

Kentucky

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Boyd County Farm Bureau donation
could ultimately be a life-saver

The Light at the End of the Tunnel
HB 320 could be a broadband service game-changer

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April 2021



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President's Column

As we prepare for spring planting and another growing season on the farm, it goes without saying that most of us will be reflecting on the past year and the dark winter we have come through.

I can honestly say I never expected in my lifetime to experience the issues we have seen over the past year – from a complete shutdown of most of the country to the terrible losses so many of us have incurred.

And, I must admit I have a tendency to knock on wood when speaking of getting back to normal. That may look very different for some time to come.

But I can also say, as an organization, we have come through this better and stronger than before. As an agricultural industry, we never stopped farming and continued through what turned out to be a record producing year.

As communities, we reached out to friends, family, and neighbors to offer our help in ways we had never done before.

We not only dredged our way through a pandemic, but we also found ourselves in the midst of some of the worst winter weather and flooding we had seen in years.

But, Kentucky Farm Bureau stepped up, as we always do, to help those communities and our members during the time they needed us the most, and I couldn't be prouder of our staff and volunteer members who reached out to help those in need.

We never stopped our advocacy efforts either. During this session of the General Assembly, we counted many successes for agriculture and rural Kentucky, including HB 320, which saw a \$250 million appropriation for the Broadband Deployment Fund. These will be matching funds which means there is the potential to turn that \$250 million into a half-a-billion-dollar investment.

As we have seen, especially over the past year, the need for adequate broadband service throughout the state is critical on so many levels, from education to telehealth services to rural economic development. This funding will be instrumental in getting that service to underserved and unserved areas across the Commonwealth.

This isn't just a win for KFB or our members, it is a win for all Kentuckians who are in need of broadband service.

Last year, we adopted policy that supported moving the administration of the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund to the Department of Agriculture. Once again, our legislators stepped up and saw this piece of legislation, SB 3, through to fruition.

Time and time again, we see this process by which KFB was founded succeed from the grassroots, to state policy, to the halls of the Capitol, and into statute. And I thank the members of the General Assembly for their efforts in making all this happen.

As we begin a new season, we have been blessed with many accomplishments and many new opportunities, as an organization and as a collective community throughout the state, despite such a bleak year.

May we never forget the ones we've lost. May we continue with the many acts of kindness we have seen. And may we never doubt that at the end of this dark winter, we will be renewed with the bright promises of a productive spring season as we plant, and we grow, and we harvest once again.



Mark Haney, President
Kentucky Farm Bureau



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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

Having once been a member of the Kentucky General Assembly, I know under the best of conditions, there is much work to be done in a short period of time. I can't imagine having had to go through the last two sessions during a pandemic.

But prevail they have, and my hat is off to all legislators for working tirelessly on issues that included a state budget.

I know many of these General Assembly members, and I appreciate the jobs they do, spending long hours away from their families, often working late into the night only to return early the next day. And it is often a thankless job hearing more complaints than "thank you's."

But I know most wouldn't trade the duties that have been entrusted to them for anything. They are dedicated to the process of bringing forth legislation for the betterment of the Commonwealth no matter which side of the aisle they sit on.

With that said, Kentucky Farm Bureau has a very dedicated Public Affairs staff who have also worked long hours over the past several weeks bringing forth our policy and priority issues connected to several pieces of legislation during this session.

Because of their diligent efforts, we have seen many successes on the state legislative front thanks to their dedication to this organization. I must also thank our devoted volunteer members who have let their voices be heard in Frankfort during this and all legislative sessions. It truly takes all of us to move forward on the issues that affect each one of us. By working together, we are much stronger, which ultimately leads to our many successes.

Some of those successes during this session included FY22 budget funding of many KFB priority ag-related projects and programs, including \$34.9 million for the Agricultural Development Fund, of which \$14.4 million is allocated for county funds; \$2.5 million to the Environmental Stewardship Program; \$907,300 for Conservation District Local Aid; and \$18.8 million for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

Other programs and entities that received funding in the budget bill included the UK Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, the Breathitt Veterinary Center, the Kentucky Mesonet at Western Kentucky University, the County Fair Grant Program, and the Kentucky Rural Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Pilot Program.

We were extremely grateful for passage of HB 320, which included a \$250 million appropriation for the Broadband Deployment Fund. Also, SB 3, which is supported in KFB policy, brought the Agricultural Development Board and the Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation from the Office of the Governor and placed it in the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

HB 278 will allow for the same tax treatment as for federal purposes related to forgiven covered loans, deductions, and tax attributes associated with Paycheck Protection loans, and HB 518 which solidified agriculture's representation on the Kentucky State Fair Board.

And the list goes on. There are many other pieces of legislation passed which are favorable to agriculture, and many of those passed with bipartisan support.

Agriculture has traditionally been a bipartisan issue, and I appreciate the support from both sides of the aisle in the Kentucky General Assembly. We are blessed for their attention to our most essential industry.



Drew Graham, Executive Vice President
Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation



A Light at the End of the Tunnel

HB 320 COULD PROVE TO BE THE BROADBAND SERVICE GAME-CHANGER

Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) has made statewide, adequate broadband service a priority for several years, understanding the need the ag industry and rural communities have with the presence of more on-farm markets and the advanced technology needed for farmers to operate more efficiently.

Throughout the course of this time, KFB has taken many steps to make available broadband service a reality, including working with legislative leaders and industry stakeholders.

Last year, the organization led the charge to get legislation passed that created the Broadband Deployment Fund. The purpose of the fund is to provide the revenue required to get service infrastructure needs completed, ultimately bringing service to all corners of the state.

While the bill passed, it was not funded at that time. However, that changed as the 2021 General Assembly passed HB 320 with overwhelming bipartisan support in both chambers which provided funding and has the potential to bring the idea of complete broadband availability to fruition.

This bill would effectively provide \$250 million to the Broadband Deployment Fund, which was created in the 2020 session. And because the fund is a cost-share program, that \$250 million will turn into a half-a-billion-dollar investment.

KFB President Mark Haney said this issue has been something the organization has continually moved forward on, and seeing a light at the end of the tunnel gives a sense of satisfaction for all those individuals and organizations who have worked together to make it happen.

"I'm proud to say our organization took up this issue many years ago as we saw the need increasing on Kentucky's family farms and rural businesses," he said. "Throughout that time, we have moved forward, working with multiple partners and organizations to see this need fulfilled."

Just over a year ago, KFB gathered a group of stakeholders to discuss the need for broadband and the methods by which it could be deployed.

Haney added that by continuing those conversations and collectively looking for solutions, it's reasonable to think some resolve to this issue is at hand.

"As long as stakeholders continue to push to get past the finish line on this priority, I see a time coming when adequate service will be available across Kentucky," he said. "While we have seen the immediate needs due to increased remote work and learning, adequate broadband service has been necessary for quite a while, and now is the time to finally make it happen."

KFB Director of Public Affairs Jeff Harper said, "This legislation has two main components, first is the \$250 million, and the second key provision is, with the passage of this bill, Kentucky's rural electric cooperatives will now have the opportunity to offer broadband service to their membership."

Haney said passage of this piece of legislation leaves little doubt that broadband service is a bipartisan issue.

"With strong bipartisan support of HB 320, it is obvious that this issue is important to every one of us, and it could be the game-changer we have needed to solve this problem once and for all," he said. "We are going to have better broadband service, and I'm proud to know that, because of our efforts, we are making a mark on this priority."



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Making a Difference in the Community

BOYD COUNTY FARM BUREAU DONATION COULD ULTIMATELY BE A LIFE-SAVER

President Harry Truman once said, "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." Boyd County Farm Bureau (BCFB) board member Bill Walters likely feels the same.

It was Walters who first brought the idea of making a donation to local law enforcement to fellow board members. That suggestion turned into a decision to donate \$20,000 to the four agencies located in the county.

"This whole idea is about helping our law officers," he said, "I've always had up a good relationship with all the law enforcement here and this seemed like the right thing to do."

Walters owns a campground in Boyd County and rents one of his campers to a young state trooper assigned to the area.

"I have gotten to know him pretty well; he's like a son to me," Walters said. "He tells me some of the stories about things he would run into as a state trooper, and I just thought, these officers are some of the most unappreciated and underpaid people in this country."

Upon giving his recommendation at a board meeting, BCFB President Duff Holbrook said Walter's suggestion became a unanimous decision to make the donation with each local law enforcement agency present in the county getting \$5,000 each.

"I thought it was a great idea, and a lot of members on this board know many of these officers – whether it's at the sheriff's office or state police or the two police forces," he said. "There's a lot of personal history behind some of it. Even my grandfather was a chief of police for a lot of

years in the city of Ashland. But more than that, it also puts us out in the community, too."

That community aspect is indicative of Farm Bureaus across the state, and Holbrook would like to see even more local initiatives like this one.

"It's a great example of community service, and I think it's a great opportunity to build relationships with everyone in our local community," he said.

BCFB Board Secretary John McGlone was instrumental in much of the logistical part of giving the funds to the agencies. He said in making the decision to give this donation, members knew they were doing something to help make for a safer community.

"But more importantly, we wanted to let the law enforcement community know that we really support them," he said. "So, it's twofold, that we help local law enforcement with monetary needs, but they also know that they have a community that cares for the job that they do."

That message came through loud and clear as each representing member of the four law enforcement agencies recognized the kind of positive partnerships they have with local organizations like Farm Bureau.

State Police Post 14 Commander Captain Jim Goble said the donation is a huge act of generosity and not something that's looked upon lightly.

"We're extremely appreciative of getting that type of donation, and it really is kind of an affirmation from these folks as to, say, 'We still believe in what you're doing, and we still trust you.'" he said. "This donation will allow us to

do things in our building as far as equipment purchases, training opportunities and things of that nature, and by having those funds on hand, then we're able to get that to the field a lot quicker, something that not only benefits our officers, but also the people we serve."

Ashland Police Chief Todd Kelley said it was exciting to get the news of this donation, and he knew exactly what he could use it for.

"It is very expensive to put all the necessary equipment we need to do our jobs safely and efficiently, into our police cruisers" he said. "When I learned of the donation, I knew it would provide the opportunity to get one more piece of equipment we need to have in each vehicle."

Specifically, Kelley was speaking about putting what are known as a "stop-sticks" in every cruiser to help end high-speed chases that often occur in this tri-state area. These devices have a covering over a long strand of spikes that are used to deflate tires as a vehicle passes over the stick.

"We have more of these pursuits than you might think, and these stop-sticks can be deployed quickly in our efforts to bring these pursuits to – what we hope will be – a safe ending," he said. "I look at it as a positive, as a way to reduce the risk of injury or death."

From the community involvement aspect of the donation, Kelley said local partnerships are critical to local law enforcement.

I not only deal with governmental partnerships, but private partnerships, as well, and those are just as important, if not more, because it opens up a dialogue between the members who are a part of that group, and it allows them to see maybe a little bit more information about what we're doing," he said.

Boyd County Sheriff Bobby Jack Woods has a long history in law enforcement not only in the sheriff's office but the years prior to that he spent with the Kentucky

"It is a tough time to be a police officer right now and to have this type of support from local organizations like Farm Bureau is just something we are very thankful for."

Cameron Logan

State Police. He said this donation is a good example of the community giving back to the community.

"And that's what I liked about it. Having those community partnerships is important to the job we are doing," he said. "Everybody thinks we're a big county and we're a big department, but we've got a lot of people here, and I have a lot of payroll. So, things like gun racks that we're going to use this money for, it's a treat, because it's something we need that we might not otherwise have the money for."

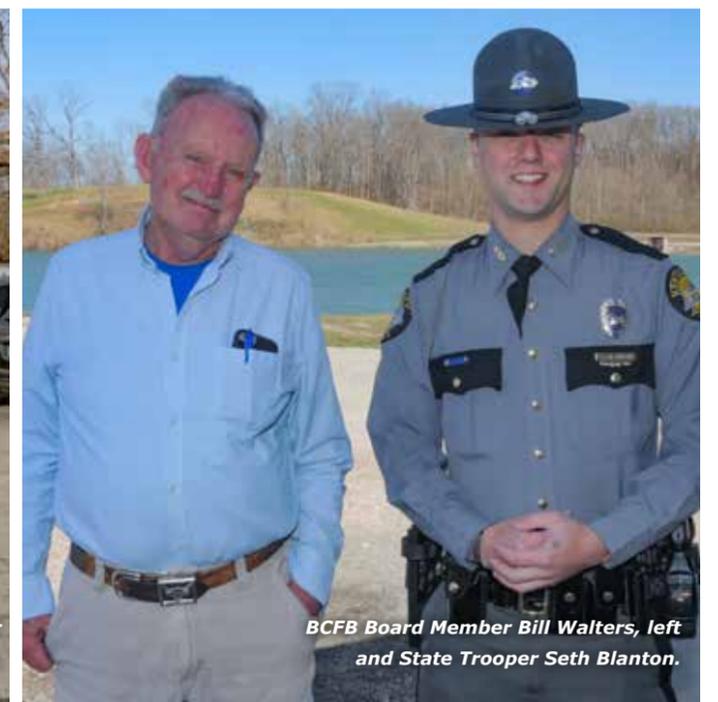
Those gun racks he referred to fit inside the cruiser allowing an officer quicker, and safer access to a weapon, when needed, as opposed to exiting the car and getting into the trunk to retrieve that weapon. Woods said the quicker response time alone could certainly benefit an officer who finds himself or herself in this type of situation.

"To know that Farm Bureau wants to do something for our officers who are out here serving every day, in what some people call a thankless job, it really touches my heart," he said.

Continued on Page 10



Captain Jim Goble, left, and Detective Daniel Cook look over some of the items typically carried in cruisers.



BCFB Board Member Bill Walters, left and State Trooper Seth Blanton.

Continued from Page 9

Catlettsburg Police Chief Cameron Logan echoes his fellow officers' sentiments when expressing his gratitude for the BCFB donation. He said getting such a sizeable contribution was unbelievable.

"I was very shocked and thankful because we ordered some new cruisers and we were going to try to figure out funding to equip them," he said. "This donation will help us buy radios and different things for these vehicles. And, it couldn't happen at a better time."

Logan said he is fortunate in the fact that community support for this smaller agency is great to begin with, and the BCFB donation is certainly a big part of that local backing.

"It is a tough time to be a police officer right now and to have this type of support from local organizations like Farm Bureau is just something we are very thankful for, and, to be honest, the donation is a major stress reliever in knowing we will be better equipped because of it," he said.

While all those law enforcement officers overseeing the donations made to their respective agencies were grateful and expressed their thanks, there was another common denominator all spoke of. Whether the money they received will be used for training, equipment or communication devices, these law officers all knew, that because of this, it could be a game-changer and a life saver in any given situation.

"Because of what we can do through this donation, there is no doubt that at some point it could save the life of one of our officers or one of our community members, and that's what is most important," Goble said.

This one idea from one person has turned into a community wide success in Boyd County, but Walters doesn't want any credit.

"This is not about me, but it is about the support and love we have for our law enforcement officers in this county," he said. "So, I just think, if we can do it every year, it would be the best thing we could ever do."



Catlettsburg Police Chief Cameron Logan.



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COUNTY LEADER WEEK

April 19-23

A TIME TO RECOGNIZE AND ENCOURAGE LOCAL VOLUNTEER LEADERS

Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) was founded on the principle of grassroots advocacy, a methodology that has served the organization well for more than 100 years.

KFB policy, and the priorities for which this organization stand on, begin at the local level. It's a system which encourages county leaders to be involved, and, quite frankly, is necessary to keep Farm Bureau moving forward, said KFB President Mark Haney.

"As all leaders of this organization have done, I began my involvement at the grassroots level, becoming active in my county Farm Bureau and taking advantage of the opportunities KFB provides to its volunteer members," he said. "I've been blessed to be involved at all levels of this organization, knowing it all begins in a county meeting discussing issues that affect those members in their communities."

In understanding the importance of voluntary local leadership, KFB will recognize April 19-23 as County Leader Week in an effort to bring attention to the value of local leaders and the opportunities and resources they have as members of the Farm Bureau family.

"I began my journey with KFB many years ago when a friend invited me to a local meeting," said KFB 1st Vice President Eddie Melton. "Since then, I have continually found opportunities to grow, first as a local leader and later on the state and national levels."

Melton once served as the state Young Farmer Advisory Committee chair and now chairs the state Resolution Committee, the body that brings forth policy recommendations from KFB districts across the state.

"Our resolutions process is part of that foundation that makes this organization so strong, and most of the recommendations we review and eventually choose for policy come from our local Farm Bureaus."

KFB 2nd Vice President Sharon Furches also recognizes the value of local leadership, having been involved in her county Farm Bureau for many years. This led her to current roles including being co-chair of Kentucky Farm Bureau's Vision 100 Strategic Planning Team and serving as a member of the United States Environmental

"I've been blessed to be involved at all levels of this organization, knowing it all begins in a county meeting discussing issues that affect those members in their communities."

Mark Haney

Protection Agency Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee.

"Of all the accomplishments I can relate to in the time I have spent in KFB, perhaps the most important roles have been at the local level," she said. "That grassroots advocacy component is what energizes this organization, and it's where we get our marching orders at the state and national levels."

Haney said whether local involvement is in the Young Farmer Program, county Women's Committees, or the soon-to-be Generation Bridge programs, the resources available to local volunteer members should be fully utilized.

"As the fourth largest Farm Bureau in the country, we have the resources to help our local leaders be the strongest advocates possible," he said. "When it comes to state and national farm policy, KFB has a seat at the table. And there are more chairs available for those who are willing to step up and be involved when it comes to our organization and our agricultural heritage."

Haney also said he hopes this week of recognition helps local volunteer members see the importance of the roles they play in KFB and will encourage them to look for opportunities to learn more, do more, and keep the organization moving forward.



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After the Ice, Snow and Floods

RELIEF EFFORTS FORMED AFTER LATE WINTER STORMS WREAKED HAVOC ON COMMUNITIES AND FARMLAND ACROSS THE STATE

To say Mother Nature delivered a one-two punch on Kentucky and much of the region during the last few weeks of winter would be a gross understatement, as damage from snow, ice, and historic flooding continues to be assessed.

State Climatologist Dr. Stuart Foster said it was quite an ending, weather-wise, to the winter season, not only for the Commonwealth but for many places in the U.S., as well.

"Winter hit the central United States hard in February, as some areas witnessed their coldest temperatures since January of 1998, when Kentucky set its record low temperature of -37 degrees," he said. "Fortunately, we were not in the bullseye of this cold air outbreak, as the lowest temperature recorded by the Kentucky Mesonet was -6 degrees in Henderson County on the 19th."

However, the state was hit by weather systems that first brought snow, sleet, and freezing rain, then heavy rains after that, Foster added.

"In many areas, it was the snowiest February since 2015, ending with widespread heavy rains that produced as much as seven inches of rainfall over the last three days of the month, leading to widespread flooding that was reminiscent of May 2010," he said.

The damage caused by these weather occurrences left many in the position of having experienced losses of some magnitude, and others having lost everything.

Outreach by KFB

KFB Insurance Executive Vice President and CEO John Sparrow said the devastation brought on by these storms was often indescribable and difficult to imagine.

"The destruction caused by these consecutive weather-related events is beyond words for me, but the outreach to these affected areas by individuals and organizations across

the state is tremendously reassuring. The citizens of this state are always willing to reach out and help those in need," he said. "We really are a collective family, and our prayers remain with all those affected by these catastrophes."

On March 5, flood relief drives were set up at the KFB State Office and in its Morehead, Lexington-Hamburg, and Jackson Regional offices. These drives were aimed at collecting items flooded neighbors needed to get back on their feet, including cleaning supplies, bottled water, gloves, first aid kits, toilet paper, pet food, and more.

Collected items were delivered to hard-hit communities by KFB staff on Saturday, March 6. In addition to the relief supplies, the Federation and Insurance Company combined financial resources to quickly donate a total of \$30,000 to the Red Cross and established a Kentucky Flood Relief Fund where additional donations from employees, agents, and county leadership were matched dollar-per-dollar by the Insurance Company.

"I'm never surprised at how willing the KFB family is to help when our neighbors are in need, and it is during these types of trying times we can all count ourselves as neighbors," said KFB President Mark Haney. "I would like to thank all those who contributed to the relief efforts, and I want all those affected by the floods to know we will keep you and your families in our thoughts and prayers."

Farmer helping farmer

Many of those affected by the floods, ice, and snow are farm families, and it didn't take long for the farming community to also rally around those in need by sending supplies to affected areas.

Garrard County Farmer Jonathan Shell had extra hay and didn't hesitate in giving it to the cause.

"We've always had good fortune

in the farm community of people helping out whenever there's a need," he said. "You never know when you're going to need some help, and, as a Christian and someone who believes that it's important to show the love of Christ to other people, my dad and I both believe that this is one way to be able to do it. Helping somebody through the hardships that they've got, I think it's important."

And the needs go far beyond hay for livestock. Fencing materials, including lumber and fencing wire, will be needed to replace all that has been lost.

Retired Director of the Office of Agricultural Policy Warren Beeler said the word he is getting is that hay is important, but infrastructure needs may be greater.

"I spoke to the county extension agent in Lee County, which is one of the hardest hit areas in the state, and he said most fences were taken out and debris is everywhere," Beeler explained. "But one of the worst long-term effects is the foot to three feet of sand on top of the pasture fields."

This situation couldn't come at a worse time as pastures were beginning to grow after the long winter.

"There is no good time for any of it, but right now, we're just on the verge of getting this weather breaking and the grass starting to pop up," said Beeler. "And with that sand on top of the pastures, you won't have any grass. That makes the demand for hay even greater as we go on down the line."

Despite the terrible conditions, Beeler said one thing remains, and that is hope.

"That's just what you do when you live on the farm, and I think in the end, you'll find that we'll get through it, and we'll have stories to tell. Right now, it's just really discouraging, but we live on hope... We live on hope."



Flooded farmland in Franklin County

The Spring Season: What effect will late winter storms have on Kentucky agriculture?

For those who have grown up in Kentucky, the weather can change quickly, and it happens at the most inopportune times. That may well have been the case this last February, as farm families anticipated spring planting on the heels of some of the worst winter weather, including historic flooding, seen here in several years. And it also came as many cattle producers had begun their spring calving season.

The big question now is, what will that mean as farmers look toward the season ahead?

Chad Lee, University of Kentucky (UK) College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment Extension Professor and Director of Grain and Forage Center of Excellence, said the aftermath of the weather events may have some effect on the field work that is done before spring planting.

"If we're applying fertilizer like potassium and phosphorus, it could affect that, and if we're trying to apply lime to adjust pH levels, it can mess that up for us, as well," he said. "But even with all those disruptions, at this point we're still on track to plant on time."

But Lee adds that it isn't the calendar so much that worries him, especially about corn planting, but rather the conditions.

"The conditions are paramount to getting a good corn crop established and getting high yields," he said. "Depending on the year, it's more important to follow those conditions than it is the calendar."

Last year's weather conditions were nearly perfect, helping farmers produce in record numbers. According to information from the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service Kentucky Field Office, corn production in the state is estimated at 254 million bushels, up four percent from the previous year, representing a record high production and the first time corn production in the state has topped the 250 million bushel mark.

Soybean production for Kentucky in 2020 is estimated at 101 million bushels, up 30 percent from 2019, and the second largest crop on record.

As unidealistic as the winter weather was that caused so much destruction in February, the best-case scenario for this spring would be stretches of five to six days of sunny weather in the 60s, coupled with a day or two of a "nice, gentle rain," Lee explained.

"If we had that five days of good working weather followed by a day or two of rain, that would be ideal," he said.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is predicting that the next two months here are going to be a little drier than normal and a little warmer than normal. Lee said as long as we're a little bit drier than normal, that's okay.

While there is no way to stop weather conditions like the ones experienced this past winter, Lee said he thinks this kind of weather really emphasizes the need to have

as much wheat for grain planted and as many cover crops as possible.

While crop planting still looks to be on schedule for the most part, some pastures may take a while to recover with reports of sand covering many areas, especially in eastern counties. That may cause issues for livestock producers over the long-term.

UK Extension Specialist Kenny Burdine said the one-two punch of the late winter weather systems caused several issues for cattle producers.

"We had a combination of freezing rain, snow, sleet, and ice, much of which stayed around for a long time. This impacted pastures, trees, and fences, but also created additional stress on cattle," he said. "Under conditions like that, cattle use more energy and consume more feed. And, calf losses tend to be higher due to the harsh conditions."

Just that weather event alone likely caused cattle losses to some producers. But then the rains came, causing the floods and creating a whole new set of problems.

"With that second round of weather, some of the same issues were experienced, and many producers lost fencing and a significant amount of hay, so it was a brutal four or five weeks," Burdine said.

The long-term effects aren't exactly clear at this point. Burdine said there are currently no definitive numbers on cattle losses, but damaged pastures will take some time to reach a point of normalcy.

"I think it's definitely going to take some time," he said. "A lot of these losses are very significant. Fortunately, many in the industry have stepped up to provide assistance, but it takes a lot of time to recover from losses like this."

Burdine added that it will certainly be weeks to overcome the immediate impacts, but with some of the longer-term effects on things such as fencing, buildings, infrastructure, and hay supply, "Frankly, we're probably talking months or even longer," he said.

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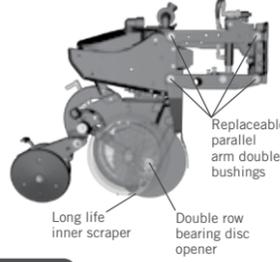


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All photos were taken pre-Covid

Farm Credit Mid-America returning \$200 million in Patronage this year

As a farmer-owned cooperative, Farm Credit Mid-America knows that a little extra capital can make a big difference in every farmer's operation – paying for new equipment, helping with operating costs for the upcoming season, meeting payroll and more.

In March, the Association further demonstrated the power of the cooperative through its Patronage Program, returning \$200 million to Patronage-eligible customers in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee. This brings the total capital returned in the last five years to \$648.5 million.

"Every year, our team members look forward to Patronage Week because it allows us to truly stop and reflect on the power of belonging to a cooperative," says Mark Barker, Senior Vice President Agricultural Lending for Farm Credit Mid-America in Kentucky. "Even though the coronavirus pandemic means we weren't able to hand-deliver Patronage checks, it didn't diminish our commitment to celebrate this time with our customers and continue helping them achieve their dreams for their farms and operations."

Farm Credit Mid-America knows patronage is appreciated, given customer feedback received:

"Thanks to the board of directors. Really helps to know Farm Credit Mid-America supports my business. I will continue to rely on you for my current and future financial needs..."

And, "The patronage check came at a great time. It helped our operation through a period of tight cash flow. I really appreciate [Farm Credit Mid-America for] supporting a strong patronage program without sacrificing their ability to keep competitive on loan rates..."

Returning Patronage is a decision Farm Credit Mid-America's Board of Directors considers and makes each year. It is not a guaranteed payment, but rather a return of earnings paid to Patronage-eligible customers, according to board resolution. Information about Patronage and eligibility may be found by visiting e-farmcredit.com/about/patronage. Patronage is based on each customer's contribution to the net income of the company - specifically a customer's contribution to net interest income and origination fees - in proportion to the Association's total net interest income and origination fees.

In addition to patronage, customer-owner benefits of belonging to the Association include participation in its Nominating Committee, Board of Directors, and annual elections as well as voting on issues that influence operations.

Backed by the strength of more than 80,000 customers and \$28.8 billion in assets owned and managed, Farm Credit Mid-America has provided loans for real estate, operating, equipment, housing and related services, such as crop insurance and vehicle, equipment and building leases for more than 100 years. For additional information, visit <https://e-farmcredit.com>.



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Farm Bureau Prepares for Climate Change Discussions

STRONG ADVOCACY WILL BE KEY IN GETTING THE AG INDUSTRY MESSAGE OUT

As the subject of climate change gathers momentum in Washington, D.C., Farm Bureau has been preparing for it over the last year. In February of 2020, the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) became one of the founding members of the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance (FACA), which is comprised of organizations representing farmers, ranchers, forest owners, the food sector, state governments, and environmental advocates who are working together to define and promote shared climate policy priorities.

Since then, FACA has produced a document listing its 40-plus recommendations that cover six areas of focus including: soil health, livestock and dairy, forests and wood products, energy, research, and food loss and waste. That 50-page report was released last November.

The Alliance has been gaining ground in getting recognition of their efforts. AFBF President Zippy Duvall said he is encouraged that leaders in both the House and Senate are requesting more detailed guidance to achieve FACA's climate goals and recommendations.

"It's important that any new climate policies respect the people who will be impacted the most – farmers and ranchers," he said. "FACA's 40-plus proposals demonstrate that farmers and ranchers must be treated as partners as we work together to build on the impressive advances already achieved toward climate-smart farming."

Duvall recently gave testimony to the House Agriculture Committee during a hearing on climate change and the U.S. agriculture sector. He said U.S. farmers and ranchers have long been at the forefront of climate-smart farming, utilizing scientific solutions, technology, and innovations to raise crops and care for livestock.

"These efforts are designed to protect soil and water, efficiently manage manure, produce clean and renewable energy, capture carbon, and improve sustainability," Duvall said. "Over two generations, we've been able to increase productivity by 287 percent, while using the same resources. To say we're doing more with less is an understatement."

AFBF's Director of Congressional Relations Andrew Walmsley, who also handles biotechnology issues for the organization, said it's important to highlight the things that are already being done agriculturally when it comes to the discussion of climate change.

"When you look at what we've been producing in the last 30 years, we've lost about 30 million acres of crop land, yet our carbon emissions have remained stable in those crop lands, while we have produced 50 percent more per acre," he said. "So, that's why we need to make sure that at least in the climate debate, that we can highlight the tools that have made that possible."

Kentucky Farm Bureau President Mark Haney said as advocacy efforts regarding climate change ramp up, the agriculture industry must show it is part of the solution, not the problem.

"We hear so much information about how detrimental agriculture is to the environment, but we, as farmers, know that simply isn't true," he said. "Through the use of such practices as no-till and minimal-till production, crop biotechnology, which has allowed us to grow more with less dependency on chemicals, cover crop use that enriches our soils, and water resource management, farm families remain the true good stewards of the land. Now we need to develop solid policy as a state organization

that will give us a solid foundation on which to advocate effectively as we get deeper into climate change discussions."

According to information from AFBF, "Congress and the Biden administration have expressed high levels of interest in the previously released FACA recommendations and requested additional guidance on how to achieve the goals laid out in the November report. In response, the Alliance's policy working groups are producing more detailed and specific proposals focusing on the carbon bank concept, tax credits and other incentives, as well as climate research. The policy working groups continue to uphold FACA's three principles: Agricultural and forestry climate policies must be built upon voluntary, incentive-based programs and market-driven opportunities; they must promote resilience and adaptation in rural communities; and they must be science-based."

The entire FACA report can be found here: https://agclimatealliance.com/files/2020/11/faca_recommendations.pdf



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Farm Bureau Footnote*:

While FACA is comprised of members both in and outside the agriculture industry, the Farmers for a Sustainable Future Coalition is comprised of mostly ag-related groups, including AFBF. According to information provided by AFBF, "The coalition will share with elected officials, media, and the public U.S. agriculture's commitment to sustainability and the incredible strides already made to reduce agriculture's environmental footprint. As policy proposals are developed and considered, the goal is for the coalition and its guiding principles to serve as a foundation to ensure the adoption of meaningful and constructive policies and programs affecting agriculture."

For more information, go to <https://www.fb.org/land/fsf>.

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The Ragland family

Candid Conversation

WITH CALEB RAGLAND

KFB Candid Conversation presents a discussion about the topical issues related to KFB priorities, the agricultural industry, and rural communities, in a question and answer format. In this column, LaRue County Farmer Caleb Ragland discusses last year's crops, the new season about to begin, and some of the conservation practices that agriculture uses to help the environment. Caleb serves on the American Soybean Association Board, and the Ragland family was named the 2020 KFB Young Farm Family winner and the 2021 American Farm Bureau Federation Achievement Award winners.

The 2020 crop year saw record corn and soybean yields in Kentucky. What was the experience like on your farm last year?

It was one of the better crops we'd ever had. I don't think it was the very top, but it was probably top on corn and beans. I planted almost all double crop beans, but they all averaged in the fifties, so that was pretty good. I had one about four years ago, we were in the sixties on our double crops, which was just unbelievable. But 2020 was a really good year. And coupled with the bump we had in prices; it was a real solid year financially, too. So that was good to see. We needed one like that.

Did any of that surprise you?

Well, honestly, an uptick in (grain) prices was more surprising than the yields. I felt like, as we got into July last year, we were in a pattern where the rains came at the right time, maybe even a little more than we really needed, but I knew we had the potential to have a really

good crop despite being a little delayed in planting. It seems like we've been in a little different weather pattern where we live than we had several years ago. And we've really had eight pretty good crops in a row. It's been a blessing, and it's really, I think, been favorable with some of the lower commodity prices we've experienced the last several years. At least we've had decent yields to kind of help pull through those declines in the market.

Do you think we've reached a new norm when it comes to crop yield and production?

I tend to think not. With advances in technology and biotechnology helping to get better genetics, and other technologies that help us lay seeds more accurately and control weeds better, I think yields will continue to increase. I feel there's still unlimited potential for yields to increase even on a large-scale production level. And while all of the technologies are great, we can still be reminded as farmers, how small we are. The good Lord still has to send the rain and sunshine, or we're not going to produce much of anything. We still have to have His hand in it. When the weather cooperates, it's really amazing what we can do. Kentucky has got some really good soil top to bottom, and with good management and favorable weather, it's just amazing that we have the ability to grow 70 bushels an acre of soybeans and 200 plus bushels per acre of corn. My great-grandpa would probably pinch himself if he saw that. He farmed with horses hoping to maybe make 30 bushels per acre on corn back when he was alive and farming. So, it's just amazing, in just a couple of generations, how much things have changed.

But with fewer farms, farm families have really had to learn to do more with less. What are your feelings about that?

The Kentucky farmer is just amazing in how we continued to learn how to do more with less. We're using our fertilizers more efficiently. We're leaving the environment cleaner and better than we ever have. We're using great conservation practices. We truly have a great story to tell with being sustainable and doing amazing things to be so efficient with the inputs we use and to really multiply our seed into a great crop. One of my favorite things about being a farmer is just how we can really take pride in doing a good thing for mankind, producing food that's going to feed folks and feed livestock and make fuel. We're doing a good thing, and I feel like we're doing it better than we ever have. And I think we will continue to do that moving forward. The future is bright, in my opinion.

There has been a lot of discussion about climate change and taking care of the environment. What is the message we need to be sending out about agricultural efforts to be environmentally sustainable?

We definitely need to be intentional about telling our story. We have nothing to hide. We are the original conservationists, and the original folks involved with sustainability. We were doing these things before it was the buzz word, before it was popular, and as time has moved onward, we continue to do it better and better. No-till farming was invented in Kentucky, and we are continuing to find ways to be innovative. We need to tell that story because a lot of the public thinks it's far different than what reality actually is. And in reality, those people need us. I also think there are great opportunities for us to partner with our friends in energy and make things better for everybody involved.

With more attention being placed on the good things happening in the world of biotechnology, do you think the time is right to try and communicate about GMOs again?

I think so. We've got to find a way to show it as a positive thing and not something to be scared of. In our daily lives, there's lots of things that we utilize and take advantage of that use bioengineering. But we've got to figure out practical examples and show people the safety of it. We have a long track record of safety. I think it's just the fact that the general public may not fully understand it. We just need to have a more thorough educational process, and the more we can get actual facts out and be proactive with telling a positive story, the more comfort level folks are going to have. But people are going to make their choices and we support choices. We don't want to force anything that's genetically modified down people's throats, so give them the choice, give them the facts. We have nothing to hide anywhere. I think when you do that people are going to make wise choices and do what's best for them.

As a young farmer, you see ups and downs on the farm every day. What would you tell other young farmers, or other people your age who want to come to the farm, about our ag industry today?

I think that there is great opportunity there. I also believe there's also great risks. To me, probably the most difficult barrier has got to be access to capital and getting started. As a row crop and livestock producer, the 15 or so years I've been farming, that has gotten much tougher even in that short period of time. You need access to a lot of capital to get started and operate on the scale you need to do to be competitive.

My advice to somebody with limited resources, is to maybe find a way to partner with a person who's on the back side of their career and provide labor and in turn get experience.

Farmers, for the most part, really love what they do. It's more than an occupation, it's a way of life and it's a love. There's a lot of farmers that don't have the next generation coming on, and we could probably do more to find ways to help facilitate those relationships.

I would also tell them to get educated, not just in ag, but in business. We are businesspeople more than ever. My grandfather was very successful with an eighth-grade education. He had a dairy in Hart County and when he passed away, he owned close to 400 acres and had money in the bank. But those days have passed, we've got to be sharp. We've got to find ways to be innovative, to find niches, and to find competitive advantages so we can succeed. And I think a good business background is a necessity these days, no matter what kind of farming you're doing, whether it's large scale row crop production, operating a CSA, or if you have a farm market. There are a lot of things you can do to add value to products you're producing, but you need to have that business mind in order to make it work.

I would also tell them to be ready to work hard, be ready to learn to do more with less, and to keep your living expenses low. You've got to really want to do it, and have that love and passion for farming because it's not easy. It's not a get rich quick deal, but if you really want to do it, where there's a will there's a way.

What does the coming growing season look like for you?

In talking to my neighbors and folks I know in the industry, I felt like there's a little more optimism than we've had in a while going into spring. I think everybody was in a little bit of a funk in 2020 from COVID and not being able to do a lot of things we're used to. We were still farming, but some of our other things we're normally involved in were changed. But I think there's just a little hint of extra optimism as we get to spring or get a crop planted. "Folks who want the vaccine are starting to get it. Everyone is wanting to get back to normal, get out, and live life. So, I think we have lots to be excited about and I think the future is bright. I'm looking forward to it.

Markets



KENTUCKY'S SMALLER HONEY CROP VALUED 26 PERCENT HIGHER

Kentucky honey production in 2020 totaled 231,000 pounds, down 15,000 pounds, or six percent, from 2019. There were 7000 colonies, up from 6000 in 2019 and 4000 in 2018. Honey harvested per colony averaged 33.0 pounds, down 8.0 pounds from the previous two years. Producer honey stocks on December 15, 2020, were 58,000 pounds, up 14,000 pounds from a year earlier. Average honey price in Kentucky for 2020 rose \$1.59 per pound, or 34 percent, from 2019 to \$6.25 per pound. The much higher price on slightly less production resulted in the value of Kentucky honey production totaling \$1.44 million, up 26 percent from 2019's \$1.15 million; this compares to 2018's \$891,000, and 2017's \$775,000 honey crop.

U.S. honey production in 2020 totaled 147.6 million pounds, down six percent from 2019. There were 2.71 million colonies producing honey in 2020, down four percent from 2019. Yield per colony averaged 54.5 pounds, down 1.3 pounds from 2019 and equal to the 2018 yield. (U.S. yield may be understated due to some colonies being located in multiple states) The average U.S. honey price of \$2.03 compares to \$1.99 in 2019 and \$2.21 per pound in 2018, the current record high. Prices vary widely depending on the honey's color class and method of sale. The total value of U.S. honey production in 2020 was \$299.6, down from 2019's \$309.1 million and much lower than 2018's \$340.4 million. Pollination income for 2020 was \$254 million, down 18 percent from 2019.

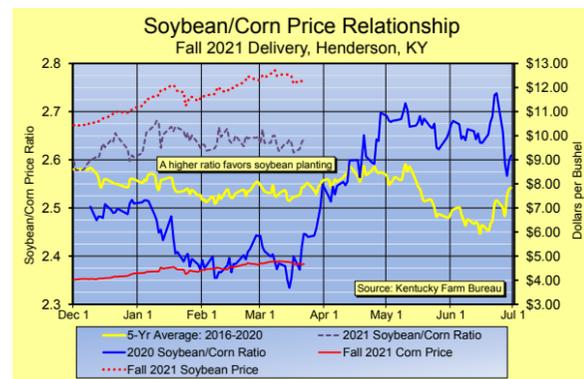
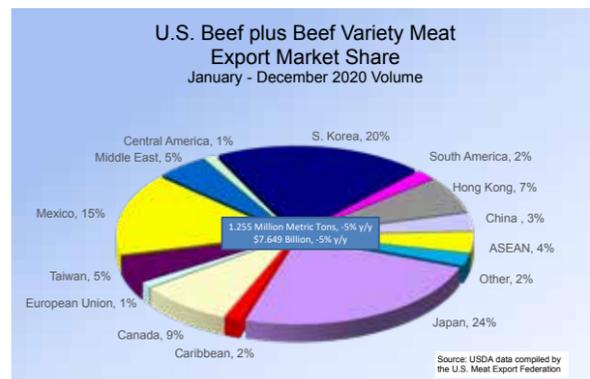
KENTUCKY TOTAL CROP VALUE UP 29 PERCENT IN 2020

The five principal crops produced in Kentucky had an estimated value of \$3.43 billion for 2020, up \$764 million, or 28.6 percent, from the previous year, according to USDA-NASS. The soybean crop had the greatest increase in value – going from \$698 million in 2019 to \$1.164 billion for the 2020 crop – a 67 percent gain. For 2020, soybeans became the "highest valued crop", ahead of corn

(for grain) which is valued at \$1.130 billion, up 18 percent from 2019. The third most valuable crop in Kentucky continued to be All Hay (baled) at \$785.6 million, up 28.5 percent from 2019. This consisted of \$679 million of hay other than alfalfa and \$107 million of alfalfa. In fourth place was All Tobacco at \$237.1 million which is nearly 11 percent lower than the value of the 2019 crop. This consisted of \$146 million of burley, \$56 million of fire-cured and \$35 million of dark air-cured tobacco. Wheat remained in fifth place at \$116.7 million and had the largest percentage drop in value for 2020 at 13 percent.

U.S. BROILER PRODUCTION AND PRICE TO RISE IN 2021

According to USDA's last Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry Outlook Report, egg set and chick placement data indicate fewer birds available for slaughter, likely into April. As a result, the first-half broiler production forecast was lowered 100 million pounds to 22.080 billion pounds. Production for 2021 is forecast to total 44.780 billion pounds, nearly a half-percent higher than 2020 production. Wholesale whole-bird broiler prices (National Composite Weighted Average) averaged 83.0 cents per pound in February, 2.9 percent higher year over year. February is the first month since January 2019 in which the monthly broiler benchmark price was higher year over year. For the last two years, wholesale prices have been weighed down by abundant supplies that outmatched demand, as well as market disruptions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. For the rest of 2021, wholesale prices are expected to remain above year-earlier levels, in large part because 2020 prices were severely depressed due to COVID-19 but also due to improving demand tied to the recovery of the hotel, restaurant, and institution (HRI) sector. The second-quarter price forecast was increased by two cents to 92 cents per pound, or seven cents above the first-quarter price. For all of 2021, the average broiler price is forecast to average 85 cents per pound, an increase of 16 percent over 2020. However, 85 cents will still be lower than the average price for any year during 2017-19.



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County Corner

SNAPSHOTS OF COUNTY FARM BUREAU ACTIVITIES



Boyd County

John McGlone (left) presents a check to Lyndall Harned, Boyd County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources, to help with winter storm recovery efforts.



District 9 Counties

This collection of items was sent by District 9 for East Ky. flood relief efforts. Pictured from left is Eli Mann, the Young Farmer 9 representative on the state committee, Shane Wiseman, state board director, Mary Jayne Cannon, State Women's Chair, and Alex Barnett, state board director.



District 10 Counties

District 10 conducted a drive for flood relief efforts and "filled a Ford." In addition to the supplies shown, they also received many monetary contributions.



Carter County

Carter County Women's Committee Chair Judy McGlone presented a donation to the Linemen and Tree Removal Program for disaster relief in Carter County due to the ice and snowstorms that hit the county in February.



Clark County

Clark County Farm Bureau provided lunch & water for the volunteers & families affected by the recent KY river flooding. Several families lost their belongings and homes due to the flooding on the KY River. Pictured in the group photo are Clark County Agent, Lauren Frazer, and her family & Clark Co. CSR, Katie Mink. Not pictured was Brooks Harrison, a Field Support Representative, who was also volunteering.



Floyd County

Floyd County Farm Bureau donated money to the local Beekeepers Association. Pictured from left: Michael Hackworth, Vice President of Floyd County Beekeepers Association and Floyd County Farm Bureau Board Member; Martha Davis, President of Floyd County Beekeepers Association; Saul Akers, President of Floyd County Farm Bureau; and Brian Pugh, Agency Manager of Floyd County Farm Bureau.



Muhlenberg County

Muhlenberg County Farm Bureau was honored to present a donation to the Hope 2 All Food Pantry for \$500. The money was used to purchase an insulated door that was needed to complete the construction of a new cooler to store refrigerated items. Pictured is Bro. Scott Casebier, director of the pantry; and Joe Kordes, Muhlenberg County Farm Bureau Vice President.



Muhlenberg County

Muhlenberg County Farm Bureau donated \$1,500 to the school district to be used toward the purchase of plexiglass shields. The shields will be utilized in the cafeterias and other locations to create safe spaces for students to socialize during breakfast and lunch. Pictured from left to right are July Pendley, Director of Student Support Services; Robby Davis, Superintendent; and Joe Kordes, Muhlenberg County Farm Bureau Vice President.



Lincoln County

Thelma Blair, women's chair for Lincoln County Farm Bureau, presented the check to fund the Tower Garden Project to the principal at Crab Orchard Elementary, Justin Abbott, and Emily Manier, teacher at Crab Orchard Elementary. Mrs. Manier attended a Regional Teacher Workshop and learned about the project.

Words of Encouragement

When the winter season enters its sleep for another year,
 I will turn to the soil to plant once again.
 Each seed embedded into the earth with care
 and sprinkled with the hope that it will be bountiful.
 I will be the caretaker for this crop and offer the prayers of gratitude
 for reaching another season to grow and harvest.
 I will labor all hours of the day to ensure success.
 May the rains be gentle and plentiful enough.
 May the warmth be adequate and nourishing.
 May my hands be strong to ward off any dangers.
 May my eyes be sharp and ever watchful over this crop as it grows.
 May my heart be sincere in knowing that what I do is right
 And pleasing to the good Lord above.
 For it is not for me I do these things but for the good of all who may enjoy the fruits of my labor.
 That is what I have been called to do now and until this season has passed
 and the winter awakens once more.





Generation Bridge Core Leadership Committee

Generation Bridge Brings New Leadership Opportunities to Specific Member Group

BRAINCHILD OF VISION 100 COMMITTEE SETS HISTORIC PRECEDENCE WITH NEW PROGRAM

As Kentucky Farm Bureau's Centennial Year came to a close in 2019, the Vision 100 Committee was created at the direction of KFB President Mark Haney. This committee, comprised of KFB volunteer leaders from the local level, as well as staff from both the Federation and the Insurance Company, was convened to help guide strategic planning for the future of the entire organization.

The committee immediately went to work, and through its efforts formed a new program as one of its first initiatives, focused on members between the ages of 36 and 49. Generation Bridge, as it is known, will help this specific demographic stay engaged in Farm Bureau through leadership and advocacy training and opportunities.

The new program is comprised of a core leadership committee established with one representative selected from each district through an application process. Upon the first official meeting of this leadership team in January, KFB Second Vice President Sharon Furches, who co-chairs Vision 100, called it a historic day for the organization.

"It's historic because it's a new

program that we've never had before, targeting an entirely new group of leaders," she said. "We literally looked around at other state Farm Bureaus to see if we could find anything like we thought we wanted, and we could not. So, this is somewhat of a one-of-a-kind program that will enable this specific group of members to be involved to help lead this organization into a new century of existence."

It hasn't taken long for the new program to gain attention not only within the state but at the national level, as well. During his recent trip to Kentucky, American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall called Generation Bridge "very exciting."

Furches said it's very validating to hear such accolades from Duvall, but the support KFB leadership has shown is a testament to how much faith they have in this new venture.

"Just the fact that we have this kind of support in our own organization, both financially and the dedication of resources, I've certainly felt like I could give any amount of time that I needed to, to the organization of Vision 100 and now Generation Bridge, as well," she said. "That is such a great feeling when you know

leadership is behind this, especially a new endeavor of this sort, and the Generation Bridge core leadership group knows our executive committee completely has their backs as we run with this new program."

The executive team met with the new group during their inaugural meeting offering that support and encouragement for the important work they are about to embark upon.

"We are at a time in this organization when it is as important as ever to keep our members involved, informed, and moving forward to provide the future leadership we will need as we continue into our second century," said Haney. "But Generation Bridge will be much more than that. It will help those members involved to become better community leaders, something that will benefit the entire Commonwealth."

Director of National Affairs Kyle Kelly is serving as the staff lead for Generation Bridge. He said being a part of such an initiative is one of the most important things he has done in his time at Farm Bureau and in community service.

"This program is so unique and so original that we have the opportunity to be a model for other state Farm

Bureaus to emulate," he said. "The sky is the limit for the kinds of achievements this group will make in the future for this organization and for our agricultural industry."

Furches said her hope is that Generation Bridge will become prevalent in every county in much the same way as the Young Farmer Program and the county Women's Committees.

"This first year, this committee will really focus on getting the word out across the states as members attend the district meetings and they will speak on behalf of the new program, and in a sense, recruit," she said. "Eventually we would love to have a Generation Bridge committee in every county, which would then feed the state program for KFB."

Furches emphasized that not every county group will be alike, but their mission will be the same as they recruit in their respective areas and work toward their advocacy goals.

"We are already focusing on having some legislative conversations with experienced lawmakers who are active in the General Assembly right now," she said.

During the first meeting of Generation Bridge's core leadership group, three members were chosen to serve as an officer team including Amanda Gajdzik of Shelby County as

chair, Tammy White of Union County, the vice chair, and Sarah Beth Guffey from Clinton County as secretary.

Messages from the officer team

Amanda Gajdzik: *I think one of the most important aspects of Generation Bridge is to fill a gap and truly encourage those 36-49 to stay engaged in Farm Bureau while developing their leadership abilities, enhancing their advocacy for our industry, and improving their operations. I think Generation Bridge will only make KFB stronger as a whole. If we can better support those that are entering the prime of their operations, they can be stronger leaders for their communities, our industry, and our organization.*

Tammy White: *I feel the most important aspect of Generation Bridge is providing meaningful opportunities within the Farm Bureau organization for the individuals outside of the young farmer and women's programs to participate and advocate for agriculture. Generation Bridge will provide Kentucky Farm Bureau with the next generation of leaders. The Bridge program can help guide and prepare individuals for leadership positions, not just within Farm Bureau, but also within our own*

communities. Being a strong advocate for agriculture is important at the federal and state level, but it is equally important at the local level, as well.

Sarah Beth Guffey: *I believe the most important aspect of Generation Bridge is connecting members of the agricultural community with leadership and educational opportunities. The membership that represents the Generation Bridge demographic are farmers and members of the agricultural community who are established in their farming operations and careers. They've seen what works and what doesn't. Having a means to communicate those experiences with other producers is important. It's my hope that this program gives them that avenue to communicate, learn, and build relationships with other like-minded individuals. While the program is in its first year, and we have many hopes for it, I believe that its lasting effect is in its name - a bridge for the next generation of Farm Bureau members. I hope it helps foster ideas, inspire leadership, and continue to help Farm Bureau advocate of behalf of Kentucky agriculture.*



From left: Amanda Gajdzik, Tammy White, and Sarah Beth Guffey



Exhibitors of all ages take a turn in the showing during the KFB Beef Expo.

KFB Beef Expo 2021

CATTLE PRODUCERS FROM A DOZEN STATES MAKE THEIR WAY TO THIS YEAR'S EXPO EVENT

With so many events having been cancelled over the last year, it came as a relief to cattle producers in the state and across the region that the Kentucky Farm Bureau Beef Expo would take place. This year's Expo marked the 35th year for the event, which has become one of the premiere beef cattle show/sales in this part of the country.

Total sales for this year's Expo were \$773,590, a decrease of \$215,040 compared to last year's sales, according to information from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, which is also a sponsor of the Beef Expo. Although total sales were down, the average sale increased by \$142 to \$2,191 per lot.

Twelve states and 11 breeds were represented, and, in the junior show, 525 cattle passed through the show ring, including 267 from Kentucky.

KFB President Mark Haney said with cattle coming from as far away as Iowa, the KFB Beef Expo has a reputation of having quality animals at a premiere event that reaches far beyond the boundaries of the state.

"We are always pleased with the superior cattle that are shown, bought, and sold at the Expo each year," he said. "But I am most proud of the fact that the majority of these cattle are bred right here in Kentucky; an indication of how strong our cattle industry is in the Commonwealth and the support shown to our cattle producers."

For the most up-to-date information on this year's show please visit, kybeefexpo.com.



KFB President Mark Haney, left, discusses the event with Ky. Ag Commissioner Dr. Ryan Quarles.



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Down the Backroads

A TRIBUTE TO MACARTHUR

By Tim Thornberry

So often, I share personal recollections with you in this column, and I appreciate the kindness you have shown me in response to those tales over the years. I would like to offer you another personal story, but this one hurts a bit to tell.

In case you didn't know this about me already, my family is in the Saddlebred horse business. I call it a business, but it is really a "small potatoes" operation. We periodically buy, show, and sell horses, and it has become a passion for us, particularly for my wife and youngest son. They are the brains of the operation. I just drive the truck.

But I love it, mostly because they love it. And we do it with great love for the animals. That often makes it hard to part ways with one, especially the ones we really get attached to.

But that's the business we're in. We never buy a horse that we intend to keep. Well, almost never. From time to time, you find that one you know you'll keep forever. For us, it was a hackney pony named MacArthur, but we called him Mac, or the Mac Attack or the Macinator, or a few other names I can't mention here. He was loveable, but a bit on the ornery side.

He actually belonged to my son who showed him under harness. They were a perfect match for each other, and we witnessed a great relationship build between the two during their show years together.

But, as is the case with all show horses, there comes a time to retire, and we gave Mac a great sendoff at our local county fair for his last trip around the show ring. It was a sad day in many ways, but we knew he was ready for this next step in life.

And it didn't take him long to get used to it. He still had that pony prance as he roamed the pasture that he now called home. But even in retirement, the years slowly caught up with him, and he gradually slowed his walk and became a little less ornery.

Sooner than we had wanted or expected, the day came when we realized something was going terribly wrong. Old age and the issues that come with it at this stage in

life began taking its toll.

The telltale sign was he didn't want to eat, and Mac had always loved to eat. The local equine veterinarian was called to check on him, and he gave us the news we did not want to hear but knew was coming. Mac had reached the end of his life here with us.

In order to let my son and Mac have a final moment together, we all left the barn to give them some privacy. As I exited, I saw my son put his arms around that pony's neck as Mac laid his head on my son's shoulder. I knew it was a difficult conversation the two were having as they said their last goodbyes.

I share that sad story to tell you this: The relationships between farm folks and their animals are true bonds of love and lifetime commitments of caring, no matter if it is a horse or some other type of livestock. For those involved in any kind of animal agriculture, you understand what I'm talking about.

While there will be other horses to love and care for, we will likely never encounter another MacArthur, as we travel down the backroads.



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Anthem Enhanced Choice offers:

- Coverage for up to 36 months
- Medically underwritten rates
- Blue Access network for coverage outside of KY
- Medical plans with \$40 copays, \$10 prescription drug coverage, and deductibles as low as \$1,500
- Members can enroll any time of the year

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU



INSURANCE



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Kentucky Farm Bureau is an authorized independent agent in Kentucky for Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of Anthem Health Plans of Kentucky, Inc. An independent license of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. This coverage is not required to comply with certain federal market requirements for health insurance, principally those contained in the Affordable Care Act. Be sure to check your policy carefully to make sure you are aware of any exclusions or limitations regarding coverage of preexisting conditions or health benefits (such as hospitalization, emergency services, maternity care, preventive care, prescription drugs, and mental health and substance use disorder services). Your policy might also have lifetime and/or annual dollar limits on health benefits. If this coverage expires or you lose eligibility for this coverage, you might have to wait until an open enrollment period to get other health insurance coverage.