

Kentucky

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**Connecting Broadband
to the Last Mile**
A local community perspective

Kentucky Crops Update
Looking for a silver lining in
the current ag economy

2020 KFB Election Guide Edition

OCTOBER 2020

Keeping Kentuckians Connected





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Cover photo by Tim Thornberry
Early fall on the farm in Henry County

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



As we draw closer to Election Day 2020, I understand the anxiety many of us are feeling. The past year has been tough in so many respects, whether we live in rural communities on Kentucky's many family farms or we live in urban areas.

The feelings of uncertainty we've all dealt with have caused us to reflect on many things: our families, our jobs, our lifestyles, and maybe even our beliefs.

For me, my faith and the love I have for my family and friends has gotten me through each day. Each of us are managing these uncertain times in our own way, but the main thing is we come out on the other side better for having been through it.

With that in mind, November 3 could be the most important date of the year for many of us. I'm a firm believer that every election, be it for local, state or national offices, is of the utmost importance. But this one seems to have taken on new meaning.

It comes at a time that most of us have never experienced. It comes at a time when divisions seem to run deep. It comes at a time when we are more anxious than ever about the future.

The main thing, though, is that it comes at a time when perhaps we are all paying a little more attention to what election days are all about.

I would urge each and every one of you to take the time to support the candidate of your choice. Despite a pandemic, and because of various methods adopted to ensure your vote is counted due to COVID-19 restrictions, we anticipate a large, perhaps historic, voter turnout for the coming general election, just as we had for the primary held earlier this past summer.

Now more than ever, it is critical to be a part of this process of electing our leaders. And for those who feel as though their single vote doesn't matter, I would remind you that many elections throughout the history of this country have been decided by a very few votes, and often it was by just one.

The right to cast our votes is woven into the very fabric of this country and we should never take it for granted.

Regardless of the candidates we choose, the underlying objective is to participate. We can argue till the cows come home over which person is the right one for a particular office, and we know not all of us are going to be happy once the votes are counted. It's likely we'll continue to argue over the job these leaders are doing once the election gets past us, too.

My hope, regardless of who is on the winning side in each of these electoral contests, is that we all decide to come together as united communities across this state and nation to work toward the common goal of getting past this time of unrest.

Despite any differences we may have, we can accomplish so much more when we work together. The agricultural community has known this for a long time, and our hope is that others will discover that truth again, as well.

Mark Haney, President
Kentucky Farm Bureau

2020 County Annual Meetings

All times are local. COVID-19 rules apply. Please follow CDC guidelines.
All times, locations and dates are subject to change. Please contact your local Farm Bureau for more information.

Carroll County

October 12, 2020, 6:30 p.m.
Carroll County Farm Bureau office
Business meeting only

Fayette County

October 16, 2020, 6:30 p.m.
James Farm, 5450 James Lane
Meal provided
Must RSVP by Oct. 9 to attend
carrie.mcintosh@kyfb.com
859-253-0023

Jefferson County

November 10, 2020, 7:30 p.m.
Jefferson County Farm Bureau
board room

Laurel County

October 13, 2020, 5:45 p.m.
Laurel County Farm Bureau,
London Agency
No meal or door prizes

Owen County

October 12, 2020, 6:30 p.m.
Owen County Farm Bureau office
Business meeting only



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Kentucky Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization dedicated to serving our membership family and their communities. As the Voice of Agriculture, we identify problems, develop solutions, promote economic success, and enhance the quality of life for all.

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COMMENT COLUMN



“In the promise of better days through better ways, even as the better things we now enjoy have come to us through the struggles of former years.”

When I was learning the FFA Creed as a freshman FFA member, I was more interested in the better days than the struggles of former years. Little did I know that in less than four years my classmates and I would be part of a worldwide pandemic that would result in unheard of changes in how we experience school, FFA, church, and sporting events.

COVID-19 has had severe impacts on all facets of the agricultural industry, including sudden changes in demand and stress on the overall supply chain. Amid these struggles, the need for strong leadership has been more apparent than ever.

The leaders of the agriculture industry have been challenged to build morale among producers, advocate for agriculture’s essential status, and ensure that the future of agriculture remains bright.

When it comes to the latter of these tasks, FFA has taken a leading role. In a time when so much darkness seems to be seeping into the walls of our homes, businesses, and schools, FFA members are continuing to shine their light through participation in community service projects, leadership conferences, and agricultural advocacy expeditions. Simply put, Kentucky FFA has not stopped our essential work of growing leaders, building communities, and strengthening agriculture.

Kentucky FFA has continued providing its members with once in a lifetime opportunities, like the State FFA Convention and Rising Sun Conference - both of which occurred virtually this year.

Also, in the category of virtual events will be the 93rd National FFA Convention and Expo. America’s FFA members are grateful that the National FFA Organization is going to continue the tradition of inspiring and celebrating thousands of FFA members by hosting them virtually over the course of three days (October 25-27).

This is a time in which members hungry for interaction, like myself, will be able to experience the same thrill of recognizing that they are a part of something so much bigger than themselves. While we won’t be part of a “sea of blue” taking over Indianapolis, we will still be able to engage with other members and celebrate the accomplishments of our members during this most unique year.

Just as Kentucky FFA has not stopped pursuing our mission of making a positive difference in the lives of our members, supporters of this organization have not ceased their work to help our goals come to fruition. More than ever, support from outside organizations, like Kentucky Farm Bureau, is essential to the success of our Association. We are two organizations with a common goal - to serve as the voice of Kentucky agriculture while improving the quality of life for our members. Our hearts are in the same place and our eyes are on the same prize.

Despite the adversity in our way, we recognize that agricultural producers haven’t stopped, so neither will we. We will continue to stand in support of each other, even through a computer screen, in order to brighten the future of this essential industry. Better days are ahead; it is up to us to find the better ways in which we will reach those days to come.

Mallory White

2020-2021 Kentucky FFA State President



Kentucky State Capitol



KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU 2020 ELECTION GUIDE

U.S. Senate Race

- Mitch McConnell (R-Louisville)
- Amy McGrath (D-Lexington)
- Brad Barron (L-Bowling Green)

U.S. House of Representatives Races

1st District

- James R. Comer (R-Tompkinsville)
- James Rhodes (D-Kevil)

2nd District

- S. Brett Guthrie (R-Bowling Green)
- Hank Linderman (D-Falls of Rough)
- Lewis Carter (P-McDaniels)
- Robert Lee Perry (L-Salvisa)

3rd District

- John A. Yarmuth (D-Harrods Creek)
- Rhonda Palazzo (R-Louisville)

4th District

- Thomas Massie (R-Garrison)
- Alexandra Owensby (D-Fort Thomas)

5th District

- Harold "Hal" Rogers (R-Somerset)
- Matthew Ryan Best (D-London)

6th District

- Andy Barr (R-Lexington)
- Josh Hicks (D-Lexington)
- Frank Harris (L-Lexington)

Kentucky Senate District Races

3rd District

Christian, Logan, Todd

- Whitney H. Westerfield (R-Hopkinsville)
- Amanda Billings (L-Oak Grove)

5th District

Breckinridge, Edmonson, Grayson, Hart, Larue, Meade

- Stephen L. Meredith (R-Leitchfield)
- Guy M. Miller (L-Brandenburg)
- John Whipple (I-Webster)

7th District

Anderson, Franklin, Gallatin, Owen, Woodford

- Joe Graviss (D-Versailles)
- Adrienne E. Southworth (R-Lawrenceburg)
- Ken Carroll (I-Frankfort)

9th District

Allen, Barren, Green, Metcalfe, Monroe, Simpson

- David P. Givens (R-Greensburg)
- Brian Pedigo (D-Glasgow)

11th District

Boone

- John Schickel (R-Union)
- James Fiorelli (D-Hebron)

17th District

Grant, Scott, Kenton (part)

- Damon Thayer (R-Georgetown)
- Jason Stroude (D-Crittenden)

21st District

Bath, Estill, Jackson, Laurel, Menifee, Powell

- Brandon Jackson Storm (R-London)
- Walter Trebolo III (D-London)

23rd District

Kenton (part)

- Chris McDaniel (R-Latonia)
- Ryan Olexia (D-Park Hills)

27th District

Bourbon, Fleming, Harrison, Lewis, Mason, Nicholas, Robertson, Rowan

- Steve West (R-Paris)
- Bryan Shumate Short (L-Paris)

29th District

Floyd, Harlan, Knott, Letcher

- Johnny Ray Turner (D-Prestonsburg)
- Johnnie L. Turner (R-Harlan)

31st District

Elliott, Lawrence, Martin, Morgan, Pike

- Phillip Wheeler (R-Pikeville)
- Glenn Martin Hammond (D-Pikeville)

Kentucky House District Races

2nd District

Graves, McCracken (part)

- Richard Heath (R-Mayfield)
- Joshua Gilpin (L-Sedalia)

3rd District

McCracken (part)

- Randy Bridges (R-Paducah)
- Corbin Sardon (D-Paducah)

4th District

Caldwell, Crittenden, Livingston, Christian (part)

- Lynn Bechler (R-Marion)
- Alonzo Pennington (D-Princeton)
- Austin Valentine Jr. (I-Marion)

5th District

Calloway, Trigg (part)

- Shannon Davis-Roberts (D-Murray)
- Mary Beth Imes (R-Murray)

6th District

Lyon, Marshall, McCracken (part)

- Chris Freeland (R-Benton)
- Al Cunningham (D-Benton)

8th District

Christian (part), Trigg (part)

- Walker Wood Thomas (R-Hopkinsville)
- Pam Dossett (D-Hopkinsville)

10th District

Breckinridge, Hancock, Hardin (part)

- Dean Schamore (D-Hardinsburg)
- Josh Calloway (R-Irvington)

11th District

Daviess (part), Henderson (part)

- Robert "Rob" Wiederstein (D-Henderson)
- Jonathan Dixon (R-Corydon)

12th District

McLean, Webster, Daviess (part), Hopkins (part)

- Jim Gooch Jr. (R-Providence)
- Arthur "Art" McLaughlin (D-Sacramento)

13th District

Daviess (part)

- Jim Glenn (D-Owensboro)
- D. J. Johnson (R-Owensboro)

15th District

Muhlenberg, Hopkins (part)

- Melinda Gibbons Prunty (R-Greenville)
- Crystal Chappell (D-Drakesboro)

18th District

Grayson, Hardin (part)

- Samara Heavrin (R-Leitchfield)
- Jacob Clark (L-Leitchfield)

19th District

Edmonson, Warren (part)

- Michael Lee Meredith (R-Oakland)
- Daniel Wayne Johnson (D-Bowling Green)

20th District

Warren (part)

- Patti Minter (D-Bowling Green)
- Leanette Lopez (I-Bowling Green)

21st District

Hart, Metcalfe, Monroe, Hardin (part)

- Bart T. Rowland (R-Tompkinsville)

- John W. Pennington (D-Horse Cave)

22nd District

Allen, Simpson, Warren (part)

- Shawn McPherson (R-Scottsville)
- David R. Young (D-Scottsville)

23rd District

Barren, Warren (part)

- Steve Riley (R-Glasgow)
- Steve Jones (D-Glasgow)
- Tim Filback (L-Lucas)

24th District

Green, Larue, Marion

- Brandon Reed (R-Hodgenville)
- Terry Mills (D-Lebanon)

26th District

Bullitt (part), Hardin (part)

- Russell Webber (R-Shepherdsville)
- Randall Daniel (L-Shepherdsville)

27th District

Meade, Hardin (part)

- Nancy J. Tate (R-Brandenburg)
- Brian T. Chism (D-Brandenburg)

29th District

Jefferson (part)

- Kevin D. Bratcher (R-Louisville)
- Suzanne Kugler (D-Louisville)

32nd District

Jefferson (part)

- Tina Bojanowski (D-Louisville)
- G. Hunt Rounsavall Jr. (R-Louisville)

33rd District

Jefferson (part), Oldham (part)

- Jason Nemes (R-Louisville)
- Margaret S. Plattner (D-Louisville)

36th District

Jefferson (part), Oldham (part)

- Jerry T. Miller (R-Eastwood)
- Jeff Grammer (D-Louisville)

37th District

Jefferson (part)

- Jeffery Martin Donohue (D-Fairdale)
- Jimmy Maricle (R-Fairdale)

39th District

Fayette (part), Jessamine (part)

- Carolyn Dupont (D-Nicholasville)
- Matt Lockett (R-Nicholasville)



U.S. Capitol

45th District

Fayette (part)

- Shirley Flynn Mitchell (D-Lexington)
- Killian Timoney (R-Lexington)

46th District

Jefferson (part)

- Alan "Al" Gentry (D-Louisville)
- Bob Devore (R-Louisville)

47th District

Carroll, Gallatin, Henry, Trimble

- Jack Couch (D-Bedford)
- Felicia Rabourn (R-Turners Station)

48th District

Jefferson (part), Oldham (part)

- Maria Sorolis (D-Louisville)
- Ken Fleming (R-Louisville)

49th District

Bullitt (part)

- Thomas Huff (R-Shepherdsville)
- Jonathan Cacciatore (D-Louisville)
- Mitch Rushing (L-Mt. Washington)

50th District

Nelson

- D. Chad McCoy (R-Bardstown)
- Kory Miller (D-Boston)

51st District

Adair, Taylor

- John "Bam" Carney (R-Campbellsville)
- Richard Steele (D-Campbellsville)

53rd District

Anderson, Spencer, Bullitt (part)

- James Allen Tipton (R-Taylorsville)
- Dustin Burley (D-Lawrenceburg)

54th District

Boyle, Casey

- Daniel B. Elliott (R-Danville)
- Lydia Coffey (D-Liberty)

56th District

Woodford, Fayette (part), Franklin (part)

- Lamar Allen (D-Lexington)
- Daniel A. Fister (R-Versailles)

57th District

Franklin (part)

- Derrick W. Graham (D-Frankfort)
- Gary Reed Stratton (R-Frankfort)

58th District

Shelby

- Will Barnett (D-Shelbyville)
- Jennifer Henson Decker (R-Waddy)

62nd District

Owen, Fayette (part), Scott (part)

- Phillip R. Pratt (R-Georgetown)
- David Mayo (D-Georgetown)

63rd District

Boone (part), Kenton (part)

- Kim Banta (R-Fort Mitchell)
- Ashley Williams (D-Fort Mitchell)

64th District

Campbell (part), Kenton (part)

- Kimberly Poore Moser (R-Independence)
- Larry Varney (D-Cold Springs)

65th District

Kenton (part)

- Charles "Buddy" Wheatley (D-Covington)
- J. Davis (R-Covington)

66th District

Boone (part)

- C. Ed Massey (R-Hebron)
- Roberto Henriquez (D-Union)
- Cristi Kendrick (L-Independence)

67th District

Campbell (part)

- Rachel Roberts (D-Newport)
- LeAnna Homandberg (R-Southgate)

68th District

Campbell (part)

- Joseph M. Fischer (R-Fort Thomas)
- Nancy Bardgett (D-Fort Thomas)

69th District

Boone (part), Kenton (part)

- Adam Koenig (R-Erlanger)
- Ryan Neaves (D-Florence)
- Bill Mitchell (L-Florence)

70th District

Bracken, Fleming, Mason, Robertson

- William Lee Lawrence (R-Maysville)
- Craig Miller (D-Augusta)

72nd District

Bath, Bourbon, Nicholas, Fayette (part),

- Matt Koch (R-Paris)
- Todd Neace (D-Owingsville)

73rd District

Clark, Madison (part)

- Kenny Blair (D-Winchester)
- Ryan Dotson (R-Winchester)

74th District

Menifee, Montgomery, Powell

- David Hale (R-Wellington)
- Jeff Spradling (D-Jeffersonville)

78th District

Harrison, Pendleton, Scott (part)

- Mark Hart (R-Falmouth)
- James Toller (L-Georgetown)

79th District

Fayette (part)

- Susan Westrom (D-Lexington)
- Jon Larson (R-Lexington)

81st District

Madison (part)

- Deanna L. Frazier (R-Richmond)
- Mike Eaves (D-Richmond)

84th District

Perry, Harlan (part)

- Chris Fugate (R-Chavies)
- Kenneth R. Hall (D-Bulan)

88th District

Fayette (part)

- Cherlynn Stevenson (D-Lexington)
- Aaron Yates (R-Lexington)

89th District

Jackson, Laurel (part), Madison (part)

- Robert Goforth (R-East Bernstadt)
- Mike VanWinkle (D-Berea)

90th District

Clay, Leslie, Laurel (part)

- Derek Lewis (R-London)
- Ralph Hoskins (D-Manchester)

91st District

Breathitt, Estill, Lee, Owsley, Madison (part)

- Paula Clemons-Combs (D-Jackson)
- Billy Wesley (R-Ravenna)

92nd District

Knott, Magoffin, Pike (part)

- John C. Blanton (R-Salyersville)
- Ancel Smith (D-Leburn)

93rd District

Martin, Pike (part)

- Norma Kirk-McCormick (R-Inez)
- Rod Varney (D-Forest Hills)

95th District

Floyd, Pike (part)

- Ashley Tackett Laferty (D-Martin)
- William Matt Reynolds (R-Pikeville)

96th District

Carter, Lawrence

- Kathy Hinkle (D-Louisa)
- Patrick Flannery (R-Olive Hill)

97th District

Johnson, Morgan, Wolfe

- Bobby W. McCool (R-Van Lear)
- Will Hurst (D-Campton)

99th District

Elliott, Lewis, Rowan

- Richard White (R-Morehead)
- William H. "Bill" Redwine (D-Morehead)

100th District

Boyd (part)

- Terri Branham Clark (D-Catlettsburg)
- Scott L. Sharp (R-Ashland)





U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, left, participated in the 2020 KFB Measure the Candidate Forum. KFB President Mark Haney, right, moderated the forum.

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU'S 2020 UNITED STATES SENATE MEASURE THE CANDIDATE FORUM

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell discusses ag-related issues during an unusual one-person forum

In what turned out to be a one-person Measure the Candidate (MTC) forum, Kentucky Farm Bureau leadership and board members heard from U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell as he discussed the upcoming election and farm policy.

In keeping with a long-standing tradition of holding the forum, KFB President Mark Haney emphasized how important it is to let candidates know where the organization stands on agricultural issues.

"There is nothing more important to KFB than the well-being of our members and farm families across this state," he said. "Letting our government leaders, and those vying for those offices, know of the issues that are affecting us on the farm and in our rural communities, is critical in getting legislation passed that will sustain this industry that affects everyone in this country."

Throughout the course of the event, McConnell discussed many issues related to agriculture and answered questions from KFB First Vice President Eddie Melton and Second Vice President Sharon Furches, pertaining to KFB priority issues including national farm policy, trade, infrastructure, and farm labor.

Regarding rural broadband issues, McConnell said inadequate broadband service has not only affected agriculture, but education, as well.

"It's an ongoing issue and we're going to keep on working on it until we get it fixed," he said. "And we've made some progress, but not enough."

McConnell noted investments made in rural broadband initiatives including (more than) \$50 million for broadband development in central Appalachia through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). Also, the multiple provisions aimed at addressing broadband and internet access that were provided

through the CARES Act which included \$100 million for the ReConnect Program, and \$25 million for USDA distance learning and a telemedicine grant program.

From a trade perspective, McConnell said no sector of American economy benefits more from international trade than agriculture.

"Agriculture was doing pretty well under NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), frankly, and I think we'll do even better under the new USMCA with Canada and Mexico, so I'm a supporter of trade deals," he said. "Generally speaking, a big powerful country like ours can dominate a lot of areas of trade and no part of our economy has done it better than agriculture."

McConnell also said that he's always looking for another deal for agriculture, and there are deals to be made.

"For example, with the United Kingdom (UK) pulling out of the European Union (EU), we needed a deal with the UK, and they're not going to want to isolate themselves totally as a result of their decision to get out of the EU for trade purposes," he said. "We need more trade deals, not fewer. Generally speaking, America benefits from the international markets, and no one benefits more, by far, than Kentucky agriculture."

Haney closed the forum thanking Leader McConnell for attending and addressing agricultural issues that affect the ag sector every day.

"Agriculture is an industry that touches the lives of everyone and the more we get our message out and explain what issues our farm families are facing, the more effective our advocacy efforts will be," he said. "Thanks to Leader McConnell for attending the forum, and thanks to all our government leaders who understand the importance of agriculture and work to support legislation that benefits our farms and rural communities."



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*Based on EDA tractor sales data of under 40 horsepower models from 2009 to 2019.
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Pictured seated are James R. "Buddy" Smith, left, and his wife Sandie Smith. Standing is their grandson Austin Goodpaster.

JRS ANGUS FARM OF LAWRENCEBURG IS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2020 KENTUCKY LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD®.

The prestigious award, given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, recognizes extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation and management of natural resources by American farmers, ranchers and foresters in 21 states.

In Kentucky, the \$10,000 award is presented annually by Sand County Foundation, American Farmland Trust, Kentucky Agricultural Council, and the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

James R. "Buddy" Smith receives \$10,000 and a crystal award for being selected. He has implemented a rotational grazing program and other conservation practices to reduce

soil erosion and improve water quality at his beef cattle farm in Anderson County.

"The Kentucky Agricultural Council is proud to once again partner with the Sand County Foundation and the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts to recognize exceptional stewardship and conservation practices among Kentucky's many private landowners," said Mark Barker, Kentucky Agricultural Council's chair. "The winner of the 2020 Leopold Conservation Award represents a lifelong work in his community to promote good stewardship and his passion for agriculture in Anderson County."

"KACD and conservation districts promote the sound management of all our natural resources and we are excited to join

Sand County Foundation and the Kentucky Agricultural Council in recognizing these well deserving landowners in Kentucky,” said Shane Wells, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts President. “The Association and conservation districts work daily to assist private landowners in their efforts to adopt sound soil and water conservation practices on their land that benefit us all. This year’s Kentucky Leopold Conservation Award recipient is a community leader with a strong land stewardship ethic.”

“Recipients of this award are real life examples of conservation-minded agriculture,” said Kevin McAleese, Sand County Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer. “These hard-working families are essential to our environment, food system and rural economy.”

“We are pleased to present this award to James R. ‘Buddy’ Smith for his outstanding application of innovative grazing practices, conservation practices in his crop operation along with his dedication to the land, soil and livestock they steward,” said John Piotti, American Farmland Trust President and Chief Executive Officer. “At AFT we believe that conservation in agriculture requires a focus on the land, the practices and the people. The Leopold Conservation Award recognizes the integral role of all three.”

Among the many outstanding Kentucky landowners nominated for the award were finalists: Graskop Farm of Nonesuch in Woodford County, and F.L. Sipes Farm of Ekron in Meade County.

The 2019 recipient was Dr. James W. Middleton of Munfordville in Hart County.

“Recipients of this award are real life examples of conservation-minded agriculture. These hard-working families are essential to our environment, food system and rural economy.”

- Kevin McAleese

The Kentucky Leopold Conservation Award is made possible thanks to the generous support and partnership of American Farmland Trust, Kentucky Agricultural Council, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts, Sand County Foundation, U.S Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kentucky State University College of Agriculture, Communities and the Sciences, AgriBusiness Association of Kentucky, Farm Credit-Mid-America, Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association, Kentucky Corn Growers Association, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation, Kentucky Pork Producers, Kentucky Soybean Promotion Board, Kentucky Tree Farm Committee, Kentucky Woodland Owner’s Association, and the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. [For more information on the award, visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org.](http://www.leopoldconservationaward.org)

About JRS Angus Farm

Aldo Leopold observed, “The landscape of any farm is the owner’s portrait of himself.”

James R. “Buddy” Smith has been painting his portrait on Kentucky’s Inner Bluegrass Region for more than 50 years. He and wife, Sandra, purchased a home and 189 acres in 1969. Acquiring three more tracts expanded their canvas to 385 acres near the border of Anderson and Franklin counties.

For 30 years Buddy would rise early to feed his beef cattle before leaving for his job as a transportation engineer in Frankfort. The Smiths and their three daughters (Vicki, Annette and Julie) grew a tobacco crop on the weekends. Today, working with his grandson Austin Goodpastor has re-energized Buddy’s love of farming.

Much of his land is now pasture for their 100-head purebred Angus cow-calf herd. Bull and heifer calves are sold to other farmers. Processed beef is sold directly to local families and at a farmers’ market. They sell hay from 30 acres of alfalfa to area horse farms, and grow about 5,000 pumpkins to be sold at a road-side stand. Diversification has been important, but Buddy says the farm’s survival depends on passing his land ethic to the next generation.

Over the years Buddy has implemented conservation practices to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality. He developed a rotational grazing program with a watering system of pipeline to tanks instead of relying on ponds and streams. Cattle are moved to fresh pasture between 15 paddocks every three to four days. This system reduces overgrazing, builds soil organic matter, encourages greater plant biodiversity, and infiltrates more water making pastures more drought resistant.

Whenever possible, Buddy schedules hay harvesting and pasture mowing to accommodate wildlife nesting periods. Such efforts earned him the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts’ Outstanding Cooperator of the Year in 2017.

Grass filter strips are used as buffers around pastures and hay fields. Buddy uses the no-till method of planting corn to reduce soil loss and compaction. By grazing standing field corn in the fall, cattle naturally re-distributed on the field. Leaving corn residue on the fields reduces erosion during the winter.

With year-round grazing as a goal, hay is usually needed for feeding fewer than 60 days each winter. With assistance from the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, Buddy built a concrete pad where cattle are fed during the winter to protect soil and water from erosion. Stored manure from the winter-feeding pad is applied each spring to reduce the amount of commercial fertilizer needed for crops.

JRS Angus Farm serves as model for the NRCS’s recommended practices on farm productivity, manure management and no-till seeding methods for grasses and legumes.

Buddy credits attending the Cooperative Extension Service’s Master Series courses on fencing and grazing for giving him the tools to leave his land better than he found it. The former student now makes his mark as the teacher by mentoring young farmers, hosting field days for landowners and lawmakers, and serving on boards for a variety of agricultural organizations.

Editor’s note: Article courtesy of Sand County Foundation.



CONNECTING BROADBAND TO THE LAST MILE

Looking at the issue of broadband connectivity from a local community perspective

The small West Kentucky county of Crittenden is typical of rural areas in the state or across the country. Agriculture is the top economic driver; the area is home to many small-town family businesses; and with a population of just over 9,000, knowing your neighbors is a common occurrence.

But within a 200-mile radius of the county seat, Marion, there are well over two million people in some of the largest cities in the country.

Being isolated is not a way to describe

this area which lies in the heart of some of the largest agricultural-producing counties in the state.

But, if you measure Crittenden County by its broadband connectivity ability, you might as well be on the moon said County Judge Executive Perry Newcom.

"Our community is very under-served with internet service and providers. With respect to changes that have taken place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue of connectivity has gotten worse, especially for our students being relegated to work from home by virtue of remote learning," he said. "Most of the students' families have no internet capability at all in their homes."

And the problem reaches far beyond the educational sector. Most businesses have connectivity issues, as does the local government and farm families depending on the service further out in the county.

Newcom said he has been working on the problem since coming into office in 2011.

"I've been fighting and looking for funding mechanisms for providers to partner with, to be able to provide broadband service because we all, the entire fiscal court, realize the need, as does the school system," he said. "It's been almost impossible in a rural community, because of our low population."

Newcom added that most providers look at the situation from a cost benefit ratio analysis and with the low population numbers, they're hesitant to put in any infrastructure because of the time-frame they're looking at for cost reimbursement.

"We all get that point, but I don't think everyone that lives in rural Kentucky and rural America should be expected to move to urban areas where the service is more readily available," he said.

Newcom is facing a problem similar to what many other local government leaders are encountering. With a student population and many in the workforce still working remotely, the problem is more apparent than ever, said Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) President Mark Haney.

"This issue of rural broadband service has been high on our organization's list of priorities for a number of years," he said. "But this pandemic has brought the matter to the attention of many other organizations, businesses, and government officials at all levels in a way we had not seen before. And now that

we have that attention, it's time to do something about it, once and for all."

KFB recently introduced an initiative that has brought internet hotspots to all 197 of the organization's offices throughout the state allowing anyone to park in a designated area at each office and connect, free of charge, to the internet.

"We know this is not a total fix to the problem," Haney said. "But, if we can help a student, business owner, farmer or anyone else in those communities, then I feel we are moving in the right direction. What we have to do now is move beyond just local parking lots until there is adequate, affordable service everywhere."

Newcom said the local Crittenden County fire departments are setting up hotspots, as well, with the help of the school system, and the local library also has made parking lot internet access available, in addition to their local Farm Bureau office. And while a proper infrastructure plays an important role in taking the next steps to adequate coverage, it isn't the only holdup for this community and others like it.

"We have a provider that has installed a fiber optic network in our county, but they won't turn on the lines due to our low population numbers," he said. "So, it's not necessarily a question of getting an infrastructure in place but it becomes an issue of money. They basically say the cost to light it up is too great for the return they would get based on the population. So, it's almost as if they have achieved the appearance of providing service coverage for the community, but in actuality it's not because the service is not active."

Working Together to Solve the Problem

One advantage that seems to be more prevalent in rural communities is a willingness to work together, whether through local businesses and organizations, or through area fiscal governments. Newcom said Crittenden, along with the neighboring counties of Livingston, Caldwell, and Lyon, are working together to create a feasibility study that would give providers a look into just how big a customer base could be in that collective area.

"I've been a firm believer since day one in this position that you've got to work on a regional basis," he said. "Each of

our communities are too small to do all the things we need to be doing and do it effectively, both from a service provision standpoint of view, as well as a feasibility point of view. And anytime you can get multiple partners engaged and involved and working together, I think it's a win-win situation for everybody that's involved."

Newcom added that this feasibility study is going to provide information that will show providers the opportunity that exists within that area with the number of businesses and individuals willing to sign on to the service.

Haney said that idea of working together has long been beneficial in the agriculture industry and sees it being just as valuable in getting rural communities on the "broadband map" when it comes to getting service to the proverbial last mile.

"Before this pandemic hit, we convened a group of stakeholders together to discuss this issue in finding common ground that would allow the whole issue of broadband connectivity to move forward," he said. "While the discussion was beneficial, we need to continue these types of meetings in working toward a common goal as a collective group rather than in individual silos."

In a perfect world, this issue would not exist and when asked what getting adequate service to his county would mean for those Crittenden County communities, Newcom used the word "hope."

"I think, for us, it would mean a resurgence in some of our population loss, based on the interest I know is out there from the phone calls I've received from those willing to move back to Crittenden County if we had high speed internet," he said.

Newcom emphasized that the success of any community is based on growth and expansion, and he feels as though there are great opportunities for his county and its residences if adequate broadband coverage can be achieved.

"It's just a matter of getting all the pieces of the puzzle put together at the same time with the right representation at the right time," he said. "I see this as important, if not more important, than the electrification of rural Kentucky back in the 30s. It's just something that has to happen at this point, somehow, some way."

KFB Farming Footnote*:

During the 2020 General Assembly, HB 362 passed the two chambers with extensive bi-partisan support. The bill added definitions of "broadband," "broadband deployment fund," "broadband deployment project," "broadband deployment project area," "unserved area," and "under-served area" to existing legislation which established the broadband deployment fund.

The bill also clarified that the broadband deployment fund will be used to provide assistance to construct infrastructure for deployment of broadband service to under-served and unserved areas of the Commonwealth.

"HB 362 was a good legislative step in moving forward on the issue of adequate broadband connectivity," said KFB President Mark Haney. "But a lot of work remains in order to reach the goal of having broadband and high-speed internet service available for the benefit of all Kentuckians. We need this service more now than ever before, and it will take all stakeholders coming together and support from our legislators to make it happen."

2020 KFB Priority Issues:

"Support efforts and incentives to improve and provide all telecommunications in rural Kentucky."

"Support broadband and high-speed internet service being available for the benefit of all Kentuckians."

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U.S. AG EXPORTS AND IMPORTS FORECAST HIGHER

Fiscal year (FY) 2021 agricultural exports are projected at \$140.5 billion, up \$5.5 billion from the revised FY 2020 forecast, driven primarily by higher exports of soybeans and corn. Soybean exports are forecast up \$4.2 billion from FY 2020 to \$20.4 billion, largely due to expected strong demand from China and reduced competition from Brazil. Corn exports are projected up \$700 million to \$9.0 billion on expectations of higher export volume. Horticultural product exports are forecast up \$500 million to \$35.0 billion with increasing sales of tree nuts and miscellaneous products. Livestock, poultry, and dairy exports are forecast up \$500 million to \$32.3 billion in FY 2021, led by higher beef and veal, variety meat, dairy, and poultry exports. Wheat exports are forecast at \$6.0 billion, down \$200 million from FY 2020, even as shipments to China increase. Agricultural exports to China are forecast at \$18.5 billion, an increase of \$4.5 billion from FY 2020, largely on higher expected soybean sales. Ag exports to Canada and Mexico are forecast at \$21.0 billion and \$19.3 billion, respectively. U.S. agricultural imports in FY 2021 are forecast at \$136.0 billion, \$4.3 billion higher than revised FY 2020 due largely to a \$3.9 billion increase in horticultural products, and a \$700 million increase in grain and feed imports. This would establish a new record in nominal terms and continue the trend of rising U.S. ag imports. The FY 2021 U.S. agricultural trade balance is \$4.5 billion, up \$1.2 billion from the revised FY 2020 balance. The U.S. ag trade surplus peaked in FY 2014 at \$43.1 billion.

LARGE FEEDLOT NUMBERS TO LIMIT CATTLE PRICES INTO 2021

Packers continue to make gains on the processing of fed cattle, according to the latest issue of USDA's Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry Outlook. USDA data indicates the pace of harvesting fed cattle has risen above year-ago levels for the first time since March. August fed cattle slaughter is estimated at almost one percent above August 2019. This quicker-than-expected harvest

rate of fed cattle more than offsets the third quarter's reduction in cows being harvested and the average carcass weight. The net result of these changes raised USDA's 2020 beef production forecast to 27.05 billion pounds, or 100 million pounds lower than 2019 production. The August 1, 2020 on-feed inventory was the largest for this month since the data series began in 1996. Feedlot placements are expected to remain high, keeping on-feed numbers up and cattle harvest rising into early 2021. USDA forecasts first-half 2021 beef production will be six percent greater than the same period in 2020. For all of 2021, beef production is forecast up 1.1 percent to 27.35 billion pounds. Fed cattle prices have been under pressure this year, especially in the current quarter, which is seasonally the lowest. USDA estimated Q1-2020 at \$118.32 and Q2-2020 at \$105.79/cwt. The Q3-2020 price is projected at \$101/cwt and Q4-2020 at \$104/cwt, resulting in a 2020 annual price average of \$107.30/cwt. USDA forecasts the first two quarters of 2021 will each average \$107/cwt and the 2021 annual price will be \$112/cwt.

SOYBEAN PRICE OUTLOOK RISES WITH LOWER YIELD AND BIG EXPORT SALES

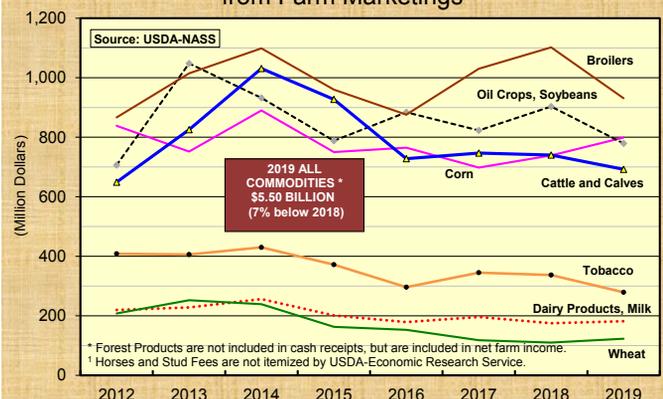
After a dry August in key soybean areas, USDA lowered its national average soybean yield from 53.3 bushels per acre to 51.9 bushels in its September forecast. The smaller production estimate and higher 2019/20 demand tightened 2020/21 season-ending stocks by 150 million bushels to just 460 million. As a result of this and a sharp soybean price rally during August and early September, USDA hiked its 2020/21 season average farm price by 90 cents to \$9.25 per bushel; this compares to \$8.55 for 2019/20. Also supporting this price increase was the accelerated pace of soybean export sales for 2020/21. For week ending September 17, total soybean export commitments (shipments plus outstanding sales) totaled 35.5 million metric tons. This is nearly triple the year-ago commitments and exceeds even the highest commitment level for mid-September in the last decade.

Broiler Egg Sets & Chick Placements



Source: Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry Outlook, ERS-USDA, September 17, 2020

Kentucky's Top Cash Receipts from Farm Marketings¹



COUNTY CORNER

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities



Lyon County

Lyon County Farm Bureau (LCFB) held it's annual meeting September 11 and recognized the county's first responders. LCFB's Board of Directors voted to purchase a flagpole and flag to honor these groups. The ceremony began with a prayer by Kim White then the raising of the flag. Charlie Murphy, patriot of the Sons of the Revolution led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. LCFB would like to thank all that helped with this project. Randy Wright, Emergency Service Director, for coordination of the ceremony, Lyon County Fiscal Court for permission, Lyon County Park employees, Scott Coney and Nathan Corley for site selection and wiring, and Signco for the installation of the pole.



Fleming County

"Fleming County Farm Bureau is happy to announce the donation of T-shirts to all 4-H and FFA Show & Sale Livestock Exhibitors. Here at Farm Bureau, we are extremely proud to support the youth of our community this way. We are very grateful to the Fleming County School Board for allowing the Show & Sale to take place during this time. We believe this is a fantastic opportunity for young agriculturalists in our community. We are proud to live in and be a part of a community that puts such a strong emphasis on agriculture education. We are proud of all these young people and realize that they will be the backbone of agriculture in Fleming County for years to come!"



Shelby County

Shelby County Farm Bureau (SCFB) donated school supplies to the Shelby County Board of Education. Pictured are Agent Josh Hurst, Deputy Superintendent John Leeper, FSCFB VP Julie Hammond, Agent Mike Hammond, Superintendent Dr. Sally Sugg, SCFB President Matt Gajdzik, and Agent Nathan Franklin.



Bourbon County

Holli and Drew Hatmaker have been named as Bourbon County Farm Bureau's Outstanding Young Farm Family.



Carroll County

Measure the Candidate Forum for House District 47 was recently held at General Butler State Park. Pictured from left : Jim Smith, Carroll County Farm Bureau President, Jack Couch (D), Eddie Melton, KFB 1st VP, Felicia Rabourn, (R) Jeff Harper, KFB Public Affairs Director.



Boyd County

The Boyd County Board of Directors purchased new signs for the two Boyd County offices. The office locations are 9285 US Route 60, Ashland, KY 41102 (Bryan Carroll, Agency Manager) and 2025 Carter Avenue, Ashland, KY 41101 (Paul Daniels, Agency Manager).



2020 Kentucky Farm Bureau Golf Classic: One to Remember

KFB's scholarship mission continues despite weather woes and COVID-19

If there is one thing you can say about golfers, it's they will play in less than stellar conditions just for the sake of the competition. And play they did during this year's Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) Annual Golf Classic with the wind, and rain, and temperatures falling throughout the day.

With so many events such as this having been cancelled in 2020, this year's outing had some modifications to meet COVID-19 regulations, but the mission and spirit of the Golf Classic could not be diminished.

This annual event serves as one of the organization's major fundraisers for its Educational Foundation, which was established in 1953. Since then, nearly 2,000 state scholarships, worth approximately \$3 million, have been awarded to children of KFB members.

"For the last 25 years, we have gathered together for a day of fun, fellowship and some serious golf all with the goal of raising money that ultimately goes to young people across this state," said KFB President Mark Haney. "While we may have had to change things around a bit and endure less than the best in weather conditions this year, we kept our eye on what is most important — helping with the educational needs of Kentucky students."

Haney thanked the many sponsors, golf teams, and KFB staff for their dedication to such a worthy cause.

"Many of our sponsors and participants have been stepping

up for years to participate in this event and we can't thank them enough," Haney said. "It takes this kind of dedication to make it the success it has been for a quarter of a century and we look forward to many more successful Golf Classics thanks to their generosity."

"While we may have had to change things around a bit and endure less than the best in weather conditions this year, we kept our eye on what is most important, helping with the educational needs of Kentucky students."

Mark Haney

Billy Toombs, Director of Special Projects, KFB Federation, said the enthusiasm he has seen connected with this year's Golf Classic has been nothing short of amazing.

"With all of the uncertainty we have seen this year, there was a point when I thought we may not be able to host the event at all," he said. "But the support we have seen from KFB leadership,



This team enjoyed a day of golf despite the rain. From front to back are Bobby Smith (Agency Manager at Butler County Farm Bureau), Brody Layton (friend), Pete Cornett (Agent at Harlan County Farm Bureau), and Ashtyn Hudson (Agency Manager at Christian County Farm Bureau - South).

the willingness to move forward with this event by the staff, and the continued interest we have experienced from participants and sponsors is beyond words. It is simply amazing."

This year, thanks to more than 50 sponsors and 200 golfers, the 2020 KFB Golf Classic continued its success in supporting the young people of Kentucky.

KFB Farming Footnote*:

Each year, KFB and county Farm Bureaus throughout the state provide scholarship opportunities to members' students in an effort to help these young people achieve their educational goals. Despite all the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 443 scholarships worth more than \$533,300 were awarded to students throughout the state earlier this year.

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KENTUCKY CROPS UPDATE

Looking for the silver lining in the current ag economy

Despite the difficulties brought on by COVID-19 to most everyone, Mother Nature has been working overtime to provide the right mix of sunshine and rain to most farm production areas during the course of the growing season.

Some producers have even said these are some of the best grain crops they have seen in quite a while. And as long as favorable conditions hold, these favorable crop conditions should hold, as well.

University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment Extension Professor for Grain Crops Chad Lee said over 80 percent of both corn and soybeans are rated as good to excellent in Kentucky, well above last year's ratings and the five-year averages.

"Corn harvest is a little behind the five-year average; that indicates a longer time for seed fill, which should result in better yields," he said. "The vast majority of Kentucky has experienced adequate rainfall during the growing season, and we need those rains to slow down a little to allow for a better harvest."

Lee added that farmers who have started harvesting corn and soybeans are drying those grains and seeds, which is typical when harvest starts.

"Based on the weather we have had, I would not be surprised if we have to dry a larger percentage of the crops this year," he said.

While corn and soybean producers are sitting on top of possible bumper crops, tobacco producers are seeing a mixed bag, condition-wise, depending on what part of the state their crop is located.

UK Extension Tobacco Specialist Bob Pearce said the tobacco crop is highly variable across the state due to various weather events.

"In the Bluegrass area, it is one of the best crops in several years," he said. "However, in South Central Kentucky, (producers) are losing leaves similar to the 2018 crop due to heavy and prolonged rain events in recent weeks."

Pearce added that leaf losses in that part of the state are occurring due to a heavy incidence of frog-eye leaf spot and, in some cases, bacterial leaf rot as well.

"From the reports I have been getting, some fields will not be harvested due to leaf losses," he said. "These losses will drag down the average yield a bit, but I still think 1700 (USDA projections) may be a bit low."

UK Dark Tobacco Extension Specialist Andy Bailey said, in general, he would rate the state's dark tobacco crop as fair to good.

"Most areas were too wet for tobacco for most of the season this year, and some crops also got some wind damage along with extremely heavy rain in late June and again in late July," he said. "There is a lot of water in this crop. It looks better in the field at harvest than it will probably weigh."

With that, Bailey said yields will be average, however, angular



leafspot, the most significant foliar disease in dark tobacco currently, was not as severe as expected given the wet conditions.

"There were some dark crops badly damaged by angular leafspot in Kentucky and Tennessee, but most crops were spared," he said.

Bailey also noted that there was also significant acreage of Connecticut Broadleaf cigar tobacco grown throughout the state this year, which is somewhat related to dark air-cured.

"There were a few good crops of cigar tobacco grown in here this year, but many also suffered wind damage and will not make profitable percentages of cigar wrapper leaf," he said.

The Weather is Always a Factor

Farmers have always been at the mercy of the weather and are experts at adapting to changing conditions. It was just over a year ago Kentucky experienced a flash drought in September 2019, which produced the driest and second warmest September on record, dating back to 1895. However, statewide precipitation has averaged above normal in every month since.

In fact, the state is experiencing a historic wet period, according to Stuart Foster, State Climatologist and Director of Western Kentucky University's Mesonet Weather Data System.

"Kentucky is in the midst of a historically wet period, with three of the five wettest years occurring within the past decade and 2020 on track to be in the top ten, possibly higher, with 2019 being the fifth wettest year since 1895," he said.

But unlike the wild swings in the weather experienced last year, the 2020 season has been somewhat more consistent following that wetter than normal pattern most of the year.

"While precipitation amounts always vary from place to place, statewide precipitation has averaged above normal every month of the growing season through August," Foster said. "After a cool start to the growing season, average temperature for the summer months has run near normal."

Looking ahead, he also noted there is a slightly enhanced likelihood of warmer-than-normal temperatures and a bit less rainfall than has been seen over the past several months, according to NOAA's Climate Prediction Center.

From the Economic Side

While the weather is often unpredictable, so too are the markets, and it could be anyone's guess where commodity prices will go as a new marketing year began September 1.

At this article's writing, grain prices have been on the rise, most notably soybeans, and export reports for the first couple of weeks in the new marketing year are decent. But skating the thin line of profitability has been difficult for farm families even before COVID-19 struck.

"Those of us in the agriculture industry are somewhat eternal optimists," said Kentucky Farm Bureau President Mark Haney. "We have to be since our businesses are constantly at the mercy of the weather, trade markets, and commodity prices. But tradition generally trumps all and despite the things that are out of our control, we continue to prevail by the grace of God and the strong will of those we trust to raise our country's food supply."

Kentucky agriculture has been able to maintain a respectable cash receipt level though low commodity prices have plagued the industry over the past several years. Still, finding a silver lining is often like the proverbial needle in a haystack.

“ We continue to prevail by the grace of God and the strong will of those we trust to raise our country's food supply.”
- Mark Haney

UK Agricultural Economist Will Snell said there are some points of positivity despite tough markets and pandemic issues.

"Government payments and above average yields have kept a lot of farmers above water amidst depressed commodity prices," he said. "One of the things I always tell people is we kind of get so enamored about cash receipts, but what's not really taken into account is the value-added market. We've got a lot of value-added marketing going on in this state that isn't captured in those cash receipts, and I think as we look to the future, that's kind of the name of the game."

There have been some upswings in commodity prices recently, and Snell said he remains optimistic about trade opportunities.

"During the trade war, exports have held their own despite all the battling back and forth between the politics of the trade situation," he said. "But I do worry about COVID in terms of, these countries becoming more restrictive and wanting supplies produced locally. Plus, in this commodity world to survive,

you've got to be a low-cost producer, and that's a tough market to handle if you don't have that demand expansion leading to improved market prices."

Snell added that there's a lot of speculation that with the levels the Chinese put forward in the phase one trade agreement reached earlier this year, we may not be hit – but the numbers have rebounded recently in terms of volume, which has helped result in a recent price rally for U.S. grains and moving a lot more U.S. pork. However, 2020 exports to Mexico and Canada have been disappointing, he noted.

"In fact, we may end up with a trade deficit in ag for the first time in several decades if exports don't pick up in the last quarter," Snell said.

As the pandemic has deepened, many of those value-added marketers Snell spoke of have realized growth, providing a bit of that silver lining.

"A lot of our ag producers who are in the value-added marketing, have weathered the storm during COVID, with consumers wanting to buy locally," he said. "But these people work hard. with 20-hour days, trying not only to produce a product, but market it and deliver it. Many had to pivot quickly away from selling to restaurants and sell directly to customers during the early days of the pandemic."

Snell said he tells his students that they are a part of the ag community, even though many of them don't come from a farming background.

"I tell them that even if they don't become a farmer or work in the ag/food supply sector, they will be impacted daily by what goes on in our ag and food markets," he said. "Plus, if our farm families aren't making a decent living, they're (students) going to be the ultimate ones to suffer in the long-term without a secure food supply. And COVID-19 has reemphasized that today's consumer prefers food be grown locally if possible and affordable, or at least produced here in the United States."

The Kentucky Advantages

While the realization that agriculture is experiencing tough times like most other industries, the state has positioned itself to endure through this period in time, Haney emphasized.

"Because of the great ag leadership we have here, the willingness of our agriculture organizations and commodity groups to work together, and the investments made through the Kentucky Agriculture Development Board, we have many advantages other states simply do not have," he said. "I think that puts us in a much better place as we continue to look for ways to shore up this ag economy."

Snell, who also serves as co-director of the KY Ag Leadership Program agreed, noting the value of that strong leadership on both the state and national levels emphasizing that not only does Kentucky have people in those positions, nationally, but they don't get there just because of their name; they get there because they bring something to the table.

"Going forward, there are likely going to be less limited resources available for agriculture at the federal level, so it becomes critical that we've got to take advantage of our leadership opportunities to benefit our state," he said. "I'm a diehard Kentuckian proud of the ag leadership that we have in the state. And at the end of the day, that's going to serve our state's farmers and agribusinesses, as well."



A corn crop in FranklIn County nearly ready for harvest.



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, State 4-H President Landry Woodrum discusses the benefits of being involved in the organization and what he has experienced being a state officer during a pandemic.

Landry, could you share with our readers a little about yourself and how you became involved in 4-H?

My first 4-H experiences weren't exactly voluntary. My mom became the Boyle County 4-H Agent when I was a baby, so I tagged along with her to 4-H camp and club meetings. It didn't take me long after that to fall in love with 4-H of my own accord. By the age of 9, I was counting down the days to 4-H summer camp. Beyond mom's career choice, 4-H is a family tradition. My paternal grandfather left the state for the first time to represent Kentucky at National 4-H Congress in Chicago, and my maternal grandfather served as Kentucky 4-H President in 1958. As for me, I graduated from Boyle County High School last May, and now I'm studying Agriculture Economics at the University of Kentucky (UK). I hope to work in sales after college, and eventually retire to farm full time with my dad and brother. I'll be the 5th generation of Woodrums to live and work on our cow/calf operation in Casey County.

Since joining 4-H, would you describe some of the events and activities you have been involved with and are there some of those events that are particularly special to you?

As a junior member I competed in the demonstration contest, covering topics ranging from giving shots to cattle to karate stances, as well as a variety of woodworking and craft projects. I was also a member of our business club, in which I sold PVC pipe marshmallow guns at festivals to fund my LEGO habit (and save a little). I found my niche in the organization in middle school when I went to my first Teen Summit, a leadership program for middle schoolers held at the Lake Cumberland Leadership Center. I dove headfirst into 4-H Leadership after that, serving on a couple of conference planning committees, as well as an officer at the county, district, and finally state level. One event that has a special place in my heart is 4-H summer camp. I've attended for 12 years straight, and my enthusiasm for it hasn't faded a bit.

As we make our way through a pandemic, how have you and other 4-Hers adjusted to some of the changes you have experienced?

At first, when we found out that many of our favorite events were either going virtual or being cancelled, many of us were crushed, especially the seniors. But after the shock wore off, 4-Hers all over the country decided to grab the bull by the



Kentucky 4-H President Landry Woodrum

horns and make it work. Everything from county club meetings to national conferences have gone digital, connecting members and providing positive youth development in spite of the global pandemic. For example, our first two State Teen Council meetings of the year will be held in a hybrid format with council members meeting in small groups across the state, non-traditional, sure, but unforgettable as well!

When it comes to major events such as the 4-H Emerald Gala, how has the adjustment been from going from in-person involvement to virtual participation?

The shift to virtual platforms has been just as difficult for 4-H and the extension service as it has for everyone else. However, it has been a shining testament to our adaptability. With the specific example of the Emerald Gala, we are all going to miss the opportunity to dress up and gather with others that are passionate about 4-H, but because we are going digital we are also reaching new audiences we would never have reached with an in-person event.

Have you recognized any opportunities that might be the result of remote learning and virtual involvement?

One major result of our virtual programming is that Kentucky 4-H's online presence has boomed. That boom created an opportunity to reach parents who use online content to keep their kids busy, many of whom have never heard of 4-H. The bulk of our online content is called "Kentucky 4-H Virtual Experience," a series of 15-minute videos that focus on a particular topic. For example, I've produced an episode on farm equipment safety and one on basic parliamentary procedure. We sincerely hope that these new families will continue their involvement beyond the era of social distancing.

What do you tell other students about 4-H who might be considering becoming a part of this organization?

The "spiel" on 4-H varies depending on the age group, but generally I'll tell interested youth that we are the oldest and largest youth development organization in the U.S., that we have opportunities for every youth regardless of interests, and that this organization will help you grow as a leader, communicator, and person while pursuing what you enjoy. Another point I often bring up is that 4-H compliments other activities like athletics or career and technical student organizations (FFA, FCCLA, SkillsUSA, etc.) because your level of commitment is entirely up to you.

What are your plans for the future, and how big of a role has 4-H played in those types of decisions?

My ultimate goal is to be able to farm full time with my dad and brother, but first I'd like to work in the agriculture industry for a while. I am leaning towards pursuing sales or management as a career path because both of those involve working with people. Through serving on various officer teams, planning committees, and councils, 4-H helped me identify that I have a penchant for communication and leadership, and I hope to apply those skills in my career, whatever it may be. 4-H also led me to attend the UK College of Agriculture. I spent a lot of time at UK for 4-H functions and because of that I never seriously considered going anywhere else.

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GETTING THE WORD OUT ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Unique collaboration helping to get information to the rural community

As the need to bring awareness to mental health issues continues to grow across this state and the country, a group of organizations in Daviess County have banded together to support those living in their rural communities who are facing tough times and difficult decisions.

Daviess County Farm Bureau (DCFB), along with Owensboro Health, River Valley Behavioral Health (RVBH), and other community partners, have come together to create an initiative that will bring information about mental and physical health issues to those living in rural areas of the county and region.

DCFB President Joan Hayden said with so much more turmoil in the world today, everyone has been affected in some way both physically and emotionally.

“What we have come to realize, especially as it relates to mental health issues in the rural community, is that it’s somewhat of a stigma; something you don’t talk about,” she said. “We are trying to change that and bring information about these issues to those in our rural areas and get the conversation started.”

Local health officials have taken notice of the issue, as well, and are working in conjunction with DCFB to do their part to help the community alleviate the problem.

Dr. Wanda Figueroa Peralta, RVBH CEO, said that organization has provided prevention and treatment in rural communities for the last 50 years, but sees the need to do more.

“We expanded our clinics, hired more behavioral health clinicians, and pursued funding opportunities and partnerships with other community organizations,” she said. “The high rate of suicide among farmers is one of the main reasons for our efforts and issues of isolation, social stigma, and transportation often prevent people from seeking help.”

Peralta added that RVBH received a federal grant this year which is specifically targeted to provide mental health services to rural communities. As a result, they now have a Crisis Mobile Team that provides mental health services to any person in crisis, wherever they are, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The grant will also help make 18 more clinicians available to serve rural areas, in addition to its current team.

Greg Strahan, CEO of Owensboro Health, said his organization’s role was to learn more about this issue and reach out to local organizational stakeholders.

“The goal of this effort was to look for ways we could work together to start a conversation about mental health in our rural and farming communities,” he said. “Owensboro Health assisted in bringing our local partners together to talk about a regional approach to this issue.”

Strahan added that this ongoing dialogue has also included members of the farming sector and the Daviess County Cooperative Extension office and that a team approach to this



issue is critically important.

“Each organization plays a different role, has areas of distinct expertise, reaches a unique group of people, and has a valuable perspective,” he said. “When we bring that expertise together, it allows us to generate ideas and create solutions that are sustainable across the community and perhaps across the state.”

Hayden said it takes these different local partners to make the project work. She also emphasized the reputation that Kentucky Farm Bureau has with those living in rural areas, has been an advantage for the initiative and one recognized by local partner organizations.

“We have worked with local health officials before to bring awareness to issues such as farm safety and I think they realize how connected we are to our farm families and the trust those families have in Farm Bureau,” she said. “But we have a close-knit community always working together to make our county and this region a better place.”

Peralta said collaboration is key to create positive, impactful changes in any community.

“We cannot succeed in increasing mental health awareness and access to treatment unless different community organizations work together,” she said. “We all have part of the solution; no organization has all the answers or all the solutions and working together helps all of us strategize for better impact.”

In keeping with that sense of community comradery, RVBH offers Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training, an evidence-based program which trains community members to offer help for someone who might be developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

“MHFA is a type of mental health CPR that trains people to provide support until appropriate treatment is received,” Peralta said. “It is not a substitute for counseling, medical care, peer support, or treatment, but it does help community members to become more aware of mental health issues.”

Hayden emphasized how important the agriculture industry is to

Daviess and surrounding counties. Because of this, making the effort to reach out and help those involved in the industry is only natural and critical to the county from an economic perspective.

"Agriculture is such a part of the fabric that makes up our region, and when we help those working on the farm, we are really helping the entire community," she said.

Strahan reiterated that fact saying the farming sector is a major part of the local economy and its strength has helped Daviess County to withstand the effects of the pandemic better than many other communities.

"However, COVID-19 has introduced even more volatility into agriculture, and farmers already face plenty of challenges and stressors, including the weather, equipment, employees and land issues," he said. "Now, with (the pandemic), the market has grown even more uncertain."

Hayden said with so many helpful partners and such a willingness from the community to help with issues related to mental and physical health, she feels this initiative will have a positive impact.

"I'm thankful to live in a place where we all work together for a common goal, and bringing needed mental health resources to our rural community members is what this whole initiative is about," she said. "We want our farm families to know how valued and loved they are as we look toward the future knowing there will be better times ahead."

As part of this initiative, DCFB has created banners that are being placed around the county which offer an encouraging word and contact information for those seeking help. Radio ads have also been produced containing the "You are Not Alone," message and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number. These ads will continue through October.

The following is a list of available resources for anyone dealing with mental health issues:

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-TALK**

**River Valley Behavioral Health crisis
line: 1-800-433-7291**

Mobile Crisis Services: 270-684-9466

KFB Farming Footnote*:

Many events are held across the nation and around the world during October that emphasize mental health awareness, and organizations, including many connected to the agriculture industry, are taking note of the need to do more when it comes to mental health issues.

Kentucky Farm Bureau President Mark Haney said with an uncertain economy having already caused plenty of anxiety in the ag industry before COVID-19, the new financial hardships brought on by the pandemic have only heightened tensions throughout rural communities.

"Our farm families continue to tackle many difficult issues, and the persistence we see in them is nothing short of amazing," he said. "However, we cannot ignore the mental issues they deal with on a day-to-day basis, and we must continually look for ways to help them address these issues."



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DOWN THE BACKROADS

By Tim Thornberry

October is one of my favorite months of the year. I love to see the changing of the leaves and the feel of cooler temperatures. But it is food that garners most of my attention this time of year. I know when October rolls around, the menu at my house takes a turn toward traditional fall food offerings such as chili and homemade soups, not to mention all the yummy desserts.

For those who know me, I really was skinny at one time! That is not so much the case these days, but I have enjoyed putting on every pound. Now, before I start getting messages of how bad it is to gain a lot of weight, I do try to eat in moderation as I have gotten older.

But being married to a fabulous cook makes moderation difficult, especially when "autumn leaves start to fall," as the song says. She starts practicing for the holidays and I am the main sampler in the house.

I am reminded how much of a role food plays in our everyday lives. Whether it was the Sunday dinners our moms prepared, the holiday feasts that have been family traditions for generations, or the special celebrations we are a part of each year.

We even take comfort in food when loved ones have passed away. I remember all the wonderful dishes friends and neighbors brought when my parents moved on to their Heavenly home. I think there is still half a casserole in the back of the freezer that has been there since 2005!

As we move through this harvest season, I think it is only natural we are reminded of the food we enjoy and are blessed to have.

One of the things my father was always adamant about was that we had plenty of food in our house. We lived in the country and had a chicken coop and a garden and fresh food was always abundant. My mother canned much of that food so we could enjoy fresh vegetables all year long.

I wouldn't fully understand how important our food supply was to my parents until I was older. My mom and dad were children during the Great Depression and often food was not abundant, and I knew there were times when both were hungry. Not hungry because it was past suppertime, but hungry

because they didn't have enough food to eat; the kind of hunger felt after going days without a good meal.

Thankfully, I have never known that feeling. But I know there are people who do and I often feel guilty when I sit down to a big meal, to be honest.

I recall my mother always making extra when she was baking so she could share with friends and family. I know she did that out of the kindness of her heart, but I also know there was a time in her life when the only meal she might have had in a days' time had come from a friend or neighbor.

So, while we anticipate the many good fall foods we enjoy year after year, I hope we all remember to make a little extra, and share with someone who needs that food much more than we do. I hope we all drop by our local food pantries and leave a bag of canned goods as we make our way home from the grocery store. And I hope our desire to share some of what we have never leaves us, as we travel down the backroads.

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