FB Members Nestor, Williams Inducted into WVAF Hall of Fame

Roger Nestor, of Barbour County, and Ellwood Williams, of Hardy County, were enshrined in the 2013 West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame.

Nestor, a retired WVU Extension agent, was recognized for a number of accomplishments, not the least of which was his work with 4-H youth. Several of the land judging and home site evaluation teams under his tutelage have won national recognition.

Williams spent a considerable amount of his career in the poultry industry, where he helped develop “Wing Dings” and designed equipment that revolutionized food processing in the poultry trade.

Both men were honored in July during a dinner and ceremony at Jackson’s Mill.

For full bios, see http://www.wvagriculture.org/WVAFHF/index.htm.

Documentary will Tell the Farmer’s Story

Oscar® winning and two-time Emmy® winning filmmaker James Moll is proud to announce the production of a feature-length documentary about the next generation of American farmers and ranchers. The yet-to-be-titled documentary will profile farmers and ranchers in their twenties, all of whom have assumed the generational responsibility of running the family business.

Made in cooperation with U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA®), the film will give an up close and personal look at some of the young farmers and ranchers who grow and raise the food we consume daily, and examine the latest farming practices and technologies that are changing and improving the landscape of modern agriculture.

For more information about the film, visit www.AllentownProductions.com

Regional Cook-Out Scheduled for September

A repeat of last year’s FB Regional Cookout will be held September 7th at Camp Barbe Fairground in Wirt County (off Route 14). The event last year was well-attended and provided the chance for many voters to discuss important issues with their representatives.

The cook-out will again be a covered dish affair – with Farm Bureau supplying meat, drinks, utensils and cooks!

All candidates running for office in 2014 are invited to attend and each will be given a brief opportunity to address the crowd.

For more information, call Gary Jones at 304-628-3553 or Don Fleming at 304-464-4261.
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**On the cover**

*Bella’s Chocolate Shimmer*  
Carrie Bowers
However Painful, SNAP Needs to be Reformed

Charles Wilfong, President, West Virginia Farm Bureau

One of the biggest issues in the agriculture community today is the passage of a new five-year farm bill. The farm bill sets the guidelines for agricultural spending by the federal government. The most contentious obstacle to passage of a new farm bill is the Food Stamp program or SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). SNAP funding currently makes up about 80% of total spending in the farm bill. This could make you wonder why we even call it a “farm bill” when only 20% or less is spent on farm programs.

Historically, the inclusion of food stamp funding was used as a means to get urban Congressional support for farm programs. Today, it seems as though roles are almost reversed and the farm program spending is used as a way to secure rural support for this out-of-control welfare program.

The Senate-passed version of the new farm bill includes some adjustments and cuts to actual farm programs, but does little or nothing to rein-in SNAP spending. Many of the ag provision in the House version are similar to those in the Senate bill. However, the House bill actually strengthens crop insurance support and retains virtually all conservation funding. The main difference between the two versions is the treatment of SNAP as a separate proposal by the House. Conservatives want to deal with SNAP separately, so they can make some much-needed changes to the program. For example, under current law, there are no real work requirements for many able-bodied recipients. The House is considering a roll-back of state waivers for able-bodied adults and targeting funds to states that are willing to impose greater work requirements through their welfare programs.

SNAP reform is greatly needed. I commend the House, and especially our representatives, Shelley Moore Capito and David McKinley, for having the courage to split the farm bill and SNAP to try to restore some sanity to the SNAP program. It is important for us to express support for their efforts. The conferees for the House and Senate will meet in September to try and work out differences in the two versions of the farm bill. Stay tuned!

Farm Bureau, Full Speed Ahead

Bob Stallman, President, American Farm Bureau Federation

National events this summer seem to have taken a page from a spy thriller. With accusations of government surveillance methods being used on American citizens and the media’s coverage from Hong Kong to Moscow of National Security Agency leaks, it’s easy to see why Americans would question the government’s ability or willingness to protect their privacy.

I typically leave espionage for the movies. But, when the government tries to expose farmers’ and ranchers’ personal information, the issues of government data collecting and personal privacy hit home – literally.

From Russia with Love

The Environmental Protection Agency recently was planning to publicly release personal information about tens of thousands of farmers and ranchers and their families in response to several Freedom of Information Act requests from media and other companies. The result? Farmers’ and ranchers’ names, home addresses, GPS coordinates and personal contact information would be up for grabs by anyone who asks for it. The American Farm Bureau Federation said, “Not so fast.”

Protecting farmers’ and ranchers’ right to privacy is a top priority for Farm Bureau. That’s why we took legal

see Stallman, page 19
Looking Ahead –
House Speaker Tim Miley (D-Harrison) recently announced key members of his new leadership team. The appointments included: Harry Keith White (D-Mingo), Majority Leader; Brent Boggs (D-Braxton), Finance Chair; and Tim Manchin (D-Marion), Judiciary Chair. Mary Poling (D-Barbour) will continue her leadership role as Education Chair. We wish Speaker Miley and his leadership team the very best as they unite their talents and energies in working with the Legislature to move West Virginia forward.

Last month my wife and I had the opportunity to join friends and family of Speaker Miley as we converged on the Bridgeport Conference Center for an evening of celebration in conjunction with Tim’s recent election as West Virginia’s 56th Speaker for the House of Delegates. The evening was arranged by Tim’s wife, Susan, to show her appreciation and that of others, for Tim’s impact on their lives. The program could easily have centered on politics, given the numbers of local and state public servants/politicians present. But it didn’t. It was a delightful and refreshing celebration of Tim’s life and accomplishments, with focus on what he means to those who care for him. Emotional, heartfelt comments touched on Tim’s life of integrity, his great work ethic coupled with a positive outlook, and most important, his caring attitude. Integrity, shaped by caring, builds a solid foundation for effective leadership.

Speaking of leadership, WVFB President Charles Wilfong, Executive Secretary Steve Butler and I had the opportunity to join 800+ local and state FFA leaders, competitors, award recipients, parents and program supporters gathering at Cedar Lakes for the 85th Annual State FFA Convention and Leadership Conference. The annual program and competitive framework offer contagious enthusiasm and high energy that is second to none. President Wilfong shared remarks and introduced West Virginia FFA’s Star Farmer for 2013 – Wesley Davis from Mason County. Wes received a $500 cash award and plaque provided by WV Farm Bureau. Three Farm Bureau members were among those recognized with the Honorary State FFA Degree for their outstanding support of the blue and gold – Steve Butler, Upshur County; Craig Canterbury, Jackson County; and Jon Sims, Wirt County. Convention speakers included Agriculture Commissioner Walt Helmick, State Treasurer John Perdue, and National FFA Vice President Lindsey Anderson.

As the convention closed, the newly elected State FFA Officer Team assumed their duties for the 2013-2014 FFA year. The leadership team includes: President – Dylan Frazier, Wirt County; Secretary – Sydney Hudson, Pendleton County; Southwestern VP – Max McCoy, Ravenswood; Northcentral VP – Brandon Thomas, Preston County; Northwestern VP – Joseph Henthorne, Tyler; Southeastern VP – Andi Mae Harvey, Greenbrier East; Central VP – Mikenze Poling, Buckhannon Upshur; Northeastern VP – Katelyn Flanagan, Hampshire County; and At-Large VP – Tiffany Harvey, Ravenswood. We extend our congratulations and best wishes to these dynamic young leaders as they charge into an exciting year of dedicated service to the nearly 5000 members of the West Virginia FFA Association. Until next time, take care FRIENDS, God bless and KEEP SMILING.
Agritainment Exposures Increase Liability

Before exposing your farm to the public, consider the need for increased protection

“‘Agritainment’ or ‘Agritourism’ were unfamiliar terms until a few years ago. Farms used to focus solely on the production of grain and/or livestock. The idea of opening up the family farm to the visiting public has only become a reality in recent years.

Today, it’s commonplace. According to the USDA, by the late 1990s, over 62 million people were visiting farms – either to participate in entertaining or educational events, or to conduct business with producers.

The terms “Agritourism” or “Agritainment” encompass a whole spectrum of activities, ranging from on-farm stores to corn mazes. Petting zoos, haunted houses, hay rides, and fall festivals are other examples of attractions that are bringing increasing numbers of urban dwellers onto farms.

Besides their positive monetary impact, producers are encouraged by how these sideline businesses increase the public’s understanding of and appreciation for the role of farming in the American economy and food supply.

However, it’s also important that farmers understand the increased liability that comes with inviting the public onto their premises. Legal responsibilities for agritainment exposures are quite different from those associated with traditional production farming operations.

“Studies have shown that farming is one of the nation’s most dangerous occupations,” says Jerry Hillard, Nationwide Agribusiness’s AVP of Farm Sales. “That risk increases dramatically when producers market their farms to attract the public. The risks are especially high when children are involved.”

Farmers who offer or are considering agritourism activities need to discuss their specific types of businesses with their insurance agent. “It’s important to get coverage for the activities they conduct on their farm. Usually, the policy that provides liability for the farm business does not extend to liability from other profit-making activities,” Hillard says.

Nationwide® Agribusiness offers liability coverages that can be written as a package, in conjunction with a farm policy, to cover agritainment and agritourism exposures.

To locate a Nationwide Agribusiness farm agent, visit nationwide.com/WVFB or call 1-800-255-9913.

Nationwide Agribusiness is the farm and agricultural arm of the Nationwide® family of companies. It is the #1 farm insurer in the U.S.
EPA Abuse of Power Targets Farmers

Ashley Stinnett

Recent polling shows Americans trust in government is at an all-time low and there is little proof to believe that number will ever rise in the near future. No doubt this year has been plagued with a continuation of old and new high profile scandals such as the NSA wiretapping, Benghazi cover ups, IRS targeting of conservative and religious groups, selective enforcement of the nation’s healthcare law, and operation Fast and Furious to name a few.

So why is abuse of power and unconstitutional behavior so rampant in Washington, D.C. these days?

One answer lies within the current Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) scandal. Last month a bipartisan group of 24 senators sent a letter to acting EPA administrator Bob Perciasepe claiming the agency had leaked private information of 80,000 livestock facilities in over 30 states, according to a story by Investors Business Daily.

This information leak was the result of a group of environmental activists via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Some of the classified information contained names, addresses and GPS coordinates to the locations of farmers and facilities.

Obviously the leak has angered farmers across the country due to the sheer volume of personal data that was placed in the hands of environmental groups that specifically target the agriculture industry. Organizations such as Earth Justice, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Pew Charitable Trust all received this personal information. Aside from the EPA, these radical environmentalists employ an army of attorneys and lobbyists whose main goal is to target agriculture through lawsuits and political punishment.

See ABUSE, page 18
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Whether you are a mineral owner, a surface owner, or both, it pays to stay up-to-date about oil and gas issues in West Virginia. New legislation proposed by the oil and gas industry could, if passed, negatively affect your rights as a landowner and your pocketbook as a mineral owner.

The West Virginia Royalty Owner’s Association has been holding a series of meetings around the state to help educate the public on several important issues. Two such meetings have already taken place in Wheeling and in Tyler County. According to WVROA, recent changes in language and terminology within the oil and gas industry are particularly worrisome to industry watchers. The term “forced pooling,” which automatically put a bad taste in the mouths of anyone outside the oil and gas industry, has been done away with, perhaps, some would say, in the hopes of fooling the public into thinking the controversy has gone away. Not so, says WVROA. The new term for forced pooling is “lease integration,” and it has reared its ugly head once again.

Along with the changes in terminology, the oil and gas industry is pitching some legislative proposals that would make robber barons look generous. According to WVROA’s Christine Davis, recently proposed legislation would make it extremely simple for oil and gas companies to force pool - or integrate - the leases of unwilling, unknown or missing mineral owners. Under the plan, oil and gas producers would submit their lease integration applications to an unelected commission, none of whom represents surface owners or mineral owners. This commission alone would have the power to review the application and determine the location and amount of surface that can be used for the specific drilling project - potentially tying up more than 900 acres of land per unit. Moreover, the legislation would allow producers to hold the acreage without any drilling activity for 7 years. If drilling commences, the producer could then hold the property forever.

In addition, the oil and gas industry wants to be permitted to change the terms of existing leases, decreasing compensation and increasing deductions from any royalties paid.

The potential impact from such legislation is chilling, and would certainly have a dampening effect on all business expansion throughout West Virginia, not to mention the unprecedented impact regarding the changing of existing leases, which are binding legal
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Grow beautiful broccoli and cauliflower this fall

**Both broccoli and cauliflower are ideal vegetables for the fall garden in West Virginia.**

Cauliflower and broccoli are in the cabbage family and are related to kale, radishes, turnips, cabbage, collards, Brussels sprouts, rutabagas, and kohlrabi.

**Timing**

Broccoli and cauliflower are cool-season crops, so as the days get progressively cooler in the fall the growth and quality of these vegetables are enhanced. Cauliflower can survive light frosts but can be damaged by hard freezes so planting at the appropriate time is important. Broccoli, however, is more tolerant of frost than cauliflower.

**Planting**

Like many vegetables, broccoli and cauliflower prefer a well-drained soil, relatively high in organic matter with a soil pH of 6.0 to 6.5.

Both vegetables can be direct-sown in the garden or transplanted. If direct-seeding, sow about three seeds per inch. After sprouting, the plants can be thinned to the optimal spacing. The transplants are typically 21 to 28 days old (from seeding) and can be planted from early- to mid-August in most areas of West Virginia. Nitrogen fertilizer can be applied before planting, with a side-dress application approximately four weeks after transplanting.

Immediately after being transplanted, each plant should receive water with starter fertilizer and subsequently mulched. Cauliflower is spaced about 18 inches between plants, and broccoli is spaced 12 inches between plants. Rows can be spaced 36 to 48 inches apart. Row covers can be used to provide freeze protection in the fall. Both broccoli and cauliflower perform well when grown in a low-tunnel structure.

**Harvesting**

Most varieties are ready to harvest approximately 60 to 70 days after being transplanted. Both broccoli and cauliflower are harvested while the heads are tight and firm. The harvested heads can be placed in the refrigerator until used or marketed.

**Varieties**

Recommended varieties of broccoli include *Everest*, *Imperial*, and *Green Magic*. Recommended varieties of cauliflower include *Fremont* and *Candid Charm*. Choose cauliflower varieties that are self-blanching.

These varieties have large wrapper leaves on the plant, which shade the developing head from sunlight and maintain a high-quality head. If the cauliflower head is exposed to light, it develops an off-color and texture. There are cauliflower varieties with diverse colors. *Cheddar* is an excellent orange cauliflower, which grows best during the summer and fall in West Virginia. *Graffiti* is a deep purple cauliflower variety that has good market appeal.

*By Lewis W. Jett, Commercial Horticulture Specialist, WVU Extension Service*
The Monroe County 4-H land judging team brought home the National Reserve Champion trophy and placed second overall this year in the 62nd Annual Land and Range Judging Contest.

Land judging is a program that educates members of 4-H about soil, land protection and conservation, water, and the environment. In West Virginia, land conservation practices used for farming and agricultural purposes are highly relevant in land judging and evaluation. The team was challenged to apply these concepts in the competition.

“West Virginia teams always do really well, because we make the learning process and skill development a priority,” said Brian Wickline, Monroe County WVU Extension agriculture agent and the team’s coach.

Bringing home the National Reserve Champion trophy is a great accomplishment for the four youth participants of Monroe’s 4-H team – Josh Dransfield, 16, Laine Shiftlet, 16, Ty Wickline, 15 and Lance Wilson, 15.

Secrets of the Mediterranean diet

What is the diet’s secret?
The people who live in the area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea are known for living long and healthy lives. Scientists believe that the typical eating habits in the region play a role. Their diets are high in legumes, grains, fruits, nuts, vegetables, and olive oil. Their intake of milk and dairy products, fish, and alcohol is moderate, with red wine being the most common source of alcohol. Red meat is eaten a few times per month and in small amounts.

This dietary pattern leads to higher intakes of mono- and polyunsaturated fats compared to saturated fats. Epidemiological studies (studies of populations) have shown that this way of eating is associated with lower risk for heart disease, stroke, Parkinson’s disease, dementia, diabetes, some types of cancer, and death from all causes.

What is it about the Mediterranean diet that makes it so healthy?
One factor is the high ratio of monounsaturated to saturated fats, which is associated with decreased abdominal fat, inflammation, insulin resistance, triglycerides, and blood pressure. Another factor is the large variety of foods, which ensures that all the essential vitamins and minerals are present in the diet.

In addition to vitamins and minerals, these foods contain different phytochemicals (compounds made by plants) that have health benefits and are not available from supplements. Red wine, olive oil, and many plant-based foods contain antioxidants that protect the body’s cell walls from damage.

What is important to consider before adopting some Mediterranean diet habits?
In studies, people whose usual diets were closest to the Mediterranean diet benefited the most; however, there are some potential concerns. It is important to note that all fats, even healthy oils, are high in calories, and a diet that is high in monounsaturated fat can lead to obesity.

The amount of fat that a person needs depends on the number of calories that they need for their size, muscle mass, and activity level, but a general rule of thumb is 5 teaspoons of oil a day for women and 6 teaspoons of oil a day for men, including the amount that occurs naturally in foods.

Keep in mind that many of the health benefits enjoyed by people in the Mediterranean region may be due to the total lifestyle and not the diet alone. People in that area often walk or ride a bicycle to get from one place to another, while we are more likely to use a car.

Being physically active is an important part of staying healthy as we age. Adopting a Mediterranean diet is not a miracle drug, but maintaining a lifestyle that includes regular physical activity and plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products can help us to stay healthier longer and decrease the risk of chronic disease.

By Cindy Fitch, WVU Extension Director, Families and Health Programs
Best ways to store purchased poultry litter

Poultry litter is valuable to soil fertility for farmers in West Virginia. Litter is generated from chicken and turkey operations primarily in the Potomac Valley and is widely used by area farmers to fertilize row crops, hay, and pasture.

Farmers in the North Central part of West Virginia have historically purchased litter to enhance pasture and hay production, and they continue to look for available litter and truckers willing to haul this product.

Typically, litter is hard to find during the early spring and the summer crop growing months; however, availability improves during the late fall and winter. Likewise, trucking resources tend to be difficult to find during the summer construction season, and the availability improves during winter months.

Following these storage considerations will protect water resources and the investment you made when purchasing poultry litter to improve your farm’s soil fertility.

• **Roofed storage**
  Storage of purchased litter needs to be planned prior to delivery. To protect water from soil, waste, and nutrient contamination, the West Virginia State Department of Agriculture (WVDA) has established Best Management Practices for persons storing and handling fertilizers and manures. It is best to store poultry litter in a roofed structure that meets the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service practice standard for waste storage. If this option is not available, WVDA recommends the following set of practices to protect water quality.

• **Open storage**
  Open storage of litter, commonly described as field storage, must be covered with a tarpaulin if the storage time is greater than 15 days. The location of field-stored litter should be 100 feet from a well and at least 50 feet from surface water, including springs, ponds, wet areas, and other water collection points. Locate a storage area at least 50 feet from an open portal such as a sinkhole. Do not sit a storage pile on slopes greater than 15 percent, unless measures are taken to divert runoff water from above the storage area. Storage of litter on floodplains should be avoided for a number of reasons, including proximity to surface streams, seasonal high water tables (less than 2 feet from the surface), and potential loss of litter from a 25-year, 24-hour storm event.

• **Location of storage**
  So where should farmers store poultry litter for the winter and early spring? Store litter away from property lines so neighbors are not impacted by potential odors. If possible, locate the storage area on a well-drained field above the floodplain or on a hilltop.

• **Transporting litter**
  The most cost-effective way to transport litter is to locate a tractor trailer with a dump bed or a trailer with a conveyer bed designed for bulk materials. Be sure a tractor trailer can enter, deliver, and exit the location without danger of upsetting the load.

*By Tom Basden, WVU Extension Specialist – Nutrient Management*
Meet WVU Extension Service’s new consumer horticulture specialist

“I am drawn to individuals having a genuine interest and desire to learn,” says Mirjana (Mira) Bulatovic-Danilovich, West Virginia University Extension Service’s new consumer horticulture specialist.

She herself never stops learning. After nearly 40 years of experience in the field, Danilovich has seen trends in consumer horticulture come and go. As any good gardener knows, it takes passion and dedication to remain current on these trends.

As an Extension educator, Danilovich strongly believes in providing a resource to the community; therefore, she plans to develop a network of support within the community consisting of WVU Extension specialists, Extension Master Gardener leaders, faculty, and members of the local consumer horticulture industry. Having a large network of resources is crucial to providing sufficient educational outreach to the community.

Danilovich refuses to let any question go unanswered. As questions arise, she promises to respond with a thorough answer or a referral to someone who can assist the person making the inquiry. Because she works with consumers, the questions she most often receives are related to disease and insects. Given Danilovich’s extensive background as a landscape and commercial fruit production analyst and adviser, she has experience dealing with various types of pest management techniques and solutions to pest problems.

Understanding the significant role collaborative effort plays in an educational outreach program, Danilovich looks to build upon these resources. A particular area of interest for Danilovich is the Extension Master Gardener program. Before coming to WVU, she served as the district Extension educator at Michigan State University, where she revitalized the area’s Master Gardener program by teaching courses and holding demonstrations that brought together individuals with a genuine interest and desire to learn.

As the new consumer horticulture specialist at WVU, she looks forward to building upon WVU Extension Service’s already-strong Extension Master Gardener program and hopes to expand the Extension Junior Master Gardener program to recruit the younger generation.

Mirjana (Mira) Bulatovic-Danilovich
WVU Extension Service’s new Consumer Horticulture Specialist

A native of modern-day Serbia, Danilovich received her Ph.D. in pomology from University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and an M.S. in pomology from University of Belgrade, Serbia.

Mira Bulatovic-Danilovich can be reached at P.O. Box 6108, 2088 Agricultural Sciences Building, phone: 304-293-2620 or Mira.Danilovich@mail.wvu.edu.

By Lindsay Wiles, WVU Extension Service, Editor and Publications Specialist
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As I was about to take off on another Farm Bureau trip (this time to Daytona Beach), a co-worker said “How the heck do you end up on these trips?” I laughed and tried to explain that I was attending a leadership conference and was a presenter there, but she didn’t understand what the Farm Bureau had to do with leadership and conferences and traveling. “Don’t farmers need to be feeding their cows? Why do they have meetings at the beach?” And when I started talking about grassroots policy development she really got confused.

It reinforced what I’ve told people before, that in order to be good recruiters for Farm Bureau and American agriculture, we all need to be ready to explain what the purpose of the Farm Bureau is and why membership in this organization is a good thing. For our non-farmer members, the membership advantages and discounts on everything from hotels to prescription meds to vehicles are incentives to join the Farm Bureau family; but these perks take a back seat to the farmer members for whom this organization really exists. As farmers, Farm Bureau gives us a united voice with our legislators in Washington, DC and our state capitols across the country. Farm Bureau is fighting for us when we can’t be there.

And for me, personally, Farm Bureau has opened doors that I never imagined existed. When I was in high school, all I could think about was moving away from my family’s farm. I loved the farm and I loved agriculture and I was a devoted member of the FFA, but I didn’t see any future for me on the farm. I wasn’t particularly excited when my cousin dragged me along to a state Farm Bureau annual meeting one fall when I was a sophomore in college; but that weekend marked a change in direction for me. I eventually found that I was pretty passionate about this farming way of life and equally passionate about being an advocate for the industry.

Farm Bureau has helped me develop the skills and the confidence to share my story with everyone from my legislators in Washington, DC, to strangers in a foreign country, to equally devoted young farmers around the nation. Farm Bureau has helped me realize that there is a future for me on my family’s farm. I am fortunate to have always had an extremely supportive family in whatever choices I’ve made, but the choice I made to live in Pocahontas County and be a part of the farm on a daily basis has perhaps found the most support of all.

That’s what Farm Bureau has done for me. And that’s why I am proud to be a Farm Bureau member. Why are you proud?

Susan Wilkins, YF&R Vice-chair

Young Farmer and Rancher Update

McCormick T-MAX, versatility where you need it most

The T-MAX was designed with flexibility in mind. Ranging from 83 to 110 horsepower, the T-MAX has the power and flexibility to adapt to numerous tasks on the farm, such as light tillage, haying and loader work, with a choice of three transmission options.

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Planning Ahead

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

Retirement is a time of many decisions. One vital financial decision is about using the tax-sheltered funds we’ve put away for those special years.

Some retirement plans allow the account owner to select an annuity -- a specific annual amount -- that will be paid to them during retirement. An alternative is to take withdrawals of any amount after age 59 ½, varying year by year (distributions before that age carry a 10% tax penalty except under certain circumstances).

For those nearing age 70 ½, an important milestone that affects all of their tax-deferred retirement funds is approaching. By April 1 of the calendar year after reaching 70 ½, minimum withdrawals based on age must begin if the annuity option has not been chosen.

Current federal regulations set percentages for minimum annual income distributions applicable to everyone. Exceptions apply for those who are still working.

If the required amount is not withdrawn in any year, a 50% penalty tax on the difference between what should have been withdrawn and what was withdrawn is owed.

At death, most other estate assets escape income taxes when passed on to heirs, but tax-deferred retirement funds do not. If the heir is required by plan rules or voluntarily requests a lump sum distribution, the account’s full balance will be subject to income taxes immediately. An alternative is for the heir to request distributions according to a “spread out” schedule. Income taxes will be owed only on the amounts received.

Also, estate taxes may be owed. In 2013 if the total estate exceeds $5,250,000, a 40% tax rate is applicable. If so, the double taxation of retirement funds by the estate and on the individual recipient’s tax return can leave as little as 20% - 25% of the funds for loved ones.

Further, the after-death double taxation makes these assets the ideal choice for a charitable estate gift to a favorite nonprofit organization. No estate or income taxes will be owed on your charitable gift, allowing the full gift amount to benefit the organization.

To accomplish that, simply list the nonprofit organization’s legal name (check with them to be sure) on the beneficiary form and note the appropriate percentage or dollar amount.

Your financial advisor or the firm handling your retirement funds can help you in making the best choices with retirement funds.

That’s good planning.
KNOW, continued

contracts.

More of these meetings will be scheduled by the WVROA in an effort to help keep the public informed. WVROA is urging people to call on their representatives to oppose any legislation that promotes lease integration, allows companies to tie up huge tracts of land, or that negatively impacts compensation for royalty owners. To find out more information, see the West Virginia Royalty Owner’s Association website at www.wvroa.com.

ABUSE, continued

This latest scandal comes fresh on the heels of unconstitutional drone surveillance of farmers in Nebraska and Iowa. The excuse delivered by administration officials was the EPA needed to snuff out those who are violating The Clean Water Act.

Yeah, right.

The best and most practical way of curing this disease known as over-reaching government encroachment is through legislative action. Such an accomplishment would require a big commitment from members of Congress. Unfortunately many of these members will shout to the heavens how they despise snooping from big brother but vote to keep the policies intact in fear of retribution.

In response to various reports of nefarious drone activity numerous states are already drafting anti-drone legislation. In fact, there are currently over 40 states that have either proposed or passed these laws. Currently 17 states have laws banning the use of “weaponized” drones. According to an article in The Wall Street Journal most of the laws concerning the use of drones revolve around obtaining a legal search warrant first.

Even a small Colorado town recently proposed a “drone hunting” ordinance in which a $100 reward would be given to anyone who lawfully shoots down a drone.

One can only hope most Americans sincerely wake up to the fact government surveillance is completely out of control. It is up to every citizen to contact his or her local, state and federal legislator to demand this issue be resolved.

A free country is one that does not live in paralyzing fear of its government.
action. AFBF filed a lawsuit and sought a temporary restraining order to block EPA from releasing the private information into the public domain.

What many people don’t realize is that the majority of farmers and ranchers and their families don’t just work on the farm – they live there, too. By turning over farmers’ names and addresses for public consumption, EPA is inviting intrusion into farm families’ privacy on a nationwide scale. EPA is in effect holding up a loudspeaker and broadcasting where private citizens live and where their children play.

I think most of us would expect this type of behavior if we lived in a different time and place or if we were watching a spy movie. We do not expect it, and will not tolerate it, from our own government.

For Your Eyes Only
Farm Bureau frequently advocates for increased government transparency, but publicly sharing spreadsheet upon spreadsheet of tens of thousands of peoples’ names, addresses and other personal information is not transparency in the workings of government. It is an invasion of Americans’ privacy.

We don’t object to the aggregation of data on farm and ranch businesses for government use. However, we know all too well that if personal location information ends up in the wrong hands, it could lead to disruptions in farm activity, farm equipment theft, sabotage or criminal mischief. These risks are especially ominous for those farms that store fertilizer and chemicals or have large numbers of animals.

In the scope of everything happening nationally with the exposure of citizens’ private information, it’s time to say enough is enough and put a stop to activities that belong in a spy thriller. Farm Bureau is not only standing up for farmers in this case, we are standing up for all citizens, who shouldn’t have their personal information publicly disseminated by their government.
The 2013 Summer Agriculture Institute

This year’s Summer Agriculture Institute was once again a big hit. Teachers spent two days learning interesting and fun ways to incorporate agriculture education into their classrooms. From the top: 1) Dave McGill discusses tree identification; 2) Teamwork is important when solving mysteries in “Agriculture CSI”; 3) Rulers are hoisted high to measure trees; 4) The opportunity to hand-feed butterflies was part of Folk’s Butterfly Farm presentation; 5) Members of Monongalia County Farm Bureau stop by to welcome educators; 6) Cinda Francis explains available resources for classroom materials.
Wood County Progressive Safety Day

Volunteers from across the state gathered in Wood County for the annual Progressive Safety Day. Students from county schools learned valuable information that someday might save their lives or help them keep others from harm. “We’d give up every field trip except this,” said Mineral Wells teacher Darcella Maul. “The kids just love it.” From the top: 1) The Electrical Safety module included a miniature model of an electrical grid; 2) Kids learn the basics of Fire Safety; 3) Luetta Fluharty shows special tools used by the disabled; 4) A special grant allowed for a new Nutrition Workshop; 5) The art of safe ATV riding is demonstrated.

Sponsors of Safety Day included Farm Credit; John Deere; Crop Production Services; Agrium; Bunge; CHS; Monsanto; Mosaic Foundation; DuPont; Toyota; and Wood County Farm Bureau.
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Saturday Adoption: 8am - 5pm
Adoption by First Come, First Served

Directions: At Groves Rd, take left at sign, follow Good Evening Ranch signs.

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