USDA Disaster Assistance to Help Thousands of Honeybee, Livestock and Farm-Raised Fish Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that nearly 2,500 applicants will receive disaster assistance through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) for losses suffered from Oct. 1, 2011, through Sept. 30, 2013.

The program, re-authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides disaster relief to livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs. Eligible losses may include excessive heat or winds, flooding, blizzards, hail, wildfires, lightning strikes, volcanic eruptions, and diseases, or in the case of honeybees, losses due to colony collapse disorder. Beekeepers, most of whom suffered honeybee colony losses, represent more than half of ELAP recipients.

“As promised, we’re making sure that thousands of producers who suffered through two and a half difficult years without Farm Bill assistance, are getting some relief,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack “Once the Farm Bill was restored, not only did we implement the disaster assistance programs in record time, we’re issuing payments less than three months after the enrollment deadline. The funds will hopefully help producers with some of the financial losses they sustained during that time.”

The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at $20 million per federal fiscal year. To accommodate the number of requests, which exceeded funds available for each of the affected years, payments will be reduced to ensure that all eligible applicants receive a prorated share of assistance.

ELAP was made possible through the 2014 Farm Bill, which builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past five years, while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for the taxpayer. Since enactment, USDA has made significant progress to implement each provision of this critical legislation, including providing disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; strengthening risk management tools; expanding access to rural credit; funding critical research; establishing innovative public-private conservation partnerships; developing new markets for rural-made products; and investing in infrastructure, housing and community facilities to help improve quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill.

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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Frozen Tractors
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2015 Legislative Session Will See Major Changes

Charles Wilfong, President, West Virginia Farm Bureau

With the Republican takeover of the West Virginia Legislature, members of the Senate and House of Delegates are busy putting together their leadership teams for the coming year, and formulating legislative discussions for the 2015 session. This will be the first time since 1931 that Republicans have controlled both houses of the Legislature. The new Senate president and House speaker will be appointing new committee chairmen and members. These new chairmen will be vital to West Virginia Farm Bureau’s policy implementation efforts. It appears that we will have true friends of Farm Bureau as chairmen of virtually every committee.

In the past, many times we would have majority support of members of both parties for legislation, but it would be killed single-handedly by a committee chairman who would not bring up the bill in committee. We look forward to the opportunity to advance constructive legislation on a bi-partisan basis in this session. I believe many WVFB issues and initiatives will see much stronger support this session.

Next month, our WVFB magazine will focus on all of our policies given final approval at our Annual Meeting in November. We will also lay out our legislative priorities in the January issue. Among them are: promote trespasser responsibility legislation to strengthen and protect longstanding liability rules; promote reasonable and responsible legislation regulating oil and gas exploration that will protect private property/surface owners’ rights and the environment, while encouraging the development of our resources. Farm Bureau supports the rights of land and mineral owners to negotiate with other parties to achieve the desired use of resources; promote action to secure an agriculture exemption for aboveground storage tanks not located in critical concern areas; and maintain adequate funding for our predator control program.

We look forward to having many of our members taking an active role working with legislators on a regular basis during the upcoming session. Please mark your calendars for our Day at the Legislature, held at the state capitol, and the Taste of West Virginia Legislative Reception, at the Charleston Marriott on Tuesday, February 3. Take advantage of these two great opportunities to interact with your representatives and share your ideas and concerns.

The West Virginia Farm Bureau Board of Directors is also planning a trip to Washington, D.C. early next year to visit with our U.S. Senate and House of Representatives members. We have many national policy issues that we will be discussing during our visit.
God, Guns and Guts –
CHRISTmas is the favorite
time of the year for the Michael
family. God’s love is in full
bloom (as it is every day) as we
focus on family, friends and
the greatest gift of all – God’s
gift of the Christ child. At this
time of year we concentrate
less on our concern about
America’s challenges (which will still be there next
year) and more on the many wonderful blessings we
as a people continue to enjoy in this great land of the
free and home of the brave. Looking at Christmases
past, two of PoliticusUSA’s Archives “Top Five
Presidential Christmas Quotes” have special meaning
to me – one from President John F. Kennedy when
I was a young teenager worried about America on
the brink of war and the other from President Ronald
Reagan when I was a young adult, married with two
young sons and eager about the future. In 1962 with
the Cuban missile crisis behind us, President Kennedy
provided much needed encouragement to Americans
– “It is the day when we remind ourselves that man
can and must live in peace with his neighbors and
that it is the peacemakers who are truly blessed. In
this year of 1962 we greet each other at Christmas
with some special sense of blessings of peace. This
has been a year of peril when the peace has been
sorely threatened. But it has been a year when peril
was faced and when reason ruled. As a result, we
may talk, at this Christmas, just a little bit more
confidently of peace on earth, good will to men. As a
result, the hopes of the American people are perhaps
a little higher. We have much yet to do. We still need
to ask that God bless everyone.” Shifting to 1981
President Reagan’s inspirational message noted – “On
Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Christ with prayer,
feasting, and great merriment. But, most of all, we
experience it in our hearts. For, more than just a day,
Christmas is a state of mind. It is found throughout the
year whenever faith overcomes doubt, hope conquers
despair, and love triumphs over hate. It is present
when men of any creed bring love and understanding
to the hearts of their fellow man. The feeling is seen in
the wondrous faces of children and in the hopeful eyes
of the aged. It overflows the hearts of cheerful givers
and the souls.” Here’s wishing you and your loved
ones God’s richest blessings for CHRISTmas and the
New Year ahead.

Turning to the topic of guns, Farm Bureau
appreciates the efforts of Attorney General Patrick
Morrisey to uphold our Second Amendment
rights. Attorney General Morrisey led a bipartisan
coalition of 21 state attorneys general in an amicus
curiae, or friend of the court, brief urging the U.S
Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit to declare
unconstitutional a Maryland law forbidding the
possession, sale or transfer of certain firearms. “We
are proud to have led this bipartisan group of states in
this amicus brief,” Morrisey said. “States must band
together in times when they see citizens’ rights being
diminished or infringed upon. If the courts decide
this law passes muster, it would undermine a core
part of the Second Amendment . . . This law’s broad
categorical ban is no different than trying to impose
a content-based ban on speech. It simply cannot be
done.” Thanks Mr. Morrisey!

In closing I want to reflect on our recent Annual
Meeting at the Flatwoods Days Hotel and the
upcoming Legislative Session. The annual meeting
always provides an opportunity for great fellowship
and fun as the agriculture community unites to focus
on policy development to guide legislative and
congressional efforts in the year ahead. Legislative
insights provided by some of West Virginia’s finest
public servants has become an annual highlight.
Thanks again to Senators David Nohe (District 3-
Wood) and Dave Sypolt (District 14 – Preston), and
Delegates Bill Hartman (District 43 – Randolph)
and “Woody” Ireland (District 7 – Ritchie). As I
noted at our meeting, “West Virginians are fortunate
and blest to have them as public servants and Farm
Bureau members are fortunate and blest to know them
as friends.” Looking ahead to the 2015 Legislative
Session, the landscape has certainly changed! Let’s
hope that both political parties have the intestinal
fortitude to work together in moving West Virginia
forward. We deserve it! Until next time, take care
FRIENDS, God bless and KEEP SMILING.
From our family to yours, wishing you a joyous holiday season and a prosperous new year.

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A New Generation Called to Feed the World

With 9 billion people to feed by 2050, filling professional agriculture jobs will be critical to achieving food and nutrition security in the 21st century.

A report released Oct. 16 at the World Food Prize Borlaug Dialogue by the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Food & Ag Council, found that demand for new talent in the food and agriculture industries is outpacing the available candidates entering the workforce from academic programs. Terrance Williams, Nationwide Agribusiness president & COO, is a member of the council.

“The food and agriculture industries are projected to have a substantial need for new business and science professionals in the coming years,” said Kim Reynolds, Lt. Governor of Iowa and chair of the STEM Food & Ag Council. “It is critical our students be prepared for the jobs of the twenty-first century.”

According to the figures in the report, the agriculture industry is expected to grow by almost 5 percent over the next five years. The need to transfer knowledge from the retiring generation to their successors will also create additional demand for the next generation of industry professionals.

“Meeting the increasing global demand for food will require the next generation of scientists, innovators and entrepreneurs,” said Paul Schickler, DuPont Pioneer president and vice-chair of the STEM Food & Ag Council. “Our industry faces the stigma that we exist only in fields and processing factories, but we are also accountants, economists, scientists, investors, communicators, and everything else needed to run an international industry.”

The research in the report identifies growing opportunities for college graduates in six advanced agriculture fields. Despite an increase of 30 percent over the past eight years in enrollment in academic programs that feed into these professions, there still aren’t enough graduates to keep up with the demand for qualified candidates.

To illustrate the success of recent graduates in the agriculture industry, the report also highlights five young professionals who are advancing in their careers at major agribusinesses — including DuPont Pioneer, Land O’Lakes, and Monsanto — after completing university STEM programs.

“Agriculture is increasingly global and information-based, which is as exciting at the farm gate as it is in international agribusiness,” said Andrew Lauver, the 24-year-old Frank Ross International Emerging Leader at DuPont Pioneer. “There are so many opportunities for people my age to make a real impact and travel the world as a part of the solution to global hunger and poverty.”

In the report, the STEM Food & Ag Council recommends that the public and private sectors partner to guide, educate and recruit the next generation of college graduates toward the business and science career opportunities that are growing within the food and agriculture industries.

Couple Representing Mountain State in AFBF Excellence in Ag Competition

Jeremy and Danielle Grant will vie for the title in the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Excellence In Ag competition during the Annual Convention in San Diego, California, January 11-14, 2015. Above, the Grants introduced themselves and gave a preview of their presentation at the WVFB Annual Meeting in November. Jeremy works for the WVDA as a farm manager, and Danielle is an ag teacher. The Grants live in Mason County. We’ll be rooting for them!

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 4/17. Available on qualified 2014 and 2015 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 logos are registered service marks of the American Farm Bureau Federation and are used here under license by General Motors. 2. Dependability based on longevity: 1987–April 2013 full-size pickup registrations.
Mineral County FFA members Jessica and William Woodworth, daughter and son of Farm Bureau members Richard and Margaret Woodworth of Burlington, West Virginia, were named National Winners by the National FFA Organization in the Stars Over America and Proficiency Award programs during the 87th National FFA Convention in Louisville, KY.

Jessica was named the 2014 American Star in Agricultural Placement, the first FFA member from West Virginia to ever win an American Star Award. Star awards are given to the top FFA members in the country with high quality Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs who are receiving their American FFA Degree, the highest award a member can earn in the FFA. She helps her family produce cattle and fresh produce at their farms, Flying W and MJW.

“I plan to become a partner at Flying W Farms after completing my education and want to continue to expand the family operation,” says Will, who is currently majoring in Livestock Science at Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute. With his win in Food Science & Technology last year, Will is the first West Virginia FFA member to win multiple National Proficiency Awards.

William was named the National Proficiency Winner in Agricultural Processing. Proficiency Awards are given to students who excel with their Supervised Agricultural Experiences as a part of the Agricultural Education program. As a part of his SAE, Will works as the assistant plant manager at his family’s meat processing plant, Flying W Farms, which processes cattle, hogs, lambs and goats. He has been taught how to complete every aspect of the operation, from programming the label computer to fabricating the carcasses into retail cuts.

“The plan to become a partner at Flying W Farms after completing my education and want to continue to expand the family operation,” says Will, who is currently majoring in Livestock Science at Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute. With his win in Food Science & Technology last year, William Woodworth plans to obtain a degree in veterinarian medicine and focus her practice on large animals.

as I entered high school, I was gradually given more responsibilities,” said Jessica. “Over the past four years, I have been involved with marketing strategies, customer satisfaction, training new employees and managing the store.” As an animal sciences and industry student at Kansas State University, Woodworth plans to obtain a degree in veterinarian medicine and focus her practice on large animals.

The Mineral County FFA Chapter is advised by Charlie Bennett, John Ritchie, Julie Sions, and Carol Webb.

Pictured above, Will and Jessica celebrate with their family in front of Freedom Hall in Louisville after winning their National FFA Awards. Left to right: Cecelia Wallace, grandmother of Will and Jessica; Richard Woodworth, father; William Woodworth, Jessica Woodworth, Margaret Woodworth, mother; and brother Don Woodworth.
Young Farmer and Rancher Update

Susan Wilkins, YF&R Chair

Somehow this fall, I lost an entire month. I think it had something to do with twenty four days I spent “gallivanting” around Europe. I left West Virginia when it was green, sunny, and 75 degrees. The cattle were still happily grazing and the corn was standing tall in the fields. I returned and the leaves were gone, the grass had stopped growing, the corn was all chopped, and a couple days later, it snowed. To say it was a shock to my system would be an understatement.

Before I even had a chance to completely catch up on all my sleep, it was time for the Annual Meeting in Flatwoods. The Young Farmers Committee had a very successful weekend and we are happy to welcome some new faces to our group. We are extremely excited for our Excellence in Ag contestants, Jeremy and Danielle Grant, who will compete at the national level during the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention in San Diego.

Officers were elected and I am both proud and humbled to have been re-elected for a second year as Chair of the Young Farmers Committee. Serving with me will be Suzanne Wilson as vice chair and Nicole Sattler as secretary. I think it is incredibly exciting that three females head up the leadership of this committee and I look forward to working towards our goals in the coming year.

I would like to personally thank everyone who attended my Information Fair session on my Germany trip and the wonderful compliments I received. Thank you!! Several of you asked if I was available to attend county Farm Bureau meetings to give this presentation and I am more than happy to do so. Please reach out by phone or email if I can help!

It is hard to believe that Christmas is here once again. My experiences in Germany taught me so much and while I like to think of myself as a person who doesn’t take my blessings for granted, my list of things to be grateful for this particular holiday season is a little longer than usual. I have been blessed with so many gifts – in particular the gift of freedom, fought for and given to us by our ancestors. I am truly humbled to live in this great country where I have never known any way of life other than a life of freedom. And while I may not agree with every decision made by our government, we are blessed with the gift of democracy.

And surpassing all gifts, I am blessed with the gift of a life lived in Christ. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) As we get caught up in the inevitable rush of the season, take a moment to thank God for the gifts that truly matter!

Merry Christmas!

Susan
Ph. 304-651-8569
susan-wilkins@hotmail.com
Wow, my first year as WVFB Women’s Chair has gone by so fast. I have been overwhelmed by all the support from across the state. I am so honored that the voting delegates at our annual luncheon selected me to serve another year as your Chairman. The role is an easy one with both Mary Clay (Vice Chair) and Tanya Pitsenbarger (Secretary) beside me for another year, along with the other members of the committee. I work with an incredible TEAM of ladies from across the state, and remember, if you need suggestions or help with programs, don’t hesitate to contact any one of us.

It was such a busy weekend at the Annual Meeting it took me several days after returning to feel rested up again. The Flora Turner Youth Speech Competition was held on Friday evening with ten contestants, another record breaking year of participation. Let me tell you, those kids were AWESOME. The First Place winner was Jennifer Friend from Braxton County, 2nd place was Mikinna Poling from Upshur County, and 3rd place was Tatiana Crawford from Hampshire County. This year, the contest was really close with 2nd and 3rd place being decided by tenths of a point. Each one of these young ladies took home $500, $300, and $200 respectfully thanks to Southern States and Denver Turner. I want to thank all the counties who held contests and for those ten teenagers who spent time researching their topic and delivery excellent speeches.

Once again the state WLC ladies out did themselves by baking some incredible cookies, candies and other goodies to sell at the annual meeting. I probably should also thank all those attendees who stopped by to satisfy their sweet tooth. We raised $743.09 in sales on Friday and Saturday including selling what was left over in the Young Farmers Auction on Saturday Night. This money helps the WLC support the AFBF Foundation’s White-Reinhardt Education Fund. On top of that, the gun and quilt raffle helped us raise $1500 and our last minute Women’s Raffle (Picture or hand-sewn Wall Hanging Quilt) earned another $202.00. A special thanks to all those individuals who donated sweets, other items, and especially to those who purchased from us. This helps us more than you can ever imagine.

I was ecstatic to see so many of the counties submit photos for the photo contest this year. We had 81 (new record) total photos for the three categories. First place winners were: FB Activity – David Underwood, Kanawha County; Funny, Comical – Patti Masters, Greenbrier County; Rural Scene – Lance Davis, Hampshire County. Second place winners were: FB Activity – Jonathan Brown, Wetzel County; Funny, Comical – Stacy Call, Cabell County; Rural Scene – Stacy Call, Cabell County. The third place winners were: FB Activity – Marie Underwood, Kanawha County; Funny, Comical (tie) – Erin Adams, Lewis County & Deloris Stemple, Preston County; Rural Scene - Joey Haynes, Kanawha County. Please continue to take those photos and submit them to next year’s contest and consider keeping a county scrapbook if you don’t already. We also had counties submit safety scrapbooks with 1st Place going to Hardy County, 2nd Place – Wood County, and 3rd Place - Monongalia County. Winners of the Safety Poster Contest were: 1st Place – Ethan Sacre, Cabell County; 2nd Place – Trenton Abbott, Cabell County; and 3rd Place – Ethan Sacre, Cabell County.

At our Women’s Luncheon on Saturday, AFBF Women’s Leadership Chair, Terry Gilbert, encouraged us to work with social media as much as we can, plan programs from the new Our Food Link, and to tell our stories and stay involved in our communities.

During the luncheon, results of the Regions 2,4, 6 and 8 caucuses were announced and the following individuals were elected or re-elected to serve for their respective regions: Region 2 – Frances Alt – Chair and Dottie Warner – Vice Chair (new); Region 4 – Beckie Jack – Chair and Robyn Yeager – Vice Chair; Region 6 – Norma Davis – Chair and Janet Wigel – Vice Chair (new); and Region 8 – Mary Clay – Chair and Barbara Shinaberry – Vice Chair (new). I want to welcome our newest members to the committee, Dottie Warner,
Lines, continued

Janet Wigel, and Barbara Shinaberry. They are a great fit and I can’t wait to start working with them in 2015. On the sad side, however, both Ethel Nash and JoEllen Blair retired from serving on the committee. I’ve been serving with both these ladies for about 15 years or more and have enjoyed each and every minute of it with priceless memories. They have both been such great mentors to me and I’ve tried to be a giant sponge and absorb as much of their endless knowledge as I can. I will miss working and seeing both of them throughout the year but they are both on speed dial, so I’m sure I will still need to call them off and on. And most importantly I’m so thankful to have such a wonderful resource in both of these ladies. Love ya both!!!

Although the holiday season brings lots of hustle and bustle, it is a good time of the year to organize your Food Check-Out and Ag in the Classroom plans for next year and get the Picture Agriculture in West Virginia Poster Contest going in your county if you haven’t already. Remember, I’m only an email or phone call away if you have questions or program ideas. We pull the most when we pull together so never hesitate to contact me!

Now, let me close by wishing you a safe and WONDERFUL holiday season! May it be filled with joy, laughter, and the great smells of the season!

Blessings from my home to yours!
Pam
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Planning Ahead

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

In the previous column, the opening tasks for administering an estate were discussed. Bringing the will to the courthouse, having someone qualify as the personal representative, and completing the appraisement form to determine the monetary value of the probate and non-probate assets can require some time, but there is more to do.

Often, a personal representative will retain the services of an attorney, accountant or appraiser to assist with the valuation, possible sale and distribution of the assets.

If the estate has more than one heir and the probate assets are worth more than $100,000, a county official will generally be appointed to review the personal representative’s records, as well as to oversee the handling of creditors’ claims.

That official is a fiduciary commissioner or a fiduciary supervisor, depending on the county in West Virginia. The fiduciary official is also responsible for filing certain estate information with the county commission.

The estate administration process may also extend to other counties or states if the deceased person owned real estate there. All requirements applicable to those areas must be met.

Further, the personal representative will be required to handle payment of any debts owed by the estate, as well as all taxes.

If the estate’s value is $5,340,000 or more in 2014, a federal estate tax return will be necessary. The return will be reviewed in detail by the Internal Revenue Service.

Also, a final income tax return for the deceased person will be required. One or more income tax returns for the estate may be necessary because the estate’s assets will continue to earn interest, dividends, and other income during the administration period.

Generally, the personal representative will delay distribution of the estate property to the heirs until all creditors have been paid and the estate’s tax returns have been filed.

Included among the forms needed to close the estate and end the probate process are a listing of all receipts and payments and information showing that no claims (tax or creditor) remain against the estate.

Naming a person or the trust department of a financial institution to be your estate’s personal representative carries with it a significant responsibility. Understanding what is required can also help you to evaluate what will be the best choice.

That’s good planning.

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Boxley Opens New Ag Lime Plant in Pocahontas County

Boxley Aggregates of West Virginia has opened a new state-of-the-art agricultural lime plant at Mill Point in Pocahontas County.

The lime will be primarily used by the farming industry to raise pH levels in the soil to improve the quality of pastureland and crop production. Lime produced at the plant is also being used by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources to elevate the pH in the headwaters of streams and rivers located throughout the region—including the Williams, Cranberry, Gauley and Shavers Fork—to provide a more optimal environment for trout populations.

The agricultural lime plant has two 25-ton bins for feeding material to the plant. The material is fed to a 54” four row cage mill that produces a minimum of 50 tons per hour of lime. The output from the cage mill is screened so the final product meets the fineness standards in Title 61 Legislative Rule Series 6A, WV Agricultural Liming Material. The plant can produce all three of the fineness standards. The calcium carbonate equivalent (CCE) for Boxley’s product meets or exceeds 90% compared to the WV minimum of 80%. The finished product is stored in a 6,000 square foot structure that can hold approximately 2,500 tons of dry lime. The fineness of the product and the effort to keep it dry make the lime easier to spread.

“The opening of this facility provides our farmers throughout this region with a source of high quality lime to assist them in improving their land and boosting future production,” West Virginia Agriculture Commissioner Walt Helmick said. “As we continue in our efforts to grow our Agriculture base in West Virginia, facilities like this play a vital role. We are very pleased that this project has come to fruition.”

“Boxley’s Mill Point lime plant is a great example of how business and government can work together to address the unique needs of the region,” said Ab Boxley, President. “Through access to high quality lime, the region can expand its agricultural opportunities as well as improve water quality of area streams.”

Construction of the plant was made possible by a $500,000 loan provided to Boxley through the Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation (GVEDC). The funds came from the State of West Virginia Department of Commerce at the request of Commissioner Helmick.
Women in Ag Survey: Gauging the Aspirations and Needs of Women in Agriculture

The American Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership Program has launched “Women in Ag,” an online survey that aims to gauge the goals, aspirations, achievements and needs of women in American agriculture in a number of different areas.

All women who are farmers, ranchers, farm/ranch employees, employed in agricultural businesses, pursuing ag-related higher education or supportive of agriculture in other ways are invited to participate in the survey at womeninag.fb.org. Respondents must reside in the United States. Farm Bureau membership is not required to participate.

“This comprehensive survey is the first of its kind to ask women in-depth questions about how they are connected to agriculture and what leadership skills they think are most important today, as well as the top business challenges they’re facing,” said Terry Gilbert, a Kentucky farmer and chair of the American Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership Committee.

“All women involved in agriculture – not just Farm Bureau members – are invited to participate in the survey,” Gilbert emphasized.

Data collected from respondents will be used to gauge trends related to the achievements of women in agriculture, including leadership positions, business successes and election to public office.

The AFB Women’s Leadership Committee is sponsoring the survey and is working with other farm and agriculture organizations to encourage participation. Participants will be eligible for an opportunity to win one of five $100 gift cards after the survey closes. Preliminary findings from the survey will be released in February 2015 at AFBF’s FUSION Conference in Nashville, Tennessee; the full report will be released in late spring.

Mida Peterson Recognized for Contributions to Agriculture by WVDA

Lewis County Farm Bureau member Mida Peterson was named one of the 2014 “Women In Ag” this year by the West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

Peterson has been a fixture at the WV Beef Expo for many years. She has been the chair of the Beef Queen Contest for the past 23 years, and has managed the Angus sale at the Expo for the past 24 years. She is reporter for the WV Angus Association and vice president of the WV Cattlewomen’s Association. She helped organize the state Junior Angus Association and has been its advisor for 20 years. In 1983, she was named the organization’s national advisor of the year.

The WV Cattleman’s Association honored Mida with its service award in 2008. She and her husband, Don, are the first married couple to be enshrined in the West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame. Together, they operate a 520-acre registered Angus farm in Lewis and Upshur counties.

“Women In Ag” is an honor granted to those women who have made significant contributions to the establishment, development, advancement or improvement of West Virginia agriculture, forestry or specialty crops in the Mountain State. Congratulations, Mida! Well deserved!

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A growing consumer demand for locally produced foods is creating a job market for West Virginia workers in dozens of fields, and state officials have started a program that will help recent graduates and business owners.

The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) now awards an Agriculture Education Concentration Certificate of Completion that students can use to document various agricultural specialties. This certificate also gives business owners an opportunity to recruit workers they know have the job skills they need.

That’s because industry representatives were consulted during the development of the curricula.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture and other subject matter experts also collaborated on the development of the program and officially endorse the certificate.

The program serves two purposes: to help business owners verify the skills and knowledge of a potential employee, and to encourage high school students to consider agriculture as a career.

“We want employers to understand that this is a statewide program with real substance behind it; it’s not just a sheet of paper,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick. “We have tremendous economic opportunity as a state if we decide to feed ourselves, but as in any industry, we need a trained workforce to make it happen.”

Agriculture education certificates are offered in agribusiness, animal systems, food products and processing, natural resources, plant systems and power, structural and technical systems.

All student “completers” must take Introduction to Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, a core concentration course, a specialized concentration course and two years of Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAEs) Projects.

SAEs are career-oriented, hands-on learning experiences that round out classroom discussion and leadership development in FFA, the student agriculture organization.

One of the primary advantages of an SAE is that students can develop a project or program according to their interests and abilities. As long as the SAE is relevant to agriculture, it counts. There are unlimited options to accommodate both urban and rural students.

Students who are interested in pursuing this certificate should consult their school guidance counselor or agriculture education teacher for more information.

State Certificate Program Recognizes Ag Achievements

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Jennifer Friend, daughter of West Virginia Farm Bureau members David and Debbie Friend of Braxton County, was the winner of the 2014 Flora Turner Memorial Youth Speech Contest, sponsored by the WVFB Women’s Leadership Committee.

Jennifer was one of ten competitors in the contest, held at the WVFB Annual Meeting in November.

Friend, who is currently a student at WVU majoring in Agriculture and Extension Education, is a member of the Braxton County FFA, where she served as chapter treasurer. She has extensive experience in public speaking competition, placing 4th in the state in creed speaking during her high school freshman year, as well as placing 2nd in the state in public speaking in 2013.

She has distinguished herself with a number of other awards as well, including attaining the rank of silver in the national FFA Proficiency Awards. She received her state FFA degree in 2013, and plans to pursue the American FFA degree next year. Friend is also an 11- year member in 4-H, and belongs to the Braxton County Junior Leaders.

Following her graduation from WVU, she plans to teach and attend graduate school. Jennifer says her “ultimate goal is to own a farm with Limousin cattle and Suffolk and Suffolk cross sheep.”

Above, WLC Chair Pam Hessler presents Jennifer with her certificate.
The cool, stainless steel food preparation rooms of today are a far cry from the colorful kitchens of my childhood. They are about as different as operating rooms and gypsy wagons! In the 1960s, our kitchen glowed with color. The big appliances, stove and refrigerator were harvest gold and the Formica tabletop was red. The red vinyl chairs sported tie-on cushions made of fabric printed with clusters of purple grapes. Orange and green Tupperware containers and stacked metal canisters rested on countertops sparkling with gold and silver confetti. The windows over the sink were dressed in ruffled curtains made of starched cotton featuring big red cherries. A neon green frog sitting by the sink held the dish scrubber in his open mouth. Milky white dishes decorated with blue cornflowers, a free promotional item packaged in oatmeal, were stacked in the shelves. There were more cabinets, then, too, maybe because there were no dishwashers or microwaves.

Mind you, this was not grandmother’s kitchen with the built-in flour sifter in the white stand-alone cupboard, the wood fired cook stove, or the pie safe. This was the kitchen of the 1960s and 70s, where mothers and fathers had been children during the depression and were now adults with a little money, but not enough to waste.

Our dishwashing detergent had a thin plastic nipple on the center of the lid which consumers were to snip off and squeeze into the dishwater. We never did that; we measured a full lid because my frugal mother was afraid that a squirt might be wasteful. Also, our bottle of Lux or liquid Ivory had a little full-length apron tied on it. And, there was a drawer just for stamps. These were not US postal stamps but trading stamps. S&H Green Stamps and Kayo Stamps and their books were stored there along with Betty Crocker points and Lucky Stars from composition books and notebook paper. I still use pieces of the stainless flatware earned with points as a wedding gift, forty-some years later, thanks to Betty Crocker.

Many furnishings had multiple uses. Calendar dishtowels were used until they were ragged and
beyond. We’d point out events of past years as we looked at the older ones. Copper-toned gelatin molds hung on the wall in between uses for making Jell-O salads. Flyswatters were used mostly to threaten spankings, but sometimes for a stinging swat needed on little behinds. Jelly jars were drinking glasses, some with brightly colored cartoon characters or flowers on them. Canning jars were also used for iced lemonade containers on picnics, button jars, or round cutters for biscuits or cookies. A wooden spoon and a pot were noisy toys for babies.

In our kitchen, an AM radio sat high on the cookbook shelf. Children were not allowed to change the tuning knob until they were tall enough to reach it. However, some devious youngsters sometimes climbed up on kitchen chairs to change it over to a rock and roll station.

There were some strange things in our kitchens. Plates from tourist destinations adorned the walls. Vacations were remembered through plates; the Smoky Mountains, Myrtle Beach, and Rock City were all on wall plates. They provided lessons about heroes, too. John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Richard Petty, and Jesus could all be found on neighborhood kitchen walls.

At our house, a string holder hung on the wall. It was made from a shortened oatmeal cylinder. A ball of string was put inside, the lid was put back on and a piece of muslin covered the front. On it, a surprised lady’s face was embroidered and the string came out a little hole shaped like an “O” for her mouth.

Another oddity was a toothpick holder in my Aunt Mildred’s kitchen. It was a brown metal log full of toothpicks with a spring-loaded redheaded woodpecker attached. When you pressed the bird forward, a sharp pointed beak speared a toothpick and raised it up for the user. It was moved to the top shelf after one visit as it became dangerous. Someone coaxed little brother to put his finger in the log and push the bird down to “peck” him.

Aside from puncture wounds from the toothpick holder, the variety of items, textures, and colors are remembered as welcoming and happy. Maybe the surroundings helped our appetites. We were surely more interested in reading the back of Wheaties boxes for information about the featured athlete than the nutritional breakdown.

Come to think of it, today’s diets seem as bland as today’s kitchens. Oh, to trade today’s lunch of salad and broiled vegetables for yesterday’s chicken and dumplings, wilted lettuce with bacon grease, cornbread, buttermilk, and homemade banana pudding!

At any rate, our kitchens are perhaps neater and more tastefully decorated these days, but those of the past are a bright cornucopia of wonderful memories.
The Great Recession had many economic consequences, most of them bad, some still lingering, but the recession also helped slow the conversion of farmland to development. Typically, when farmland is developed it is turned into housing tracts, shopping malls, roads, other public works projects, golf courses and the like.

All of these activities were impacted by the recession. Single-family housing starts peaked at 1.7 million on an annualized basis in 2006. They are just now returning to the 1-million mark. Retail construction suffered a similar fate. New shopping center construction plummeted in 2009, and 11 percent of retail space was vacant. A recovery finally began last year. Recreational development also declined. According to the National Golf Foundation, more golf courses are closing than opening. A little more than a dozen 18-hole courses opened in 2013, while 157 closed.

Energy development has surged, but generally speaking it is compatible with farming and ranching because its surface footprint is small. It also benefits agriculture by spurring the rural economy.

The recession’s effect on farmland conversion was the opposite of its impact on development. The full impact hasn’t been completely captured yet in the National Resources Inventory, a survey conducted every five years, but a mid-cycle release reported that the annual loss of farmland to development was down 38 percent from the period preceding the recession.

At this point, the nation has around 300-million acres of prime farmland. This is farmland best suited to grow a crop because of soil quality, growing season and water supply. Not all farmland that is developed is prime farmland, thank goodness, but over a 25-year stretch, every state lost some of its prime farmland to development.

Now that economic growth is taking hold, does it mean that farmland conversion will accelerate? Not necessarily. Times have changed. Prime farmland is much more valuable today than it was in 1980, when farmland preservation first became an issue.

Since then, federal, state and local programs were added to assist with preservation through agricultural land easements. The public also has a greater awareness and appreciation of local agriculture, which could prove helpful. Farmers and ranchers are more engaged with the public through social media and this relationship builds support for maintaining a healthy agriculture.

Other trends also are favorable to reducing the pressure on farmland conversion. A recent analysis of housing trends found less interest in developing new suburbs and more interest in urban projects where transportation and public amenities are more accessible. Online shopping has taken a bite out of shopping malls, and big box stores are starting to be replaced by stores with smaller footprints.

Farmers have always said the best way to preserve farm and ranch lands is to make agriculture profitable enough to keep the land in farming and ranching. This maxim still holds true and is important for all of us.
“What Does Farm Bureau Do For Me?”

Joan Harman

When encouraging folks to join Farm Bureau, the question is often asked, “What does Farm Bureau do for me?” Well, one of the many benefits of a Farm Bureau membership is saving money!

In today’s economy, saving money is important to almost everyone. Perhaps the most advertised discount offered through Farm Bureau membership is with Nationwide Insurance. Through a partnership forged in 2004, Nationwide and West Virginia Farm Bureau began offering a 7% discount on insurance exclusively for WVFB members. WVFB membership has grown as people recognized the substantial savings over and above the cost of membership dues.

But the savings certainly don’t stop there. Farm Bureau members can save $500 on the purchase of a new GM vehicle. Looking for a 4-wheeler instead? Check out the Farm Bureau discount offered by Polaris!

Want more? Well, another great discount is offered to members through Sam’s Club. WVFB members can receive a discount, in the form of a gift card, on their Sam’s Club membership with proof of membership in WVFB presented along with a coupon from the WVFB members-only page on our website.

Like to travel and save money at the same time? WVFB members enjoy 20% discounts with Wyndham Hotels and Choice Hotels!

There are terrific discounts for farmers and handymen (and women) too – like a $300-$500 incentive from Case IH on tractors and implements, and savings from Grainger – including a 10% discount and free shipping on all online orders!

You can get the full scoop on all Farm Bureau discounts on the WVFB website, but here’s a quick listing of additional discounts: HP & Dell computers; TruTravel Insurance; Nationwide Advantage Mortgage; Farm Bureau Bank; Bowles Rice Attorneys; ScriptSave prescription discounts; Farm Bureau Medical Alert; Clear Value Hearing. And members also receive the monthly West Virginia Farm Bureau News, a full-color magazine with lots of interesting articles, stories, recipes and more!

Visit www.wvfarm.org or call 800-398-4630 x. 300 now for information on Farm Bureau membership so you can start saving today! Remember, you can save far more than the cost of your membership with Farm Bureau discounts!
ATVs can be hazardous to operate. Polaris models with engine sizes over 90cc are only for riders age 16 and older. Always wear a helmet and be sure to get safety training. For safety and training information, call the SVIA at (800) 887-2887, or Polaris at (800) 342-3764.

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24 West Virginia Farm Bureau News
NEED A CHANGE? Interested in exploring an opportunity with a stable company that has the backing and resources of a large corporate conglomerate with a domestic and international presence? READ ON!

Sapa Extrusions Inc., Yankton, SD (World’s Leading Aluminum Extruder) has several production positions available for qualified individuals. Those with Manufacturing Experience will be given first opportunity and must be capable of working a 4 days on 4 days off (12) hours a day shift schedule with overtime, must be able to lift up to 50# on a regular basis. Must be reliable and willing to work your way to the top. These positions are full time and include both night and day shift openings.

Sapa offers a very competitive compensation package (starting wage for entry level positions is $12/hour with $1.00 shift differential, paid weekly) performance based merit increases every 3 months/benefits package (where else can you get Medical, Vision and Dental Insurance and pay only $14.41 a week for single coverage and $42.81 a week for family coverage). Sapa also offers quarterly profit sharing (how would you like to get an extra paycheck every four months just because you helped the company make a profit), company paid life insurance, short and long term disability and ten paid holidays, a 401K plan with Company participation and a Company sponsored retirement plan which you become fully vested after three years of service. If you are a hardworking, dedicated person who wants to work only sixteen days a month then come join us.

Interested candidates please apply in person and/or by mail:
Attn: Jane Larson, HR Mgr. 2500 Alumax Rd, Yankton, SD 57078 or email: Jane.Larson@sapagroup.com.
The 2014 West Virginia Farm Bureau Annual Meeting was full of information and fun, as evidenced in these pictures. Nearly 400 members from across the state attended the event held at the Days Conference Center in Flatwoods.

Elections for state leadership positions were held on the last day of the meeting. The voting delegates chose Charles Wilfong of Pocahontas County to serve as president and John Pitsenbarger of Nicholas County to serve as vice president.

Directors were elected in regions 1, 3, 5 and 7 to serve on the WVFB board. Elected from Region 1 were Dave Parker and Doug Stolipher; from Region 3, John Pitsenbarger, Philip Gregg and Roger Hanshaw; from Region 5, Pat Nestor and Mike Morris; and from Region 7, Paul Cummings, Clyde Bailey and Bill Stewart.
Marilyn Thomas, of Wetzel County, and Ralph Blair, of Wood County, were chosen as the recipients of the 2014 Distinguished Service Award at the 2014 West Virginia Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in November.

Marilyn Thomas learned about farming early in life, spending summers on her grandfather’s farm. He raised chickens and grew nut trees, and instilled in her a love for all things agriculture. Today Thomas lives on 73 acres in Wetzel County, where she raises polled short-horned heifers, chickens and rabbits.

Thomas has personally financed three visits to Wetzel County of the Mobile Agriculture Education Science Lab. She singlehandedly raised funds for a new livestock barn/arena for the local fairgrounds. She established Wetzel County’s Autumnfest, serves on the Southern States board, is president of the Wetzel County Cancer Coalition and past president of CEOS.

Thomas served as the Wetzel County Farm Bureau president from 1989-2002, and has also served in a number of other roles and committees. She has been honored with many awards throughout her career.

Ralph Blair has always had farming in his blood, working in his grandfather’s hayfields as a young boy. Later, Ralph planted a garden on his parents’ property and sold vegetables. He continued this venture through high school and college, where he obtained a B.S. in Agriculture.

Ralph and his wife, JoEllen, eventually settled in Belleville in Wood County with children Victoria, Sue Ellen, Douglas and Sam, on a 250-acre farm, where they raised cattle, sheep and chickens. These days the Blairs raise corn, soybeans, hay and beef cattle, and have a large garden.

A Farm Bureau member for 40 years, Ralph has served on the WVFB Board of Directors as well as serving a twenty-year term as Wood County president. Currently he serves as vice-president of WCFB, and as a Region 6 director on the West Virginia Farm Bureau board. He is also a former member and past president of the Wood County Board of Education and the West Virginia Sheep Producers Association, as well as many other committees and organizations, where he has received numerous awards. He has been recognized as both a Friend of 4-H and a Friend of FFA.
A COMPLETE Holiday Table

FAMILY FEATURES

Nothing pleases the senses like a home filled with family, friends and the welcoming aroma of a holiday meal.

Whether you’re cooking up a full-menu feast from your own kitchen or you need a delicious idea or two to share at a potluck-style gathering — these dishes please the palate. With timeless flavors of turkey and butternut squash, or treats that charmingly display a symbol of the season, guests will surely be encouraged to dig in.

Roast Turkey with Sausage Stuffing
Prep time: 15 minutes
Total time: 3 hours, 30 minutes
Servings: 20
1 pound breakfast pork sausage
1 1/2 cups hot water
2 packages (6 ounces each) Stove Top Stuffing Mix for Turkey
1 Butterball Frozen Whole Turkey (10 pounds), thawed
Heat oven to 325°F.
Brown sausage in skillet; drain, reserving 1/2 cup drippings. Add drippings to large bowl; stir in hot water. Add stuffing mixes and sausage; stir just until stuffing mixes are moistened.

Stuff neck and body cavities lightly with stuffing. Truss turkey; place, breast-side up, on rack in large roasting pan sprayed with cooking spray. Spoon any remaining stuffing into separate baking dish sprayed with cooking spray; cover. Refrigerate stuffing until ready to bake.
Bake turkey 3 to 3 1/4 hours or until internal temperature of thigh is 180°F and breast and center of stuffing are 165°F, adding dish with remaining stuffing to oven for the last 30 minutes.

Keeping it safe: Do not stuff turkey until ready to roast.
Substitute: Substitute butter for the sausage drippings. For more recipes, visit www.kraft.com.
Pan Roasted Butternut Squash and Apples
Prep time: 15 minutes
Total time: 15 minutes
Servings: 4
3 tablespoons Parkay Original Spread tub
1 package (12 ounces) refrigerated butternut squash pieces (about 3 cups)
1 1/2 cups chopped Granny Smith apple (about 1 large apple)
1/2 cup apple juice
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/8 teaspoon salt
Melt spread in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add squash; cook 5–7 minutes or until lightly browned, stirring occasionally.
Add apple, apple juice, cinnamon, ginger and salt; stir to combine. Reduce heat; cover and simmer 15 minutes or until squash is tender.
Note: Fresh butternut squash may be used in place of refrigerated squash. It will take more time to peel and cut into pieces.
For more recipes, visit www.readyseteat.com.

Turkey Casserole
Prep time: 15 minutes
Total time: 55 minutes
Servings: 6
4 cups leftover prepared stuffing, divided
4 cups coarsely chopped leftover cooked turkey (about 1 pound)
3/4 cup Hellmann’s or Best Foods Real Mayonnaise, divided
1/4 cup whole berry cranberry sauce
2 cups leftover mashed potatoes
1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray 8-inch baking dish with no-stick cooking spray. Spoon in 2 cups stuffing, then top with turkey.
Combine 1/4 cup mayonnaise with cranberry sauce; evenly spread over turkey.
Combine remaining 1/2 cup mayonnaise, potatoes and cheese in large bowl. Evenly spread on turkey, then top with remaining 2 cups stuffing.
Bake 40 minutes or until heated through. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. Garnish, if desired, with dried cranberries.
For more recipes, visit www.hellmanns.com.
USDA Guide Chock-Full of Info on Funding and Technical Assistance, Project Design and More

The USDA has a wide range of financial assistance programs, but finding the right one can be difficult, complicated further by trying to stay up to date with changes in funding following each Farm Bill.

Thanks to the newly updated guide Building Sustainable Farms, Ranches and Communities: A Guide to Federal Programs for Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry, Entrepreneurship, Conservation, Food Systems, and Community Development, producers, researchers, nonprofits and landowners can find programs to help them achieve their goals.

The 86-page guide covers 63 government programs and has been updated to include programs included in the 2014 Farm Bill. Each listing provides a description of the program’s available resources, information on how to apply, and in some cases, examples of how the funding has been used. Additionally, the guide includes basic information on how to design sound projects, find appropriate programs and write grant applications.

“Building Sustainable Farms, Ranches and Communities provided me with concise, comprehensive, well-organized and user-friendly information on federal grant programs,” says Mary Holland, a regional food systems entrepreneur who serves the Upper Midwest.

Beginning farmers faced with hefty start-up costs can use the guide to find grants and loans, in addition to technical assistance. Landowners will find opportunities to be compensated for participating in land and energy conservation programs. And experienced producers looking to conduct research to improve agricultural practices can find programs to help foster innovation on their farm.

The guide also opens doors for people who have never applied for USDA funding before. “I use this wonderful guide with start-up nonprofits all over the country. The guides are especially valuable because most groups I work with aren’t familiar with federal programs. It’s great having something that’s so concise and also helps people understand how to go and look for additional resources,” says Lorna Donaldson, a Tennessee farmer and national sustainable agriculture enterprise consultant.

Building Sustainable Farms, Ranches and Communities was developed through a partnership between the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (MFAI), the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), with support from SARE and other USDA agencies. The guide was first published in 1997 and this is the 4th update.

To download a free PDF of the guide and to learn how to order hard copies, visit www.sare.org/building-sustainable-farms.
Do You Support the Reintroduction of Elk into West Virginia? Fill Out the Form Below and Tell the DNR

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources has been holding meetings to help determine public interest in the restoration of elk to West Virginia. West Virginia Farm Bureau policy OPPOSES this effort, because of the presence of Chronic Wasting Disease in elk and the fear it could spread to livestock. Others believe it will also add to crop and fence damage, as well as the already high number of collisions between cars and deer in the Mountain State, thus increasing insurance rates further.

DNR has been working on a proposed elk restoration plan for the past few years and is now accepting public comments regarding the plan. You can submit your opinion using the form below or by emailing the DNR. Comments may be mailed to: West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Section, 324 4th Avenue, South Charleston WV, 25303 or emailed to: DNR.Wildlife@wv.gov. Comments must be submitted by Dec. 29, 2014.

For further information, you can read the draft West Virginia Elk Management Plan online at http://wvdnr.gov/Publications/Draft_Elk_Plan.pdf.

Free-roaming elk have not been present in West Virginia until recent years. For the past several decades, elk have received protected status in the state. The DNR developed its first elk reintroduction feasibility study in 1972 and conducted more recent research in 2005.

Name:___________________________________________

County___________________________________________

☐ Favor the restoration of elk in southern West Virginia

☐ OPPOSE the restoration of elk in southern West Virginia

Written comments must be submitted by December 29, 2014
Mail comments to: WV DNR, 324 4th Ave., South Charleston, WV 25303
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