New Website Explains How Farm Bill Works

The American Farm Bureau Federation has produced a new series of videos and launched a website (http://goo.gl/ujjnny) to help farmers, landowners and other stakeholders better understand the provisions of the 2014 farm bill. Featured content includes videos on key commodity program and crop insurance provisions of the farm bill.

The videos include a farm bill overview describing the basic provisions of the commodity title, including a description of the decisions related to program participation that will need to be made by farmers and landowners. Four other videos go in-depth on the Price Loss Coverage and Supplemental Coverage Option, the Agricultural Risk Coverage Program, the Stacked Income Protection Program for Cotton and the Dairy Margin Protection Program.

“We have distilled down a massive and complex piece of legislation – the 2014 farm bill – into several ‘bite-size’ pieces, with the goal of helping farmers and managers understand how it will affect their farms,” said John Anderson, deputy chief economist with AFBF.

Links to useful farm bill information from USDA, land-grant universities, and other organizations also is available on the website at http://goo.gl/ujjnny.

USDA Announces Conservation Reserve Program details

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that farmers, ranchers and landowners committed to protecting and conserving environmentally sensitive land may sign up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) beginning June 9. Retiring farmers enrolled in CRP could receive incentives to transfer a portion of their land to beginning, disadvantaged or veteran farmers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP).

“CRP is one of the largest voluntary conservation programs in the country,” said Vilsack. “This initiative helps farmers and ranchers lead the nation in preventing soil erosion, improving water quality and restoring wildlife habitat, all of which will make a difference for future generations.”

The Conservation Reserve Program provides incentives to producers who utilize conservation methods on environmentally-sensitive lands. For example, farmers are monetarily compensated for establishing long-term vegetative species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat. For more info, visit a local FSA county office or go online to http://www.fsa.usda.gov.
6  Nationwide Examines Theft-Prevention Measures

9  Economist Finds EPA Water Analysis Flawed

12  Hardman Bids Adieu to Mobile Ag Lab

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On the cover
Bunches of Chicks
istockphoto.com/andipantz
It’s Time for Some Field Work

Bob Stallman, President, American Farm Bureau Federation

Farmers have thrown open the doors of the machine shed, greased up the gears and cranked up their diesels. It’s farming season!

With Congress in session only a few days between now and August, this also is a good time to gear down and throttle up on agriculture’s policy priorities.

Refueling Immigration Reform

In February, thousands participated in the #IFarmImmigration campaign to bring attention to farmers’ and ranchers’ labor challenges. That same month, more than 600 business organizations, including Farm Bureau, signed a letter urging House leaders to move forward with immigration reform.

Since then, the engine has idled a bit, and we can’t let that happen. It’s time to tell Congress to refuel immigration reform. Without a legal, stable supply of labor, farmers will continue to face labor shortages and lost crops, and the public will face the loss of economic activity from agriculture and the risk that more of their food will come from other countries.

Clean up the Pile of Expired Tax Provisions

Some in Congress are working to renew tax policies that expired last year. Congress has allowed the work of addressing these tax provisions to pile up like a stack of off-season invoices.

One of the most important tax provisions for farmers and ranchers is enhanced small business expensing, which helps them upgrade to more efficient and environmentally friendly equipment, purchase livestock and build certain farm structures. Because farmers operate on tight margins, the ability to deduct these expenses immediately can give a farmer a way to smooth out volatile fluctuations in farm income.

Congress also needs to extend tax credits for renewable energy production, donations of conservation easements, food donations to charitable groups and other tax provisions that help farmers and ranchers be productive and profitable while helping to achieve societal goals.

Field Scout for Regulatory Threats

To keep a crop healthy, the farmer must keep an eye out for pests and anything in the field that doesn’t appear to be thriving. The EPA’s “Waters of the U.S.” rule threatens to drain the vigor from routine conservation and farming activities. Landowners would have to secure federal permits to make ordinary changes to their cropland, build fences or other structures, or apply fertilizer or pesticides even in parts of fields that are wet only during rainstorms. EPA wants to classify these areas that shed rainfall, and features such as otherwise dry ditches, as “waters of the U.S.” subject to federal regulation. Farm Bureau is asking Congress to weed out that proposal, and we commend the 231 representatives and 46 senators who have signed letters urging EPA to “Ditch the Rule.”

Congress has a lot of fallow ground left to plant. “Growing conditions” in Congress have been less than optimal. Germination might seem slow, but we must plow ahead with our legislators and get our farm work done in anticipation of the harvest season ahead.

Get involved - Get the facts!

DITCHTHERULE.ORG

#STAYOUTOFMYDITCH
#DITCHTHERULE
Something to Think About

Don Michael, WVFB Director of Governmental Affairs

Many questions continue to be raised concerning the Aboveground Storage Tank Act established by Senate Bill 373. The topic was addressed during a recent meeting of the Joint Legislative Oversight Commission on State Water Resources, held in conjunction with the May Legislative Interims in Charleston. Scott Mandirola, Director of Water and Waste Management for the WV Department of Environmental Protection, provided an update on DEP’s efforts in sharing information and securing input from stakeholders as DEP works to craft appropriate rules for implementing the regulatory program addressed in the Aboveground Storage Tank Act.

Details available on DEP’s website (www.dep.wv.gov/tanks) include the final version of SB 373; explanation of the new requirements and deadlines; frequently asked questions; stakeholder comments to assist with rule development; a “Do I need to register my AST?” survey to help tank owners determine if they actually need to register; tank registration via DEP’s Electronic Submission System; inspection and enforcement details and more. Per a May 28 DEP news release — “... In general, the law requires all aboveground storage tanks located in the state that are large enough to hold at least 1,320 gallons of fluid, are in one place for more than 60 days and are 90 percent or more above ground to be registered with the DEP by Oct. 1...Because there are likely tens of thousands of tanks that will be affected, the DEP is working to revise its Electronic Permitting/Electronic Submission System (ESS) to accept tank registrations online so that the information collected can quickly and easily be stored and accessed... Tank owners who don’t currently use the ESS system will need to sign up for a user ID in advance. In order to ensure that the Oct. 1 registration deadline can be met, tank owners are asked to request this ID as soon as possible.” Stay tuned!

On a lighter note, I recently had the privilege to join Tyrell Childers (St. Marys agriculture teacher) and Kevin Ellis (Antero Resources) in judging Ritchie County Farm Bureau’s Annual Flora Turner Memorial Youth Speech Contest. Capturing first place from a field of seven impressive speakers was Andrew Ashcraft, speaking on “The Effects of Marcellus Shale Drilling on WV Agriculture.”

Andrew received an iPad 2 donated by Antero Resources. Additional winners/prizes included: second place – Nic Tate (Kindle Fire HD7 donated by Dominion Resources); third place – Madison Johnson (iPad Mini donated by Raiguel Funeral Home); fourth place – Abby Burgess (iPod Nano donated by Warren and Lena Haught of Whittle Corporation, and Phil and Norma Davis of Davis Farms); and fifth place – Austin Weekly ($50 cash prize donated by Cook & Huffman LLC). Farm Bureau appreciates the efforts of all who make this annual showcase of future leaders a success.

One side note – Anna Cokeley, 2013 Ritchie County FB Youth Speech Winner and second place winner in Farm Bureau’s State Youth Speech Contest, was recently announced as one of five WVU Foundation Scholars for 2014. The announcement noted, “The WVU Foundation Scholarship rewards West Virginia high school students who have shown extraordinary academic ability, outstanding leadership skills, and true community involvement – they are the best and brightest of West Virginia’s future. The award covers full tuition and fees, room and board, personal expenses, and books for four years, plus a $4,500 stipend for academic enhancement. When paired with the PROMISE Scholarship, the total value is approximately $80,000.”

Until next time, KEEP SMILING FRIENDS, God bless you and your loved ones, and God bless America.
Minimize your risk and protect your personal property with these tips.

Summer should be an easy, breezy season free from troubles. Yet the rate of break-ins spikes during the warm months, according to both FBI statistics and Nationwide Claims data.

A recent Nationwide Insurance* survey reveals that nearly eight in 10 homeowners use at least one common theft-prevention measure (e.g. alarm system, deadbolt), but three in 10 do not use any, potentially putting their loved ones and belongings at unnecessary risk.

“At Nationwide, we’re committed to protecting our members and what is most important to them,” explains Pete Lore, associate vice president of property technical claims at Nationwide. “When you’re part of the Nation, peace of mind comes with every service we provide.”

Learn the facts about burglary and ways you can help you minimize your risk and protect your personal property.

FACT: According to the FBI, crime rises between 6% and 16% in June, July and August. Summer is an especially opportune time for burglars. Many homeowners take vacations, leaving their houses unoccupied and vulnerable to break-ins. And when people are at home, they often keep windows and doors open to catch a cool summer breeze, sometimes forgetting to lock up when they go out or go to sleep.

Take extra precautions during the summer. When you go on vacation, ask trusted friends or neighbors to check on your home each day and make it look like someone is home. Ask them to bring in the newspaper and move the trash cans to a different position. Thieves rely on darkness to keep them hidden from view; install motion-detecting lights to deter them. Don’t announce your vacation on social media. Keep windows and doors locked when you’re not at home.

“Preventive measures only work if you use them,” says Lore. “We want to ensure homeowners recognize the importance of taking those few extra steps to keep themselves, their families and their belongings safe.”

FACT: The National Burglar & Fire Alarm Association (NBFAA) estimates that one-third of the time, burglars enter homes through the front door.

There has been a dramatic rise in thefts over the last 40 years. Still, 39 percent of homeowners admit to leaving their doors unlocked about the same amount or more often as their parents did when they were growing up.

According to the NBFAA, almost a third of thieves don’t force their way into a home—they simply let themselves in through the front door. Yet, just 15 percent of homeowners in Nationwide’s survey correctly believe it’s the most common entry point.

Always lock your windows and doors when you leave the home—even if you’re running a quick

see Theft Prevention, page 8
Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid
Outperforms Many Expensive 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.

Dr. Cherukuri knew that untreated 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 $2,000-$6,000 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.

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.”

Adequate 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, well under $200 each when buying a pair. 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.

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“Perhaps the best quality-to-price ratio in the hearing aid industry.”
—Dr. S. Babu Board-Certified ENT Physician, National Authority on Hearing Loss

“I have a $2,000 Resound Live hearing aid in my left ear and the MDHearingAid® 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

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Theft Prevention, continued

errand or going out for a walk. Locking up is one of the simplest ways to prevent break-ins.

FACT: Homes without alarm systems are three times more likely to be burglarized, says the NBFAA.

Alarm systems can be a worthwhile investment, yet 20 percent of surveyed homeowners with an alarm system don’t activate it during the day, even though that’s when most thefts occur. It’s critical to activate the alarm system every time you leave home.

Nationwide is so invested in our members’ safety that we offer a discount on homeowners insurance in some states if your home has a protective device.

FACT: There is a burglary every 14.6 seconds, according to the FBI.

Break-ins and burglaries are common, but Nationwide is there to help protect your home. “The items in a home are what make it a home,” explains Lore. “That’s why we offer our members Brand New Belongings® coverage. If you have this coverage and a theft occurs, we’ll reimburse the member the full cost to repair or replace the covered personal property with new or articles similar to those stolen or destroyed. That’s the benefit to being part of the Nation.”

Sources: Nationwide Insurance Survey conducted by Harris Interactive; Time Magazine; Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); National Burglar & Fire Alarm Association; Washington Post

*Methodology

The survey was conducted online by Harris Interactive on behalf of Nationwide Insurance from May 21 to May 29, 2013. Respondents were comprised of 1,005 U.S. adults aged 18+ who have a homeowners insurance policy or a condo insurance policy with any insurance company. Results are weighted to the U.S. General Population adults ages 18+ in terms of age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for consumers’ propensity to be online. Research participants were drawn from the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) research panel. Because the sample is based on those who were invited to participate in the HPOL panel, we cannot calculate estimates of theoretical sampling error.
The Environmental Protection Agency’s proposed Clean Water Act rule is rife with errors, lacks transparency and would greatly expand strict federal control over land that was previously not regulated by the federal government, according to a report by economist and University of California-Berkley faculty member Dr. David Sunding.

Sunding’s report, Review of 2014 EPA Economic Analysis of Proposed Revised Definition of Waters of the United States, raises the blinds on the controversial proposal by detailing how EPA failed to provide a realistic explanation of the scope, costs and benefits of the rule.

The proposed EPA rule represents an expansion of the “Waters of the United States” to include waters such as small, isolated wetlands, ephemeral drains and many ditches. In the proposed rule’s economic analysis, the EPA systematically underestimated the impact on affected communities and businesses, according to the report.

Sunding documents how EPA excluded costs, under-represented jurisdictional areas and used flawed methods to arrive at much lower economic costs of the proposed rule. Sunding’s report also notes that the lack of transparency in the report makes it difficult to understand or replicate EPA’s calculations, examine the agency’s assumptions or understand discrepancies in its results.

Sunding has concluded that the errors in the EPA’s analysis are so extensive as to render it useless for determining the true costs of this proposed rule. His report underscores the need for EPA to withdraw the rule and complete a comprehensive and transparent economic review.

“The EPA’s proposed waters of the U.S. rule is irreparably flawed from an economic standpoint,” said American Farm Bureau Federation President Bob Stallman. “The rule is also an end run around Congress and two Supreme Court rulings, and in their official comments, farmers and ranchers across the national are calling on EPA to ditch the rule.”

This rule will also have a huge impact on communities and businesses across the country, according to Stallman. He said it is not just businesses trying to expand that will suffer. This proposed rule would impact everything from local governments trying to start or expand infrastructure projects to community gardens.

“The rule will dictate land use across the United States,” Stallman said. “And EPA has not been forthright about the costs to our communities and businesses, including countless small businesses.”

Dr. Sunding prepared this report with support from the Waters Advocacy Coalition, which represents Americans involved in construction, real estate, mining, agriculture, wildlife conservation, forestry, manufacturing and energy. As a member of the coalition, AFBF will continue to push for a better rule that balances the needs of affected communities with protections for our nation’s waters.

To learn more, you may visit Farm Bureau’s “Ditch the Rule” website at ditchtherule.fb.org.
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Helen Hardman retired from West Virginia Farm Bureau as the Coordinator of the Mobile Agriculture Education Science Lab on May 31. WVFB staff held a luncheon in her honor and presented her with a beautiful handmade mantel clock to commemorate her time with Farm Bureau.

As her final farewell, Helen writes:

“What a great educational program,” is one consistent comment I heard upon leaving schools which had completed a week with the West Virginia Farm Bureau Mobile Ag Ed Science Lab. And a second question I always heard as we prepared to leave was, “Will you please put us back on the rotation schedule so that we can have you back?”

The Mobile Agriculture Education Science Lab has visited all but seven counties throughout the state of West Virginia. This program would not have been possible without cooperation from the West Virginia Farm Bureau president, board of directors and administration. Thank you for your encouragement and support in building the Lab.

Many county Farm Bureau directors and members visited the Lab and worked to secure funding for schools, along with conservation districts, local businesses and others. Thank you all so much! The initial contributors to the Mobile Ag Lab had only a vision and a handshake when they each donated $5,000 toward the purchase of the unit. Their names were displayed on the outside of the Lab as a thank-you for their support of agriculture education.
Others who donated $1000.00 a year (many donors contributed multiple times) had their names shown inside. A giving tree displayed on the closet door inside the Lab denotes the names of still more folks who donated varying amounts to the Lab, as well as the county Farm Bureaus and businesses who donated directly to schools.

The Mobile Ag Lab could not have come to fruition had it not been for the privilege to network with Jeanne Mueller, Director of Elementary Education with Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation. She was a great inspiration to me and helped to get the Mobile Lab up and running with her expertise in curriculum choices, and experience with the “do’s and don’ts” of moving the Lab. I also appreciated working with Tanya Wible from the Pennsylvania Friends of Ag Foundation; she was a wealth of information and help to me as well.

Without our dedicated hauler, Steve Putnam and his wife, Beverley, the Mobile Lab would not have moved across the state. The route was oft times bumpy to say the least, and like threading a camel through a needle’s eye, but Steve succeeded in getting the Lab into every requested location.

I must thank our wonderful teachers, both past and present: Roianne Hackett, Anna Border Shepherd, Jane Morgan, Doris Ann Taylor, Nancy McCord, Jill Parker, Marilyn Tompa (and her volunteer sister, Patsy), Donetta Sisler, Dawn Robinson, and Janet McIntyre. Without them, the mission could not have been fulfilled. I don’t have enough words to express my thanks to them.

Thanks also to Eric Thomason and Betty Irvin Payne who worked with the program, and to my Assistant Coordinator, Mark Riggleman, who has worked with me for the last two years. I appreciate the role that each of these staff members played. Thanks to Patty Sayre for keeping up with our schedule; Brenda Snyder for making sure that the invoices, hauler and teachers were paid expeditiously; Joan Harman for providing a venue for publicity; Vera Gillum for encouraging words and Crystal Squires for helping to make supplies at the onset of the program. Thanks, too, to Bill Aiken for promoting the Lab in the counties.

It has been a pleasure to develop and work with the program throughout the state and I have been privileged to interact with many wonderful educators, school personnel and students. Many thanks go to the volunteers (parents, grandparents, neighbors, Farm Bureau members, businesses) who gave their time to work in the Lab.

Thanks to my husband, Terry for supporting, encouraging and for sharing me for six years as I traveled with the Lab. He was always there for me and would come to my aid if an emergency developed with the Lab.

The greatest benefit of the Lab for the schools has been to meet state education standards and objectives while providing a fun and exciting hands-on learning experience. As many as 35,000 students have been exposed to agricultural education, as well as the many educators, volunteers, helpers and visitors.

The biggest benefit for me, as I retire from the Coordinator position effective May 31, is to know that the Lab will continue to be successful in carrying out the mission that it was designed and created for. I thank you all for being an intricate part of this tremendous undertaking and allowing me the honor and privilege to participate in the journey. It is my prayer that the program will continue to prosper and keep “Ag on the Move” for many years to come. God bless!
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Herbal Formula Eases Farmer’s Aches & Pains

“I keep a jar of Steuart’s Pain Formula by my bed and reach for it at night when my knee pain flares up. It knocks the pain right out,” says Mike Marsden of Mabel, Minn. Marsden’s been using Steuart’s Pain Formula for about 4 years and says he’s constantly recommending it to other people.

Steuart Laboratories originally developed Steuart’s Pain Formula for race horses. Over the years, it has gained a following for treating other animals and humans. Rickey D Snow of Hood, Calif., says, “I hurt my shoulder January 18, 2013, and had constant pain through the middle of March-doctors could do nothing. Within 10 minutes of applying Pain Formula, the pain was completely gone.” The cream contains extract of the herbs comfrey and arnica in a liposome base that penetrates the skin rapidly, says Gary Steuart, who founded the company in 1982. “People now use the product to relieve joint and muscle pain associated with arthritis and injuries,” Steuart says.

Rose Johnson of Hazleton, Iowa, uses Steuart’s Pain Formula to relieve the tissue pain caused by fibromyalgia, a disorder characterized by widespread pain and tenderness in joints, muscles, tendons, and other soft tissues. In addition to pain relief from Steuart’s Pain Formula, she appreciates that the product causes no side effects.

Betty Brooks, Buhl, Idaho, read about Steuart’s in a farm magazine reported. “I put the Pain Formula on my knees about 10 AM this morning, and it’s now 9 PM and I’m still pain free. I’ve had knee surgery-and tried just about every product on the market-this works—I’ve had a very good day! I could feel it working as soon as I put it on.”

Warren Ward of Pemberton, Minn., says his knees ached so terrible at night that he couldn’t get to sleep without taking painkillers. “An orthopedic surgeon told me both my knees were shot, I had bone rubbing on bone, and I needed knee-replacement surgery. Then someone told me about Steuart’s Pain Formula. I started using it and in three days I had no pain in my knees, I went right to sleep at night, and I haven’t taken a pain killer since.

“I like Steuart’s product because there’s no odor, it doesn’t stain your clothes, and you don’t feel a thing when you apply it. It’s an excellent product and I know it works,” Ward says.

Steuart Laboratories, P.O. Box 306, 203 N. Main St. Mabel, Minn. 55954 (ph 507 493-5585; 877-210-9664; www.steuartlaboratories.com).
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West Virginia Farm Bureau News 15
I grew up on a small farm in Upshur County near Buckhannon, West Virginia. Following the passing of my mother to cancer in 1980 when I was just nine years old, my grandparents – Max and Avis Reed – stepped in to help my father Terry raise my younger brother Mark and me. Although this was a time of big change, it also introduced some important things into my life, especially the love of farming and agriculture.

My grandparents, known as Mommers and Poppers, who were long-time members of the WV Farm Bureau, brought me to live on their farm on the Tallmansville Road. Soon, I, a shy, book-focused child, was in the out-of-doors doing all things associated with a farm, from picking strawberries in our garden to helping put up the hay to fishing in the pond. I found peace in simple activities like climbing to the tops of trees, interacting with the cows, riding the tractor with Poppers, and helping Mommers clean and string beans under our grapevine. And, how I loved going to those WV Farm Bureau covered-dish dinners every year!

I now live in Washington, DC, and am Executive Director of the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation. The IFIC Foundation (www.foodinsight.org) is an educational nonprofit organization dedicated to effectively communicating science-based information about health, nutrition, and food safety for the public good. As part of our organization’s efforts, we want to build public understanding of things like the importance of modern food production and the role of food biotechnology, especially as we approach the year 2050. Between now and then, a mere 36 years away, the population of our planet will increase by 2 billion – from 7 to 9 billion people.

Along with this monumental population increase comes an important role for those involved in farming and agriculture, including those in West Virginia. It is my hope that West Virginia Farm Bureau members will join me and many others in building awareness of the important role that you play feeding our communities, state, country, and world. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, by 2050, we will need 100 percent more food and 70 percent of it must come from efficiency-enhancing technologies. Here are a few science-based communication resources that can be helpful to you in sharing this story:

Understanding Our Food Communications Tool Kit (includes Leader’s Guide and five handouts): http://www.foodinsight.org/understandingourfood.aspx


The Role of Biotechnology in Our Food Supply (PowerPoint Slides for you to download and use in your own presentations in your communities - please attribute to the IFIC Foundation): http://www.foodinsight.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1477

Alliance to Feed the Future (a 121 partner organization and growing) Lunchbox Lessons (which meet common core educational standards) for teachers, club leaders, home school parents, etc. focused on students in grades K-8: http://www.alliancetofeedthefuture.org/new/FarmtoForkResources/ForEducators.aspx

I also want to recommend a fantastic new movie – Farmland – that I recently had the privilege of seeing at its press debut at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. American Farm Bureau Federation President Bob Stallman, a wonderful advocate for Farm Bureau members across the nation, provided the introduction and also took questions from the journalists in the audience. If you want more information on where to see the film or to watch the trailer, go to: http://www.farmlandfilm.com/.
Farmland Director James Moll stated that he “hope[s] that watching this film will not only give viewers a connection to the people who grow our food, but that it will also prompt conversation about some about some of the thoughts, questions and concerns we all have about farming today.” Even though I grew up on a farm in West Virginia, this movie challenged me to think about some broader issues and what its like to farm in other parts of our nation. I loved its many stories and hope you do, too.

To take on Director Moll’s challenge of prompting conversations on issues, my colleagues at the IFIC Foundation hope to be able to share some additional helpful science-based information and stories with you in the months to come, as such knowledge building can help us all to become better food advocates.

And, I’m so pleased that many West Virginia Farm Bureau county leaders, like Phillip and Janet Gregg of Preston County, whom I had the pleasure of meeting earlier this year at the American Farm Bureau Federation’s Annual Convention in San Antonio, already are great advocates. In our discussion, Phillip stressed that “we have to speak more about . . . the safe food we produce for everybody.” Janet observed that “women are getting more involved” and sees how “important it is [to have] communication with all of the states for building understanding.”

In closing, I want to share a picture of my favorite farmer, Max Reed, who also is a West Virginia Farm Bureau member, and thank him. Poppers, who turns 97 on July 26, continues to enjoy his farm, and – because of his blessed influence in his granddaughter’s life – I do, too! It is also no coincidence that Poppers’ favorite song is “In the Garden”, which was written by C. Austin Miles in 1912: “And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other, has ever, known!” I love you, Poppers!

Here’s to all the farmers . . . and those to come: Thank You for Feeding Our World!

Author Kimberly Reed with AFBF President Bob Stallman

Max Reed - better known as “Poppers”
I have said many times that young farmers need to do more to make our voices heard. Right now, farmers of ALL ages need to make their voices heard and tell the Environmental Protection Agency to #DitchTheRule. Hopefully you read the special edition to last month’s magazine and already know about the EPA’s proposed new ruling on expanding the Clean Water Act. Maybe you even submitted some comments on the ruling. But if you did not submit comments, you need to NOW and I am going to tell you why you need to do this and how.

The new ruling is meant to clarify what is defined as “waters of the US” under the Clean Water Act. But what the ruling actually does is give the EPA the authority to regulate any land where water might run across or collect – even if it is only for a few hours out of an entire year. For example, that low spot in your corn field; your backyard garden; the ditch beside your driveway; maybe even the potholes in your farm road. Virtually any spot where water flows or collects would be under the EPA’s authority and considered navigable water.

“So what?” you might say, “Who cares if it is navigable in their definition?” Well, because of that low spot in your corn field where water collects, you will be required to obtain a permit to do the most basic things in that field – such as plowing, applying fertilizer, spraying weeds, even building fences. Applying for a permit means paperwork, fees, and farming time lost due to waiting for approval.

The EPA has no right to make its own laws – the Congress of the United States writes our laws. When the Clean Water Act was created, it limited federal regulatory power to “navigable waters.” Congress did not give the EPA permission to regulate land just because rain water might occasionally run across it. But the EPA has decided they want more and so with this new rule they are proposing the most far reaching regulations ever seen from the agency.

Here is what you need to do – you need to stand up and tell the EPA that this is a bad idea. The proposed changes are open to public comment until July 21st. An incredibly fast and easy way to make comments is to visit the website: http://www.regulations.gov/#!submitComment;D=EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0880-0001 or the FBAct Insider page at: http://capwiz.com/afb/issues/alert/?alertid=63192396.

If you prefer to mail a paper letter, you should send the original and three copies to: Water Docket, Environmental Protection Agency, Mail Code 2822T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20460, Attention: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0880.

Tell the EPA to #DitchTheRule and tell them why. Tell them that the water running across your cornfield after a spring rain cannot hold a boat and is not navigable. Tell them that they are overreaching on the rights of Americans. Tell them that this new rule will hurt our local economies and cripple the agriculture industry.

Please make your voice heard and encourage your family, friends, and neighbors to do the same.

**REMININDER:**

FARM USE EVALUATIONS DUE SEPTEMBER 1
When it is time to begin one’s estate planning, working with capable advisers becomes very important. Often, because this is an expertise that a person does not need very often, it is difficult to find the “right” estate planning adviser.

While many lawyers can prepare simple wills, estate planning can be complex, making a simple will inappropriate in certain situations. If you do not know any estate planners personally or do not have a good recommendation from someone, one option is to work with an adviser who attends continuing education seminars on estate planning or is a member of an estate planning council (or both). Most financial advisers must meet requirements for continuing education, and those in the estate planning field will choose seminars that can provide current in-depth information to them to benefit you. Staying abreast of tax and related planning topics is crucial in this field.

Estate planning councils are organizations which include lawyers, accountants, trust officers, insurance professionals, stockbrokers and others for whom estate planning is a significant part of their work.

Remember to ask any adviser you have not worked with before about attendance at appropriate seminars or membership in an estate planning council as a way to evaluate his or her expertise. Having experienced advisers who know the best way to protect your hard-earned property and find the most appropriate ways to lower the taxes owed can make all the difference.

That’s good planning.
Have you ever dreamt of standing on a podium to receive a Gold Medal in the Olympics? Well, at the Morgan County Fair your dream can become a reality. For the past twelve years since the Morgan County Fair was resurrected following a 40-year hiatus, the Morgan County Farm Bureau Board and Women’s Committee has sponsored and coordinated this fun-filled event for the entire family. The Olympics has two divisions: a junior division (ages 11-18) and senior division (ages 19 and up). Teams may consist of family members, friends, churches, organizations, and businesses. The event is absolutely free and
the top three winning teams in each division receive medals and cash prizes (first place - $100; second place - $50 and third place - $25). Teams consist of at least two people, but no more than four of any gender. Most events require 1-2 team members each.

So, what are these Olympic events? The first is “Stack’n Hay,” where a team of two is given one minute to throw bales of hay/straw off a pickup truck and stack them on a pallet as high as they can before time is called. If any of the bales fall when time is called, the judges count how many are left standing. Another event, “Toss’n Grain” consists of a team of two who toss a bag of grain. The team who tosses it the farthest wins the event.

Now the Olympics move into the running events: “Go’n to Town” has two teammates racing to town (actually up and around a cone and back to the starting line). This game always has the audience in stitches as one team member pushes the other team member (who must be in a dress) in a wheelbarrow up to the cone, where they switch places. The crowd cheers while the teammate in a dress tries to remove it and the other tries to put it on, all while attempting to beat the clock. They cannot head for home until the other teammate has the dress on with both arms in the sleeves of the dress. “Come on Back” uses the wheelbarrow again with two teammates. This time the wheelbarrow driver is blindfolded and the teammate in the wheelbarrow must give directions to the driver all while going in and out of cones, and then racing back to the starting line. This event is also timed and teams are penalized if they miss or tip over a cone.

For “Herd’n Livestock”, one team member uses a yardstick and tries to move their potato “cow” through an obstacle course which mimics moving cattle from one field to another. What makes this event more difficult is the use of an odd-shaped potato - the more odd, the better. The team with the fastest time minus any penalties wins. The event always left for the end is “Fetch’n Eggs”. One team member runs to their hen’s nest and gathers eggs, one at a time, trying to find the lone hard-boiled egg in the nest. To find that egg they must run back with one egg at a time and crack it over their teammate’s head. The team that finds the hard-boiled egg first wins.

Each year, more and more teams enter as the audience has grown in numbers. Teams get quite creative with their team names as well, adding to the fun. Morgan County Farm Bureau directors serve as judges, timers and announcers, and set up the various events. While events are being set up, the Morgan County 4-H Program Director, Cindy Smalley, holds other games for those kids under age 11, so there is always something going on for the crowd to watch. There are sack and three-legged races and even an egg toss.

So if you don’t have anything on your schedule and want to compete or just watch and laugh your head off, visit Berkeley Springs the last Saturday evening in July and then stay for the fireworks that close the day’s events. It’s a perfect way to end a summer evening.
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Representative David McKinley, of West Virginia’s first Congressional district, paid a visit to three Eastern Panhandle farms on Tuesday, May 13. Accompanied by staff and board members of West Virginia Farm Bureau and Farm Credit, McKinley and his staffers got an up-close and personal view of some of West Virginia’s finest operations.

One recurring theme discussed at every stop was crushing regulations that do nothing to protect farmers or consumers but only make it more difficult to remain profitable. McKinley listened patiently, often asking, “what message can I take back to Washington for you?”

Above, Sonny Taylor of Cottage Hill Farm in Grant County outlines his specific objections with federal regulations and how he, his family and his business have been affected.
McKinley greets Tony and Lois Alt at their Eight is Enough Farm in Hardy County.

The Alts discussed their current lawsuit against the EPA, which claimed they were polluting and ordered them to obtain an NPDES permit. Rather than get the permit, Lois asked the EPA to show her what they were doing wrong and how to fix it. The EPA refused.

The Alts have received awards recognizing them for their environmental stewardship.

Rick Woodworth, owner of Flying W Farms in Burlington, WV., takes Congressman McKinley on a behind-the-scenes tour of his meat processing facility.

Flying W operates a restaurant and store featuring meats processed on-site. They also have a farm market offering fresh produce and colorful annuals.

Woodworth explained to the congressman the tremendous expenses incurred in setting up his processing facility, because of federal regulations. Many of these requirements do nothing to improve food quality or safety, but federal regulators turn a deaf ear to suggestions or protests from agriculture producers. “Washington should not be burdening farmers with excessive regulations,” McKinley said.

The group enjoyed a delicious lunch at Woodworth’s restaurant before continuing on to visit the Alt farm.
It’s easy to throw a 4th of July party that looks like you worked on it for weeks, even if you just started the planning process. Celebrate the holiday in style by serving classic entrees everyone loves and focusing your attention on delicious, easy-to-make desserts. With the right recipes, your sweets will be as captivating as the colorful spectacle of fireworks above.

Your party planning confidence will skyrocket with these delicious dessert ideas from the Wilton test kitchen. For more fun and festive party ideas, visit wilton.com.

**Hot Cinnamon Fireworks Cake**

Yield: 12 servings

- 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups (4 sticks) butter, softened
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 6 eggs
- 1 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 bottle (6 ounces) Cinnamon Drops, crushed
- 1 box (1.5 ounces) Blue Colorburst Batter Bits
- 1 cup sifted confectioners’ sugar
- 3 to 4 tablespoons milk
- Red, white & Royal Blue Candy Melts candy, melted
- Red, white and blue colored sugars

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray Dimensions Cascade Pan with vegetable pan spray.

In large bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt. In second large bowl, beat butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, scraping bottom and sides of bowl often. Add vanilla; beat until well combined. Add flour mixture and beat at low speed until just combined. Fold in Cinnamon Drops and blue Batter Bits. Pour into prepared pan; smooth out top. Bake 60 to 65 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes on cooling grid. Remove from pan and cool completely. In large bowl, whisk together confectioners’ sugar and milk. Drizzle melted candy onto cake to look like fireworks. Sprinkle sugars onto melted candy.
**No-Bake Cheesecake Star Pops**
Yield: 6 servings
1 envelope (2 1/4 teaspoons) unflavored gelatin
1/4 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup boiling water
1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 bag (12 ounces) royal blue Candy Melts candy
Lollipop Sticks

Prepare 6-cavity Mini Star Silicone Mold with vegetable pan spray.
In small bowl, combine gelatin, sugar and water; whisk until completely dissolved. In large bowl, beat cream cheese, vanilla and salt with electric mixer until smooth. Gradually add gelatin mixture, beating well. Scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Continue beating until fully combined. Pour into prepared pan. Refrigerate 2 hours or until completely set. Carefully unmold cheesecakes onto cookie pan. Melt small amount of Candy Melts candy. Dip lollipop stick in melted candy and insert 3/4 way into cheesecake stars. Freeze 30 minutes or until firm. In large bowl, melt remaining Candy Melts according to package directions. Drizzle or pipe candy over cheesecake stars as desired. Refrigerate 10 minutes or until set. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

**Note:** Some cream cheeses are firmer than others. Firm is best for this recipe. Choose a brand name, full fat cream cheese for best results.

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**Mixed Berry and Lemon Mini Icebox Cakes**
Yield: 12 mini cakes
2 cups fresh or frozen mixed berries
2/3 cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 cups heavy whipping cream
1 tablespoon lemon zest (about 1 lemon)
1 package (4.9 ounces) vanilla wafer cookies
Blueberries, raspberries or blackberries, for garnish

Line muffin pan with plastic wrap, pressing plastic into each cavity and letting plastic hang over edge of pan. In large skillet, combine mixed berries, sugar and lemon juice. Bring to a gentle boil over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue simmering until berries soften and liquid reduces to 1 cup, about 20 to 25 minutes. Gently mash berries with wooden spoon. Transfer to medium bowl and cool completely. In large bowl, whip cream on medium-high speed until cream holds stiff peaks, about 4 to 5 minutes. Gently fold in berry mixture and zest until completely combined. Place whipped cream in decorating bag and cut off pointed end. To assemble, pipe small amount of whipped cream mixture into each muffin cavity. Lightly press a cookie into whipped cream. Continue layering whipped cream and cookies until cavities are full, finishing with whipped cream layer. You should have 3 layers of cookies. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Remove pan from refrigerator. Remove plastic wrap from top and carefully flip out onto serving platter. Remove wrap from mini cakes. Garnish with additional berries, if desired. Serve immediately.
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