Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee Plans Spring Farm Tour

The Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee invites folks of any age to join them on their Annual Spring Farm Tour on Saturday, May 19, 2012 in Hardy County. The tour will begin in mid-morning (exact time TBA) at the West Virginia University Research Farm in Wardensville, followed by tours of farms throughout the county.

A picnic lunch will be served, but please bring a side dish. For more information and to reserve your spot, contact Eric Thomason by May 17 at 304-472-2080 x. 309.

EQT Donates to Mobile Ag Education Science Lab

Steve Perdue, EQT Manager of Government Affairs, presents a check for $1000 to Helen Hardman, Mobile Ag Education Science Lab Coordinator, in Charleston during the 2012 Ag and Forestry Day at the Legislature.

EQT has been a recurring sponsor of the Lab. “We’re very thankful for the support of EQT,” said Hardman. “Their contribution helps us to buy supplies needed to conduct the experiments which teach children how important agriculture is to all of us.”

The Mobile Ag Education Science Lab travels to schools across West Virginia, and comes equipped with a teacher and curriculum to service schools for a week. To book the Lab or obtain more information, contact Hardman at 800.398.4630 x. 311 or online at www.wvfarm.org.

NASS Ends Dairy Report

Effective this month, USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is no longer releasing its weekly Dairy Products Prices report. Going forward, these data will be collected and published by USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) as outlined in the amended Dairy Product Mandatory Reporting Program, required by the Mandatory Price Reporting Act of 2010.

Articles for NewsBytes must be submitted by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Time-sensitive announcements must be submitted no less than 8 weeks prior to the date of the event. Electronic submissions, including photos, are preferred. Send to joanh@wvfarm.org.
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PRESIDENTIAL PARADIGMS

A Promise Kept

Charles Wilfong, President, West Virginia Farm Bureau

President Obama is making good on his promise to kill the coal industry. If you remember, during the 2008 presidential campaign, then-Senator Obama vowed to destroy coal-fired power production. His exact quote was, “If someone wants to build a new coal-fired power plant, they can, but it will bankrupt them because they will be charged a huge sum for all the greenhouse gas that’s being emitted.”

During the last week of March, Obama’s EPA released their greenhouse gas emission guidelines. The guidelines essentially do away with the coal industry here in West Virginia and across the country. The new rules allow for only 1000 pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt of power produced. The average coal-fired plant today, even with all the recent upgrades, produces about 1750 pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt. The expense of capturing and storing the extra 750 pounds of carbon dioxide will be cost-prohibitive.

Here in West Virginia, where more than 95% of our electricity comes from coal, we will pay a huge price for these new regulations. All consumers everywhere will pay much more for electricity, as well as products produced using electricity – which means virtually everything. Moreover, thousands of mining and power plant jobs will be in jeopardy, not to mention all of the supporting industries tied to coal.

The craziest part of this plan is that it will accomplish no reduction in worldwide greenhouse gasses. As we are forced to shut down our clean power plants, China will continue to build dozens of new coal-fired plants that essentially have no emission controls. In the end, all that will be accomplished by the EPA rules will be a shifting of our wealth and jobs to China and other places around the world.

We can’t say we weren’t warned. Obama told us his intentions, and now he is making good on them.

Stallman Releases Statement on Sackett vs. EPA

Bob Stallman, President, American Farm Bureau Federation

The American Farm Bureau Federation is pleased with the Supreme Court’s unanimous decision on behalf of property owners in Sackett v. EPA. AFBF filed amicus briefs in the case to educate the court about the legal and on-the-ground consequences of Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act policies.

“The Sacketts’ homebuilding was halted by EPA in 2007 based on the agency’s assertion that the Idaho couple’s home site was a wetland. Although the couple believed their land was not a wetland, they were denied any opportunity to challenge EPA’s ‘compliance order’ and faced up to $37,500 per day in potential fines until the matter was settled. Today’s decision vindicates the rights of landowners like the Sacketts to challenge EPA compliance orders that improperly assert jurisdiction over their land. The decision gives landowners like the Sacketts their day in court, overriding the position taken by EPA and many prior courts that have denied them that right.

“We agree with Justice Alito’s concurring opinion that the federal government has too often ‘put the property rights of ordinary Americans entirely at the mercy of the Environmental Protection Agency’s employees.’ We also agree with Justice Alito that, while allowing landowners to sue is a start, Congress needs to clarify the reach of the Clean Water Act.

“Farm Bureau is optimistic that today’s decision will help curtail EPA’s efforts to illegally expand its regulatory jurisdiction over farming and other land-based activities. At the very least, landowners have another tool to hold EPA accountable.”
Something to Think About

Don Michael, WVFB Director of Governmental Affairs

Progress “Under the Dome” – At this writing the dust has settled in “Puzzle Palace,” and there are varying opinions regarding accomplishments achieved during the 2012 Regular Session. Traditionally an election year cycle results in a slower-paced session, and this one certainly had its moments. But significant legislation was passed with major implications for West Virginia’s future. The more prominent bills included: HB 4086 (providing major tax credits to attract an ethane cracker plant), HB 4351 (addressing coal mine safety) and SB 469 (providing a plan to pay down the state’s liabilities associated with OPEB – Other Post Employment Benefits for retired public employees). Another significant piece of legislation was completed in Special Session the week following the Regular Session – HB 101. The bill provides tax credits to enhance opportunities for restarting Century Aluminum near Ravenswood.

The Regular Session had its normal flow of bills, with 2029 bills introduced – 1351 in the House and 678 in the Senate. Farm Bureau was tracking 117 bills. Twenty-eight were related to the oil and gas industry, but we were informed by many from the onset that none of these bills would gain traction. The mindset on each end of the Capitol was to let the dust settle from the Marcellus legislation enacted December 14, 2011 during Special Session. One of the major bills Farm Bureau promoted was SB 367 – trespasser responsibility legislation. The bill unanimously passed Senate Judiciary and the full Senate, but hit a snag en route to House Judiciary. Farm Bureau is most appreciative of the support demonstrated by the Senate, as well as interest in the House, and will be working with stakeholders and legislators to revisit modified legislation in 2013. Captive cervid (deer farming) legislation (SB 421) received much visibility during the session and was embraced by the Senate, as well as many members of the House, but died in House Judiciary. During the final days of the session two significant actions were taken regarding EPA’s assault on agriculture. Delegate Bill Hartman, Chairman of the Rural Caucus, and various members of the group co-signed a letter to Governor Tomblin expressing concerns about EPA’s attack on agriculture, and calling on the Governor to reach out to governors of neighboring states whose producers are facing similar challenges. On March 10 legislative action was completed on House Resolution 41, expressing concern regarding recent actions of the federal EPA and urging the EPA to exercise restraint and moderation in its regulation of the agriculture industry in West Virginia and to strike a fair balance between protecting the environment and the need to maintain and expand opportunities for employment in the agriculture industry. A copy of the resolution was forwarded to Governor Tomblin and the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Delegate Daniel Hall was the lead sponsor of the resolution, with 93 other House members co-sponsoring. Farm Bureau thanks the House and Rural Caucus for taking a stand for agriculture in the Mountain State. For complete details regarding the final status of bills on our watch list, go to www.wvfarm.org and click on Legislature – Hot Issues.

I felt one of the most dramatic moments of the 2012 Session came during a fiery House Session when one Committee Chair noted he was tired of the fear-mongering and dishonesty displayed by lobbying groups. He noted that consideration is being given to having anyone testifying before his committee to be sworn in first . . . talk about a game changer! From my brief experience of five years in the system, I am reasonably confident that sworn testimonies would eliminate a load of bull crap! Until next time, take care FRIENDS, God bless and KEEP SMILING.
In Case of a Flood - Are You Covered?

Steve Uhlman | Sponsor Relations Sales Manager
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Flood Insurance Overview
Homeowners are often unaware that flood damage is not covered by their home insurance. Flood insurance is the single best way you can protect yourself from flood losses. Here are a few facts regarding floods and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP):

Floods happen everywhere – Any place can flood under certain conditions.

Federally backed – Flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program is administered and backed by the Federal Government.

Better than a loan – You don’t have to repay flood insurance settlements.

Faster recovery – Under the National Flood Insurance Program, your agent can help process claims quickly so you can make repairs and recover faster.

Cleanup help – Flood insurance covers cleanup expenses, damages to your heating and cooling systems. “After water damage has occurred, the first 24 to 48 hours are crucial in preventing additional damage,” according to Dick Clinard, associate vice president, Nationwide and Allied Claims.

Flood insurance covers direct physical losses by flood. Depending on the exact circumstances of the event and claim, flood insurance could also cover other water losses including those resulting from coastal storm surge, snow melt, blocked storm drainage systems, levee dam failure and other similar causes. Flood insurance coverage is also available for your possessions, including furniture, clothing and other valuables. Flood insurance isn’t just for homeowners. Condo owners and renters should also buy flood insurance.

How Flood Insurance Works
Flood policies are written by the U.S. government and are offered to customers with property located in government designated flood zones. These policies are necessary because certain types of water damage are excluded from regular homeowner policies.

Some examples of flood coverage could include:
• Rivers overflowing (flash floods)
• Storm surges during a hurricane
• Street storm drains filling up due to heavy rains causing water backup
• Flood damage to vehicles is covered under the comprehensive section of an auto insurance policy, but there is no coverage for flooding in most standard homeowners, renters or commercial property insurance policies. Coverage is available in a separate policy from the NFIP. Despite efforts to publicize this, many people exposed to the risk of floods still fail to purchase flood insurance.

People tend to underestimate the risk of flooding and while the number of insureds is growing, a significant portion of the population at risk of flooding still is not insured for flood damage. Ninety percent of all natural disasters in this country involve flooding. The federal government declared 51 major flood disasters in 2010 and another 56 flood disasters in 2011.

Protect your home and possessions in case of flooding. Contact your local agent or a Nationwide Insurance agent to buy flood insurance today. Please remember that most flood policies have a 30 day waiting period before they take effect.

Source: http://www.iii.org/issues_updates/flood-insurance.html
The West Virginia Farm PAC has announced its endorsements for the 2012 primary election on Tuesday, May 8, 2012. In addition to endorsements for the West Virginia legislative races below, WV Farm PAC is endorsing the following candidacies: U.S. House of Representatives, District 1: David McKinley (R); 2nd District: Shelley Moore Capito (R); U.S. House of Representatives; 3rd District: Rick Snuffer (R). West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals: James J. Rowe (D); Allen Loughry (R).

WV Senate endorsements:

District 1: Jack Yost (D)
District 2: Jeffrey Kessler (D)
District 3: Donna Boley (R)
District 4: Mike Bright (D); Mitch Carmichael (R)
District 5: Bob Plymale (D)
District 6: Mark Wills (D)
District 9: Daniel Hall (D)
District 10: William Laird IV (D)
District 11: Clark Barnes (R)
District 13: Roman Prezioso Jr. (D)
District 14: Bob Williams (D)
District 15: Craig Blair (R)
District 16: Herb Snyder (D)
District 17: Corey Palumbo (D)

WV House of Delegates endorsements:

District 1: Randy Swartzmiller (D)
District 2: Phillip Diserio (D)
District 3: Ryan Ferns (D); Erikk Storch (R)
District 4: Michael Ferro (D)
District 5: Dave Pethel (D)
District 6: Wm. Roger Romine (R)
District 7: Lynwood “Woody” Ireland (R)
District 8: E.W. “Bill” Anderson Jr. (R)
District 9: Anna Border (R)
District 10: Dan Poling (D); Tom Azinger (R); John Ellem (R)
District 11: Bob Ashley (R)

District 14: Jim Butler (R)
District 15: Troy Andes (R)
District 16: Kevin Craig (D); Carol Miller (R)
District 17: Dale Stephens (D); Michael Ankrom (R)
District 18: Kelly Sobonya (R)
District 21: Harry Keith White (D)
District 24: Rupert Phillips Jr. (D)
District 25: Linda Goode Phillips (D)
District 27: Joe Ellington (R); Marty Gearheart (R); John Shott (R)
District 28: John D. O’Neal IV (R)
District 30: Linda Sumner (R)
District 32: John Pino (D)
District 34: Brent Boggs (D)
District 35: Doug Skaff Jr. (D); Ann Calvert (R); Fred Joseph (R); John B. McCuskey (R); Eric Nelson (R)
District 36: Robin Holstein (R)
District 38: Patrick Lane (R)
District 39: Ron Walters (R)
District 40: Tim Armstead (R)
District 42: George Ambler (R); Ray Canterbury (R)
District 43: Bill Hartman (D)
District 44: Sue Blake Andersen (D); Robert Karnes (R)
District 45: Bill Hamilton (R)
District 46: Peggy Donaldson Smith (D)
District 47: Mary Poling (D)
District 49: Jeff Tansill (R)
District 52: Larry Williams (D)
District 53: Stan Shaver (D)
District 54: Allen V. Evans (R)
District 56: Gary G. Howell (R)
District 57: Ruth Rowan (R)
District 58: Darryl E. Cowles (R)
District 59: Larry Kump (R)
District 60: Gary Kelley (R)
District 61: Walter Duke (R)
District 62: John Overington (R)
District 63: Michael Folk
District 64: Eric Householder (R)
District 65: Tiffany Lawrence (D)
District 67: Stephen Skinner (D)
Telling ‘em Like it Is...
Ag Commissioner Candidates Answer Questions
at Statewide Forums

Candidates vying for the West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture race participated in a series of forums sponsored by West Virginia Farm Bureau and Farm Credit. Audience members submitted questions to the candidates on a variety of topics including the candidates’ experience and qualifications, vision for the Department of Agriculture, environmental and regulatory concerns, food safety, taxes and economic and promotional opportunities for farmers. From left to right, above: Deputy Commissioner Bob Tabb, Jefferson County; Assistant Commissioner Steve Miller, Mineral County; WV State Plant Health Director Joe Messineo, Roane County; WV Senator Walt Helmick, Pocahontas County; Sally Shepherd, Kanawha County; and Kent Leinhardt, Monongalia County.

Among the top concerns expressed by candidates: Tabb, regarding the EPA - “The government needs to be educated about agriculture. Industries under attack need to unite against the EPA.” Leinhardt, discussing first priorities as Ag Commissioner: “The first sixty days, we need to assess if we are getting to the customer what we are supposed to provide.” Shepherd, on her vision for agriculture: “The energy crisis is an opportunity for ag in West Virginia. It is to our advantage to play up the diversity of agriculture.” Messineo, regarding farmland preservation: “It is a voluntary program. If people want to sell and make a lot of money, they’re going to do it. Education will help them understand the value of farmland.” Helmick, on his support of agriculture: “I was the lead sponsor on the bill to eliminate Class I taxes and supported agriculture on anti-degradation issues.” Miller, about animal welfare: “We need to work with the legislature to get some teeth in our laws so we can help law enforcement when they get animal cruelty calls.”

Dr. Roger Hanshaw (foreground) reads questions submitted by audience members to the candidates at the WVU forum
This election is about freedom from regulation

Ashley Stinnett

Make no mistake. America has one of the most radical regulatory agencies in the world. Ironically we call this organization the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) but it does everything but protect our country’s best interests.

At the time of this writing, the Washington Post is reporting that new greenhouse-gas emission regulations will virtually end all new coal-fired power plants while threatening the survival of facilities currently operating. That means electricity costs and food prices will continue to skyrocket while tens of thousands of hard-working Americans will be left unemployed. This directly affects every single American living in the United States no matter his or her socio-economic background. Even though we are all fully aware of what is happening to our coal industry in and outside of West Virginia, we must not lose focus on the harsh reality that the EPA is rapidly regulating another industry out of existence - agriculture.

America’s farmers are under attack because of a pro-regulatory, anti-business climate in Washington, D.C. The Obama administration does not grasp the ages old reality that farmers not only feed America but provide a major boost to our economy. Unfortunately the White House sees farmers as mass energy consumers who contribute little to national interest. This mentality has been turned into a startling and very real agenda led by two very sanctimonious individuals; EPA administrator Lisa Jackson and Energy Secretary Steven Chu. Remember, this is the same duo who believe Americans should power their cars with algae while getting rid of traditional farms and replacing them with hydrogen powered organic factories. These are the same types of individuals who subscribe to the belief that the government should have complete control over every industry and manufacturing sector in the United States. Take for instance a recent edict by the Department of Labor (DOL). That agency issued a rule banning youth workers from working on family farms. Under intense fire from the agriculture community, the DOL withdrew some provisions of that rule. The action by the DOL provides a clear example to all of us just what the federal government can and will do if they go un-checked.

It has been proven time and time again that big government regulations stifle economic prosperity and individual freedoms. A massive bureaucratic-driven federal government is the exact opposite of what America was founded on and is supposed to be.

Recently, the U.S. Supreme Court sided with farmers in the case of Sackett vs. EPA in which the nation’s highest court ruled landowners could legally challenge EPA mandates. Even though this was a small step in the right direction for the agriculture community, the job is ultimately left up to Congress and the White House. This means we all must get involved because these individuals who make decisions everyday that impact our lives are elected by the American voter. The EPA needs a serious overhaul, if not full elimination all together. This will not occur under the current Obama administration. If the president is reelected in November the EPA’s regulatory arm will grow longer and things will get much more ominous for farmers across America.

The time is now to educate your family, friends and neighbors on the importance of this election cycle. Write letters to your local newspaper, get involved in a political campaign and start calling Washington.

On March 23rd, 1775, Patrick Henry delivered his famous “Give me liberty or give me death” speech. The words spoken that day rallied a nation against tyranny that ruled from across an ocean. Those words ring as true today as they did then. One key line from that text should be a stark reminder of where America now stands 237 years later. Patrick Henry said, “We have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on.”

The question remains; have we done everything we could to make sure America stands great again?

On November 6, we will make the most important decision of our lifetime.

Follow Ashley on Twitter: @AshleyStinnett
or on Facebook: Facebook.com/AshleyCStinnett
THE FOOD DIALOGUES
Results from Surveys of Farmers, Ranchers and Consumers

We wanted to understand the attitudes and opinions of farmers and ranchers AND consumers, so we went straight to the source ...

2,417 consumers surveyed nationwide
(August 2011)

1,002 farmers & ranchers surveyed nationwide
(August 2011)

Research Highlights:

Consumers think about food production constantly, yet know very little about how food is brought to the dinner table

Overwhelmingly, farmers and ranchers share the same values as consumers

Farmers and ranchers know a divide exists between consumers and their food

Consumers are firmly divided on the direction of modern agriculture

Topics FARMERS & RANCHERS Feel are Most Important to Educate Consumers About

1. The effect of pesticides, fertilizers and antibiotics on food
2. Where their food comes from in general
3. Proper care of livestock and poultry
4. Effect of government regulations on farming/ranching
5. Economic value of agriculture

Topics CONSUMERS Want More Information About

1. How chemicals are used
2. How pesticides are used
3. Food safety standards
4. Effect of government regulations on farming
5. How antibiotics are used + Genetic engineering in crops

CONSUMER Survey: Topics With the Most Confusing or Conflicting Information

Effect of gov’t regulations on farming

1. #1

How pesticides are used

2. #2

Genetic engineering in crops

3. #3

How antibiotics are used

4. #4

How livestock and poultry are cared for

5. #5

79% of consumers say that producing healthy choices for all consumers is very important for farmers and ranchers to consider when planning farming and ranching practices

64% of consumers say keeping food prices low is very important

* U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance *

West Virginia Farm Bureau News
THE FOOD DIALOGUES
Results from Surveys of Farmers, Ranchers and Consumers

CONSUMER Survey: Which topics do you believe should be a PRIORITY for those who grow and raise food?

1. How pesticides are used
2. How livestock and poultry are cared for
3. Effect of government regulations on farming
4. Food safety standards
5. How antibiotics are used

FARMER & RANCHER Survey: How much knowledge do you think the average consumer has about the modern farming and ranching industry in the United States?

- A significant amount of knowledge 2%
- Some knowledge 13%
- Very little knowledge 70%
- No knowledge at all 16%

CONSUMER Survey: Overall, would you say the US is heading in the right direction or off on the wrong track in the way we produce food?

- Right direction 39%
- Don’t know 19%
- Wrong track 42%

FARMER & RANCHER Survey: How accurate is consumer perception of modern farming and ranching?

- Very accurate 2%
- Mostly accurate 5%
- Only somewhat accurate 35%
- Not accurate at all 58%

Research Highlights:
Consumers think about food production constantly, yet know very little about how food is brought to the dinner table. Overwhelmingly, farmers and ranchers share the same values as consumers. Consumers are firmly divided on the direction of modern agriculture.

Topics Farmers & Ranchers Feel are most Important to educate consumers about:
- The effect of pesticides, fertilizers and antibiotics on food
- Where their food comes from in general
- Proper care of livestock and poultry
- Effect of government regulations on farming
- Economic value of agriculture

Topics Consumers Want more Information about:
- How chemicals are used
- How pesticides are used
- Food safety standards
- Effect of government regulations on farming
- How antibiotics are used + Genetic engineering in crops

Some 79% of consumers say that producing healthy choices for all consumers is very important for farmers and ranchers to consider when planning farming and ranching practices. 74% say keeping food prices low is very important.
“Pink slime” seems to be in the news an awful lot lately. A product actually known as Lean Finely Textured Beef is being termed “pink slime” and if you believe what you see and hear on the news, it is a gelatin like substance containing dangerous chemicals and used as filler in ground beef. When the first photos of this product hit the internet, it indeed looked like pink slime. And to be truthful, the thoughts of it being in the hamburgers I enjoy were not very appetizing. That was until I started doing a little research about this so-called slime. One of the first things I learned was that the photos circulating when this story initially hit the news were not even of beef. It was mechanically separated chicken. Since then, a more accurate and much more appealing looking photo is being attached to the stories. I encourage everyone to visit the sites http://pinkslimeisamyth.com and www.meatmythcrushers.com if you want to know more on this issue than what my column tells you.

One of the myths these sites want to lay to rest is that Lean Finely Textured Beef is just filler and not beef. It is beef. One blog post uses the example of trimming a beef roast. It is nearly impossible to trim away all the fat without sacrificing some of the red meat. However, a company known as Beef Products, Incorporated developed a method to salvage the trimmings left from large cuts of meat. They do this using a heating process that essentially liquefies and then removes the fat from the actual meat. The resulting meat is practically 100% lean and has the same nutritional value as the rest of the roast.

The news media is reporting that the meat is treated with dangerous chemicals and that because the meat contains additives, it is not 100% beef and should be labeled as such. In reality, nothing is added to the meat. Instead, during the processing, the meat is treated with a “puff” of ammonia for about a second. The reason for doing this is to kill bacteria. The ammonia combines with naturally occurring moisture in the meat to create ammonium hydroxide. Ammonia controls certain pathogens in meat that cause E.coli; thus making it safer for consumers. Ammonium hydroxide was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1974 as safe for use in food processing. In 2001, the Food Safety and Inspection Service approved it as a way to increase food safety specifically in beef. Ammonia is a naturally occurring compound found in numerous foods (like baked goods, cheese, chocolate, and puddings) as well as our own bodies. It is important to realize that this is a different type of ammonia than what is used in household cleaning products! Ammonia is also used in the processing of dairy products, breakfast cereals, eggs, fish, and beverages. In fact, ammonium hydroxide is even used on fresh foods (like fruits and vegetables!) to kill bacteria. The simple reason is to make our food safer to eat.

Estimates show that farmers will have to double food production by 2050 if we are to continue feeding the world’s growing population. We should be commending companies like Beef Products, Incorporated for their efforts in making the beef industry a little more efficient. They are, after all, saving valuable meat from going to waste as the world’s meat supplies decline and demand actually increases. If we are to continue to supply affordable meat to the consumers who want it, we must develop new ways to be more efficient and economical. And we must fight back when uninformed media and consumers make ridiculous claims of dangerous pink slime invading our beef supply.

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Planning Ahead

Deborah Miller, JD, Director of Planned Giving, West Virginia University Foundation, Inc.

As part of the estate planning process, some people choose to write out their thoughts about life in a “personal legacy letter” that is filed away with their will or revocable trust. It serves as a keepsake for their loved ones to read in the future and states their views and perspectives on life in a personal way that other estate planning documents cannot.

It is easier to do this once the other pressures of estate planning are out of the way. Its purpose is not to explain any of the financial aspects of the estate plan but is a way to reach out to others from the heart.

Whether the letter includes secrets of success, special remembrances, memorable accomplishments, biographical information, a discussion on values, or other thoughts, it is meant to convey what that individual views as their personal legacy.

Thoughts about how family relationships may change in the future can also be included. Some well-chosen words of remembrance can help the family during a difficult time.

As part of their legacy, many are proud to include reminiscences about their volunteer work and support of civic and nonprofit organizations. Describing the benefits of doing that can guide others in making choices throughout their lives.

The letter can be plain and simple, handwritten or typed, or printed onto colorful paper with photos included. It’s up to the individual preparing it, but family members will definitely appreciate the effort and the intent behind it.

Such a personal legacy letter can be a satisfying way to communicate very important messages. It can speak volumes about its author’s life and joys and serve as a connection to times past.

That’s good planning.

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Davis College Students Excel in Entrepreneurship Competition

Fonda Holehouse

Students at the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources & Design at West Virginia University continue to distinguish themselves as budding entrepreneurs by virtue of their participation in the West Virginia Statewide Collegiate Business Plan Competition. This competition affords college students around the state the unique opportunity to make a business idea come to life with the support of state institutions of higher education and seasoned business professionals from around the country.

Davis College students have the opportunity to enroll in Professor Fonda Holehouse’s rural entrepreneurship class which is offered through the Division of Resource Management. Students taking this course are required to develop a new business idea and prepare an executive summary for their idea and submit it to the competition. These entries are evaluated by educators, investors and business owners and the field is narrowed to ten semifinalists in two categories – lifestyle & innovation and hospitality & tourism. Twenty semi-finalists are chosen and the students proceed to round two where they develop a feasibility analysis and “pitch” their idea to investors, educators and the business community. From these semi-finalists, five are chosen in each category to move on to develop a full-fledged business plan that will be presented in April 2012. The winner in each category receives $10,000.00 in cash, accounting and legal services and virtual or physical incubator space as the young entrepreneur launches their business!

In the five years that Holehouse’s students have competed in the statewide competition, they have become a force to be reckoned with. With 171 business ideas entered in the past five years, this class has produced 39 semifinalists, 18 finalists, 1 runner-up and 2 winners. This year’s crop of students competing is no exception! Of the 117 entries statewide in the fall of 2011, 44 were from Holehouse’s class. Eight of the 20 semifinalists (40%) were from the Davis College and enrolled in the rural entrepreneurship class and 6 of those 8 entrepreneurial ventures moved into the finals (60%)

This year’s finalists from the Davis College of Agriculture include:

Hospitality and Tourism:
- Katie Workman, Homestyle Meals at Snowshoe
- Jameson Holehouse & John Howard, Pranzo Veloce Italian Food Truck;
- Brianna Heckert & Alexandra Bay, Whistlin’ Dixie’s Western Saloon.

Lifestyle and Innovation:
- Jenna Mullins, Bella Boots
- Meg Grzeskiewicz, Bulls-I Breeding Technology
- Ruth Mary Oldham, Full Circle Compost.

These 8 aspiring entrepreneurs have been assigned business coaches and have received $1000 in funding to continue to develop their business plans. The final plans will be presented on April 14-15, 2012, at the Erikson Alumni Center on the campus of West Virginia University.

Congratulations and good luck in the final competition!

For more information on the competition and to read the media summaries for each of these finalists, visit the competition’s website at http://be.wvu.edu/bpc. Click on the “participants” link.
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NURSERY CROP INSURANCE (RMA)
ENROLLMENT DEADLINE MAY 1

Nursery crop insurance is available in all states to all persons operating nurseries that meet certain criteria. Insurance coverage will apply, by practice (fieldgrown or container), to all of your nursery plants in a county that:

- Are on the Eligible Plant List*
- Are grown in a nursery that receives at least 50 percent of its gross income from the wholesale marketing of nursery plants;
- Meet all the requirements for insurability; and
- Your nursery must be inspected and approved as acceptable before insurance coverage can begin.

*View the Eligible Plant List at:  http://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/eplpps

To learn more about what is insured, coverage levels, and deadlines visit the WV Small Farm Center’s Risk Management Tools at http://smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu/cropinsurance/nursery-crops
GM IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH FARM BUREAU® TO BRING YOU THIS VALUABLE OFFER.¹

Farm Bureau members can get a $500¹ private offer toward the purchase or lease of most new GM vehicles, including the Chevrolet Silverado 2500HD and 3500HD lineup. Visit fbverify.com for more details. They get tough jobs done with a maximum payload of up to 6,635 lbs.² and a conventional towing capacity of up to 17,000 lbs.³

And through the GM Business Choice Program,⁴ business owners receive even more when purchasing or leasing an eligible Chevrolet or GMC truck or van for business use. Visit gmbusinesschoice.com for details.

¹ Offer valid toward the purchase of new 2011 and 2012 Buick, Chevrolet and GMC models, excluding Chevrolet Volt.
² Requires Regular Cab model and gas engine. Maximum payload capacity includes weight of driver, passengers, optional equipment and cargo.
³ Requires available 6.6L Duramax® diesel engine. Maximum trailer ratings assume a properly-equipped base vehicle plus driver. See dealer for details.
⁴ To qualify, vehicles must be used in the day-to-day operation of the business and not solely for transportation purposes. Must provide proof of business. This program may not be compatible with other offers or incentive programs. Consult your local Chevrolet or GMC dealer or visit gmbusinesschoice.com for program compatibility and other restrictions. Take delivery by 9/30/2012.

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Food Check-Out events were held in Huntington, Charleston and Morgantown in February. More than $20,400.00 in food and in-kind donations were delivered to the three Ronald McDonald Houses in West Virginia. Once again, Farm Bureau members from all across the state stepped up to the plate to help families in need!
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Over the last few years, there’s been a growing awareness that it really matters how food gets from the farm to the table. But not everyone knows much about the process.

The most recent Consumer Trust Research by the Center for Food Integrity found that:

1. American consumers rank safe, affordable and nutritious food as their top priorities.
2. Only 23 percent of Americans strongly agree that they have access to all of the information they want about where food comes from, how it is produced and its safety.

Farmers like Shana Beattie and Marie Bolt want to change that by volunteering to participate in the CommonGround program. They’ve joined with other women farmers who want to share their knowledge with the people who buy their farm-raised food.

The Beattie family raises soybeans, corn, alfalfa, beef and pork in Nebraska. In fact, they raise roughly 8 million pounds of pork annually. That’s enough to feed at least 40,000 Americans for a year. The Bolt family raises cattle and sheep in South Carolina, and Marie says it’s an honor to share her knowledge and experiences raising food.

“There are so many misconceptions about farming today. Many people seem to think that food is grown by huge corporations. The truth is, most food is grown and raised on family farms like mine.”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that families such as the Beatties and Bolts operate up to 98 percent of the 2.2 million farms in America. You can learn more about these family farms and food facts, as well as join in the conversation yourself, at www.FindOurCommonGround.com, and www.Facebook.com/CommonGroundNow.

Here, Shana and Marie share some of the recipes they make for their families.
Orange Grilled Pork with Honey-Mustard Dip

By Shana Beattie
Prep Time: 30 minutes
Cook Time: 10 minutes
Yields: 6 servings
6 pork chops, bone-in or boneless
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 medium lemons
3/4 cup orange marmalade
1/2 cup chicken broth
1/4 cup honey
1/4 cup Dijon-style mustard
3 tablespoons mayonnaise
Sprinkle pork with salt and pepper. Set aside.
Finely shred enough zest from the lemons to make 1 tablespoon. Squeeze enough juice from the lemons to make 1/4 cup.
For marinade: In medium nonmetallic bowl, combine orange marmalade, broth, lemon zest and lemon juice. Add pork; toss gently to coat. Place in zipper bag and marinate in the refrigerator for 1 to 4 hours, turning occasionally.
For dipping sauce: In small bowl, combine honey, mustard and mayo. Cover and chill until ready to serve.
Drain pork and discard marinade.
Preheat gas grill. Reduce to medium heat and place chops on grill rack.
Cover and cook about 7 to 9 minutes or until chops are slightly pink and the juice runs clear (145°F).

Mama Jeanne’s Stuffed Peppers

By Marie Bolt
Yields: 4 servings
1 pound hamburger
1 can diced tomatoes
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 cup cooked rice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
2 cups cheese, divided
4 or 5 large bell peppers (boil peppers for 10 minutes and clean out)
Preheat oven to 350°F.
In large pan, brown hamburger meat, then drain.
Add tomatoes, salt, pepper, rice, Worcestershire sauce and 1 cup cheese to meat. Simmer for about 15 minutes.
Stuff peppers with meat mixture and top with cheese. Place in baking dish and bake for 30 minutes.

Food Facts
- According to the Food and Drug Administration, the agency does not allow meat to be sold with traces of antibiotics above strict safety limits.
- On average, Americans spend roughly 10 percent of their income on food, versus other countries around the world that spend roughly 18 to 25 percent, according to the educational resource The Hand That Feeds U.S.
- While organic food often is more expensive than conventional food, there is no difference in nutritional value, according to a review of 400 scientific papers on the health impacts of organic foods, published in the journal Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition.

You can rely on Nationwide Agribusiness, too. They’re the #1 farm insurer in the U.S. They’re also the only company with On Your Side® Farm Reviews that help make sure your farm has the coverage you need at the right price for you.

Dale Earnhardt Jr.

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