

Kentucky

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**Farm Bureau Prepares for
Climate Change Discussions**

**Record Corn and
Soybean Yields
Highlight 2020
Growing Season**

**Generation
Bridge Brings
New Leadership
Opportunities**

March 2021



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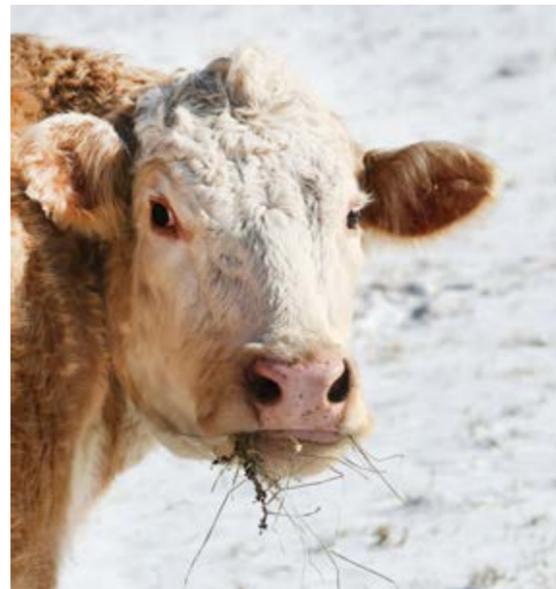
Kentucky Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization dedicated to serving our membership family and their communities. As the Voice of Agriculture, we identify problems, develop solutions, promote economic success, and enhance the quality of life for all

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Lunch time on a winter's day.

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President's Column

The 2021 KFB Presidents and Vice Presidents Conference was the first in-person gathering we have experienced as an organization in nearly a year. And to say it was a great day when we all first met is an understatement.

While we followed all required COVID-19 protocol to ensure safety, just having those volunteer leaders present was so gratifying to me.

Each year during this meeting, we try to relay valuable information to these county leaders that will be a benefit to them as they go back to their communities.

The strength of our organization lies within those individual counties that collectively make up the strongest ag advocacy organization in this state, and one of the biggest in the country.

With that said, having a handle on the issues that affect our agriculture industry and rural communities is critical to our mission. Having policy to stand on fortifies our message. It allows us to have a seat at the table when these issues are discussed at all levels of government.

Because of that importance, I conveyed to this gathering that we have some work to do. As a new administration gets settled in Washington, we are already seeing some issues to address. It's not that we don't have a handle on these concerns or have a say in the game, but there are some areas where our policy is vague or absent altogether concerning some of the ag-related matters we are about to face.

An example of that are the discussions taking place over climate change and some of the ideas that are being touted to address this issue. We simply need more supporting policy to fully advocate from an agricultural standpoint, and it starts with discussing it with each other.

That is how we build policy at Farm Bureau. We bring forth ideas of how we will support our industry, our rural communities, and the members who will be affected by any governmental actions that might come our way, whether it's about climate change or any other matter.

In doing so, having clear and concise policy will benefit our advocacy efforts in a major way.

I don't have to remind you that, when it comes to climate change discussions, we have heard for years how much damage the ag industry does to the environment. But we all know that isn't true. In fact, the agriculture industry already plays a major role in controlling our carbon footprint on the environment through such practices as no-till and minimal-till production, crop biotechnology, the use of cover crops, and water resource management. Farm families remain the true good stewards of the land.

We must have our voices heard on this and other topics that are related to our farms and rural communities. Having policy that leaves no doubt of where we stand gives us a foot up when making our case.

As we move forward through the coming weeks and months, we will keep you informed of these types of issues, and as we continue our policy development efforts, let's keep in mind what areas we need to shore up, and what we need to create altogether. Our organization and industry will be better for it.



Mark Haney, President
Kentucky Farm Bureau





Service means going the extra mile. Even if it's a country mile.

Service is the foundation of everything we do at Kentucky Farm Bureau. Whether it's sponsoring a Little League baseball team, helping legislative leaders meet the needs of Kentucky farmers, serving as the voice of Kentucky agriculture or helping policy holders recover from a loss, we are committed to serving Kentuckians. Why Farm Bureau? Because together, we will make Kentucky a better place to live and work.



KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU
EST. 1919

Comment Column

Having lived and worked on the family farm all of my life, there are a couple of things I am sure of. First, I know there is no place I would rather be than on our farm and no place I would have rather raised my family.

The second thing is, I realize that most people don't live on a farm. And many of them don't know all we do to ensure our food supply remains the most abundant, safest, and affordable food supply of any country in the world.

Because of that, as a farmer, much of what I do involves advocacy. I find myself helping my urban neighbors understand the art of raising a crop and how we care for our animals.

I explain to them how farm families serve as the original caretakers of the land to ensure generation after generation has fertile soil to sustain their farms and how very important our natural resources are to the existence of farms everywhere.

I tell them that broadband connectivity is essential in today's world of advanced technology to run equipment, stay connected to world markets, and operate our on-farm markets.

I help them understand that at certain times of the year, they will encounter farm equipment traveling down their rural roads, and a little patience and a friendly wave is helpful during these times.

I talk about the efforts we make at Kentucky Farm Bureau to work with our local, state, and national government leaders to support legislation and regulations that are beneficial to agriculture, not just for the sake of the farmer, but for all those who eat.

I describe how international trade affects our industry and how important export dollars are to ag operations large and small.

I tell them how immigration and farm labor reform are connected to the farm since we depend greatly on the system to supply us with the workers we need to produce our crops.

I explain the history of the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund and how it has helped this state become one of the most agriculturally diverse states in the country, something that has helped keep countless farm families on the farm.

I help them understand that so much of the information they read about agriculture, especially on social media, is often misleading and produced by those misinformed about the real truths of our industry.

And finally, I encourage them to take the time to connect with those who raise their food to learn the real facts about how their food is grown.

We are blessed to live in a state where we have so much support for the agriculture industry. We have great commodity groups and government agencies who collaborate daily with our organization. We have legislative members who are also willing to work together with Kentucky Farm Bureau to make sure the ag industry in this state remains sustainable. When we work together, we can achieve so much more.

I hope you all take the time to meet your local farmer, talk to him or her about the wonderful food they raise, and offer a "thank you" to them for all they do to provide the food, fuel, and fiber we all need.



Sharon Furches, Second Vice President
Kentucky Farm Bureau





Bringing Attention to the Value of Pollinators

THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN JUST HONEY BEES

As thoughts of spring begin to surface, especially in the agricultural world among countless farm families, they get excited to plant a new crop or see fruit trees blossom fill the air across the Commonwealth.

But those living and working on the farm aren't the only ones preparing for spring. In the world of pollinators, they too, are getting ready to do their jobs, one that so many crops depend on.

Tammy Horn Potter, Kentucky Department of Agriculture's (KDA) State Apiarist, says while the honey bee is the first that comes to mind when thinking about pollinators, in the bee world alone, there are many different species that contribute in many different ways.

"There are 20,000 species of bees around the world, and North America has approximately 4,000 of them, many of which can be seen in your backyards such as bumble bees," she said. "You may also see the very first of the spring bees that we call "miner bees," which are solitary, but burrow in underground tunnels and create "tiny volcanoes" on bare soil. Since they are solitary, they are quite docile, have a short season, and not aggressive. They're one of the first signs of spring."

Another common bee to be found in this region is called a Blue Orchard or Mason bee, which tend to pollinate apple, cherry, and peach trees. Although these bees are solitary, the females will lay their eggs in tubes and then "caulk" the entrances with a mud that they create (hence, mason). These bees are excellent pollinators for strawberries, added Potter.

"Many people aren't fond of the sweat bee because they have negative interactions with it, but it too is a common pollinator," she said.

Bees aren't the only pollinators around. Hummingbirds and some butterfly species including Monarchs are also included.

Pollinators are not just pretty to look at, their services mean big bucks to the economy. According to information from Bayer, between \$235 and \$577 billion worth of annual global food production relies on their contribution. Information provided by the American Farm Bureau Federation notes that, economically, honey bees contribute more than an estimated \$15 billion to the agricultural economy with 90 or more U.S. crops dependent on insect pollination.

But in order to be most efficient in growing crops requiring pollination, there is a lot to learn about what pollinators are best for which crops.

Alfalfa, for instance, is a crop that is pollinated much better by the Alfalfa Leaf Cutter Bee, emphasized Potter. However, honey bees can also be used because these bees are more versatile.

Kentucky Department of
Agriculture's State Apiarist,
Tammy Horn Potter, sampled
honey bees for the 2020 USDA
Honey Bee Health Survey.
Photo submitted.

"Honey bees are what we call 'generalist pollinators,' and they will get nectar and pollen from a wide variety of flowers," Potter said. "But a lot of the native bees, what you may consider to be unmanaged bees, are more specialized and have adapted to specific flowers and floral strategies, such as color, odor, and petal structure."

This is certainly the case with bumble bees, which are great for blueberries. Potter said the assumption by many beekeepers is that honey bee hives can be placed next to blueberry bushes and all of the pollination needs would be met, but that couldn't be further from the truth because the bumble bees are actually better pollinators for blueberries.

Matching the right pollinator with the right crop can get to be a little complicated, according to Potter. Therefore, the educational component of beekeeping and pollinator protection is critical in making good decisions for crops and the pollinators, themselves.

Luckily there are many resources to turn to in this state including KDA, the Kentucky State Beekeepers Association and University of Kentucky (UK) College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Extension in addition all the higher education entities as well as local beekeeping organizations.

One of the things that KDA has done is to create an electronic app, Pollinator Protection App, that allows farmers who may be using a chemical on a crop or in an orchard to register the area that will be sprayed, along with the time and day that it will be sprayed, and the product that will be used. This information is then sent to any beekeeper that is within a five-mile vicinity via a text or an email, if the beekeeper has registered his or her apiaries. The service is free, anonymous, and typically takes about five minutes to create an account. The farmers can be compliant with federal label laws, and can print off the notification of when the application was scheduled.

"KDA created the app in 2017, and every year more and more people use it as they learn about it," Potter said. "We've been trying to get the word out because, I think many people in Kentucky, farmers especially, know that pollinators are in peril, and they don't want to do something that would cause those numbers to decrease any further, but they may not always know that their neighbors around the corner have decided to try beekeeping for the first time."

With the interest in beekeeping increasing every year, the app can help provide valuable information to agriculture producers across the state. Kentucky is also home to several beekeeping schools made possible through Cooperative Extension and Kentucky State University's Beginning Farmer series to assist new and experienced beekeepers in a number of areas related to their hives.

Potter, who maintains her husband's apiaries on two family farms, said many simple things can be done to help maintain the health of pollinators of all kinds especially as it relates to chemical applications.

"We have an orchard on one of our farms and wait until

5:00 or 6:00 at night so that we're not applying anything when insects are flying," she said. "Another thing that farmers can do is really simple, they can go out 48 hours before they apply a product and mow all of the attractive flowers that could be in bloom, so that those flowers are not attractive to insects. That action clears the area of attractive forage for when you do apply that product."

There are other practices that have proven to be beneficial to the environment, as a whole, when it comes to production agriculture, including the technology that helped create GMO crops, no-till production measures, and the use of cover crops to help maintain soil health in a very natural way, all of which contribute to less use of chemicals and better care of the soil and the environment.

Potter also recognizes the benefits of other technologies that help to protect pollinators.

"I think the technology in agriculture gets more specialized every year. A great example of that is air blast sprayers, which better target areas of application and lessen the possibility of any spray-product drift," she said.

Still, communication and education seem to be the most effective and cheapest tools in promoting and protecting pollinators of all species in all places.

Maintaining hives can provide many rewards but also many challenges, so Potter warns that beekeeping may not be something producers, who depend on pollinators, need to take up on their own. She said in some cases, those producers (organic farms) may allow beekeepers to leave their hives on the property on more of a permanent basis. But there are some commercial beekeepers in the state that move their hives to areas where needed, such as pumpkin or watermelon areas.

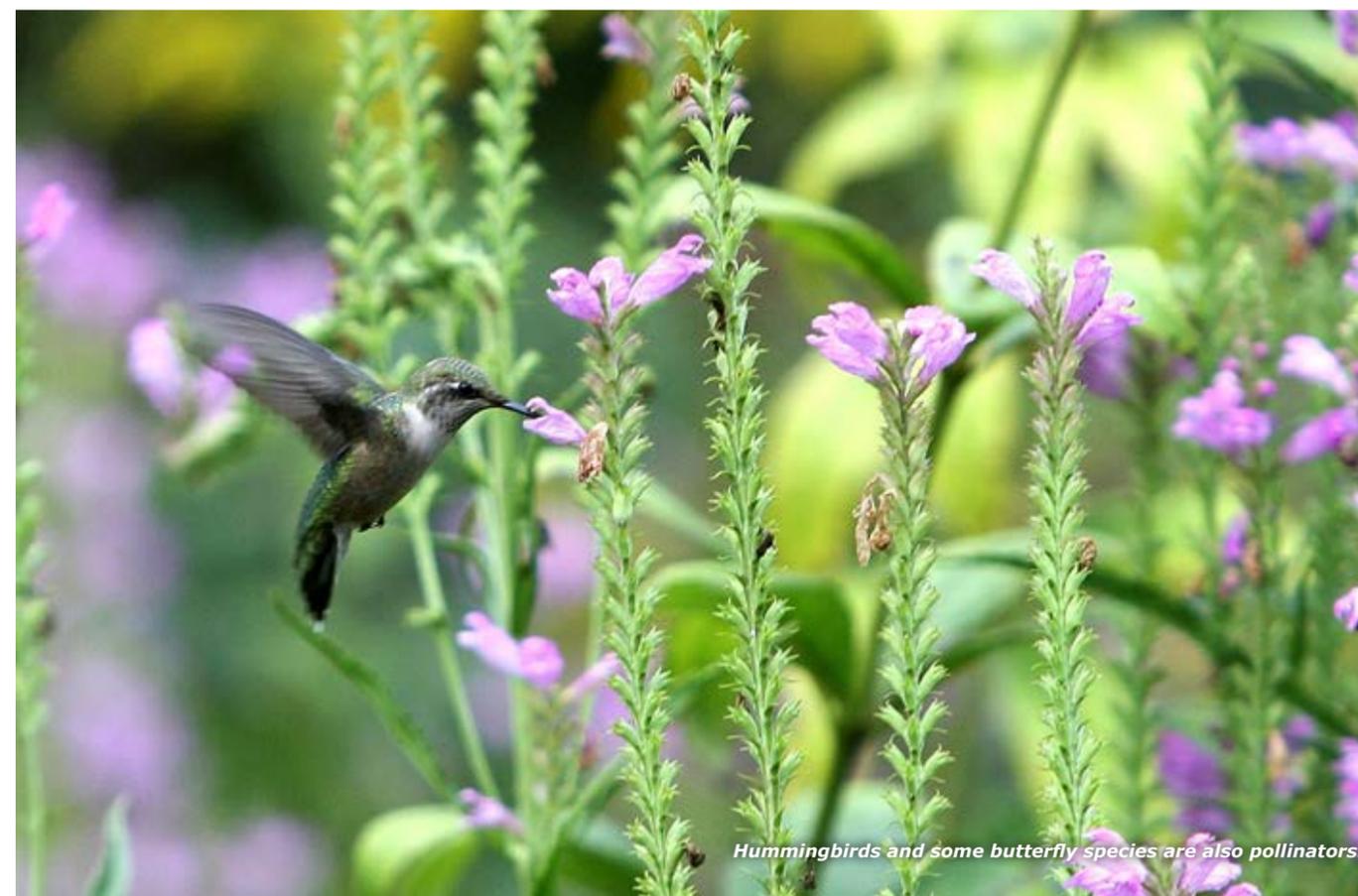
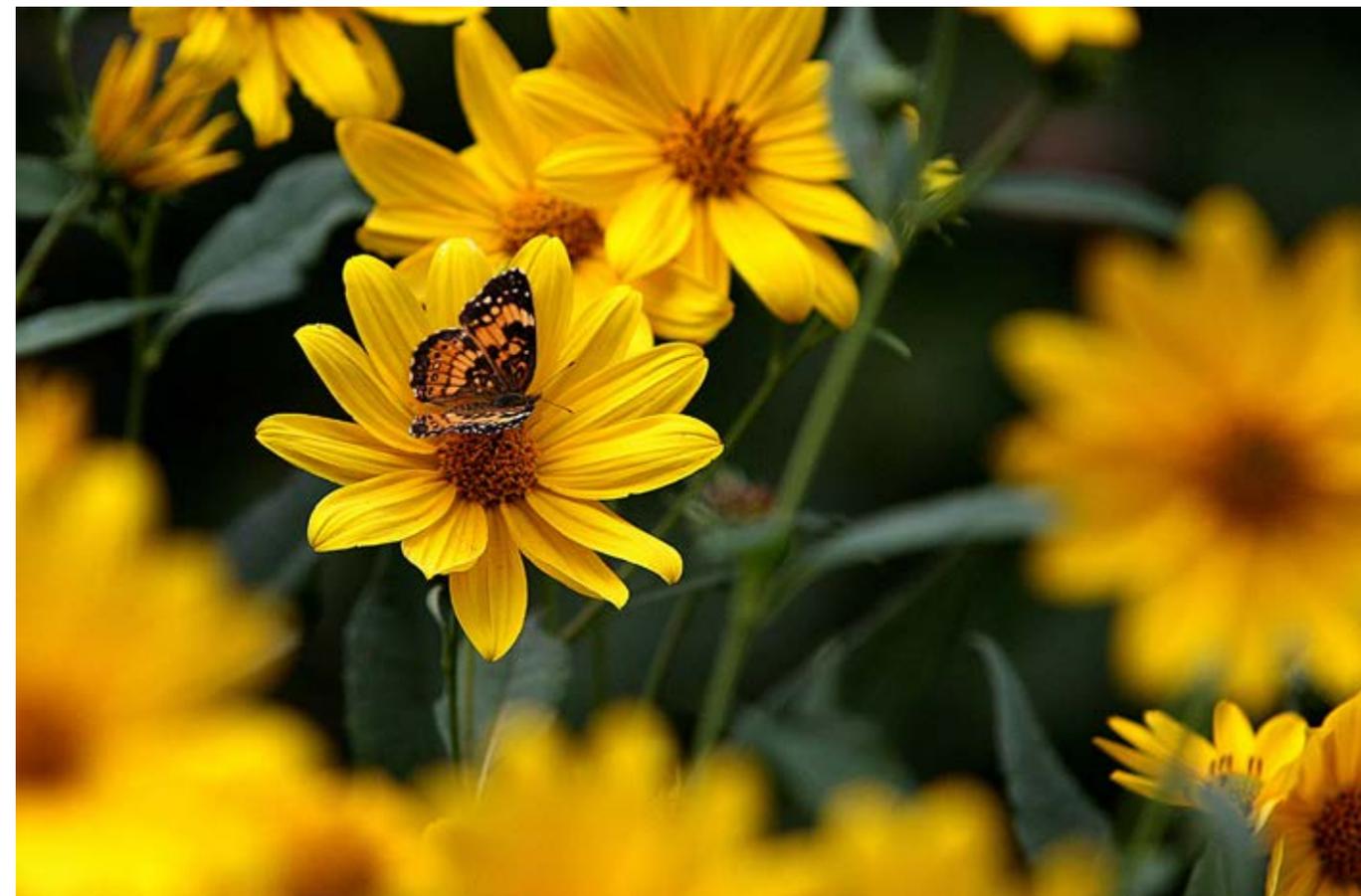
Having a relationship with these types of experienced beekeepers is often the best route to go for producers. But for those who want to get into the pollinator business, Potter emphasized it is not a quick study.

"I try to tell people to not spend a dime on bees or equipment until you have spent an entire year going to local bee association meetings, getting a subscription to a trade journal, such as American Bee Journal, or Bee Culture, and spending a entire calendar year learning the biology of a beehive," Potter said. "Spend your money and time on education. Then, once you've done that, if you're still interested, that's when you can purchase your equipment, your protective clothing and your bees."

KDA is currently in the midst of its annual Kentucky Pollinator Stakeholders Pollinator Habitat Poster Contest for youth. The contest is designed to educate the public on the benefits of pollinators and encourage behaviors that promote pollinator habitats across Kentucky.

"In agriculture, we know the importance of pollinators," Commissioner Quarles said. "This contest will allow children from across the Commonwealth to spread that message in the most colorful, vibrant and artistic ways imaginable."

The theme of this year's contest is "Pollinators and Their Floral Hosts in Kentucky," and focuses on the state's wide variety of flowers and plants and the pollinators that visit them. Youth ages 5-18 are invited to participate.



Hummingbirds and some butterfly species are also pollinators.



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 that 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 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 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."

During the recent Kentucky Farm Bureau Presidents and Vice Presidents Conference, American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) President Zippy Duvall discussed what agriculture may be facing the as it relates to climate change discussions taking place at the national level, in an interview for Agri-Pulse Communication's Open Mic program.

When asked if any proposals related to policy on climate and climate smart policy might be good for agriculture or may lead to negative attacks on the industry, Duvall said he hopes it won't be attacks.

"Our effort is to make sure that whatever policies and requirements come through, that they not be mandates, that they be voluntary and our farmers can choose whether or not they want to participate in those programs, then, maybe expand some of the old programs that we already are familiar with," he said.

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

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>.



2021 KFB Presidents and Vice Presidents Conference

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NEARLY A YEAR, AN IN-PERSON CONFERENCE BRINGS LOCAL LEADERS TOGETHER FOR THIS ANNUAL EVENT

KFB President Mark Haney

For nearly a year, Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB), like most other organizations, has held events virtually in order to adhere to COVID-19 regulations. And while this has enabled KFB to carry on with its commitment to local Farm Bureaus, it has presented its own set of challenges.

"While we are very thankful for the virtual technology we have that has allowed this organization to move forward as we have endured the pandemic, nothing beats meeting in-person to convey information and hear from the local leaders who are so important to our success," said KFB President Mark Haney.

Following state guidelines for mask wearing and social distancing, this year's meeting brought county leaders together to hear from a host of speakers including American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall, who also addressed new county presidents.

He talked to local leaders about their importance to Farm Bureau in being strong advocates for agriculture and being leaders in the communities in which they live.

"The strength of this organization lies within the counties that you represent. And I hope that you'll make sure that your county will be active at all levels," he said. "You can help us by talking to our consumers. You can help us by being the best friend your community has. Continue your good work and look for different ways, new and exciting ways, to be involved."

In his address to the conference, Haney talked about the importance of clear, concise policy to address issues as they become prevalent.

"Our policy is what we stand on as an organization, and it enables us to be stronger advocates as it relates to that policy," he said. "But there are issues that are on the horizon being discussed at both state and national levels that we don't have clear policy on, including the discussions around climate change. When the time comes for us to introduce new policy, we must take into consideration any issues in which we need more clarity in our policy. It will make us stronger advocates for our

industry and a better Farm Bureau. Now is the time to be bold."

Haney also thanked the local leaders for their continued efforts to be involved in advocacy issues and all levels.

"Our county Farm Bureaus serve as the foundation of KFB, and the work you do each and every day dictates the issues we will address as the state organization," he said. "Your involvement is more critical now than ever and I appreciate all you do to make your communities a better place and to keep Farm Bureau relevant throughout the Commonwealth."

In other conference activities, attendees heard from Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles, as well as several KFB leaders on a variety of subjects and updates, including an insurance update from KFB Insurance Executive Vice President and CEO John Sparrow, a legislative update from the KFB Public Affairs, a discussion about KFB's newest initiative Generation Bridge, and county breakout sessions.

Casey County Farm Bureau President and State Director Tim Goodlett said the conference is beneficial in that it provides valuable information to county leaders as they continue to advocate for their local communities.

"I think it is important to network with other county leaders, and we always get a chance to do that at this conference," he said. "I like to hear others' experiences and successes, and I gain valuable insight by discussing challenging issues and brainstorming ideas together. These experiences combined with support from my friends and colleagues can enable all of us to be more effective in our own counties."

Goodlett also said he benefits from the different sessions presented at the conference.

"They offer crucial information on state and national issues that we, as leaders, need to know," he said. "We can, in turn, discuss them more effectively at the local level and better guide our county so that our endeavors can help advance state goals."



KFB Insurance Executive Vice President and CEO John Sparrow



KFB 2nd Vice President Sharon Furches



KFB 1st Vice President Eddie Melton



KFB Federation Executive Vice President Drew Graham

District Meetings Play an Important Advocacy Role in KFB

As Kentucky Farm Bureau's 1st Vice President, I have had the opportunity to attend many district meetings throughout the years. And each time, I am reminded just how important these gatherings are in helping to fulfill our mission as the Voice of Kentucky Agriculture.

District meetings play an essential role as KFB leadership shares with our members ways to implement Farm Bureau policy. During these meetings, members learn how best to communicate with legislators, how to respond when a legislator disagrees with our position, and how we can show our appreciation to legislators who support Kentucky Farm Bureau policy.

In addition, our staff provides updates on key legislative initiatives in Frankfort and Washington D.C. With the increased number of special interest groups in both our state and nation's capitals, and with over 20 new members of the Kentucky General Assembly, it is even more vital that we establish new, and enhance existing relationships with our legislators to inform them on agricultural issues.

It's more important now than ever before to be involved in KFB, and these meetings provide a great opportunity to learn more and be active in our organization.

Eddie Melton, 1st Vice President
Kentucky Farm Bureau

District	Date	Time	Meeting Location
1	Thursday, March 11	7:00 p.m. (CT)	Knights of Columbus Hall, 6725 US-45 S, Paducah, KY
2	Tuesday, March 2	6:00 p.m. (CT)	Ballard Convention Center, 605 E Arch St., Madisonville, KY
3	Thursday, March 11	6:00 p.m. (CT)	Breckinridge County Extension Office, 1377 S Hwy. 261, Hardinsburg, KY
4	Monday, March 22	6:30 p.m. (CT)	Cave City Convention Center, 502 Mammoth Cave St., Cave City, KY
5	Tuesday, March 9	7:00 p.m.	Washington County Farm Bureau Office, 211 Progress Ave., Springfield, KY
6	Tuesday, March 16	7:00 p.m.	Morgan Community Center, 147 Victory Ave., Bedford, KY
7	Tuesday, March 23	7:00 p.m. (ET)	Central Kentucky Ag-Expo Center, Pork Producer Building, 678 S. Wallace Wilkerson Blvd., Liberty, KY
8	Monday, March 22	7:00 p.m.	Madison County Fairgrounds, 3237 Old Irvine Rd., Richmond, KY
9	Monday, March 15	6:30 p.m.	Harrison County Fairgrounds, McCauley Building, 2849 US Hwy. 27 S, Cynthiana, KY
10	Thursday, March 11	6:30 p.m.	El Hasa Shriners, 13450 State Route 180, Ashland, KY
11	Monday, March 29	6:00 p.m.	Hindman Settlement School, 51 Center St., Hindman, KY

Are You Prepared for Spring Storm Season?

THE HIGHEST RISK OF SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS AND TORNADOES IN KENTUCKY TYPICALLY OCCURS FROM MARCH TO JUNE.



Photo courtesy of Adobe Stock

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

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

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

1. HAVE A PLAN

If disaster strikes, will your family be on the same page? The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends planning how you will connect to one another in the event of an emergency. Make sure everyone knows at least two ways to escape from each room in the house, and designate multiple meeting places. If you have pets, be sure to remember them in the process.

Nowadays, most people have important numbers pre-programmed into their cellphones. It's imperative to make sure all members of the family know emergency contact numbers by heart in case they need to use a landline or borrow someone else's phone. Make sure to also post numbers for the fire department, police station, and hospital in a visible spot in the home.

2. STOCK UP

An emergency kit is a great thing to have on hand in case you need to quickly vacate your home due to a severe weather emergency (like flooding). The CDC recommends

stashing a flashlight, a battery-operated radio for listening to weather reports (plus some extra batteries), and a first-aid kit. You'll also need a three- to five-day supply of bottled water and nonperishable food, personal hygiene items, extra clothes, and blankets or sleeping bags.

3. ORGANIZE AND PROTECT IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND BELONGINGS

If you have enough warning of an impending storm, move and store important documents (like insurance policies, birth certificates, passports, etc.) to an off-site location. If it isn't possible to move these items, store them in waterproof, sealable bags on a high shelf. Don't forget important keepsakes, like photos!

4. CREATE A HOME INVENTORY

Should damage occur, an accurate, up-to-date inventory of your possessions will greatly simplify the process of filing an insurance claim. Never heard of a home inventory or need some help creating one? [Click here.](#)

5. BUY OR RENT A BACK-UP GENERATOR

If it's possible to get your hands on a back-up portable generator, do so! Severe storms have the potential to knock out power to your home for hours, days, or even weeks. The use of a generator can power important electrical equipment, such as portable heating units, fans, computers, water pumps, freezers, refrigerators, and lighting. Generators do come with their own list of hazards, though, so be sure to check up on safe portable generator use from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration here: <https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3286.pdf>



2021 KFB Young Farmer Committee Chair, Heather Graham

Candid Conversation

WITH 2021 KFB YOUNG FARMER COMMITTEE CHAIR, HEATHER GRAHAM

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, Heather Graham, the 2021 KFB Young Farmer Committee Chair, talks about the role young farm families play in Kentucky's ag industry and her thoughts about being the first female Young Farmer Chair.

Would you mind sharing with our readers a little about your agricultural background?

I grew up on a farm in Scott County where we raised and showed Rocky Mountain horses, but it wasn't until

high school when my interest in agriculture really peaked and I became active in both 4-H and FFA programs. By the time I graduated high school, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in agriculture, so I attended Morehead State University and majored in Agricultural Sciences with an emphasis in Animal Science. It was at Morehead that I met my future husband, Reed. We farm in southern Wolfe County with our 3-year-old son, John Henry. Like a lot of farmers, we have a diversified operation. We have a small, commercial cow-calf herd and retain our steers for a freezer beef business. We tend about 70 acres for hay, and we also have a firewood business that keeps us busy year-round. This past year, we completed the

building of a high tunnel, and we are in the beginning stages of starting vegetable production. Reed and I both also work off of the farm as County Extension Agents for Agriculture. As the saying goes, farming is not just a job, it's our way of life!

When and how did you become involved in the KFB Young Farmer program?

When I met Reed, he was serving as the Young Farmer chair for Wolfe County. I was fortunate to attend Young Farmer Summer Outings and Winter Leadership Conferences with him. I quickly realized not only how important the KFB organization was to agriculture as an industry, but how the Young Farmer program was essential for cultivating relationships and building leaders for the new generation of agriculturists. In 2015, I was blessed to be accepted into the LEAD program, and my passion for KFB only grew from there. KFB does an outstanding job of encouraging producers to have an active voice in not only their local communities but all the way to the national level, and the Young Farmer program helps those younger farmers grow their voice.

From a young farm family perspective, what do you see as some of the major challenges in staying on the farm, or beginning a career in the agriculture industry?

I've talked about this very topic with several producers, both young and seasoned! It can be hard to make a living off of farming alone, many of us have to work off of the farm to ensure a steady paycheck or to afford health insurance. Throw in kids, school activities, family activities, and everything else life presents, and time becomes an issue. Farming isn't a 9 to 5 job, it is 24/7/365. It can be overwhelming to try and divide your time between all the tasks at hand.

How do you feel about being the first female chair of the Young Farmer Committee?

It's certainly an honor to be the first female chair. To be selected by your peers for a position of leadership is humbling and I am proud to be serving in this position. Women have been, and continue to be, involved in decisions and leadership both on and off the farm, and the situation in KFB is really no different. It's encouraging to see more women in the organization with

leadership titles.

Do you see yourself as a role model for other young people, especially females, becoming more involved in ag-related leadership positions?

My hope is that any person, child or adult, male or female, would see in me my passion for my community and my passion for agriculture and that it might light their fire to be involved. We can all make a difference in our community, in our world, if we take that first step to be involved. I would encourage anyone that is interested in agricultural leadership to find that someone that they can lean on for inspiration and support. And for those of us that are in leadership positions already... be the light.

Along with challenges come opportunities. What are some opportunities you see ahead for young farm families?

COVID and the ripple effects of the pandemic have been hard on everyone, but there have been a lot of opportunities to change how we interact and learn because of COVID. Farmers have had the opportunity to watch amazing seminars, conferences, and lectures through online platforms that they otherwise may not have been able to attend in person. We've been able to join farmers from across the state, the nation, and even the world and learn about their practices, what they're doing to make an impact on their farm and their community. The knowledge of experts has literally been at our fingertips while we've been plowing the fields, cooking dinner, or working in the garden. The last year has certainly been a struggle, in more ways than one, but it has also presented us with unprecedented opportunities to learn, improve, and grow – ourselves, our families, and our farms.

What would you like to accomplish the most during your tenure as KFB Young Farmer Committee Chair?

I'm sure, like the Chairs before me, I'd like to see the Young Farmer program continue to grow. Specifically, I would like for our individual county and district programs expand and strengthen. Farm Bureau involvement starts at the local level, and if we can engage our young people at home – hone their leadership skills, build networks of support, and ignite their passion for agriculture and Farm Bureau – then our organization will be that much stronger for the future.

“Farm Bureau involvement starts at the local level, and if we can engage our young people at home – hone their leadership skills, build networks of support, and ignite their passion for agriculture and Farm Bureau— then our organization will be that much stronger for the future.”

Heather Graham



U.S. GRAIN STORAGE CAPACITY EXPANDS LESS THAN ONE PERCENT

According to USDA, total grain storage capacity in the United States is estimated at 25.2 billion bushels, up 0.4 percent from a year earlier. Comprising this total storage capacity is 13.49 billion bushels on the farm and 11.75 billion bushels off the farm. On-farm storage decreased 43 million bushels, or 0.3 percent. Iowa leads all States with 2.05 billion bushels of on-farm storage, followed by Minnesota with 1.55 billion bushels, Illinois with 1.48 billion bushels, and Nebraska with 1.20 billion bushels. These four states account for nearly 47 percent of the nation's total on-farm storage. Kentucky's on-farm storage totaled 225 million bushels, up ten million bushels from a year ago. U.S. off-farm commercial grain storage increased 134 million bushels, or 1.2 percent, during 2020. The top three States - Iowa, Illinois and Kansas - account for nearly 37 percent of the total off-farm capacity. Illinois added an amazing 100 million bushels of storage while Iowa lost 20 million bushels (impacted by the August derecho storm). There are 8,263 storage facilities in the U.S., down 1.4 percent from a year ago. Kentucky added two million bushels of capacity for a total of 92.0 million bushels at 150 facilities, unchanged from 2019.

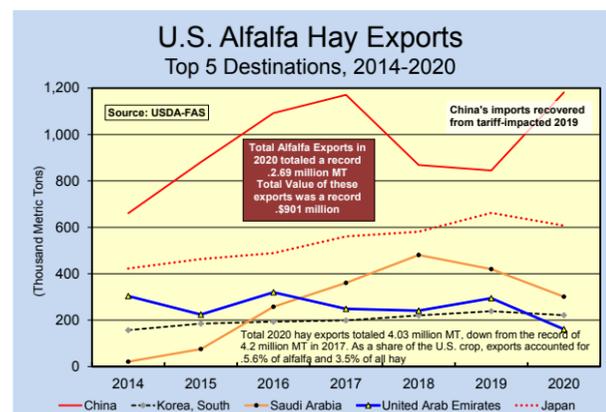
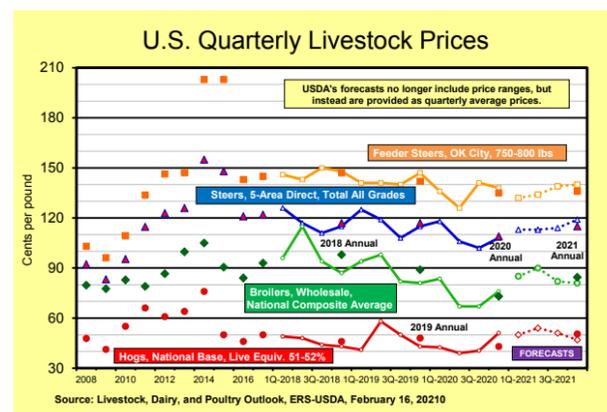
U.S. AG TRADE BALANCE IMPROVES ON RISING RECORD EXPORTS

According to USDA's Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Trade, FY 2021 agricultural exports could surpass FY 2020 exports by \$21.3 billion. U.S. ag exports in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 are projected at a record \$157.0 billion, up \$5.0 billion from the November forecast, driven by higher oilseed and grain export forecasts. Soybean exports are forecast \$1.1 billion higher to a record \$27.4 billion (\$17.9 billion - FY 2020) due to higher prices resulting from strong demand from China. Soybean meal exports are projected up \$700 million to \$5.7 billion (\$4.5 billion - FY 2020). Corn exports are projected up \$800 million to \$14.0 billion (\$8.2 billion - FY 2020) on higher prices. Wheat exports are forecast at \$6.9 billion, up \$700 million, on higher prices. Exports of

feeds and fodders are forecast at \$8.1 billion. Livestock, dairy, and poultry exports are forecast up \$300 million to \$32.6 billion (\$31.4 billion - FY 2020), primarily due to higher beef values. Horticultural product exports are projected to remain unchanged from November at \$34.5 billion (\$33.8 billion - FY 2020). Exports to China are raised \$4.5 billion from the November forecast to a record \$31.5 billion due to strong first quarter shipments and surging sales, most notably of corn. China should remain the largest U.S. agricultural market in FY 2021, followed by Canada and Mexico. U.S. agricultural imports in FY 2021 are forecast at \$137.5 billion, up \$500 million from the November forecast. The FY 2021 U.S. agricultural trade balance is forecast at \$19.5 billion, up \$4.5 billion from the November forecast and up \$17.0 billion from FY 2020. The U.S. ag trade surplus peaked in FY 2014 at \$43.1 billion.

U.S. BEEF PRODUCTION TO REACH NEW RECORD

According to the latest USDA Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry Outlook, total commercial beef production in 2020 is estimated at 27.152 billion pounds, virtually unchanged from 2019. Despite slaughter numbers that were down by 2.4 percent, 2020 beef production was unchanged as a result of cattle on feed longer under good feeding conditions which helped cattle weights surpass 2019 by 2.4 percent. Heavier anticipated carcass weights and greater fed cattle marketings are expected to lift 2021 beef production to a record 27.540 billion pounds. Because of higher-than-expected placements in late fourth-quarter 2020 and a quicker-than-expected pace of cattle slaughter in early 2021, anticipated cattle slaughter was raised for first-half 2021. Prospects for higher placements in first-half 2021 increased anticipated marketings in last-half 2021, which also contributed to a raised 2021 beef production forecast.



Revenue for Broadband Deployment Fund a Must

AS LEGISLATORS CONSIDER BUDGET PROPOSALS, FUNDING FOR BROADBAND REMAINS A TOP KFB PRIORITY

Kentucky's General Assembly meets every year to consider and pass legislation. In even-numbered years, lawmakers convene for a 60-day session, in which a two-year budget is always on the agenda. In odd-numbered years, a shorter 30-day session is held and is generally not a time to consider revenue-based legislation.

But 2020 was anything but normal, and due to a shortened session caused by COVID-19 restrictions, legislators were left with the choice of passing a one-year budget with the anticipation they would finish the work in 2021.

Jeff Harper, Kentucky Farm Bureau's Director of Public Affairs, said legislators are finding themselves in unfamiliar territory this year as they work to finish their biennial budget efforts from last year, along with their normal consideration of many other pieces of legislation, during a much shorter session.

"It is often difficult to pass a two-year budget in the best of times, but now lawmakers are faced with passing budgetary legislation for what will be three years in a row, taking into consideration that 2022 will see a return to business as usual, and that it will be a normal budget session," he said.

While this situation is unusual, Harper indicated that state lawmakers are up for the task and many important pieces of legislation, including the budget, will make its



way through the House and Senate.

"They have hit the ground running, and I have no doubt our legislators will complete their tasks at hand, including finishing the budget," he said.

One item on the minds of Kentucky Farm Bureau members throughout the Commonwealth is the need to provide revenue for the Broadband Deployment Fund (BDF), which was created in the 2020 session.

The BDF is meant to assist infrastructure construction for deploying broadband service to underserved and unserved areas of the Commonwealth, according to information contained within the text of the bill.

"This fund was created without any revenue stream attached," said KFB President Mark Haney. "While we deemed it an accomplishment, we would like to see it funded this year so we can move forward in getting needed broadband service to all areas of Kentucky."

The availability of adequate broadband service throughout the state has been a long-time KFB priority. Because the need to work and go to school remotely has been so prevalent during this last pandemic-stricken year, Haney said it is more important than ever

to get the required funding that will complete the task of supplying broadband service to unserved and underserved areas.

"We have seen the use of broadband service grow exponentially since so many of us began working or studying from home," he said. "If we can't recognize how great the need is now, we never will. So, we must look at this as a priority that is as necessary as when we fought to bring electric service to rural areas decades ago."

Governor Andy Beshear included \$50 million for the fund in his budget proposal presented to the General Assembly in January.

Haney thanked him for that, but is quick to note, that proposal is not a done deal yet.

"Passing a state budget is no easy task, and there are many projects needing a piece of that pie," he said. "But we have come to a point in time when we simply cannot run our farming operations and rural businesses without adequate broadband service. If the consumers we feed want our farm families to stay in business, then it's my hope that our lawmakers understand how important this funding is, not only for the ag industry, but for our entire economy."



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

County Corner

SNAPSHOTS OF COUNTY FARM BUREAU ACTIVITIES



Clark County

Clark County Farm Bureau Board Member, Garry Allen Taylor, recently won 2021 Kentucky State Champion Auctioneer.



Boyd County

On February 8, 2021, the Board of Directors of Boyd County Farm Bureau Federation donated \$500.00 to River Cities Harvest in observance of our Food Check-Out Week. The check was presented to Gina Rice, Operations Coordinator at River Cities Harvest, by H. Duff Holbrook, President of Boyd County Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors.



Grant County

Grant County Farm Bureau Federation presented David Hammond, Pastor of 1st Love Church, a \$1,000 donation for their Homeless Mission to purchase Food. This was in observance of Food Check-Out Week.



Lyon County

Pictured from left is State Senator Jason Howell, State Rep. Chris Freeland, and Lyon County Farm Bureau Insurance Agent Brodi Sutton. They came to the county's January meeting to discuss the state legislative priority issues.



Fayette County

Fayette County Farm Bureau Board Member Stacy Vincent's daughter, Kendall, got a little snow time earlier this winter.



Shelby County

The Shelby County Farm Bureau Board of Directors raised \$1,361, over 4,500 servings and donated to Awake Ministries for their Food Check-Out program to be donated to families in need. Prayers and blessings for those families.



Bracken County

Drue and Alex Hyrcza of Bracken County Farm Bureau brought donated food from the Green House in Gertrude Roadside Market to the Augusta Food Bank, which serves about 50 to 60 families a week.



Union County

These KFB kids, from Union County, participated in Food Check-Out Week.

Words of Encouragement

When the nights are long, and the wind is cold,
When the world seems to be less controlled
When a light at the end of the tunnel
Is barely visible, if at all.
It's important to remember
The springtime always comes to lessen the cold
Daylight overtakes the darkness for longer periods of time
This out of control world will again slow down
As it always does as the lighted tunnel becomes more vibrant
But patience and persistence and prayer
Can comfort us through the process of transition.
May we be patient in our waiting, persistent in moving forward,
And prayerful as we look to future days of warmth and light and peace within.





Lyon County Farm Bureau (LCFB) made a donation to the Hope Food Bank in Eddyville for Food Check-Out Week. Those pictured are (left to right) - Hope Food Bank Volunteers Becky Conner and Clarice Goodall; Farm Bureau Representatives Glen Kinder, LCFB President, and Becky Kinder, LCFB Women's Chair. Photo Credit- LCFB Board Member Marilyn Terry.

KFB Food Check-Out Day and the Connection it Brings to Local Communities

Each year, Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) members across the state observe the calendar day in which the average American has earned enough income to pay for their entire year's worth of food. Known as Food Check-Out Day, the focus of this annual event is to showcase the affordability of food in this country and to bring attention to the hard work of farm families.

Often the events include a number of county activities by local Farm Bureau members, including talking to local and state leaders and donating food to local food banks.

This year however, due to the pandemic, many of the gatherings were different, but the scope of Food Check-Out Day was not lost. As was the case in many communities, Lyon County Farm Bureau (LCFB) continued their food donation to the local food bank.

LCFB President Glen Kinder said making that food donation is something they do every Food Check-Out Day.

"It's one of the activities that we have done as part of our Food Check-Out Week promotion annually to not only talk about how affordable food is in the United States, but also highlight the need for those who are less fortunate," he said. "And so, it's just a really good opportunity to connect with our local community."

COVID-19 changed a lot of things for a lot of people, all the more reason Kinder said to make those food donations.

"It obviously changed the way our food bank operates and definitely has increased some of the demands for them, but they are working to navigate this virus just like a number of other businesses and individuals," he said. "There is still a tremendous need for the services that they provide to our community."

Farm Bureaus from across the state have pitched in to help their local food banks and pantries weather the needs this coronavirus has created.

KFB Federation Executive Vice President Drew Graham said it comes as no surprise to him how involved local Farm Bureaus have been in helping their neighbors during this pandemic.

"As I have talked to county leaders across the state, the conversations are all very similar in that they are reaching out to their community members to help in any way they can," he said. "But that comes as no surprise. That's what makes our organization so unique and so valuable. No matter the circumstances we are handed, these dedicated volunteer members are going to do all they can to help

their neighbors. They didn't need a pandemic to make a difference, because they are making a difference in their communities every day."

While COVID-19 has altered the way many events have happened this year, there have been opportunities to still connect to community members, especially through the use of social media.

Kinder said they use the Lyon County Farm Bureau's Facebook page to generate interest in community activities and to promote local activities.

"It also allows us to let people know about the different things that are going on as we continue our efforts to be a part of our local community," he said.

Food Check-Out is part of advocacy efforts. Each year, the General Assembly passes resolutions recognizing Food Check-Out Day.

Graham said even though many events have changed this year, the need to advocate to local, state, and federal lawmakers is still very important.

"I would encourage all of our volunteer members to meet with their legislators as often as they can, and build relationships with them," he said. "It is those types of relationships that will prove to be invaluable in our advocacy efforts."

Kinder said they are lucky in that their representatives in the General Assembly often attend local meetings and are always willing to listen to their members no matter the issue.

"We were very blessed that our state representative, Chris Freeland, and our new state senator, Jason Howell,

"No matter the circumstances we are handed, these dedicated volunteer members are going to do all they can to help their neighbors."

Drew Graham

attend our meetings to talk to us about policy issues and the things that we're doing in our local community," he said. "We have a fantastic working relationship with both gentlemen."

While KFB members across the state are looking forward to the world getting back to a level of normalcy, Kinder emphasized some things haven't changed despite a pandemic.

"In reality, our farmers are still farming, whether that's growing local fruits and vegetables or producing local meats or local honey," he said. "They're still farming and still doing the things that we have known them to do for a number of years. It may look a little bit different, but there's a lot of things still happening in a positive way in our community."

Editor's note: To see what other Farm Bureaus did to commemorate Food Check-Out Day, go to this month's County Corner.

In Kentucky, being grassroots is fertile ground for success.

With more than 70,000 family farms in Kentucky, agriculture is a vital part of the Commonwealth's culture, values and economy. Every year, farm families work together at the grassroots level to identify shared challenges and achieve common goals. Kentucky Farm Bureau reflects these challenges and goals in our policies, and we're proud to advocate for farmers across the state in everything we do. Why Farm Bureau? Because Kentucky's success depends on improved farm income, better economic opportunities, and enhanced quality of life for all.



Soybeans in LaRue County.

Record Corn and Soybean Yields Highlight 2020 Growing Season

ADEQUATE RAINS HELPED BOOST PRODUCTION THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE STATE

In a year that was anything but normal for most people and industries, farm families stayed on the job and, with some help from Mother Nature, finished the season in record territory for corn and soybean production.

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 is estimated at 101 million bushels, up 30 percent from 2019, and the second largest crop on record.

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 state had very good and timely rainfall, especially at the most critical points in time, which is typically July and August.

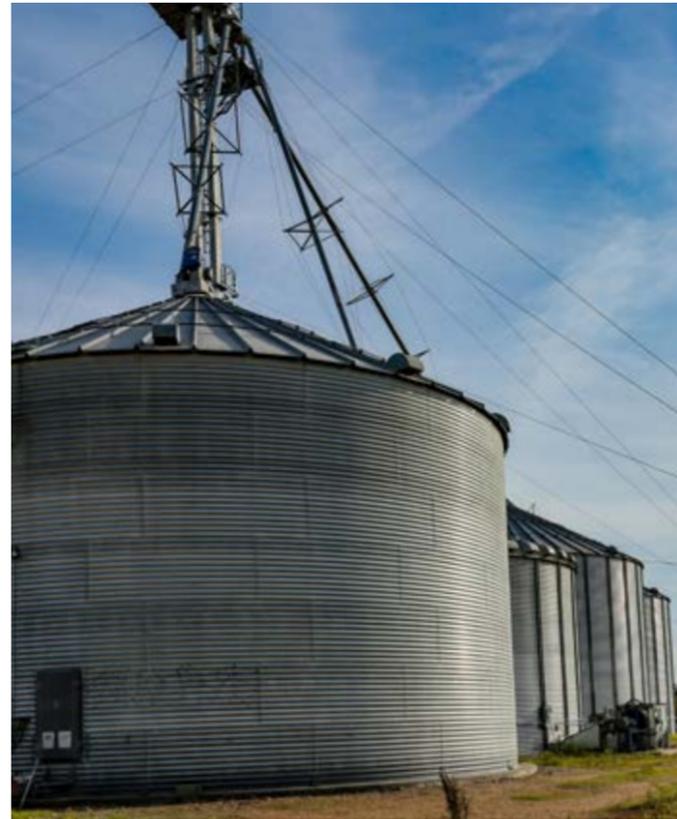
"If you're just looking statewide, we had phenomenal rainfall across the state, and farmers were able to maximize and capitalize on that," he said. "Farmers were also able to plant pretty timely, they got good stands early on, and they were able to control weeds and protect against diseases and insects. You don't get good yields unless you get good planting and good harvesting. So, all of those working together are part of that equation."

Lee also mentioned the increased presence of on-farm storage as being one more component in that equation, assisting with such incredible yields and total overall production.

"Logistically, that on-farm storage capability allows producers to get the grain out of the field in a very timely fashion, enabling them to dry that grain and store it at good quality," he said. "And so, they're capturing better yields through that process."

Yield numbers included 184 bushels per acre for corn and 55 bushels per acre for soybeans, something Lee called "amazing."

One thing Lee mentioned as being another contributing factor for these outstanding crop yields is no-till production methods utilized by most producers.



At left, a harvest in Ohio County and, right, grain storage in Calloway County.

"I do believe that's part of why we see these yields where they are," he said. "These soils would be extremely difficult to manage with the rainfall we've been getting, especially in the spring and the fall, if we had been doing (conventional) tillage."

Lee noted that grain producers understand the soils they have and the measures needed to keep crop yields at optimum levels.

"By and large, our growers recognize the soils that they operate with, they recognize the challenges of those soils, and they recognize that they've

got to have those soils in really good condition and structure if they're going to get excellent yields," Lee said. "I think our farmers are keenly aware that they've got to be really good stewards of the soil. I think any concerns over environmental quality are very legitimate concerns, and I think what we've

demonstrated here is that we can be a good steward of the environment and we can produce high yields. Those two things can go together. Probably even more important is we've got to continue that effort, if we want to keep higher risk land out of agricultural production."

With education being a key component to continued success on the farm, Kentucky farmers have the advantage of being located in a state with a comprehensive network of extension professionals to help with crop questions and bring information directly to the farm. They also are

reaping the rewards of the research conducted at the Grain and Forage Center of Excellence located at the UK Research and Education Center in Princeton.

Lee said staying educated is very important for farmers, and in the digital world, information can be found everywhere. But it comes with a caveat.

"Yes, there's a lot of information out there, which is a double-edged sword," he said. "The challenge is finding the best information for their operations in our climate. Certainly, I think it's good for the growers to hear people

from other regions talk about how they grow crops, but I think it's equally important that they stay focused on the fundamentals, which is what extension is going to teach, and they stay focused on local agronomists who are familiar with our climate, with our soils, and with our management system."

As farm families look forward to another growing season, Lee said they have a lot going for them when it comes to planting right, tending well, and harvesting big.

"I am amazed at the sophistication of our growers, their logistical sophistication, their financial sophistication, their employee sophistication, their technology sophistication, all of it," he said. "They manage phenomenal operations at relatively low margins, and I'm always amazed at their ability to handle risk and manage that risk."

"I think our farmers are keenly aware that they've got to be really good stewards of the soil."

Chad Lee



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2021 KFB Young Farmers Virtual Leadership Conference

ROUNDTABLE Q&A WITH LEADERSHIP TEAM HIGHLIGHTS A JAM-PACKED VIRTUAL EVENT

While virtual events have been the order of the day for most of the past year because of COVID-19, continuing the process of keeping members informed is still an important part of Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB), and the 2021 KFB Young Farmers (YF) Leadership Conference did just that.

This year's virtual conference included a roundtable discussion with KFB President Mark Haney, 1st Vice President Eddie Melton, and 2nd Vice President Sharon Furches, as well as a legislation update and remarks from Federation Executive Vice President Drew Graham and KFB Mutual Insurance Company Executive Vice President and CEO John Sparrow.

The 2021 State YF Advisory Committee Chair Heather Graham led the virtual meeting and offered a word of thanks to those attending as she began the conference.

She said hosting this event by way of video cameras was a bit daunting at first, but the end result was a big success.

"It took me a few minutes to get used to it, but knowing we were keeping our young farm families informed on issues was very gratifying to me as the committee chair," Graham said. "I want nothing more than to get helpful information to our members, and I feel as though we were able to accomplish that goal at this year's virtual conference."

During his remarks to the conference, Drew Graham said that KFB understands the value of the Young Farmer Program and it is of the utmost importance to the organization.

"Many of you are carrying on traditions that have been a part of your heritage for generations, while others have decided to begin a tradition all your own. Either way, this industry and this organization depends on you to help move agriculture forward in the 21st century," he said.

Sparrow shared with attendees a little of his history with the company and the strength he sees in the organization and its members.

"Our strength is out in the communities and from people like you, our young farm families," he said. "In my years of service to this organization, I find my strength in KFB's community advocacy and its county leadership; uniquely in 120 counties, with thousands of members advocating



State Young Farmer Advisory Committee Chair Heather Graham moderates a roundtable discussion with KFB leadership during the Young Farmers Virtual Leadership Conference.

for a better life in their community and for Kentucky."

Legislative update

KFB Director of Public Affairs Jeff Harper shared information about this year's General Assembly session and some of the legislative issues that will affect farm families and the agriculture industry. He also answered several questions that had been sent by viewing members.

"One bill that we have been following, that we just adopted policy in support of during our last annual meeting, is Senate Bill 3, which would take the (Kentucky) Agricultural Development Fund and the Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation and remove those from the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy and place that under the administration of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture," he said.

Harper emphasized that this particular bill has been filed for three or four consecutive sessions, but it is expected to pass in this session. Other important topics under consideration by the General Assembly include a one-year budget, something that is a carryover from last year's shortened session due to COVID-related issues, and funding for the Broadband Deployment Fund, a KFB-backed bill which created the fund and passed in the 2020 General Assembly without the benefit of revenue.

Harper said Governor Beshear's budget proposal includes a requested \$50 million for that fund, something KFB has publicly supported.

Executive Q&A Roundtable

During the executive roundtable, KFB leadership shared

a little about their journeys through Farm Bureau and some of the highlights of their careers. Graham led the discussion and presented several questions to each one.

Haney shared one of his most memorable moments during his years of involvement in the organization.

"One of my most memorable moments came on March 2, 2012, a day tornadoes moved through all of our state and left heavy damage, particularly in Morgan and Magoffin Counties," he said. "We formed a plan at the state office and got to those areas as quickly as we could. The local Farm Bureau office had survived, and we gathered there trying to help as many people as possible."

Haney shared that the one instance which really stood out in his mind that day was seeing the county secretary talking to a member who was obviously upset. But the secretary remained calm and helpful.

"I would find out later that, at that time, she also knew she had lost her own home but was still there being of assistance to others in their time of need. That made me so proud to be a part of this organization, and I'll never forget that day," he said.

Each of the leaders had interesting memories they shared, including how they began their service to Farm Bureau through varying types of leadership programs offered.

Melton discussed his very first Farm Bureau meeting and the incentive it provided that has led him through a long-time involvement in the organization.

"I learned what Farm Bureau was doing for agriculture during that first meeting, and I thought, if I'm going

to spend my career farming, I needed an advocate representing me, and working in my best interest," he said. "It sparked an interest for me and that has continued over the years."

The three of them also emphasized the close relationship they have with each other and how beneficial that has been.

"The three of us have known each other for a very long time and we've been friends for a long time, both personally and professionally," Furches said. "It's really an honor to work with them now, and for all of us to have come up through the programs of Kentucky Farm Bureau like we have, we've all been very, very fortunate in that respect."

KFB leaders closed the discussion by encouraging the young farm families to be involved and stay involved. Haney encouraged them to take up the challenge of being leaders and strong agriculture advocates in their communities.

"Often it is the little things we do in our counties and in our local communities that make a big difference over time, and I encourage you to do those things because it's those leaders who are giving of themselves that make a better Farm Bureau, better programs, and better communities," Haney said.

To see the 2021 Young Farm leadership Conference in its entirety, [click here](#).



Down the Backroads

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT NEIGHBORS DO

By Tim Thornberry

I must admit, winter is not my favorite season, and for those who know me, you have heard me state this before. So, the "lovely" weather we endured in February was not a welcome sight to me, for the most part.

But I will say this, the snow and ice had a certain beauty about it, that is unless you were one left in the cold because of a lack of electricity, or for those working out in the elements.

It reminded me of a few winters we had back in the '70s when I was still in high school. I had a part-time job at a local convenience store in my small hometown. In fact, it was the only convenience store we had.

It was located in the middle of several small neighborhoods and was a regular place to visit for most of those who lived nearby.

One particular winter, it snowed so much that most people were stuck at home with the exception of those in four-wheel drive farm trucks.

I lived out in the country, and our long snow-filled driveway would have kept me in, except for the fact that my boss offered to pick me up for work since all the schools were closed and some of the employees could not make it in.

I was glad to get the extra hours and thankful my boss was willing to make the trek to pick me up. That old truck of his could plow through the deepest of snows, thank goodness.

As I worked through those next several days, business was slow due to all those snowed in. But the occasional customer would make it in to load up on provisions. Most

of them weren't only coming for themselves but picking up food for their neighbors, because that's what neighbors do.

My boss spent much of the daylight hours clearing the parking lot so folks who decided to walk in wouldn't slip and fall. As fast as he would shovel, more snow would fall but it was very important to him to make sure all who entered, entered safely.

An elderly lady lived across the street and was afraid to make the short journey, so we took food to her.

I soon realized that little store was as much of a neighbor to all these folks as they were to each other.

And during such terrible weather, the services we were providing seemed invaluable to those customers as each one thanked us over and over again for being open and available for them.

I learned a lot during those times, not just about running the register or keeping the shelves stocked. It was no longer about getting extra hours but about seeing the value in neighbors helping neighbors.

As I have grown older, I have often thought the art of neighboring was disappearing as busy lives got busier and taking time to visit each other seemed to fade away under the weight of cell phones and social media.

So, it came as a bit of a surprise when someone cleared my driveway not once but twice during our recent bout with snow and ice. I tried to find the good Samaritan to offer my gratitude but had no luck.

And then I realized that not knowing made it all the more special and it renewed my faith knowing it was simply what neighbors do, as we all travel down the backroads.



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