

Kentucky

F A R M • B U R E A U • N E W S



2019 ELECTION GUIDE

**STRESS ON THE FARM,
FROM A COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE**

**WAVE IS ROLLING IN WEST
KENTUCKY'S RIVER-COUNTIES**

KFB 100 YEARS
EST. 1919

OCTOBER 2019



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.



KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU
KFB 100 YEARS
EST. 1919



KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU NEWS
Volume 18 | No. 8
October 2019

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Cover photo by Tim Thornberry
Harvest season is in full swing in Kentucky. Photo from
Calloway County.

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President's COLUMN



I'm often asked what I think is the most important issue facing the agriculture industry today. To be honest, several things always come to mind including adequate rural broadband coverage, support for a strong infrastructure system, continued agricultural tax exemptions, water resources, rural development and farm labor reform, to name a few.

All these issues are important to our farm families in this state and across the country. But, international trade has got to be at the top of the list at this time.

Nearly 40 percent of our ag cash receipts comes from export markets. Without current and future trade deals between our country and others throughout the world, we just can't keep running our ag businesses, especially given the state of our current ag economy. Trade deals such as the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, which is currently waiting Congressional passage, are critical to our survival.

If you told any other business person they would lose 50 percent of their net income in a five-year period and be faced with mounting losses due to export issues, they would likely shut the doors and go to the house.

Yet our farm families have faced just that. As producers of our food supply, farmers have to remain on the job, not just for their sake, but for all those people depending on a domestic food supply. On a personal note, our family farm has been in existence for 150 years and closing the doors has never been a thought or an option.

The farm families in this state and nation want to stay on their farms and continue to do what we do better than anyone else in the world; produce the most abundant and affordable food supply on this planet.

You can't do what we do in a lab. You can't get the safest food supply we enjoy here from anywhere outside our boundaries, and we shouldn't want to. But we are continually facing mounting obstacles trying to make ends meet during this downturn in the farm economy.

We must have trade agreements in place to continue to produce the world's food supply. It's as simple as that.

While there are many "unknowns" on the farm right now when it comes to profitability, I do know this; Kentucky Farm Bureau members have always been strong advocates for our ag industry; very strong advocates.

Now, more than ever, we need to keep up these efforts and make our priorities known to elected leaders.

One way we can speak the loudest is on Election Day. Do not let an opportunity to exercise your civic responsibility go by. Cast your vote on November 5. Regardless of your party affiliation, the freedom to vote is one of the most important rights we have as citizens of this country.

We are very fortunate to live in a state where we have so much support from our government officials, but we can never take that for granted. We must get the correct information about agriculture to them and the general public if we are expected to survive on the farm. It's not just farm families who are depending on it.

Mark Haney

President, Kentucky Farm Bureau

2019 COUNTY ANNUAL MEETINGS

All times are local

Anderson County

October 14, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Eagle Lake Convention Center

Boone County

October 8, 2019, 6:00 p.m.
Boone County Extension
Enrichment Center

Bourbon County

October 10, 2019, 6:30 p.m.
Legion Park

Bracken County

October 8, 2019, 7:00 p.m.
Extension Office Brooksville

Carroll County

October 14, 2019, 6:00 p.m.
Carroll County Farm Bureau Office

Casey County

October 10, 2019, 6:00 p.m.
Kentucky Ag/Expo Center

Fayette County

October 15, 2019, 6:30 p.m.
Fayette County Cooperative Extension
office.

Floyd County

October 17, 2019, 7:00 p.m.
Jenny Wiley State Park

Henry County

October 10, 2019, 7:00 p.m.
Henry County Farm Bureau Office

Laurel County

October 15, 2019, 5:45 p.m.
Laurel County Farm Bureau Office

Lawrence County

October 15, 2019, 6:00 p.m.
Down Home Grill, Louisa

Magoffin County

October 14, 2019, 4:30 p.m.
Magoffin County Farm Bureau

Marion County

October 14, 2019, 7:00 p.m.
Knights of Columbus Hall

Martin County

October 11, 2019, 9:00 a.m.
Martin County Farm Bureau

Morgan County

October 17, 2019, 6:30 p.m.
Morgan County Extension Education
Center Building

Perry County

October 8, 2019, 7:00 p.m.
Perry County Tourism



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COMMENT COLUMN

Kentucky Farm Bureau is a voluntary organization of farm families and their allies dedicated to serving as the voice of agriculture by identifying problems, developing solutions and taking actions which will improve net farm income, achieve better economic opportunities and enhance the quality of life for all.

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Every year, hundreds of FFA members across Kentucky get their first FFA jacket— not knowing how poignant it will be in their lives. The first time I put on my corduroy jacket, I was timid.

As I was about to walk into the room to compete in the local creed speaking competition, I remember my advisor telling me how I was going to do amazingly, boosting my confidence. The second time I put on a new FFA jacket was my senior year of high school, as a regional officer, and I was beyond excited.

Every time we put on the corduroy, it represents a new milestone in our lives. It symbolizes growth and a newfound understanding for the importance of service. For some students, an FFA jacket represents a legacy, and to some, it represents a second family. But to others, it represents hope.

Today, as I once again put on my new jacket, I am thankful— thankful for every opportunity, member, and person who supports the FFA organization. Without these pivotal people in my life, I can confidently say I would not be where I am today.

Likewise, without support from the Kentucky Farm Bureau, we as a state officer team would not be able to help members grow as leaders. Because of your support, this summer we were granted so many opportunities to grow as leaders and build fundamental skills to serve this year.

I cannot thank you enough for that. As a team, we started out the summer attending Base Camp in Bowling Green, Kentucky. During our first training we started to learn how we can serve members to the best of our ability and how to build positive relationships to encourage members to believe in themselves.

We learned about the levels of leadership, how students learn, the importance of diversity and inclusion, and how to properly deliver a workshop.

Next, we took our skills we learned and facilitated a workshop at FFA Camp, the happiest place on earth. During the week we taught FFA members about the importance of effective communication, danced under the pavilion, sang karaoke, and got “baptized” in the pool.

After FFA camp, we furthered our training with Checkpoint Two, learning about effective workshop facilitation and speech delivery. During the week, we also got to attend a training organized by the Kentucky Farm Bureau. Lastly, we had the amazing opportunity of attending State Officer Summit in Washington D.C.

While in attendance, we learned about the importance of advocacy and made new friendships with people around the nation.

A couple of weeks ago, we hosted the Rising Sun's Conference, impacting over 100 FFA members across Kentucky. During the Conference, we facilitated leadership workshops based on servant leadership, diversity, and Ag literacy.

We hope that the workshops showed FFA members the importance of serving others and accepting others, no matter their background.

Every time I go to put on my FFA jacket this year, I will continue to be thankful for every opportunity I have had, and especially be thankful for every single one of you. Without your support, none of this would be possible. Thank you again for being intentional, serving FFA members beyond yourselves, and inspiring members to be proud when they put on the corduroy.

Haley Nelson,
Kentucky FFA State President



STRONGER TOGETHER



A message from KFB President Mark Haney

Each year, our members come together during our annual meeting to vote on policy, hear from state and national agricultural leaders about issues on the farm, and visit with old and new friends alike.

We have continued this annual meeting tradition since our organization began in 1919. And as special and meaningful as each meeting is, this one marks our 100th year and promises to be the best yet. I couldn't be prouder to be in my position at this time in the life of Kentucky Farm Bureau.

Our organization has been a part of so much since its inception. From Farm Bills to state legislation that has enhanced the lives of all Kentuckians. If an issue affects farms or rural communities, we have developed policy to address these issues, and it all begins during our annual meetings.

For those of you making your way to Louisville, and the Galt House this year, you will hear from a host of commodity experts; you can attend the annual agriculture outlook session; you'll get to listen to a variety of different general session speakers; and witness the many award presentations we make each year to deserving members from around the state including our Distinguished Service Awards.

You'll get to be a part of our many youth-oriented contests, see our new state Young Farm Family of the Year named, as well as hear from our Farmer of the Year winner. Our Top County will be also be named.

American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall will be our keynote speaker at our Public Affairs Breakfast. For those of you who have met or heard from him, you know the message will be heart-felt and informative.

You'll also get to attend a special concert event as we celebrate our Centennial and 100th Annual Meeting.

But of all the things you'll get to do and see, I hope you take away from this meeting a sense of family that is so much a part of Farm Bureau and understand how much you are valued as a member and a friend.



KFB President Mark Haney addressed attendees during the 2018 Annual Meeting

Register at kyfb.com/kfb19

Registration opens October 14, 2019



2019 ELECTION GUIDE

STATEWIDE CANDIDATES

Governor

Matt Bevin (R)
Andy Beshear (D)

Agriculture Commissioner

Ryan Quarles (R)
Robert Haley Conway (D)

Secretary of State

Michael Adams (R)
Heather French Henry (D)

Attorney General

Daniel Cameron (R)
Gregory Stumbo (D)

Treasurer

Allison Ball (R)
Michael Bowman (D)

Auditor

Mike Harmon (R)
Sheri Donahue (D)

ELECTION DAY: NOVEMBER 5, 2019



Governor Matt Bevin



Attorney General Andy Beshear

2019 GUBERNATORIAL MEASURE THE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

From Candidates Matt Bevin and Andy Beshear

The State Budget

Many budget items are important to Kentucky agriculture and rural Kentucky, and it is critical these items be properly funded. One of the first priorities of the Governor will be to present the General Assembly with a biennial state budget.

What will be your funding priorities in the state budget?

Matt Bevin: My top budget priority is to create a fiscally responsible budget that invests strategically in areas that will create the greatest return on investment for taxpayers and support growth in our economy. The largest part of our budget will remain focused on education and workforce training to support the growing investments we are attracting. Education funding is at an all-time high in the Commonwealth and we have invested more than \$100 million to support workforce training programs. By partnering with local governments and the private sector, we have deployed more than \$250 million toward workforce training. I will maintain our commitment to funding the pension promises made to teachers and public employees.

Andy Beshear: Agriculture not only helps drive our economy, but it also helps feed our people. Unlike Governor Bevin, who has never mentioned farmers or agriculture in a single state budget address, I'll make sure this industry is a priority, and I'll work with the Kentucky Farm Bureau on the agriculture issues that matter.

We should start with funding the Kentucky Department of Agriculture with the resources it needs to support farmers. I'll ensure that 50 percent of tobacco settlement funds are allocated to agriculture development boards to improve income for local farmers. We should also prioritize funding for state conservation districts to help protect soil and air quality, and modernize the Grain Insurance Fund to protect Kentucky grain producers.

Please share your thoughts on funding for the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

Andy Beshear: The Kentucky Department of Agriculture supports Kentucky farmers by promoting local agricultural products in national and global markets, improving nutrition outcomes for Kentucky families, looking out for the health and welfare of livestock and poultry, and ensuring clean air,

water, and soil quality. I'll prioritize funding for the KDA so the department can continue to meet these critical objectives.

I'll also make sure that the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy deepens its commitment to supporting Kentucky farmers. As governor, I'll represent the interests of Kentucky agriculture when working with federal leaders.

Matt Bevin: Specifically, as it relates to agriculture, I will maintain the allocation of 50% of the Master Settlement Agreement funds to agriculture.

I believe we should continue funding GOAP and KDA at present levels. GOAP administers about \$40 million a year in programs and projects and has \$87 million in loan programs that improve and grow KY agriculture. GOAP administers these programs from start to finish while also keeping compliance records with less than 4% of administrative funds. KADB is made of farmers and agribusiness people that have proven to be great stewards of the funds. KY Agriculture has grown by \$2 billion in cash receipts at farm gate with market prices being very low since the inception of these tobacco settlement funds. GOAP administers programs which are in turn making the state money.

Kentucky Department of Agriculture serves a valued purpose from the regulatory side from checking gas pumps, to animal health issues, to environmental issues. They check the scales everywhere from the delis in Walmart to grain elevators. KDA's marketing work is world class, from hosting international customers to assisting local food marketers through KY Proud program (funded by the KADF). I trust Commissioner Quarles to be a good steward of funds.

I believe with the current depressed status of agricultural prices it is extremely important to maintain funding for GOAP and KDA.

How do you envision Agricultural Development Funds being utilized in the future?

Matt Bevin: State funds

- Utilizing as many of the state funds in Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation would be my first choice. Our loan programs are helping farmers while making money for the state off principle and interest that can be loaned again and again. The KAFC is the legacy of the KADF.
- State funded projects that will extend ownership beyond the first market for farmers with value-added middle infrastructure processing will add jobs for Kentucky and profit opportunities for the farmers.
- Seeking and funding Ag Tech businesses and opportunities
- Continue water harvesting demonstration projects
- Invest in the next generation of crops and agricultural products and their markets.

County funds:

- Incentivize producers to utilize new technologies, improved genetics, implement best management practices, and invest in capital through cost share programs.
- Encourage and fund farmers' projects to network as purchasers and marketers.
- Encourage counties to invest in county projects and

regional projects that grow agriculture and serve the entire rural community.

- Invest in the youth of agriculture

Andy Beshear: As attorney general, I'm proud to have monitored and enforced the terms of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement and ensured that half of those funds went to the Agriculture Development Fund. These funds have supported Kentucky farmers and aided sustainable agribusiness growth. My administration will continue to distribute settlement funds to support the Agriculture Development Fund and its important work.

Taxation

Tax reform has been addressed by the General Assembly in each of the last two legislative sessions. There is the potential for additional tax reform during the 2020 session.

How do you think Kentucky's tax code should be further reformed?

Andy Beshear: Our state tax code is outdated and doesn't benefit working families. As governor, I'll close wasteful tax loopholes that only benefit special interests, which will create more revenue for funding priorities. I'll also stop handing out tax credits to out-of-state corporations that don't pay their workers a living wage. Tax incentives should be used for creating good-paying jobs.

Matt Bevin: As a person with an extensive business career, I understand the critical importance of enacting tax reform that makes us more competitive with our neighboring states. I have pushed for that and we have certainly made progress. The Tax Foundation has improved our ranking compared to other states, but we have more we must do in this area. I am committed to pushing for additional reforms to make us even more attractive to job creators. A business-friendly tax code is a farmer-friendly tax code as farmers are ultimately small business owners. The Farm Bureau will have a seat at the table as we continue to work to make Kentucky a more business friendly state.

What are your thoughts regarding the current agricultural sales and use tax exemption and the state's current property tax laws?

Matt Bevin: A basic principle in good tax policy is that products should be taxed only once – when purchased by the consumer. Because agriculture, like manufacturing, is a production process, exemptions for goods and services consumed in the agricultural process should be continued.

Andy Beshear: The sales tax should never place a burden on working families, including farmers. I'll make sure our sales tax is fair for farmers by continuing the exemption for farm machinery and supplies. My administration will also support continuing current limits on state property taxes.

Rural Economic Development

The agriculture landscape in Kentucky is continuing to change. Among these changes is the look of our rural communities. Both agricultural and rural development are essential to a vibrant economy in the Commonwealth. As part of rural development, broadband and telecommunication infrastructure improvements must be implemented.

What is your plan to get broadband access to our rural communities and how can you generate economic development in rural Kentucky?

Andy Beshear: *There is no reason in 2019 that any household in Kentucky should be closed off from the internet. I'll prioritize expanding broadband and high-speed internet access to every part of Kentucky, especially rural areas.*

Matt Bevin: *KYWired is a middle mile network that has open access. This open access will allow last mile internet service providers to partner with the Commonwealth to provide broadband to local communities. We will need local internet service providers, electrical coops and local governments to bring broadband to homes and businesses.*

KYWired will provide last mile broadband to State Agencies, Courts, Community, Kentucky Community and Technical Colleges, and State Universities. We have the ability to provide last mile to City and County Governments, and are prepared to begin working on access today.

We will be going to local communities to have Roundtable Discussions with Elected Officials, Business Leaders, Chambers of Commerce, etc. starting in October. These discussions will revolve around what is the best way to deliver Last Mile to their communities.

We are working with USDA and Center for Rural Development to establish easy access nodes for providers to tie into our network at reduced cost.

As Governor, how do you incentivize the telecom providers to service rural Kentucky?

Matt Bevin: *KYWired has greatly reduced the cost of bringing broadband to communities. I do not believe there is an appetite in the upcoming budget to expend additional funds to bring broadband to every rural home and town. The local communities will have to incentivize local providers, if those providers require additional government incentives.*

Andy Beshear: *As governor, I'll work closely with telecom providers to increase connectivity for rural Kentucky and support public-private partnerships to expand broadband and high-speed internet access in rural communities. It's also critical that the next governor apply more pressure to telecom companies to stop robocalls.*

Infrastructure

Continued investment in our rural communities is critical. Infrastructure is not only essential to local communities but also provides critical links to global markets for agriculture and other industries.

What is your plan to provide the resources necessary to maintain Kentucky's current infrastructure and to expand it?

Andy Beshear: *Kentucky's infrastructure is in desperate need of repair. Making our infrastructure safer, more reliable, and more efficient will support Kentucky agriculture. I'll invest in new and updated roads and bridges and make needed repairs to our water systems to keep Kentuckians safe. And I'll make it a priority to build the I-69 bridge in my first term, which will open up Western Kentucky to new growth in agriculture and other areas.*

Matt Bevin: *Moving forward, transportation areas of focus will continue to center on addressing critical safety and congestion needs; asset preservation through programs like Bridging Kentucky, which is addressing 1,000 bridges in need of repair; and supporting economic growth and job creation.*

In 2016, I directed the Transportation Cabinet to develop a data-driven, objective process – a program called SHIFT – to evaluate and compare highway projects with each new road plan. The program has been successful in providing an objective scoring methodology to prioritize critically needed projects with limited transportation funding.

The Transportation Cabinet is currently in the process of finalizing the 2020 collaborative SHIFT plan to determine critical transportation needs going forward. Once finalized, our administration will take the lead in communicating these needs and partnering with legislators to determine how to best keep Kentucky moving ahead.



Kentucky's capitol building

Will you support the rural secondary and county road aid programs and continuation of the 22.2 percent allocation of the state gasoline tax revenue for rural roads?

Matt Bevin: The city and county road systems account for more than 60,000 miles of Kentucky's 90,000 total miles. I have directed the Transportation Cabinet to reach out to county and city local officials with more than 250 meetings across the Commonwealth to better understand their needs. Our takeaway from these many discussions is that these local systems are in dire need of additional funding. I strongly support additional funding for these road systems. Changing the gas tax and protecting the way those funds are allocated to the local level is an important discussion that I am committed to working on.

Andy Beshear: Yes. My administration will support rural secondary and county road aid programs by maintaining the 22.2 percent allocation of state gasoline tax revenue for rural roads. That's why I have proposed that we put \$22.5 million recovered from Marathon Petroleum in a price gouging settlement directly into repairs of our roads and bridges.

Insurance

Kentucky Farm Bureau got in the insurance business to serve our members back in the 1940's because farmers had difficulty getting affordable insurance coverage for farms, homes, and automobiles. Kentucky needs strong insurance companies capable of paying claims during disasters.

How would you propose changes to the current legal environment in Kentucky that seems to encourage lawsuits and litigation?

Andy Beshear: As governor, I will enforce the laws on the books, and work with the legislature to change laws that are unfair to Kentucky families.

Matt Bevin: Unlike the other candidate in this race, I am a strong supporter of liability reform and have worked to pass reforms in the General Assembly. We have a lot of work to do to make Kentucky's legal climate fair.

- I favor reform of the collateral source rule- Currently, personal injury plaintiffs are allowed to present the jury with evidence of the entire "sticker price" for their hospital bills. But, as we all know, almost no one pays the full price. The collateral source rule prevents juries from finding out how much was actually paid (i.e., by insurance, discounts, etc.), and this results in plaintiffs getting windfalls. This should be reformed.

- I would like to see Kentucky amend the peer-review statute to apply to medical malpractice cases. Doctors should be able to engage in peer-review efforts to reduce medical errors without it being used against them. Due to a loophole created by Kentucky's Supreme Court 20 years ago, our current peer-review statute does not apply to medical malpractice

lawsuits. We need to fix this.

- Reform of the Affidavit of Merit-We should join other states in requiring medical malpractice plaintiffs to submit an affidavit from a doctor stating that their lawsuit has merit before they can file it.

- Premises liability reform- It needs to be more difficult for trespassers to sue property owners and it should also be more difficult to sue property owners for hazards that are open and obvious.

- Attorney's Fee Reform- Statutes that allow plaintiffs to recover their attorney's fees should be reformed to discourage plaintiffs from using the prospect of large fee awards to extort settlements in meritless cases

I also would support:

- Caps on non-economic damages and punitives
- Judicial selection reform
- Loser pays legislation

Would you support tort reform in the Commonwealth to help make Kentucky more business-friendly?

Matt Bevin: See above: I have championed tort reform and other efforts to enact common sense liability reform measures. I championed medical review panel legislation and other reforms that have passed, but we have more work to do as a Commonwealth. Due to adverse Court rulings, I support a Constitutional Amendment to clarify the power of the General Assembly to enact further liability reforms.

In closing, I would like to thank Kentucky Farm Bureau for all that they provide not only our agricultural community but to the Commonwealth in general.

I share many values with the KFB membership. I have taken a bold stand in areas like:

Fighting for the sanctity of life by signing six pro-life bills into law and directing my legal team to defend Kentucky's pro-life laws in court. I was proud to be endorsed recently by the Susan B. Anthony List and National Right To Life

Standing unapologetically for our 2nd Amendment rights including signing concealed carry legislation into law and by being by clearly communicating my support for the right to bear arms in a video that has been viewed by tens of millions of Americans. I am endorsed by the NRA and the National Association for Gun Rights.

Working hard along with the First Lady and faith community partners to protect our families, keep families together and to improve our foster care and adoption systems. We are leading the nation in these efforts with initiatives like Uniting Kentucky.

And finally, fighting the opioid scourge. We are seeing progress and recently launched our Hope and Help initiative but this is an ongoing battle.

Andy Beshear: As the top law enforcement officer in the state, getting justice is very important to me. That means those who are harmed should have access to courts. Those courts should conduct proceedings that are fair to all parties.



STRESS ON THE FARM, FROM A COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

How rural communities are being affected and what some are doing to help

While only about two percent of the U.S. population is involved in farming, for rural states like Kentucky, when farm income is down, those agriculture communities feel the impact, as well as affecting more than just that two percent.

As farm families continue to face a tough ag economy and high stress levels, their rural community neighbors are facing these issues with them.

Dr. Will Snell, an agricultural economist with the University of Kentucky (UK) College of Agriculture, Food and Environment said the impact is being felt but will vary from place to place.

“Obviously with many of our farmers experiencing a 30 to 50 percent reduction in net farm income over the past five years, local economies will experience a definite impact, but of course it varies from main street to main street,” he said. “While lower farm incomes impact farm equipment and infrastructure investment, it also affects non-ag farm spending on both goods and services.”

Research indicates that every dollar of ag income in the local economy generates about 50 cents of additional income through indirect and induced effects, with spillover effects on other related sectors within those local economies.

It stands to reason that when economic or other stress-related issues are being felt on the farm, the local communities are feeling the same, but recognizing those issues may not always be the case.

Dr. Deborah Reed, a professor at the UK College of Nursing, and a long-time rural healthcare professional, has seen the stress situation affecting farmers and the communities in which they live. She said that often non-farming people in these smaller communities don’t realize a stress issue even exists on the farm.

“Historically, we have seen rural communities as being so tight-knit, with everybody supporting each other,” she said.

“I think that used to be true in the slower times of life. But, now that we have such a fast-paced world, we have, in rural communities, something very similar to what is found in urban areas called ‘Garage Door Syndrome.’ You come home and put your car in the garage and close the door.”

But farmers are often reluctant to share some of their more personal issues with friends and neighbors anyway, adding to that unawareness.

“Farmers are still viewed as stoic individuals who can do anything on their own. And they try to keep up that front and show no weakness or cracks in their armor,” said Reed. “And if they do show those cracks, they often fear that the public will have another way to attack them.”

Reed noted that farmers often feel persecuted by a non-informed public, adding to an already high stress level and fortifying that need to always appear strong regardless of what their emotional issues may be.

One way she has found that helps farm families release some of the stress and take a harder look at safety and health issues, is through conducting local farm theaters which are based on 25 years of research with farm families across America.

Reed said farmers wanted these plays to be stories they could relate to, based on the reality of farming and situations found in their own communities.

“The plays are really three short skits that last about 15 minutes and the actors, which are the local farmers or family members of that particular community, read their scripts based on some of the stories told by these local farmers. Some of the farm couples even refer to these events as ‘date nights.’”

Reed added that this concept of telling the farmers’ stories through these plays has gained national, and even international attention.

"This idea is based on listening to their stories, learning what their challenges are and having to figure out a way where we could promote health, safety and well-being of that farm family in a way that is acceptable and affordable to the community," she said.

Events such as the ones centered around the farm theaters often bring community members together in an effort to bring awareness to health and safety issues on the farm. But, more and more rural towns and cities are hosting much larger events to showcase the value of their local farms especially when it comes to the food they produce.

Seven years ago, LaRue County Farm Bureau saw a need to help educate their rural community about its farming industry. Out of that concern came an event known as "AGStravaganza."

Local farmer Ryan Bivens has been involved in the event since its inception. He said the event has changed over the years, but the message is still the same.

"The first few years we offered actual farm tours and always had a finale event at the end of the day," he said. "Then, four years ago, we decided to change it up and simply do a nice sit-down dinner on the square in downtown Hodgenville and only use LaRue County raised food."

Bivens noted that in making the change, organizers wanted something that would be very elegant and impressive with a decor much like what you would see in a fine dining establishment.

The idea has taken off to the point that attendance has doubled since its beginning. The most recent AGStravaganza brought nearly 500 people to the table to enjoy the homegrown goodness local farms had produced.

"I think this event, along with several other things we do in our community to promote agriculture, has certainly shined a light on the awareness to many individuals about just how important farming is to a rural economy," said Bivens. "As a farmer I feel much more respected by my fellow citizens, whether it be when I'm moving a piece of machinery down the road, or simply the fact that farming is associated as a business in our community by

community leaders where that has not always been the case."

Bivens pointed out misconceptions non-farmers often have about farm families in what they do and how they do it. But events such as the one held in Hodgenville every year helps to bridge that gap.

"This event is one that everyone in our community recognizes and knows about, allowing us to have a door opened to the non-farm folks so that we can have the serious discussions about things like this down-turned farm economy and suicide rates among farmers, right now," he said.

Bivens added that, as a farmer, he is "one of the world's worst" to share his feelings about how tough times are on the farm. But, because of events like the AGStravaganza, the misconceptions people have about farmers being rich because of their big, shiny pieces of equipment or perhaps because of all the land they own or tend, have been put to rest.

There are many communities now hosting events similar to the one in LaRue County and, as has been the case there, community members are learning more and more about their farming neighbors.

"These types of events can bring members of the community together to get to know their farmers a little better and it really helps uplift the whole community," said Reed. "A good relationship between farm and non-farm members of a community is incredibly important. Because of the synergy and the positiveness that comes out of a neighbor helping a neighbor."

Reed added that she believes people are beginning to realize that our communities are the backbone of the American dream and no one can do everything by themselves.

"But, if we couple together with our neighbors, we can do so much more. Just by the larger community understanding what the farmer does I think it causes us to be more kind to each other, and kindness can go a long way in helping farm families feel wanted, needed, and valued."



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Collaboration between WAVE's four river counties has been the key to the initiative's success, so far.

WAVE IS ROLLING IN WEST KENTUCKY'S RIVER-COUNTIES

Collaboration has been key in keeping this economic development initiative moving forward.

Over the last three years, the West Kentucky river counties of Ballard, Carlisle, Hickman and Fulton have been at the center of an economic development initiative known as the West Kentucky Alliance for a Vibrant Economy (WAVE.)

It has been an initiative born out of the desire to be proactive in the area's approach to economic development, and agriculture has been one of the top drivers in an area that has seen its share of industry losses over the years.

But what makes WAVE so unique has been the ability to bring four different counties, along with their local government, businesses and agricultural leaders together with common goals of creating rural development opportunities in the area, utilizing new ideas and existing resources.

Justin Puckett, the agency manager at Ballard County Farm Bureau has been involved with WAVE since its inception and sees opportunities from different perspectives.

"I wear two hats. I am a small business owner and I also represent the farm community, and in meeting with farm families and understanding the things that they are going through, my sense of urgency is, what can we do and what is the vehicle that will get us from A to B," he said. "And I think the driver is economic development, utilizing agriculture and the resources we have."

That economic development factor has been at the forefront of the initiative since it began, looking at a number of key components to enable the project to move forward. With more than 60 partnerships in place to support WAVE, one of those components included hiring a consultant to help bring ideas to the table and advocate locally, statewide and nationally.

Steven Elder is doing just that, telling the story of WAVE and the river counties to bring interest to the ideas, and results to the initiative.

"In our own communities, I try to let people know how important agriculture is in this region, but I also go across the state spreading that message, and even to Washington, D.C., because people there may not know where we are, what we do, or what is important to us," he said.

In keeping with the collaborative effort that is at the center of WAVE, Elder decided to take a look at agricultural numbers from the four counties as a whole, with stellar results.

"If you combine the four counties, you're looking at \$359 million worth of product sold. So that is money going in and out of banks of ag producers, and that's a lot of money. It is a lot of businesses, and a lot of people," he said.

It also makes this four-county area the top producing ag area in the state, a fact that could prove to be very attractive for outside interest looking for a business home, added Elder.

In looking at those numbers and seeing the potential in value added products or other related industries, is it the hope of WAVE members to utilize the value of their overall ag industry.

"We are within a day's drive to Nashville, Memphis and St. Louis, which are some of our larger markets," said Elder. In hearing the Kentucky Department of Agriculture tells us people are looking to source locally, we have products we can produce right here. We just have to have the people willing to make the capital investment and do that here."

Bob Wilson, Administrator for Ballard County Schools and WAVE Chairman, said a key to the success seen so far has to do with working together.

"I'm not sure we had a light-bulb moment in looking at our ag industry as one, but we are one region. That is the focus, we are not advocating specifically for a county, but rather four of them, with our four county judges on board, meeting together, wanting to help each other out," he said. "So, if a company comes to Carlisle County, then that is just as good for those in Hickman County. We should combine our resources and help each other. When you do that, you realize you have this big agriculture industry here, and what that could mean in developing and attracting other industries."

In taking their message to the masses each year, WAVE and community members, along with state leaders come together to recognize area farmers and to further spread the word about the initiative at their Ag Day event.

WAVE also had a presence at this year's Kentucky State Fair in the Pride of the Counties section. Puckett said the reaction from people, who may not have even known where the counties are located, was amazing.

"I was blown away with the reactions and we accomplished what we wanted to by having folks from that area seeing us there and knowing that we really have a buy-in to what we're doing," he said. "One of the neat things I did not anticipate was the tourism aspect. We had a lot of brochures that showcased our state park and our bed and breakfast businesses, and I can't tell you the people who were really interested in that; who have never been this far west."

Along with the tourism industry, and the proximity to areas of large populations, the four-river-county area is home to an abundance of educational opportunities with the West Kentucky Community and Technical College campus in Paducah, Murray State's presence with a regional campus, and the agricultural research farm at Eagle Rest Plantation.

Wilson said all the partners involved in WAVE have a voice in what is happening with the initiative and what happens next.

"We are partners and we all have a say in what is taking place. It is so good to come to our meetings and see so many people on the same page and so excited about this," he said.

“I can honestly say there is not one person seated at our table who has an agenda other than promoting this area and that is what is refreshing. When you sit at the meeting you can feel like you're making a difference.”

- Bob Wilson

One of the newest government leaders taking a seat at that table is Ballard County Judge Executive Todd Cooper. He said county lines no longer exist, when it comes to this project.

"We are in a global economy, now, especially from a farm perspective, and because of the success we have seen thus far with WAVE, it goes to show that when you get four counties working together, the things you can do are amazing," he said. "If the farmers are doing well, the rest of the community is, too."



River transportation by way of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers offers an infrastructure advantage to the four river-county area

With any initiative, challenges are realized, as well as the triumphs. One thing WAVE leaders see as a challenge deals with infrastructure, notably the lack of a four-lane highway through much of the area. But plans are in place to make that happen.

"We are up for a grant for a four-lane, and while it won't get all the way to the river, at least, it is in our area and every little piece is important," said Puckett.

That river happens to include the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, an advantage the four-river county area has that no other area does, and something local leaders want to capitalize on.

"Every day we watch millions of dollars go by our area heading to international ports and we feel like taking a look at a port is one of our big pieces," said Wilson. "The county judges are looking all the time, but the first thing we want to make sure is that we don't take away from the river ports already here. However, there is also a big picture to think about in this area, and a river port would be a big advantage for our area and the entire region."

Allan Pace, a local farmer and WAVE supporter, said the initiative is a good idea and should be good for their region especially when it comes to that mighty river system that is so close to his farm.

"Who could imagine that I'd be talking about things like international trade and leaders in Washington sitting in a combine in Ballard County, but we are, and I think the WAVE project will really help our region, especially being this close to such a large river system," he said. "The crops I'm harvesting right now, could be at ports in New Orleans within a couple of days and off to international markets. That would help our farms so much."

If you could take away only two things from this initiative, at this point in time, it would likely be how important agriculture is to this four-county region, and what a model of cooperation it has become as local leaders work to keep this WAVE rolling forward.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS “VITAL” TO KENTUCKY AGRICULTURE

USMCA, foreign agricultural attaché tour and new deal with Japan topping trade discussions in the Commonwealth

In September 2018, the White House announced a trade deal had been reached with two of the United States' largest trading partners, Canada and Mexico.

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) was formed to replace the 25-year-old North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which went into effect in 1994.

Since that announcement, Mexico has ratified the agreement and Canada has initiated the process for ratification. While President Trump began the ratification process in May, Congress has yet to come to terms on passage of the trade deal much to the chagrin of American farmers and the agricultural industry.

Last year, American agriculture exported \$20.7 billion in ag products to Canada and \$19 billion to Mexico. This new deal promises to be even more valuable to farm families, according to most agricultural organizations.

American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall recently stated, “We need Congress to pass the USMCA trade agreement to bring certainty to our already-positive trade relationship with our closest neighbors and build on that relationship with new opportunities and commitments. The benefits of the USMCA are clear. Estimates indicate we will gain more than \$2 billion in additional farm exports and \$65 billion in gross domestic product once the agreement is in place.”

This kind of agreement is greatly needed, as farm families continue to battle a tough agricultural economy, said Kentucky Farm Bureau President Mark Haney.

“Our farmers have been very patient as we have waited to see this agreement get moved through Congress,” he said. “But, that will only last so long. We need it to be passed and we need it to happen as soon as possible.”

Haney added that the agriculture industry fared well under the old NAFTA agreement and the USMCA will prove to be even better, once Congress ratifies it.

“Mexico and Canada are two of our largest trading partners and the benefits this agreement will provide to all three countries can't be understated,” he said. “Getting this trade agreement passed now couldn't come at a better time. Our farm families need the certainty this deal will bring.”

In the wake of the trade difficulties the ag industry has faced over the last several months, finding new markets and shoring up existing ones has been a top priority for Farm Bureau and other agriculture organizations across the country.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture recently hosted a number of foreign agricultural attachés as part a tour of farms and ag-related businesses, conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture's Foreign Ag Service (USDA FAS).

Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles said trade missions like this one are a vital way for the Department to connect state producers with international markets.

“Kentucky needs international trade, but more importantly, the rest of the world needs Kentucky agriculture,” he said. “We know there are a lot of discussions nationally, and internationally, about United States trade policy. I would wager that getting folks out on a Kentucky farm, talking to our producers, and learning about our farm economy is just as important – if not more important – than a bunch of negotiators in Washington, D.C. talking to one another in a board room.”

Dr. Josyline Javelosa, the Agriculture Attaché to the United States and the Americas from the Philippines was a member of the tour. She said the trip supplied inspiration and ideas from America.

“Especially now with a new (Filipino) agriculture leadership, we would like to treat agriculture as a business and make agri-business as an industry and we are looking for partners,” she said. “We are very good trading partners and we'd like to have more American businesses in the Philippines.”

Javelosa added that the U.S. is their top agricultural export market and values the relationship they have with this country and Kentucky.

“**The sharing of ideas can also build relationships which are very important in this business so bringing us all together in this USDA ag tour can make our relationships even stronger,” she said.**

- Dr. Josyline Javelosa

One of the stops on the Kentucky portion of the tour included Hayden Farms in Ohio County and a tour of their poultry facility.

Daniel Hayden invited attendees into one of his poultry barns, designed for viewing, and said having ag-related events like this one really helps the industry.

“While we truly value the domestic market we have built for our poultry products, international trade is very much a part of the equation when it comes to staying profitable on the farm,” he said. “From this tour, our hope is these ag officials will take back to their countries the news that Kentucky farms are willing and ready to work with them through new or existing trade agreements.”

Hayden added that trade deals such as the USMCA are critical to his success and other poultry producers in Kentucky and across the country.

“Mexico and Canada are two of the top export markets for

U.S. poultry and are markets we must have to remain sustainable,” he said.

While the USMCA has been getting a lion’s share of pending trade news, a new agreement was reached with Japan on September 25, 2019, that will lower tariffs and put U.S. farmers and ranchers on a level playing field to compete in Japan and with countries that participate in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, according to American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall.

“Japan is American agriculture’s fourth-largest export destination and vital to the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of farms and the families who live on them,” he said. “We export nearly \$13 billion a year in agricultural products to Japan, even as we continue to face steep tariffs on many exports. The time for trade wars has come and gone. We are thankful the administration has reached this deal and we urge trade negotiators to achieve many more like it. Farmers and ranchers need to get back to doing what they do best: feeding a hungry world that needs what they produce.”

While there is hope that trade deals on the table will soon move forward, Haney said the advocacy efforts demonstrated so far, must continue.

“We always welcome good news such as the Japan trade deal, but there is still much advocacy work to do to get other agreements in place,” he said. “We must keep up our efforts, as agricultural advocates, to get these across the finish line.”



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COUNTY CORNER

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities



Campbell County

Members of the Campbell County Board posed with Senator Wil Schroder during their recent annual meeting.



Clark County

Clark County Farm Bureau Board & Women's Committee members cooked for the opening of the new GRC Football Stadium as well as gave out over 300 T-shirt's to the students.



Elliot County

The Elliott County Board of Directors recently honored retired Board Secretary/Treasurer Hildreth Pennington for her years of dedication to the members of Elliott County.



Grant County

Local and State KFB Board members gathered for the county's annual meeting.



Henry County

Pictured from left are CSR's Barbara Whitaker, Megan Franklin, and Tiffany Fish working at the Henry County Member Appreciation Day at the Henry County Fairgrounds.



Kenton County

Pictured is KFB President Mark Haney addressing Kenton County members at the Kenton County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting as they celebrated their 100th as a charter county.



Knott County

Knott County Farm Bureau Agency Manager Mike Fannin riding in the Cornbread Festival Parade.



Logan County

KFB's 1919 Model T Ford Pickup was on hand for the Logan County Farm Bureau annual meeting. Most of the board members gathered for this photo taken prior to the meeting.



Lyon County

Dr. Jay Akridge, left, is pictured holding a portrait of himself that will hang in the Lyon County Farm Bureau Hall of Fame, while his nephew, Logan Akridge is shown holding a portrait of his grandfather, Dean Akridge. Jay was inducted into the Hall of Fame and Dean was retroactively inducted at the Farm Bureau's annual dinner.

COUNTY CORNER

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities



Mason County

Mason County board members pose with the grain safety apparatus they helped purchase to save farmers that may be caught in a grain bin as part of their safety day for educating six-graders.



Mercer County

Future young farmer Hadleigh Drury, is the daughter of the Mercer County Farm Bureau Young Farmer Hunter Drury.



Pendleton County

Pendleton County Farm Bureau Young Farmer Chair Eli Mann presented their Young Farm Family of the Year Award to Lance and Brianna Fisher during the county's annual meeting.



Perry County

Perry County Farm Bureau President Mary Lou Turner presented a check, to be used to develop an outdoor classroom. Those pictured include: Janet Smith, Perry County Agency Manager, Michelle Stacy, Teacher, Curtis Deaton, Parent and AUS, Jamie Turner, Principal, and Mary Lou Turner, President. The students are Harper Thornsberry, Grayer Thornsberry, and Ryan Deaton.



Russell County

Russell County Farm Bureau along with the Russell County Extension Service hosts a farm safety day for over 400 youth in the county.



Scott County

Scott County Young Farmer Chair Daniel Smith presented their Young Farmer Award to Jessica and Matthew McQuade.



Shelby County

Members of the Shelby County Women's Committee attended the District 5 Women's Planning Meeting in Nelson County.



Todd County

The Todd County Farm Bureau Federation has donated a Turtle Tube Grain Rescue device to the Todd County Rescue Squad. It will be used to aid in grain bin rescues. Pictured are William Randolph, Todd County Rescue Squad Chief and Directors of the Todd County Farm Bureau.



Wolfe County

Wolfe County FFA celebrating Kentucky Farm Bureau's Centennial Year during the recent Silver Mine Festival Parade.

MARKETS

LATE SEASON STRENGTH SEEN IN SOYBEAN EXPORTS AND CRUSH

U.S. soybean exports concluded the 2018/19 crop year with a flourish, according to USDA economists. At 180 million bushels, August export inspections of soybeans totaled an all-time high for the month. The 2018/19 marketing year displayed an atypical export pattern – August shipments were nearly as high as those in October and November. The unseasonably strong revival in U.S. export demand was stimulated by competitive prices and a slowing of shipments from Brazil. China accounted for much of the August gain in U.S. soybean shipments, which surged when sales booked earlier this year were finally shipped. Thus, USDA raised its 2018/19 estimate of U.S. exports by 45 million bushels to 1.745 billion. Domestic soybean crushing rebounded in July to 179.5 million bushels after slumping to 157.6 million bushels in June, when some processors took downtime. The late seasonal strength prompted an increase in USDA's estimate of the 2018/19 crush by 20 million bushels to 2.085 billion. While this summer's strong demand trims carryout stocks by 65 million bushels, the revised forecast of 1.005 billion bushels still represents an all-time high. Thanks to a smaller 2019 soybean crop, USDA expects stocks will drop to 640 million bushels by August 31.

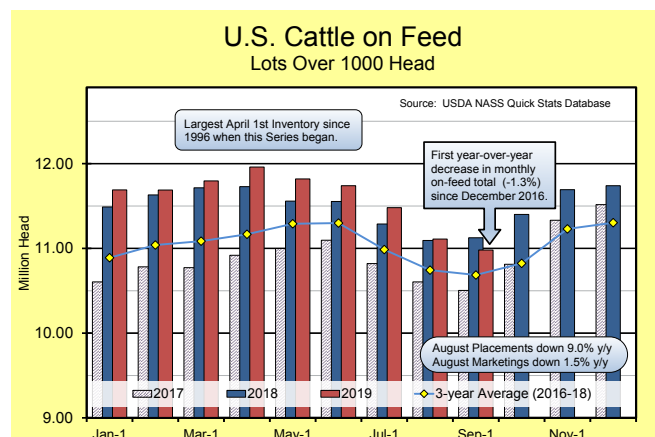
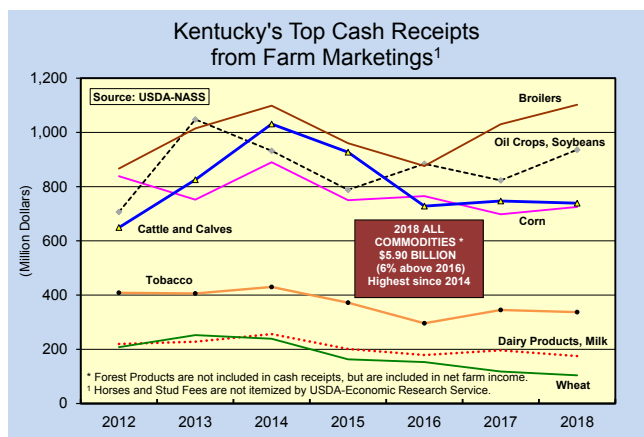
EGG PRICES RISE SHARPLY ON IMPROVED S&D BALANCE

U.S. table egg production totaled 8.25 billion during August 2019, up two percent from last August. August egg production per 100 layers was 2,413 eggs, up one percent from August 2018. Layers producing table or market type eggs in the U.S. on September 1, 2019 totaled 331 million. Rate of lay per day on September 1, 2019, averaged 77.8 eggs per 100 layers, up one percent from September 1, 2018. Despite rising egg production, wholesale egg prices (New York, Grade A Large) climbed 61 cents during August from 57 cents to 118 cents per dozen. Prices averaged 92.9 cents

per dozen for the month, an increase of nearly 49 percent compared to July, but still almost 22 percent below August 2018. After six months of depressed egg prices, prices rallied on an improving supply and demand balance. Weekly shell egg inventories available for marketing fell to the lowest inventory of the year. The decrease in inventory is likely due to a shrinking table egg layer flock and increased retail activity associated with the new school year. Upward pressure on prices is expected. The average price is forecast at 85 cents per dozen in the third quarter and \$1.00 per dozen in the fourth quarter. The 2020 price forecast was revised up to 99 cents per dozen; this compares to 90.5 cents for 2019 and 137.6 cents in 2018.

U.S. BEEF EXPORTS TO INCREASE IN 2020

U.S. beef exports increased one percent year-over-year in July to 117,842 metric tons(mt), according to data released by USDA and compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). Export value (\$720.4 million) was down slightly from a year ago but still the seventh-highest monthly total on record. January-July beef exports were down 1.6 percent from a year ago in volume (766,607 mt) while export value (\$4.75 billion) was slightly below last year's record pace. Beef export value per head of fed slaughter averaged \$308.47 in July, down seven percent from a year ago, while January-July export value averaged \$311.51 per head, down two percent. July exports accounted for 14.4 percent of total U.S. beef production and 11.8 percent for muscle cuts only, down from 15.1 percent and 12.9 percent, respectively, last year. For the first seven months of the year, exports accounted for 14.1% of total beef production and 11.6% for muscle cuts – each down one-half percentage point from a year ago. USDA forecasts beef exports at 3.14 billion pounds this year and 3.24 billion pounds in 2020. Enactment of the USMCA or new trade agreements with Japan and China could lift this forecast.



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CANDID CONVERSATION

KFB Candid Conversation presents a discussion about the topical issues facing the agricultural industry and rural communities in a question and answer format. In this column, Brandon Davis, State FFA Advisor and Agriculture Education Consultant with the Kentucky Department of Education discusses ag-education, FFA, and the benefits of being involved in both.

What are some of the commonalities you see as FFA Advisor, Ag-Ed Consultant, as well as serving on the KFB Board?

I became one of the program consultants at the Department of Education in November of 2011, and by virtue of that position it makes me the state FFA advisor, as well. So, we've always said that in agricultural education our main focus is helping to develop those students to have an appreciation for agriculture, and as part of that, the FFA organization is the leadership portion of agriculture education. Both of these entities work closely together, in that you can't have FFA without agricultural education. Then, when you look at Farm Bureau, the largest portion of their policy book deals with education, and KFB has always had a long-standing role of supporting education. They have a number of programs and opportunities for elementary, middle and high school students so they can learn more about, what I would say is the most important industry in Kentucky, in the country, and across the world.

Do you think there are still some misconceptions that exist about FFA and ag-ed?

Oh, I'd say there are definitely still misconceptions out there. When the organization was originally formed in 1928, the letters "FFA" stood for "Future Farmers of America," and that was the original intent; to have an organization that would help young men be able to run their own farms one day. Many things have changed since then including it is not just for young men anymore. And over the years, it has become very clear that agriculture has grown far beyond just being about production, even though that is still the backbone and the most important piece of agriculture. But, when you look at the business, the science, the environmental pieces of the ag industry, FFA now spans a much larger scope where our members have interests in all facets of this industry. We find that when students enroll in ag classes they sometimes think that FFA is not for them, but they soon find out there is indeed a place for them in the organization because agriculture is such a vast industry that takes on so many different career options.



Brandon Davis, State FFA Advisor, Agriculture Education Consultant with the Kentucky Department of Education, KFB Board Member

In your opinion, how important is ag education for students today?

I believe that every single student in the country should take an agricultural education course, recognizing that I'm probably a little biased. But, when we talk to employers across the state and we ask what do you need from employees, often, the things that they're telling us is, they need people who are able to communicate, and work with other people, and understand the value of coming to work on time, and having the ability to recognize the importance of doing a good day's work. Those types of employability skills are what we always see in the vast majority of our FFA members and of agricultural education students because when they're in those classes, they really learn the value of how to communicate with another person. They learn how to work with a group of people maybe they've never met before, in order to accomplish a task. When you look at education and its focus on the importance of career readiness, in that transition from school life, to adult life, to the work-life, it's clear we need to find ways to continually interject those skills. There's always going to be an importance in the value of understanding math, science, social studies and language arts for students. But, we also have to have students who are able to enter the workforce and have those skills that have been a part of FFA for 90 years. Agriculture education, as a whole, is doing a lot of good for our current students and our future workforce.

So often we see such a difference in students after they have spent some time in a student organization such as FFA. Why do think that is so?

I wish there was a way to say this is the exact formula and if you do this, you'll always end up with that. But, I think one of the most important things is, especially with FFA, when someone joins, there's this kind of uncompromising goal to push yourself. We always talk about growing leaders, building communities and strengthening agriculture and part of that "growing leaders" is really about asking these students what they want to do, and what their goals are, whether it's a career or just personal goals. And then, it's about really helping them push through to get to the other side. Some of my best moments as a teacher came from listening to seniors who said thank you for pushing me, and believing in me, and for really seeing what my potential was because I didn't see it myself. Once you get that buy-in from those members, then they really want to start to figure out how far they can go and it's just mind-blowing how amazing these young people are.

What are your thoughts about the importance of partnerships as it relates to education today?

There was probably a time when education kind of seemed like it existed in its own silo. Teachers and school administrators did the teaching and the focus was not on bringing in the community to be a part of that. The fact is, that was a very flawed idea. Now, we see the desire to reach out to the community to help partner in the education process. From a career standpoint, bringing local leaders to let young people know what career opportunities are out there, and what kind of skills are needed for these future employees. Finding those groups that support education and allowing them to be able to provide support whether it's in time, talent or treasure is invaluable. Education today is about bringing in folks from post-secondary, from different community groups and organizations, and from different sectors in terms of industries to come together and ensure that we have the best opportunities for our students across the state.

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TOTAL 2019 RAINFALL IN KENTUCKY AT A SURPLUS SO FAR. REALLY?

A wet spring has kept total precipitation numbers above normal, but a late summer drought has other plans.

It is hard to believe that measurable precipitation in Kentucky is above normal for the year, but that's how much it rained in the first half of the year.

And as wet as it was then, it is as dry, now. It's so dry, nearly all of Kentucky has made the U.S. Drought Monitor map. From the abnormally dry stage covering most counties, to some areas being listed as in severe drought, the dry conditions are prompting some local governments to thinking about their drought mitigation programs; not to mention the majority of counties have instituted "no-burn" rules.

Prior to this year, the driest September on record across Kentucky was 1897 with an average of 0.30 inches of rainfall. That record has a chance to fall once official rainfall totals are released for 2019.

Possibly adding insult to injury is the fact that October is normally one of the driest months of the year in Kentucky... normally.

Dr. Stuart Foster, state climatologist and director of the Kentucky Mesonet, said the dry weather pattern has shown strong persistence, but there is hope of increasing rain chances by mid October.

"Typically, this is a dry time of year when we look at September and October," he said. "The average statewide rainfall in October is 3.35 inches. In contrast the wettest month of the year, on average, is May with 5.29 inches."

Just last year, the state nearly broke its record for precipitation set in 2011 and Foster said with the amount of rain received earlier in the year, Kentucky was set to have another record rainy year. But all that changed when the water dried up and the hot temperatures stayed around into October.

"It's interesting and very challenging from the drought perspective that it has

hardly rained over the last month, and in some areas for a couple of months, yet if we look at annual totals, we have places in the state that are 10 to 20 percent above normal for the year, as a whole," he said.

Foster also pointed out that in looking at the weather outlook for October, there are no clear signals as to expect more rain than normal will show up given the state is normally dry at this time of year, and it would take a pretty significant change in the weather patterns to bring the amount of rainfall needed.

With that data, it may seem hard to understand how the state could be in a drought. But, the one-two punch of no

rain and near-record high temperatures over the last several weeks have created the situation, indicating how quickly drought conditions can develop, noted Foster.

And it is affecting the majority of residents in Kentucky. According to the latest information from the National Integrated Drought Information System, over 2.6 million Kentuckians are in drought areas with an additional 1.5 million in abnormally dry areas.

While there are no crystal balls to look into and see exactly what is going to happen when it comes to the weather, Foster did say it is likely that warmer temperatures will be the case for the immediate future.

"The one thing we are a little more confident in is that we are likely to continue to be warmer than normal over the next month and even the seasonal outlook suggests that we have an enhanced likelihood of above normal temperatures but no strong signal precipitation-wise."

(Editor's note: Look for Dr. Foster's Candid Conversation interview in the November KFB News.)



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KENTUCKY WINTER WHEAT PRODUCTION UP 27 PERCENT FROM 2018

USDA, NASS, Kentucky Field Office
The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2019 Small Grains Summary report showed an increase in Kentucky's winter wheat production from a year ago.

A higher yield per acre drove the increase, along with an increase in the number of acres harvested for grain.

"Rain hampered seeding last fall and the crop struggled early, but generally favorable conditions thereafter helped the crop finish well," said David Knopf, director of the NASS Eastern Mountain Regional Office in Kentucky. "Yield was above the five-year average, while production was below the five-year average."

Kentucky farmers harvested 25.1 million bushels of winter wheat during the summer of 2019 according to the Kentucky Field Office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. This was up 27 percent from the previous year. Yield is estimated at 76.0 bushels per acre, up 10.0 bushels from 2018.

Farmers seeded 460,000 acres last fall, up 10,000 acres from 2018. Area harvested for grain totaled 330,000 acres. Acres for other uses totaled 130,000 acres and was used as cover crop, cut as hay, chopped for silage or abandoned.

Production of all wheat for the U.S. totaled 1.96 billion bushels, up 4 percent from 2018. Grain area harvested totaled 38.1 million acres, down 4 percent from the previous year. The United States yield is estimated at 51.6 bushels per acre, up 4.0 bushels from last year.



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DOWN THE BACKROADS

By Tim Thornberry

Call me old fashioned but one thing taught to me at an early age was to say “thank you” when a situation called for it and sometimes, even when it didn’t.

And it shouldn’t come as something too difficult to do. It should not hurt you physically to offer those two kind words to show your appreciation to another person.

Yet, more and more I am failing to hear it at the grocery store or a restaurant, or on a telephone call or in an email.

Of course, a “thank you” to one was most often replied to by the same or at least “you’re welcome.”

For instance, I was in a restaurant the other day and when presented my food, I said my customary “thanks” to which the person replied, “no problem.”

Now to some, that would be completely acceptable, and it did not, in any way, anger me. But it did make me think about when “no problem” became a standard reply.

I hope it’s no problem for me to walk into an establishment to spend my hard-earned money on goods or services.

“You bet” is another one I hear a lot more these days. One of my first public jobs was in a small-town food mart and believe me, if I had replied to a customer, “you bet,” my boss would have shown me the door. “Thank you and you are welcome” was the standard and nothing else was acceptable or expected.

Now, I know your first thought might be, it must be youngsters who are making these courtesy mistakes, but that isn’t necessarily the case. I have often found the younger folks to be on top of their game in the courtesy department.

Case in point; just recently, on a business trip, I stopped into a rural marketplace and upon getting checked out, I offered my usual “thank you,” but the cashier didn’t reply at all. In fact, she looked out the window. And she was more in my age-range; far from being a youngster.

I have discovered, as I have gotten older, my kindness filter has developed some holes in it.

As I walked away, I couldn’t help but say, “No, thank you,” as if to answer for this somewhat rude person.

I’m not sure she heard me and if she did, my guess is she would think I was the rude one.

Folks, simple acts of offering thanks can go a long way to the person in which you are offering it to.

And it shouldn’t just apply to those people in the retail world. We should be thanking the many teachers, first responders, military men and women, and farmers every day for all they do for us.

“A “thank you for what you do” goes a long way to those who do so much for us and usually don’t get the recognition they deserve.”

Having been behind the counter, dealing with an ever-stressful public can be trying at times. So often they don’t get that thanks and therefore learn not to give it themselves. But a simple “thank you” may calm a difficult customer or it could even make their day.

I’m not asking for much, just a simple acknowledgment of gratitude when I have offered the same.

By the way, thank you for taking the time to read this, as I travel down the backroads.

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