Harrison County Farm Bureau Scholarship Available

The Harrison County Farm Bureau is offering a $1000 scholarship to children or grandchildren of active members in good standing of the Harrison County Farm Bureau.

The scholarship will be awarded for the use of accredited college or technical schools tuition costs, books and other fees. Applicants must be enrolled or accepted to a post-secondary school in an agricultural field of study including but not limited to animal and veterinary science, agricultural sciences, agricultural economics, agricultural education, wildlife and fisheries management, plant or soil sciences, forestry, wood industries or related fields. Other conditions may also apply.

The application submission deadline is May 1, 2016. To obtain an application or get more information about this scholarship, contact David Hill, Scholarship Committee Chairman at 304-782-1977 or email wvhills@dwhrf.com

WV Farm PAC Endorses Beth Walker for WV Supreme Court

Following a special meeting, West Virginia Farm Bureau PAC has endorsed Beth Walker as a candidate for the Supreme Court of West Virginia.

“This is an extremely important race for West Virginia,” said WVFB President Charles Wilfong. “We felt we needed to get this endorsement out now. Beth Walker is strong on business and her views parallel the values of Farm Bureau. She’s been endorsed by the WV Business and Industry Council, the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce, and many other like-minded groups. We need someone with her wisdom and sense of fairness on our Supreme Court.”

Walker, from Morgantown, is Associate General Counsel for the West Virginia University Health System, which is the state’s largest healthcare system and second largest private employer. Prior to that, she was a partner in the law firm of Bowles Rice, where she concentrated her statewide practice on labor and employment law for more than 20 years.

A 1987 summa cum laude graduate of Hillsdale College, Beth earned her law degree in 1990 from The Ohio State University. She is admitted to practice in the U. S. Supreme Court, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth and Sixth Circuits, District Courts in West Virginia and Ohio and the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia.
### Presidential Paradigms

9  Supreme Court Refuses to Hear Chesapeake Bay Case

12  Farm Bureau Visits Capitol Hill

13  Vying for Votes in Rural America

14  Getting the Message Across: The Need for Technology in Agriculture

16  Making the Most of It

26  Elevate Your Easter Brunch

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**On the cover**

Kwasniewski farm view

Joan Harman
Legislative Session Keeps Farm Bureau Busy

Charles Wilfong, President, West Virginia Farm Bureau

The past month has been a busy time for Farm Bureau, maintaining our presence in Charleston during the legislative session representing the interests of our members. In addition to our daily involvement with the West Virginia Legislature, we have had several other activities as well.

On February 8, WVFB and representatives from Farm Credit delivered box lunches for all members of the legislature as part of our “Welcome Back Luncheon.” Farm Bureau and Farm Credit literature was distributed with the lunches, to help legislators understand issues important to agriculture and rural life. We have been involved with this activity for several years now. It is always a pleasure to partner with Farm Credit in this and other activities. Farm Credit provides exceptional financial services for our farmers and others. So if you have lending or crop insurance needs I would strongly encourage you to consider Farm Credit and take advantage of their knowledge and commitment to agriculture.

The following day, we held our annual Agriculture and Forestry Day at the Capitol and our “Taste of West Virginia” legislative reception at the Charleston Marriott that evening. Many legislators tell us our reception is their favorite event. Even with bad weather conditions we had a full house. With most of our legislatures and statewide office holders in attendance it was an exceptional opportunity to share our views on many of the current issues.

The legislature has done many good things this session that WVFB has supported for years. I applaud them for their courage in many areas.

see Wilfong, page 21

Taking Ag’s Message Beyond the Fencerows

Zippy Duvall, President, American Farm Bureau Federation

Welcome to “Beyond the Fencerows,” the new monthly column by AFBF President Zippy Duvall. This column is just a snapshot of the ongoing conversation President Duvall is eager to have with Farm Bureau members from across the country on the pressing issues facing agriculture. Just as President Duvall’s father encouraged him years ago to step outside his fencerows to make a difference in the policies affecting his farm, President Duvall invites you to make your voices heard to protect the business of farming for generations to come.

When I attended my first county Farm Bureau meeting back in 1977, I never imagined that I’d have the privilege to serve as your president one day. My Farm Bureau journey is truly a testament to how this organization invests in young people and gives farmers and ranchers the tools we need to protect our livelihood. One of the greatest joys of Farm Bureau leadership for me has been getting the chance to give back and pass on what I have learned to the next generation.

It has certainly been a whirlwind since we all met in Orlando, but there’s no time to waste in keeping up the important work of our great organization. I’ve enjoyed meeting with many of you over the last few months, and look forward to getting out to visit more of our members across the country to hear directly from you about the issues you are facing on your farms and ranches.

see Duvall, page 23
Many thanks to those of you who attended West Virginia Farm Bureau Ag and Forestry Day at the Capitol and the Taste of West Virginia reception. Many legislators have commented positively about the reception held that evening at the Marriott. Thanks to Senator Ron Miller, Senator Bob Ashley, and Delegate Mark Zatezalo for participating on the legislative panel. Most of the discussions centered upon budget shortfalls, oil/gas development, and future agricultural opportunities. I appreciated being able to meet several WVFB members from around the state and look forward to meeting others in the months ahead.

This legislative session has been focused primarily on right-to-work legislation and prevailing wage issues. Both bills passed both houses; each were vetoed by the governor and overridden by both houses. These issues have been very divisive and may well play important roles in upcoming elections/races.

More than 20 bills have been introduced in both houses regarding various aspects of oil/gas drilling and development. Many of these bills lack support in caucus and committee. Other bills address the West Virginia Department of Agriculture’s promulgation of legislative rules, the development of micro-processed foods sold at farmers’ markets, and the Sunday hunting issue. We will continue to monitor these bills as they go through the committee/review process.

Important legislation has also been introduced that affects the transfer of Cedar Lakes to the Department of Agriculture, the elimination of the timber severance tax, and the creation of the Uniform Partition of Heirs Act. I will have a final report of legislative activities next month.

In national news, the unexpected death of United States Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia will affect many areas from Capitol Hill to farm country. This leaves the court evenly divided between four conservative and four liberal justices. Scalia was a strong supporter of property rights and Second Amendment rights. His replacement will be of great importance, as in the future the Supreme Court may hear cases regarding WOTUS, carbon pollution, and other important agricultural issues.

On another note, the American Farm Bureau has four major policy actions for 2016:

1. Create more positive dialogue with consumers about modern farm practices
2. Protect farmers’ ability to use biotech plant varieties
3. Oppose expansion of federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act
4. Move forward with congressional approval of the Trans-Pacific Trade Partnership Agreement

Newly-elected American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duval states that the expansion of federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act “is nothing short of a federal land grab.” This rule stands to take away local and state authority while threatening private property rights. Many believe that this act, along with the Endangered Species Act, may rewrite the proud history of American agriculture and threaten food security in many areas of the world.

It is estimated that the world population may increase from the current 7 billion to 9 billion in the very near future. Nearly one-third of the world’s population live on less than $2 a day. We in the United States often take food for granted. It is imperative that we in American agriculture be allowed to use technology responsibly while caring for soil and water resources in order to meet the coming world food challenges.

Remember that our greatest resource is not oil, gas, or timber; it is our children and family. Franklin Pierce, our 14th president, said, “I can express no better hope for my country than that the kind Providence which smiled upon our fathers may enable
Farming is a business of uncertainty, but here’s something you can count on.

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1 Offer available through 4/1/17. Available on qualified 2015 and 2016 Chevrolet vehicles. This offer is not available with some other offers. Only customers who have been active members of an eligible Farm Bureau for a minimum of 30 days will be eligible to receive a certificate. Customers can obtain certificates at www.fbverify.com/gm. Farm Bureau and the FB logo are registered service marks of the American Farm Bureau Federation and are used herein under license by General Motors. 2 Dependability based on longevity: 1987–April 2013 full-size pickup registrations.
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— Dr. May, ENT Physician

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Supreme Court Refuses to Hear Chesapeake Bay Case

On Monday, February 29, the Supreme Court of the United States declined to take up a challenge by the American Farm Bureau Federation to stop the EPA’s Chesapeake Bay plan.

American Farm Bureau argued the EPA was overstepping its authority under the Clean Water Act, and was usurping states’ rights in the process, opening the door for a massive expansion of power. Twenty-one states, 39 members of Congress and a group of counties within the Bay watershed supported AFBF’s legal challenge in the lower courts.

The decision by the Supreme Court allows an earlier decision by U.S. District Court judge Sylvia Rambo to stand.

Farm Bureau believes EPA will now follow suit in other watersheds across the nation, including the Mississippi watershed.

In a statement released by AFBF, President Zippy Duvall said: “We, of course, are disappointed by the Supreme Court’s decision not to examine the lawfulness of EPA’s Chesapeake Bay ‘blueprint.’ EPA has asserted the power to sit as a federal zoning board, dictating which land can be farmed and where homes, roads and schools can be built. We remain firm in opposing this unlawful expansion of EPA’s power. We will closely monitor the agency’s actions in connection with the Bay blueprint, as well as any efforts to impose similar mandates in other areas. This lawsuit has ended, but the larger battle over the scope of EPA’s power is not over.

“Farmers are justifiably proud of their successes in reducing agriculture’s impact on water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, and they remain committed to further improvements. We will continue to support state and local programs to improve agriculture’s environmental performance, and we will continue to oppose EPA overreach.”

Farm Bureau believes the ruling “locks in” decisions made in 2010 and deprives state and local governments of the ability to adapt their plans to take account of changes in societal needs, developing technologies, or new information, thus preventing them from exercising their own judgment about the best and most efficient ways to achieve the goals for the Bay.

Implementation of the blueprint is expected to cost roughly $28 billion to $30 billion in Maryland and Virginia alone.
Farmers and ranchers are innovative businesspeople, not afraid to take risks. Many operators are always thinking about ways to increase revenues. Sometimes that means expanding into areas that can include commercial activities, like seed conditioning, hauling other peoples’ grain, custom spraying, even agritourism or a farm stand.

Nationwide, the #1 farm insurer in the U.S., has compiled a list of the Top 10 things farm and ranch operators should consider whenever you have a discussion about expanding your business. The bottom line: It’s important to do your homework, and be sure to contact your insurance agent.

1. Check federal, state and county laws and ordinances
   Check to see what building codes, permits or licenses may be needed prior to starting any new business or adding new construction.

2. Environmental impact
   Be a good land steward and consider any impact your expansion could have on the environment. Check with your local Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Department of Transportation (DOT) and county engineers on how you can protect the environment as you grow your operation.

3. Consider your neighbors
   Will an expansion of your operation impact your neighbors in any way? If you think the answer to that question may be yes, consider informing them early of your plans.

4. Increased traffic
   Inviting the public onto your property brings with it special liability concerns. You will need to post signs to warn visitors of any potential dangers. Are your premises ADA compliant? Will you provide restroom or hand-washing facilities?

5. Product safety
   You may need to initiate proper controls and safe handling programs for any product you are processing or selling to prevent property damage or bodily injury to others.

6. More employees
   If the expanded operations will require hiring additional employees, you may need to provide training and safety materials. If the additional employees increase your operation to over 50, you will need to comply with OSHA standards. Be sure you’ve obtained adequate insurance to protect both your employees and your operation.

7. Safety and security
   Consider if you need to take additional steps to protect your property or operation from burglary, theft or other crimes.

8. Manage outside risks
   Be sure to obtain signed contracts and certificates of insurance for any expansion operations that involve other businesses.
coming onto your farm or ranch or for businesses you hire to do work for you and your operation.

9. Have a contingency plan
   If your operation suffers a set back, have a plan in place with steps to follow that allow you to continue your operations. Having a documented contingency plan can help you get your operation back up and running more quickly.

10. Review your insurance
    Depending on the type of operations you’re considering, your farm insurance policy may no longer be adequate and a General Liability policy maybe needed. Invite your insurance agent out to review your operations and talk through your expansion plans. He or she can help address any new coverage needs or gaps and will be able to guide you. This is a critical step to help ensure you’re protecting your assets as you expand your business.

Nationwide has been protecting agriculture for over 100 years, including commercial agribusinesses. For more information or to find an agent who offers Nationwide farm insurance, visit www.WS4U.com/farmers-ranchers.

Photo credit: dollarphotoclub.com/SNEHIT
West Virginia Farm Bureau board and staff members attended the AFBF Advocacy Conference February 22-25 in Washington, DC.

On Tuesday, attendees heard Chris Wallace of Fox News discuss his views on the upcoming elections. Following his presentation, a series of workshops were offered on a variety of topics important to agriculture, as well as helpful sessions on how to approach and effectively discuss topics with legislators.

On Wednesday, participants were bussed to Capitol Hill to meet with their state representatives. More than 500 Farm Bureau members fanned out across the Congressional office buildings in pouring rain to discuss concerns such as biotechnology, EPA overreach and regulatory reform, trade agreements, immigration issues and more.

Following the meetings, AFBF hosted a reception where AFBF President Zippy Duvall presented House Agriculture Chairman Mike Conaway with Farm Bureau’s Golden Plow award.

West Virginia Farm Bureau’s delegation had productive meetings with all of the state’s Congressional representatives - Senator Shelley Moore Capito; Senator Joe Manchin; Congressman Alex Mooney; Congressman Evan Jenkins and Congressman David McKinley.
As presidential candidates' screen-printed busses navigate the dusty back roads of America, rural voters now more than ever need to make sense of the political chaos that has taken over national headlines by researching candidates and their stances on all things agriculture.

"It's very important for rural voters to follow the different candidates and know as much about them as possible, even if they don't plan on voting for them," said Cody Lyon, AFBF director of advocacy and political affairs.

And with the primary season nearing, presidential candidates will be engaging in even more debates, town hall discussions, and one-on-one constituent interactions, making it the perfect time to understand their policies and visions for the future.

Farm Bureau recently launched a new election website, election16.fb.org, to highlight key issues, track candidates' positions and provide links to individual websites and biographies. The website also features regularly updated blog posts.

A main contributor to the website, Lyon said, "Not only do we highlight the candidates overall ag views, we make sure to report every time one of Farm Bureau's priority issues comes up."

Two of those priority issues were highlighted during one Republican debate, when former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush listed WOTUS as a rule he would seek to repeal and Donald Trump and Ohio Gov. John Kasich talked immigration reform.

At the two Democratic debates, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders highlighted their stances on immigration reform and climate change.

In addition to WOTUS, climate change and immigration reform, hot topics important to agriculture include the economy, biotechnology, trade and regulatory reform.

Year round, Farm Bureau focuses on advocating for agriculture though grassroots efforts. The FB Advocacy page, fbadvocacy.org, provides links to Congress and ways to become more involved during the election cycle, like volunteering for a campaign, using the hashtag #Vote4Ag on social media and most importantly, showing up on election day.

"While candidates vie for votes around the country, it's important that rural voters get involved and make sure the candidate hear their voice," said Lyon.

Through resources like FB Advocacy and the new election website, constituents can educate themselves, engage with the candidates and truly make a difference in the upcoming election.

Jessica Wharton is a communications assistant at the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Jessica Wharton

Vying for Votes in Rural America
In 1903, if you had seen an ad asking for a volunteer to test the Wright Brothers’ first airplane, would you have taken the ride? Or would you have liked to be the first person to insert a plug into an electrical outlet? Technology, though beneficial and necessary, can cause some apprehension. These concerns can lead to a lack of trust, innovation and support. Today, when the phrase “technology in agriculture” is used, it is often followed by terms such as ‘Genetically Modified Organisms,’ ‘producer data,’ ‘biotechnology’ or ‘precision agriculture.’ These phrases cause fear among the public, and sometimes apprehension within our government. As consumers, producers and Farm Bureau members, what can we do to protect our right to technology and gain support from the public and our government officials?

Education and transparency are two key components to assuring producers are able to utilize technology. Scroll through the Yahoo! homepage, and you will usually find an article regarding a new restaurant that is no longer using GMO products. This is a terrific marketing tool for these restaurants, because it takes advantage of consumers’ lack of knowledge. The average consumer does not know genetic modification occurs naturally; or that 75% of all products consumed are genetically modified; or that, thanks to advancements in technology, the average farmer now feeds over 150 people. Consumers do not realize in order to feed the 9+ billion people who will populate our planet by 2050, we must keep moving forward by adopting new technologies, so the food supply can keep up.

The public is supportive when there are medical advancements using genetic modification to fight cancer or cure diabetes because they understand the necessity of these solutions. As producers, we must make the public understand the necessity of genetic modification to sustain and grow an abundant, healthy food supply. Additionally, we must emphasize
the economic impact of removing products with GMOs from the market place. In order to keep food affordable, GMO products are necessary, because they yield higher amounts while using fewer inputs such as fertilizer and pesticides. No matter if you are a consumer or a producer, everyone can relate to saving money.

American Farm Bureau supports programs educating consumers about biotechnology and GMOs. One such program is the AFBF’s partnership with a large seed company to create and sustain “GMO Answers.” This valuable resource allows individuals to ask questions and receive answers from professionals from various industries such as plant scientists, food scientists and medical professionals. Currently, over 900 questions have been asked and answered. Monsanto has created their own program, “Talking Biotech,” with a similar mission of assuring the public is receiving accurate information from professionals. If we don’t tell our story someone else will tell it for us, and then we have no way of assuring it is correct.

West Virginia Farm Bureau has also taken a stance in assuring consumers are receiving agriculture education from credible sources through programs like the Summer Agricultural Institute. By educating teachers about various agriculture practices including biotechnology, and giving them resources to deliver the curriculum to their classrooms, WVFB is helping to assure the next generation of producers and consumers are educated about the foods they grow and eat. Additionally, individuals completing this program will be able to offer real world examples to others with questions regarding the agriculture industry, and can make educated decisions about agricultural issues. As producers, we often feel the need to defend ourselves regarding our various agricultural practices, but are we prepared to protect ourselves from our own technology when necessary?

During the 2016 AFBF Annual Convention, one of the issues addressed was data protection. Our industry has become incredibly advanced and like all businesses, agriculture producers rely on information to help them be more efficient and productive. With developments such as GPS, precision ag and drones, a tremendous amount of data is often collected during crop production. Who does this data belong to and how is it being stored? According to AFBF policy, proprietary information collected from farms should remain the property of the farmer. Although this sounds like a simple concept, many producers must send their data to consultants to have it analyzed. Producers need to educate themselves concerning their rights regarding this information and should also carefully read the agreements they sign to ensure the privacy of the material. Data is powerful, and if this power is given to the wrong individuals the information can be used against the agriculture industry.

Animal producers must equally be aware of their rights concerning the data they share. Regulatory groups such as the EPA may use production data inappropriately to regulate farmers, which could hurt productivity. AFBF could offer assistance in the issue of “Big Data” when it pertains to agricultural producers. One suggestion would be pairing with another group to collect and store information in a safe, private manner. This service would be valuable for members and would allow them to choose how their data will be used and shared.

As Farm Bureau members, we can each play a role in assuring our industry thrives utilizing the technology available. First of all, we must educate ourselves on the innovative practices available to improve our operations. Secondly, we must become more technology-transparent about our industry, sharing with consumers and our government the benefits they receive because of the use of technology in production agriculture. Additionally, we must assure elected officials making decisions on our behalf are educated about the scientific practices involved in agriculture. Lastly, we must understand the important role relationship building plays in the success of the agriculture industry. Agriculture will only be sustainable and thrive if producers are able to benefit from technological advancements. Producers, consumers and our government must collaborate, so that improved technology continues to be part of American agriculture.

As the West Virginia Farm Bureau motto says, “We pull the most when we pull together.”
Making the Most of It

What do you get when you mix a 27-year-old who loves to cook and was educated in philosophy with a love of the outdoors? You get a full-time young farmer with some big plans that, with the help of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), are coming to life.

Tabby Bennett

Mike Kwasniewski, along with his family, farms 480 acres in Randolph County, where you’ll see cattle, field crops, poultry, produce, honeybees, and a breathtaking view that is picture-book worthy.

How did a young farmer like Mike become so involved in only four complete growing seasons? Multiple conservation programs through the NRCS helped fund and design the programs on the Kwasniewski’s farm, and made Mike’s goals a quick reality.

When the Kwasniewskis bought one of their two farms, the barns on the property were in dire need of repair. The roofs were on the verge of collapse, and needed to be addressed quickly, along with other structural and aesthetic issues. “We needed to fix the barns, or we would have lost them,” said Pam Kwasniewski. By using NRCS funds to pay for conservation improvements on the farm, the family concentrated their own funds on the barn repairs.

Currently, the Kwasniewskis are involved in three types of NRCS programs: Environmental
Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA). Each of these programs offers financial and technical assistance to farmers who want to address issues dealing with water management or quality, improving or maintaining conservation activities and improving soil, water, animal, air or other natural resources on their farm.

Mike was already working to implement such practices, but NRCS helped by providing funds and expertise to assist him. He said, “Designing the farm for optimum functionality and sustainability was the goal from the onset; utilizing NRCS programs that helped me achieve this just made sense.”

At present, Mike has three high tunnels, one of which was built with the help of NRCS, utilizing the EQIP program. High tunnels extend the growing season for farmers in a structure similar to a greenhouse, which is especially important when the regular growing season does not go as planned. The 30x72 high tunnel has a staking system comprised of spools that hang from the ceiling to keep crops like cucumbers and tomatoes from growing so high that they become top heavy and fall over.

Another NRCS project the Kwasniewskis enjoy, especially in the wetter months, is a Heavy Use Area Protection road. A road was laid from the barn to the end of the property using surface treatment to provide a stable, non-eroding area for Mike and his family to drive on to feed cows, while still protecting and improving water quality. The road makes life easier for Mike as he carries out his daily duties. “They don’t want you to have to drive through two-foot mud ruts,” Mike said. “It makes it so much more pleasant to work every day.”

Mike has also incorporated a “Protected Barnyard” pad for his cattle that allows them to walk outside of their barn onto a 60x65 foot loafing pad. The pad controls manure run-off and allows the cows to go in and out of the barn as needed. Additionally, the pad lets Mike move the cows from one side of the barn to the other every two weeks, and gives the cows somewhere to go when he needs to shovel the barn.

Rotational grazing is another NRCS tool Mike uses for his cattle. Through interior lightweight
fencing, he is able to increase the cows’ forage utilization by limiting the space in which they graze. When the cows have used up the forage in one area, he moves the fencing and the cows to a new section.

Presently, Mike is working on a runoff drain that will allow the water from the barns and other structures to be collected in a storage tank that sits on a cement pad, then run under ground to assist with water management.

All of these projects have taken time and effort to develop and perfect, but according to Mike the process is well worth it in the end. “Initially it takes some time to familiarize yourself with the programs and the requirements, but once I did this, my work with NRCS was easy,” he said. “I could navigate existing contracts and research new programs with ease.” After some extensive research of the programs on his own, Mike got in contact with NRCS and began developing his Conservation Plan. Mike said, “NRCS helped design each project, which took into account local rainfall, estimated cost, intended use or stocking rate, and depending on the project, how much we would be reimbursed using a percentage of the cost of implementing the practices.”

After only five years, Mike has accomplished several goals, but has many more. He is starting a large scale on-farm compost. He also raises 70 percent of the grain he needs for poultry and hog ventures and all of the hay he needs for beef cattle. Mike explained that without the NRCS, he would not have been able to accomplish so much on his farm in such a short amount of time. “I rolled over the reimbursement from one program to begin another, and was able to accomplish in five years what likely would have taken me fifteen,” he said.

In the future Mike hopes to continue to reduce the crop inputs imported on his farm and move toward 100 percent grain fed stuffs produced on his farm. He says that his customers value his stewardship of the land, and that he is able to help his local community with all of his conservation practices.

Mike said, “NRCS is there to help the farmer help the land, which I think is worthwhile, respectable work.” He would encourage other farmers to utilize NRCS programs on their farms, with the understanding that they are committed to completing the program if they decide to sign up. “The folks in the field office are there to help and advise you,” Mike said. “They really want to see you succeed.”
The decision to use SumaGroulx on my corn and soybean crop came after several years of debating whether to use it or not. The idea of using SumaGroulx meant taking a risk and trying something different. It took many years of seeing and hearing about SumaGroulx before taking the first step of trying some myself and I was so happy to see that my yields were much better by using this product. My soybeans were an average of 7 to 17 bushel better and my corn was 8 to 15 bushel better when I used SumaGroulx in 2013. I don’t have the expense of fertilizer now and was so impressed that I became a dealer for SumaGroulx for the year 2014. I am so excited about the savings and yield increase that I want to share my knowledge and use of it with the farming world.

- Steve Koroleski • 5 - K Ag Supply • Kinde, MI

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O’Dell, continued

their children to preserve the blessings they have inherited.”

William Jennings Bryan said, “Burn your cities and you can build them back. Burn your farms and grass will grow in your cities.” I leave you with this thought: Fear is the darkroom of negativity. We can fear everything and run, or fear everything and rise. Let’s work together for a great future in West Virginia and United States agriculture.

Hope to see you soon!
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Pamela S. • Tobaccoville, NC
Wilfong, continued

With only a few days left in this session many tough decisions remain in dealing with the budget. I hope they will remain committed to downsizing government rather than raising the taxes to balance the budget. We simply have more government than the people of our state can afford. Tough times require tough decisions.

One particular disappointment has been the many attempts of a couple of our state senators to pass various oil and gas legislation that would have been devastating to the property rights of so many of our Farm Bureau members and others. Senate Majority Leader Mitch Carmichael in particular, and Senator Boso (chairman of Senate Energy committee) to a lesser extent have blindly pushed various very bad bills. Luckily we had enough friends in the legislature to stop them. It seems that especially Senator Carmichael is very beholdng to EQT and some other natural gas entities in pushing their agenda. We need to know if these actions were initiated by the individual senator or if they came from Senate President Bill Cole.

On February 23-25 several members of the WVFB Board and staff attended the American Farm Bureau Federation Advocacy Conference in Washington D.C. As part of the program we visited all of our U.S. House of Representatives and Senate members. We had the opportunity to express our views on many of the current issues before Congress today. It is very gratifying to have almost all of our folks in Congress agree with us on most of our issues. Reining in the EPA was one of our major discussions. Other topics included:

• Our opposition to Birthplace of Rivers national monument design
• Funding for predator control program
• Trans Pacific trade deal
• Judicial appointments for Supreme Court
• Regulatory reform
• Biotechnology

On March 4 & 5 we held our WVFB Campaign Seminar for political candidates. This activity is coordinated by our Director of Public Relations Joan Harman. The seminar is designed to teach candidates about all aspects of running a successful campaign, including raising funds, prioritizing issues, dealing with media, and more. It is an intense two days, but candidates find the information invaluable. Currently, at least 8 members of the West Virginia Legislature are graduates of this program.

As I said, it has been busy on the political front lately and it looks like it will remain that way for a while. Please continue to stay in touch with our elected folks here in the state and in Washington. Our individual participation is still what makes things happen. It is amazing how legislative attitudes change when they get a lot of calls or messages about an issue. It is your involvement that makes the difference.
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The fact is: Farmers and ranchers need to be the ones telling our story or someone else will. We each have been given a voice, but it’s our responsibility to speak up and use it. That’s what my father taught me when I was a young farmer just starting out and complaining about regulations and milk prices. “You’re not going to solve those problems inside your fencerows,” he said. “You’ve got to get outside your fencerows.” My dad encouraged me to attend my first county Farm Bureau meeting, and with the journey that followed, I got a lot farther outside my fencerows than I ever expected. But I have learned over and over again that what my dad said was right: We can’t solve the problems facing agriculture if we’re not willing to step outside our comfort zone.

I am proud of the thousands of Farm Bureau members who are investing their time in this important work. Last year alone, 2,415 Farm Bureau members from across the country took their messages straight to Capitol Hill and met with lawmakers to tackle the issues facing agriculture. Our state and national staff work tirelessly fighting for you, but representatives want and need to hear from the people in their home districts.

We also need to get out there and share our stories with consumers. People don’t trust what they don’t know. And they don’t trust agriculture because they don’t understand it. Most Americans have never been to a farm and didn’t even grow up near one, but they are ready to learn more about where their food comes from. We need to open up the lines of communication. We need to connect through our shared values, explain how we take care of our land and animals, and tell people about the important steps we take to ensure our food supply is safe.

And there’s one other thing consumers need to hear about: How unjust regulation is making our lives so difficult. We know many of our members are afraid to speak openly about their battles with the EPA, Army Corps and others. We also know the media can be our ally in these struggles – if only we speak up and let journalists tell our story in the first place.

Being an advocate for agriculture is not an easy job, but thankfully farmers are used to hard work. And more than that, we’re not afraid of a challenge. Step outside your fencerows. We must be faithful with our opportunities today if we want to preserve our freedoms for tomorrow.
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West Virginia Farm Bureau News
If you’ll be hosting friends and family to honor Easter this year, make your gathering as simple as it is scrumptious with a decadent brunch menu.

If you’re daunted by the diversity of dishes a brunch menu demands, remember that quality ingredients – not complex preparation – is what makes dishes truly stand out. Fresh produce and superior products instantly elevate a recipe from good to great.

These brunch staples all start as basics, but get a boost with the right combination of quality ingredients:

Made-to-order omelets are always a hit because they guarantee you’re serving up exactly what your guests enjoy. Use a few winning ingredients to create an easy and quick omelet base, then offer an array of toppings, including unexpected flavors such as Jarlsberg Brand Cheese. Best known for its classic wedge, this nutty, mild cheese is also available in slices – perfect for the ooey-gooey factor everyone loves in an omelet.

A classic French quiche combines fresh and flavorful ingredients, is easy to make and tastes delicious hot or cold. The quiche is simple enough to make that you can prepare several varieties, giving guests plenty of options and handily filling a buffet spread. Simply prepare your crust and filling base then mix in fresh, crisp veggies that are steamed or lightly browned. Or create a savory, meaty quiche with your favorite sausage or bacon. Add some cheese before filling the crust and sprinkle some more cheese on top before baking.

Finger foods bursting with flavor simply make brunch better. This recipe uses ready-rolled puff pastry sheets, rosemary and the distinctive taste of Jarlsberg Brand Cheese for a mouthwatering dish that can be featured at a tasting station or as part of a larger meal.

Find more recipes for your Easter brunch at jarlsberg.com.
Easy Brunch Omelet
Makes: 4 portions

Toppings:
- mushrooms
- chorizo, bacon or ham
- cherry tomatoes
- spring onions
- herbs

Omelet:
- 8 eggs
- 8 tablespoons water or milk
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 8 slices Jarlsberg Cheese
- 8 slices ham

Prepare toppings. Fry mushrooms and chorizo, bacon or ham; cut cherry tomatoes and spring onions.

To make omelet, crack eggs in bowl and add water, salt and pepper. Whisk eggs until they turn a pale yellow color, about 25-35 whisks.

Heat frying pan on medium heat and melt butter. When butter is bubbly, add about one quarter of the egg batter. This will make one of four omelets. When batter starts setting, move hardened parts toward the middle, enabling the rest to get direct heat as well. Use a gentle hand to avoid scrambled eggs. When batter starts to look cooked, add cheese and meat and flip omelet over. The omelet should be slightly golden on fried side and a little runny and soft in the middle.

Finally, put omelet on plate and add garnish before serving.

Cheesy Bacon Quiche
Makes: 4 portions

Crust:
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup flour
- 2 tablespoons water
- salt

Filling:
- 1 cup bacon, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 leek
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup Jarlsberg Cheese, plus additional for topping, grated
- 3 tablespoons parsley
- 4 tablespoons cream

Heat oven to 400 F.

In large bowl, mix butter, flour, water and salt together. Knead thoroughly to make firm dough. Pack dough in plastic wrap and let rest in refrigerator for 20 minutes. Press dough into full surface of pie plate and cover with aluminum foil. Prebake in oven 10 minutes, then remove aluminum foil and bake another 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in frying pan on medium heat, sauté bacon. Add leek at end of cooking time.

In bowl, whisk eggs and cream together and add grated cheese, parsley, bacon and leek. Pour filling into crust and top with grated cheese. Bake for 15 minutes, or until edge is golden brown and center is set. **Tip:** To save time, use premade pie crust and bake according to package directions.

Make Brunch a Breeze
Skip the stress this Easter with these tips to make preparing your holiday brunch simply delicious.

1. Choose several make-ahead dishes that you can prepare well in advance, such as quiche or a breakfast bake.
2. Skip time-intensive pancakes and instead serve up a French toast casserole.
3. Prepare recipes using the highest-quality, freshest ingredients for the best results.
4. Give your meal a boost with unexpected but impactful touches, such as specialty butters, homemade jams and delicious cheeses.
5. Create beautiful and tasty accents for your buffet in minutes with pretty bowls or platters filled with colorful, seasonal fruit.
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