



MARCH, 2016 Volume 69 No. 3

Official Publication of the Arizona Farm Bureau

A Conversation with a Farmer Geneticist: Wes Kerr

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Communication Director

If you've ever heard him speak you'd say his enthusiasm was contagious. Yes, contagious even if the topic is about genetics. Buckeye, Arizona Dairyman Wes Kerr of Kerr Dairy shares his passion for genetics -- and specifically his breakthrough efforts with polled genetics for his family's dairy herd -- with whomever will listen.

Beyond eliminating the need to dehorn cows with polled genetic success, Kerr contends that we might just be studying the "language of God" when we study DNA strands, amino acids, A, T, C and G sequencing and more. Partly influenced by what his dad said to him years ago as a boy and by Francis S. Collins book, *The Language of God*, Kerr celebrates that genetics carries for us our special code of life.

And, this farmer under 40 is focused on a bright future for agriculture because of the opportunities today's technology is affording those in the industry. He's certainly trying to take advantage of what our modern world is serving up.

He was earlier quoted in *Progressive Dairy* saying, "My goal is that my grandchildren will never know cows had horns." To get to 100% polled Holsteins on the family dairy takes times.

So, *Arizona Agriculture* had a conversation with Wes Kerr to get an update on his polled genetic efforts (including some other efforts with genetics that could impact other areas in the dairy industry) on the farm and find out what else excited this enthusiastic dairy farmer. Oh yes, he insists he's not a geneticist, but simply loves studying the science behind it.

Arizona Agriculture: We know you know a lot about genetics, certainly polled genetics, but what inspired your interest in it?

Kerr: When I was a kid I remember riding around the dairy farm in the truck with my dad and asking him why almost all of our cows had black and white spots, but a couple had red and white spots. He told me it was due to different genes inside the cow. I was amazed by this so I decided I needed to learn more about genetics. I concluded that if genes were powerful enough to change the color of a cow then what else could they do?

Since that day I have never been bored studying genetics. The more I have learned about the complexity of DNA the more amazing and miraculous I find it. Realizing that ALL life on Earth is made up of only four amino acids that are chained together to spell out a specific code is astounding to me. It doesn't matter if it is bacteria, fungus, plants, animals or humans we all are made of a complexity of varying sequences: A, T, C and G.



While Wes Kerr of Kerr Dairy might be excited about the progress of the polled genetics program on the family dairy, he's also encouraged by the potential of breeding for specific milk proteins.

Arizona Agriculture: Update us on your polled breeding program so far on the Kerr Dairy? And, what's the percentage of your heifers now that are polled?

Kerr: Our polled breeding program is going very well. We have continuously selected for the best polled bulls available. Currently, our calf barn is about 75% polled.

Arizona Agriculture: Besides your interest in genetics, what motivated your drive to achieve a high percentage of polled heifers in your herd and ultimately for the industry?

Kerr: For me it was an easy decision. Dehorning was never something I looked forward to doing, so if it was avoidable then that is what I wanted. All farmers and ranchers are entrusted with resources such as land, cattle etc., which I believe, is our duty to improve upon for the next generation. For me it was simply getting my cows where I think they should be. It was only later that I realized that the consumer would appreciate the effort we were undertaking as well.

Arizona Agriculture: To have polled cows in the dairy industry certainly should be classified as another identifiable development, if not achievement, for the industry. But my sense is that there's been a bit of push-back or skepticism. Now that you've been at this for a few years, what's the current attitude? Will it be common for the industry to have a plurality of polled heifers?

Kerr: With any change there will always be push-back. Some push-back has merit and some does not. The biggest concern was very legitimate: "Would breeding for polled take us backwards genetically?" Our commitment was to continue to improve the herd while adding the polled trait on top of all of the other traits

that we have been breeding for.

There have been several exciting developments industry wide in regards to polled. First, many name brand companies have requested dairy farmers start breeding for polled because of consumer demand. Secondly, most semen companies now have polled lineups available which have never existed before. Finally, many high profile dairies have made commitments to breed for polled. Most notably Fair Oaks Farms in Indiana, one of the largest dairies in the world which milks 30,000 cows, and Maddox Dairy in California one of the largest and most influential registered Holstein dairies in the world. The adoption of polled from these two dairies, among others, have brought polled genetics into the mainstream.

Every sire summary has more polled bulls available and many dairy farmers now

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2016 Ag Fest: Great Arizona Meet Up!

Legislation important to agriculture is also identified for us.

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Communication Director and Joe Sigg, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Director

This year's Arizona Farm Bureau Legislative Agricultural Festival (Ag Fest) in January at the Arizona Department of Agriculture drew 52 Arizona Legislators. Additionally, 52 Farm Bureau member leaders were on hand to host their state senators and representatives and introduce them to agricultural products, families and issues from counties throughout Arizona. Special guests including representatives of the various agricultural commodity groups numbered 66 this year.

But Ag Fest is only the beginning. Arizona Farm Bureau member leadership encourages ongoing contact with your state representatives.

Connect with Your Legislators throughout the Coming Year

In the midst of a busy season and before time runs out, Arizona Farm Bureau encourages members to participate in the process by connecting with Arizona's legislative leaders.

The specific bills introduced to consider in the 2016 legislative session follow. Use these bills and the issues they represent to help you dialogue with your state senators and representatives when you connect.

When specific bills are up for hearing or vote, we will alert you through the



Senator Bob Worsley was hosted by Young Farmer & Rancher Taylor Rogers during the 2016 Ag Fest.

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Here's How

The Latest Matter on Transportation and Farm Vehicles

By Joe Sigg, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Director

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) *Moving Ahead for the Progress in the 21st Century Act* (MAP-21), passed in late 2012, included provisions that exempt commercial motor vehicles operating as "covered farm vehicles" (CFV) from certain Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (see Table 1). In order (in the future) for a vehicle to qualify as a CFV it must be equipped with a special license plate or other designation by the State in which the vehicle is registered to allow for identification of the vehicle as a farm vehicle by law enforcement personnel.

Currently, Arizona allows for a special plate for farm vehicles that meet certain criteria. These plates merely signify that the vehicle meets the requirements of a farm vehicle and therefore qualifies for a reduced vehicle weight and registrations fees. **There are currently no federal or state exemptions tied to Arizona's farm plate.**

Although the current farm plate is one option for identifying a CFV, federal statute allows for "other designation by the State." Not all farmers and ranchers want a farm plate, either because they do not need the exemptions at all times or they prefer a commercial license plate for their vehicles rather than the farm plate. In order to provide flexibility for Arizona's farmers and ranchers another designation, such as a self-certification form would allow them certify that their vehicle meets the federal requirements of a CFV and provide that information to law enforcement when requested.

Early on, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) did not believe they had the authority to issue a self-certification which could be carried in the truck having commercial plates, which would have forced those seeking the exemptions below to choose only a farm plate, which would then send us to the legislature for statutory change – something we did not wish to do because of the opposition this would attract. However, we persisted/pursued this with ADOT and the Department of Public Safety (DPS). It now appears we can accomplish this without changing the law. The certification form will be developed by rule.

And we certainly appreciate the cooperation of ADOT and DPS.

For more information contact Joe Sigg at .480.635.3603 or joesigg@azfb.org or Ana Kennedy Otto at 480.635.3614 or anakennedy@azfb.org.

TABLE 1

Covered farm vehicles and drivers are exempt from the following federal regulations
49 CFR Part 383: Commercial Driver's License Standards; Requirements and Penalties
49 CFR Part 382: Controlled Substances and Alcohol Use and Testing
49 CFR Part 391, Subpart E: Physical Qualifications and Examinations
49 CFR Part 395: Hours of Service
49 CFR Part 395: Hours of Service

It's an Election Year! Important Dates to Remember

Your vote counts and your engagement in the political arena matters. So, to keep you up-to-date on this election year's important dates, here's a list to ensure you know what's happening next.

And speaking of elections, they do matter! You've heard so often that your vote counts. And, it does. You can also help Arizona Farm Bureau and our efforts to help solid candidates win their elections. We do this through our AG Political Action Committee of the Arizona Farm Bureau Federation (AgPAC). AgPAC was established to provide individuals interested in the future of the agricultural industry to contribute to the support of worthy candidates for Arizona's offices who believe, and have demonstrated their beliefs, in the principles to which the industry is dedicated.

AgPAC raises funds to support the candidates of any party affiliation who are committed to working for the best interests of Arizona agriculture. Because Arizona Farm Bureau is non-partisan, we have supported Democratic, Republican and Independent candidates in the past. It's AgPAC's intent to seek out candidates that have a clear vision for the future prosperity of Arizona and who know that a robust agriculture industry is part of what makes economic growth happen.

Our fundraising strength will serve as a reminder to political leaders that farmers and ranchers remain stakeholders in Arizona's future. With the continued support of the Farm Bureau members like you, our voice will be heard at the State Capitol and in Washington D.C.

As stated earlier, elections matter. Consider supporting agriculture through a contribution to AgPAC.

Contribute online by going to azfb.org's "Public Policy" Section and selecting "AgPAC-Elections Matter." You'll be able to donate online. AgPAC cannot accept corporate contributions. Contributions to AgPAC are not tax deductible as a business expense or as a charitable contribution.

Event	Date
Early voting begins for Special Election	April 20 th
Special Election	May 17 th
Last day to file arguments for or against ballot measures	July 13 th
Voter registration deadline for Primary Election	August 1
Early Voting begins for Primary Election	August 3
Primary Election	August 30
Voter registration deadline for General Election	October 10
Early Voting begins for General Election	October 12
General Election	November 8

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Arizona Agriculture

is published 9 months, plus two special editions annually, (ISSN 0274-7014) by the Arizona Farm Bureau Federation...
325 S Higley Rd., Suite 210
Gilbert, AZ 85296
Periodicals postage paid in Higley, Arizona and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to:
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consider polled a viable option for their farm. Polled is no longer considered a fringe idea but it is now, for many, a question of when will we start using it. The dairy industry is moving at a brisk pace towards adopting polled. Polled dairy cattle will one day be the norm.

Arizona Agriculture: What are your plans for the future with your polled genetic development?

Kerr: We will continue to breed for polled, but to that we are now looking at breeding for specific milk proteins. Milk is made up of Kappa Casein and Beta Casein protein. Within each class of protein there are several types possible. It is a similar idea to different blood types in people. It is now understood that Kappa Casein BB is more advantageous for making cheese. There is also some evidence to suggest that Beta Casein A2A2 is more digestible for a small percentage of the population who has difficulty digesting cow's milk. We have been able to use polled bulls that also produce these desired milk proteins. In the future, milk will be more digestible to more people, cheese making will be more efficient and cows will be polled.

Arizona Agriculture: You've also shown a willingness to take a risk, go out on a limb, or buck the trends. Why?

Kerr: I believe that life is precious, fleeting and should be lived to the fullest. Every person has unique talents, interests and gifts that they should use to make a positive impact on our world. I am innately curious about the world we live in. I find creation to be fascinating and incredible.

My curiosity and desire to seek truth and understanding is what propels me to try new things. Every idea is a crazy idea until it works. However, the curious side of me must always be tempered with the business side. I try very hard to make my experiments small enough to that if they go wrong, it is not going to harm our business, but I also need my experiments to be big enough to analyze the data. At the end of the day I try to be data driven. Every experiment must sink or swim on its own merit. If it fails, it fails and I will be the first to admit it.

Arizona Agriculture: As a farmer under 40, what do you think is your future? Speak also in terms of your generation in general.

Kerr: I consider myself a long-term optimist but a short-term pessimist. I believe that the future is very bright for agriculture. Our world will continue to need agricultural commodities, and technology will continue to provide new ways of meeting demand. However, there are threatening realities that we must overcome and that is why I am a proud member of the Arizona Farm Bureau. I am positive that together we will overcome these challenges.

My generation in general is good at seeking out new possibilities and questioning the status quo. As a younger generation, I believe we are constantly asking the very important question, "Is this the best way?" My generation is also not afraid of new technology, we are eager to try new technology and we thrive on it.

Arizona Agriculture: Many say the up and comers, like yourself, will have to operate differently than the previous generation. If so, how?

Kerr: We are living in a globalized economy like never before in history. This creates more volatility in world markets than ever before. Our generation must be more

sensitive to change in order to stay efficient and profitable in our various operations. It is an exciting but challenging time to live!



Kerr, and his wife, Lauren, both grew up in the dairy business. Their generation is optimistic about the future. As Kerr says, "What drives our farm is a deep respect for our land and cattle. We are called to be good stewards of what we have, and that is the core value that must remain from one generation to the next."

Arizona Agriculture: There are also commonalities in each generation, after all each generation has its own short-lived youth. What are these commonalities in your view? How do they help you as a dairy farmer?

Kerr: At the end of the day, the way we do things might (or perhaps sometimes should) change, but the reasons we do what we do should not change. For me, it is the "how" that will change, not the "why". What drives our farm is a deep respect for our land and cattle. We are called to be good stewards of what we have, and that is the core value that must remain from one generation to the next.

Arizona Agriculture: For the non-scientist, genetics is a complex topic, yet when you enthusiastically talk about it and especially as it relates to your own dairy farm, the science of genetics comes to life. One can conclude that the science of agriculture needs to be celebrated more. Give us tips on how to do this.

Kerr: Agriculture at its core is science. Those of us in agriculture deal with living things which is biology. But biology is not the only branch of science that agriculture deals with. We must also understand chemistry, geology, ecology, meteorology and more. The better we understand the various fields of science the more efficient we can make our operations.

Those of us in agriculture are on the frontlines of human interaction with our living world. We agriculturalists bring sustenance (along with other commodities) to the postmodern world which would have never developed into what it is today without efficient food production. The most advanced societies around the world have the lowest percentages of their populations working in food production which frees up the masses to pursue all other aspects of an advanced economy. Poor countries tend to have the majority of their populations in agriculture due to inefficiencies which are passed along to their underperforming economies.

Humanity today is experiencing great advances in almost all areas of life. Very serious challenges still remain, but I believe the overall success around the world is in a large part due to sweeping advancements in agriculture. For this reason, modern agriculture should be celebrated the world over. I believe the future is brighter than it has ever been before in human history.

Arizona Agriculture: Being a dairy farmer and genetics enthusiast, where do we go now with the GMO story on behalf of the public?

Kerr: I believe we need to continue to make it clear to consumers the reasons why the agricultural community has so readily embraced biotechnology. We should share our own reasons as to why biotechnology makes sense for our own operations. Letting the public have first-hand experience of our operations through tours is also irreplaceable and usually very fruitful.

The future for biotechnology is expanding into many areas. Medical biotechnology is having much success in fighting many diseases but perhaps most notably in the fight against cancer. I would like to see those of us in agriculture highlight these successes. Most people want state-of-the-art modern medicine available when it comes to fighting disease, if we can show the public that the same technology that helps us fight disease also helps us solve problems with growing crops then, I believe, we are much closer to bridging the gap with consumers and winning over public opinion. 🍌

Top 10 Truths about Arizona Agriculture

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Communication Director

Some of my favorite "truths" or facts about Arizona agriculture are quite unique to this desert state's agriculture industry. They make us shine. They tell our story.

These agriculture facts about Arizona are obviously not the only ones. But, they're special ones.

So, I share them here.

1. In Arizona, we can be *planting and/or harvesting* a vast variety of crops – from asparagus to zucchini -- 12 months out of the year. California and Florida can probably claim this one too, but in our little desert state this makes it even more amazing!

2. In the west and specifically in Arizona, only 20% of the agriculture lands can be found here. But, we produce *60% of the total value of all agriculture products*. This is mostly due to targeted, managed and conservation-conscious irrigation.

3. In the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture (done every 5 years), *Arizona had 20,005 farms and ranches listed*. The previous census (2007) the number was 15,637, a 28% increase. Why the large increase? More subsistence farms and ranches on tribal lands are being counted, a unique cultural and historical distinction for our state. While



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Meet Up

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regular *LegisLetter*, so you can follow through with your contacts. Legislators value a call from their constituents; who better to talk to them than you?

Bills Impacting Arizona Agriculture

KEY

Monitoring Farm Bureau Opposes Farm Bureau Supports

Two separate bills, (SB 1270) and (HB 2171), will create two new divisions within the Arizona Department of Agriculture. The office of pest management (formerly structural pest) and the department of weights and measures are being fully integrated into the ADA. Both bills appear to be moving without much opposition. **AZFB supports both bills.**



Senator Kimberly Yee was hosted by Navajo County Farm Bureau President Marguerite Tan during this year's Ag Fest.

There is general agreement between the legislative and executive branches to restore Joint Technical Education Districts (JTED) funding. However, there are some politics between the House and the Senate as to who gets credit and some politics between the Governor and the legislature as to how this will happen. There are actually several bills on JTED, and we hope the normal politics on these sorts of things don't stymie the end goal – i.e. restoration of JTED funding. **Farm Bureau is monitoring.**

Agriculture has taken the high road this session by not pushing any animal welfare bills, although the opportunities have certainly presented themselves. The "other" side did spin off their hoarding provisions from last year's bill and are pushing a new bill (SB 1227), as well as several other bills which will not be heard. We will continue to see a creep of unnecessary animal protection bills – and with no regard for what is good animal husbandry practices.



Senator Andy Biggs was hosted by Pinal County Farmer Dan Thelander. Our Senate President, Senator Biggs also shared his vision for the 2016 Legislative Session in Arizona Farm Bureau's January 2016 Arizona Agriculture.

As to the Salt River feral horses? A bill (HB 2340) offers that the state will take jurisdiction and ownership, but not management or liability obligations. Only the state could establish such a successful business model. **AZFB opposes.**

As Arizona Farm Bureau anticipated, we are beginning to see legislation (SB 1449 and HB 2073) as to unmanned aircraft systems – yet another example of our technology ahead of our behavior and regulatory response. We do not antici-

pate much in the way of sustainable outcomes this session, but a whole host of issues persists before this technology is fully implemented and integrated in the regulatory system. Expect this type of legislation to be a fixture in upcoming legislative sessions for years to come. It's an extraordinary tool for agriculture with a whole range of legal and liability issues. **AZFB is monitoring these bills.**



Representative Heather Carter was hosted by Maricopa County Farm Bureau member and Young Farmer & Rancher participant Joel John.

Arizona and other states are in a phase where there is effort to reduce the regulatory burden on the production of food -- so-called "freedom to farm." Farm Bureau's position is we cannot retreat from food safety, and a lot of time has been spent trying to insure some accepted food safety discipline – in one case schools were exempted (SB 1004). Of course we are portrayed as wanting limitation on competition – which is not true. – Farm Bureau does not want food borne illnesses in the marketplace. Ask Chiptole what happens when you ignore a food safety culture. Just like GMO's, it remains a continuing education effort. **AZFB opposes any retreat from food safety discipline and practices.**

(HB 2326), clarifying transaction taxes on feed producers is ready for floor action in the House, as of this writing. **AZFB supports.**

(SB 1372) provides \$200,000 to the city of Buckeye for salt cedar remediation – the bill is moving but since it is outside of the budget process, it is a bit uphill. **AZFB supports.**

We again see bills in the states' rights genre – extreme frustration over federal government encroachment – that the state can ignore unconstitutional measures. Even the Supreme Court is not immune as one bill indicates that Congress has to pass approval over what the court says is constitutional. OK – everyone knows that is not about to happen but it points out the level of frustration, which provides signals as to why the electorate is reacting the way it is in today's primaries across the country.

Speaking of elections, there is a long list of bills dealing with election reform and campaign finance.

(SB 1243) establishes approval requirements by AZ Game & Fish as well as reporting requirements for the Mexican wolf. **AZFB supports.**

Most of the water measures this year (e.g. SB 1191 and SB 1268) deal with structural changes which could lead to increasing water supply and conservation and modification of municipal adequate water regulations – in other words, the thrust of the various bills is working along the margins, as there are no grand works or attempted compromises or any money on the table at this time. We will see if that changes with the Governor's augmentation committee which will look in depth at the 22 geographic areas identified as priority. (SB 1459) establishes financial assistance for water improvements under Board of Supervisors auspices. **AZFB supports these measures.**

An exception to the above, (SB 1192) would appropriate \$1,000,000 in general funds to the Arizona Water Protection Fund. **AZFB supports.**

(SB 1190) establishing NRCD education centers has passed the Senate. **AZFB supports.**

Proposition 123, the school funding compromise, is on the ballot in May. The proponents are distributing a flyer wherein they also announce a free showing of the new Star Wars movie. Is this a sign of too much money (supporters have collected a huge war chest) or simply millennial campaigning? Around election time, George Washington's account ledgers always showed increased amounts for corn whiskey – there is no word as of yet whether the movie theater is serving alcohol. **Arizona Farm Bureau does not support the free movie showing, we do support Proposition 123.**

In a nod to cultural differences: during an Argentine soccer match a player killed a referee over a call the referee made – in American football, the mayhem occurs off the field.

Since the second regular session of the Fifty-second Arizona Legislature is in full swing, Arizona Farm Bureau wants to make a way for you to easily track the bills. The list is also available at the following link: <https://www.votervoicenet.com/AZFB/Bills>. Click on the bill you want to track and more information will be provided regarding recent action on the bill. You can also access the bill tracker at www.azfb.org under the Public Policy section.

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Our Equine Segment Matters to Farm Bureau

By Ana Kennedy Otto, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager and Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Communication Director

On a few occasions, we've had Arizona Farm Bureau members with horse property ask us why their business is "defined as agriculture property?" It's a fair question and one that deserves clarification.

To clarify what might not always be obvious, we turn to the Arizona Department of Agriculture. Horses are livestock according to the Arizona Department of Agriculture's definition of livestock. Although some horse owners regard their horses as "show ring snobs," they are still livestock. The same goes for any high-priced, show-ring animal like beef, sheep, and goat. As a result, Arizona Farm Bureau's own policies in one way or another impact their care and well-being even if they are not raised or part of a traditional farm.

"Our work, which protects the growers' ability to farm ensures horse owners accessibility to local and affordable feed supplies," explains Arizona Farm Bureau's First Vice President Stefanie Smallhouse, partnered in a ranch with her husband, Andy, and a lifelong horse owner. "Of possibly even greater importance in our current environment is Arizona Farm Bureau's ability to work to ensure that animal activists do not control/eliminate the use of animals for show/work and general use in agriculture."

With regards to growers and their ability to produce feed supplies- we deal with water policy, air quality regulations, crop protection tools that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) keeps trying to limit.

Sometimes Arizona Farm Bureau's work has a direct impact on the equine industry. Back in 2010, we worked on an equine zoning issue which put this segment of our membership front and center. Equine may not always be at the forefront, Arizona Farm Bureau puts them front-and-center on their issues when needed. This is the case with all our diverse groups in agriculture. Arizona Farm Bureau represents all agriculture, therefore, we're always covering issues depending on what's needs the organization's critical attention.

Current Policy Areas that Relate to Equine

Arizona Farm Bureau's policies are reviewed annually by our members. These policies, created and driven by our farmers and ranchers set the course for what Arizona Farm Bureau will work on. In nearly every instance, these policy issues have a significant impact on your business.

Here is an example of some of our current policies that impact the equine industry.

Taxes

Agricultural Valuation for Small Farms: Viable agricultural production can be conducted on parcels of less than 10 acres. All lands in agricultural production should be assessed for agricultural valuation. Arizona Farm Bureau will work with state and county officials to change assessment practices to acknowledge parcels less than 10 acres that include commercial farms and commercial equine operations as agricultural properties.

Regulations

Animal Care: Proper care of livestock, poultry and fur-bearing animals is essential to the efficient and profitable production of food, fiber and ornamentals. No segment of society has more concern for the wellbeing of poultry and livestock in accordance with commonly accepted agricultural practices.

Recognition of Equine Industry: The Arizona Revised Statutes section governing the Animal Services Division of the Arizona Department of Agriculture includes horses, mules and burros in the definition of livestock. Therefore, the Arizona Department of Agriculture should recognize the equine industry as an agricultural commodity and include equine activities as normal agricultural activities.



The Arizona Department of Agriculture defines horses as livestock even if most of what a business uses horses for is show animals.

Equine Rescue Registry: We support the Equine Rescue Registry established in the Arizona Department of Agriculture and 97 development of programs in relation to this registry. We urge improvements to the Department website to make this registry easily accessible and to add links to the individual registered horse rescues. We encourage all equine rescues to meet the requirements and register with the Arizona Department of Agriculture 501(c)(3) equine rescue registry.

Equine Massage and Dentistry: We encourage a change in Arizona state law to allow non-veterinarians who are trained as massage therapists or equine dentists to legally practice as certified massage therapists or certified equine dentists.

Equine Training for Peace Officers: We encourage all peace officers to attend the Arizona Horse Council's Peace Officers' Standards and Training (POST) certified law enforcement training program as part of their continuing education.

Air Pollution Controls: We are in favor of having normal agricultural practices exempt from air pollution controls; including, but not limited to, livestock facilities (including equine facilities), open controlled agricultural burning, and ditch burning and normal field operations.

Equine Facilities: Owners and/or operators of equine facilities should be encouraged to post signs informing users of the facility of the legal limits of liability. The signs should reference Arizona Revised Statutes 12-553, "Limited 118 liability of equine owners and owners of equine facilities."

Law and Order

Equine Processing: Arizona Farm Bureau supports development of an equine processing facility in Arizona. We support a policy that allows equine slaughter facilities to be built in the United States to supply meat for consumption by zoo animals.

Equestrian Property Use and Regulations: Arizona Farm Bureau believes that all Arizona County Planning and Development Departments should recognize horses as livestock and exempt equestrian normal-use activities in rural areas from requiring permits. If the nature of a proposed commercial equine activity in rural zoned areas demands a special use permit, the owner's property rights should be recognized and the owners should not be subject to continually changing requirements and unnecessary, exorbitant costs.

Transportation

Transportation of Equine: Transport of equine should not be regulated by federal law but rather as a states' rights issue. We support the need and right to transport equine animals for any purpose, i.e. recreational activities, attending shows, aiding in the movement of cattle, processing, etc.

Our commitment to equine is as solid as our commitment to the diverse other groups represented by Arizona Farm Bureau. We encourage our members to be part of our process.

For more questions on this issue contact either Julie Murphree at 480.635.3607 or Ana Kennedy Otto at 480.635.3614. 📞



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The Honorable Doug Ducey
Arizona State Capitol
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Ducey:

Thank you for your position against expansion of the Mexican wolf territory. We seem to have this fascination with natural predators, without acknowledging the hard reality some of our actions could bring.

In this case, the subject is a pack killer. I don't see anything that has changed in the status quo which would indicate man and this animal can co-exist in the same space, at the same time. Proposals for expansion would further crowd this scenario, and I fear the upshot is there will be some sort of tragic event.

I read of a party describing the thrill of being able to hear a wolf. Such thrills should not come at the expense of public safety, and caution should be the precedence.

Thank you for a reasoned approach to this matter.

Sincerely,
Kevin Rogers
Arizona Farm Bureau President

News Briefs

Farmers Input Sought in a USDA Survey

Encouraging farmers and ranchers to complete a short online survey about 10 Agriculture Department programs. All farmers – whether they are long-time food producers or just beginning their careers – are encouraged to complete the survey. AFBF will use feedback from the survey to develop recommendations on how USDA can enhance its programs and make them more useful.

The survey focuses on the following programs housed in three USDA agencies – Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development:

- Is USDA on right path• Environmental Quality Incentives Program;
- Conservation Stewardship Program;
 - Conservation Reserve Program;
 - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program;
 - Value Added Producer Grants;
 - Rural Energy for America Program;
 - Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program;
 - Direct Farm Ownership Loans;
 - Direct Farm Operating Loans; and
 - Guaranteed Farm Loans (farm operating and farm ownership).

Membership in Farm Bureau is not required for the survey, which takes fewer than 10 minutes to complete. Take the survey online through March 15 at <http://usdaprograms.questionpro.com/>.

Conservation Stewardship Program Sign-ups Open

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced this year's deadline for producer applications for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is March 31.

March 31 is also the deadline by which initial applications are needed from farmers with expiring 2012-2016 contracts if they want to renew them for another five years. Some 12 million acres already in the program are eligible for renewal this year.

The Conservation Stewardship Program is a voluntary stewardship incentives program administered by NRCS. It rewards farmers, ranchers, and foresters for maintaining existing conservation and for adopting additional measures that run beyond the farm or ranch.

To sign up, farmers and ranchers should visit their NRCS local service center and submit their basic application form by the March 31 deadline. To find a local service center visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrsc>

10 Truths

continued from page 4

other states do have tribal farms counted, ours represent well over 50% of the farms and ranches counted.

4. And too that point, *Arizona has the highest number of American Indian farmers in the United States*

5. The 2012 Census of Agriculture recorded more than *26 million acres in agriculture production in Arizona*, up 1% from the previous census in 2007.

6. The *average size farm in Arizona is 1,312 acres*, representing a bigger farm than is typical across the United States.

7. The market value of Arizona agriculture products sold during the 2012 Census of Agriculture period was just under \$4 billion, up 15% from the 2007 census.

8. In Arizona, we have the five "Cs": Copper, Cattle, Cotton, Citrus and Climate. And, every one of them in-

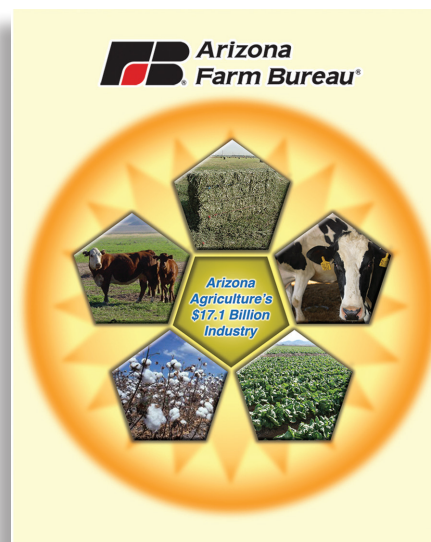
cluding copper and climate have an agriculture connection (mining is considered a form of agriculture). The value of *cattle, cotton and citrus* production that was sold in 2012 during the Census of Agriculture period totaled nearly \$940 million, excluding the more than \$760 million in milk sales, according to the USDA.

9. Arizona agriculture is a \$17 billion industry.

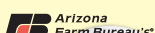
10. Arizona agriculture grows three high-quality biotech crops: cotton, alfalfa and field (feed) corn.

So many more interesting and unique truths about Arizona agriculture exist but these are some of the ones that rank in my top ten list. As we advocate for agriculture, you might consider using some of these "AgFacts" to share while you're

telling your own story. Remember that telling your own story will personalize the message of agriculture. 🍷



Arizona agriculture is a \$17 billion industry.



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