Primary Election Endorsements Issue
Communications Boot Camp Teaches Women How to Tell Ag’s Story

The American Farm Bureau Federation is now accepting applications for its tenth Women’s Communications Boot Camp class, July 12 –15 in Washington, D.C. The three-day intensive training is open to all women who are Farm Bureau members. The program focuses on enhancing communication and leadership skills and includes targeted training in the areas of public speaking, media relations, messaging and advocacy.

Fifteen women will be selected to participate in this year’s program. Applications are available online or through state Farm Bureaus. The deadline for submissions is May 10. All applicants will be notified of their status by June 1.

The American Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership program provides women with the training and education they need to encourage positive change in their communities and within agriculture. For more information, visit www.fb.org.

Caterpillar Adds New Machines, Tools to Farm Bureau Member Discount

Farm Bureau members can now save up to $2,500 thanks to the addition of hydraulic excavators and a medium track-type tractor to the Caterpillar Member Benefit program. In addition, Farm Bureau members will now receive a $250 credit on work tool attachments purchased with a new Caterpillar machine.

“Caterpillar is excited to grow its partnership with Farm Bureau by offering discounts on additional products,” says Dustin Johansen, agriculture segment manager for Caterpillar. “Our goal is always to help members be more productive and better serve Farm Bureau members’ diverse needs.”

“West Virginia Farm Bureau is proud to make these exclusive benefits available to our members,” says Charles Wilfong, president of West Virginia Farm Bureau. “Thanks to Caterpillar, our members will continue to benefit from savings on best-in-class machines.”

To take advantage of Caterpillar incentives, members can visit www.FBadvantage.com/Cat, enter their membership ID and ZIP code, download a certificate and present it to a Cat dealer at the time of purchase. The offer is transferrable to anyone living in the Farm Bureau member’s household. Residency must be verified for both the original customer and the transferee through a current driver’s license or state identification.
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On the cover
Barnes’ Barn
Tabby Bennett
West Virginia’s Future in Hands of Voters

Charles Wilfong, President, West Virginia Farm Bureau

Seems that our hopes of an early and lasting, warm spring season are being delayed a little bit by the recent cold snap. The early turn-out of livestock on mountain pastures that many of us were hoping for probably won’t happen. But my dad always said the grass that grows in March most always gets frozen in April. I guess once again he knew what he was talking about.

One thing that hasn’t cooled down is the current upcoming election. We have many important choices to make in the May 10 primary here in West Virginia. Without a doubt the biggest news in the West Virginia election is that all judges - from Magistrate Court to the state Supreme Court - will be elected on a non-partisan basis in the primary. That means these elections are over with in the primary.

Having these positions elected on a non-partisan basis was something that WVFB worked hard to get done. Our state Legislature approved this change last year. It is vitally important that we pay special attention to these judicial elections and take advantage of this new opportunity to elect these folks based on their qualifications and abilities rather than just by political party. So please encourage family, friends and neighbors to take advantage of this new chance to elect the right people to oversee our judicial system. Many people are unaware of this change in the election process.

The only judicial race that the WV Farm PAC is involved with is the position on the WV Supreme Court. The Farm PAC has endorsed Beth Walker for that position. She is an exceptional candidate who we believe would serve our state very well on the West Virginia Supreme Court. This is likely the most important vote we can cast in this primary.

see Wilfong, page 15

Sowing Seeds for a Future Harvest

Zippy Duvall, President, American Farm Bureau Federation

Farmers are blessed to get a front row seat each spring to fresh beginnings and new life. Each year we plant our crops and care for the animals and land we’ve been entrusted with, not just for ourselves but for those who will come after. Here in Washington, we take planting season just as seriously as we work to ensure farmers and ranchers have the tools they need to plant, care for and bring those crops to harvest.

Our team is constantly scanning the policy field to move our issues forward. The political climate can change as quickly as the weather, but whether that brings challenge or opportunity, it’s all the more important for us to get ahead on the key issues affecting agriculture. And that’s just what we’re doing this spring.

AFBF already has taken the lead in tackling budget talks that could threaten important farm bill programs. Some would like nothing more than to cut programs that have been carefully streamlined to fit today’s marketplace. We’re partnering with a variety of organizations and members of Congress from both sides of the aisle to guarantee the 2014 farm bill accomplishes its goals of supporting conservation, providing nutrition assistance and helping farmers manage through challenging economic times. Taken as a whole, it is about keeping healthful, affordable food on America’s dinner tables.

see Duvall, page 14
As I step back and look at the last day of the 60-day 2016 Legislative Session, a few thoughts come to mind. With more than 1,600 bills introduced, numerous committee meetings, and long House and Senate sessions, when you break it all down, it’s about what’s best for West Virginia’s future.

In the early morning of the last day, I saw lobbyists, delegates, senators, and of course, private citizens. One in particular caught my attention—a dad with his young daughter was walking about the Capitol and stopped at the massive statue of U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd. I thought, after all the disagreements, discussions, denials, and demands, that it all comes down to what is best for the overall good of West Virginia families. This is represented by the young father who was leading his daughter around the Capitol. What will West Virginia look like when this little girl grows up to possibly lead her own child someday around our Capitol?

This thought means even more when each of us concentrate upon what the future holds for our families. West Virginia Farm Bureau has continued a long history during this session of standing strong on conservative family values, protecting individual freedoms and property rights, and building strong foundations for future generations. I believe that while much has occurred during this legislative session, much remains to be accomplished.

One of the major issues of the 2016 Legislature involved how oil/gas resources are developed in this state. No doubt, West Virginia needs this enterprise to provide jobs and tax bases. In my view, it is imperative for West Virginia to maintain and expand its status in the energy sector. However, the development of West Virginia oil and gas reserves, including drilling, pipeline expansion, and other infrastructure upgrades, must not come at the expense of private property rights. Future legislation must include a balanced approach that encourages companies to develop oil/gas reserves while at the same time protecting the surface owners’ and mineral owners’ rights.

The Legislature must consider all who are involved, along with ensuring that drilling is conducted with the use of the best of technology from an environmental standpoint. I believe that some of the legislation as proposed by Delegate Ireland and others contained many positives. Hopefully the WVFB, oil/gas developers, legislators, and other stakeholders will work together in the coming months to develop legislation that can be enacted to further strengthen and guide oil/gas development and protect private property rights at the same time.

Nationally, the American Farm Bureau reports that the U.S. Senate has failed to reach an agreement on the Biotech Labeling Solutions Act as proposed by Senator Roberts of Kansas. This legislation was needed to set a national standard for GMO labeling. Failure to pass this bill, according to many economists, may add numerous dollars to food manufacturing, and ultimately the consumers will pay the cost. This legislation was supported by over 300 farm groups, companies, and other entities.

GMO/biotechnology has been approved as safe by the FDA and USDA. Over 70 percent of our corn and 90 percent of our soybean production are GMO varieties. Activists are calling for labeling of any food that contains GMO or biotech varieties to indicate that there may be a safety issue with the product. Due to the Senate’s failure to act, interstate commerce will be threatened and small family-owned companies will face a penalty of $1,000 per day if their products enter into the Vermont food chain, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Really, this vote is a vote against American consumers and ultimately the farmers of America who have used technology to improve production in order to feed the world’s population. Efforts are now underway to reconsider the recent Senate decision.
Dear parents and all of those caring for children,

I have the pleasure of serving as chief marketing officer of Nationwide, but I view my most important role as being a good father to two bright and active boys. Like most parents, raising healthy and well-adjusted children is my number one priority. While I take great joy in watching my sons grow, each new stage of childhood brings new risks and worries for their safety – be it on the playing fields, at school, or even in our home. According to our recent survey of more than 1,000 parents with children under 13 years of age, 93 percent think that, compared to other locations, their home is the safest place for their child. It’s not every day that we think about the potential safety risks in our own homes as the most serious. Unfortunately, accidental injuries, such as poisoning, drowning and home fires, are the leading cause of death among children. I also now know that nearly 50 percent of these accidents actually happen at home. Because of this, Nationwide continues our mission to raise awareness and to help parents take action to keep their children safe.

In February 2015, Nationwide launched Make Safe Happen, a program dedicated to driving awareness and action around accidental childhood injuries. At that time, we started a conversation on this important, but also very difficult, issue. Since then, I’m proud to share that we have made significant progress to empower parents and families in the U.S. to improve home safety behaviors. We convened a Make Safe Happen Advisory Council – an esteemed group of injury prevention and child safety experts from media outlets and leading nonprofits, such as Safe Kids Worldwide and Nationwide Children’s Hospital. Together, we’ve educated hundreds of thousands at events across the country, through the app, and through the tips and resources on our website.

We know more needs to be done. According to the survey, the majority of parents are looking for more updated information on today’s child safety issues. So, this year, with the guidance of our Advisory Council, Make Safe Happen will focus on educating caregivers on four critical at-home safety risks. They are: furniture and TV tip-overs, poisoning, drowning and fire. These serious, complex and potentially fatal issues require greater attention and understanding, which is why we are eager to inspire one million safety actions by the end of the year. We believe this is a lifesaving goal that we’ll track throughout the year at MakeSafeHappen.com.

To reach our goal, we want to share lifesaving information with parents, and help communities and homes that need it most. In partnership with our newest Advisory Council member, the American Red Cross, we will install fire alarms in houses and provide grants for youth swim lessons in high-risk, low-income communities across the country.

We encourage you to take your own action today by downloading the app, watching a safety video or attending one of the Make Safe Happen safety events that will take place across the country in 2016. And, of course, help us inspire more parents and caregivers to take action by spreading the word on social media using #MakeSafeHappen.

As a parent and long-term Nationwider, I am
Do You Suffer From:

- Heel Pain
- Joint Pain
- Back or Knee Pain
- Neuropathy
- Plantar Fasciitis
- Arthritis
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Achilles Tendinitis
- Bunions
- Hammertoe
- Heel Spurs

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West Virginia Farm Bureau News 7
West Virginia’s comeback starts now. I stand committed to seeing it endure.

The revitalization begins at the D.C. Circuit Court, where my office and its bipartisan coalition of 29 states and state agencies will demonstrate the far reaching impact of the EPA’s Power Plan.

Let’s be clear, the Power Plan represents a radical transformation of the nation’s energy policy and will have a sweeping impact on the American way of life. It will decimate West Virginia’s coal industry, lead to skyrocketing electric bills and jeopardize the reliability of the nation’s energy grid.

For now, the Power Plan seeks to double regulate coal-fired power plants and force states to shift their energy portfolios away from coal-fired generation. But no energy source is safe.

President Obama ultimately seeks to transform the EPA from serving as an environmental regulator into a central energy planning authority. That would enable EPA to pick winners and losers, eventually moving its line of attack from coal to natural gas or other fuels in favor of wind and solar.

Historic and unprecedented.

Those words illustrate West Virginia’s seismic win at the U.S. Supreme Court – a victory that reverberated across the nation instilling hope in the state’s coal industry and forcing bureaucrats to think twice before using executive regulation to bring about radical change.

The ruling, issued Feb. 9, immediately stopped President Obama from implementing the centerpiece of his coal-killing agenda. It limits further economic damage by freezing the Environmental Protection Agency’s progress while our legal challenge proceeds.

This victory does not represent the end our fight, but a crucial time-out. It saves taxpayer dollars and may limit some additional layoffs as state governments and job creators feel more emboldened to delay any effort at complying with a rule that we believe will be struck down as illegal.

This represents an enormous triumph for West Virginia. It resets the narrative, stops some of the bleeding and announces to the world that coal still does have a future.
Fortunately, that is not legal under the Clean Air Act, the Constitution and prior case law. Such transformation only can be approved by Congress.

The Supreme Court’s stay sends a strong signal that serious doubts exist about the Power Plan’s legality. In delaying its implementation, the Supreme Court had to conclude our coalition will likely succeed.

Don’t let the White House, EPA or anyone spin you on that point.

Even the EPA acknowledged such a decision “would be extraordinary and unprecedented.” Never before, to our knowledge, has the Supreme Court delayed a rule’s implementation before a lower court decided its legality.

Every state, coal operator, electricity producer and regulating body should realize the gravity of the Supreme Court’s decision. Aside from any glimpse into the future, the ruling strips EPA of its authority to enforce the Power Plan and eliminates the requirement for anyone to develop compliance strategies.

Simply put, everyone impacted by the Power Plan should put their pencils down.

Such a tremendous victory doesn’t come without an equally tremendous team. Our broad, bipartisan coalition is comprised of 29 states and state agencies, labor unions, coal miners, boilmakers, coal operators, utilities, chambers of commerce, consumer groups and concerned citizens.

My staff attorneys also did a tremendous job. When I took office I sought to recruit the best and brightest attorneys in America to work in our office. Through this victory, you are seeing the high quality of our attorneys’ work product.

Now that we have achieved this significant legal victory, we must push as hard as possible to get as many people back to work as possible. Real people are hurting in part due to this Administration’s illegal policies and that has to change.

Patrick Morrisey serves as attorney general for West Virginia

Patrick Morrisey serves as attorney general for West Virginia

West Virginia's Comeback Begins Now
Farming is a business of uncertainty, but here’s something you can count on.

Chevrolet presents this exclusive $500 private offer toward the purchase or lease of an all-new Chevy Silverado — the 2014 North American Truck of the Year. From the family of the most dependable, longest-lasting full-size pickup in America, rest assured your Silverado will keep you working without skipping a beat.

1 Offer available through 4/1/17. Available on qualified 2015 and 2016 Chevrolet vehicles. This offer is not available with some other offers. Only customers who have been active members of an eligible Farm Bureau for a minimum of 30 days will be eligible to receive a certificate. Customers can obtain certificates at www.fbverify.com/gm. Farm Bureau and the FB logo are registered service marks of the American Farm Bureau Federation and are used herein under license by General Motors. 2 Dependability based on longevity: 1987–April 2013 full-size pickup registrations.
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West Virginia Farm PAC Announces Candidate Endorsements for May 10th West Virginia Primary

West Virginia Farm PAC has announced its endorsements for the May 10, 2016 West Virginia Primary.

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We also want farmers to have the security of knowing the seeds they’re planting this season, including those enhanced through biotechnology, will be available in the future. For more than two decades now, we’ve seen increased production, reduced pesticide use and restored soil with the help of improved seeds. But misleading biotech labeling initiatives at the state level continue to threaten these vital tools. It’s time for Congress to put a stop to this confusion and protect the freedom of all Americans to choose safe and affordable food.

Of course, not all spring “planting” at AFBF is in the policy field. Some of the most important work we do is in connecting farmers and ranchers from across the country and helping them develop as leaders in their businesses and communities. This spring, we’re expanding our new Patriot Project, which pairs military veterans just getting started in agriculture with experienced farmers who provide guidance and insight along the way. We can think of no better way to thank our heroes than by helping them succeed as they return home and take up farming and ranching. It’s our hope that the program will build meaningful relationships that last a lifetime.

As American farmers and ranchers, we approach every spring with hope and faith that the seeds we sow will fall on good ground and yield a fruitful crop. Like our members across the country, we at Farm Bureau are planting lots of seeds this spring. We sow the desires of our farmers and ranchers every day. Sowing seeds about agriculture and our beliefs requires determination and faithfulness. Let us pray that the seeds we sow fall on ears that hear—and are moved to act! (From the Parable of the Sower, Matthew 13:9—“Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”)

We will nurture those seeds and pray for good growing conditions, so that we can harvest successful outcomes by the hundredfold for all farmers and ranchers.
Wilfong, continued

election. We believe she would be a thoroughly fair and honest Justice who shares our conservative principles. We feel confident that she will interpret and defend the laws of West Virginia, rather than “legislating from the bench” as some Justices have done in the past. She is a candidate that deserves our full support. There is an accompanying article in this magazine about Beth.

On the Congressional front we strongly support the re-election of all three of our current House of Representatives members. Congressman McKinley, Mooney, and Jenkins have all proven themselves and deserve our full support as well.

The rest of the WV Farm PAC endorsements are also listed in another article in this magazine. Please take time to review them. These decisions were not made lightly. The board looked at the voting records and actions of the incumbents. We also sent out a questionnaire to incumbents and newcomers to get their view on many of the important issues facing agriculture and rural West Virginia in general. We make a real effort to support candidates who share our philosophy and will properly address the many issues confronting us. Remember May 10 is Election Day and early voting starts on April 27. Vote.

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West Virginia Farm Bureau News 15

If you’re a West Virginia Farm Bureau Member register for your FREE classified ad with a FREE photo!
“You have to have water - especially in drought years. Seasons with little rain are tough.”

These are the words of an experienced farmer who raises beef cattle and hay, and knows a thing or two about how to improve and make the most of his water supply. Dick Barnes of Flat Top, West Virginia has been farming since the late 1960s. He and his dad bought their first farm around 1968, then purchased another around 1971. Barnes was a salesman for most of his life, but now farms full time and manages a beautiful 300-acre piece of land full of hay, lots of fence, breathtaking mountain views and seven ponds.

Two of Barnes’ ponds were created through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) with the technical and engineering assistance of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). For one pond in particular, Barnes had a difficult time figuring out how he could create a large enough dam to hold water. One day he had the idea of removing top soil from one of his fields, then later replacing it so he could get the results he needed to create the pond.
Barnes called his local NRCS extension agent to see if his idea would work, and a short time after planning with NRCS, his brainstorming turned into a new pond. “I had the idea, called NRCS to see if it could be done, and now the field I took the soil from looks untouched and I have the pond,” he said.

Barnes’ ponds feed into concrete troughs, so all he needs to do to water his cows is turn a valve. He has even built a pond that will stay thawed all winter, so his cattle never have to go without a drink. Another project Barnes is currently working on through NRCS is a water tank that will help him better utilize the water he catches from rooftops on his buildings, which could be used to water his cattle or his hay.

In addition to tank-captured water, a unique way Barnes waters and fertilizes his hay is by the use of trout emulsion. Barnes takes several tanks, each of which holds 275 gallons, to a nearby trout farm. The employees at the trout farm fill his tanks, and he hauls the fertilized water home to spread on the land. “To date I have hauled more than 24,000 gallons (of trout emulsion), and it works beautifully for my hay,” said Barnes. He sells the hay to folks in his community, who benefit from his stewardship and conservation practices.

At one time Barnes raised anywhere from 100 to 200 head of cattle, but today he keeps only enough to ensure his pastures stay clean. Although he has fewer cattle than he once did, Barnes relies on internal fences for rotational grazing.

NRCS provided the technical assistance for a portion of the inner fences on Barnes’ farm, so his cattle graze in the same area until they have completely utilized the forage. Once they have eaten everything possible in one area, the fence can be easily moved to rotate the cows into a new area. The practice of rotational grazing maximizes forage.

“NRCS is easy to work with. They are good to help you engineer your ideas.”

Photos: Opposite page: Some of the picturesque ponds on Barnes’ property. This page, above: Several cattle graze in front of one of the barns on the property. Bottom right: A pond under construction.
growth and encourages the growth of desirable plants by moving the cattle around different sections of a pasture to allow the most nutritional and best-tasting plants time to grow back.

Aside from farming, Barnes stays busy making memories with seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren and holding family events on his farm, such as a wedding for his granddaughter in his hay barn.

He also has get-togethers in his barn bar. After years of accumulating beer signs and bar decorations, he needed a place to display his collection. Barnes used a closed off section of his barn to build a room with bar tables and chairs, and has since put it to use with friends and family, as well as for charitable purposes, such as hosting benefit motorcycle rides.

Even with a sometimes hectic life, Barnes finds time to improve his farm, and knows NRCS is always available to offer assistance to him in new and existing programs that will optimize conservation practices which will benefit the environment and his farm. After taking advantage of all of the expertise NRCS provides, Barnes offered he would recommend NRCS to other farmers who are trying to improve. “NRCS is easy to work with. They are good to help you engineer your ideas.”

Photos: Left: The bar displays Barnes’ collection of signs and memorabilia hung on board-and-batten walls. Below: The tanker sprayer Barnes utilizes to apply fish emulsion to his hay fields.
**Supreme Court Outcome Could Help Dispel “Judicial Hellhole” Reputation of West Virginia; Attract Businesses**

*May 10th primary will determine the race for the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals*

Following a change in state law last year, judicial races in the Mountain State are now non-partisan, and thus are decided during primary elections. So the impact of the May 10th election will have a direct bearing on helping West Virginia change the negative legal climate plaguing the state and keeping new business at bay.

Beth Walker, of Morgantown, has been endorsed by the West Virginia Farm PAC for this very reason.

Walker is Associate General Counsel for the West Virginia University Health System, which is the state’s largest healthcare system and second largest private employer. Prior to her current position, Beth was a partner in the law firm of Bowles Rice, where she concentrated her statewide practice on labor and employment law for more than 20 years. Walker came within one-half of one percent of winning a seat on the Supreme Court in 2008.

WV Farm PAC believes Walker is the best candidate for the position of Justice of the Supreme Court, citing Walker’s desire to uphold the rule of law and not to ‘legislate from the bench.’

“Beth Walker’s commitment to conservative principles and desire for a fair, impartial judiciary are the very reasons why WV Farm PAC voted to support her,” said Charles Wilfong, WVFB President. “We believe she is by far the most qualified candidate for the Supreme Court of Appeals.”

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**O’Dell, continued**

Speaking of Washington, D.C., in late February I traveled with other WVFB members to the AFBF Advocacy Conference. Over 700 Farm Bureau members from around the country came together to receive information on the 2016 agricultural economic outlook, trade legislation and other Capitol Hill issues. With over 96 percent of the world’s population residing outside the United States, trade policy is of utmost importance. Our group was well received by Senators Capito and Manchin and Representatives McKinley, Mooney, and Jenkins.

Finally, West Virginia Primary Election Day is just around the corner. It is imperative that we have people in elected positions who are supportive of WVFB policies and sympathetic to issues that face our farmers and rural communities around the state. Winston Churchill stated, “It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.” We live in a great state and country, but we must participate in the election process in order to help make West Virginia and the United States of America even better.

Hope to see you soon.
highly committed to this program. Please join the movement to make our homes as safe as possible for our children. On behalf of my colleagues at Nationwide, we very much look forward to making a real difference in families’ lives through one million safety actions.

Respectfully,
Terrance Williams
Executive Vice President
& Chief Marketing Officer

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[1] The Make Safe Happen survey was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of Nationwide between November 4, 2015 and November 13, 2015, among 1,001 U.S. parents or guardians of children ages 0 to 12 years old.


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Members of the West Virginia Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee were invited to attend Ohio’s Young Agriculture Professionals Conference or YAP. On January 29th, eight WVFB members traveled to Columbus for the conference, hosted by the Ohio Farm Bureau. Those in attendance were Eric Thomason, Joe Hatton, Jeremy and Danielle Grant, John and Sara Wayne, Teighlor Cross, and Kearsten Huffman.

The YAP conference was first held a few years ago, with only 100 producers in attendance. Each year the conference has continued to grow. This year’s YAP conference boasted nearly 700 young ag professionals! The conference is designed to provide young agriculture professionals with an opportunity to build leadership skills and better their agriculture operations. The conference also provides attendees with a great chance to network with other producers.

On Friday, the conference opened up with the first round of the discussion meet and the general session, followed by the final round of the discussion meet. Saturday was dedicated to a wide variety of educational workshops ranging from food safety, marketing, business financials, farm succession planning and communicating with consumers about their concerns involving agriculture.

One of the workshops that we chose to attend was by Dr. Leah Dorman from Phibro Animal Health Corporation. Her presentation, “Having Conversations with Ease,” further opened my eyes to the many misconceptions consumers have about agriculture. Dr. Dorman explained how farmers can engage in conversations about food production, as well as what types of information consumers are concerned about. Dr. Dorman also stressed the importance of consumers learning about how their food is produced from the people who are actually producing it. For more information you can visit www.fooddialogues.com.

Mark Ankerman, from Ohio State University, held a workshop titled “Perfecting Your 30 Second Elevator Speech.” Professor Ankerman shared with us the art of getting and holding the attention of the audience, no matter how big or small, in order to deliver your message. By combining the information from these workshops we hope to improve our ability to be advocates for both agriculture and the Farm Bureau. The opportunity to be immersed in such a positive atmosphere with other young people who were passionate about agriculture proved to be truly inspiring to all of those attending.

Photo: Sara Wayne and husband, John.
ANIMAL WELFARE:
A Priority for Farmers, Ranchers and the American Food Supply

by Randy Krotz

Without question, the videos, images and first-hand accounts of the mistreatment of animals being raised for food are incredibly painful to watch, and they are extremely infuriating. I’ve worked with animals all my life on our family farm, and like so many farmers and ranchers, I experience a range of emotions when I see this type of abuse — anger, sadness and frustration. While these pictures and videos are the rare exception and not the norm, put simply: the bad actors who do not follow the standards of care set by experts in animal science don’t belong in agriculture. We have zero-tolerance for this behavior.

As CEO of an alliance representing more than 90 farmer- and rancher-led organizations and agricultural partners, I can tell you this perspective is shared by farmers and ranchers nationwide.

I work with people who have dedicated their lives to the care and well-being of animals, so nothing is more upsetting than seeing them mistreated. For farmers and ranchers, taking care of animals being raised for food is personal because we are responsible for their care 24/7, 365 days a year.

My interactions with farmers, ranchers and consumers reinforce the fact that there is a lot of emotion tied to the care and well-being of animals being raised for food — as there should be. But, we cannot let our emotions get in the way of dialogue and understanding.

A real conversation about animal welfare must include consumers, NGOs, food retailers, veterinarians, and farmers and ranchers. When it comes to how animals are raised for food, we must work together and ask questions, instead of casting judgment.

We all have distinct points of view on these topics and yet, we have one shared interest — making sure animals raised for food receive proper care.

“Animal welfare is fundamental to the work we do as farmers and ranchers. It’s an ethical responsibility – for the animal and the safety of our food supply.”

Randy Krotz is the fourth generation on his family’s farm and is the CEO of U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance®.

To join the discussion on how food is grown and raised and to learn more about animal welfare, visit FoodDialogues.com and follow USFRA on Facebook and Twitter (@USFRA #FoodD).

About U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance®
U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA)® consists of more than 90 farmer- and rancher-led organizations and agricultural partners representing virtually all aspects of agriculture working to engage in dialogues with consumers who have questions about how today’s food is grown and raised. USFRA is committed to continuous improvement and supporting U.S. farmers’ and ranchers’ efforts to increase confidence and trust in today’s agriculture.
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Springs celebrations wouldn’t be the same without one classic centerpiece: leg of lamb. Whether roasted or grilled, a leg of lamb is a tried and true addition to the Easter or Passover table. As elegant as it is, it’s also quite simple to prepare.

For a new take on tradition, swap conventional mint jelly with a vibrant salsa verde or mint-pistachio pesto for a fresh, but familiar, flavor that complements the rich taste of American lamb. Find more springtime celebration-worthy American lamb recipe ideas at americanlamb.com.

**Boneless Leg of American Lamb**

Follow these easy guidelines for preparing the perfect roast:

- For generous portions, figure on one half pound of American lamb per serving.
- Use a good meat thermometer to determine doneness. Medium Rare: 145 F; Medium: 160 F.
- Remove the roast from the oven when the internal temperature reaches 10 degrees less than your desired temperature; it will reach desired doneness while it rests, allowing the meat’s juices to settle.
- Carve the roast across the grain so the meat will be tender.
Roasted Boneless Leg of American Lamb with Fingerling Potatoes, Leeks and Mint Salsa Verde

Serves: 6-8

Mint Salsa Verde
3 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
2 c. loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
1 c. loosely packed fresh mint leaves
3 anchovy fillets
1 tbs capers, drained and rinsed
1/2 tsp kosher salt
1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper
2 tbs plus 1/3 c. extra-virgin olive oil, divided

3-3 1/2 lbs boneless leg of American lamb, butterflied
2 1/2 tsp kosher salt, divided
3 large leeks
2 lbs fingerling potatoes, halved lengthwise
1 tbs extra-virgin olive oil

Position rack in lower third of oven (so roast will be in the middle) and heat to 325 F.

With food processor running, add garlic cloves. When finely minced, stop motor, remove top and scrape down bowl. Add parsley, mint, anchovies, capers, salt and pepper. Pulse until ingredients are finely chopped. Pour in 2 tablespoons olive oil and pulse to combine. Transfer about two-thirds of paste to small bowl and cover with remaining olive oil. Cover tightly and refrigerate until serving time, or up to 2 days.

Lay lamb flat on cutting board with fat side up. Trim fat to no more than 1/8 inch. Turn meat over and trim away any large chunks of fat from interior, but leave the rest intact. Be careful not to trim away connective tissue that holds meat together. Season lamb on both sides with 2 teaspoons salt.

Spread salsa verde paste over interior of meat to edges, rubbing into crevices. Reserve remaining salsa verde. Roll lamb up lengthwise into cylinder. Use kitchen twine to tie cylinder at 1 1/2-inch intervals. Tie another piece of twine lengthwise to secure ends. Allow lamb to sit at room temperature 1-2 hours before roasting. (If you plan to wait more than 2 hours before roasting, loosely cover and refrigerate roast, but bring to room temperature before cooking.) Pat outside of roast dry using paper towels before roasting.

Trim dark green tops from leeks. Halve leeks lengthwise and rinse well. Pat dry and cut into 2-inch pieces. Put leeks and halved potatoes in large roasting pan.

Drizzle vegetables with olive oil, season with remaining salt and toss to coat. Spread vegetables around roasting pan in even layer. Place lamb roast on top, seam-side down and transfer to oven. Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into center of meat reaches 135 F for medium-rare, about 1-1 1/2 hours.

Transfer lamb to cutting board and allow meat to rest for 20-30 minutes, loosely covered with foil. (The internal temperature will increase to 145 F.) Bring reserved salsa verde to room temperature. Toss vegetables in roasting pan to coat in pan drippings. If they are tender and browned, set aside in a warm spot while meat rests. If not, return to oven to finish cooking.

Trim away kitchen twine and cut roast into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Arrange slices over vegetables. Stir salsa verde to incorporate oil, spoon it over meat and serve.
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