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KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU

— EST. 1919 —



KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU NEWS
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Cover photo by Tim Thornberry
Cows in Franklin County

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President's

COLUMN



To say it has been an eventful year for agriculture thus far, might be an understatement especially since we are just over a month into it. But farm families, in need of a little good news, have gotten just that since the holidays.

From a trade perspective, this time period has likely been the most productive in the last few years with a signed U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement that will create so much opportunity for agricultural trade between this country and our biggest export markets.

This agreement updates an antiquated North American Free Trade Agreement and could be worth billions to American farmers.

News of the Phase I Trade Agreement between the U.S. and China is also a huge win for the ag industry, bringing back much of a market American agriculture has missed due to an ongoing trade dispute.

Our advocacy efforts to get adequate broadband service to all rural areas got a boost with word of funding coming to this state for that purpose. Thanks to Hilda Legg and her work as USDA Rural Development state director for Kentucky in helping to move this initiative forward. While there is plenty of work left to do, we are making big strides to further this priority.

The last federal funding bill that was passed in December proved favorable to agriculture. The bill included a provision that retains \$1.5 billion in disaster relief; it fully funds the Farmer and Rancher Stress Assistance Network; it continues USDA's rural broadband efforts with \$550 million in grant funding for the ReConnect program, which will help expand broadband access to historically underserved communities; and retroactively extends the biodiesel tax credit to apply to 2018 and 2019, and extending it through 2022, bringing stability to producers after years of debate in Congress.

We also can expect an upturn in net farm income if USDA estimates hold true and while the bottom line is as thin as it can be, news of nearly \$6 billion in farm cash receipts for 2019, demonstrates the strength of Kentucky's agriculture industry even in the toughest of economic times.

From an organizational perspective, the recent American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention was very successful on many levels. Kentucky brought the largest group of any state including host Texas. Our Young Farmer competitors were extraordinary with a national Excellence in Agriculture winner and a top-ten finish in the Achievement Award competition, and a very strong showing in this year's Discussion Meet.

I couldn't be prouder of our Young Farmer program and the young people who always represent KFB so well.

While we love good news, there are still hills to climb. As we continue through this current General Assembly session, we must maintain a high level of advocacy to ensure our voices are heard and the issues we face on the farm reach every legislative member. The upcoming Congressional Tour will allow us to do the same with our federal delegation.

In receiving the Distinguished Service Award at the AFBF convention, Senator Pat Roberts of Kansas told the gathering that Farm Bureau is the strongest of advocacy groups in the country. Be assured that KFB will continue to do its part to make sure that never changes.

Mark Haney, President
Kentucky Farm Bureau



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“YOUR DONATION, YOUR COMMUNITY, OUR LEADERS.”

In the months of February and March, Kentuckians across the Commonwealth will make their annual trek down to their county clerk's office to renew farm license plates, or as members of Kentucky's agricultural community call them “ag tags.” When farm families visit with their county clerk this year, I hope you consider making a voluntary \$10 donation to the Kentucky Ag Tag Fund to invest back in our communities and in our leaders.

Ag Tag donations are equally divided among Kentucky 4-H, Kentucky FFA, and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) for youth development and promotional programs. As Kentucky's Agriculture Commissioner, I can personally attest to how each organization uses the dollars to promote the future of Kentucky agriculture and invest in future leaders.

At the KDA, the funds help support initiatives that promote agriculture in Kentucky, such as the Kentucky Leopold Conservation Award and the Kentucky Ag Athletes of the Year scholarship program that we conduct annually with the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA). The fund also supports many commodity organizations and events, ranging from the Kentucky Agricultural Leadership Program (KALP) to AgLand at the Kentucky State Fair. In recent years, the Ag Tag Fund has even assisted industry groups like Kentucky Women In Agriculture in sponsoring their annual conference.

Kentucky FFA uses the donated funds to support more than \$20,000 in agriculture program grants to make a capital investment in curriculum or facilities. FFA also provides \$1,000 to each of the 12 FFA regions to recognize students at regional FFA banquets and for travel scholarships for Kentucky FFA

members who are competing at the National FFA Convention. It also supports statewide initiatives such as the Kentucky FFA website, state officer leadership development, and support for teacher educators at the university level.

The Kentucky 4-H Foundation uses its portion of its Ag Tag funds to support statewide programs such as engineering events, the Issues Conference, the Performing Arts Troupe, the 4-H Summit, and state officer scholarships.

Half of the 4-H and FFA donations are returned to local councils and chapters, meaning leaders in your community are able to use those funds to cover the cost of 4-H and FFA camp and other leadership programs. County 4-H councils use Ag Tag dollars to provide opportunities such as 4-H camp scholarships and travel for life-changing, educational experiences, to enable local 4-H youth to grow as leaders and engaged citizens. FFA chapters are free to use the money to meet the greatest need in their community, such as FFA jackets for students in need or helping cover travel costs to leadership events.

At the end of the day, your donation goes back into your community to support statewide programs impacting 274,000 students. Last year, Kentucky motorists donated \$613,000 to the program, the second highest amount in history. I challenge Kentucky Farm Bureau members to join me in making the voluntary \$10 donation to invest in our community and our leaders.

[Ryan Quarles, Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner](#)



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

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Comment

COLUMN



With more than a year under my belt as the Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation's Executive Vice President, I can't begin to describe the warm welcome my wife Lorra and I have received from volunteer members throughout the state, from our board members, from the office staff, and everyone connected with this organization.

Having worked with Farm Bureau for so many years while serving in other roles, I knew the strength it possesses as an advocate and an insurance company. I knew the great reputation we have as a community neighbor. I knew the respect given to us at all levels of government; and I knew how fortunate Kentucky is to have such an organization that has, in one way or another, touched the lives of all of our citizens in so many positive ways.

If we can make the life of one person better because of initiatives we have supported, we have been successful. But, in effecting change that is beneficial to all, that is incredible to say the least, and it is what we are proudest of.

What a different place Kentucky would be if Farm Bureau was not here. I can't imagine it and pledge to do all I can in my position to make this organization the best it can be so we may continue to fulfill our mission of serving our members and striving to make life better for all.

Other than the good Lord above, and my wonderful family, I have to say our farm means the most to me. Having grown up on a family farm, I learned the value of faith and family. I learned to develop a strong work ethic, and I learned to help my neighbor when help was needed, as I would depend on them when my time came.

I can relate to our farm families across this state as they dredge through a tough farm economy. I feel the stress you do and have endured the challenges we have faced as an agriculture community.

Because of that, I like many of you, have a strong resolve to look forward rather than linger in the past. I have the same faith that a new growing season will bring a successful harvest. I have the same anticipation that better days are ahead. And I have the same assurance that Farm Bureau will stand beside us no matter what comes our way.

Those words are not coming from an executive vice president, they come from a farmer, a blessed husband and father, and a faithful steward.

I can't promise that the road ahead of us won't have hills, and curves, and a few potholes, be it on the farm, in our communities, or in our organization. But I can promise to do my best in this position I hold, to hear your concerns, to share in your times of joy, and to keep my door open to all.

Thanks to our executive committee for believing in me, to our Insurance CEO and Executive Vice President John Sparrow for the friendship we have shared, to my wife Lorra for supporting me in all we do, and to my Heavenly Father who never ever leaves my side.

And thanks to all of our Farm Bureau members, for making me a part of your family.

Drew Graham, Executive Vice President
Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation

KFB WELL REPRESENTED AT 101ST AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION CONVENTION



Kentucky Farm Bureau President Mark Haney proudly represents the Commonwealth at the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention.

With over 400 members attending, Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) was well represented during the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Annual Convention. In fact, Kentucky brought the largest member group from any state to this year's event.

KFB President Mark Haney said having such large numbers reflects on the efforts being made at the grassroots level to get members involved and keep them motivated.

"Having the largest group here is something to be proud of, and it shows the support we have from our members," he said. "We encourage our county leaders to be involved and send their officers, board of director members, and their young farmers to events like this and they are responding."

This year's total attendance reached nearly 5,000 as Farm Bureau members from across the country made their way to the Lone Star state to hear from leaders within the organization, experts in a variety of ag-related fields, and to see state competition winners compete on a national stage.

Along with the general and breakout sessions, as well as local agricultural tours, many other events took place at the convention. Each year, KFB's annual meeting winners in the Discussion Meet, Young Farm Family, and Excellence in Agriculture competitions are invited to the AFBF Annual Convention to compete at the national level.

Trisha Campbell of Logan County competed in the Discussion Meet, Wesley and Alicia Logsdon of Pulaski County were named in the top 10 of the Achievement Award competition, and Kirby Green of Daviess County won top honors in the Excellence in Agriculture competition.

"It is such an honor to be named the American Farm Bureau Federation's Excellence in Agriculture winner," said Green. "There were so many great participants from all across the country competing this year, and I appreciate and thank each one for their efforts in our agricultural industry. I also want to thank Kentucky

Farm Bureau for their guidance and support throughout this year and every year that I have been involved. Farm Bureau is a true family and I'm so glad to be a part of it."

While KFB Young Farmer participants fared well at the convention, the organization now has national representation on the AFBF's Women's Leadership Committee as Vickie Bryant was elected to a two-year term.

She has served the last 19 years as Kentucky Farm Bureau's 4th District Women's Chair and just completed her third year as Kentucky Farm Bureau's State Women's Advisory Committee Chair.

Vickie also served on the Kentucky Farm Bureau Board of Directors, Centennial Committee, Safety & Rural Health Advisory Committee, and Resolutions Committee.

"I am very honored to be named to this prestigious committee and look forward to serving with these great leaders from across the country," she said. "Women have long been such an important part of farming operations and in policy making efforts with Farm Bureau, and I appreciate this opportunity to further my service to the organization and to our agricultural industry."

In addition to the individual honors received, KFB took home several organizational awards presented at this year's convention. Each year state Farm Bureaus are presented awards in different categories related to programs and initiatives.

KFB was honored with awards in all four Awards of Excellence categories given, including: Advocacy; Engagement and Outreach; Leadership and Business Development; and Membership Value.

National policy

For the third straight year, President Donald Trump addressed the convention, doing so this year after a major trade deal had been made with China and the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement had passed the full Congress.

The President told the attendees that when he ran for the

presidency, he said he would always have the farmer's back.

“ My administration understands that if we want to stand up for America, we must stand up for American farmers. If we want America to thrive and grow, then we must ensure that America's farms flourish and prosper. And that's what we're doing. You feed our people, you fuel our nation, you sustain our land, you uphold our values, and you preserve our cherished American way of life.”

- President Donald Trump

As he concluded his remarks, President Trump said, “With your faith, your grit, your tenacity, your talent, and your patriotism, the best days for America and the best days for America's farmers and ranchers are yet to come.”

USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue also addressed the convention as well as participating in a question-and-answer conversation with Tennessee Farm Bureau President Jeff Aiken.

Perdue said while realizing 2019 was a tough year for agriculture, he believes this year will be better.

“It's 2020 and I think a new decade can give us reason for new optimism,” he said. “New trade deals and stronger consumer demand in the United States and abroad, are a great sign of brighter days ahead because we need those markets.”

Haney said having such high-level government officials attend the convention is a sign ag advocacy efforts are effective.

“They hear us and understand how important agriculture is to this country and to the many markets around the world that depend on the American farmer,” he said. “And Kentucky agriculture has a seat at the table when developing national policies that will affect our farm families for years to come.”

The convention concluded with its annual business session where voting delegates made decisions on AFBF policy and priorities moving forward through 2020.

AFBF report on adopted policies

Farmer and rancher delegates to the American Farm Bureau Federation's 101st Annual Convention adopted policies to guide the organization's work in 2020 on key topics ranging from dairy to labor and climate change to conservation compliance.

“Delegates from across the nation came together today to look ahead at issues and opportunities facing farms, ranches, and rural communities,” said American Farm Bureau Federation Vice President Scott VanderWal. “The 2020 policies ensure we are able to continue producing safe and healthy food, fiber, and renewable fuel for our nation and the world.”

Delegates also re-elected American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall and Vice President Scott VanderWal for their third terms. VanderWal served as chair of the meeting on behalf of Duvall, who is grieving the loss of his wife, Bonnie.

Delegates updated labor and immigration policies, emphasizing that we must see significant changes to the H-2A program. While AFBF has long had policy in place to ensure an accessible, competitive guest worker program, the updates address problems with the adverse effect wage rate and emphasize the importance of year-round program access to all of agriculture. AFBF looks forward to working with Congress on efforts that align with these policy objectives.

After a year-long process to review ways to modernize Federal Milk Marketing Orders, AFBF's delegates voted to support giving individual dairy farmers a voice by allowing them to vote independently and confidentially on rules governing milk prices. The opportunity to vote on milk pricing rules, along with other proposed changes to marketing orders will form a strong foundation to guide the organization during future reform efforts to better coordinate milk supply and demand in the U.S. Delegates also voted to support the creation of a flexible, farmer- and industry-led milk management system.

There are significant new policies on conservation compliance. Delegates called on USDA to significantly improve program transparency and due process for farmers. They specifically prioritized changes in USDA's processes for wetland delineations and the appeals process. Delegates also adopted a new policy supporting the repeal of Swampbuster provisions. The changes highlight growing frustration with conservation compliance practices within the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Delegates voted to support allowing a higher THC level in hemp, giving AFBF staff the flexibility to engage in discussions with regulators and lawmakers about the appropriate legal level, and to increase the window of time farmers are allowed to conduct THC testing, acknowledging the many questions about how the testing process will work and the potential for backlogs.

New policies are on the books supporting science-based climate change research and the documentation of agriculture's tremendous advances toward climate-smart practices. Delegates also made clear they want federal climate change policy to reflect regional variations, and they oppose a state-by-state patchwork of climate change policies.

Beyond policy changes, delegates also elected members to serve on the AFBF board of directors and national program committees.

In addition to Duvall and VanderWal being re-elected to two-year terms, thirteen state Farm Bureau presidents were re-elected to two-year terms to represent their regions on the board, including KFB President Mark Haney from the Southern Region.



For the third straight year, President Donald Trump attended the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention. Photo courtesy of AFBF.

SCENES FROM THE 101ST AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION CONVENTION



USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue addressed the closing session.



Excellence in Agriculture winner Kirby Green with KFB Executive Committee members.



AFBF Business Session



AFBF Vice President Scott VanderWal



AFBF Women's Leadership Committee Member Vickie Bryant



KFBF Executive Vice President Drew Graham



Wesley and Alicia Logsdon of Pulaski County placed in the top 10 of the Achievement Award competition.



Trisha Campbell



KFB Insurance CEO and Executive Vice President John Sparrow.

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KENTUCKY LIVESTOCK SECTOR REPRESENTS A VITAL SEGMENT OF OVERALL FARM ECONOMY DESPITE TOUGH 2019

No agricultural sector was spared hardships in 2019 due to a multitude of ag-economy issues including volatile commodity markets, international trade difficulties, and weather conditions that were more favorable for waterfowl than anything else.

And while livestock producers dealt with their share of challenges, the sector still represented a very strong part of last year's farm revenue

According to information from the University of Kentucky (UK) College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's ag outlook presented at last year's Kentucky Farm Bureau annual meeting, the state's livestock sectors accounted for more than one-third of the \$5.9 billion in farm cash receipts.

UK Ag Economist Kenny Burdine said when considering the many different animals making up state livestock populations, Kentucky has a diverse livestock industry, and that is a good thing.

"We are home to a little over one million cows, which is the largest cow-herd east of the Mississippi and we also have a large stockering / backgrounding sector that adds value to a large number of those calves each year," he said. "The equine sector is also very large, accounting for more than \$1 billion dollars in farm-level cash receipts the last two years."

Burdine added that Kentucky also has a sizeable hog industry with both independent and contract / integrated operations.

"Of course, the dairy sector has gotten smaller in Kentucky for many years, but it remains significant and impacts a large number of producers," he added. "And, there seems to be continued interest in small ruminants - sheep and goats."

While the numbers, especially when talking about cattle, are strong, the quality of these animals has risen greatly over the years, noted Burdine.

"Kentucky has made great strides in cattle quality over the last several years and it's a large number of factors that have come together to make this happen," he said. "Producers are becoming better managers all the time, we are doing a better job with genetics, a lot more producers have facilities that allow them to administer health programs and manage cattle better, and we've made improvements in forages, grazing, hay storage, and feeding practices. I really think Kentucky's cattle sector has a lot to be proud of!"

And while poultry is technically not considered livestock, this sector is tops in Kentucky's agricultural world. Burdine said, in



Kentucky is home to over one million cows, making it the largest cow-herd east of the Mississippi.

his opinion, he expects that part of the industry to grow.

"Of course, poultry is actually Kentucky's largest sector in terms of farm-level cash receipts and stepping back and looking at the poultry sector as a whole, chicken is the most consumed meat in the U.S., and it is priced very competitively at the retail level as a protein," he said. "There are also indications that the export market for poultry will continue to be strong. And, a lot of these companies have found Kentucky to be a great place to locate and source product from."

Burdine added that poultry operations also complement the grain sector very well as the litter is very valuable as fertilizer and significant income can be made on a relatively small amount of acreage.

"There's no question that when our livestock industry is doing well, it gives a boost to our grain sector since so much of our grain goes to feeding livestock," he said. "Increased feed use in the livestock sector impacts local prices (ie: basis) for feed grains and a lot of corn, soybean meal, hulls, etc. are fed by Kentucky's livestock producers."

Sharon Furches, KFB Second Vice President and a grain producer from Calloway County reiterated that, saying how significant one sector is to the other.

“We so often hear of the importance of partnerships and how valuable it is for our different ag sectors to work together,” she said. “The relationship our livestock producers have with our grain farmers confirms that value, something that not only benefits each commodity group, but it ultimately affects our rural communities in a very positive way.”

- Sharon Furches

One thing all farm families have to deal with is the weather. The winter of 2019 proved to be tough on livestock producers.

"The mud through winter and spring was very tough on cattle and we saw this impact in terms of cow and calf losses, stress, body condition, and the amount of hay that was consumed," said Burdine. "It also had a major impact on pastures and feeding areas and this is something producers need to be aware of and manage around as best as they can."

He added that some have done this through improved feeding areas and others by rotating cattle and limiting concentration in any area as much as possible. Burdine also said being diligent about repairing damaged areas is crucial to the long-term success of an operation and is also important when dealing with the conditions Mother Nature sends.

In looking ahead, weather conditions have improved somewhat over last year at this time, according to Dr. Stuart Foster, state climatologist and director of the Kentucky Climate Center and Kentucky Mesonet at Western Kentucky University.

"All in all, it has been a more favorable start to winter than we had last year, when persistent wet and cloudy conditions prevailed," he said. "After an exceptionally warm start to this winter, temperatures have returned to more seasonable levels. Precipitation amounts have varied but generally totaled above average for January, continuing a pattern from the late fall. Looking ahead at February, the Climate Prediction Center hints at the possibility of cooler than normal temperatures with no clear indication regarding precipitation."

From an economic standpoint, Burdine said he is optimistic about the coming year for many reasons.

"One of those reasons is due to trade. This fall, the trade agreement reached with Japan significantly lowered tariffs on U.S. beef exports to Japan, which is our number-one export market for beef," he said. "At the same time, the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement has the potential to impact most all species. We have also seen increases in exports of U.S. pork to China and there have been spillover effects on beef exports. Also, remember that China agreed to resume importing U.S. chicken last fall. All in all, I'm optimistic that the livestock sector is in for a better 2020."



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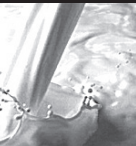
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69,994 FFA members, advisors, and guests attended this year's FFA National Convention in Indianapolis.

FFA NATIONAL CONVENTION SETS ATTENDANCE RECORD

This year's National FFA Convention brought a record 69,994 FFA members, advisors, and guests to Indianapolis including more than 2,100 Kentucky members to recognize the achievements of the organization and its members, to hear from national leaders, and to celebrate another year of service and dedication from the members and their advisors.

Matt Chaliff, Kentucky FFA's Executive Secretary said the convention gives students a broad perspective of the organization.

"Attending the National FFA Convention allows FFA members to understand the size and scope of FFA and to grasp the variety of career opportunities in the agriculture industry," he said.

The convention stands as the largest youth organization gathering in the United States with many attendees having long histories of involvement in FFA.

James Kash, a former state officer, agriculture education teacher, and FFA advisor in Metcalfe County has been attending the National Convention for a decade and said it is always exciting to come to the annual gathering, be it as a student, teacher, or advisor.

"This was my 10th National Convention, but only my second as an ag teacher and advisor, and still there always seems to be something new," he said. "And the convention always provides good opportunities for our students," he said.

Kash also said there are people that come from every corner of the state and nation to be a part of this, many having never been on a farm but still learning about, and connected to, agriculture in some way as they experience the convention."

"As a teacher, one of the best things I can do for my students is introduce them to new experiences, and the National Convention provides just that," he said.

Jonathan Pinkston serves as his FFA Chapter President in

Mercer County, as well as the Bluegrass Region Treasurer. While he has attended the event in the past, he said it's still exciting to see all the members from different states attending.

"I have been an FFA member for the last 4 years and this is the third year I have attended the National Convention. But it's still pretty cool to see all the different places represented here, such as the students from Alaska," he said. "They came all the way to Indianapolis just to be a part of this and I think that is awesome."

Pinkston also said it was great to see a variety of different students with a variety of interests coming together at the convention all with similar goals.

"I see students who are just like me and have very similar interests in agriculture, but I am seeing very, very different students who are not even close to what I would call a traditional ag student learning and doing the exact same things that I am doing," he said.

Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) has been supportive of student organizations like FFA and their conventions for decades. KFB President Mark Haney said encouraging young people to be involved in some form of agriculture is important to the future of the industry.

“ There is likely nothing more important to the agriculture industry than to get a new generation involved in some way, be it in terms of production, technology, or research. This next generation will lead us into the future and the National FFA Convention provides learning opportunities to help guide them.”

- Mark Haney

As part of those learning opportunities, most of the students attending were also participating in competitive events in a variety of areas earning awards and earning cash prizes for their efforts.

Some of the state highlights included, Spencer County FFA winning the Dairy Cattle Evaluation Career Development Event marking the 10th time since 2006 team members have won the national Dairy Evaluation CDE. Augustus Cole Holt, of LaRue County, was named the national winner in the Forest Management and Products Proficiency contest. And 115 Kentucky FFA members received their American FFA Degree, the highest award the organization can bestow on a member.

For a complete listing of National Convention winners, visit <https://www.ffa.org/event-results/>



Ben Pinkston, of Mercer County received his American FFA Degree.



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AUBURN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE AND KENTUCKY: A HAND-IN-HAND RELATIONSHIP FOR NEARLY SEVEN DECADES

Since 1951, aspiring veterinary students from Kentucky have had an opportunity to apply to one of the most well-respected vet schools in the country and retain in-state tuition levels.

Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine, commonly referred to as Auburn Vet-Med, began a partnership with the Commonwealth, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Redding S. Sugg, the third dean of the College. He helped found the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and through that board this partnership began with a total of 12 Kentuckians participating the first year. Since then, that number has more than tripled giving more students from this state an opportunity to attend at the lower in-state tuition rate.

Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) has a long history of supporting this partnership, according to KFB President Mark Haney.

"The relationship we have with Auburn is undoubtedly one of the most successful I have seen in all my years of involvement in the agricultural industry. Our farm families depend on proper veterinary care of their animals and most of the vets we have servicing rural Kentucky received their training and degrees from Auburn," he said.

Dr. M. Daniel Givens, a professor and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Auburn Vet-Med said the Kentucky students attending have become a part of the fabric of the college.

"Understanding that the majority of practicing veterinarians in Kentucky are Auburn graduates, and understanding that Auburn has a very strong commitment to the Commonwealth, it is just a very unique thing to see that you can have an enduring relationship that is mutually beneficial for both parties over such a long period of time," he said. "I see it as a positive experience for both the college and Kentucky."

So often, many students considering a career in veterinarian medicine, take into consideration the cost of doing so, which can sometimes change their minds. Givens said the in-state tuition option for Kentucky students can certainly make a difference.

"We see that the cost of a veterinary medicine education is notably high and because of the opportunity that Kentucky students have to attend Auburn and pay in-state tuition, when they sit down and weigh the benefits and the cost of an education, it is often that in-state tuition is a deciding factor for them," he said.

The student's perspective

Luke Trapp from Butler, Kentucky is a member of Auburn Vet-Med's Class of 2023. Having grown up on a cattle farm, he saw a need in his community for a large-animal vet, from an early age. And it was something that spurred his interest in veterinary medicine.

"While many of the students here will choose to go a different route, such as a small-animal practice, when they graduate, I

saw the value a large or mixed animal practice would bring to the area where I grew up. And being a veterinarian is one of the only things that I've thought about for the past five or six years of my life," he said. "But so many of the Kentucky students would probably not be here if not for the partnership that allows us to pay in-state tuition."

Logan Matney, from Center, Kentucky, is set to graduate from Auburn this year. He said that without the in-state tuition program, he definitely would not be at the vet school.

"Without the partnership between Auburn and Kentucky, I would, 100 percent, not be at Auburn. In fact, if there were no options to attend a school for in-state tuition, I more than likely would not be pursuing veterinary medicine as a career," he said.

"I am forever grateful to both Kentucky and Auburn for the opportunity. I have not only received an excellent education but have made some of the greatest friends and memories possible in my time at Auburn."

- Logan Matney

In addition to the monetary benefit seen at Auburn, Trapp looks at his journey as meaning more than just animal care, and knows the journey is being made possible because of the Auburn-Kentucky partnership.

"I know that I can put my knowledge toward not only the betterment of animals and production agriculture, but the public health system in general," he said. "And I think it is really cool how we highlight that here at Auburn University not only knowing you are assisting an animal in maintaining the production system but addressing public health that is linked back to animals in terms of zoonotic diseases and control."

Allie Ingram is a third-year veterinary student from Greensburg, Kentucky who also grew up on a farm where she gained her first experiences working with animals.

"Working with our cattle was my first introduction to veterinary medicine and inspired me to pursue this career. But I also had two dogs growing up," she said. "Even as a freshman, while attending Western Kentucky University, it was made very clear to me the special relationship that existed between Kentucky and Auburn. I was encouraged to consider all of my options, but my heart was already set on Auburn."

In addition to her time spent on the family farm, Ingram also worked at a local animal hospital as an undergraduate, which also helped to reinforce her decision to be a vet.

"The practice consisted of five Auburn veterinarians, and I admired them all greatly," she said. "They, too, encouraged me to consider all of my options, especially since I was applying as a third-year student but emphasized the amazing price per educational opportunity that Auburn presented thanks to the

Auburn/Kentucky partnership.”

Continuing the tradition

With a history as long and successful as the Kentucky-Auburn partnership has been, budgetary decisions still have to be considered when the time arises to renew the funding used by this state to maintain the in-state tuition levels for those students from the Commonwealth who get accepted and make their way south to the Plains of Alabama.

Haney said the dollars going into the program are well-spent and should be looked at as an investment in these young people who will ultimately contribute to the state's economy by way of being practicing veterinarians.

“The most important thing we can do, as an organization, is make an investment in our young people, and support programs that do just that,” he said. “The dollars utilized by this state for the Kentucky-Auburn partnership will come back to us in the form of dedicated citizens returning to the Commonwealth who will play an important role in keeping their communities alive and vibrant for generations to come.”

Givens said Auburn has been an outstanding steward of those dollars that are going to the Kentucky students.

“What I mean by that is, the Kentucky dollars go directly to Kentucky students to decrease their cost of tuition and those students return to the Commonwealth, at a very high rate, to serve the needs of animal owners within the state,” he said. “We think that the program speaks for itself.”

Givens noted that when you consider that so many of these Kentucky students are coming back to their state to practice, it becomes an economic development aspect, and a great investment on one end that produces dividends on the other.

“When you have a veterinarian, who doesn't have that in-state support going into rural communities, that creates real challenges. That vet almost has to create an income of dollars outside of that community to support that educational debt. Whereas, if you have a vet with low educational debt, the income they make stays in that community.”

- Dr. M. Daniel Givens



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COUNTY CORNER

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities



Bath County

Bath County Farm Bureau hosted a Veterans Appreciation dinner recently which was open to any veteran in the county. President Michael Staton welcomed the group and offered appreciation to each attendee for their service to our country.



Boyd County

Excellence Program was selected for a display during the Trade Show at the 100th Annual Meeting in Louisville. Boyd County Farm Bureau Directors Michael Dixon and John McGlone had their display set up for their 2019 Distracted Driving Essay Contest which was held in May. There were five schools in Boyd County that participated in this event.



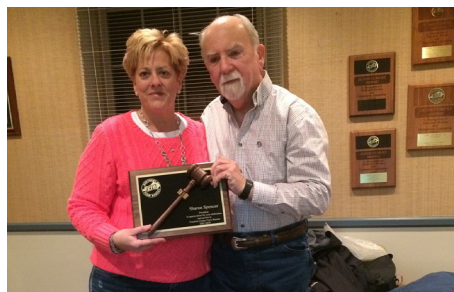
Breckinridge County

Breckinridge County Farm Bureau presented grain rescue turtle tubes to their local fire departments.



District Nine

Pictured are District 9 women with donations for Ronald McDonald charities from each county ready to be taken to the foundation. From left: Mary Jayne Cannon, Linda House, Louise Moneyhon, Jean Rapp, Jennifer Meadows, Stephanie Wiseman, Brandy Graves, Taylor Darnell, Susan Wood and Sally Walton.



Franklin County

Pictured from left are Sharon Spencer, Franklin County Farm Bureau Past President, being presented a plaque from current President Ray Bowman for her 14 years of service.



Grant County

Grant County IFAL representatives were recognized by the board. From left are: Mark Kinsey, State Director; Tyler Clemons, Mandy Chloe, Austin Magee, and Grant County Farm Bureau President Travis Rhoton.



Grant County

A proclamation was signed at the November meeting of the 100th Anniversary for KFB. From left: Mark Kinsey, State Director; Chuck Dills, Judge Executive Grant County; Bill Courts, Treasurer/ Director.



Greenup County

Pictured is one-year-old Miss Lydia Imel celebrating 100 years with Kentucky Farm Bureau at the 2019 KFB Convention.



Hardin County

Hardin County President Larry Jaggers, II recognized retiring director, Jimmy Stuecker, for his service to Hardin County Farm Bureau. Mr. Stuecker served as HCFB director from 1998 to 2019. "We appreciate all the time and dedication he has provided to Farm Bureau and our community."

COUNTY CORNER

Snapshots of County Farm Bureau activities



Kenton County

Last September, Kenton County Farm Bureau celebrated their 100th Anniversary. With help from agency managers, customer service representatives, agents, the board of directors, and many others in the community, the event was a huge success. The day-long festivities were held at the beautiful Honey Locust Farms in nearby Piner, Kentucky.



Nelson County

Nelson County Farm Bureau sponsored the 50-year reunion of the Kentucky National Guard Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery, better known as "Charlie Battery". Of the 117 men that served in the unit during the Vietnam War, almost all were from Nelson County.



Taylor County

Eighth-grade students from all three schools in Taylor County took a trip to Sullivan Farms to learn about animal care and safety.



Martin County

Martin County Farm Bureau provided a mini grant to Inez Elementary School.



Shelby County

Pictured are attendees at the Shelby County Farm Bureau Young Farmer fundraiser held last October.



Woodford County

Woodford County Farm Bureau Food Check-Out Day recognition.



McLean County

McLean County Farm Bureau President Gerry Hayden presented a check for \$1302.00 to FFA Teacher Kellie Watkins and Officers Kendall Bishop and Cole IgLeheart. The money was raised through a "White Elephant" auction at the Christmas Board Meeting.



Ohio County

Anna Law, of Hartford, has become the first-ever Miss Ohio County Fair to be named Miss Kentucky Fair. The Miss Kentucky Fair pageant was sponsored by Kentucky Farm Bureau and had 79 contestants. Law, 18, is a senior at Ohio County High School and also attending classes at Owensboro Community & Technical College. After graduating from OCHS, in the Fall of 2020, she will attend Queens University in Charlotte, North Carolina, on a volleyball scholarship. Law plans to major in communications. She is the daughter of Brian and Kathy Law, of Hartford, and the grand-daughter of Judy and the late Ronnie Law, of Beaver Dam, and Bob and Linda Cox, of Beaver Dam. Mr. and Mrs. Cox have been Farm Bureau members for more than 50 years.



USGS crew finishing collecting a discrete representative water-quality sample for the super gage on the Licking River at Highway 536 near Alexandria, KY.

Photo courtesy USGS

SUPER GAGES, THE SUPER HEROES OF WATER QUALITY MEASUREMENTS

Collecting accurate water quality data is beneficial to everyone

With so many super heroes appearing on television and in the movies these days, it's easy to confuse which ones can fly, or which ones have super human strength, or which ones have both.

Yet, in the world of TV and movies, one doesn't really have to understand as much about who does what, but rather just enjoy the overall experience.

The real world is a bit different, however; often less interesting, and frequently harder to understand. In realizing that, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) officials are involved in a project that may appear to be hard to understand on the surface but has superpower implications that affect everyone, even if they don't know it or fully comprehend it.

The project involves what are called "super gages" and while these devices are far from the heroes we think about in the movies, they have the potential to be super valuable in measuring water quality.

Super gages incorporate real-time streamflow and water-quality measurements with representative in-stream sample collection for laboratory analysis, according to information from the U.S. Geological Survey that oversees the project. Put simply, these devices measure what's in the water that passes through them and estimates how much of a particular element or nutrient is in the water.

There are different methods used to make the measurements with varying degrees of information that can be gleaned from these varied methods. However, with the advancement of modern technology over the years, the data are more accurate than ever thanks to the use of such instrumentation as the super gages.

Understanding the data collected through water quality measurements may seem difficult at first, but the information can prove to be invaluable when recognizing what's in our water supply and what is traveling through to larger waterways.

Because of its importance, the USGS has published multiple documents, available to the public, explaining super gages, what they do, and their importance.

Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) First Vice President Eddie Melton, who serves on the Kentucky Water Resources Board, said having the type of information available collected through super gages helps keep the general public informed, and provides a more accurate picture of the conservation efforts Kentucky farmers are conducting.

"We have long touted the stewardship observed by farm families across this state but saying it and proving it are two different things," he said. "By collecting this valuable data, we can articulate our message in more precise terms."

Angie Crain, a water quality specialist at the U.S. Geological Survey for the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Water Science Center said measurements through the use of super gages can often give a much more accurate reading of just what nutrients are flowing through our waterways.

"A lot of the information on nutrients we have stems from the capabilities we had when we could only collect discrete water-quality samples," she said.

Additionally, state agencies often have an ambient water quality monitoring network where they collect a sample once a month. The information they get may vary with conditions such as high or low flow of the water, and with the type of method used

to collect the sample.

"Many times, it is a grab sample," said Crain. "USGS collects samples a little different. We collect an entire depth- and width-integrated cross-section sample of the river to get a representative sample concentration."

And while the technology to take continuous measurements of many of these nutrients being measured has not been developed yet, super gages do have the ability to measure continuous concentrations of nitrates and phosphates that can be used as surrogates for total nitrogen and total phosphorus.

With enhanced measurement abilities, the data from the super gages has shown that the nutrient content coming from Kentucky waterways, especially phosphates, nitrates, and sediments is lower than older data had indicated, and often much lower.

Crain said if there was anything, data-wise, that has been measured through the use of super gages that has surprised her, it is the low amounts of nitrates.

"I guess I'm very surprised at just how really low the concentrations of nitrates really are at our super gages," she said. "I think the highest concentration I've ever seen was less than three milligrams per liter. So that's good. It's very good."

To put that into perspective, the EPA's standard for drinking water is 10 milligrams per liter. Melton said when these kinds of numbers are seen, it's good news for everyone.

these gages will no longer be used to measure water quality after September of this year without additional funding.

Melton noted how important funding for water projects, such as super gages, is when compiling important information about the environment.

"There is so much misinformation circulated to the public about the dangers agriculture production poses to our environment, and that information is simply not true," he said. "By obtaining such updated data from these super gages, we are making the case in Kentucky of how conscious our farming community is of our natural resources, of which we depend on daily to make our living. The question is not whether to fund this type of project or not; it is, how can we do without them?"



Photo of the super gage located on the Ohio River at Ironton, OH with insert photos of the water-quality and streamflow equipment. Photo courtesy USGS.

“The data coming from the super gages has proven to be valuable to all citizens and confirms how conscious farmers are when it comes to natural resource stewardship,” he said. “It also allows the agriculture community to firmly dispute much of the negative information related to farming practices and demonstrates our commitment to the very elements that sustain our farms.”

- Eddie Melton

Currently, there are five super gages located around the state in strategic locations to measure what is coming into the state and what is exiting from these monitored waterways. But as with any project, funding is an issue and three of



USGS hydrologic technician at the super gage located on the Kentucky River at Lock 2 at Lockport, KY.

Photo courtesy USGS

MARKETS

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

According to USDA, total grain storage capacity in the United States is estimated at 25.1 billion bushels, up less than 0.6 percent from a year earlier. Comprising this total storage capacity is 13.5 billion bushels on the farm and 11.6 billion bushels off the farm. On-farm storage rose only 40 million bushels, or 0.3 percent. Iowa continues to lead all States with 2.10 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 did not add any storage the past year and account for nearly 47 percent of the nation's total on-farm storage. North Dakota, Indiana, and South Dakota account for another 19 percent of the on-farm total. Kentucky's on-farm storage totaled 215 million bushels, up five million bushels from a year ago and ten million from two years ago. U.S. off-farm commercial grain storage increased only 107 million bushels, or 0.9 percent, last year. The top three states - Iowa, Illinois, and Kansas - account for 36 percent of the total off-farm capacity. There are 8,378 storage facilities in the U.S., down 1.2 percent from a year ago. Kentucky added three million bushels of capacity for a total of 90.0 million bushels at 140 facilities. Compared to two years ago, Kentucky has 15 fewer facilities, but six million more bushels of off-farm storage.

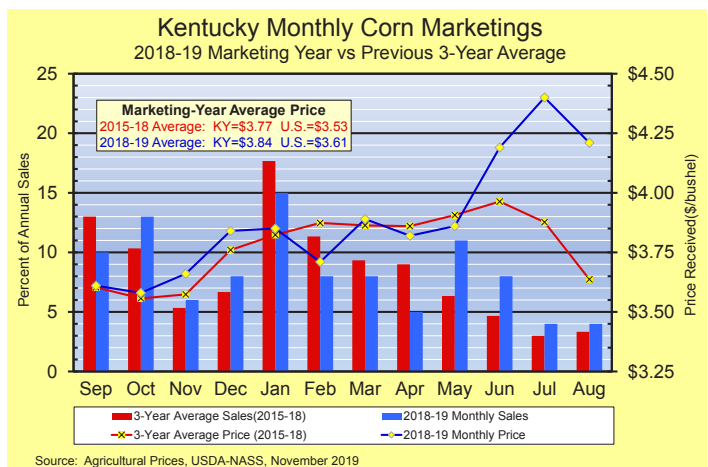
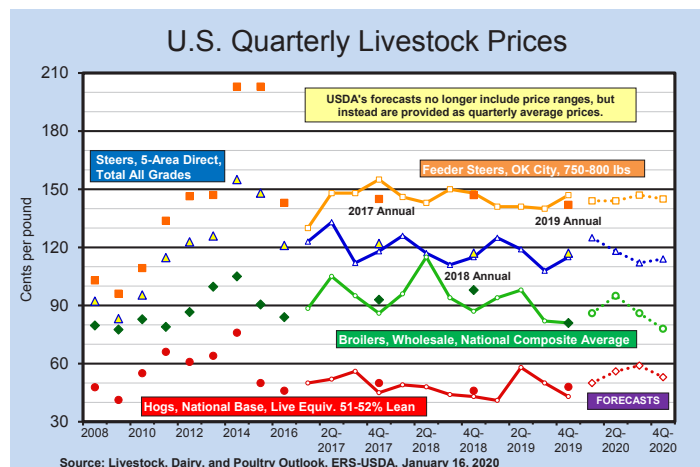
2019 IMPORTS HIGHER FOR CATTLE, LOWER FOR HOGS

In the latest "Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry Outlook", USDA reported on the January-November 2019 imports of live cattle and hogs. The imports are divided into two classes, animals for slaughter and "all others." Most of the "other animals" class is comprised of feeder calves for cattle and finishing animals for hogs. Mexico is the largest source of live cattle imports to the

U.S. -- about 63 percent of the total. About 99.8 percent of Mexican imports fall into the all-other category (feeder calves). About 37 percent of total cattle imports are of Canadian origin, 71 percent of which are slaughter cattle. Year-to-date cattle imports are about seven percent higher than in 2018. Most of the increase is attributable to an 84,000-head increase in slaughter animals, mostly from Canada. Feeder cattle imports have increased about 41,000 head, or 3.1 percent, through November. U.S. hog imports are sourced almost exclusively from Canada -- over 99.9 percent. 2019 year-to-date total hog imports are about 4.7 million head, almost four percent lower than in 2018.

U.S. CORN EXPORTS PROJECTED LOWEST IN 6 YEARS

U.S. corn exports for the 2019/20 marketing year are projected at 1.775 billion bushels, down from 2.065 billion bushels estimated for 2018/19. This level of exports is the lowest in six years, according to USDA's January Feed Outlook report. These forecasts preceded the signing of the U.S.-China Phase 1 Economic and Trade Agreement, so future export forecasts could rise if China steps up its corn purchases. U.S. corn exports face strong competition from Brazil, Argentina and Ukraine - all are projected to have bumper harvests. U.S. market share in the major corn importing countries has become highly dependent on the crop size in South America and Ukraine, as large crops in those countries boost their price competitiveness and tend to limit U.S. exports. Even in traditional, stable U.S. import markets, such as Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, where the United States used to reign as the top foreign supplier, it is losing market share. The pace of U.S. corn shipments in the beginning of the year has been sluggish and by the end of December, accumulated exports were 55 percent behind a year earlier. Outstanding corn export sales were about 26 percent behind the same time last year.





2020 MEASURE-THE-CANDIDATE MARCH DISTRICT MEETINGS

District 1

Tuesday, March 17, 7:00 p.m. (CT)
McCracken County Farm Bureau Office
1600 Broadway, Paducah, KY

District 7

Tuesday, March 17, 6:00 p.m. (CT)
Russell County Auditorium/Natatorium Center
Russell Springs, KY

District 2

Tuesday, March 3, 6:00 p.m. (CT)
Ballard Convention Center
605 E Arch St., Madisonville, KY

District 8

Monday, March 2, 7:00 p.m.
Madison County Farm Bureau Office
Community Room, Berea, KY

District 3

Thursday, March 12, 6:00 p.m. (CT)
Breckinridge County Extension Office
1377 S Hwy. 261, Hardinsburg, KY

District 9

Monday, March 16, 6:30 p.m.
Blue Licks State Park
Mt. Olivet, KY

District 4

Monday, March 30, 6:30 p.m. (CT)
Barren River State Park Lodge
Lucas, KY

District 10

Tuesday, March 24, 6:30 p.m.
U.S. 23 Country Music Highway Museum
120 Stave Branch Rd., Paintsville, KY

District 5

Monday, March 9, 7:00 p.m.
Spencer County Extension Office
100 Oak Tree Way, Taylorsville, KY

District 11

Monday, March 23, 6:00 p.m.
Hindman Campus of Hazard Community and Technical
College
56 Education Ln., Hindman, KY

District 6

Tuesday, March 17, 7:00 p.m.
Trimble County Extension Office
43 High Country Rd., Bedford, KY

KFB MARKETBASKET SURVEY SHOWS 2019 ENDING WITH SLIGHT INCREASE IN OVERALL FOOD PRICES FOR CONSUMERS

The Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) Marketbasket Survey results from the fourth quarter of 2019 indicate price fluctuations to most food items and a slight increase in the overall cost of food over the course of the year.

The Marketbasket Survey is taken four times per year at the end of each quarter to monitor overall and categorical trends in food prices across the Commonwealth. The survey gathers the prices of 40 basic food items throughout the state and then averages the numbers into six categories: beef, pork, poultry, dairy, fruits and vegetables, and grains.

The average overall cost of food increased during three of the four quarters in 2019, ending with an average of \$118.74. Despite slight overall increases in recent years, the average marketbasket price is still lower than the costs seen in 2014-2016.

The survey also shows that while the 2019 average Marketbasket costs fluctuated throughout the year, consumers are not seeing a significant increase in the overall cost of food.

Similar to Kentucky findings, national results from the Consumer Price Index report show an increase in overall food prices throughout 2019.

Marketbasket Survey specifics:

The fourth quarter prices of specific items and commodities remained a mixed bag with some items contributing to the overall price increase, while others decreased. Increases in beef and poultry were likely due to seasonal demand while other surveyed items remained somewhat steady. Grains saw the largest decrease, percentage-wise at 3.92 percent.

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ADVOCATING FOR RURAL BROADBAND

“We’re not going away.”

Since the onset of the Internet, connectivity has been an issue. In the early days, slow, dial-up connections compared to today’s fast Internet speeds looked like horse and buggies in a NASCAR race.

So much has changed over the years, but one obstacle still remains; getting this adequate broadband service to everyone in all locations across the country.

What makes this service a necessity for farm, business, and individual use is the growing dependency we all have to stay connected, be it for personal use, or for the operational needs of businesses, large and small.

And as advanced as technology has become, the lack of good connectivity in many rural areas has become a huge hindrance, especially to the agriculture industry and its growing use of new technological programs and equipment that do everything from operating equipment to running the books.

Kentucky Farm Bureau President Mark Haney said the growing necessity to have adequate broadband service on the farm and in rural areas is only going to grow in the future.

“As a family farm owner and rural business operator, we have seen the need for solid broadband service increase over the years and if we are expected to operate in this modern world of technology, we have to have adequate service,” he said.

“As agricultural advocates, this is and will continue to be one of our top priority issues. We have a voice in this matter that needs to be heard, and we’re not going away.”

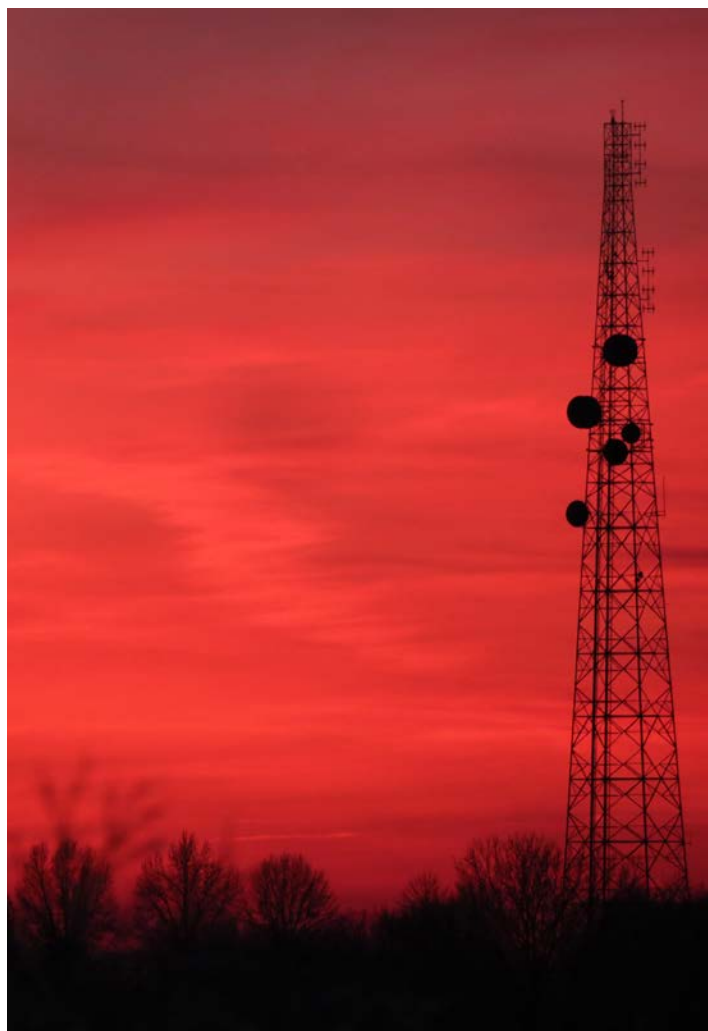
- Mark Haney

Congress must be listening. Late last year, the House of Representatives passed the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability (DATA) Act. This Farm Bureau backed legislation requires broadband providers to report more specific data to create a significantly more accurate and granular National Broadband Map, according to information from the American Farm Bureau Federation.

“Broadband is a necessity and many rural areas still don’t have access to it or are underserved. With limited funding, it’s critical we target resources where they are needed most,” said American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall.

What is so significant about this bill centers around the fact that these broadband maps depend on census block data to determine which areas are covered, and often those census blocks are too large and don’t adequately represent a total of people or business within those respective areas.

AFBF reports, “If even one household in a given census block is reported by a provider as being served, then the entire block is considered served. Census blocks larger than two square miles comprise more than 64 percent of the U.S. land area, so every



The need for broadband Internet access for farm, business, and personal use continues to be an obstacle for many rural communities across the country

rural area is impacted by this problem in some way.”

Haney said, from a local farm family perspective, this bill could pave the way for the increased service that is needed in rural areas across the country.

“Getting a more accurate count on the number of people and/or individuals represented in these large rural areas is crucial in getting the broadband service they need to operate on a day-to-day basis; it would be a game-changer,” he said.

In addition to the House passage of the DATA act, the latest government funding bill included \$550 million in grant funding for the ReConnect program to help expand broadband access to underserved areas.

According to information from the USDA, this program furnishes loans and grants to provide funds for the costs of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service in eligible rural areas.

Agriculture advocates across the country are urging Congress to pass the DATA act and other related legislative efforts to ensure adequate broadband service makes it to every area of the country. Along with the provisions of DATA, an audit process is included that guarantees internet providers are providing accurate data for these new maps as well as a process to challenge any of the data produced.

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, June Iljana, Partnership/Media Specialist with the Philadelphia Regional Census Center discusses the Census process and why it is so important, especially to rural communities.

For those maybe a little unfamiliar with exactly why we take a census, could you explain the process?

The U.S. Census is one of the foundations of our representative democracy and it's the first census in the world that was created to give the people power over their government rather than for taxation or conscription into military service. Article 1, Section 2 of the United States Constitution establishes that a national census will be taken every ten years for two specific purposes. First, each state is to be equal in the Senate, but representation in the House of Representatives is apportioned based on population, so the number of representatives each state has in Congress is based on the official census population. Second, the constitution establishes that the census will be used to apportion direct taxes, meaning that part of our federal tax money is redistributed to the states based on their population. More than \$675 billion is returned to local communities each year to support services everyone uses such transportation, health care, education, communication, and public safety.

What are some of the main reasons the census is so important?

The decennial census, as well as the other ongoing surveys conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, provide essential information about our nation. Because a nationwide count of every single person living in the United States and its territories only occurs every ten years, the results of the decennial census affect individuals and communities for the next decade. Everyone living in the U.S. benefits from



June Iljana, Partnership/Media Specialist with the Philadelphia Regional Census Center

a complete and accurate count to ensure that the services they use – from roads and schools to emergency medical care – are adequately funded. When some folks aren't counted, it reduces the community's ability to plan for and provide services that benefit everyone.

Over the years, I'm sure we have seen regional populations change one way or the other. For those in rural communities, which have lost some population in between census-taking years, is it fair to say, it is especially important for those folks to be counted?

In small, rural communities every single person matters in the census because every person counted brings more funding for critical infrastructure, fire departments and healthcare services that are essential and almost always underfunded. But we know that rural populations are less likely to respond to the census and that may be based on some distrust in government

along with other factors. That's why it's so important that we make sure people know exactly how providing information about their household will directly benefit themselves and their community. Equally important is making sure everyone knows that information provided to the U.S. Census Bureau is completely confidential and will not be released to anyone. Under federal law, census responses cannot be shared with any other government agencies and can never be used against you in any way. There are no exceptions.

I noticed on the census website that the information can be taken online this year. Is this the first time that has been available, and do you think that will assist in getting people to participate?

We are very excited to offer multiple response options for the 2020 census, making it easy for anyone to respond. For the first time, people will have the option of responding to the census online

using their smart phone or a computer and we do expect a lot of people to take advantage of that. We also have a new phone response option which is very helpful for people with lower literacy or English language skills. Of course, we will still offer the option of responding on paper by mail. The last resort is to send a census-taker to the residence, but each household is so important that we will do that if we don't receive a response. We expect these new options to increase self-response, meaning we will save taxpayer dollars in conducting the census if we can send fewer people to homes to gather the information. That is especially valuable in rural communities where distance between homes is greater. Once we have received a complete response, the Census Bureau won't contact the household again.

As we look to gain services in rural areas such as adequate broadband, how important is the census information when it comes to getting services like this in all areas?

Infrastructure, including connectivity, is one of the ways the official census population for a community makes a difference. Projects to develop connectivity in under-served areas are often funded by formula-based grants for rural areas that are based on the population served as much as the need. Beyond that, commercial providers rely on census data in making investment decisions and prioritizing geographic areas.

A few other items of interest:

Recruiting

We are hiring tens of thousands of people in Kentucky to work as census-takers. It's a very flexible job that is based on your availability and it pays a great wage plus mileage. Your extra time during the day or evenings and weekends could help ensure our community is fully counted and bring more of our federal tax money back to fund schools, roads, healthcare, public safety, and other services we all rely on every day. Folks can register online at 2020census.gov/jobs to earn extra money AND play an important role in shaping the future of your community.

Timeline

In Mid-March most households will receive a letter from the U.S. Census Bureau inviting them to respond to the

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In small, rural communities every single person matters in the census because every person counted brings more funding for critical infrastructure, fire departments, and healthcare services that are essential and almost always underfunded.

-June Iijana

2020 census. It is important that people respond to the census as soon as they can because once their response is received, we won't need to keep trying to reach them and that will save taxpayer dollars. The last day to respond to the census online is July 31, 2020, however, we will begin following up with households as early as May 2020.

Scams

We want to make sure everyone understands that the Census Bureau will not contact them by email. The census is only conducted on our secure online system which uses the most advanced security measures available and we actively monitor our system to make sure your information stays secure. If we call you on the phone,

it will only be to verify information provided on your survey response. The census will not ask you for your full social security number or for any financial information such as banking or credit information.

Supporting the census

Conducting the census is a massive undertaking. It requires years of planning and the support of hundreds of thousands of people. We encourage everyone to join us in spreading the word. Talk with your friends and neighbors and any community organizations you meet with and tell them how important it is to you all that they respond to the census. Help your community understand how the census is easy and confidential.

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DOWN THE BACKROADS

It's Always Good To Come Home

By Tim Thornberry

After returning home from a recent business trip out of state, I remember how excited I was to look out the window of the plane and see Kentucky land below me.

It was a great trip and one I was happy to make. But there is something about returning home that makes me feel so good.

I like to travel, whether for work or vacation, and enjoy seeing new places. However, after a few days, I start looking forward to the return trip. The old saying, "Home is where the heart is," is true, at least for me, and my heart belongs in the place I was born and raised.

I'm proud of the fact that I live only a few miles from where I started. And it's not like I haven't tried to move away. Several years ago, I had the opportunity to take, what turned out to be, a short-term job with a newspaper in another state.

I learned a lot at that job and saw a part of the country I had not seen much of at that point in my life. It was a valuable experience that I would not trade. But it wasn't home. My parents were both living at the time and I missed them. My good friends were back home, and I missed them. My favorite restaurant was home, and I missed it!

The house I grew up in was there, as were the schools I attended and the church I attended. My whole world was in this small town where I grew up.

Now, I certainly don't fault anyone who takes that giant leap to make their home in another place.

It takes a lot of guts to move away to a new town or city, with new people, and new experiences. It just wasn't for me and I think there are many more like me.

I realize that often the reason for a move comes with job opportunities. Making a living for yourself and a family has to take precedence. And many times, a young person has to follow that path away to make that living.

I'm blessed in that opportunities have come my way throughout my life that kept me near my childhood home. Even when I thought, at times, I wanted to leave.

I do think many of those opportunities came because I searched for them. Even though I didn't move away, it didn't

mean I had to give up on my dreams. It didn't mean I had to settle. Sure, I may have had to work a little harder to get to the place in life I wanted to be, but it was well worth it.

I'm happy to be home. I love that I can drive down the road and see places I grew up around. My hometown has changed with the times. Businesses have moved out and moved in. New subdivisions, new roads, new people. But the heart of my hometown is still the same. And it keeps me here. I know there are many of you who feel the same.

For all those folks who did take the big step and go elsewhere to make new homes for themselves, I salute you for your resolve to do so. But I hope a little piece of you remained in the place you came from and you have the chance to come back occasionally and travel down those backroads.

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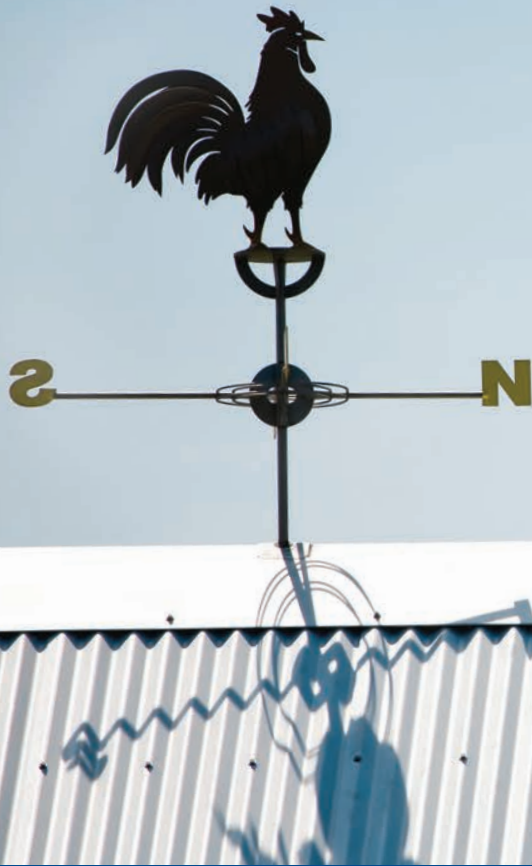
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