Experience Agriculture in New Zealand

Join West Virginia farmers and Farm Bureau members for an exciting tour of farms and agribusinesses in New Zealand in 2013. New Zealand is a global leader in beef and sheep production, and New Zealand farmers practice some of the most impressive conservation methods on the planet. This tour will take participants to both New Zealand islands and showcase beef and sheep production, commercial deer farming, natural resource conservation practices, and agricultural marketing strategies used in New Zealand. It will also give participants an opportunity to tour Auckland, the capital city of New Zealand, and spend a day with a farmer selected for each participant.

Tour dates and final tour price remain subject to change until deposits have been paid, but the tentative dates for the tour are November 25 - December 6, 2013. The cost per participant is approximately $6700.00, which includes airfare, hotels, all transportation, all admission fees, and most meals during the trip. It also includes a traditional New Zealand Thanksgiving Dinner prepared especially for our group. To make reservations or to get more information about the tour, visit the WVFB homepage at www.wvfb.org and click on “New Zealand Agriculture Tour 2013” or contact Roger Hanshaw at rogerhanshaw@gmail.com or (304) 587-9947.

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.
# West Virginia Farm Bureau News

*The Voice of Agriculture in the Mountain State*

**February 2013**

**Volume 21 Number 2**

West Virginia Farm Bureau
One Red Rock Road
Buckhannon, WV 26201

**PRESIDENT**

Charles Wilfong

**VICE PRESIDENT**

John Pitsenbarger

**SECRETARY/TREASURER-ADMINISTRATOR**

Steve Butler

**EDITOR**

Joan Harman

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web site: www.wvfarm.org
email: joanh@wvfarm.org
phone: 800.398.4630

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On the cover

Glade Creek Grist Mill
istockphoto.com/dscz
Second Amendment Rights Too Precious to Lose

Charles Wilfong, President, West Virginia Farm Bureau

Our Second Amendment rights to own and use firearms are under the greatest threat in our history. The efforts to curtail our rights of gun use and ownership are being led by President Obama and his liberal supporters in the media and in Congress. We cannot take for granted that our gun rights are safe. Those who oppose our rights to keep and bear arms will say or do anything to achieve their goal of a gunless citizenry, as demonstrated repeatedly in the news.

It is frightening to know that 4 of our 9 U.S. Supreme Court justices also believe that gun rights are not an individual right, and that only people acting collectively in the service of the state have the right to bear arms. This totally perverts the intent of the Second Amendment. Just one more liberal appointment to the Supreme Court will tip the balance and our individual gun rights will most likely disappear. Ironically, the Second Amendment was intended to protect us as individuals from the type of tyranny and oppressive government which the Obama administration seems bent on imposing.

A great deal of propaganda has been put out by the left concerning crime and gun control, to garner public support. However, gun control does not reduce crime, as evidenced by law enforcement statistics. Localities that have imposed the strictest gun control measures have seen the number of murders and other crimes skyrocket. For example, Washington, D.C. passed a city ordinance in 1976 which prohibited residents from possessing a handgun. The law remained in effect until see Wilfong, page 10

Innovation is Anything but Business as Usual

Bob Stallman, President, American Farm Bureau Federation

Albert Einstein once said, “If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got.” I’ve tried to adhere to this mantra throughout my life by embracing risk and thinking outside of the box.

American agriculture, too, follows this philosophy pretty darn well. Through innovation and thinking big, U.S. farmers and ranchers have transformed agriculture from mule and plow operations into one of the most tech-savvy and society-changing industries in the modern world.

Fail Big

There’s a popular theory that goes something like this: Failure is not an option--it’s a requirement. Fear of failing dooms us to repeat what others have done, therefore never finding innovation and change. So, if we are going to think big, we will certainly at some point fail big. But it’s these failures that in the end make us better than what we were.

Without a doubt, modern agriculture has downs getting to where it is today. In other words, it’s failed big on an occasion or two. But because of that, modern agriculture is at the forefront in technology, leading to greater efficiency and safety. Recently, at AFBF’s annual meeting, former astronaut Mark Kelly talked about the various satellites NASA uses. As he spoke, I couldn’t help but think to myself that farmers also use satellites and other precision agriculture technologies in their line of work to increase yields and reduce chemical use.

American agriculture has see Stallman, page 12
West Virginia Farm Bureau News

Something to Think About

Don Michael, WVFB Director of Governmental Affairs

IT’S SHOWTIME

The Regular Session of the West Virginia Legislature convened February 13, featuring many new faces in both the House and Senate. The leadership remains consistent, with Rick Thompson (D-Wayne, District 19) continuing as Speaker of the House and Jeffrey Kessler (D-Marshall, District 2) as Senate President.

The new landscape in the House, with 54 Democrats and 46 Republicans, strengthens the hand of the non-partisan Rural Caucus, led by Bill Hartman (D – Randolph, District 43). The Caucus provides an excellent forum for public servants to put politics aside as they discuss issues and exchange ideas in promoting legislation to have a positive impact on rural West Virginia. The Rural Caucus has always been supportive of agriculture and forestry initiatives. Farm Bureau appreciates Delegate Hartman’s leadership, as well as the involvement of the 40+ House members who participate.

It is anyone’s guess what the 60-day session holds. As usual, budget will drive the process, and West Virginians can take comfort and pride in the track record established by our lawmakers. They are certainly to be commended for their fiscal responsibility. But their efforts may be challenged if the “fiscal train wreck” in Washington, D.C. isn’t resolved soon.

Lawmakers will be sifting through more than 1,000 bills during the 60-day session. We are hopeful to see closure on legislation focusing on a number of issues addressed during legislative interims – trespass responsibility to protect West Virginia’s longstanding liability rules, loose animals/livestock trespass, fencing, poultry litter and manure movement into primary poultry breeder rearing areas, etc. For updates and details regarding the status of bills on our watch list, go to www.wvfarm.org and click on Legislature – Hot Issues.

Until next time, remember – “We pull the most when we pull together.” Take care FRIENDS, God bless and KEEP SMILING.

Important dates on the Farm Bureau Legislative Calendar:

March 4 – Farm Credit & Farm Bureau Legislative Appreciation Lunch Activity, Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting, Twentieth Day/Legislative Rule-Making Review bills due.

March 5 – Farm Bureau and Forestry Day at the Legislature, Legislative Briefing (5:00 p.m.) and Taste of West Virginia Reception (6:00 p.m.) at the Charleston Ramada (formerly Charleston House Holiday Inn)

March 25 – Forty-first Day/Last day to introduce bills in the Senate and House. Does not apply to originating or supplementary appropriation bills or resolutions.

March 31 – Forty-seventh Day/Bills due out of committees in house of origin to ensure three full days for readings.

April 3 – Fiftieth Day/Last day to consider bill on third reading in house of origin. Does not include budget or supplementary appropriation bills.

April 13 – Sixtieth Day/Legislature adjourns at midnight.
Increased Risks for Homeowners During Winter Months

Simple Safety Steps Can Prevent Millions of Dollars in Frozen Pipe Damage

A much colder winter this year predicted by The Old Farmer’s Almanac threatens to cause even more frozen pipe damage to homes than last year unless homeowners fight back the cold with simple steps to protect homes.

According to claims data compiled by Nationwide and Allied Insurance, the average frozen pipe insurance claim tops more than $10,000. In just three years -- 2009-2011 -- Nationwide and Allied received more than 30,000 homeowners’ frozen pipes claims from across the country totaling more than $2.1 million. The top states for frozen pipes claims were Pennsylvania, Ohio, Connecticut, New York and Maryland.

“Ruptured pipes in winter are one of the most common claims and the onslaught of a predicted colder winter will no doubt make it a tough season for homeowners unless they take preventative action to protect their homes,” said Pete Lore, Nationwide associate vice president of claims. “We urge homeowners to take action and avoid frustration caused by frozen pipe water damage, especially those traveling away from home for significant periods of time.”

Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) research shows that frozen pipes are one of the most costly sources of damage during freezing weather. When water freezes, it can cause pipes to burst and result in significant water damage. While the average insurance claim includes several pipes, IBHS research found that just a single burst pipe can cause more than $5,000 in water damage.

Nationwide and Allied will closely monitor winter weather across the country and are urging customers to take steps now to prevent potential damage.

Helpful Tips for Winter

Freezing pipes

Frozen water can cause pressure buildup leading to pipes bursting. Pipes in attics, crawl spaces and outside walls are particularly vulnerable to freezing, where holes in the home’s outside wall for television, cable or telephone lines allow cold air to reach them. Each situation is unique, and may require a different approach, but here are a few general tips you may want to consider to try to keep water in pipes from freezing:

- Keep cabinet doors open during cold spells to allow warm air to circulate around pipes (particularly in the kitchen and bathroom).
- Keep a slow trickle of water flowing through faucets connected to pipes that run through an unheated or unprotected space. Another option is to drain the water system, especially if your house will be unattended during cold periods.
- Fit exposed pipes with insulation sleeves or wrapping to slow the heat transfer, often times the more insulation the better.
- Seal cracks and holes in outside walls and foundations near water pipes with caulking.

For more tips and demonstrations, view our winter weather infographic:

http://www.nationwide.com/frozen-pipes-prevention-tips.jsp

Contact your local Nationwide agent, call 1-877-OnYourSide, or visit nationwide.com/WVFB.
Farm and non-farm rural America got a shock last fall when U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said rural America is “…becoming less and less relevant.”

Who knows why the person charged as the number one advocate for rural America would make such an outrageous statement. Vilsack said rural Americans need to be more strategic in picking their political fights. Maybe it was politics as Mitt Romney won 61 percent of rural voters and President Obama was backed by 37 percent.

With the farm bill stuck in Congress in an election year Ag Secretary Vilsack was likely looking for a scapegoat as to why he as the leader of rural America could not get this important legislation passed.

“It isn’t just the differences policy…but that Congress doesn’t understand farm issues,” the Secretary stated. “There is a huge communication gap between farms and the food-eating public,” he said. Well whose fault is that?

The farm community should remind the Agriculture Secretary to get to Capitol Hill and fill that gap. He should educate the Members and staff about rural America. That is the way it used to work.

Only because of the scare Vilsack put out, during the fiscal cliff negotiations, about the cost of milk rising did the farm bill get extended until September.

West Virginia farmers benefit from the farm and conservation programs in the farm bill. These programs assist with their income and in helping meet various environmental regulations.

An even greater benefit to farmers throughout rural America is the creation of off-farm income – or should I say a job in town. For far too long the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through both Republican and Democrat administrations, has shown little to no interest in rural development.

It is rural development that can help small places become viable, create jobs and provide the off-farm income to help farm families. Going back to 1972 - and even before that - Congress charged the Secretary of Agriculture with the responsibility to stand up and fight for rural America – not just the farming part – the part that I call non-farm rural America.

Vilsack’s own Department has reported that about 50 percent of rural counties have lost population in the past four years and poverty rates are higher there than in metropolitan areas, despite the booming agricultural economy.

While the farm bill was under consideration in Congress, 44 organizations came together in a Campaign for a Renewed Rural Development. They offered policy changes that would have ensured federal rural

see Why?, page 8
development programs were improved. Among the group’s suggestions was to insist that USDA become more focused on funding the strategic economic and community priorities of rural stakeholders and improve program metrics to lead to better program evaluations and increased effectiveness of funding decisions.

The group of 44 called for streamlined processes for these communities, people and businesses. The staff of rural communities and organizations has to confront application processes that are so complicated and are designed for large urban cities, non-profits and corporations. The group pointed out the critical need for technical assistance to help rural organizations with their lack of capacity to apply for sophisticated projects.

What policy direction did Vilsack’s department offer?

Let me observe that too often when national policy is created it has an urban focus with little or no thought given to its implications for rural communities and their limited staffs. With federal funding in jeopardy it is time that not only the U. S. Department of Agriculture develop a rural policy but that all government agencies become more rural focused, contemporary and effective.

It is time for USDA to get serious about their responsibility to those of us living and working in rural America.

There is hope for West Virginia’s farmers, rural people and places. Our State’s new Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick knows the importance of rural development. He is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma. The experience he gained as a County Commissioner, as development director in McDowell County, and as a State Senator will give him a strong voice at USDA’s policy table for rural development.

(Phillips served in the US Department of Agriculture as Director of the Office of Rural Development Policy. Likewise, worked for Members of Congress who served on House of Representatives Agriculture Committee and the Public Works Committee that handled legislation related to economic development. He writes a political blog at PHILLPSBILLBOARD.COM.)

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**Contacts:**

West Virginia University
Dr. Darin Matlick, DVM (304) 813-2954
Darin.matlick@mail@wvu.edu

West Virginia Cattlemen’s Association
Jim Bostic (304) 472-4020
wvca@wvbeef.org

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**14 Days** from $1358*

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*Price per person, based on double occupancy. Alternate departure dates available in 2013. Seasonal rates may apply. Airfare is extra.

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**West Virginia Farm Bureau News**
April 3, 2013
WVU Reymann Memorial Farm
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Schedule of Topics

The Pulse of Global Economics
• The State of Global Economics
• The State of Domestic Economics
• Game Changers for the Ag Economy
• Supersized Supercycle

The Presenters

Back by popular demand, Dr. David Kohl will once again be conducting the Young Farmer Institute. Dr. Kohl is currently Professor Emeritus in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at Virginia Tech.

Dr. Kohl has traveled over 8 million miles throughout his professional career, conducting more than 6,000 workshops and seminars for agricultural groups. He has published four books and more than 1,200 articles on financial and business-related topics in journals and other popular publications.

Dr. Alex White has taught a wide variety of college courses at Ohio State, N.C. State and Virginia Tech for the past 25 years. In August 2012, he began working full time in the fields of financial management (focusing on retirement planning) and farm/business consulting. He will be working with individuals and small business owners throughout the mid-Atlantic region as well as teaching a few courses at Virginia Tech and the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine.

He has worked with Farm Credit in various capacities for the past 20 years. He currently speaks to Farm Credit employees as a part of the Farm Credit University training program. Further, Alex is a customer (member/owner) of Farm Credit.

There is NO cost to attend!

For more information about the Young Farmer Institute, please call 800-919-3276
2008, when it was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. From 1976 to 2008, the murder rate in D.C. rose 73%, while the murder rate in the U.S. overall dropped by 11%.

The largest discussion is about an “assault weapons” ban. The public is being deliberately misled about alleged “assault weapons.” Guns are being categorized as assault weapons simply because they can accept a detachable magazine, or if the gun holds more than 7-10 rounds of ammunition, or if the gun has even one “military characteristic” – whatever that means. Senator Diane Feinstein’s proposed assault weapons ban includes over 150 handguns, rifles and shotguns – a lot of them common guns that many of us own.

Background checks sound like a positive method of limiting access to people who have mental problems, but in reality, medical privacy laws like HIPPA would prevent proper screening. This is an area where constructive reform could be beneficial.

It is deplorable when our elected leaders use tragedies like Sandy Hook to advance their political goals to disarm the honest, law-abiding citizens of this country. If we fail to fight for our individual gun rights, we will lose them, and we will cease to be a free nation. Our elected officials must be held accountable when they threaten our basic rights. Call your representatives in Charleston and Washington, D.C. They must hear from us.

The U.S. Capitol switchboard can be reached at 1-202-224-3121. Contact information for West Virginia legislators can be found at http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Contact/capmail.cfm. Act now.
In a stunning move, the Environmental Protection Agency has withdrawn a November 2011 mandate ordering Lois and Tony Alt, poultry operators in Hardy County, to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.

The Alts, who had previously been recognized by Pilgrim’s Pride for their environmental stewardship, were surprised and puzzled at the order from EPA. Particularly disturbing was the fact that the Alts had been complemented on the condition of their farm by EPA inspectors at the conclusion of their visit.

Not one to sit idly by, Lois immediately called EPA to ask what she could do to rectify any alleged pollution. “They just told me to fill out the paperwork and get the permit, and they’d probably never visit my farm again,” said Lois. EPA would not suggest, however, any remedies to fix the purported findings. The answer didn’t sit well with the Alts, who have always had a firm belief that they should leave the land better than they found it.

Confident they had done nothing wrong, the Alts decided to push back and filed suit in June of 2012. Shortly thereafter, West Virginia Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau Federation petitioned the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of West Virginia to be granted intervenor status, since EPA’s attempt, in this case to regulate agricultural stormwater, was a clear violation of the Clean Water Act, and any decision by the court would affect farmers everywhere. The motion to intervene was granted in October 2012. A short time later, EPA withdrew their order.

“EPA says its withdrawal is based on a May 2012 re-inspection of the farm, but I can’t help but notice that EPA only withdrew the order after Farm Bureau was granted intervention in October,” said Ellen Steen, AFBF General Counsel. “It’s like upsetting the chess board when you know you are in danger of losing. All signs are that EPA does not want to defend its position in court.”

While the withdrawal represents good news for the Alts, who were threatened with fines of $37,500 a day if they failed to comply, the larger question still remains.

“EPA is clearly overstepping their authority under the Clean Water Act,” said WVFB Administrator Steve Butler. “Although they have withdrawn their order against the Alts, the larger issue has not been resolved. The fact remains that other farmers are still under threat of the same kind of treatment by EPA. The matter needs to be settled once and for all.”

Stay tuned.
Agriculture has played a vital role in the development of America’s business sector, from innovation and enterprise to the entrepreneurial spirit that has always been a major focus of America’s farms and ranches.

Not only is Farm Bureau partnering with the Smithsonian on this exciting venture, the first donation to the exhibit came from Tennessee Farm Bureau member and dairy farmer Pat Campbell. Campbell gave the museum a selection of photographs, a computer cow tag and a reader unit to show the change in dairying from a hand-labor intensive process to a modern computer-run operation. The donation will also include his personal recollections about how changing technology has altered his work life and has led to greater efficiency and safety.

The Smithsonian exhibit will showcase to the public what farmers and ranchers have known for a long time: innovation and technology makes agriculture a leading business opportunity; we are an industry where failing big isn’t bad (at least once in awhile) and our modern farming practices are changing the world in which we live. All in all, innovation on the farm is anything but business as usual.

Entrepreneurial Spirit

Recognizing U.S. agriculture’s role in the business sector, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History is partnering with farmers, ranchers and American agri-business to build a collection that reflects modern agricultural practices. The initiative, called “American Enterprise,” will be unveiled in spring 2015 and will celebrate precision farming, traceability, environmental practices, irrigation, biotechnology and hybrid seeds.

Entrepreneurial Spirit

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Create more desirable plants for your garden

If you want to grow more plants in your garden this year, you might try propagating offspring from plants having such desirable traits as high yield, quality, and flavor. Cutting, grafting, and layering are ways of propagating new plants.

**Cutting**

After cutting a part of a leaf, root, or stem, insert the cut portion with some buds into the propagation medium to develop a new plant having the same desirable traits as the original plant. Softwood cuttings are taken from new growth or actively growing plants. Hardwood cuttings are taken from dormant plants.

From a disease-free plant, take a portion of the stem having three or four nodes. A node is the area on the stem from which a leaf originates; it also contains a bud. The cut end or basal portion of the cutting can be coated with or dipped into a rooting hormone to promote formation of new roots. Insert the cutting containing one or two nodes beneath the medium for root formation. The rooting medium can be peat moss placed in a flower pot or small container.

If you make the cutting during the growing season, place it in a shaded area. Put a plastic bag or dome over the pot to increase humidity, which is important for new root formation. Make sure the rooting medium remains moist in order for the new plant to develop roots. Fruit trees, blueberries, shrubs, and most house plants are often propagated from cuttings.

**Grafting**

Grafting can be done by home gardeners but they may need some skill to obtain maximum success. Apple trees can be easily propagated by grafting. "Whip and tongue" grafting can be done with dormant apple buds in February in West Virginia. A rootstock variety must be chosen. Rootstocks can be purchased from nurseries or grown as individual stock plants in the garden. One-year-old plant tissue or stems are best for rootstocks.

Make a diagonal cut on the stem approximately 1 inch long. The scion is the plant that will be grafted onto the rootstock. Choose the scion wood from a desirable apple tree and make a matching diagonal cut. Cut partially into the stem, making a tongue section of the stem that can be placed together with the rootstock. Grafting tape or freezer tape can be used to bind the two stems together. Petroleum jelly can be used to prevent moisture loss from the cut surfaces.

Place the grafted stems in a plastic bag and store them at room temperature until the graft union heals. When the buds on the grafted plant begin to swell, the new plant can be planted in a shaded area of the garden or in a nursery pot. The following spring, transplant the plants in the garden or farm area where you want the apple trees.

**Layering**

Some plants develop roots from stems and can be propagated by layering.

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“Multiply your own garden plants through propagation.”

(www.flickr.com/photos/mmmavocado/4254544242/)

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“– continued on page iii –”
Did you know that your home-preserved foods could make you sick? Each year, 47 million cases of foodborne illness are reported in the United States. Some cases are linked to foods preserved at home. Many people use old recipes and canning guides that have not been updated with recommendations based on current research.

Improper home canning practices can cause illness

Home-canned vegetables are the most common cause of botulism outbreaks in the United States. From 1996 to 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention received reports of 116 outbreaks of foodborne botulism. Botulism is a rare, but sometimes fatal, paralytic illness. Symptoms include double vision, drooping of eyelids, loss of facial expression, swallowing problems, and difficulty talking. In severe cases, botulism leads to paralysis of the breathing muscles and causes respiratory failure. The symptoms can be mistaken for those of a stroke.

Of the 48 outbreaks caused by home-prepared foods, 18 (38%) were from home-canned vegetables. These outbreaks often occurred because home canners did not follow canning instructions, they did not realize that pressure canners MUST be used to preserve vegetables, they ignored signs of food spoilage, or they did not understand the risk of botulism from improperly preserved vegetables.

W.Va. canning practices study

West Virginia culture is steeped in the tradition of food preservation, particularly home canning. Several WVU Extension Service agents conducted a research project to establish a baseline of information about canning practices. The agents learned a great deal about how West Virginians are preserving foods. Where home canners gained their knowledge about canning practices is especially important to consider. The sources of canning knowledge were divided into two categories – informal sources (family members, friends, the Internet) and formal sources (reputable canning guides, WVU Extension Service). Informal sources are more unreliable because they have not been tested for safety and they often rely on outdated methods. Of those surveyed, 95 percent reported using informal sources, compared with only 4.3 percent who reported using formal sources.

The researchers found it interesting that the canners who reported the most use of the WVU Extension Service to get answers to their food preservation questions were those with less than one year of canning experience. On the other hand, county WVU Extension Service offices were still reported as one of the less frequently used sources of canning information by canners of all experience levels and ages.

WVU Extension agents plan to use these findings to guide them as they develop educational programs on food preservation practices.

By Ami E. Cook, Braxton/Clay County Extension Agent, and Gina M. Taylor, Jackson County Extension Agent, WVU Extension Service
Protect your calves against scours

When West Virginia cow herds enter the last trimester of pregnancy, it is time to prepare for the challenges of calving. Cows and calves are too valuable not to receive the producer’s full attention.

About scours
Scours, which causes dehydration through diarrhea in calves, indicates an underlying condition or infection in the herd. The complex disease has a variety of infectious agents and conditions. A calf scours problem is best corrected through management, rather than medication. The main pathogens that cause calf scours are *E. coli*, rotavirus, coronavirus, clostridia, *Salmonella*, and Cryptosporidium. Sometimes, the pathogen creating the problem is determined by the age of the calf when it exhibits clinical signs.

Prevention measures
Many scour vaccines should be given at least six weeks before calving. The vaccines are administered to pregnant cows in two doses three weeks apart, with the second dose given three to six weeks before calving. Some product labels state that vaccines should be administered 8 to 16 weeks before calving. Regardless of the product, calf scours vaccines must be administered in advance of calving to be effective.

The “gold standard” to prevent scours is controlling environmental contamination. If the vaccination window is missed, the next alternative is to treat calves within 12 hours of birth with commercial oral antibodies. Practice tight biosecurity because *E. coli* can travel on boots from field to field or farm to farm. A common practice that introduces scours into many herds is bringing in a calf from the sale barn, a dairy, or a neighbor’s farm. If you insist on replacing the calf of a cow or heifer that has lost a calf, at least move the pair to an isolated area.

Portable calf shelters can provide protection and reduce stress. Change bedding or move calves to fresh ground regularly. Shelters work when the weather turns cold and wet, but monitor them regularly to make sure that too many calves do not crowd under a shelter. Sometimes, calves should be shut out totally to avoid exposure to contamination.

Colostrum important
Nature offers the best treatment and prevention of scours – the colostrum of the calf’s mother. Ensure that all calves nurse and get all the colostrum the dam provides in the first 12 hours after birth. If commercial colostrum is provided, use a colostrum replacement, not a colostrum supplement. Save replacement colostrum from one of your own cows and avoid using colostrum from dairies or other outside herds.

A properly immunized cow herd ensures the quality of the colostrum and helps the newborn calf’s immune system to develop. Vaccinating before the breeding season will build a high level of whole-herd immunity.

Treatment
The universal treatment of scours is rehydrating and correcting electrolyte imbalances. Fluids can be administered either orally or intravenously, depending on the severity of the illness. Several commercial fluid and electrolyte formulas are available. A mistake producers often make is administering too little fluids or electrolytes too late.

Contact your WVU Extension Service county agent for details on providing the right amount of fluids at the right time. You may also check the WVU Extension Service website (http://bit.ly/ScourDiseaseProtection) for information.

Check with your veterinarian before treating with antibiotics. The wrong antibiotic or dose can do more harm than good.

By Phillip I. Osborne,
Animal Husbandry Specialist,
WVU Extension Service

Create more desirable plants for your garden

For example, most raspberries and blackberries can be propagated by covering a portion of the tip of a cane with soil or potting mix to create a new plantlet. When the new plant emerges, it can be severed from the parent plant and replanted in the garden.

By Lewis W. Jett,
Commercial Horticulture Specialist,
WVU Extension Service
Cultivate fish and plants with personal aquaponic system

A personal aquaponic system is a living ecosystem that combines aquaculture and hydroponics. Imagine a small garden where you can work without bending over the plants, weeding, or watering. Many products can be grown in these systems and it can be managed to complement a traditional garden. Salad greens like lettuce, chard, and kale grow well even when the water is cool. The choice of fish is related to temperature as well. Tilapia, Koi carp, catfish, and trout have been used. The system provides a good educational demonstration of a simple ecosystem for classrooms. A healthful meal of fish and produce leaves a lasting impression on curious students.

How aquaponic system works

The system efficiently uses water to grow great tasting fish and plants in a sustainable manner.

Fish release waste, bacteria convert waste into useful nutrients, and plants convert the nutrients into food for your table.

In its simplest form, there are two components – a tank for fish and a place to grow plants. A pump recirculates water from the fish tank to the plant area. The media-filled plant area collects solids, aerates, and provides a home for the nitrifying bacteria. To extend the growing season, aquaponic systems are often protected from cold weather in a high tunnel or greenhouse.

A simple aquaponic system can be as easy to operate as an aquarium. When the fish are fed, they excrete waste in the form of ammonia nitrogen. Without treatment, this waste can accumulate and become toxic for the fish. Naturally occurring nitrifying bacteria colonize the substrate in the plant bed and convert the ammonia nitrogen into a safer form. Plants then use the various forms of nitrogen as a fertilizer. The water is returned to the fish tank cleaner and oxygenated.

Getting started

Beginners should start with a medium-size hobby system. A 200-gallon system is a good starter size. The bigger the system, the more time there will be to identify and address problems.

After it’s constructed, a system should be “cycled” so the nitrifying bacteria communities have time to become established. Cycling is as easy as turning on the system, pouring in some ammonia, and waiting. Nature will take care of the rest. You do not need to buy bacteria.

Monitoring water quality with a test kit will reveal that the system has cycled after several days. When this occurs, it is finally time to add fish and plants. It is wise to do this slowly – don’t load up with too many fish. These systems are most reliable with a modest number of fish. It does not take many fish to make enough nutrients to feed the plants. If you have a nutrient deficiency at first, adding kelp extract will help. As the fish grow and eat more, they will produce more nutrients.

By Ken Semmens, Aquaculture Specialist, and Matthew Ferrell, Aquaculture Facility Coordinator at Reymann Memorial Farm, WVU Extension Service
Planning Ahead

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

Recent passage of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 has made permanent the $5 million tax-free amount that each person can give to family and friends during lifetime or through their estate without owing any gift or estate taxes. The $5 million base amount will be indexed for inflation each year. For 2013, the tax-free amount is $5,250,000.

Above the tax-free amount, gift/estate taxes of up to 40% are owed on gifts to family members (except spouses) and friends.

For a married couple, if one person’s estate cannot use the full $5.25 million (or the current amount in effect at the time), the balance is “portable” and is available to the surviving spouse to use.

This means that the great majority of Americans do not have to be concerned about those taxes and can give away more during lifetime as well. Previous laws had restricted the total of lifetime giving to family and friends.

As in the past, all assets transferred to a spouse are tax-free, but it may not make sense to “bunch up” significant assets in only one person’s estate. Instead, the use of trusts can assure tax-efficient results, especially for couples with assets in excess of $10.5 million.

Many choose to give portions of their estate to grandchildren and skip the taxation that would occur when a child inherits the funds first. The generation-skipping transfer tax which made doing that an expensive direction earlier is now also effective only after exceeding the $5.25 million level of assets.

As in the past, charitable support can be carried out through a will or revocable trust and earn a tax deduction for the estate.

For lifetime charitable giving, those who are age 70 ½ and older and have funds in IRAs can make direct transfers of up to $100,000 during 2013 to qualified nonprofit organizations. Such transfers avoid income taxes and satisfy the required minimum distribution for 2013.

While estate taxes have become less of an issue, it still makes sense to take the time to set up an estate plan to provide control of the assets in the way you feel is important. The laws that govern when a person dies without a will cannot provide the same result.

Although it can take time to establish everything needed for your estate plan, the effort can benefit you during your lifetime through getting financial and medical powers of attorney finalized for use as needed.

That’s good planning.
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The American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee saw several young farmers from West Virginia in attendance. Six of us enjoyed the beautiful Gaylord Opryland Hotel, site of this year’s Annual Meeting.

While in Nashville, the group attended sessions and workshops and networked with other young people from around the country. In addition, the YF&R Discussion Meet, Achievement Award, and Excellence in Ag Award were all played out on a national stage. While we did not have any competitors from West Virginia, we enjoyed cheering on Eva Leatherman Hurley and her husband Brandon from South Carolina in the Achievement Award category. Eva, a graduate of West Virginia University, is the daughter of George and Miriam Leatherman of Hardy County.

I always come away from these meetings feeling positive and uplifted. No matter how moved I am by a speech (and we heard some good ones!) or how much I learn in workshops, the thing I love the most is being surrounded by more than 6,000 other farmers and ranchers from around our great country. Folks may be from as far away as Hawaii, California, Maine, and Washington; but all feel the same way about agriculture as I do. It truly makes a person realize how close-knit we all are, no matter how many miles may be between us. An incredibly proud moment for me (and for those in attendance from West Virginia) was when Lois Alt and her family were recognized by President Stallman at the General Session for her recent lawsuit against the Environment Protection Agency. Lois Alt is a wonderful example of what we all need to be more like – unafraid to stand up for ourselves and fight back when our livelihoods are threatened by people or organizations that do not understand what we do.

As 2013 plays out, American agriculture may in for a struggle. The one thing we all must remember is that we are in this together. Farmers in West Virginia have the same worries, doubts and fears as farmers in Nebraska, Missouri, and California – worries over drought, estate planning, cattle prices, and environmental regulations. But because we are in this together, we have a support network that is over 6 million farm families strong who are all members of this great organization we call the Farm Bureau. I often encourage folks to get more involved by advocating for agriculture and taking action on legislative issues. But today I am encouraging you to do something different. My challenge to you is to find ways in the New Year just to be surrounded by other folks who feel strongly about the future of agriculture – purely for the joy of the fellowship. Your life will be better for it.

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20 West Virginia Farm Bureau News
Southern Bull Test & Replacement Heifer SALE

Saturday, March 30, 2013
Jack Crank Farm - Mason County

SALE TIMES:
11 AM - Heifers  1 PM - Bulls

ALL SALE BULLS WILL:
• Be in the top 2/3 of their test group
• Pass a breeding soundness exam
• Be scored for structural correctness & muscle development
• Be ultra-scanned for backfat, ribeye and pelvic

Bulls on test: 119 Angus, 3 Herefords

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• Have a minimum score of 4.5
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Jack Crank Farm located 3.5 miles south of Pt. Pleasant on old US Rt. 35 (817)
West Virginia Farm Bureau members obviously enjoyed the 2013 AFBF Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, in January.

Left page, top left: Roger and Kirsten Hanshaw enjoy the Flapjack Breakfast; Right: Clyde Bailey at the Trade Show; Center: The West Virginia delegation poses for a group photo; Bottom, left page: Astronaut Mark Kelly gives an animated speech to the General Assembly; Bottom right: AFBF President Bob Stallman addresses the crowd.

Right page, top left: Ethel Nash makes the big screen; Right: Susan Wilkins serves as a judge at the Discussion Meet; Center: WVFB Women’s Leadership Committee Chair JoEllen Blair is recognized; Bottom: Phil Davis proudly stands with the West Virginia flag.
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