Tyler County Farm Bureau President David Ash presents a check for $1000 to WVFB Field Representative Bill Aiken for the new Mobile Agriculture Education Science Lab at the October meeting. Left to right: David Ash, Bill Aiken and Tyler Co. FB Secretary Jim Hileman.

Berkeley County Farm Bureau celebrated their 100th anniversary in October. Maryland Farm Bureau President Chuck Fry was the featured speaker, reflecting on the changes in agriculture during the past century. West Virginia Farm Bureau President Charles Wilfong spoke about upcoming legislative and regulatory challenges facing Farm Bureau and WVFB Field Representative Bill Aiken entertained the large crowd with his witty humor.

Following a delicious catered dinner, a large number of door prizes were drawn, including dozens of beautiful mums.

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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On the cover
Red Barn
arianahabich/dollarphoto.com
Americans love a good story and we love a good meal. All the better when the two can go hand-in-hand. Consumers are eager for more stories about their food. They want to know where each meal comes from and how it's grown.

The market responds, but only haltingly. Walk into a grocery store and you can find just about every label imaginable--free range, non-GMO, organic, gluten-free and natural--you name it, there's a label for it. Some of these labels are helpful, but none of them can fully tell the story of American agriculture. That's up to us farmers. We need to tell the story instead of letting others define who we are.

Consider the mantra of sustainability. It's today's buzzword, but it's been our way of life for a century or more. Farmers are producing more food with less land, water and pesticides, and we can prove it. Thanks to tools like Field to Market's Fieldprint Calculator, we can track our efficiency and environmental impact and share the impressive results. Our practices may vary, but we all know the importance of protecting our resources. Our livelihoods depend on it.

Whether conventional or organic, we all work hard to produce the highest quality food for our customers as affordably as we can. American farms are growing more food using less water and energy, all while protecting the soil for future crops. We need to get out there and tell consumers how we're making this happen.

We need to tell people in cities and suburbs--cubicle dwellers and factory workers--about the new technology we're using. They need to know how we are growing more crops on less land with less soil erosion than ever before. Even water use is down thanks to better equipment and genetically modified seeds.

Big data systems let us zero in on fields to use the exact amount of water, seed and crop protection each crop needs. Average consumers don't know how practices like conservation tillage are protecting our soil, but we can teach them. We can explain how homegrown fuels like ethanol are cutting greenhouse gas emissions. We can proudly share more about how we rotate our crops and use conservation plans to keep the soil healthy. Cover crops, green manure, grassland preservation, no-till techniques--all this and more are mysteries to non-farmers.

Agriculture has a great story of sustainability to share. Conventional and organic alike--we're keeping America fed and preserving our valuable resources for generations to come. People need to hear it straight from the ones who know it best.
Farm Bureau members from across West Virginia gathered for their annual meeting at Flatwoods, November 13-15 at the Days Inn and Suites. The event provided great fellowship through a showcase focusing on educational forums, policy development, insight from lawmakers, member and local organization recognition, competitive events, women’s activities, young farmer leadership development, and the election of leadership for the year ahead. Thanks again to our “STP” (Stability, Trust, Performance) Legislative Insights Panel – Senator Bob Williams (D-Taylor) and Delegates Bill Hartman (D-Randolph), “Woody” Ireland (R-Ritchie) and Amy Summers (R-Taylor). This group of dedicated public servants offered candid insights regarding potential legislation and budget issues impacting the 2016 WV Legislative Session.

Sunday’s programming featured the vocal talents of Farm Bureau’s Brenda Snyder, as members and guests had the opportunity to worship with the Dean Family – what a blessing! As the annual meeting concluded Farm Bureau leadership met to finalize legislative priorities for the year ahead. Major priorities include:

- Support legislative action to ensure local control on Sunday hunting, with approval only by local option at the ballot box.
- Farm Bureau recommends an investigation of individual budget items rather than across-the-board cuts to address budget shortfalls.
- Farm Bureau supports reinstating the food tax as a broad-based tax.
- Promote action to ensure county assessors adhere to the approved formula for appraising farmland.

A complete listing of legislative priorities and Farm Bureau policy will be featured in the January issue of *West Virginia Farm Bureau News*.

President Wilfong, Executive Secretary Butler and I want to thank Delegate Amy Summers for affording us an opportunity to participate in her December 1st Town Hall Meeting in Grafton. The meeting focused on draft legislation addressing the Horizontal Well Unitization and Landowner Protection Act of 2016. The meeting was well attended and included six state lawmakers – Senators Dave Sypolt and Bob Williams, and Delegates “Woody” Ireland, Amy Summers, Patsy Trecost II and Terry Waxman. Thanks again to House Energy Chair Ireland for his tireless efforts with stakeholders and the excellent overview presented at the meeting.

Thanks for the Memories – I want to express my sincere appreciation to the Farm Bureau family for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Director of Governmental Affairs for the past nine legislative sessions. As I said last month, it has truly been a treat...and my wife and I have been richly blest! After considerable thought and prayer I have decided it is time to pass the torch to a newcomer. But rest assured I will always be faithful to Farm Bureau and our industry of agriculture. Until our trails cross “under the Dome,” at a Farm Bureau or agricultural event, or perhaps in your neck of the woods – KEEP SMILING FRIENDS, God bless you and your loved ones, and God bless America. MERRY CHRISTMAS!
Nationwide Stands Up for Farmers

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Through Nationwide’s We Stand For You® advocacy efforts, we show farmers and agribusinesses that we support them — and do what’s right for the members we serve.

That’s why we helped create the Stand Up award program to honor farmers making a difference in their communities — farmers like Matt DeMatteo.

In collaboration with the Nationwide-sponsored Small Town Big Deal, a weekly RFD-TV program that celebrates the stories of rural American life, the award was created to highlight the great work being done by farmers across the nation.

Promoted on Small Town Big Deal throughout 2014, community members could nominate Stand Up award recipients online. Of the more than 300 nominations received, DeMatteo’s story struck a chord.

For the 23-year-old resident of New Philadelphia, Ohio, farming was a lifelong dream. After graduating from Ohio State, he returned to the family farm where he works with his brother and volunteers with the local fire department.

After his farming mentor tragically lost his life in a tractor roll-over just weeks before harvest, DeMatteo rallied his community in support. He led a tractor tribute and, with the help of other local farmers, harvested the farmer’s crops.

“This young man is always doing good things,” says his Nationwide Agent Lynette Dauch. “He has become someone that people look up to. The impact of this on the community will never be measured; bringing together family, friends and acquaintances to mourn and share grief is a big task. Matt made it happen. We need more young adults like Matt in this world.”

DeMatteo was featured on Small Town Big Deal on November 12, where he shared his story and received the Stand Up award. Check the show’s website for details about where to watch.

“Partnering with the most-watched show on a network that targets rural audiences and those involved in agriculture allows us to tap into the creativity, innovation and resourcefulness of rural Americans,” says Brad Liggett, Agribusiness president for Nationwide. “And highlighting the work of individuals like Matt DeMatteo is just one of the ways we continue to stand for our members and for the entire agricultural community.”

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WILL WE BE READY?

WEST VIRGINIA SITS ON THE CUSP OF A MASSIVE EXPANSION IN GAS EXPLORATION. WILL WE BE WILLING TO PLACE OUR STATE IN A POSITION TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE?

DELEGATE JOHN R. KELLY
Amidst the slowdown in oil and natural gas production in West Virginia, the industry remains a strong and vibrant part of our state’s economy. Much of the blame for the current slowdown can be attributed to the Saudis for flooding the American oil and natural gas market, thus driving the price of natural gas to artificially low levels. American companies are reluctant to invest in new drilling while these low prices exist. Now is the time for the oil and natural gas companies to drill and seek an expanded transportation infrastructure. We are at a point in Marcellus and Utica operations that we must now build extensive pipelines to move large volumes of oil and natural gas coming from the ground.

In a recent speech to the Parkersburg/Wood County Area Economic Development Roundtable, Senator Joe Manchin suggested the state should directly invest in building major transportation pipelines throughout the state. By doing so, West Virginia would be ahead of the game once drilling resumes. Currently, seven pipeline infrastructure projects are on the table, encompassing 1992 miles of new pipeline expansion. The first of these projects is expected to be complete in December 2015. Columbia Pipeline and Energy Transfer expect completion of two more pipelines in 2017; and Dominion, EQT, and Columbia have 2018 completion dates on four other pipeline projects. The cost of these projects is estimated to be $16.7 Billion and will give the industry the capacity to move 14.5 Billion Cubic Feet of natural gas per day.

West Virginia has 1751 horizontal wells in Marcellus, and 2 additional Utica wells as of September 2015. Marcellus production exceeded 16 Billion Cubic Feet per day in June 2015, and Marcellus/Utica combined natural gas production currently exceeds 18 Billion Cubic Feet per day. Utica wells are currently producing at a rate three to four times that of Marcellus. EQT Corporation has permits to drill the state's third Utica well in Wetzel County; and if their past history is an indicator, it will be a very prolific well. They currently have the highest output natural gas well in history, producing 73 Million Cubic Feet of natural gas per day in Green County Pennsylvania.

West Virginia must be prepared to handle the production rates that are anticipated by the industry. The total number of wells, and the high volume of production makes investment the right decision for West Virginia. The anticipated growth will bring investment, jobs, economic development, and prosperity to a state that has, for too long, been at the bottom.

The West Virginia Legislature is working hard to promote policies that will enhance and promote this valuable resource. The House Committee on Energy is working with outside agencies and organizations to assist the expansion in a way that is fair to all concerned. The Independent Oil and Gas Association of West Virginia (IOGA) and the West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Association (WVONGA) have contributed volumes of information on technology and development related to future expansion. The Committee’s involvement with the West Virginia Farm Bureau, West Virginia Surface Owners Rights Organization, West Virginia Land and Mineral Owners Association, and the Royalty Owners Association of West Virginia has established a balanced fairness in any legislation that is presented. Because all interests are served, the oil and natural gas industry in West Virginia will flourish, and our state will be a better place to work and raise a family. Properly managed, West Virginia’s economy can and will move forward through oil and natural gas development.
This fall, West Virginia Farm Bureau expanded its staff with three new employees. Michelle Bailey is our new Mobile Agriculture Education Science Lab Coordinator, and Jennifer Kirby is working with Michelle as the Mobile Agriculture Education Science Lab Assistant Coordinator. Tabby Bennett is our new Public Relations Specialist, and will be writing and educating members about Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) in the state through a grant with the USDA.

Michelle Bailey

Michelle was born in Buckhannon, West Virginia and raised in Rock Cave, where she currently lives with her husband Mike, who does maintenance for Weyerhauser. They have two sons, Brandon, age 19 and Nathaniel, age 14; and two dogs, Gizmo and Gadget.

She earned an Associate’s degree in Applied Science Occupational Development from Pierpont Community and Technical College in 2013, and a Bachelor’s degree in Family Consumer Sciences with a Child Development Specialization from Fairmont State University in 2015. Before Farm Bureau, Michelle worked in the childcare field with seven years of experience as a teacher assistant at Upshur County Head Start and eight years as an advanced pre-k teacher at the Child Development Center.

“I am excited to educate the children in West Virginia about agriculture and how it truly is part of their everyday lives,” said Bailey. “I am eager to build awareness about the Mobile Ag Lab, and help the program grow, so every child has the chance to learn about the importance of agriculture.”

Michelle likes to bake cakes, travel, and spend time with her family.
Jennifer Kirby
Jennifer was born in Huntington, West Virginia, and raised in northern Ohio. After spending some time in South Carolina, she decided to move back to the Mountain State, and currently lives in Ellamore. Jennifer’s husband Brad is a Safety Manager at Weyerhauser. They have been married for 20 years and have three children: Dustin, age 20, Jonathan, age 16, and Elizabeth, age 10. Her family also has three pets, a dog named Sadie, and two cats named Charlie and Sugar.

Jennifer earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education in 2012 and a Master’s in Education in 2014 from Ashford University. She worked for seven years as a secretary at Pelion Middle School in South Carolina, then spent two years as a pre-k teacher at Little One’s Place.

“The continuation and growth of agriculture rests with our youth, so delivering information to their schools through the activities in the Mobile Ag Lab is an important mission that I am proud to be part of,” said Kirby.

Jennifer enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, and gardening.

Tabby Bennett
Tabby was born in Clarksburg, West Virginia, raised in Buckhannon, and now lives in Bridgeport. She is engaged to be married this summer to Greg Kuckuck, who grew up working on his dad’s farm in Pennsylvania, and is now a project scientist at Civil Environmental Consultants, Inc. in Bridgeport.

Bennett earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Relations from West Virginia Wesleyan College in 2015 where she also minored in Education, and had a summer internship with WVF. Tabby plans to pursue a Master’s degree in the near future. During college, she worked part-time as an assistant teacher at the Child Development Center, then was a junior account executive at Orion Strategies before joining Farm Bureau.

Tabby is excited about joining a team dedicated to farmers and causes she is passionate about, and hopes to make a positive difference for everyone involved in Farm Bureau. In her spare time, Tabby enjoys watching baseball and hockey, photography, reading, makeup, and baking.

Michelle, Jennifer, and Tabby are eager to learn all they can so they can serve our members and help Farm Bureau continue to grow.

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FOCUS ON AGRICULTURE

Band of Farmers

Morgan Slaven
Military veterans returning to civilian life can find the transition difficult, especially when it comes to employment. Thanks to the American Farm Bureau Federation's Patriot Project, service men and women can put their skills to work in a new field back home.

The Patriot Project connects military veterans interested in farming with experienced Farm Bureau members. The mentorship is a natural fit for many of our nation's veterans. They are up for the challenges agriculture brings, according to Damon Helton, an army veteran mentee from Arkansas.

"Farm life has had such a positive impact on me and my family," Helton said. "My military experience helped me contribute to my country with hard work and dedication. Farming has given me that same opportunity and leaves me very fulfilled."

At its heart, the Patriot Project is about strengthening community and creating mentorships that help farmers succeed through purposeful relationship building and business development—a desire that aligns with Farm Bureau's mission.

"There is a special bond of service to our nation between farmers and military veterans that runs deep," said AFBF President Bob Stallman. "Veterans are not only the backbone of our country, but of our farmlands and rural communities."

State partnerships are critical to the success of the project, with Texas and Arkansas Farm Bureaus currently piloting the program. Dale Bullock, Texas Farm Bureau director of field operations and state pilot advisor, believes that collaboration between Farm Bureau leaders and veterans will keep America viable.

"Texas is starting to notice a decline in the number of farmers and ranchers while the average age increases," Bullock said. "Programs, such as the Patriot Project, can be an avenue to attract a new generation involved in the production of food and fiber."

As these new farmers kick start their businesses, they are looking for someone to turn to with their farming questions. Ross Dunn, Arkansas Farm Bureau assistant director of public policy and state pilot advisor, believes the Patriot Project answers that call through relationship building.

"Farm Bureau mentors who have volunteered their time and energy share their wealth of knowledge about the ups and downs of production agriculture," Dunn said. "The men and women of the U.S. military are deserving of the absolute best we can offer to sustain their families and their future."

The program structure is outlined in three online modules, which are housed in the new FB University. The modules guide farmer veterans and their mentors through the structure of Farm Bureau, the principles of successful mentorship, and finally help them develop successful business plans. The program gives mentors and mentees a structure to follow without being too rigid.

"It is my hope that more veterans see the positive impact agriculture provides to our country and how they can be involved," Helton said. "Becoming a farmer has helped me in many ways that go beyond income. It has brought my family together, and given me the opportunity to continue caring for my country after my military career."

Photo credit: dusan kostic/dollarphotoclub.com
CORRECTION - Cabell County Farm Bureau purchases FFA jackets - Through a program initiated by the Santa Barbara, California Farm Bureau, Cabell County FB was able to provide FFA jackets to members who applied for and participated in an interview process. Among the traits considered were the students’ hard work and dedication to FFA. CCFB hopes to provide more jackets in the future. Above, left to right, C.J. Simpson, Jonathan Adkins, and Danielle Berry proudly wear their new FFA jackets.

If your county FB is interested in this program, contact the WVFB office for more info.

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

1 Offer available through 4/1/17. Available on qualified 2015 and 2016 Chevrolet vehicles. This offer is not available with some other offers. Only customers who have been active members of an eligible Farm Bureau for a minimum of 30 days will be eligible to receive a certificate. Customers can obtain certificates at www.fbverify.com/gm. Farm Bureau and the FB logo are registered service marks of the American Farm Bureau Federation and are used herein under license by General Motors.

Farming is a business of uncertainty, but here’s something you can count on.
Wow, what a busy weekend we all had at the WVFB Annual Meeting. I have been overwhelmed by all the support from across the state throughout the year. I am so honored that the voting delegates at the annual luncheon voted me to serve another year as your State Chair. The role is made even easier as both Mary Clay (Vice Chair) and Tanya Pitsenbarger (Secretary) will be beside me for another year, along with the other members of the committee. I continue to work with an incredible TEAM of ladies from across the state and could not do what I do without each one of them. Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to Norma Pursley, Region 7 Chair as she decided to step down after many years serving on the state committee. But, the best thing is, I know she is just a phone call away as are many of those I have been so privileged to serve with in the past; Ethel Nash, JoEllen Blair, Jeanne Carter, etc.

Now, let me report all the results from that busy weekend. The Flora Turner Youth Speech Competition was held on Friday evening with nine contestants. Let me tell you, each year these students amaze me with their performance and knowledge. The 1st place winner was Rachael Martin from Putnam County, 2nd place was Savannah Metheny from Lewis County, and 3rd place was Mattison Johnson from Ritchie County. 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 nine teenagers who spent time researching their topic and delivered excellent speeches.

Once again the state WLC ladies outdid themselves by baking some incredible cookies, candies and other goodies to sell at the annual meeting, along with Christmas ornaments and a beautifully handmade stand cover by Dorothy Stewart that we raffled off. I probably should also thank all those attendees who stopped by to satisfy their sweet tooth and started their Christmas shopping a little early. We raised $638 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. The Christmas ornament sales raised $442.50 which included a beautiful and “perfect” Douglas Fir Christmas tree that was donated by Lois and French Armstrong to display those beautiful ornaments. The gun and quilt raffle helped us raise $275.00 and the handmade stand cover raised $82. This year the Young Farmer’s Committee graciously passed over the silent auction to the Women’s Leadership Committee to help us raise funds for our programs and activities, and it garnered $1,472.50. We want to use this annually to help support the Mobile Ag Science Lab. The Silent Auction process is admittedly a work in progress and we hope to clarify things for next year. I want to express my sincere apologies to those Young Farmers who worked so hard to keep things separated. It was a bit of a nightmare, and that is putting it mildly. I also want to personally thank 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 66 total photos for the three categories. First place winners were: FB Activity – Sue Galloway, Wood County; Funny, Comical – Stacy Call, Cabell County; Rural Scene – Robin Shawver, Fayette. Second place winners were: FB Activity – Marie Underwood, Kanawha County; Funny, Comical – Sally Shepherd, Kanawha County; Rural Scene – Stephanie Arden, Braxton County. The third place winners were: FB Activity – Brooklyn Jones, Wetzel County; Funny, Comical – Linda Brown, Braxton County; Rural Scene - Stacy Call, Cabell 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 Preston County, 2nd Place – Wood County, and 3rd Place – Wetzel County. Winners of the Safety Poster Contest were: Under 18 – Zach Mullins, Greenbrier County; 2nd Place – Zach Mullins, Greenbrier County; 2nd Place – Zach Mullins, Greenbrier County.
Lines, continued

– Nick Thomas, Greenbrier County. Over 18 1st Place
– Robyn Yeager, Wetzel County; 2nd Place – Donna
Montgomery, Preston County.

At our Women’s Luncheon on Saturday, we were
honored to have WV Delegate Kayla Kessinger speak
to us about how agriculture has touched her young life.
Although she didn’t grow up on a farm, she spoke of
a time when her family briefly raised pigs, which left
all of us laughing hysterically. Delegate Kessinger
also spoke of the cherished time and life lessons she
learned from her grandmother while helping her with
her vegetable garden. This was Kayla’s first WVFB
Annual Meeting but I believe it will not be her last as
she thoroughly enjoyed the weekend and has some new
adopted mothers and grandmothers who will follow
her life as a college student and as the second-youngest
member of the WV Legislature.

During the luncheon, results of the regional caucuses
were announced and the following individuals were
elected or re-elected to serve for their respective regions:
Region 1 – Pam Hessler – Chair and Dorrie Blue, Vice
Chair (new); Region 3 – Beckie Jack – Chair and Robyn
Yeager – Vice Chair; Region 5 – Tanya Pitsenbarger –
Chair and Lois Armstrong – Vice Chair; and Region 7
– Susie Cummings – Chair and Deborah Burdette - Vice
Chair (new). Dorrie and Deborah are a great fit and I
can’t wait to start working with them in 2016.

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

Blessings from my home to yours!

Pam

Pam Hessler
WVFB WLC Chair
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From our family to yours, wishing you a joyous holiday season and a prosperous new year.
Don’t Despair!
The Light is Coming

Becky Crabtree
We are not the first to suffer winter “blahs.” Our ancestors feared the days of late fall and the hardships that darkness brought. Survival during those times must have been difficult enough without losing the warmth and light of the sun. Not having enough wood for heat or food to last until spring could have been fatal. When winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, took place about December 21 in the Northern Hemisphere, people celebrated because the days to come were going to gain, not lose, sunlit hours. Winter was going to start to loosen its cold, cruel grip of darkness, a wonderful reason for merry-making!

Existing architecture from thousands of years ago provides evidence that daylight was of great consequence. Stonehenge in England was built so that rays of light at sunset on the solstice lined up the Altar and Sacrifice stones. Goseck Circle in Germany has two gates cut into its outer circle which correspond to sunrise and sunset on the solstice, and the Mayan pyramids in Tulum, Mexico are built so that a sunburst appears through a hole in the top when the sun hits it on the day of winter solstice.

The sun’s position really doesn’t cause the difference in hours of light; rather, the tilt of the earth causes the change. For half the year, the North Pole tilts toward the sun and for the other half, the South Pole is closer to the sun. Inhabitants of the top half of the earth get shorter hours of sunlight each day in the fall until the winter solstice and then the process reverses and the hours of sunlight gradually increase.

In recent years, many results of excessive sunlight have become well known. Too much exposure causes sunburn, a variety of skin cancers, and premature aging. However, there are also health risks that occur when not enough sunlight is present. Production of vitamin D, necessary for bone calcium formation, improves with sunlight as a catalyst. Residents of higher latitudes who have too little exposure also have higher rates of lymphoma and other cancers. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a mental health condition directly affected by a lack of sunshine. “Winter blues,” a less serious ailment, also occurs more frequently when sunlight is limited. The production of serotonin in the brain seems to be related to exposure to sunlight and consequently, better moods. Even in classrooms, the health of students who suffer from the absence of sunlight in the wintertime has been studied. Early studies indicate that natural light, or full spectrum lighting which most resembles sunlight provides healthier school environments for students and teachers. Natural daylight is proving to be extremely important to human health.

During the season of renewed physical light, modern Christian cultures also celebrate a symbolic glow of the season. While the origin of the actual date of Christmas is less clear than that of winter solstice, in the modern Christian world, the holy birth of Christ is celebrated at roughly the same time. For believers, a spiritual light is also growing during this season. With increasing physical light also comes the time to celebrate Christ’s birth and celebrate the divine internal light of peace, good will, and the radiance of Christian love.

Feeling lousy? Physical, mental, and spiritual health a bubble off of level? Don’t despair, look to the days ahead. Celebrate - light is on the way!
Harper, Carter Honored for Distinguished Service

Jeanne Carter and Joe Harper were recognized with the 2015 Distinguished Service Award at the WVFB Annual Meeting in November.

**Jeanne Carter** hails from Green Bank, West Virginia and now lives in Ohio County. Carter has a long history of involvement with agriculture, starting at age 9, when she joined 4-H, later becoming an All-Star. Jeanne attended West Virginia University, and while there met her late husband, Harlan. She graduated magna cum laude in 1952 with a degree in Vocational Home Economics Education, and later went on to earn a master’s in Counseling and Guidance.

Jeanne and her husband ran a dairy farm, selling bulk milk to a local dairy. Later, the farm switched to growing hay for local horse owners. Carter worked outside the farming operation in a variety of roles: educator (teaching grades from seven through college); Mason County Home Economics agent; Ohio Valley General Hospital School of Nursing; Ohio County 4-H assistant; Jackson’s Mill employee; 4-H camp instructor and more.

Jeanne has been a member of West Virginia Farm Bureau for more than 40 years. She served on the Women’s Leadership Committee for 15 years, and for most of the last 20 years, she’s been known as the ‘official’ song leader at WVFB Annual Meetings.

Carter has been a pioneer in a number of areas, both inside and outside of agriculture. She was a regional chairman for the national dairy industry “June Dairy Month” promotions; helped to establish Blaker Mill as an operating entity at Jackson’s Mill; served on the board of trustees of the Ohio Valley Medical Center where she was the first woman elected as Chairman and was also the first woman to chair the WVU College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Science Advisory Committee and Alumni organization. She and her late husband were also the first recipients of the Farming Heritage Award, presented by WVFB and the State Fair of West Virginia. In the 1950s, Jeanne hosted a live cooking show on WTRF, called “Heart of the Home,” from which she has some amusing stories.
Jeanne has also received a number of other honors, including: WVU College of Agriculture, Forestry and Family Resources 1995 Outstanding Alumni Award; Ohio County 4-H Alumni Award; West Virginia 4-H Hall of Fame; West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame and the WVU Extension Service Outstanding Fundraising Award. In 2005, Jeanne was recognized by Governor Joe Manchin as one of the “History Heroes” of West Virginia, for her live portrayals of women significant to the state’s past.

Joseph “Joe” Harper of Seneca Rocks has made substantial contributions to the sheep and beef cattle industries and their organizations in West Virginia and throughout the country.

Joe grew up on a family farm and is the eighth generation in his family to own and operate the farm. As a youth, he was involved in 4-H and raised cattle and sheep. After graduating from Circleville High School, he attended WVU, where he earned a B.S. and M.S in animal science. He spent four and a half years working in the meat industry in the upper Mid-West before returning to the family farm in 1971.

Since 1971, Harper has built a flock that averages around 400 ewes, created and operated a lamb feedlot, became a wool buyer in the area and utilized a number of innovations in marketing, breeding and predator control in his cattle and sheep operations. As a leader in West Virginia Farm Bureau, Joe led support for a self-help Predator Control Program, which was approved by the WV Legislature to take effect in 2005. He raises guard donkeys for his own use and sale to other producers and also utilizes guard dogs with his flocks on mountain pastures.

In addition to his sheep enterprises, Joe runs 500 head of feeder cattle each summer and bred heifer program. He led the development of a market lamb show and sale at the Tri-County Fair, which grew from nine to 40 to 90 to 130 to nearly 200 lambs in its first five years under his guidance. He and his wife, Carolyn, provided lambs and taught young people how to feed and groom their lambs through the 4-H Club system.

Harper has been a member of and served in pivotal roles in a number of organizations, including the WV Sheep Industry Development Association; West Virginia Cattlemen’s Association; National Cattlemen’s Beef Association; American Sheep Industry Association (ASI); USDA Wildlife Services Advisory Committee; West Virginia Shepherd’s Federation and the American Lamb Board. For two terms, Harper chaired the American Farm Bureau Sheep Advisory Committee and he conducted a speaking tour throughout Nova Scotia on sheep management.

Harper’s father had a small country store in Seneca Rocks. Today, Joe and Carolyn have maintained its early 1900s style, but they have added a restaurant upstairs, where they serve up to 95 lamb sandwiches a week during the summer tourist season. At the store, they also market sheep skins and lamb skins from their flock and pelts of coyotes caught in their pastures.

In 2006, Joe was honored by his alma mater, West Virginia University, as a Distinguished Alumnus of the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences. In addition, the WVU chapter of the Gamma Sigma Delta chose Joe to receive their award for Distinguished Service to West Virginia Agriculture in April 2006. In 2010, Joe was enshrined into the West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame. He also received the McClure Silver Ram Award in 2010.

He has been a member of the West Virginia Farm Bureau (Pendleton County) for 43 years. In 2013 he was awarded the Pendleton County Farm Bureau Service Award, which recognizes Pendleton County Farm Bureau members who have contributed to agriculture.

Congratulations to Joe and Jeanne!
More than 300 members and friends of the West Virginia Farm Bureau (WVFB) gathered on November 13, 14 and 15 at the Days Inn Conference Center in Flatwoods, WV, to conduct their 96th Annual Meeting.

The most important activity conducted during the Annual Meeting was the review of current policies and the addition of new policies by the voting delegates. The policies adopted by WVFB delegates originate at the grassroots level and define the organization’s position on a variety of concerns, including agriculture, taxes, highways, and public issues.

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.

Regions 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8 had the task of choosing directors to serve on the WVFB board. Elected from Region 2 were Dennis Funk and Steve Conrad; from Region 3, John Pitsenbarger and Philip Gregg; from Region 4, David Ash and Mike Merinar; from Region 6, Ralph Blair and Woody Ireland and from Region 8, Charles Wilfong, Paul Canterbury and Joe Clay.
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If sticking to a low-carb diet seems like a lofty goal, you may find it helpful to focus on all the foods you can eat with confidence while watching your carbs:

- High-fiber vegetables
- Protein (fish/seafood, poultry, beef, pork, eggs, plant-based)
- Healthy fats (olive oil, avocados, nuts, butter)
- Dairy (cheese, Greek yogurt)
- Low-glycemic fruits (berries, cherries, melon)

The hustle and bustle of the holiday season – from office parties to family gatherings – often leads to over-indulging and deviating from a healthy lifestyle; luckily, it’s still possible to enjoy many of your favorite holiday dishes while reducing carb and sugar intake.

And the numbers don’t lie – numerous studies show that low-carb eating can be a healthy lifestyle option for people who want to lose or maintain their weight. When you control your carbohydrate intake, you start burning stored fat as your fuel source instead of carbohydrates.

Low-carb eating results in more effective weight loss and better health markers, such as a decrease in your risk of heart disease and diabetes. Plus, a low-carb lifestyle, such as Atkins, can be customized to your individual needs to help you lose weight and keep it off.

In fact, with the wide variety of foods to choose from in a low-carb lifestyle, it’s easy to find plenty of the festive foods and recipes you like so you can skip the stress this holiday season and simply focus on celebrating.

These recipes – favorites of actress Alyssa Milano, who started her own journey on the Atkins program – show how easy it is to make and enjoy low-carb dishes packed with flavor. Find more low-carb recipes to share this holiday season at atkins.com.
Chicken Parmesan with Garlic Sauteed Baby Broccoli

Prep time: 10 minutes  
Cook time: 30 minutes  
Net carbs: 7.9 g

20 ounces boneless, cooked chicken breasts  
salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided  
15 ounces canned tomato sauce  
1/2 teaspoon ground dried basil  
1/4 teaspoon leaf oregano  
1 teaspoon sucralose sweetener (sugar substitute)  
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 cup shredded whole milk mozzarella cheese  
20 cups baby broccoli florets  
1/2 teaspoon garlic  

Heat oven to 350 F.  
Using meat mallet, pound out chicken breasts until they are about 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, and place into preheated skillet over medium-high heat with 2 tablespoons oil. Cook until brown on both sides, about 2 minutes per side, then layer into 8-by-8-inch baking pan.  
In small bowl, combine tomato sauce, basil, oregano, sucralose and Parmesan cheese. Mix with spoon and pour over chicken. Layer mozzarella on top and bake 25-30 minutes, until cheese is melted and sauce is bubbly.  
During last 10 minutes of cooking chicken, use same skillet to saute baby broccoli. Over medium-high heat, add garlic and broccoli to 2 remaining oil. Saute until broccoli is crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Serve immediately with chicken.

Fresh Mozzarella Salad with Basil Pesto

Prep time: 10 minutes  
Net carbs: 1.7 g

4 cups arugula  
1/4 cup basil pesto  
2 pounds sliced whole milk mozzarella cheese  
2 small whole red tomatoes, sliced  

Basil Pesto

24 ounces basil  
1/3 cup dried pine nuts  
1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1/2 teaspoon garlic  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil  
To prepare pesto, combine basil, pine nuts, Parmesan, garlic and salt in food processor or blender; pulse until finely chopped. Add oil in slow and steady stream with machine running; process until fairly smooth but not pureed. Serve immediately, refrigerate in airtight container for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 1 month.  
Toss arugula with 2 tablespoons of pesto. Mound onto serving plates. Top with alternating slices of mozzarella and tomato. Drizzle with remaining pesto and serve.

Cauliflower-Cheddar Mash

Prep time: 5 minutes  
Cook time: 8 minutes  
Net carbs: 3.5 g

1 cup cauliflower  
1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese  
salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
Steam cauliflower in steamer basket over boiling water in medium covered sauce pot until tender, about 5 minutes. Remove to bowl and mash with fork. Top with cheese and season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.  
Recipes courtesy of Atkins.
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