



ARIZONA AGRICULTURE

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A Conversation about Arizona, the Nutrition State: Shane Burgess

Year after year, our desert state offers up a cornucopia of rich diversity and abundance in crop and livestock production. To ensure this continues, do we have the leadership capacity that knows why, what, how and who to invest in as our state's agriculture moves into the future?

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Communication Director

This is now my third conversation article I've had with Shane Burgess, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the University of Arizona. Each time I thoroughly enjoy these conversations, the insights they inspire and the takeaways gathered. I was motivated to solicit Dean Burgess again since more than once he's identified Arizona as the "Nutrition State," most recently at the first-ever *Arizona Agribusiness Roundtable* hosted by the Arizona Department of Agriculture last December.

But, the first time I heard Dean Burgess label Arizona the "Nutrition State" was nearly a year ago during a two-day conference in Tucson on the Mediterranean Diet. I was actually honored to be one of the presenters. I was asked to highlight Arizona agriculture's diversity and bounty and heartily reveal how each area of the typical Mediterranean Diet can actually be satisfied here in our southwest desert – yes, even the fish.

Woven in this revelation, more critically, is the future of Arizona agriculture and its role in sustaining a nation's food, fiber and fuel production and how profound the entire nation's agriculture productivity is to national security and global geopolitics.

This conversation then attempts to peer into the future of agriculture, certainly Arizona's agriculture.

Arizona Agriculture: In a recent presentation you said we were in a *transforming time* in the future of Arizona agriculture. Why and can you expand on this point?

Burgess: I think we are experiencing a confluence of scientific, technological, societal and environmental factors that are together both potential future and real current problems for U.S. agriculture in general; at the same time, though, there are some real opportunities for the next iteration of Arizona agriculture. This all makes for a very complex calculus for which, because it is also unique in our history, we have no existing "off-the-shelf"

solutions. Specifically, we are seeing increased public awareness of natural resource use; challenging weather patterns (both in variability and absolute factors); fundamental changes in our domestic and local markets; fundamental changes in how global trade works (and I use the word "works" broadly); and a recognition of the role that food, fiber and fuel production plays in both our national security and global geopolitics. We heard about all these things, and more, at the inaugural *Arizona Agribusiness Roundtable* jointly held by the *Agribusiness and Water Council of Arizona* and *Arizona Department of Agriculture* on December 1, 2015. The bottom-line, I think, is that we'll need to come up with some "adaptive" solutions.

Certainly opportunities for the private sector come with attendant risk by definition, —but when in Arizona's history haven't they? I think the purpose of the public sector (i.e. Arizona's Department of Agriculture and Arizona's three universities--and especially the Land Grant one) in supporting the private sector are to actively do all that they can to mitigate that risk. They can provide technical and technological solutions to problems from production through the supply chain; help with marketing; provide well-educated employees, and work to support the private sector as it works on the underlying political solutions to challenges.

This all requires real and coordinated leadership as a community with a shared overall purpose. I think we have great leaders in all of our public and private sectors right now to do the things we need to do. It's not going to be easy and that is one reason why I think that the *Arizona Agribusiness Roundtable* meeting and other such efforts are so important. The roundtable provided a benchmark and foundation from which to take actions as a community all working together

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Very few states in America can claim to be a "Nutrition State." One of them is Arizona, and it begins with one of the state's most abundant resources: the sun.

Changes Coming to Worker Protection Standards

By Ana Kennedy Otto, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

Last year the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized revisions to the Worker Protection Standards (WPS) regulations, which govern training and activities related to regulated pesticides. The rule revision process began in March of 2014 when the EPA first released proposed changes to the WPS.

Many organizations like the Arizona Farm Bureau and American Farm Bureau, as well as individual growers, filed comments addressing concerns about the proposal in August of 2014. Although some elements of the proposal were revised to address industry concerns, many were not. Consequently growers using pesticides on their operation will have to make some changes to how they implement WPS in the next couple of years.

Compliance with most of the new WPS components go into effect in January 2017. Some elements, such as training content and pesticide safety information displays, will not go into effect until January 2018, as EPA develops those materials. Some of the new requirements are listed below.* A more expansive list of new requirements is available at www.azfb.org.

Requirement	New Worker Protection Standard (January 2017)
Frequency of full training for workers and handlers	Annual training.
Training grace period for worker training	No grace period. Workers must be trained before they work in an area where a pesticide has been used or a restricted-entry interval has been in effect in the past 30 days.
Expand training content for workers and handlers	Keep existing and expand content. Final worker training topics expanded to 23 items and handler training expanded to 36 items. Training on new content not required until January 2018.

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\$24,000 Raised for Ag Education

Arizona Farm Bureau Represented Well in Orlando

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Communication Director

State Farm Bureaus were presented awards at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 97th Annual Convention last month in Orlando recognizing their Awards of Excellence achievement and implementation of outstanding programs serving Farm Bureau members in 2015. Arizona Farm Bureau was among the winning Farm Bureaus.

The Awards for Excellence are awarded to state Farm Bureaus that have demonstrated outstanding achievements in six program areas: Education and Outreach; Leadership Development; Member Services; Membership Initiatives; Policy Development and Implementation and Public Relations and Communications. Arizona Farm Bureau won in all six areas.

Additionally, President's Awards were presented to states from each membership-size group that achieved quota and demonstrated superiority in the Awards for Excellence categories. Arizona won in Education and Outreach and Public Relations and Communications.

A delegation of nearly 40 members from Arizona Farm Bureau made it to Orlando this year to celebrate our wins and cheer on the Young Farmer & Rancher competitions. Additionally, members attended workshops hosted by American Farm Bureau Federation. The weeks' worth of events culminated in a leadership election held Tuesday, January 12th to determine who the next president for American Farm Bureau would be.



Nearly 40 Arizona Farm Bureau members made it to Orlando for the 97th Annual Meeting of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

their income from an agricultural operation, but who actively contribute and grow through their involvement in agriculture, their leadership ability and participation in Farm Bureau and other organizations.

Another participant in Young Farmer & Rancher competitions included Arizona Farm Bureau's Young Farmer & Rancher Jace Householder. He competed in the Discussion Meet competition and made it into the Sweet Sixteen.

Winners of the Young Farmers & Ranchers Achievement Award, Discussion Meet and Excellence in Agriculture competitions were announced at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 97th Annual Convention & IDEAg Trade Show. Young farmers and ranchers from around the country competed for the awards by demonstrating knowledge of and achievement in agriculture, as well as commitment to promoting the agriculture industry.



Two key programs within Arizona Farm Bureau – *Fill Your Plate* and *Ag in the Classroom* – were instrumental in helping us win the President's Award in the areas of Education & Outreach and Public Relations & Communications once again.

One of Arizona's Young Farmers and Ranchers makes it in the Top 10

Arizona Farm Bureau's Cassie Lyman was selected in the top ten in the Young Farmers & Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture Award. The Excellence in Agriculture Award recognizes young farmers and ranchers

who do not derive the majority of



Arizona Farm Bureau's Cassie Lyman (far left) was selected in the top ten in the Young Farmers & Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture Award.



Jace Householder competed in the Discussion Meet and made it into the Sweet Sixteen.

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Standards

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Minimum age for handlers and early-entry workers	Handlers and early-entry workers must be at least 18 years old.
Respirators	Employer must provide respirator and fit testing, training, and medical evaluation that conforms to OSHA standards for any handler required to wear any respirator by labeling. Requires recordkeeping of completion of fit test, training, and medical evaluation.
Handler (applicator) must suspend application in certain circumstances.	Handler must apply pesticides so as not to contact workers or other persons. Handler must suspend application if a workers or other person is in the application exclusion zone, an area up to 100 feet around the application equipment.

*Adapted from the Arizona Department of Agriculture's The New Federal Worker Protection Standard (WPS).

Another new WPS requirement allows for a "designated representative," someone who has been granted written permission by an employee to represent them, to request certain records farmers maintain on pesticide use. We, along with the American Farm Bureau, objected to this provision in comments filed, and American Farm Bureau continues to evaluate ways to remediate this issue through EPA guidance or possible legislative action.

The Arizona Department of Agriculture, through its Environmental Services Division and Agricultural Consultation and Training Program, has already begun to review the changes coming to the WPS with pesticide applicators and pest control advisors through annual recertification and training courses. Growers can also obtain pesticide safety training information, assistance with developing pesticide information resources, and mock inspections to assist in complying with the new pesticide regulations through the Agricultural Consultation and Training Program by contacting Jennifer Weber at (602)542-0985 or jweber@azda.gov.

Editor's Note: For additional information contact Ana Kennedy Otto at 480.635.3614 or anakennedy@azfb.org.

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for the benefit of Arizona's and the nation's economy and security.

Arizona Agriculture: Also as you said, Arizona has been producing income – new money – from water and the sun for a long time, as far back as the Hohokam. And, as a result explain more why we're a primary production state. Also, we're proud to explain Arizona agriculture as a \$17.1 billion economic contributor to our state. But I get the sense that you think we somewhat limit our view and pride with this number. Why?

Burgess: The terms primary production and secondary production are based in biological and then ecosystems science and are applied in economics also. An economy's primary sector makes direct use of natural resources: agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining. Economists say that the secondary sector produces manufactured goods, and the tertiary sector produces services. From our perspective it's about creating new wealth in, versus cycling money within, an economy. You can create new dollars from the sun, dig them out of the ground or print them; the last is illegal if you are not the federal government. Regardless, the secondary and tertiary simply cannot happen without the primary and so to make the point I lump the secondary and tertiary together.

One of the things that I am extremely frustrated with is when people take a primary sector's output value and compare it head-to-head with that of the secondary and tertiary added together. We've seen this in Arizona and California this last twelve months when it comes to water: "agriculture uses X percent of our water and only produces a tiny fraction of that as a percent of our GDP." I think that is a very naïve and limited way to look at a complex economic system that is sensitively dependent on primary (foundational) production.

As you know, I am fond of Russian orthodox Christian and evolutionary biologist Theodosius Dobzhansky's 1973 statement that, "Nothing in Biology Makes Sense Except in the Light of Evolution." Our economies and politics are part of our biology. It follows that of course the primary sector is smaller in dollar terms—it is supposed to be in a functioning economy and political system! Small doesn't mean unimportant and small doesn't mean low inputs. Should you do without your brain even though it is only 2% of your total body mass and uses more energy inputs than any other organ? The human brain is the foundation for everything we do including our social systems (including building functioning economies and political systems).

If you want historic examples compare the evolution of the economies and political systems within the Americas (north, central and south); take the underlying causes of the "Arab Spring", the Syrian civil war, China's economy and political system and North Korea's problems.

So many of the technologies that we use today come from answering the hardest challenges we have ever faced as a species—how do we take our natural resources and harness other species' biology to make our lives better? We wouldn't have civilization, politics, writing, math, business, medicine, even cell phones, anything we know today, without our answers to this question. Today's medical biotechnologies are a direct result of technologies developed for food production.

To answer your question in short, Arizona is a destination state and all the reasons that people have for coming here and investing here are based around Arizona's historical and future rational use of its natural resources.

Arizona Agriculture: This leads me to ask you why you say you see Arizona's "brand" as a "nutrition," rather than "agriculture" state. Explain, please.

Burgess: When you take a look at what contemporary science considers our optimal diet for physical function and our ability to think and learn (often described as a *Mediterranean* or *Okinawan* diet) it looks a lot like what is produced by Arizona agriculture.

Imagine we were to stop food imports to Arizona and so we could only eat what we produce here; how would we feel about that and how healthy would we be? We come out pretty well (arguably better off than many of us are today). Now try this for some of the "big mid-western agriculture states"—not so enticing.

Not only is this about what products Arizona produces but what market segments it delivers into. For example (and with apologies to those I miss), if you are like me and care about sustainable optimal production with lower water use and minimized pesticide application you can get transgenic (GMO) crops; if you want to have certified organic food you can get that; if you want "local" you can get that; you can chose grass-fed or grain-fed; if you want "heart-healthy," that's no problem. If dairy is your thing—no problem. If you want salad at Christmas dinner—sure, have at it at bargain prices with negligible "carbon miles." If you want some great wine or beer, you can get that. We even have exceptional aquaculture production. Of course this will require some actual cooking and families eating together.

Obviously I am not actually suggesting or advocating we carry out this experiment; it's simply one way to visualize the amazing diversity of primary production this state has. We are not the biggest ag state by any means, but there are few that can boast what we can deliver to a table and to lower health care costs.

Arizona Agriculture: Keeping our constraints in mind, including residential and industrial development in the state and regulation, what's our potential as a "nutrition" state? If we have such great potential in this state with our agriculture, what should be our various roles in the industry to move our future in an exciting way?

Burgess: I'm not best placed to answer this first question; I think my colleagues in the production side are. However, I believe that our potential is in our government, university and private sectors working closely together. It is limited only by our ability to take problems and see them as opportunities that need an innovative solutions. I

I think that our biggest risk to fulfilling our potential is not having the leadership capacity that knows why we need to invest, what we should invest in, how to do so and who to invest in, to get innovation. I believe that leadership is the key in our universities, our representative organizations (like the Farm Bureau), our serving government agencies and mostly, ourselves as individuals.

actually don't see residential and industrial development in the state as a constraint *per se*—regulation is another matter altogether and one that should be tackled with innovative solutions.

To me, you only have innovation if you have the product of three I's: Inspiration X Invention X Implementation. I think we need innovative thinking in three big areas: technological, economic and political. I think that the first two are easiest but the third is hardest, most important and greatly affect our ability to do the first two optimally.

I think that our biggest risk to fulfilling our potential for innovation lies in not having the leadership capacity that knows why we need to invest, what we should invest in, how to do so and in whom to invest. I believe that leadership is the key in our universities, our representative organizations (like the Farm Bureau), and our serving government agencies, our political leaders both elected and appointed and, mostly, ourselves individually.

In terms of our different and complementary roles: the universities should be great sources of invention but are less well-positioned for, but still can contribute to, inspiration and implementation. The exception is the University of Arizona's CALS Cooperative Extension System, which is designed to be more balanced across the three. The state government agencies have a role in implementation and they can facilitate invention through investment. The federal government, through its *Agricultural Research Service* should be strong in invention and implementation and its competitive funding process should support all three areas. The Feds also have the biggest role in implementation (or in limiting it). Inspiration and implementation are primarily the domain of the private sector—market competition drives both. The private sector has the lowest risk tolerance but the public is funded to mitigate this risk and we should use that to its fullest extent. Primary political activism, to be credible, simply must be led by the private sector, especially through its representative organizations.

Arizona Agriculture: Talk about the importance of meat protein and developing countries and its correlation with test scores.

Burgess: I quote scientific work from Hullett; Bwibo et al., specifically; neurophysiology especially around neurotransmission and signaling in general as well as our scientific understanding of human brain evolutionary biology.

An easy-to-remember take away is that animal-derived foods (meat and milk) have been shown to improve cognitive function in children heretofore eating only a vegetarian diet without any animal-derived food, by improved performance in math, English, science and the arts school up to 45% over 5 school terms.

I want to explicitly say, however, that eating a vegetarian diet without any animal-derived food does not mean that kids will do poorly in school. But simply, because we evolved as omnivores our physiology means that it is much harder to get optimal human nutrition for optimal cognitive functional development without eating animal-derived foods. It is possible, but in relative terms very expensive, to provide optimal nutrition on a vegetarian diet without any animal-derived food components. In countries where significant numbers of people cannot afford animal-derived foods (which coincidentally is where the majority of the world's population lives) these people also cannot afford optimal nutrition on a vegetarian diet without any animal-derived food. There is a reason why humans *en-masse* naturally chose to purchase animal-derived food as they take their first steps out of the poverty cycle. There is a reason that countries that plan to have strong economies and a vibrant "middle class", economies built on innovation, include animal production as a central component to their development plans.

Arizona Agriculture: Our agriculture moves to the national security issue too. Dive into this a bit.

Burgess: My brief thoughts on this topic are based on what I see in our world today and what I have seen as I have traveled in countries where the majority of the world's population lives and where the population does not have food security. A nation that relies on another for its food cannot be secure in the long term. A nation without the systems needed for its people to get enough of the safe and nutritious food, that they want to buy at reasonable price, will not have political stability. Inclusive economies and stable political systems can only be built by food secure people with good cognitive function.

Food and/or facilitating food security is a cheaper and far more effective weapon than bullets. I am not advocating one without the other; but who has enough friends and who couldn't do with fewer enemies? No parent, in no country, wants to lose their children in a foreign land or to a flawed ideology. Food is central to every single culture and religion and food provides intersections amongst all. What better way to make friends than sharing food? Food has the added value of enabling successful education and thus the growth of economies. These economies can become politically stable trading partners. Interdependent stable trading partners, whose economies depend on each other, think twice before aggression. The biggest recruiter of terrorists is not religion

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Kevin Rogers Runs for AFBF President



Arizona Farm Bureau President Kevin Rogers made a run for the top spot and enjoyed a robust candidate forum conversation.

While his bid for American Farm Bureau president was unsuccessful, Arizona Farm Bureau President Kevin Rogers conducted a robust conversation with the three other candidates for AFBF president during a candidate forum while at the Annual Meeting in Orlando. The candidate forum, the brainchild of AFBF Women's Leadership Chair Sherry Saylor, was hosted by the AFBF Women's Leadership Committee.

Zippy Duvall from Georgia was elected AFBF's new presi-

dent. Delegates from all 50 states and Puerto Rico elected the new leader during the American Farm Bureau Federation's 97th Annual Convention. Scott VanderWal from South Dakota was elected as vice president.

Vincent "Zippy" Duvall is a poultry, cattle and hay producer from Greene County, Georgia, and served as president of the Georgia Farm Bureau for 9 years. Duvall has held numerous leadership positions in Farm Bureau and his local community. He is the 12th president of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Scott VanderWal is a third-generation family farmer from Volga, South Dakota, and has been president of the South Dakota Farm Bureau since 2004. 📱



Farm Bureau Delegates Elect New Officers; Set Policy for 2016

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Communication Director

Delegates from all 50 states and Puerto Rico last month elected new leaders and approved policies that will help determine the future of agriculture, during the American Farm Bureau Federation's 97th Annual Convention in Orlando, Florida. Renewable fuels, governmental reform, farm policy, risk management and international trade were among the most important matters slated for action over the next 12 months.

Delegates elected Zippy Duvall to serve as the new president of AFBF and Scott VanderWal as vice president.

Vincent "Zippy" Duvall is a poultry, cattle and hay producer from Greene County, Georgia, and served as president of the Georgia Farm Bureau for 9 years. Duvall has held numerous leadership positions in Farm Bureau and his local community. He is the 12th president of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Scott VanderWal is a third-generation family farmer from Volga, South Dakota, and has been president of the South Dakota Farm Bureau since 2004.

Arizona Farm Bureau President Kevin Rogers was among four candidates to run for American Farm Bureau's president position. During the annual meeting he participated in a candidate forum that was held a few days before the election.

Policy Deliberated and Voted On

Delegates to the American Farm Bureau Annual Meeting approved new policies that covered a wide range of agricultural topics. Among other things, they:

- Supported the addition of cottonseed to the list of oilseed crops eligible for farm programs;

- Supported voluntary risk management products for poultry growers that would provide assistance during disease outbreaks; and

- Reaffirmed support for programs that provide emergency assistance for livestock and tree producers not covered by federal crop insurance programs.

Regulatory Review and Reform

Delegates addressed recent malfeasance by establishing a new policy that opposes governmental attempts to sway public opinion regarding rules that are open for public comment, whether by social media or other means.

International Trade

Delegates reaffirmed support for fair and open world trade that benefits agriculture. In particular, AFBF voted to support the Trans Pacific Partnership, which promises to expand opportunities for U.S. farm goods to some of the fastest-growing markets around the world.

Biotechnology

Delegates reaffirmed their support for the use of genetically modified plant varieties and other innovative technologies. Delegates also called for a voluntary and uniform labeling system for products designated as genetically modified organisms. They denounced mandatory labeling of food products containing GMOs at the local, state and federal levels.

Law Enforcement

Delegates approved new policy related to forfeiture reform that requires that individuals be convicted of a federal crime before their property is seized.

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or ideology, but lack of even a very short-term future at the individual level and this is often plays out as poor food security.

Arizona Agriculture: You said that you were extremely disappointed and concerned with the 2015 USDA nutrition guidelines, in addition to their un-mandated focus on sustainability, you said that in particular that the export committee of your peer scientists has let down the American and world public. Can you explain more?

Burgess: The USDA dietary guidelines ("my plate") for Americans affect the diet of tens of millions of our citizens, as well as food labeling, education, and research priorities. They affect what our children will be fed in schools. They affect food marketing and public perception and our health care costs.

I, and many other scientists, believe that the scientific committee did not use standard methods for most of its analyses. To quote Dr. Fiona Godlee, editor-in-chief of the British Medical Journal (one of the world's preeminent medical journals), "The least we would expect is that they (*the guidelines*) be based on the best available science. Instead the committee has abandoned standard methodology...". The committee largely stayed with what is now obsolete advice that doesn't reflect current, relevant, science that was published well within the time frame that the committee was charged with analyzing. They are continuing to recommend a high carb diet that is now commonly known to be a central cause of obesity. At least they did recommend decreasing processed sugar intake.

Our best science, published long enough ago that the committee not only could have accessed it but was charged explicitly to do so, has shown that meat-eating is not actually bad for you per se (not really a total shocker as we evolved as omnivores). It also shows that dairy products will not actually clog up your arteries and contribute to heart disease. The particular saturated fats in cheese, butter, and full-fat milk will not raise the cholesterol in your blood; these dairy products can actually be actively good for heart health. Twelve separate studies found people eating full-fat dairy products to be leaner than those who don't—"it's the carbs that get you" (well really it is the bio-accessible calories). The science shows that eggs are not a "heart attack waiting to pounce on you from their shell in the 'fridge" but, provided you are otherwise healthy, egg consumption as part of a balanced diet has no ill consequences whatsoever. In fact, and as the vast majority of mothers worldwide know, and those especially in food insecure countries prove daily, eggs and dairy products are an exceptional source of nutrition for growing lean, smart and active human beings.

My view as a professional scientist is that the members of the committee, as professional scientists, exhibited poor judgment in the least and that they have severely damaged the trust in what for decades has been a valued U.S. government-provided resource, not only for this country but worldwide. 📱



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Lyman Named First Ag in the Classroom Volunteer of the Year

By Katie Alkins, Arizona Farm Bureau Ag Education Associate Director

A new award surfaced at the Arizona Farm Bureau (AZFB) Annual Meeting this past November; the 2015 Ag in the Classroom Volunteer of the Year. The award was designed to recognize a dedicated member that has gone above and beyond to educate students about agriculture in partnership with the Arizona Farm Bureau Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) Program.



Cassie Lyman trailed a cow to the school for students to have a hands-on experience. During this last school year, Lyman has presented to over 1,600 students in Payson this last year, one reason she earned AITC Volunteer of the Year Belt Buckle at last year's Annual Meeting.

The recipient of the first ever AITC Volunteer of the Year was Cassie Lyman. Cassie along with her husband, Jared, ranch Bar L Bar Ranch in Payson Arizona, in which they are co-owners. There, she participates in daily ranch operations, cares for her herd of 4 boys, works for the local County Extension Office, and serves as a 4-H Leader and Boy Scouts' Den Mother. Did we mention she is also the Young Farmer and Rancher Committee Chair?!

Cassie moved to Arizona in 2013 and has quickly established herself in her community and schools. In addition to helping with the 3 Farm Bureau Ag Literacy Events, she also on her own, designs, schedules, funds and delivers presentations on cattle and wheat to the classrooms. She has even organized a Farm Field Day at the local Elementary school and hosted classes at her family's ranch. Cassie left a lasting impression on 1,513 students in 61 classrooms during the 2014-2015 School Year.

Cassie's dedication to youth, agriculture and education is inspiring. We are proud to recognize her as the 2015 AITC Volunteer of the Year.

Watch for an exciting 2016 in Arizona Farm Bureau's agriculture education programming. We hope to extend our reach to Arizona students. Plus, you could be AITC's next Volunteer of the Year recipient! 🐾

New Officers

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Immigration

Delegates reaffirmed support for flexibility in the H-2A program that would allow workers to seek employment from more than one farmer. They also called on Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform to assist in solving the continuing shortage of agricultural workers.

Big Data

Delegates reaffirmed support for the protection of proprietary data collected from farmers, as well as fair compensation for farmers who choose to sell their data to third parties including other farmers.

Energy

The delegates maintained their strong support for biofuels and the Renewable Fuel Standard. They also called for continued tax incentives to benefit biodiesel and other advanced biofuels.

Remember Arizona's Policy Course for 2016

As highlighted in last month's issue, Arizona Farm Bureau's policy goals are somewhat similar to national with some unique focus for our state.

Water: It can be listed as priority number one with a variety of parts to it. Plus, we must maintain a recognition that the water issues in Arizona vary from county to county.

National Monument Designations: We will continue our strenuous opposition to additional national monuments including the Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument and the Sedona Verde Valley Red Rock National Monument.

ESA: Endangered Species Act reform that creates some balance as to the species along with economic concerns and impacts upon farmers and ranchers is well past due. Expansion of the wolf should be slowed and more workable compensation explored. The question continues to be begged: what has changed in the status quo to believe that man and the wolf can co-exist, except in separate spaces?

Visa Reform: Although visa reform is virtually dead, we continue to make the case if the opportunity presents itself.

Genetically Modified: GMO labeling and WOTUS continue to have our attention, but there may be current resolutions on the horizon.

Vet School: The Veterinary School at the University of Arizona will require no tax funds for support. Support will come private donations, grants and tuition. But it will require two infusions of public capital outlays – for the upcoming legislative session "The Ask" is \$8 million, and we will work with our agricultural brethren in full support.

Supporting ADA: We need inspections and licenses of all kinds from the Arizona Department of Agriculture to move our product. We will support the department in their effort to secure more stable funding. Livestock and plants are key – right now if federal funding slipped, nursery inspection and fulfilling of phytosanitary requirements for shipping would disappear.

Taxes: Sales taxes on all inputs of production should be removed. And, we must be integrally involved in discussions to potentially alter the property tax system.

AgPAC: Our political Action Committee funding must be a priority though mid-2016.

Arizona Farm Bureau encourages you to brush up on these key issues for 2016. For our participating leaders, we'll be able to meet one-on-one with our state senators and representatives throughout the year, present them with a sampling of our amazing and diverse agriculture in this state and discuss those issues important to our industry. 🐾

A Word of Thanks



Every year, Arizona Farm Bureau Educational Farming Company raises funds for the ag-related youth programs that we support. This year, we raised more than \$24,860. We extend a hearty "Thank You" to the following donor honor roll, those who generously donated to the Educational Farming Company as a result of our fundraising efforts. We could not do our educational outreach without you. Your donation is making a world of difference for our youth and our ag-related outreach to the community!

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Please consider a donation! If you'd still like to donate, you can go online to azfb.org and under programs find the "donor" button on the "Educational Farming Company" page. Or simply write a check to **Arizona Farm Bureau Educational Farming Company** to 325 South Higley Road, Gilbert, Arizona, 85296. For questions and further information about our program, contact Julie Murphree at 480.635.3607. 🐾

Rural Leadership Program Applications Due March 1st

Project CENTRL, Arizona's Center for Rural Leadership, is now accepting applications for Class 25. Rural leaders, farmers, ranchers, and individuals working in businesses that serve agriculture or rural Arizona who want to improve their leadership skills are encouraged to apply.

Project CENTRL is a premier leadership development program with nearly 600 graduates since the first class started in 1983. Alumni are active community leaders and dedicated volunteers who share a common vision of making rural Arizona and agriculture more healthy, vibrant, and sustainable. The mission of Project CENTRL is to equip and empower leaders to meet the needs of rural Arizona.

The one year program has six two-day seminars in Arizona, a six-day seminar in Washington D. C. and a five-day seminar in Mexico. The capstone to the program is a one-day session followed by graduation that evening. The first two seminars improve leadership and communication skills and the next three address diverse topics, emerging issues and future challenges that face agriculture and rural Arizona. The last three seminars apply the knowledge and skills gained at state, national and international levels. The Graduation and day time session will polish leadership skills and introduce participants into the CENTRL

network of Arizona leaders.

Project CENTRL is a partnership between the non-profit Center for Rural Leadership and Arizona Cooperative Extension in the UA College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) Cooperative Extension. The costs for participants are underwritten with donations from alumni, sponsors, and other organizations. Applicants must be at least 25 years of age by the beginning of the program and a full time resident of Arizona.

"Project CENTRL is all about cultivating leaders to be more responsive and effective in meeting the growing needs of rural Arizona," said CENTRL Director Monica Pastor. "The program is a life changing experience that is making a difference in agriculture and rural Arizona."

Detailed program information and an application packet are available online at www.centrl.org. Additional information is available by calling the Project CENTRL office at 520.316.0909. Applications are due on March 1, but candidates are encouraged to complete and submit earlier.

For more information, contact Karen Vanderheyden at karen@centrl.org.



Policy Book Now Available Online

The 2016 Arizona Farm Bureau Policy Book is now available online at the Public Policy section of www.azfb.org.



As you know Arizona's minimum wage is indexed to inflation. Given where the economy has been in 2015 there will be no increase from the 2015 rate of \$8.05 in 2016.



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News Briefs

Register Now To Learn Farm Business Essentials

The Arizona Farm Bureau Women's Leadership is taking registrations now for the 2016 Spring Class for Annie's Project, Farm Business Essentials for Women. This workshop is designed to empower farm and ranch women to be better business partners through managing and organizing critical information. The 2016 series of classes will be held March 11, April 8 and May 13, 2016 at the Arizona Farm Bureau in Gilbert.

Register today by calling Peggy Jo Goodfellow at 480-635-3609 or Paula Jensen at 480-635-3605. Registration is \$100 for all 3 classes in the series. Children are welcome with quiet toys, \$30 per child for 3 meals or you may provide meals for your child.

For more information, contact Sonia Gasho, State Facilitator at 520-820-9644.