocery store was laughable, we had our own! Most families grew their own food, as everyone had a garden. Fresh produce was as close as our own back yard, and many summer hours were spent breaking beans or gathering tomatoes to can. Corn was cut off the cob and put in the freezer. We always dug enough potatoes to get us through the year, even though they were a little shriveled by the time spring rolled around.

We never ate a lot of beef at our house in those days, but I certainly knew where a hamburger came from. Almost everyone "processed" a hog, and a "mess" of squirrel or rabbit was always a welcome change.

We also raised chickens, paving the way for a platter of fried chicken that would make even the Colonel envious. Without anybody actually telling me, I knew the exact origins of my food.

Things are different today. With most folks being three or four generations removed from the farm, many really don't know where their food comes from, they just expect it to be on the shelves of their local grocery market. They have no idea of the connection between the agricultural source and products they are familiar with and consume or use every day.

The Kentucky Farm Bureau Women's Program has several significant areas of engagement to help bridge that gap, one of which is agriculture literacy. Every year during Kentucky Ag Literacy Week in March, countless KFB volunteers go into their local schools to share information about our farms and rural communities as a way to strengthen the student's agricultural knowledge.

Many of our volunteer leaders will read an accurate ag book, going into detail from when the seed is first planted, to being harvested, and finally how it gets on the grocery shelf.

We love seeing the bright faces of our youth as they learn where their food comes from and all about our strong agriculture industry.

We also like to educate students as to the value of local farmers, and the fact that we care deeply about our land, our animals, and our communities. Kentucky Ag Literacy Week is one of our favorite times of the year!

Kentucky Farm Bureau clearly sees the importance of Ag Literacy. We believe the future of our industry directly depends on our ability to educate and demonstrate the true value of American agriculture to the next generation.

Making them aware of how Kentucky agriculture impacts their lives and personal well-being every day is essential in accomplishing this goal and, as an organization, we have the boots on the ground to make this happen.

Vickie Bryant
KFB Women's State Advisory
Committee Chair



2019 KFB CONGRESSIONAL TOUR

Large contingent of state members advocate at the national level

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Once again Kentucky Farm Bureau made its presence known in the nation’s capital by bringing a large contingent of members to Washington to meet with their Congressional delegation and advocate for the agriculture industry.

KFB President Mark Haney led the group and said Congressional leaders take note when seeing so many of their constituents making their way to Washington each year to meet with them.

“Our Congressional delegation has consistently been supportive of our agriculture industry at home and for

issues affecting farm families across this country,” he said. “One thing that helps to encourage them in their efforts, is to see and experience the advocacy efforts our members make each and every year during this annual Congressional Tour.”

This year, approximately 320 KFB members came to Washington getting the chance to meet with every Kentucky Congressional member, hear

from American Farm Bureau Federation leaders about national ag-issues being discussed at the federal level, and to get a trade update from Ted McKinney, USDA Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs.

“I can’t begin to express how proud I am of our members who continually and consistently work hard to help further KFB’s mission of being the Voice of Kentucky Agriculture,” said Haney.



Congressman Hal Rogers gives his annual tour of the Capitol to constituents.



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Senator Rand Paul answer questions during a Q&A session with KFB members.

KFB’S OUTSTANDING YOUTH GO TO WASHINGTON

Young people bringing their own perspective as advocates at the national level

Lauren Rowlette of Madison County and Marcus Wiseman of Clark County were named 2019 Outstanding Farm Bureau Youth during the KFB Annual Meeting held last December. As part of that honor, the two were given the opportunity to attend this year’s Congressional Tour to experience the organization’s efforts to advocate at a national level.

Providing learning opportunities for young agriculturalists has long been a priority for KFB, and both Rowlette and Wiseman said they feel it’s important for their generation to take advantage of every chance they get to make their voices heard.

Rowlette, who was making her first trip to Washington, said in being a part of this Farm Bureau group, she saw members taking the opportunity to bring up important issues to lawmakers, ultimately having an impact on these issues.

“To have an opportunity such as this and be in a place where legislative leaders will hear what you have to say, it’s just been an awesome experience,” she said.

Rowlette also noted that many different skills can be learned by being involved in the agriculture industry.

“It’s estimated that the average American is two to three generations removed from the farm. So, it’s vital,

especially for our younger generation, to develop the skills that are taught through agriculture such as commitment, responsibility, and being educated about real-world topics,” she said. “Agriculture is not just about feeding the world, but it’s about building who we are as people, gaining characteristics you can’t always get from other careers.”

In discussing what issues are important to her, Rowlette said there’s no doubt that today’s modern technology is very important to agricultural production. But there are still many in the ag industry utilizing more traditional methods of production. She feels there is room for both.

“There are those farmers who are more traditionalists when it comes to farming and are not utilizing some of the advanced technology available, for whatever the reason. Making connections between those traditional agriculturalists and those utilizing the more technology-driven methods of production is important,” said Rowlette. “Many farming operations are still small in size and the need for more advanced technology isn’t as great as perhaps that needed on a larger farm.”

Wiseman, who has been to Washington once before, said he’s known at school as the “kid” who gets up early every morning to feed cattle and comes to school with smelly boots.

“They tease me a little about it, but they also respect it. I’ve had several kids at school tell me how much they appreciate what I do because it helps to feed them,” he said. “And if I can bring that much attention to my friends at school, it makes me want to work harder to get out there and tell other people that what we do as farmers is good, and we are here for them.”

Wiseman said, from an issues standpoint, there are many concerns in the ag industry including those with the dairy business and current-day burley tobacco growers.

“It’s harder to make money in those two industries today, as well as agriculture in general. But there are also opportunities such as with industrial hemp,” he said. “Being in Washington, as a Farm Bureau member, it’s important to be here to talk to legislators about our needs on the farm.”

Wiseman added that having a support system such as Farm Bureau at the state and national levels is important to farmers, especially for farmers his age.

“I know at my age, if something goes wrong, I always want to call my mom. In agriculture, if something goes wrong, you have Farm Bureau to call on,” he said. “And if you can compare any organization to your mom, you know they have to be a good group.”



OFBY Lauren Rowlette and Marcus Wiseman posed along Pennsylvania Avenue.



More than 300 KFB members gathered in the Russell Senate Office Building for the Q&A session.

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KENTUCKY SOYBEAN PRODUCTION REACHES RECORD HIGH

Rain characterized much of the 2018 growing season," said David Knopf, director of the NASS Eastern Mountain Regional Office in Kentucky. "While it generally had a positive effect on crop growth, excessive rains kept crops from reaching their full potential and complicated harvest. Soybean production reached a record high level based on an increase in harvested acres. Corn yield and acres were below last year, dropping production from last year and the 2016 level."

Corn production in Kentucky is estimated at 215 million bushels, down 3 percent from the November forecast and down 1 percent from the previous crop. Yield was estimated at 175 bushels per acre, down 4 bushels from the November forecast and down 3 bushels from the 2017 level. Acres for harvest as grain were estimated at 1.23 million acres, up 10,000 acres from 2017. The U.S. corn production is estimated at 14.4 billion bushels, down 1 percent from the 2017 estimate. The average yield in the United States is estimated at 176.4 bushels per acre, 0.2 bushels below the 2017 average yield. Area harvested for grain is estimated at 81.7 million acres, down 1 percent from the 2017 acreage.

Soybean production for Kentucky is estimated at 103 million bushels, down 4 percent from the November forecast and up 1 percent from 2017. Yield was estimated at 52 bushels per acre, down 2 bushels from last month and down 1.0 bushel from a year ago. Acreage for harvest as beans was estimated at 1.99 million acres, up 50,000 acres from the previous year. U.S. soybean production is forecast at 4.54 billion bushels, up 3 percent from last year. The average yield per acre is estimated at 51.6 bushels, up 2.3 bushels from last year. Area harvested is down 2 percent from 2017 at 88.1 million acres.

Knopf added that, "Tobacco took the hardest hit from weather conditions. As the growing season came to a close, yield was drastically cut by excessive rain."

Kentucky burley tobacco production is estimated at 80.0 million pounds,

down 11 percent from the October forecast and down 38 percent from 2017. Yield was estimated at 1,600 pounds per acre, down 100 pounds from the October forecast and down 450 pounds from the 2017 crop. Harvested acreage was estimated at 50,000 acres, down 13,000 acres from last year's crop. For the burley producing states production is estimated at 100 million pounds, down 38 percent from last year. Burley growers harvested 61,050 acres, down 25 percent from 2017. Yields were

estimated at 1,645 pounds per acre, down 332 pounds from last year.

Production of Kentucky dark fire-cured tobacco is estimated at 35.2 million pounds, down 7 percent from the previous year. Dark air-cured tobacco production is estimated at 19.2 million pounds, up 18 percent from last year.

Alfalfa hay production by Kentucky farmers is estimated at 450,000 tons, down 26 percent (from) the 2017 level. Other hay production is estimated at 4.64 million tons, up 2 percent from last year.



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Tyler Ferguson discusses issues with a group during the Young Farmer Leadership Conference.

2019 KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU YOUNG FARMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Young farm families from across the state gather for this annual learning opportunity

LEXINGTON - In keeping with Kentucky Farm Bureau's (KFB) efforts to continually provide learning opportunities to its members, this year's Young Farmer (YF) Leadership Conference hosted nearly 300 attendees for a weekend filled with educational workshops, tours, and the chance to network with each other, as well as state ag leaders.

KFB President Mark Haney addressed the gathering and said helping a younger generation remain on, or come to the farm, is critical to the success of the industry here and across the country.

"We must do all we can to support and encourage young farm families to carry on traditions that, for many, started generations ago, and for others is something new," he said. "The need for young people to become involved in

the agriculture industry has never been greater, and learning opportunities, like the ones found at this winter meeting, can be of assistance and an inspiration to them."

Tyler Ferguson, the 2019 State Young Farmer Committee Chair said these types of meetings help to encourage these young farm families even in trying times.

"While we may be going through a rough time economically on the farm, we realize how important agriculture is to all of us, and it will be this new generation of farmers who will lead the way into the future," he said. "My hope is those who are participating in this, and all of our YF Outings, will take something back to the farm that will make it more successful and encourage them even more."

The Ferguson farm consists of a cow-calf operation in Johnson County utilizing reclaimed strip-mine land as pastures for livestock. Additionally, Tyler and his wife Andrea have a direct beef marketing business. In maintaining such operations, he said educating oneself is paramount in remaining sustainable.

"We've had to learn a lot about forages and what is best to use in an environment that is common in Eastern Kentucky," he said. "But learning opportunities like the ones found at the YF Leadership Conference are available and invaluable. Not only do attendees take back good practices for the farm, the leadership skills they gain help them become better leaders in their communities."

And from a business perspective, Ferguson added, gaining those leadership



skills is something that makes their hometowns better.

"Any time we can improve our rural communities, all of our ag-related industries, including our farms, have a better chance of being successful," he said.

CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

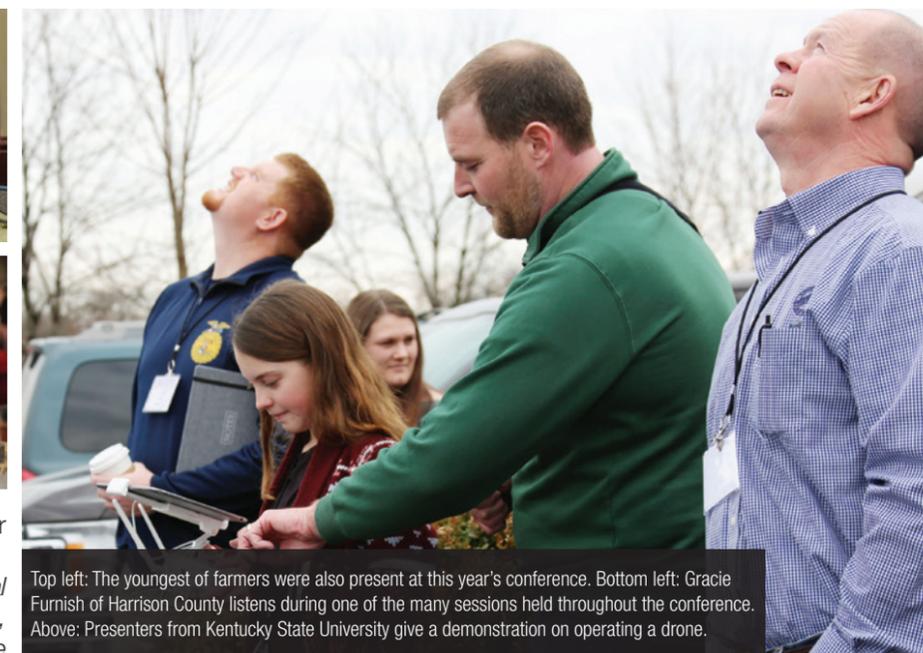
Each year, the YF Leadership Conference includes a variety of workshops on a number of subjects all designed to enhance the learning opportunities available to attendees including one for the children.

This year, workshop subjects included farm vehicle regulations on the road; learning the best times to purchase new equipment and supplies for the farm; adding value to a livestock operation through a CSA; finding ways to diversify operations; drone technology; personal safety and self-defense; telling your story through social media; and the basics of canning.

FROM THE PODIUM

In addition to hearing from Mark Haney and Tyler Ferguson, attendees also heard from an array of speakers including renowned author, farmer, and radio/television broadcaster Andrew McCrea, along with Keni Thomas, a former U.S. Army Ranger Veteran and motivational speaker.

Legislatively, Kentucky House Speaker Pro-Tempore David Meade spoke to the gathering after policy issues were discussed by KFB Director of Public Affairs Jeff Harper. Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles served as the keynote speaker on day-one and KFB First Vice President Eddie Melton brought greetings on day-two.



Top left: The youngest of farmers were also present at this year's conference. Bottom left: Gracie Furnish of Harrison County listens during one of the many sessions held throughout the conference. Above: Presenters from Kentucky State University give a demonstration on operating a drone.



David Meade, Speaker Pro-Tempore, Kentucky House of Representatives

"We need to make sure those young farmers have an avenue to come in and maintain our farms because our farming communities are extremely important to our rural economy. Often, as is the case in my home county, farming is the number-one industry in many of these areas. We also need to start bringing in more jobs so we can sustain the needs we have in rural communities, and have the proper infrastructure that we need. Rural broadband is especially important with the younger generation. Everything is technologically driven now, so we have to make sure we have access to rural broadband and push for more of it in those rural areas."

Ryan Quarles, Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner

"Agriculture is dependent on nurturing the next generation with leadership, and Kentucky Farm Bureau is supportive of developing a pipeline of leadership. It's important they be prepared, not only for the challenges of marketing or the changing consumer preferences, but also changing technology that will emerge and shape how agricultural production occurs for that next generation. These young farmers are focusing on new and emerging crops, but also focusing on ways to market products directly from the farm to consumers. They are brilliant at it and using social media in ways the previous generation has never used. They are also willing to take some risks, whether it be with new crops like industrial hemp or other types of livestock which are beginning to develop across the state. It's the millennials who are doing more with less, and we are even beginning to see some urban agriculture."

Eddie Melton, Kentucky Farm Bureau First Vice President

"In working on their farm everyday, these young farm families see the issues firsthand that are affecting them. Conferences like the Young Farmer Leadership Conference allows them to network with other farm families to talk about these issues openly. Many of us in agriculture today had a family to help get us started. This next generation needs that, too. And those of us in leadership want to help them build a base they can grow on; a place where they can raise their children and be successful. This farming way of life will get into your blood and I think Farm Bureau's role is to find ways to help these young people stay on the farm and be involved in their communities. Being involved not only helps on the farm but helps the rural development picture across the state, and successful rural economies help to make our state's overall economic outlook better."

"MEET A FARMER" BROUGHT THE FARM TO SCHOOL IN A BIG WAY

Scott County event introduced students to the value of farming



Jeremy Hughes of Triple J Farm and Savannah Robin of Robin Ridge Farms talk to students about their farming operations and food origins.

GORGETOWN - Royal Spring Middle School recently played host to a unique event that brought local farmers to the school in an effort to share their knowledge, and in some cases, part of the farm, with students.

This first ever "Meet a Farmer" event was presented by the school's FFA chapter and was created as a way to bring young people unfamiliar with the farm closer to the industry by way of local producers, according to the school's agriculture teacher and FFA advisor Shelby Roberts.

"Most of the students at this school don't come from an agriculture background and don't truly know what farming is all about or what a farmer does," she said. "So, in realizing there are huge misconceptions about farmers by many of these students, I wanted them to understand there are so many different levels of farming and wanted them to see it."

The students at Royal Spring do have the advantage of having some farm animals on sight and the ability to grow some vegetables for the school

cafeteria by way of the ag program. But Roberts wanted them to have more of a personal idea of who their local farmers are and what they do.

Roberts, who came to Royal Spring from the ag program at Scott County High School said the program at the middle school began last year as a half-day course, but the response has been great, and the administration has been very supportive of the program, making it a full-day class this year.

"This school has been so supportive of all the things I've wanted to do, including this event," she said. "And I think the students here needed this. They need to know who produces our food."

Nineteen local farmers joined Roberts and the rest of the faculty and students at Royal Spring to set up informative stations within the gymnasium, as part of the event; some complete with animals and food from the farm.

Henry Mendes, a seventh-grade student was especially fond of lambs, courtesy of Rosie's Ponies and Petting Zoo, one of the attending farms. He said his family raised chickens and

goats in the small town in Uganda, where he was born.

"I learned a lot of cool things here with all the farmers, like how long it takes a cow to have a calf and how to hold a lamb," he said. "There were many hands-on activities and I think kids my age like the hands-on learning."

Mendes added that many of the students there don't know much about farming, and because he was around farming when he was younger and had been involved in the ag class at Royal Spring, he could talk to his classmates about it.

"I find it really cool to explain to them all these new things about agriculture they had never explored before," he said. "I think we all should know where our food comes from and be thankful for our farmers. The things Ms. Roberts taught us has given me a better understanding of what agriculture is like and now I want to know more and more so maybe I could become a farmer someday and produce something that is the best in the world."

Alexis Little, an eighth-grade student at Royal Spring has the luxury of helping

a nearby farmer with show pigs and often talks to her fellow students about farming.

"I love talking about farming because it's so fun and I love the animals, but many times other students don't know much about it so, I enjoy telling them what I know," she said.

The value in an event like this is in these students giving us an idea of what they know so we can determine where we, as farmers, need to go to educate them.

- Jeremy Hughes
Triple J Farm

Little also said she thinks many people don't know much about agriculture because more and more of them live in cities, away from the farm, and she feels as though young people need to know more about farming because they all have to eat.

"I think the farms that are out there are having to do more today like raising more animals and crops like vegetables to feed people," she said. "But I like telling other people about farming, and when they learn more about it, they seem to like it, too."

While the students were enjoying the event, so were the farmers, themselves. Jeremy Hughes of Triple J Farm said being at the event provided a great way to engage with these youth in teaching them more about agriculture and farmers.

"The value in an event like this is in these students giving us an idea of what they know so we can determine where we, as farmers, need to go to educate them," he said. "As consumers, they will be able to play a part, agriculturally, just by knowing where their food comes from. We always want to participate in events like this because, with the networking opportunity and learning from each other, together we can make our community as strong as possible."

Savannah Robin, who along with husband Ben, were named the KFB 2018 Excellence in Agriculture winners, brought ideas from their Robin Ridge Farms operation to the school. Robin, who currently serves as the Equine Programs Internship Coordinator for the University of Kentucky College of



Agriculture, Food and Environment said the Scott County event is something she has not seen before.

"I've been to a lot of agriculture career fairs, but I had not seen something like this, especially focused on this age group," she said. "They can develop misinformation at this age because middle school-age students are often missed when it comes to agriculture education. I think, in getting to put a face with the farmer and a face with agriculture, the reality is different than what many of them thought before coming to this event."

Roberts also said combating that misinformation, or a lack of information about agriculture, can begin with teachers.

"It's about offering resource opportunities for teachers in regular classrooms, who may also be disconnected from agriculture, and offering more agricultural education. Kentucky doesn't have a lot of middle school ag programs but getting information to teachers and students at this level, to see the value in agriculture,



Royal Spring Middle School students got the opportunity to speak to all the farmers who participated in the event.

is really important and can go a long way in connecting students back to the farm and the farmer."

Roberts said the event was a hit with students and teachers alike, and she hopes to continue this effort in the months and years to come.

"The students even made cards to give to each farmer who participated, thanking them for coming or for growing their food, and the farmers were so eager to help," she said. "I think they needed this, too, and I hope this event lives on well into the future."

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KDA's Dale Dobson demonstrates safety measures using a tractor rollover simulator.

THE NATIONAL FARM MACHINERY SHOW: MORE THAN JUST NEW TRACTORS

LOUISVILLE - It's billed as the nation's biggest indoor farm machinery show, and there is no doubt that truly is the case once you step inside the doors of the Kentucky Exposition Center during the four-day National Farm Machinery Show (NFMS) event.

Since 1965, this show has attracted people and exhibitors from across the country and around the world to see and present the latest and greatest in farm equipment from lawn mowers to massive combines, and everything in between.

But this enormous event is so much more than just new tractors. There are countless workshops and seminars led by nationally known ag experts, including the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's (KDA) Farm and Home Safety Exhibit.

KDA Farm and Home Safety Program Administrator Dale Dobson has brought this demonstration to the NFMS for 20 years in his efforts to teach attendees how to remain safe on the farm, something that is a true passion of his and a staple at the show.

"I set up my first farm safety demonstration here at the NFMS in 1999. But I started doing farm safety in 1989 and 1990 on the farm," he said. *"Then, we did the first statewide farm safety symposium there in 1994. I was just an old farm boy and became a firefighter and put together safety programs that people began to notice over the next couple of years."*

It was that farmer-teaching-farmer method that began one of the most recognized safety programs in the country. The program has made its

way to all 120 Kentucky counties and several venues in other parts of the U.S.

What makes the NFMS such a good place to discuss farm safety isn't due to the volume of people passing through, noted Dobson, but it is the fact that most of those attending the event have some attachment to the farm or interest in agriculture.

"I would say that most of the people that come to this show has some idea of where their food comes from, and they are either coming here as farmers or they have a love for farmers and agriculture," he said. *"It's an audience who understands what we're doing."*

Dobson admits that farm safety may not have always been a real concern of farmers when he first began his training sessions many years ago, but times have changed, and most farm families

place safety at the top of their priorities on the farm with countless requests coming each year to bring his safety symposium to them or other events.

"We have farming operations today that make it mandatory for their family and workers to attend a safety program," he said. *"The number of requests we get is unreal."*

A mark of success can be measured in many ways, including the number of requests coming in for safety programs, but Dobson said the lives saved are what matters.

"We've gone from an average of 50 farm deaths a year in this state to around 12, and we've got an army of people helping," he said.

Part of that army includes many local first responders who partner with Dobson and KDA to learn about safety issues such as grain bin rescue procedures, and often doing so on area farms. Dobson said other local organizations also help in the cause, including Farm Bureau.

Jefferson County Farm Bureau (JCFB) is one such local organization that has helped on numerous occasions, something that may come as a surprise to some people, said Calvin Shake, JCFB President.

"We have a lot of agricultural operations in our county even though we are home to the state's largest city," he said. *"And we have been in the position to help Dale in his efforts to bring farm safety not only to first responders and farmers in our area but other regions of the state, as well."*

Shake, along with JCFB Vice President Bob Williams and JCFB Executive Director Matt Michaud, recently traveled to Moultrie, Georgia, to participate with the Kentucky team at the Sunbelt Ag Expo assisting with a grain bin rescue demonstration. In fact, JCFB, as have other county Farm Bureaus, has bought grain bin rescue devices for their county fire departments.

"Safety is so important on and off the farm, and helping to spread that message is a big part of what we do as a local Farm Bureau," said Shake.

Dobson noted how helpful local Farm Bureaus have been in helping to bring grain bin rescue training to counties throughout the state.

As long as there is a need for farm safety training, Dale Dobson, along with his army of safety-minded individuals and organizations, will do all they can to bring that training to farm families, to community

leaders, to first responders, and to all those who attend the NFMS. But Dobson is also training that next generation of safety enthusiasts to continue once he decides to head back to his farm full time.

NFMS: A Family Tradition

LOUISVILLE- Farm families are all about tradition and togetherness. The Meadows family from Lewis County is a prime example of that. And one of their annual traditions comes every February when the National Farm Machinery Show rolls into town.

Jim and Jennifer Meadows' son Matthew, has never, in his 32 years, missed attending the NFMS. That is indicative of many of the families that make their way to this largest of indoor agricultural shows each year.

But this year marked the first in which the family brought their modified Case IH Tractor (named Relentless) to participate in the Championship Truck and Tractor Pull which is held in conjunction with the show.

The Meadows family operates a feed, seed, fertilizer and chemical business, as well as their own farming operation, and feel their tractor pulling endeavors are just an extension of those agri-businesses.

"It's amazing, the people you meet doing this, and a lot of our customers we have come from meeting them through pulling, so tractor pulling kind of fits into our business," said Matthew. *"I grew up around it because Dad pulled a lot at local fairs with micro minis to garden tractors, then it evolved from there starting with a farm tractor into what it is right now,"* he said.

Matthew said the people they know because of the pulling experience are like family, many of them beginning the same way as did the Meadows family. What started out in a small way has led to their involvement in the Light



Matthew and Jim Meadows

Pro Stock class, one of many classes featured at this and other pulling events, and a class added to the NFMS event just last year.

Matthew said this particular competition is the "Super Bowl" of tractor pulls and getting invited to participate is an honor.

Jennifer said participating at the level of the NFMS Tractor Pull is a dream come true.

"Years ago, when Jim and I first married, we pulled the micro-mini tractors, and his ultimate goal was to someday pull in Freedom Hall at the NFMS. So, it's really exciting to have been here, especially with our family. It's a dream fulfilled," she said.

Jim said he got started in the "pulling" business about 40 years ago and has always been a family thing to do.

"It means a lot to do this as a family, much the same way as we run our business and farm at home," he said. *"It's something that gets in your blood and even though it's a lot of work, we wouldn't trade it for anything."*

Jim noted that the first time at the "Super Bowl" of tractor pulls was a success in their book and the family looks forward to coming back again, all in the name of tradition.

2019 KFB PRESIDENTS AND VICE PRESIDENTS CONFERENCE

LOUISVILLE - Nearly 250 of Kentucky Farm Bureau's (KFB) county presidents and vice presidents made their way to Louisville for the annual KFB Presidents and Vice Presidents Conference in February. KFB President Mark Haney addressed the local leaders and said there are many things in life you can rely on including the mission of the organization



KFB President Mark Haney addresses a session of the conference.

"It has never crossed my mind, in all the years I have been involved in Farm Bureau, to ever doubt that what we do is for the betterment of the farm families across this state, the industry that feeds us all, and for this Commonwealth, as a whole," he said. "I came to Farm Bureau knowing this and it has never changed. I hope you feel the same way."

Haney also mentioned the priority issues taken up by KFB this year and

the advocacy efforts being made at the state and national levels for the industry, rural communities and farm families across the state.

During the course of the conference, attendees heard from several KFB leaders on a number of topics including communications, finance and insurance updates. There were also panel discussions held featuring local Farm

Bureau leaders talking about successful programs in their areas.

"This conference is important to these county presidents and vice presidents for a number of reasons, but the networking opportunities made available to them may be of the most value as they take new ideas back to their communities and their local organizations," said Haney.

AFBF PRESIDENT ZIPPY DUVALL VISITS KENTUCKY

OWENSBORO - American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall paid a recent visit to Kentucky to speak to leadership and staff at the state office, meet with local and regional Farm Bureau members in Daviess and surrounding counties, and to serve as the keynote speaker at the Owensboro Chamber of Commerce's monthly Rooster Booster Breakfast.



AFBF President Zippy Duvall met with local farmers during his recent visit to Kentucky.

Duvall said there are many reasons visiting members and events in Kentucky and other states is important.

"There are several reasons for these visits. One is, I think it's important to go back to the roots of this organization, where all the power and strength is, and let (members) realize that American Farm Bureau is working for them and with them each and every day," he said. "I can also interact with (people) off the farm, and I can share with them about issues that are facing farmers and maybe bring a different point of view

that helps them appreciate agriculture a little better."

Duvall added that something else he really values about visiting people across the country is, it gets him out on farming operations to see firsthand how issues are affecting farmers and ranchers in those specific areas.

"It's one thing for me to go home and work on our farm and do all the things we do. But for me to visit and hear other

farmers talk about their concerns, in the different regions where issues may be the same but affecting them in different ways, it gives me a broader (perspective) of how these issues affect American agriculture, as a whole."

While in Kentucky, Duvall visited Hillview Farms to see their beef cattle, grains and store operation, and Hayden Farms to tour their poultry houses and new poultry education center.

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BEEF EXPO



KFB leadership along with Ag Commissioner Ryan Quarles were on hand to present awards to Kentucky's breed association representatives during the 2019 KFB Beef Expo.



Retired KFB Second Vice President Fritz Giesecke received an award for his dedication and service to the Beef Expo and to the state's cattle industry. Presenting the award are, from left: KFB First Vice President Eddie Melton, Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles, Giesecke, KFB President Mark Haney, KFB Executive Vice President Drew Graham, and KFB Second Vice President Sharon Furches.



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MARKETS

MORE SHEEP, FEWER GOATS IN KENTUCKY

The total number of sheep in Kentucky on January 1, 2019, was estimated by USDA-NASS at 64,000 head, an increase of 6,000 from the previous year's estimate. All breeding sheep and lambs were estimated at 49,000 head, up 3,000, and all market sheep and lambs were estimated at 15,000 head, also up 3,000 head. Breeding ewes were increased 1,000 to 37,000, and breeding rams increased 500 to 2,500 head. Replacement lambs numbered 9,500, up 1,500 from 2018. The 2018 lamb crop of 37,000 head is 2,000 bigger than the 2017 crop. The U.S. sheep and lamb inventory totaled 5.23 million head, slightly below a year ago. The U.S. lamb crop was essentially unchanged at 3.235 million head. All meat and other goats in Kentucky were estimated at 52,000 head, down 5,000 head from January 2018. Milk goats at 6,000 head, equaled last year's estimate. The U.S. goat and kid inventory totaled 2.62 million head, down nearly one percent from a year ago.

INCREASED SOYBEAN CRUSH IS BRIGHT SPOT

A bright spot in the U.S. soybean market is domestic crushing. USDA estimated first-quarter soybean crush at a record 530.9 million bushels. A

below-average meal extraction rate has necessitated a faster crush rate to meet demand for soybean meal. For the 2018/19 marketing year, USDA raised its forecast by 10 million bushels to 2.09 billion bushels. Less meal per bushel means more oil produced. The market has absorbed the bigger oil supply, in part due to demand from the biodiesel market. Despite this one positive note, the soybean market and price will depend on a recovery in exports, especially to China.

KENTUCKY CATTLE HERD CONTRACTED

Even as the U.S. cattle herd continued to expand – up 0.5 percent – Kentucky's cattle inventory on January 1, 2019, had contracted by 1.4 percent to 2.130 million head, according to the Kentucky office of USDA-NASS. The number of beef cows declined by 1.5 percent to 1.017 million head, while the number of milk cows dropped seven percent to 53,000 head. This is the first decrease in beef cow numbers since January 1, 2014. Kentucky producers were holding 130,000 beef replacement heifers on January 1st, down 15,000 head from a year earlier. But there was a 15,000-head increase in "other heifers". The 2018 Kentucky calf crop is estimated at 970,000 head, down 20,000 from 2017. Kentucky's calf

crop has been below a million head each of the past eight years. Compared to a year earlier, on January 1, U.S. producers had one percent more beef cows, one percent fewer milk cows, three percent fewer beef replacement heifers, and nearly three percent more "other heifers". The U.S. 2018 calf crop of 36.40 million head is 1.8 percent larger than the 2017 calf crop and is the largest U.S. calf crop since 2007.

U.S. FACES INCREASED EXPORT COMPETITION IN CORN

For the 2018/19 marketing year, the U.S. faces increased export competition from Ukraine and Argentina, thanks to sizable production gains. USDA estimates Ukraine corn production for 2018/19 at a record 35.5 million metric tons (mmt), up 11.4 mmt from last year. Ukraine had a record yield of 7.80 metric tons per hectare (124 bu/acre). Argentina corn production for 2018/19 is estimated at 46.0 mmt, up 44 percent from last season. The estimated yield of 8.36 mt/ha (133 bu/acre) is 36 percent higher than last year. The combined production increase of 22 mmt will allow for an 18.5 mmt increase in their corn exports, taking over 90 percent of the 20 mmt increase in world corn trade for 2018/19. Thus, U.S. corn exports are forecast nearly unchanged at 62.2 mmt.

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR SPRING STORM SEASON?

Just about the only predictable pattern concerning spring weather in Kentucky is, well – that it's unpredictable. Sunshine, snow, rain, tornados, hail... you never know what you're going to get. One thing that never fails is that our state is hit by some variation of severe spring weather.

"Year after year, Kentucky is impacted by spring storms," said Rob Payne, VP of Claims with Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance. "Springtime in Kentucky brings us many beautiful things, like flowers and our famous bluegrass, but it also never fails to bring with it intense storms."

The highest risk of severe thunderstorms and tornadoes in Kentucky typically occurs from March to June. There are several things you can do to prepare yourself in the wake of impending severe spring storms:

1 HAVE A PLAN

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends planning how you will connect to one another in the event of an emergency. Designate meeting places, and make sure everyone knows at least two ways to escape from each room in the house.

In today's age of cellphones, it's imperative to make sure all members of the family know emergency numbers by heart in case they need to use a landline or borrow someone's phone. Post numbers for the fire department, police station, and hospital in a visible spot in the home.

2 STOCK UP

Have an emergency on hand in case you need to quickly vacate your home due to severe weather. The CDC recommends stashing a flashlight, a battery-operated radio, and a first-aid kit.

You'll also need a three- to five-day supply of bottled water and nonperishable food, personal hygiene items, extra clothes, and blankets or sleeping bags.

3 ORGANIZE AND PROTECT IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND BELONGINGS

If you have warning of an impending storm, move and store important documents off site. If it isn't possible to move these items, store them in waterproof, sealable bags on a high shelf.

4 CREATE A HOME INVENTORY

Should damage occur, an up-to-date inventory of your possessions

will greatly simplify the process of filing an insurance claim. A home inventory logs the valuables in your home and each item's worth. There are several smartphone apps that can help you create and manage your own.

5 BUY OR RENT A BACKUP GENERATOR

If it's possible to get your hands on a back-up portable generator, do so! Severe storms have the potential to knock out power to your home for hours, days, or even weeks. Generators do come with their own list of hazards, though, so be sure to read the user manual and study up on safe portable generator use.



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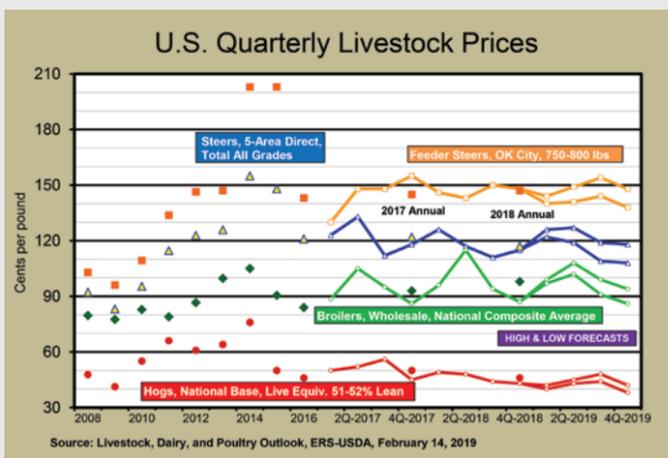
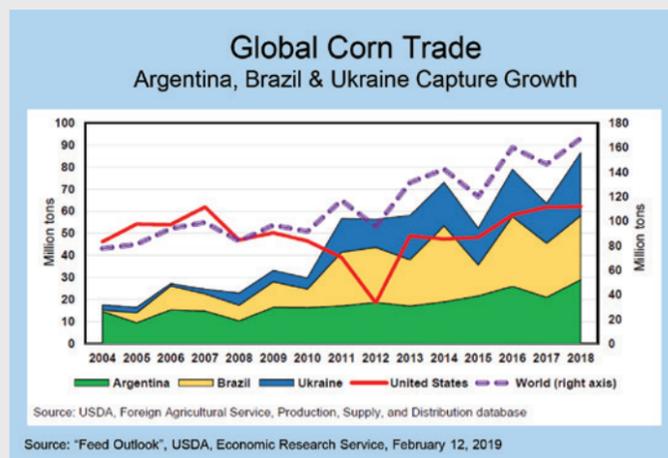
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CANDID CONVERSATION

KFB Candid Conversation presents a discussion about the topical issues facing the agricultural industry and rural communities in a question and answer format. In this column, Dave Ross, Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Water, discusses the new Waters of the U.S. rule.



The subject of the Waters of the U.S. rule has been at the forefront of farm family concerns for quite some time now. What clarity does this new rule bring that the previous rule did not?

The proposal establishes six clear categories of waters that are jurisdictional; traditional navigable waters (TNWs), tributaries to TNWs, certain ditches, certain lakes and ponds, impoundments of jurisdictional waters, and adjacent wetlands. All other waters and features not meeting one of these six categories are out under the proposal.

Previous rules and guidance, on the other hand, rely on versions of the "significant nexus" test to determine Clean Water Act jurisdiction for countless wetlands, ponds, and streams. The test has generated substantial uncertainty for the regulated public, and the proposed rule does away with it.

According to the "significant nexus" test, a water is jurisdictional if it significantly affects the chemical, physical, and/or biological integrity of a downstream traditional navigable water. To determine if a water possesses a significant nexus, the federal government must perform a case-specific analysis of a waterbody. Meanwhile, the landowner is left in the dark regarding the jurisdictional status of a waterbody on his/her property until the test is performed.

To provide additional clarity to the nation's farmers, the proposal continues to exclude "prior converted cropland," and for the first time defines the term for Clean Water Act purposes. Similarly, the proposal more clearly defines

which ditches are in, such as ditches constructed in a tributary, and which ditches are out, such as most roadside and farm ditches

Often the agriculture industry has been on the negative side of discussions when it comes to the environment. What is your opinion when it comes to the environmental stewardship of the farming community?

There's a reason that farmers are often referred to as the first environmentalists. The men and women who work the land have a vested

interest in properly managing their natural resources – their crops, their livestock, and their livelihood depend on it. I see the agricultural community – and farmers in particular – as partners in the EPA's efforts to protect human health and the environment.

Procedurally, what happens now that this new rule has been announced?

At this point, the rule is in the proposal stage and is available for a 60-day public comment period through April 15, 2019. The EPA and the Army have held a public webcast, a public hearing,

and are continuing to hold meetings with states and tribes. Meanwhile, due to litigation surrounding the Obama Administration's 2015 WOTUS Rule, the 1980s regulations and accompanying guidance are in place in 28 states, and the 2015 WOTUS Rule is in effect in the remaining 22 states. Kentucky is currently subject to the 1980s regulations and accompanying guidance. A map depicting which regulations apply in each state is available on the EPA's website here: www.epa.gov/wotus-rule/definition-waters-united-states-rule-status-and-litigation-update

How important is it for the ag community to make comments on this new rule?

All are welcome to comment on the proposed rule. The EPA and the Army have requested comment on a variety of issues related to waters and features commonly found in agricultural landscapes, including the treatment of prior converted cropland, ditches, and irrigated lands. Farmers are key stakeholders when it comes to WOTUS, and we value the input of the agricultural community, and all stakeholders, as we develop this rule.

Will there be any modifications to the rule once comments are made?

At this time, the proposed rule has been published in the Federal Register and the public comment period is open until April 15, 2019. After the comment period closes, the EPA and the Army will take all comments into consideration, respond to those comments, and finalize a rule with changes made if and as necessary.

At the end of the day, what is the desired outcome of this rule as it relates to the ag community?

Ultimately, it is my goal that the EPA and the Army craft a rule that is clearer and easier to understand than previous regulations and that respects the limited powers that the executive branch has been given under the Constitution and the Clean Water Act to regulate navigable waters.

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COUNTY CORNER

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities



GREENUP COUNTY

Greenup County Farm Bureau Co-Women's Committee Chairs Connie Howard and Lisa Osborne met with McKell Elementary Robotics Teams for an early Food-Check Out project.



LETCHER COUNTY

Letcher County Farm Bureau Women's Committee passed out Kentucky products during Food Check Out Week at Food City in Whitesburg. Pictured from left: Diane Watts, Judy Collins, and Wanda Crown.



DAVISS COUNTY

Daviess County Farm Bureau and agents visit with attendees at the AgExpo in Owensboro.



ANDERSON COUNTY

State Director Randy Chrisman participated in an agriculture discussion on a New Zealand radio show called "The Country" during a recent trip.



LYON COUNTY

Left photo: Lyon County Judge Executive Wade White, center, signed the Food Check Out Week Proclamation. Pictured with him are Lyon County Farm Bureau President Glen S. Kinder IV and Becky Kinder, Lyon County Women's Chair. Right photo: Lyon County Farm Bureau invited the local FFA chapter for their regular monthly meeting during National FFA week. Pictured from left: Sandy Rudolph, Secretary/Treasurer; Glen Kinder, President; Keaton Bridges, FFA member; Jake Klueppel, FFA member; Mercedes Smith, FFA Advisor; and Kim White, Agency Manager.



FAYETTE COUNTY

Fayette County Farm Bureau's Spelling Bee Winners. First place went to Jonathon Johnson, a 6th grader from Trinity Christian Academy. Second place went to Lauren DeVore, a 7th grade homeschool student. Third place went to Krishna Bhatraju, an 8th grade student from Winburn Middle School. Pictured left to right: Krishna Bhatraju, Lauren DeVore, Jonathon Johnson.



BOYD COUNTY

The Board of Directors of Boyd County Farm Bureau Federation donated \$500 to River Cities Harvest in observance of Food Check-Out Week. The check was presented to Brittany Hoback, Director of River Cities Harvest by Wm. David Horn, President of Boyd County Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors.



HOPKINS COUNTY

Brian Welch, MNHHS Ag teacher and FFA Adviser, recently represented Hopkins County Farm Bureau at the American Farm Bureau Federation Convention in New Orleans. Welch was one of 36 from across the nation competing in the Young Farmer/Rancher Discussion Meet. He had previously won 1st place in the 2018 Kentucky Farm Bureau Discussion Meet in December. Mr. Welch also serves on the Hopkins County Farm Bureau Board of Directors. Pictured from left to right is Shawn Brumfield, Hopkins County Farm Bureau Vice President; Brian Welch, Board of Directors; and Curtis Dame, President.

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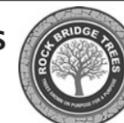
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Down the Backroads

By Tim Thornberry

As much as I love this digital age we live in, at least when it comes to gathering information, I still am a bit old fashion in that I love the printed word; not files on a smart phone or computer but actual print in a newspaper, or magazine, or book.

For me, there is an inherent value in a real live book that is somewhat lost on a phone or laptop. The feel of the pages as they turn is not something you can experience in the digital world, although there are computer programs that give online publications that virtual page-turning effect.

I like the ability to place a bookmark in a page and leave the top sticking out,

as to see my progress. I don't ever have to worry about losing my connections or being in a place where I have no digital signal.

I don't have to wonder if I have enough battery power to finish what I'm reading. And, I don't have to place my book in a separate tray going through airport security.

I like old books and old book stores. I'm good with paperbacks. Of course, I like those coffee table books with lots of photos and colorful hardback covers.

I'm not sure where this love of books came from exactly, but much of it is due to my fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Jenkins. She loved books and had

several stacks all over her classroom at Sand Spring School.

She used to read to us every day after lunch. There was something about her voice that kept your attention and story time was one of my favorite times of the day.

More than learning to love books, Mrs. Jenkins taught us the art of listening, as well. A book is only beneficial, if we "hear" and understand what is being said in its pages. I'm not sure she intended that to be a lesson, but it was something I took with me long after I had moved on from her class.

I don't mind telling you that occasionally, I read aloud to get a better comprehension of what it is I'm reading or what it is I have written. Each time I do this, I'm transported back to the fourth grade in that little country school and can hear Mrs. Jenkins voice reading aloud to my classmates and me.

The world is much different now than when I was in grade school. Today, we have the ability to share ideas and content instantly, as well as grab facts in a blink of an eye that would have taken much longer many years ago.

In my early school days, we didn't carry backpacks; we had book satchels. We didn't have the Internet; we had a dictionary and encyclopedias. We didn't have a media center; we had a library.

And while the way to get and distribute information is different today, many of the lessons learned from a fourth-grade teacher who read aloud to her students are still the same, at least in my mind.

The words we read and the words we share may only be beneficial if our audience can hear and understand clearly what it is we are saying, as we travel down the backroads.

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