

# Kentucky

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## KFB CANDID CONVERSATION:

2019 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION WRAP-UP

RURAL BROADBAND:  
THE PUSH INTENSIFIES

GETTING A LOOK AT AGRICULTURE  
OUTSIDE THE U.S.

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KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU NEWS  
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Cover photo by Tim Thornberry  
Springtime at the Capitol.

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President's  
COLUMN



Another General Assembly session has come and gone, and thanks to the advocacy efforts of Kentucky Farm Bureau, we saw many pieces of legislation, that benefit our agriculture industry, passed.

Those of us connected to farming know how critical this legislation can be to the success of our industry, and how detrimental some laws that ignore our farm families can be if not countered.

KFB has a long history of supporting good ag policy and advocating against laws that hurt the American farmer, and I’m extremely proud of that. I will never apologize for standing with farm families and opposing laws and regulations that are harmful to agriculture.

Some of those successes in the 2019 session included S.B. 153, which modernized Kentucky’s Grain Insurance Law; H.B. 311, which ensures lab-grown protein products are properly labeled for consumers; H.B. 354, which deals with a number of taxation issues, including an increase in the Section 179 expense deduction for equipment, and the inclusion of sales tax exemptions for nonprofit organizations; and finally, S.B. 246 which will create a new Farmer Small Business Tax credit for those farmers selling their farmland to a new or beginning farmer.

We are fortunate to live in a state where members of the Kentucky General Assembly recognize the importance of our agriculture industry. They get it, when it comes to the needs of our farm families and rural Kentucky.

But, just because we came away from the 2019 session with many successes, that doesn’t mean we rest on our laurels, especially when it comes to federal farm, and rural community issues.

I can’t stress enough the importance in continuing the push we must make to ensure adequate broadband is available in rural areas throughout this state and all across the country. We, as farm and rural business owners, cannot continue to operate in this technologically dependent world without it.

There are current initiatives and programs on the table to help address this issue, thanks to the work of the USDA. But we need to continually emphasize to Congressional members the importance of being fully connected on the farm.

Trade issues continue to be a concern for the ag industry despite some positive movement in Washington. The new U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade pact needs to be ratified by Congress soon.

Immigration reform and farm labor issues remain high on our priority list. We must have an adequate workforce on the farm and in many of our agricultural industries. The migrant workers we have grown to depend on are essential to keep the industry moving forward in this country. We must keep these workers coming to our farms in a legal, manageable manner.

And let’s not forget Farm Bill implementation. We worked hard to get passage in the same year it expired. Now, let’s continue our efforts to get implementation which will continue the necessary programs farmers need to keep the doors open.

Success is a good feeling and we should be proud of our legislative efforts. But there is still much work to do, as we will continue to be the Voice of Kentucky Agriculture.

**Mark Haney**  
President  
Kentucky Farm Bureau



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# A second century of putting Kentucky farmers first.

1919. Woodrow Wilson was President. The pop-up toaster, short wave radio and arc welder were invented. Women gained the right to vote. And in Kentucky, Kentucky Farm Bureau was founded to serve as the voice of Kentucky agriculture. A lot has changed during those 100 years, but we've remained true to our mission of supporting farm families and doing all we can to improve net farm income, pursue better economic opportunities and enhance the quality of life for all Kentuckians. Why Farm Bureau? Because our farmers deserve an advocate who can serve them in the next century and beyond.



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



Having grown up working on my grandparent's farm, I learned at an early age an appreciation of the farming way of life. I was taught the value agriculture holds for my family and the world around me. I saw the attention that goes into producing a crop and taking care of livestock. I experienced, firsthand, how to be a better steward of the land. And I learned to utilize the resources around me in order to keep this farming way of life moving forward.

For those of you who had the luxury of growing up on a farm, you know exactly what I'm saying and have felt the same feelings I feel each and every day.

For those who don't, at least understand that what we do as farm families in producing the safest, most affordable food in the world; we do it for you. We do it for all those who eat.

And while that may sound simple, farming can be a pretty complex way to make a living. First, we must deal, daily, with Mother Nature and the weather conditions she sends our way. Whether we are producing a crop or raising livestock, we must contend with the elements, every day, 24/7.

In addition to weather conditions, we must also deal with market conditions; knowing when to sell, how much of a particular crop to grow in any given season, expectations of an ever-changing market; customer demands; and the list goes on.

Then there is the logistics of farming. When to move my cattle from one pasture to another to ensure they get the nutrition they need, and my land gets the rest it needs. If I'm a grain producer, I need to make decisions about crop rotations and grain storage. I need to have an adequate infrastructure to get my products to the marketplace and to customers.

Then there is this whole technology question. Do I have proper broadband service to run computers, cell phone apps, and GPS equipment?

Trying to navigate all these obstacles is daunting, even for the most seasoned of farmers. But it can be absolutely overwhelming for the young farm family. I know; I have experienced it. Some days it would be much easier to throw in the towel and walk away to a much easier work life.

However, it's hard to deny the inherent love all farmers have for the land, their animals and for the blessings we receive from life on the farm. My cow-calf operation in Johnson County may be small in some respects, but it is the world to me and my family.

It is true when we say it gets into your blood. You don't have to be born into it to become a part of it. You just have to trust your instincts, learn from those who have come before you, and be glad you live in a place where so much support for agriculture is found.

I am honored to serve as the 2019 Young Farmer State Committee Chair. I have seen the efforts made by Kentucky Farm Bureau and its many volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure people like me are successful.

**Tyler Ferguson**  
Chair  
2019 KFB Young Farmer  
State Advisory Committee





# PRIORITY: RURAL BROADBAND

Adequate broadband in rural America is no longer just a luxury, but a necessity

WASHINGTON - As the push to move broadband service to all corners of the country intensifies, a new report has been released which highlights the major government initiatives for doing just that.

The American Broadband Initiative (ABI) Milestones Report was released in February and makes note of current efforts, taking into consideration a number of issues including e-connectivity, quality of life, rural workforce, technology and economic development.

The report also focuses on strengthening current programs by streamlining federal permitting processes and maximizing the impact of federal funding streams.

Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) President and American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Executive Committee Member Mark Haney said the time is now to push hard for the broadband coverage needed in rural areas.

*"If we are going live in a world where technology is so prevalent and necessary, then adequate rural broadband is also necessary. The success of our farm families and rural businesses depend on it," he said. "I have said more than once, if we had connected rural America with electricity the way we have broadband service, many of us would still be in the dark."*

AFBF Director, Congressional Relations R.J. Karney said the ABI

came from a Congressional request that was included in the 2018 Farm Bill.

*"Congress asked the administration to create a working group that would be focused on broadband infrastructure deployment," he said. "And within this working group, there were 20 agencies which looked across all the sectors of the government to see who had a role and what programs the different agencies were offering that touched on rural broadband."*

This recent comprehensive report specifies what steps these federal agencies are taking to support broadband deployment and adoption, noted Karney.

*"The focus, predominantly, with the ABI, was on federal programs to expand private sector investment in broadband infrastructure," he said. "And they really focused on three different types of categorization including how to streamline the permitting process on federal lands, how to leverage federal assets to lower the cost of broadband deployment, and to maximize the impact of the federal funding programs that are currently in existence."*

In expanding that private sector involvement, Karney emphasized that the ABI is not so much a plan as to what to do in order to address the broadband issue, but rather a listing of things taking place within the government to make it easier for private companies to receive funds the government is supplying.

That public-private partnership is obviously important to the success of getting service to those areas lacking in it. But understanding the scope of the problem is critical in any process to meet these goals.

Karney said that at least 30 percent of rural Americans lack broadband connectivity, compared to only two percent of urban Americans.

*"And that number, in and of itself, is distorted and not wholly accurate. I would put it at a larger percentage," he said.*

One reason for that distortion could be attributed to something known as census blocks.

Internet service providers have to fill out a form for the FCC to designate where their service areas are, utilizing these census block areas.

According to information from the U.S. Census Bureau, census blocks are "statistical areas bounded by visible features such as roads, streams, and railroad tracks, and by non visible boundaries such as property lines, city, township, school district, county limits and short line-of-sight extensions of roads."

And it should be noted that the data pertaining to these census blocks is not related to population. In fact, many have no population, at all.

*"Unfortunately, if the provider says they provide broadband service within a census block to just one entity, one individual, one business, one school,*

*one church, one hospital, or one farm, then, according to the FCC, that entire census block is considered fully covered," said Karney. "The concern with that is, the size of census blocks in rural America are so vast and large to the point where there are more than 3,200 census blocks in rural areas larger than all of Washington, D.C. and five census blocks that are larger than the entire state of Connecticut."*

That disproportion in these areas is negatively impacting rural America build-out and the maps become a critical component in solving the rural broadband issue, added Karney.

**"If we are going live in a world where technology is so prevalent and necessary, then adequate rural broadband is also necessary. The success of our farm families and rural businesses depend on it."**

**- Mark Haney**  
*Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) President and American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Executive Committee Member*

As is the case so often when it comes to projects of this magnitude, funding is a problem. Some estimates are between \$45 billion and \$65 billion to lay fiber to all the rural areas currently without service. And while are some current programs that make funding available, those funds have a cap and are no where near this estimated amount.

*"One reason we are focusing so much on this maps issue is because there is an overabundance of need with only limited funding available at this time," said Karney. "So, the federal government needs to be very targeted with where the money allocations are going and to be targeted and accurate, accurate maps are needed to understand completely, where coverage is, where it is not, and where build-out should occur."*

In getting into more specifics, there are other ways to bring digital broadband to underserved areas besides the use of fiber optics, which is somewhat of the gold-standard, and likely the most expensive. Satellite or

*Rural Broadband continued on page 21*



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# STAYING OUT OF THE WEATHER

Compost bedded pack barns could eliminate some wintertime hassles for cattle producers



This compost bedded pack barn became the home for several head of beef cattle at the David and Mollie Appelman / ATM Farm last winter.

Since the end of last December, several head of a beef cattle herd on the David and Mollie Appelman / ATM Farm, were kept in a compost bedded pack barn throughout the winter months, rather than out in the wet winter weather. The idea led to dryer feeding conditions, less water/waste run-off, easier working conditions, and happier cows.

This type of facility has often been utilized in the dairy industry but is somewhat new when it comes to beef cattle.

The barn was constructed with the help of a grant through the On-Farm Water Management Program, which is funded by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board in cooperation with the Kentucky Water Resources Board.

David Appelman said the grant focuses on water management, water quality and preventing pollution with the hope of keeping pastures from being damaged over winter feeding. Part of the grant included sharing with other producers what has been learned through the project and to convey the opportunities provided by the structure.

Appelman, who also serves as the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

extension agent in Bracken County, recently hosted a field day on his farm to do just that. Throughout the day, he showed the facility to attendees and explained the function and benefit of such a structure.

*"The design allows you to improve cow comfort and better utilize bedding which is stirred each day, incorporating oxygen into the saw dust (used as the*

*bedding material) and allowing it to compost, so it is heating, driving off the moisture and sterilizing the bedding that the cows lay on,"* said Appelman. *"We're not having to add bedding because it is drying itself, and the animals will stay clean and healthy and this project has proven to be a great way to keep animals throughout the winter."*



Appelman said the barn proved to be a great way to keep cattle in the wintertime.



David Appelman spoke with some of the field day attendees about the advantages he discovered by using the compost bedded pack barn.

The muddy conditions and plentiful rains experienced through the last few months proved to be a perfect time to try out such a facility.

*"The cows weren't as stressed as being outside during the winter and we are having improved performance, and we're looking at big gains in our calves,"* he said. *"This is just an ideal way to manage cattle."*

Steve Coleman, chair of the Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group (WMWG) said projects such as this pack barn are a direct result of the work and dedication the WMWG is doing for better water resource management in Kentucky.

*"This group of very knowledgeable individuals has been working diligently over*

*the last three years on water management issues, collecting a wealth of information, which can be view at [www.kyfb.com/water](http://www.kyfb.com/water),"* he said. *"In bringing together this expertise with the desire to work with producers and landowners to solve problems, and make that information useable for those farmers, it's so gratifying to see it happen."*

Coleman added that one of the most amazing things to him, having chaired the WMWG since its inception, is to see the diversity, and complexity of issues that come before the group and the expertise by which these issues are addressed by members who are a part of the work group.

This pack barn, and the benefits it provides, on a number of levels, is certainly indicative of some of the diversity Coleman spoke of, in that it is equipped to capture, store, and use water run-off from the structure's roof for watering livestock or other uses. A15,000-gallon cistern to store the water run-off will be added later.

Coleman said cow comfort is critical to producers, and this barn certainly has advantages for that, as well as for the producers. But the best-practices approach to water resource management

will also prove beneficial in so many ways.

*"The different benefits created by using the pack barn go hand-in-hand with each other whether it has to do with water quality, or water quantity issues, or knowing the use of a facility like this kept his animals from going through the mud during the winter months,"* said Coleman. *"It was beneficial to the animals, to the producer and the water run-off that will be captured and recycled into the operation, will reduce water usage from other sources."*

In addition to an ability to eventually capture water from this structure, the saw dust used as the bedding material captures any waste coming from the animals and could be reused in a variety of ways including composting.

*"The use of this barn just creates a pleasant situation. The cattle are happy, and when it comes to working with them every day, in a facility like this, it tends to make the cattle calmer,"* said Appelman.

He added that producers who are interested in building a barn such as the one he has used, can do so in a number of ways to accommodate herd size and expense including utilizing or adding to existing structures on their farm.

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

Kentucky Farm Bureau took the proactive step to ensure Kentucky citizens and farmers have a secure supply of fresh water for the future by creating the 20 member Water Management Working Group. Adequate water resources are critical to agricultural production and Kentucky's overall economy. Planning and developing plentiful water resources now will prevent one segment of the economy being pitted against the other during times of extreme drought. Learn more about Kentucky Farm Bureau and how we support the Kentucky Water Resource Board at [kyfb.com/federation/water](http://kyfb.com/federation/water).



*"Voice of Kentucky Agriculture"*



# KFB MARKETBASKET SURVEY SHOWS SLIGHT INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES TO START 2019

Louisville, KY - The most recent Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) Marketbasket Survey indicates a slight increase to the overall cost of food to begin 2019. The Marketbasket Survey is taken four times per year at the end of each quarter to monitor overall and categorical trends in food prices across the Commonwealth. The survey gathers the prices of 40 basic food items throughout the state and then averages the numbers into six categories: beef, pork, poultry, dairy, fruits and vegetables, and grains.

The average overall cost of food prices in the first quarter of 2019 was \$118.64, up 1.85 percent from \$116.44 in the fourth quarter of 2018. These findings are a shift from the end of last year, which indicated overall decreases of \$0.97 in the

third quarter and \$0.86 in the fourth quarter, respectively.

The national findings from the latest Consumer Price Index report in March shows an overall increase in food prices, as well. The summary indicates the overall cost of food increased 2.1 percent over the past year, which marks the largest 12-month increase since April 2015.

## MARKETBASKET SURVEY SPECIFICS:

First quarter prices of specific items and commodities remain a mixed bag with a number of items showing price decreases while others increased. Most notably, the price of pork products increased 5.71 percent and the price of grains increased 4.65 percent since the fourth quarter of 2018. Meanwhile, the overall cost of beef was down 2.01

percent and poultry was down 1.42 percent since the fourth quarter of 2018.

## 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. The average U.S. farmer produces enough food and fiber to provide for about 154 people – a number that has continuously grown since 1940 when the average was 19 people per farmer.



Both the Kentucky Senate and House recognized Kentucky Farm Bureau for reaching its milestone Centennial Year with resolutions marking the occasion. Pictured in the Senate Chambers from left: Senator Stan Humphries, Senator Matt Castlen, KFB First Vice President Eddie Melton, KFB Second Vice President Sharon Furches, and Senator Paul Hornback.

**KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU**  
**MARKETBASKET SURVEY**  
• First Quarter | 2019 •

**40**  
basic  
grocery  
items

**\$118.64**  
total cost

**↑ 1.85%**  
from last quarter

**↑ 2.97%**  
from same time  
last year

**< \$0.15** average amount a farmer makes  
on every dollar spent on food\*  
\* source: USDA Economic Research Service

**\$17.80** approximate amount farmers would have directly earned from the \$118.64 total if  
the Marketbasket Survey's 40 basic grocery items were bought in March 2019.

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# THE WINTER OF 2019: A MUDDY MESS

A lot of winter rain has left pastures feeling the pain

As this year's winter season melts into spring, one thing is certain, there was plenty of mud to deal with as the above normal precipitation pattern, experienced throughout most of last year, continued into 2019.

With the exception of a couple of extreme cold spells, the temperatures were warm enough, throughout the winter months, to keep the ground from freezing, and precipitation, mostly in the form of rain, was frequent enough to keep the ground from drying.

Stuart Foster, state climatologist, said looking at historical data available through the Midwestern Regional Climate Center, average precipitation statewide for January and February together was 13.98 inches, ranking as the 5th wettest start to a year since 1895.

"Normal for the period is 7.21 inches, so we were 194 percent of normal through the first two months. The wettest start to a year was in 1950 with 17.75 inches," he said.

Foster pointed out specific counties which received the most precipitation during the first part of the year.

"Focusing on Kentucky Mesonet stations, Harlan County led the state with 19.94 inches through February, while Calloway (19.76"), Fulton (18.44"), Graves (17.89"), Knox (17.31"), and Trigg (17.04") were next in line," he said. "Through March 13th, the top four counties were Harlan (23.64"),

Calloway (23.03"), Fulton (22.83"), and Graves (22.26")."

With all those weather factors in place, the end result was, and remains, very muddy fields, creating less than stellar conditions to work in, especially when it comes to livestock.

And while winter has expired, and the spring season is here, the mud is still a factor and pasture conditions continue to be less than favorable to downright terrible.

Ray Smith, forage specialist at the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment said pasture conditions are as bad as he has seen, but there are things producers can do to help with the situation.

*"It's a tough situation. It would nice for permanent pastures to get seeded back right now, but with spring seeding grasses, when we get to mid-April, the chances of a good establishment are pretty low," he said. "Fortunately, you can still add red and white clover to pastures in April if you graze close first and then use a no-till drill. Fall is the optimum time to seed cool season grasses into pastures in Kentucky, but if you try spring seeding aim for mid-March and even then you have only about a 50:50 chance for a good stand."*

But there are still options for those who missed that window or prefer to try something now as opposed to later. Smith said for those pastures that are total dirt, one option is to plant a summer

annual, such as sudangrass, sorghum-sudangrass or pearl millet, in order to have some feed over the summer.

*"Some people are even trying some of the new crabgrass varieties even though we sometimes feel like crabgrass is a weed, but it is a very nutritious forage," he said.*

Smith pointed out that UK has new publications about all these annual grasses on the forage website and said getting in touch with local county extension agents is a great way to get help with forage issues.

He also noted that many of the pastures may look worse than they really are.

*"Go out and look closely at your pastures, and even though there may be a lot of mud, if you can still see grass plants, in many cases, those (pastures) will recover with a lot of rest," he said.*

Regardless of what moves producers make to shore up pasture conditions, Smith warns against doing anything too soon before the ground has had a chance to dry.

*"Even though it's hard to be patient, you don't want to make a bad situation worse by compacting wet soil," he said. "There are not a lot of easy solutions, but if people will be patient in resting fields and getting ready for fall seeding, there are some good solutions."*

For more information, go to:  
<https://forages.ca.uky.edu>.



The average precipitation statewide for January and February together was 13.98 inches, ranking as the 5th wettest start to a year since 1895.

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AYRES FAMILY ORCHARD		
Owenton	ayresapples.com	504-514-1594
BEECH SPRINGS FARM MARKET		
Winchester		859-744-2868
BI-WATER FARM & GREENHOUSE, LLC		
Georgetown	biwaterfarm.com	502-863-3676
BRAY FRUIT		
Bedford		502-255-7296
CHAPPELL FARMS PRODUCE		
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Jeffersontown	sunnyacresfarmky.com	502-727-9536
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Brooksville		606-782-0033
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Georgetown	triplejfarm.org	502-863-678

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Greenup		606-473-1708
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Louisa		606-922-0762
THE FARM STAND		
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The 2019 KFB Women's State Advisory Committee.

# 2019 KFB WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

A record number of counties were represented at this year's event.

As Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) continues to celebrate its Centennial Year, this year's Women's Leadership Conference brought more than 240 members together to recognize that milestone, along with participating in numerous workshops and hearing from an array of speakers.

Those attendees came from a record 90 counties to take advantage of the learning and networking opportunities that have become a staple of this long-running annual event. They also heard from KFB and state leadership, as well as nationally recognized keynote speakers.

KFB Second Vice President Sharon Furches has seen this conference at many levels including as a local volunteer, a state Women's Committee member and now, as a member of the organization's Executive Committee. She said the members who comprise the many Women's Committees across the state are the boots on the ground when it comes to local advocacy.

"The Women's Committee is one of the strongest programs in KFB. These

ladies are going into schools to help educate students about agriculture, they interact with consumers at grocery stores and any number of different businesses to discuss food production, and they work tirelessly on a number of Farm Bureau initiatives," she said. "The programs these members are involved with are often the first thing people learn about Farm Bureau. These volunteers are in every community; they are our friends and neighbors. Their community members trust them and in doing so, they trust our message."

Much of what the Women's Committees do deals with young people through education or competitive programs, introducing a new generation to the organization, added Furches.

"They are literally finding these local students and putting a paper in their hand to encourage them to participate in our Farm Bureau programs at the local level with hopes of making it to Louisville at our annual meeting to compete," she said. "These programs offer a lot of prize money for these students, but they promote the personal growth and

leadership skills those students can learn by participating in these programs."

Furches said in coming to this year's state leadership conference, the participants, while celebrating the Centennial, were looking forward to the future, as well.

"I believe it was a record year in enthusiasm, as well as in the number of counties represented. The program was really well designed to not only talk about our past but talk about ways to move into the future," she said.

Much of that forward movement comes from the networking opportunities in which participants take back new ideas to their respective counties.

"County leaders were able to appreciate some of the activities and ideas they learned about while attending the conference, hoping to use them to be more successful in getting their own message out, but also to help reach new audiences in a better, and more effective way," said Furches.

"I believe this year we had such a good mix of discussions about the past



Pictured from left: Alexis Craddock was paying close attention during one of the general sessions. Attendees came from a record number of counties for this year's conference. KFB Women's Committee Chair Vickie Bryant addresses the conference.



in the organization, as well as about ways to transition more effectively into our future and what we need to be and what we want to be."

In looking over the audiences, there were many long-time participants who made their way, once again, to this annual event. But, there were also many new generation attendees experiencing the conference for the first time.

The Women's Committee is one of the strongest programs in KFB. These ladies are going into schools to help educate students about agriculture, they interact with consumers at grocery stores and any number of different businesses to discuss food production, and they work tirelessly on a number of Farm Bureau initiatives.

– Sharon Furches  
KFB Second Vice President

One of the youngest was 14-year-old Alexis Craddock, a 9<sup>th</sup> Grader at Bourbon County High School, and, as she put it, a proud Bourbon County Farm Bureau Member.

"I loved what the speakers had to say, especially one of the keynote speakers who really inspired me, and her words were moving to me," she said. "Overall, the conference reinforced the idea that being a leader is one of the most important things you can do, and a leader is what I want to strive to be."

Furches said when a young person like Alexis can be inspired by attending this conference, it fortifies the work so

many Women's Committee members are doing across the state.

"I am always happy to see our younger generation get involved in our industry and our organization," she said.

"And in knowing our work has inspired young people in some way, through some event or action, it makes me feel good about the future of Kentucky Farm Bureau as we embark on the next 100 years."



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# GETTING A LOOK AT AGRICULTURE, OUTSIDE THE U.S.

Seeing Argentina agriculture gives Kentucky farmers a new appreciation here, at home

**B**UENOS AIRES - Sometimes, the best way to see more clearly, and perhaps appreciate more, a specific issue that is close to home, is to observe it from a different perspective, in a different place.

That's exactly what an alumni group from the Kentucky Corn Growers Association's CORE (Crop Observation and Research Education) Farmer Program did during a recent trip to Argentina.

Chad Lee, director of the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Grain and Forage Center of Excellence led the group of 20 on a tour of farms around the Argentine countryside to experience their agricultural industry and see firsthand the differences between that country and U.S. agriculture. Adam Andrews with Ky Corn and a local professor, Dr. Lucas Borrás, helped organize the learning trip.

The tour included an area that is home to the country's most productive corn and soybean production, the major port city of Rosario and back to Buenos Aires, where the tour began.

"We primarily visited farms, but we had one industry visit, a research facility, and we toured one university to see the research taking place there, as well," said Lee.

He noted several reasons for choosing Argentina for this group to experience, including the fact it is a country with zero subsidies, a very high-taxed system, and a government system that historically, has not been favorable to production agriculture.

All this in a country with rich natural resources and good agricultural production. In fact, much of the off-season produce Americans enjoy buying at their local grocery stores, comes from Argentina.



Tour attendees walk a test plot of corn where the farmer is trying populations as high as 55,000 seeds per acre in 20-inch rows.

## AGRICULTURAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Agriculturally, that country and Kentucky have similarities in some areas of crop production. Lee said the Argentine farmers produce corn, wheat, and double-crop soybeans, on some acreage, in the same rotation as is done here. They also utilize no-till planting to the tune of about 95 percent, which they learned from Kentucky producers. He also noted that most of the farms they visited also had cattle.

While crop production is comparable in some ways, climate differences between that country and what producers see in Kentucky has some marked differences.

"They have a Kentucky-type summer, and maybe just a bit milder than a typical Kentucky summer. They have a Georgia winter, which is definitely milder, but they have Iowa soils," said Lee. "Those 'Iowa soils' are at least 60 feet deep. So, from a natural resource standpoint, they have phenomenal capabilities to produce crops."

From a production perspective, Lee said if you put Argentina and Brazil together, their soybean production is greater than what is produced in this country. However, the country is not currently a major player in the corn market largely because of past governmental policies that favored soybeans.

"But, the current government has eased up those policies and is allowing more corn to be grown in Argentina," he said.

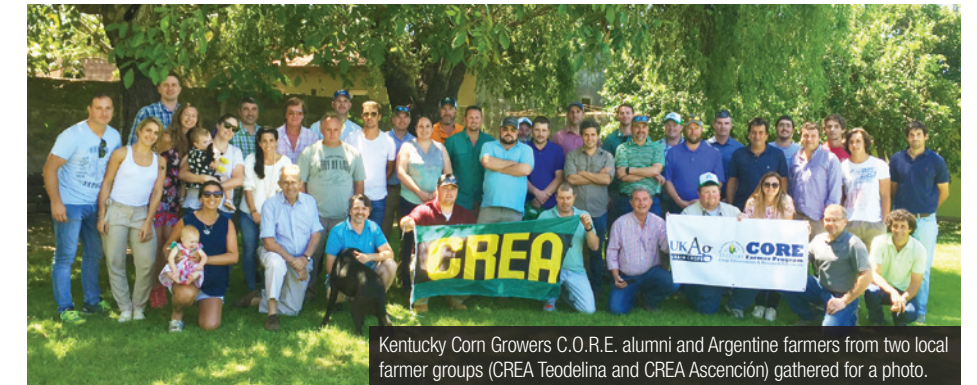
In comparing acreage, Lee noted the average field size is about 100 acres, but some are as large as 250 acres, and farm size is normally larger than what is found here.

"In order to survive, the typical farm is larger than what you see in Kentucky; larger by a factor of about two and a half," he said.

That would mean a 3,000-acre farm here, would be about 7,500 acres in that country. And Lee said it would take a farm in Argentina about that size to be profitable.

Another similarity between Kentucky and Argentine agriculture is, most of the farms there are family farms.

"For the most part, they are family farms, but they are structured differently, then what we are used to. They don't have the infrastructure, in the rural areas,



Kentucky Corn Growers C.O.R.E. alumni and Argentine farmers from two local farmer groups (CREA Teodelina and CREA Ascención) gathered for a photo.

that we do here, and so, most of the farm families will live in a city or a town, because it's easier for their children to go to school, along with getting other services," he said. "Usually a parent will travel to the farm on a somewhat regular basis, and they may have people that live and work on the farm, full time."

**"For the most part, they are family farms, but they are structured differently, then what we are used to. They don't have the infrastructure, in the rural areas, that we do here, and so, most of the farm families will live in a city or a town, because it's easier for their children to go to school, along with getting other services."**

– Chad Lee

Director of the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Grain and Forage Center of Excellence

There is also more contracted labor on farms there, and often the farmers will not actually own any equipment.

"The contracting business there is much bigger and more developed than it is here, and it's very common for someone to rent some acreage and pay others to plant, fertilize, spray and harvest, never running a piece of equipment, themselves," said Lee.

Crop insurance in Argentina is also much different than in this country mostly because there are no government subsidies to help pay for it or any kind of real safety nets. Insurance can be bought but it is incredibly expensive; so much so, that instead of buying

insurance, often farmers will plant crops 600 miles away from each other in a different climatic zone to hedge against negative weather events.

Lee said there were many things about U.S. ag and the farmers here that the Argentine farmers found unusual.

"They were absolutely shocked that our farmers would communicate with politicians or the idea of local forms of government and seeing local road development actually occur," he said. "They couldn't fathom that. The fact that our farmers live on their farms, they couldn't understand that. It's a different system."

## BRINGING HOME A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Lee added that he hopes the farmers who attended this trip took home with them the understanding of how important it is to stay in frequent communication with their elected officials and to maintain a good, positive dialogue about what works for everybody in the community.

And while there are marked differences between the two countries when it comes to agriculture, there is something that perhaps most of those attending found to be a pleasant surprise when it came to how hospitable the Argentine farmers were.

"This was my seventh or eighth time down there and my third trip with a group of farmers and probably the biggest thing that stands out to them is the hospitality," said Lee. "They are a very gracious and friendly people and very open to us."

Lee said that the farmers attending this trip came back from Argentina impressed, but at the same time amazed that the government is so out of touch with the farmers.



# MARKETS

## COUNTY CORN AND SOYBEAN YIELDS PUBLISHED

According to USDA NASS, Kentucky's 2018 average corn and soybean yields came in shy of the record yields of 2017. However, the state's soybean production did reach a new record high of 103 million bushels. NASS noted the two crops are significant to Kentucky agriculture, together bringing in \$1.5 billion in cash receipts in 2017 (2018 data not available). USDA recently published its 2018 county yield estimates. These county-level estimates are used by other USDA agencies to conduct crop insurance and risk protection programs many farmers rely on to protect their operations. NASS relies on producers responding to periodic production surveys with accurate and timely data. This county yield report shows that, unfortunately, not enough producers responded in some counties having sizable production to permit NASS to publish an estimate. For 2018, the top five counties – Christian, Union, Henderson, Daviess and Logan – accounted for 27 percent of Kentucky's corn production. Ohio County took the top corn yield spot in 2018, producing 202.0 bushels per acre (bu/ac); this is the second straight year a county average corn yield has exceeded 200 bushels. The record of 205.0bu/ac was set by Wayne

County in 2017. After Ohio County, the top counties for yield include Bourbon County – 196.8bu/ac; Fayette County – 195.0bu/ac; Lewis County – 195.0bu/ac; and Butler County – 194.0bu/ac. For soybean production, the top five counties – Henderson, Daviess, Graves, Christian and Logan – accounted for 23 percent of the total. Ohio County had the highest soybean yield at 59.6 bushels per acre, followed closely by McLean County, Spencer County, Union County and Marion County, all of which yielded 58.3 bushels per acre or more.

## MORE CORN USED FOR ALCOHOL PRODUCTION

According to USDA's Annual Summary of Grain Crushings and Co-Products Production, total corn consumed for alcohol production for 2018 was 5.67 billion bushels, up one percent from 2017. Corn for beverage alcohol totaled 35.6 million bushels, down one percent from 2017. Corn for fuel alcohol was 5.55 billion bushels, up one percent from 2017. Dry mill co-product production of distillers dried grains with solubles (DDGS) was 23.7 million tons during 2018, up two percent from 2017. Distillers wet grains (DWG) 65 percent or more moisture was 16.2 million tons, up one percent from 2017. Distillers dried grain (DDG) production was 4.61 million tons in 2018, down

12 percent. Wet mill corn gluten feed production was 3.61 million tons, down nine percent from 2017. Production of wet corn gluten feed 40-60 percent moisture was 3.11 million tons, down 13 percent from 2017.

## MOST ANIMAL PROTEIN EXPORTS INCREASED IN 2018

Exports of beef, pork, broilers, and milk were strong in 2018, driven by domestic production increases and favorable foreign demand, according to USDA. U.S. beef exports increased 10.3 percent last year, pork exports increased 4.2 percent, and broiler exports were 4.1 percent higher than in 2017. Although milk production increases were modest last year (+0.9 percent over 2017), strong foreign demand led to a 9.5-percent increase in dairy product exports. Lamb and mutton exports were 1.5 percent lower despite stronger domestic production, however, while lower turkey production was likely a contributing factor to 1.8 percent lower turkey exports. Egg exports were 6.1 percent lower than a year earlier, while 2018 production increased 2.1 year over year. For 2019, USDA forecasts beef exports will increase 3.1 percent; pork exports will increase 4.3 percent; broiler exports will increase 1.1 percent; and dairy product exports will drop 2.2 percent.

## KFB PRIORITY ISSUES

KFB Priority Issues continued from page 7

wireless technology are other ways, but they come with caveats.

Karney said AFBF takes a policy stand of being technology-neutral, as long as the technology meets the FCC's minimum definition of broadband connectivity, which is 25 megabytes per second for download speed, and three megabytes per second for upload speed.

"There's technology out there, and as long as it meets that minimum definition and speed then, from our perspective, it's suitable," said Karney. "And something else to remember, even wireless technology requires wired towers."

While there are no silver bullets to solve this problem overnight, Karney noted some positive things happening to move this issue forward.

"When talking about broadband, it is a true bipartisan issue. Both sides see the value and the need to connect rural America, and that is across the administration, as well. There has been a strong focus on elevating the need for rural build-out," he said. "It is a priority on the Hill and within Farm Bureau."



Despite communications towers found throughout the countryside, at least 30 percent of rural Americans lack broadband connectivity.

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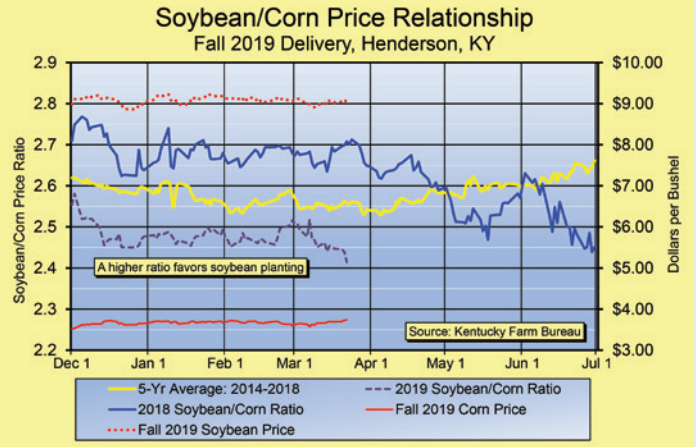
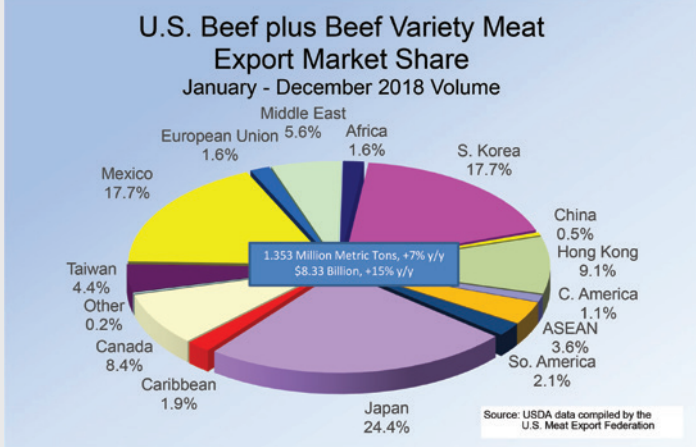
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# CANDID CONVERSATION

**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, Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) First Vice President and Resolutions Committee Chair Eddie Melton discusses the 2019 Session of the Kentucky General Assembly and the important legislation passed related to agriculture.**

## How did the session go as it relates to KFB's advocacy efforts for Kentucky's farm families?

*From a success standpoint, I thought this session went very well. We were able to accomplish several of our important issues as well as create new opportunities for the future of agriculture. I think it is important to note that we live in a state where our lawmakers are very much in tune to our agriculture industry and are supportive of farm families. With that said, we never want to ease up on our advocacy efforts to keep lawmakers informed on issues important to agriculture. We want to do all we can to ensure proactive legislation that helps maintain a vibrant agriculture industry and rural communities.*

## What were some of the key pieces of ag-related legislation passed during this session?

*There were several bills that will be of assistance to the state's ag industry. But some that stood out included H.B. 354, which addresses a number of taxation issues, such as an increase in Kentucky's Section 179 expense deduction for equipment, and the inclusion of sales tax exemptions for nonprofit organizations. S.B. 246 creates a new Farmer Small Business Tax credit for those farmers who may be retiring and choose to sell their farmland to a new or beginning farmer.*



*S.B. 153, modernized Kentucky's Grain Insurance Law, and H.B. 311, ensures lab-grown protein products are properly labeled for consumers.*

## In regard to H.B. 354, what exactly is that bill about and how will it benefit farm families?

*This bill addresses multiple issues. First, it increases Kentucky's Section*

*179 expense deduction to \$100,000, which will allow for more expensing of equipment. This is an increase from the previous cap of \$25,000. However, it is important to note that the increase in the cap will go into effect for equipment placed in service on or after January 1, 2020.*

*This legislation also exempts nonprofit organizations from sales tax, including admissions by civic,*

*governmental, or other nonprofit organizations and exempts nonprofit fundraising event sales. This bill also addresses resale certificates pertaining to sales tax to prevent double taxation; this provision will be beneficial to our states diagnostic laboratories, as they will not have to collect sales tax on a sample sent to them for testing by a veterinarian. Something of great importance to our poultry producers is the clarification that the sales tax on small animal veterinary services will not include services for poultry.*

## As KFB works to identify opportunities to enhance rural development, what is the premise of S.B. 246?

*This bill established a Farmer Small Business Tax Credit. A farmer who chooses to sell their farmland to a new or beginning farmer may be eligible to take this credit. This program will take effect on January 1, 2020 and we will be working with the Economic Development Cabinet to establish the guidelines that will oversee this new tax credit program.*

## What are some of the highlights of this new Farmer Small Business Tax Credit?

*To be eligible to receive approval for a tax credit, the selling farmer must demonstrate the active use, management and operation of the land for agricultural production. The farmer must also execute a purchase contract to sell the agricultural land to a new or beginning farmer for an amount substantiated by an appraisal. The selling farmer will submit an application after the sale, transfer of title and conveyance of the farm together with any information necessary for the authority to determine eligibility for the tax credit. The maximum amount of the Farmer Small Business tax credit in each calendar year will not exceed \$25,000 and may be prorated based on factors determined by the Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority. The maximum amount of credit an individual may claim over*

*a lifetime will not exceed \$100,000. Any unused credits can be carried forward for up to five years.*

## There has been a lot of discussion about lab-produced meat. What does H.B. 311 address when it comes to this issue?

*While we understand on the national level, the USDA and the FDA have agreed to jointly regulate cell-cultured meat, our membership took a proactive approach on this issue at our last annual meeting. They adopted policy to prohibit the misrepresentation of a product as meat that is not derived from harvested production of livestock, poultry or aquaculture. We do not mind competition, we do think however, consumers need to know if they are purchasing a product that has been produced in the lab and it is our hope that H.B. 311 will provide some clarity to consumers.*

## One of KFB's state priority issues for 2019 was modernization of Kentucky Grain Insurance Law. How does S.B. 153 address this issue?

*Since it was established in 1984, the ag community has known the value in the Grain Insurance Law. However, over the years this law has been modified but has never truly been modernized. Eligibility for the states grain producers needed clarification and other parts of the program were in need of updating. This bill will move the oversight of the fund from the Grain Insurance Board to the State Board of Agriculture. The new statute*

*will also clarify that any grain producer in this state will be covered under the new law as long as they are producing a fund-covered grain and are selling those commodities to a licensed purchaser of grain. This legislation will also increase the membership of the State Board of Agriculture from 14 to 18 members and will change the entities eligible to nominate individuals to the board similar to the way the State Fair Board members currently are nominated.*

## As Chair of the State Resolutions Committee, how important is KFB's grassroots policy development process in achieving legislative results that benefit agriculture and rural Kentucky?

*It is critical that we have sound policy and our organization is proud of our grassroots policy process that begins on the county level. Our State Resolutions Committee members take great pride in their work, as they are elected by and are representing the members of their respective districts. Our other members serve on the committee in their role as Women's Chair and Young Farmer Vice-Chair. The resolutions committee submits their report of new policy recommendations to our voting delegates who ultimately determine what our policy will be for the upcoming year. Our voting delegates consist of our grassroots membership who are the foundation of our organization. Many of these policies make it into law that benefit our ag industry and every citizen in this state.*

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# COUNTY CORNER

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities



## BREATHITT COUNTY

This is the Jackson City School Ag Program Director Britni Back with student Ethan Pugh, receiving their grant check and matching grant from us. Holden Williams BCFB President, and Rhea Price, Women's Chair.



## MASON COUNTY

Mason County Farm Bureau hosts a Farm Family night which brings over 900 people from multiple Kentucky counties and southern Ohio for educational break outs and keynote speakers every March. They were able to show off the KFB Model T at the event this year to celebrate the organization's Centennial. Pictured are Mason County President Shelby Trimble and County Women's Chair Sally Walton.



## CARTER COUNTY

Pictured on the left: Carter County Farm Bureau's Women's Committee celebrated Food Check Out Day at a local grocery store. Gift cards were given as door prizes along with \$100 being donated to the local food pantry. Three grocery carts of food were collected and also taken to the food pantry. Approximately 200 people were contacted. Pictured at right: Carter County Farm Bureau Women's Committee observed National Ag Week at the local farm service store March 20, 2019. Along with serving refreshments for breakfast and lunch, the 1919 KFB Ford truck was on hand for viewing. Approximately 125 farm families were served.



## LAUREL COUNTY

Laurel County President Randell Brewer, right, along with Deanna Herrmann, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, presented a \$1000.00 check to each of the London/Laurel County Chamber Teachers of the Year at the annual banquet. Pictured from top: Lynndessa Rupard, Bret McIntosh, and Sherry Osborne.



## CRITTENDEN COUNTY

Crittenden County Women's Program presented Crittenden County Elementary School Kindergarten teachers and librarian with the ag accurate book, Right This Very Minute: A table-to-farm book about food and farming, to promote Kentucky Ag Literacy Week and National Ag Day.

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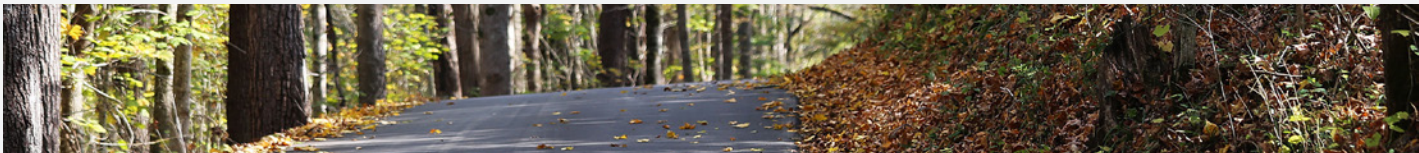
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FDIC





# Down the Backroads

By Tim Thornberry

Being lucky enough to live in a rural area, I have grown accustomed to my farm neighbors and their implements moving back and forth on our roads. In fact, I have gone along for a ride or two with them, on occasion.

So, I have no issues if I get behind a tractor or combine while in my car. I just enjoy the ride and wave once they make their turn into their respective farms.

Recently, I had the good fortune to fall in behind one such neighbor. He actually has two separate farms a couple of miles apart and can often be seen moving a piece of equipment from one to the other. If you live out my way, you know this and are aware he won't be on the road for long.

On this particular day, I waved to let him know I was following, cracked my

window to let in a bit of fresh air and to enjoy one of the few sunny days I had seen all year. That's about the time I noticed an SUV about as close to my bumper as you could get without touching. And the driver was obviously not as happy about being behind that John Deere 5100 as I was.

His arms were thrashing around, and he must have been yelling from the look on his face. To be honest, it was a bit funny to watch his antics, especially in knowing my neighbor was about to turn off the road. The way I looked at it, my bumper guest was wasting a perfectly good fit on a two-minute tractor ride.

I'm sure he would not have agreed with my way of thinking, but I so badly wanted to explain a few things to him.

However, stopping someone as mad as he was to enlighten them on the simple pleasures of following a tractor down a beautiful country road did not appear to be the safest thing I could do at that time. If only I could write him a letter. Yea, that would work!

*Dear crazed person in the SUV following me and the tractor:*

*I hope you are feeling better than earlier today, as it appeared as though you were about to explode while encountering me and my farmer neighbor. I regret that you did not find the same pleasure as I did while slowing down to enjoy the beautiful countryside.*

*I think it's only fair I should let you know a few things that will hopefully make your next chance-meeting with a farm implement a much more enjoyable occurrence.*

*First and foremost, that farmer has as much right on the road as you do. I did not see a sign stating any ownership of the highway, so I am comfortable in saying it does not belong to you.*

*Secondly, he and his family and many of the farmers in that area have to move their equipment from one place to another in order to fulfill their mission of creating a safe and affordable food supply for people like you. You do eat, don't you?*

*You should be thankful he is out there doing this for you and me. Oh yes, understand one more thing. He is likely working 10 times harder than you are, probably making 10 times less than you do, just so you have the fortitude to drive past his farm in too big of a hurry, shouting things your mother would not approve of.*

*Lastly, I would recommend the next time you wave to a farmer on a tractor or other piece of farm machinery, you respectively use all your fingers. Acting ugly was not very becoming of you.*

*Have a nice day, as you once again travel down the backroads!*



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