Wilkins Appointed to AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee

WVFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Vice-chair Susan Wilkins has been named to the American Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers committee.

Wilkins, a resident of Hillsboro in Pocahontas County, is employed by the Greenbrier County Farm Service Agency. Susan is a 2006 graduate of Bluefield State, where she earned a bachelor’s in Business Administration. In 2011 she completed a master’s in Communication Studies at WVU.

In her “spare” time, Wilkins helps out on the family’s cow/calf operation. She also volunteers with 4-H as a leader and camp counselor; organizes a yearly “Women in Agriculture” celebration; and works with both the annual 4-H Livestock Sale and the 4-H/FFA Ham, Bacon and Egg Show and Sale. As a Master Gardener, she helps instill a love of all things green through classes held for children.

Susan writes the YF&R monthly column for WVFB News. She has been a member of the state committee since 2005.

Soil Surveys Available from NRCS

The Natural Resources Conservation Service offers soil survey information to homebuyers, developers, land use planners, farmers and others to determine the suitability of land for various uses. “Soil surveys can help in evaluating the suitability of a tract of land for the intended use before buying,” says Kevin Wickey, West Virginia Conservationist.

“Where soil maps show that soil-related hazards may damage structures or installations, alternate sites that have favorable properties can be selected. Structural designs can also be changed to compensate for the hazards.”

The most up-to-date information for West Virginia is available at http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/. Call or visit your local NRCS office to discuss soils and land use with the soil conservationist or soil scientist assigned to your county.

Summer Ag Institute Scheduled for June

The Hilton Garden Inn in Morgantown will be the new location for this year’s Summer Agriculture Institute for Teachers on June 14 and 15.

The Institute will feature all-new programming, with content designed to meet state curriculum standards.

Teachers will receive a wealth of material to share with their students, including learning many hands-on activities, all while earning graduate or professional credits.

Registration will begin in March. Mailings will be sent to all West Virginia public and private schools with flyers and registration forms. Online registration, along with more information, will also be available at www.wvfarm.org in March. For questions, contact Joan Harman at 800.398.4630 x. 306 or joanh@wvfarm.org.

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**

*Winter Woodpecker*

Eric Thomason
Keystone Pipeline - Opportunity Missed?

Charles Wilfong, President, West Virginia Farm Bureau

On January 18, the Obama administration denied the permit request by Trans Canada Corporation to build the Keystone Pipeline. This pipeline would carry 700,000 barrels of crude oil a day from the Alberta, Canada oil sands to refineries in the U.S. gulf coast. The 1660-mile pipeline would create 20,000 direct jobs and hundreds of thousands of indirect jobs. However, since President Obama listened to extremist environmentalists, and at least for now has killed the project, Canadian officials are pledging to instead build another pipeline to their Pacific coast and sell their oil to the Chinese and other Asian markets.

Canadian Prime Minister Harper said that their decision to proceed with a “Chinese” pipeline was due to the “volatile indecisiveness” of President Obama, and that the Canadians feel they are being held hostage. Currently, 99% of Canada’s crude oil exports come to the United States. It is difficult to understand why Obama would reject this opportunity to make us less dependent upon oil from suppliers in the Middle East and Venezuela, and allow China to end up with oil that could have been ours. This decision could also damage other economic relationships between the U.S. and Canada.

Groups such as the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Center for Biological Diversity, which are extremist environmental groups, oppose the pipeline because they claim the project “perpetuates America’s addiction to oil and undermines clean energy alternatives.” At the same time, President Obama continues to give hundreds of millions of our

see Wilfong, page 20

Ringing in 2012 the Farm Bureau Way

Bob Stallman, President, American Farm Bureau Federation

It’s hard to believe that 2011 has come and gone and the New Year is upon us. Looking back, Farm Bureau had a very good year. We saw the success of some of our priority issues and the undertaking of several endeavors that are significant to the future of agriculture.

Looking ahead, there will be twists and turns in the road that awaits us, especially as we delve into the farm bill this year. But, knowing that Farm Bureau is on the right track as we head down that road, I am confident we will be met with success at the end. As the old jazz song goes, “It’s a new dawn, it’s a new day…and I’m feeling good.”

A Toast to the Past

It was a good year for Farm Bureau’s trade priorities. The Colombia, Korea and Panama trade agreements all passed Congress and were signed into law. Further, Mexico lifted $2.5 billion of retaliatory tariffs against U.S. farm products, and the World Trade Organization welcomed Russia into its membership. All of these victories will result in increased U.S. farm trade.

On the tax front, an IRS provision was repealed that will allow farms, ranches and other businesses to forego unnecessary and burdensome Form 1099 reporting requirements. We also achieved repeal of the 3 percent withholding tax.

Farm Bureau also supported House-passage of the Energy Tax Prevention Act of 2011, which eliminates the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. And, we successfully urged EPA to not propose changes to the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for coarse particulate matter, which includes dust from rural areas.

In an effort to secure regulatory certainty on the dust issue, we also

see Stallman, page 8
Showtime
At this writing “week three” of the 2012 Regular Session of the West Virginia Legislature is underway. It is truly “showtime” under the Dome as decision-makers and stakeholders throughout the state unite their energies to impact legislation.

I often note that most have no idea of the tremendous amount of effort that is put forth by the dedicated public servant on a day-to-day basis to make a positive difference for their constituents. During a sixty-day session, the pace almost becomes a rat race at times. At this early stage of the 2012 Session (day nine), 1352 bills are already pending – 963 in the House and 389 in the Senate. With the large volume of bills it is critical for legislators to hear from their constituents on key issues. Constituent input is what drives the process year-round, and particularly during “showtime.”

Fifty-plus bills are on the Farm Bureau watch list to date. Some of the more interesting include: SB 95 – By Senators Sypolt, Miller, D. Facemire and Nohe – Limits the landowner from civil liability for injuries that occur to person or property on the landowner’s property or surrounding property caused while hunting; SB 367 – By Senators Williams, Sypolt, Beach and Jenkins – Relates to liability of real property possessor for trespasser harm, strengthening/protecting WV’s longstanding liability laws; HB 2527 – By Delegates Michael, Hartman, Crosier, Williams and D. Poling – Regulates captive cervid farming as an agricultural enterprise in WV; HB 2753 – By Delegates Ireland, Longstreth, L.Phillips, Hall, R. Phillips, Canterbury, Storch, Snuffer and Savilla – Clarifies the requirements for and scope of practice of veterinary technicians; and HB 2851 – By Delegates Manypenny, Fleischauer and Martin – Permits surface owners to purchase the mineral interests that lay below the property when the mineral interest becomes subject to a tax lien. Companion bills to SB 95 and SB 367 are expected out of bill drafting any day, as is a bill requiring county commissions to establish a livestock committee to handle complaints regarding inhumane livestock treatment. The annual bills that would make English the official language of West Virginia are also pending in the House (HB 2409 by Delegates Ireland, Hamilton, Romine and C. Miller) and Senate (SB 121 by Senator Sypolt). For regular updates and details go to www.wvfarm.org and click on ‘Legislature – Hot Issues’ and www.legis.state.wv.us and click on ‘bill status’.

Last week “America’s Got Talent” winner Landau Eugene Murphy Jr. and NBA Hall of Famer Dominique Wilkins captured everyone’s attention with presentations promoting Physical Activity Day at the Legislature. Such “stars” come and go at the Capitol, BUT the “real stars under the Dome” are those public servants among the legislative body who are truly driven by the people during “showtime.” Until next time, take care FRIENDS, God bless and KEEP SMILING.
Make sure your barns and outbuildings are clear of snow — and are adequately insured.

Barn collapse can injure farmers and kill livestock. When heavy snow meets fierce winds even the best-engineered buildings can collapse. That’s why it’s important to be adequately insured for this type of peril.

What is snow load and what can it do?

Snow load is the downward force on a building’s roof by the weight of accumulated snow and ice. The roof or the entire structure can fail if the snow load exceeds the weight the building was designed to shoulder, or if the building was poorly designed or constructed. It doesn’t take a blizzard to cause problems; an imbalance of drifting snow can cause one part of a roof to give, causing a domino effect that affects the rest of the structure.

“Wood structures typically will give a warning of imminent failure with audible creaking or visible bowing of rafters,” says Randy Tinker, Risk Management Property Engineer, Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance Company, Des Moines, IA. “Metal structures, unfortunately, often don’t exhibit signs of stress before failure.” Farmers need to keep a close watch on structures with heavy loads and be prepared to move livestock and equipment to safer quarters.

It was just this kind of close watch that was conducted by Nationwide Insurance agent Kurt Fetterman of Fetterman Insurance Agency, Milford, Delaware, while visiting a customer’s farm. He noticed two poultry houses with wavy roof ridges. He called in the claim and an adjuster conducted the damage inspection, determining that the snow load caused the damage. “I was happy to assist my valued customer Carla and she appreciated that we proactively identified what could have been a much more serious problem resulting in personal injury,” says Kurt.

How much snow is too much?

Calculating the snow load on your barn takes more than an educated guess. The University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service says that a ballpark estimate of snow load can be made with the following formula:

Calculated Roof Loading (lb/ft²) = Depth (ft) x Density (lb/ft²/ft depth).

The approximate density (lb/ft²/ft depth) for light snow is 5-20, packed snow 20-40, packed snow with ice 40-58, and ice 58.

For example, a roof with three feet of light snow has an estimated roof load of 60 pounds per square foot (3 ft depth x 20 lb/ft²/ft depth density = 60 lb/ft²). You should know the roof weight limits for your barns and outbuildings, and rebuild or fortify them to withstand worst-case scenario snow loads and meet local building standards.

What you can do

Some failures can be prevented with careful snow removal. The University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service offers the following suggestions:

• Use caution if standing on the roof, making sure to wear a safety harness and use securing ladders.

• Use a snow rake, and avoid chipping or picking away at ice as that may damage the roof.

• Remove snow in narrow strips to keep the load somewhat even.

• Not all snow needs to be removed. A thin layer of snow can protect the roof from damage while snow is being removed.

Insurance checklist

A few minutes can give you reassurance during a heavy-snow winter. Check with your Nationwide Agribusiness farm insurance agent to:

• Confirm that your property insurance covers roof or building failure due to snow load.

• Make sure the policy pays for actual replacement costs, so you’re not out in the cold if you have to rebuild.

• Verify that valuable equipment stored in a barn or outbuilding is covered under your farm personal property endorsement.

Contact a local Nationwide agent to learn more about Nationwide Agribusiness farm insurance or visit Nationwide.com/wvfb.
**Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid Outperforms Many Higher Priced Hearing Aids**

**Reported by J. Page**

**CHICAGO:** A local board-certified Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT) physician, Dr. S. Cherukuri, has just shaken up the hearing aid industry with the invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid. **This revolutionary hearing aid is designed to help millions of people with hearing loss who cannot afford—or do not wish to pay—the much higher cost of traditional hearing aids.**

“Perhaps the best quality-to-price ratio in the hearing aid industry” – Dr. Babu, M.D. Board Certified ENT Physician

Dr. Cherukuri knew that hearing loss could lead to depression, social isolation, anxiety, and symptoms consistent with Alzheimer’s dementia. He could not understand why the cost for hearing aids was so high when the prices on so many consumer electronics like TVs, DVD players, cell phones and digital cameras had fallen.

Since Medicare and most private insurance do not cover the costs of hearing aids, which traditionally run between $2000-$6000 for a pair, many of the doctor’s patients could not afford the expense. Dr. Cherukuri’s goal was to find a reasonable solution that would help with the most common types of hearing loss at an affordable price, not unlike the “one-size-fits-most” reading glasses available at drug stores.

- Designed By A Board Certified Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Doctor
- Doctor-Recommended , Audiologist-Tested
- ★★★★★-Rated, #1 Selling Hearing Aid on Amazon.com
- FDA-Registered
- Save Up To 90%
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- Batteries Included! Comes Ready To Use
- 100% Money Back Guarantee

He evaluated numerous hearing devices and sound amplifiers, including those seen on television. Without fail, almost all of these were found to amplify bass/low frequencies (below 1000 Hz) and not useful in amplifying the frequencies related to the human voice.

**Inspiration from a surprising source**
The doctor’s inspiration to defeat the powers-that-be that kept inexpensive hearing aids out of the hands of the public actually came from a new cell phone he had just purchased. “I felt that if someone could devise an affordable device like an iPhone® for about $200 that could do all sorts of things, I could create a hearing aid at a similar price.”

**Affordable Hearing Aid With Superb Performance**
The high cost of hearing aids is a result of layers of middlemen and expensive unnecessary features. Dr. Cherukuri concluded that it would be possible to develop a medical grade hearing aid without sacrificing the quality of components. The result is the MDHearingAid PRO®, starting well under $200. **It has been declared to be the best low-cost hearing aid that amplifies the range of sounds associated with the human voice without overly amplifying background noise.**

**Tested By Leading Doctors and Audiologists**
The MDHearingAid PRO® has been rigorously tested by leading ENT physicians and audiologists who have unanimously agreed that the sound quality and output in many cases exceeds more expensive hearing aids.

**DOCTORS AND PATIENTS AGREE:** “BEST QUALITY SOUND” “LOWEST AFFORDABLE PRICE”

“I have been wearing hearing aids for over 25 years and these are the best behind-the-ear aids I have tried. Their sound quality rivals that of my $3,000 custom pair of Pho Ink Xtra digital ITE” —Gerald Levy

“I have a $2,000 Resound Live hearing aid in my left ear and the MD Hearing Aid PRO in the right ear. I am not able to notice a significant difference in sound quality between the two hearing aids.”

— Dr. May, ENT physician

“We ordered two hearing aids for my mother on Sunday, and the following Wednesday they were in our mailbox! Unbelievable! Now for the best part—they work so great, my mother says she hasn’t heard so good for many years, even with her $2,000 digital! It was so great to see the joy on her face. She is 90 years young again.” — Al Peterson

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supported House passage of the Farm Dust Regulation Prevention Act.

In 2011, Farm Bureau undertook a very important initiative with its participation in the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance. This unified, long-term and coordinated campaign for American agriculture is unprecedented in size and scope, with most every U.S. agriculture organization working toward one goal: moving the needle to gain consumer trust. I am confident this effort will vastly improve the connection between consumers and farmers and ranchers as we move further into 2012 and the future.

Keeping our Resolutions

As we settle in to the New Year, there are also visible obstacles on the horizon. One such challenge will be to complete a farm bill by years’ end that meets our expectations, while also staying in tune with the fiscal state of the nation. Farm Bureau supports the need for deficit reduction and tackling the nation’s rising debt, and we understand that in order to do this, cuts in farm programs are likely. While we will fight tooth and nail against disproportionate cuts, we will do our share to get the nation’s economy back on track. I am confident Farm Bureau is up to the task.

Water issues, too, still loom. Farm Bureau is leading both legal and policy efforts against EPA’s Chesapeake Bay regulations, which unlawfully usurp states’ authority. Left uncontested, EPA’s unprecedented initiative could set the stage for federal mandates on land use and water quality regulations nationwide, which could negatively affect all farmers and ranchers.

Other issues on the horizon include continuing to work toward comprehensive farm labor and immigration reform plans, maintaining our efforts to combat anti-agriculture animal welfare initiatives, and making sure agriculture’s voice is heard during the 2012 elections.

As we ring in 2012, I wish you and your family a happy, healthy and prosperous year. Or, as the Irish toast goes, “May your right hand always be stretched out in friendship but never in want.”

Happy New Year.
Aquaculture Forum and Small Farm Conference Slated for Early March

The 2012 Aquaculture Forum will be held Saturday, March 3, at the Waterfront Place Hotel in Morgantown. This annual meeting is designed to inform people about growing fish to eat, as ornaments, to control aquatic vegetation, or to sell.

The day will consist of presentations on a variety of topics, a showcase of West Virginia aquaculture products, posters describing the latest aquaculture research, door prizes, a business meeting of the West Virginia Aquaculture Association, and an opportunity to meet and speak with fish folks from the region.

This year, the Aquaculture Forum will be held at the same time and place as the West Virginia Small Farm Conference. Individuals registered for either event on March 3 are free to attend sessions at the Small Farm Conference and/or the Aquaculture Forum.

The Small Farm Conference boasts three days of classes. Thursday, March 1, features intensive workshops on cheese making, high- and low-tunnel construction and management, hands-on poultry production and processing, grant writing, alternative energy management, food businesses, and youth entrepreneurship. Friday and Saturday offer 72 different classes, including the Aquaculture Forum, to help farmers meet the many challenges and opportunities they face every day, such as reaching new markets, extending growing and marketing seasons, regulations, wildlife, demands through better production, business planning, and risk management methods.

Cost of a one-day registration for the Aquaculture Forum on Saturday, March 3, is $70, which will include meals and a membership waiver for the West Virginia Aquaculture Association. To get this benefit, you must sign up for WVAA membership at the meeting. Although walk-ins are welcome on the day of the meeting, participants can assure a place at the noon meal by registering by February 28.

Online registration is available at the WVU Aquaculture Extension web page (http://aquaculture.ext.wvu.edu/events) or on the Small Farm Center web page (http://smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu/).

Information about the Aquaculture Forum may also be obtained from Ken Semmens (304 293-2657 or email Ken.Semmens@mail.wvu.edu). You may also contact your county WVU Extension office, or Becky Casteel (304-293-2565; Becky.Casteel@mail.wvu.edu).

The Aquaculture Forum is sponsored by the West Virginia University Extension Service, the West Virginia Aquaculture Association, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, and the WVU Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design.

Please consider joining fish folks and other farmers in Morgantown in March. It’s a great networking opportunity and a time to savor locally grown and prepared West Virginia foods.
Young Farmer and Rancher Update

Susan Wilkins, YF&R Vice-chair

During my time on the state Young Farmers committee, I have indeed been fortunate. I have been able to travel to several of the AFBF Annual Meetings, meet countless people from across the country, and continue to learn more about American agriculture than I ever thought possible. In January, I was able to attend the AFBF Annual Meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii. It was, by far, the best Farm Bureau experience I have ever had; and much much warmer than last year’s meeting in “Ice-lanta.” Hawaiian agriculture is so vastly different than what we know here on the mainland of the United States. From a purely tourist viewpoint, it might be hard to look past the beaches and sunsets of paradise to see the farmers who work on nearly 7,500 farms throughout the islands. But a closer look reveals that agriculture is a booming part of the economic makeup of the state, particularly in biotechnology research.

Most folks, when they think of Hawaiian agriculture, might picture pineapples and coffee. While I saw both of these, pineapples and coffee are actually only a very small segment of Hawaii’s farming industry. Years ago, Hawaii was the largest supplier of pineapple in the world, responsible for 80% of the world’s market. Today, only 2% of the world’s pineapple comes from the Hawaiian Islands, as production has been outsourced to places where it is more cost effective to grow. Likewise, coffee can be grown much more cheaply in other places around the world, so those farmers in Hawaii who do grow coffee aim for an exceptionally high quality product.

Macadamia nuts are actually one of the leading commodities for Hawaii, only behind greenhouse and nursery products and cane for sugar. Tree nuts rank as Hawaii’s number one export and value for $113.2 million, according to United States Department of Agriculture census data. On a national scale, Hawaii is 6th in the sale of tree nuts. Other crops that are important to the agricultural industry include ginger, bananas, onions, sweet potatoes, lettuce, and seed crops.

My time was spent on the island of Oahu, but I would have enjoyed visiting the “Big Island” of Hawaii where there are several very large cattle ranches. Michelle Galimba, who works on her family’s 10,000 acre ranch, spoke during one of the sessions I attended during the meeting. She talked of the difficulty her family has in actually finishing and processing the beef they produce. The Galimbas run 1,800 head of cows. Hawaii does not have the necessary industry in place to finish cattle for slaughter. Until recently, the Galimbas had to ship live animals to the mainland to feedlots to be finished.

Michelle said that it is actually cheaper to ship the animals to the grain than it is to bring the grain to the animals. In strides to be more economical and profitable, the Galimbas are now trying to capitalize on the local foods market. Hawaii imports between 85 and 90 percent of the total food consumed, even though the islands have ideal growing conditions year round. As one of the most geographically isolated areas in the world, Hawaii is experiencing a huge push for the “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” food movement. The Galimbas are currently marketing their beef within the state to local restaurant chefs and consumers.

While Hawaii may seem a world away from our West Virginia hills, farmers are farmers no matter the location. Just like this state’s farmers, the majority of Hawaii’s farmers are older, with the average age at 59. Top concerns are the price and availability of farm land, protecting the land against development for the next generation, and food security. (Just like us!) The average farm size is 149 acres. (West Virginia’s average is 157 acres.) Hawaiian farmers are hardworking and friendly, care deeply for the land they work, and eager to share stories of their lives.
Special congratulations are extended to Lyle Tabb and his wife of Kiya of Jefferson County who represented our state in the national Achievement Award contest while in Honolulu. The Tabb Family has an impressive operation and it was evident to the review panel that Lyle had spent a lot of time completing an intensive application for the contest. Lyle did a fantastic job and we were proud to have him as our competitor.

After returning from Hawaii, our farm seems a little brown and cold. But warmer weather will soon be upon us and the Young Farmer committee will begin planning for our annual spring farm tour in Hardy County. Book Barns will be heading out to more new counties this coming year, including Morgan and Berkeley. The committee selects four counties each year to donate Book Barns to, but any county is welcome to purchase one through the state office.

Until next time, stay warm and enjoy the mud!

---

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Rotational grazing brings great benefits

Rotational grazing involves more than a pasture system with many small divisions where the livestock are moved every day or so. Although that system can be productive, rotational grazing does not have to be so intense. A way to increase the productivity of many West Virginia pastures is to develop more rotational systems.

Any rotation is better than none. Dividing existing fields will likely make them more productive. Although dividing one big field in half and rotating livestock between the sections is better than grazing it continuously, the benefits become more apparent when you have five to 10 divisions to rotate through. This allows a section to be grazed for three to seven days and rested for 25 to 42 days.

The rest period is the key that gives rotational grazing an advantage over continuous-grazed pasture. Rotational grazed pastures use the rest period to send their roots deeper. This makes them more productive and more drought-tolerant since they have access to more nutrients and water. Continuous-grazed pastures never get this chance because they are always using energy to regrow leaf area.

Research has shown that pasture regrowth is quicker and more vigorous in fields having more residual leaf area than those that are grazed very close. Many cool-season grasses depend on residual leaf area for regrowth. In rotations, therefore, it is important to leave grass at least 3 inches high when livestock are removed from a field.

Animal waste distribution can be another advantage of rotations. In rotations, manure and urine will be deposited somewhere in each division, whereas in continuous-grazed pastures they are often concentrated in a few areas. With the higher fertilizer costs, the nutrient cycling that comes with good waste distribution has economic impact.

Now is the time to think about how to improve pastures this year. Fences and water are the two main obstacles to pasture rotation. But do not let these stop you from creating pasture divisions. Interior division fences can be simple – a great deal can be done with temporary and permanent electric fencing. And, there are many ways to get water to different pasture divisions.

Pasture improvements do require investments – of time, effort, money, and most important . . . thought. Instead of saying it can’t be done, figure out how to do it. Try pasture rotations. They work every time.

By Bruce Loyd, Lewis County Extension Agent, WVU Extension Service
February is a good month to begin a heart-healthy lifestyle. You can join the thousands of others who are making changes in behavior this month. February has been declared American Heart Month by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Heart Association. Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 cause of death in the United States. In fact, 6.4 percent of Americans have heart disease. In West Virginia, 10.4 percent of residents have heart disease—the highest rate in the nation. More than one of every four deaths in West Virginia are caused by heart disease. In the United States, one person dies every minute from a coronary event.

The recent Wear Red Day helped bring attention to the fact that heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women. It’s the third leading cause of death in women between the ages of 25 and 44. West Virginia women often do not perceive that they are at risk for heart disease.

Make changes for yourself and your family that will improve these frightening statistics.

What you can do
Some of the most significant risk factors for cardiovascular disease are smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity. Other health factors—such as family history, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol levels—also play a role. To help reduce risk factors:

- Stop smoking or using tobacco products
- Become more physically active
- Improve your diet

Learn the signs of a heart attack
Both men and women tend to ignore the signs of a heart attack. Common signs are:
- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Shortness of breath. This may occur with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs. Nausea, breaking out in a cold sweat, and lightheadedness can signal a heart attack.

Share the news
Each of us can make lifestyle changes and help others too.

Learn more about heart disease and assessing risks, get free recipes, find local programs, or plan a workplace program. Share these websites:

- American Heart Association (www.heart.org)
- CDC American Heart Month (www.cdc.gov/features/heartmonth/)
- The Heart Truth (www.nhlbi.nih.gov/educational/hearttruth/materials/index.htm)

By Lauren Weatherford, Fayette County Extension Agent, WVU Extension Service
Take simple steps to make your home more energy efficient

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) offers many suggestions on its website (www.aceee.org).

- Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120°F). You'll not only save energy, but you'll also avoid scalding your hands.
- Start using energy-saving settings on refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines, and clothes dryers.
- Set your thermostat back when you can tolerate cooler conditions, especially overnight and whenever you leave your home for several hours.
- Check the age and condition of your major appliances, especially the refrigerator. Even if an appliance has a few useful years left, replacing it with a top-efficiency model is generally a good investment.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents (CFLs). These lamps can save three-quarters of the electricity used by incandescents. The best targets are the 60- to 100-watt bulbs that you use for several hours a day. New CFLs come in many sizes and styles to fit in most standard fixtures.
- If you have one of those silent energy-guzzlers – a waterbed – be sure to make your bed. The covers will insulate it, saving up to one-third of the energy it uses.

After the weather improves, you can take many actions to improve your home’s energy efficiency. Here are a few suggestions:

- Assess your heating and cooling systems. Determine if replacements are justified or whether you should retrofit them to make them work more efficiently to provide the same (or better) comfort for less energy.
- Insulate hot water pipes and ducts wherever they run through unheated areas.
- Insulate your house. If the walls aren’t insulated, have an insulation contractor apply blown-in insulation (cellulose or fiberglass) to them. Bring your attic insulation level up to snuff.
- Have your heating and cooling systems tuned up in the fall and spring. Duct sealing can also improve the energy efficiency and overall performance of your systems.

If you have questions about what you can do to make your home more energy efficient and comfortable, contact me at 304-293-3657 or Chris.Haddox@mail.wvu.edu.  

By Chris Haddox, Visiting Assistant Professor, Davis College
Firewood producers to receive training through Friends of Firewood project

The number of U.S. households heating with wood grew by 34 percent between 2000 and 2010; wood grew faster than any other heating fuel, according to U.S. Census Bureau 2010 statistics.

The switch to wood heat is being driven by the rising cost of propane and oil. In West Virginia, wood heat is especially important, with nearly one in every seven households using wood as a primary heat source.

West Virginia has a thriving and diverse firewood industry that creates a positive economic impact in all regions of the state. Local firewood producers are often small service providers who collect, split, dry, and deliver wood. In addition, many individual farmers, private landowners, and entrepreneurs are engaged in firewood production for personal use and small-scale sales.

There is also much negative publicity about firewood and its role in the spread of insect pests, such as the emerald ash borer, and the potential for the spread of harmful forest diseases. Buying and using locally produced firewood is one of the best ways to help prevent the spread of pests and diseases. Although many firewood producers work independently, they have many opportunities to improve the safety and economic efficiency of their operations through networking and training with other producers.

West Virginia University Extension Service is introducing a project called Friends of Firewood, which will promote local networks of firewood producers in the state. To explore the extent and diversity of the local firewood industry, the project will survey producers to find out who is involved, the size of the operations, and types of training needed.

Once these questions are answered, WVU Extension will implement educational workshops on safety, hygiene, and other topics. Collaborating partners on the Friends of Firewood project are the W.Va. Division of Forestry, U.S. Forest Service, W.Va. Forestry Association, W.Va. Department of Agriculture, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If you are or know a firewood producer, or are otherwise interested in this project, please contact Dave McGill (304-293-5930; or dmcgill@wvu.edu). Information about firewood producers can be submitted online at the project website (http://ahc.caf.wvu.edu/joomla/firewood).

By Ben Spong, Forest Operations Specialist and Dave McGill, Forest Resources Specialist, WVU Extension Service; and Ellen Voss, Forest Stewardship Program Outreach and Education Coordinator, Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Design

State's firewood industry is thriving.

Rising fuel costs spur homeowners to heat with wood.

WVU Update

The West Virginia University Extension Service and the WVU Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Design are pleased to offer this educational insert to the Farm Bureau NEWS as a service to West Virginians.

Check our Web sites for more news (www.ext.wvu.edu and www.caf.wvu.edu).

Joyce Bower, Editor
(304-293-8703)

Meg Baughman, Creative Director

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West Virginia University is governed by the West Virginia University Board of Governors and the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.
By now, you may be satisfied with your efforts of accomplishing your new year’s resolution. Perhaps you have decided that setting a few goals was a good idea, but it just isn’t going to happen in 2012. Or maybe you are like me and vow not to make resolutions - this way you are not setting yourself up for disappointment. No matter your dedication or your willpower, one resolution we all need to make a diligent effort to keep is advocating agriculture. We are pretty good at preaching to the choir, but it is time for agriculturists to take on another task - sharing our passion with those removed from agriculture. Agriculturists are fortunate to have such organizations as Farm Bureau to represent our interests, but we cannot rely solely on their efforts. We must think in terms of job security.

Every agriculturist has a unique and positive story to tell; it is just a matter of letting these voices be heard. You are unwavering in your commitment to your land, crops, livestock, and family. Agriculture not only provides you with an income, but also a way of life. You continue no matter the trial or triumph, and when the dust settles or the mud dries, you are contented in your chosen profession. You work relentlessly to contribute to a safe, abundant food supply, and advocating agriculture is just one component of an insurance policy to preserve your future.

We think about consumers as we farm, and we hope that they are just as interested in us. Consumers have genuine questions and concerns, and are eager to connect with real people to discover the facts of American agriculture. Make progress by beginning an open, respectful dialogue with consumers about where their food and fiber comes from, the importance of today’s agriculture, and our commitment to improvement. Farmers acknowledge the blessing and honor of caring for land, crops, and livestock, but also realize the responsibility that goes along with it.

There are many ways to share your story and the facts of current agriculture. Talk with people wherever you may venture - set the facts straight through media, write a politician, get brave and immerse yourself in social media and blogging, or just chat with someone at the grocery store. Farmers are innovative and resourceful, and this is an area to utilize these talents. Share your message in a clear, concise manner, remembering not everyone understands the vocabulary used by farmers. No need to “sugar coat” what it means to be involved in agriculture. It is important that consumers know how hard we labor to ensure they continue to have safe, wholesome, and pleasurable dining experiences.

West Virginia Farm Bureau members, cultivate the higher ground and help establish a positive image of agriculture. The end of 2011 saw another world population milestone - 7 billion people. It is time to get talking!
West Virginia Farm Bureau was well-represented at the 2012 AFBF Annual Meeting in Honolulu, January 8-11. Clockwise, top: Humorist Dave Barry was the featured speaker during the closing session; Shirley and Susan Wilkins enjoy the local cuisine; a display of Hawaiian agricultural products; Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsak speaks; Board members John Pitsenbarger and Mike Merinar with the West Virginia flag; WVFB representatives pose outside the convention center; and a scene from a traditional luau. Center: AFBF Women’s Leadership Committee member Ethel Nash presides over elections.
Planning Ahead

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

Generally, a person’s will does not control everything that individual owns. Many do not understand that.

Knowing what a person’s will does and does not cover is important in completing an estate plan. Other legal documents or forms control certain property and assets, which are called non-probate assets.

Life insurance, retirement account funds, annuity policies, financial accounts with “payable on death” designations, U. S. savings bonds, and other assets that have a named beneficiary are examples of non-probate assets. The beneficiary form for each of these assets determines the recipient. However, when a person’s estate is listed as the beneficiary, then their will does control in that situation.

Other non-probate assets include jointly owned property, such as real estate or stock accounts. They will be transferred to the co-owners “outside” the will. The exception is ownership by tenants in common. Each owns a proportional share of the property, and his or her will controls that person’s share. But when property is owned jointly with rights of survivorship, then the deed or account title controls, not the deceased person’s will.

Make sure to include the value of these assets in the overall determination of what you want your estate plan to accomplish.

While your estate can be the named beneficiary of life insurance, retirement accounts, etc., doing that is not always wise. When you decide upon a recipient, using the beneficiary form to name that person or non-profit organization will allow the asset to be transferred more quickly and can save estate and income taxes in certain situations.

The beneficiary for non-probate assets can be changed without altering the contents of your will. That can give you some flexibility in your overall estate plan, but it’s also important to check the terms of your will when making any major beneficiary changes.

Keeping a list of the assets that will not be controlled by your will and the beneficiaries’ names can be helpful when settling your estate. Storing the list with your will allows more efficient efforts by your executor.

That’s good planning.

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tax dollars to “green energy” companies, such as Solyndra and Beacon Power, both of which have gone bankrupt.

Agriculture and the public in general will pay a huge price for the President’s incompetence. Farmers will face higher prices for fuel, fertilizer, plastics, chemicals, feed and more as a direct result of higher oil prices. The public will face higher prices for food and nearly every other item they purchase. We deserve better leadership than we have in government today.

Hopefully, after the elections, projects like the Keystone Pipeline can be revived.
One of the best kept secrets of membership in Farm Bureau is the many discounts our members receive. One discount alone can save members many times the cost of their membership in Farm Bureau. That can certainly be said for Farm Bureau’s discount program with General Motors.

Who doesn’t need a vehicle? And when it’s time to purchase or lease that car or truck, who doesn’t like a little more shaved off the price? Well, Farm Bureau members can save $500 on the price of a new GM vehicle. Yep, it’s true - and here are the details:

Twenty-seven GM models are part of the program: Chevy Avalanche, Aveo, Camaro, Colorado, Corvette, Cruze, Equinox, Express, HHR, Impala, Malibu, Silverado, Suburban, Tahoe, and Traverse; GMC Acadia, Canyon, Savana, Sierra, Terrain, Yukon and Yukon XL; and Buick Enclave, LaCrosse, Lucerne and Regal.

To qualify for the discount, you must be a Farm Bureau member for at least 60 days prior to the date of delivery of the vehicle. You simply go to www.fbverify.com, enter your FB membership number and your zip code, and print off a certificate to take to the dealership. Note: your mailing address on your membership number must match the mailing address listed on your driver’s license. Go to a participating dealership, make your best deal, and present your certificate. And if you don’t have internet access to print your certificate, call the Farm Bureau office, and we’ll help you.

If you’re buying vehicles for your business, then you can save even more! You can qualify for yet another $500 of cash value if you lease or purchase a new GM truck or van for your business and equip it with one of five Business Choice option packages that are available from your participating GM dealer (see dealer for details).

And here’s the best news yet - members may receive the incentive for the purchase or lease of multiple vehicles, including fleet vehicles purchased through GM’s National Fleet Purchase Program. This discount is not “one and done!”

Membership in Farm Bureau is a pretty good value, don’t you think? And if you need more convincing, just stay tuned...
Because food doesn’t come from a grocery store.

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