



ARIZONA AGRICULTURE

www.azfb.org

FEBRUARY, 2018 Volume 71 No. 2

Official Publication of the Arizona Farm Bureau

A Conversation About Arizona's Top Agriculture Commodity: Beef

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

Arizona's beef industry typically leads our top agriculture commodities in the state. The most recent USDA calculation is no exception with cash receipts valued at nearly a billion dollars. So, it's only appropriate to have a conversation about our leading ag industry and who better to talk with than Jay Whetten, owner of the 76 Ranch near Bonita in Cochise County and the current president of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association.

Also a member of Arizona Farm Bureau, Whetten lived in Mexico for more than 50 years. His father started as a cowboy working on different ranches in the State of Chihuahua until eventually building his own business. Whetten credits his dad's increased knowledge of the industry and networking with other ranchers as invaluable to the success the family had later. "I had the privilege of working with him for more than 30 years," says Whetten. "In this time, we witnessed breed trends, market changes and the necessity to produce more pounds per animal with higher quality yields. We worked together, along with my brother, Mark, to transition from the old-time idea of running cows to raising beef. My brother and I continue to learn and produce the best beef we can in the environment we live in."

After graduating High School in Colonia Juarez, Chihuahua, Whetten went to Eastern Arizona College for a year and then to the University of Arizona for a semester. "My father decided I could do more good at home than at school so I moved back to Chihuahua in January of 1976. We were busy, we took care of cow-calf operations and bought calves and pastured them. Apple and peach orchards were another venture. I also made horseshoes for a few years."

In early 1994, a good friend asked Whetten to serve on the Chihuahua State Cattle Growers board of directors. During that time, U.S. cattle producers were pressured

to address Bovine tuberculosis (bTB). At the time, USDA demanded to reduce, if not eradicate, the disease. Says Whetten, "A very large percentage of the disease came from Mexico and border States threatened to cease commerce with Mexico unless it was cleaned up. I was given the charge to begin an eradication campaign in Chihuahua and

at the same time negotiate with USDA and Border States to keep commerce going. It was a valuable experience, I made a lot of friends and learned a lot."

In the fall of 2008 Whetten and his family left Mexico. Described as an uneasy, tough time with much uncertainty the family felt like someone was looking out for them, because in the fall of 2010 they put a down payment on the 76 Ranch. "We have enjoyed immensely our time here along with the challenges that we face. Arizona is a fantastic place to live and work. Our son, Derryl, and his wife, Dejah, their two kids, Greysen and Charlie Jae, live here at the ranch with us. They make it possible for me to leave as I try to serve the industry."

The Whetten family run mostly Black Angus cows, along with a few Red Angus, with an emphasis on total pounds

produced and desirable carcass traits. "We are constantly learning, I don't think we will ever get it perfect."

Whetten and wife, Jennifer, are blessed with five wonderful children who have given them 16 grandkids. "Life has not always been easy, but it has certainly been worth it," he explains.

In our conversation, I was curious about Whetten's modern-day approach to managing a healthy herd of cattle and what makes Arizona special in the production of high-quality beef, certainly because of his global perspective having originally lived in

See BEEF Page 2



Part of an agriculture commodity panel during Arizona Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting last fall, Jay Whetten (right) says the industry has transitioned from the old-time idea of running cows to raising beef. Pictured to the left is the dairy industry's Paul Rovey.

Agriculture Industry Certification Paves Way for High-Skilled, Trade-Related Careers

By Katie Aikins, Arizona Farm Bureau Education Director and Chelsea Mcguire, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Director

According to USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture and Purdue University, employers have 57,900 job openings in agriculture and related fields each year. But just 35,400 students graduate annually with a bachelor's degree or higher in agriculture. If you make a direct mathematical correlation, there is a shortage of 22,500 ag graduates compared to the needs of the industry. Certainly, we need more students pursuing agriculture and life sciences.

Meanwhile, nearly two million college students will graduate from college with a bachelor's degree this year. Will they find a job? If they majored in agriculture they would. In fact, some biotech companies have begun recruiting students during their junior year because the seniors in the agriculture and life sciences have already committed to an employer after weighing multiple offers.

We have the jobs; how do we get the people?

If you ask Queen Creek High School agriculture teacher, Justen Ollendick, he will tell you that we must get kids interested early. "If we can get students interested in agriculture during their freshman year, we have a better chance of them staying in the program for all four years," he explains.

Students have a lot of program options when entering high school and their Freshman year is the year of discovery. Ollendick believes, "If we had four years of funding for ag programs [there are currently three: sophomore, junior and senior] we could better provide the newer technologies for our programs and draw students who might not have considered agriculture as a career path."

The reality is technology has and will continue to be more central to even the most traditional roles in agriculture and there is already a shortage of workers with the appropriate skills. The key is showing students the opportunities so they will enroll in the classes to gain the skills.

Funding an Opportunity

It's no secret that K-12 education is gearing up to be one of the most controversial issues of this legislative session. Improving our State's schools is a

See CAREERS Page 4

Small State - Page 5
Doing Big Things

Grassroots Involvement - Page 7
A Game Changer

Project CENTRL - Page 8
Submit Your Application by March 15

Beef continued from page 1

Mexico. Plus, he gives us a real sense of how important the industry is to a hungry world.

Arizona Agriculture: Recently during the University of Arizona's Water Resources Research Center's "State of the Watershed" you said, "As ranchers, many years ago we used to run cows. Today we raise beef." Talk about this.

Whetten: If Arizona ranchers are going to keep up with the massive growing global beef market, we have to analyze what beef products are in most demand and make efficient, intelligent and swift decisions on how we as Arizona ranchers keep our businesses profitable. Markets have changed dramatically which obligates us as producers to change our production practices. The United States of America now produces a record 222.8 pounds of meat and poultry per capita, per year, thanks to five years of bumper crop grains produced by American farmers. Acronyms, like NAFTA, TPP and others are bantered about, and retail giants such as Amazon are making moves to join the great grocery store wars we will see in 2018 by competing with the likes of Walmart, Sam's Club and Costco. Protein giants like Tyson Foods and Seaboard Farms are building new modernized plants to accommodate the new "normal" increase in protein tons. The U.S. beef cattle herd has expanded by 12% over the last four years. My interpretation of these facts is that the stakes are high for the Arizona rancher and we have to move from the inefficient ways of the past to a new streamlined version of beef production that accommodates the voracious appetite we call demand, which is phenomenal.

Arizona Agriculture: If today's beef industry is a dynamic, fast changing industry, what are key elements for Arizona's ranching families to keep up with this pace?

Whetten: History teaches us that there are always opportunities in the beef business. It is essential for each Ranching operation to find those practices that could be implemented to create a more positive bottom line. In today's world, information is at our fingertips. We need to use it, analyze it and implement the changes that are necessary to be able to maintain profitability. Talk to people who are having success, develop relationships with those who are involved in marketing, and work toward producing a product that meets today's requirements. The folks at the end of the marketing chain set the standard, know what that is.

Arizona Agriculture: If our beef industry is so dynamic, what kind of market inflection points can we watch for, if any? In other words, are their obvious market challenges and/or opportunities to look for that might be standard or expected. To define inflection point, it's that point in the market curve at which a change in the direction of the curve occurs, positive or negative.

Whetten: The American herd has expanded to near record numbers, and people I talk to discuss two possibilities for the near future. There are as many commodity forecasters out there as there are weathermen, and as we have seen in the past, few get it right. I certainly have no insight on what this year's prices will be. One line of thinking is quite traditional which is a direct supply and demand formula that implies that as we begin to over-produce what the market can absorb, prices will back up. The other line of thinking is that prices are affected greatly by attitude and because of the strong economic policies implemented by President Trump, people will spend their extra money on beef and the increased demand will take up the slack. Also, we are seeing an improved economic attitude around the world that also translates into more demand for U.S. Beef. Inflection points in the market are difficult for a cowboy to understand, we need to become more familiar with them as an industry in Arizona. Hedging is a great tool, contracting your cattle is also. In the end, a quality product can always be marketed well.

Arizona Agriculture: Make comparisons with Arizona's beef market and other regions of the country and even globally. Why is Arizona beef so special?

Whetten: Arizona is a wonderful place to produce beef. We have strengths in our weather throughout most of the state in that we don't have the hay and supplement costs some other beef-producing states have. If we can get enough rain to get by, our input costs are generally on the low end of the national average. Our quality of product that we offer is on the rise and there is a greater demand for it now than there was in the past. Our down side is the fact that our beef cattle are exported to other states and the freight comes off from the price we receive.

Arizona Agriculture: Talk about our opportunities in the China markets, and as buyers what are they expecting from us?

Whetten: The China market is still in its infancy and has not yet shown a demand that is significant, but the potential is there and soon they will be a factor that increases the value in the market. One very important fact is that they buy what they want with the bells and whistles "they" want, not what "we" want. They are more concerned with birth place of origin, traceability, quality and other factors than cost. This market will grow but we will have to meet their demands, which we can.

Arizona Agriculture: What does the cattle industry in Arizona need to do differently?

Whetten: An Arizona rancher's first concern is to assure a viable, profitable operation with an acceptable bottom line. Imagine yourself sitting on the front porch, in serious thought, with the experience that you have in the business and you design and plan the best production unit that you know how with the environment that you must work with that will meet the demands of the market now and in the future. Ranchers in Arizona have traditionally and notoriously been known for their expert ability to grit themselves though drought and water challenges of an arid state; feast or famine as they say.

If Arizona ranchers are going to be able to keep up with the massive growing global beef market that is growing at record pace, we must embrace obstacles with an efficient and intelligent viewpoint and act swiftly. Grass and water management can no longer be overlooked. Tools, such as increased watering and cross-fencing to allow pasture rest, herd quality and health must be seriously examined. Mineral supplement is a must. Bulls need to be Trich tested, veterinary and nutritionist advice should be sought, prenatal vaccinations for calves at pregnancy testing assures that our future Beef supply begins its lifecycle with the best possible chance of being safe, healthy and reliable.

RFID tags ensure that our calf crop can be traced back to its birthplace of origin and that our source of beef can be authenticated to anyone in the world. Genetics that target the beef products that the consumer demands need to be part of our plan. These things are key elements to embracing the American rancher's journey to efficient, profitable production. We ranchers in Arizona, as well as in America, are being called to task to create the most safe, reliable, authentic, nutritious, traceable and delicious beef in the world, by the world. We must know our market and respect the fact that there are consumers, like millennials, that have very specific ideas about the food they consume. We, as ranchers, must sit up and pay attention to what is going on around us if we expect to embrace the opportunities as they present themselves. 🐄

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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.

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Send address changes to:
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Careers continued from page 1

top priority among legislators. At the same time, lawmakers are also trying to find ways to boost the State's economy by attracting industry, jobs, and skilled labor to fill them. And, right at the intersection of these two priorities lies a golden opportunity for Career and Technical Education.

In recent years, industries that felt the decline of the late-2000s recession the hardest have bounced back in a big way. The agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and other industrial sectors are thrilled to be growing and thriving again, but now they face a different problem: lack of labor to fill the jobs that come with expansion.

There are a few ways to explain the labor crisis. For one, today's educational environment tends to look down on trade-related careers as "lesser" options to college-degree required jobs. Moreover, even those who are encouraged to enter careers in our primary economic sectors don't always have the training necessary to keep up with the advanced, technology-driven industries of today. Take agriculture, for instance: an employee in a modern-day milking barn doesn't just need to have a great work ethic, he or she also needs to know about automated milking technology, how to comply with complex food safety rules, and maybe even how to use robotic technology on a milking carousel. A tractor driver needs to know how to program a GPS unit to do the driving for them. And for a farm owner, it costs valuable time and money to train a brand-new employee to handle all the technology that's become essential to making inputs more efficient and realize higher yields.

By teaching our youth the skills they need to be successful at these jobs, before they even step foot on an employer's property, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are the ideal way to bridge the gap between the labor we need and the young people who are looking for long-term, fulfilling careers – right here in our own back-



Arizona Farm Bureau spent the last year working with teachers and other industry organizations to develop the Arizona Agriculture Skills and Assessment Certificate (AASAC). This industry certificate, through a variety of qualifications, establishes that a student has the attitude, perseverance, and skills to succeed in the workplace. The certification will serve as a good indication for potential employers that this individual will show up, work hard, and can learn the on-the-job skills necessary to be a valuable employee, regardless of whether they have decided to further their education through university or trade certification.

yard. CTE also offers students access to Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) such as the FFA. The combination of agricultural knowledge and skills learned in class and the leadership skills developed through FFA produce employees that can step into these open positions and take us into the future.

Sponsored by Senate Education Committee Chairwoman Sylvia Allen, SB1269 would restore 9th grade funding for CTE programs in five crucial areas: agriculture, automotive technology, construction, engineering, and manufacturing. Focusing on these five areas not only targets the industries where we most need the labor, it also helps keep the cost of the legislation to a minimum.

At a luncheon on January 4, a bipartisan group of legislators, business leaders, and educators came together to voice support for this proposal. Representatives from each of the industries impacted by the bill explained how restoring complete CTE programs will encourage bright and talented young people to pursue careers in these sectors. Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle explained how the bill will increase both educational and economic success for the state. And educators voiced their support of a bill that puts more money into the programs that are already working to ensure college and career readiness for Arizona's students.

Certified Quality

The Arizona Farm Bureau (AZFB) feels it is important to play a role in providing quality employees for the future, while helping our High School ag programs keep their funding and succeed today. To this effort, AZFB spent the last year working with teachers and other industry organizations to determine where assistance was most needed. The result: the *Arizona Agriculture Skills and Assessment Certificate (AASAC)*. This industry certificate, through a variety of qualifications, establishes that a student has the attitude, perseverance, and skills to succeed in the workplace. It is a good indication for potential employers that this individual will show up, work hard, and can learn the on-the-job skills necessary to be a valuable employee, regardless of whether they have decided to further their education through university or trade certification. Furthermore, the AASAC will serve as a tool to help Joint Technical Education Districts (JTED) to meet the requirement of offering industry certificates -- a requirement for legislative funding -- and will provide schools with the necessary certificates to help them achieve higher grades on the A-F School Accountability Plan.

As the AASAC gears up to be released this month, teachers across the State are anxious to provide this new certification to their students. April Scibienski, ag teacher at Desert Edge High School is excited and eager for the AASAC's release. "I will encourage my students to attain the AZFB Certificate because it will add an industry-validated stamp of approval to the education they received as an agriculture education program completer. In addition to boosting a student's confidence the certificate will give their future employers the confidence of knowing this student committed themselves to study and improving their skills in agriculture above and beyond their peers."

More information regarding the AASAC is available online at www.azfb.org. Questions can be directed to Katie Aikins at katieaikins@azfb.org.



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2018 Ag Fest: The Great Arizona Meet Up!

This year's Arizona Farm Bureau Legislative Agricultural Festival (Ag Fest) in January at the Arizona Department of Agriculture drew 49 Arizona Legislators. Additionally, 61 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 55 this year.

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



This year during Ag Fest, we featured Arizona agriculture's \$23.3 billion industry for the annual photo opportunity. Here, Clint and Brooke Gladden of Maricopa County Farm Bureau, among 61 other Farm Bureau farm and ranch leaders, represent our industry at Ag Fest.

Connect with Your Legislators throughout the Coming Year

During 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 2018 legislative

can we found online in the "Public Policy" section of azfb.org. Use these bills and the issues they represent to help you dialogue with your state senators and representatives when you connect. Consider inviting them to one of your county Farm Bureau meetings too.

When specific bills are up for hearing or vote, and action on your part is needed, we will alert you through a Call-to-Action. Legislators value a call from their constituents; who better to talk to them than you? 📞

Arizona Farm Bureau: A Small State Doing Big Things

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

Arizona Farm Bureau received American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) prestigious Pinnacle Award, the highest honor a Farm Bureau state can be awarded for program and membership achievement. State Farm Bureaus were presented awards at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 2018 Annual Convention & IDEAg Trade Show in Nashville last month. The awards recognized excellence in implementation of outstanding member programs and membership achievement in 2017.



To earn the Pinnacle, Arizona Farm Bureau had to earn recognition in all four areas of programming excellence: Advocacy; Engagement and Outreach; Leadership and Business Development; Membership Value. Here, Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse receives the Pinnacle.

To earn the Pinnacle, Arizona Farm Bureau had to earn recognition in all four areas of programming excellence: Advocacy; Engagement and Outreach; Leadership and Business Development; Membership Value.

The Awards of Excellence are awarded to state Farm Bureaus that demonstrate outstanding achievements in four program areas: Advocacy; Engagement and Outreach; Leadership and Business Develop-

ment; and Membership Value.

Because AFBF gives out six Pinnacle awards based on member size, Arizona joined Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Tennessee in earning top honors.

But the recognition didn't stop there. Arizona Farm Bureau earned the New Horizon Award this year too, honoring states with the most innovative programs. Other states that earned the recognition included Alabama, Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia.

Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse accepted the *New Horizon Award* during the General Session in recognition of the *Farm to Football Program*, designed to reach children with the agriculture story tied to a popular sport, in this case football.

"We are so pleased that the Farm to Football Program was recognized by the American Farm Bureau as one of the best innovative programs by a Farm Bureau this year," said Arizona Farm Bureau Ag Education Director Katie Aikins. "We really couldn't agree more! Farm to Football has proved to be a wonderful way to reach people where their interests are and educate them about an industry that, although impacts everyone multiple times a day, they are often disconnected from and is often misunderstood. I wish I were a kid again and could participate in this program. Arizona Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom (AITC) is honored that Hickman's Family Farms entrusted us with this program."

This is Arizona Farm Bureau's second time to win the Horizon Award. The first time was in 2014, for its publication series project aimed at providing information in various mediums to Arizona's farmers and ranchers.

See **BIG THINGS** Page 6

It's All about Video Now

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

Drum roll please: Our "Arizona Agriculture in 60 Seconds" garnered 12,000 views on Arizona Farm Bureau's Facebook newsfeed (posted February 28, 2017). The "Farm Bureau Multiplies Your Time" earned 6,800 views on Facebook. The "Beef Leads in Arizona Agriculture Revenue" posted 5,400 views. Our latest, Trade Talks! Just Listen" earned almost 4,000 views on the digital social media channel.

And while Facebook tells up it's changing its algorithms a bit in a way that might hurt brands, if we engage with the content we post organic reach will still have merit.

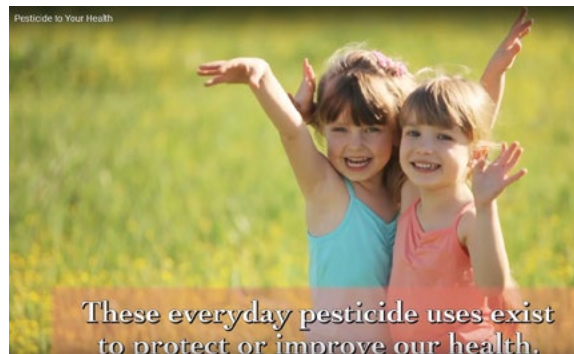
But why does this have any value for Farm Bureau and agriculture in general? Well, it's another way to tell our story, tell it correctly and engage the public. Plus, the marketing gurus say by 2019, video content will be the driving factor behind 85% of search traffic in the United

States. Whether it's Snapchat, Instagram, or Facebook, video content on social media is what marketers need to focus on in for now, say the experts.

So, Arizona Farm Bureau is dedicating some of our outreach efforts to video engagement. Most of our efforts are unable to garner these type of immediate views and engagement with most of that taking place within the first 24 hours the video is posted. Plus, we're covering our critically critical issues including water, GMOs, wildlife management, food safety and more!

The video series we've begun on Facebook and YouTube is called "Food for Thought." Watch for it every Wednesday. That's the day we release the latest video.

See you online and fully engaged. Oh, don't forget to share the video to your newsfeed if on Facebook! 📺



One video we recently released on Facebook was called "Pesticide to Your Health." The 90-second video talks about how we use pesticides in our everyday lives.

MAKING HISTORY.

ON SEPT. 30, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Colorado River Basin Project Act, authorizing construction of the Central Arizona Project, one of the largest Bureau of Reclamation projects ever constructed. The 336-mile system is an engineering marvel, bringing Colorado River Water to central and southern Arizona. It is the state's single largest renewable water supply and critical to the economic health of Arizona.

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For more information, visit
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CENTRAL ARIZONA PROJECT

Big Things continued from page 5

Arizona's Young Farmer & Rancher Program Brought home a Winner and had two competitors competing in Nashville



Fourth place Young Farmer & Rancher Achievement Award winner Cassie Lyman of Arizona received a Case IH 40" combination roll cabinet and top chest and a \$500 Case IH parts card, courtesy of Case IH.

One of our Arizona ranchers comes back a national winner. Fourth place Young Farmer & Rancher Achievement Award winner Cassie Lyman of Arizona received a Case IH 40" combination roll cabinet and top chest and a \$500 Case IH parts card, courtesy of Case IH.

Our Gila County Farm Bureau President, Lyman is a cattle rancher from Central Arizona. She and her husband, Jared, have four boys and are very involved in Farm Bureau. Cassie just retired as the Arizona Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher chair but was recently elected to be the Gila County Farm Bureau President. You can usually find Lyman volunteering for Ag in the Classroom or working on the ranch. Lyman also homeschools her boys and is very involved in her 4-H community and church. Though

she is a native of Utah she has made herself home here in the great state of Arizona!

Lyman is not new to the YF&R contests, she has already competed in Discussion Meet and the Excellence of Ag Contest.

Additionally, Alanna Riggs of Cochise County, competed in the Discussion Meet on behalf of Arizona Farm Bureau. Riggs is a fourth-generation Arizona cattle rancher on both her mother and father's side of the family.

American's Zippy Duvall Re-Elected and National Priorities Set

While the main Annual Meeting concluded by Monday, delegate work was just getting started. Delegates to the American Farm Bureau Federation's 2018 Annual Convention last month unanimously re-elected American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall. Delegates also approved measures to help assure a prosperous agricultural and rural economy in the coming year and beyond.



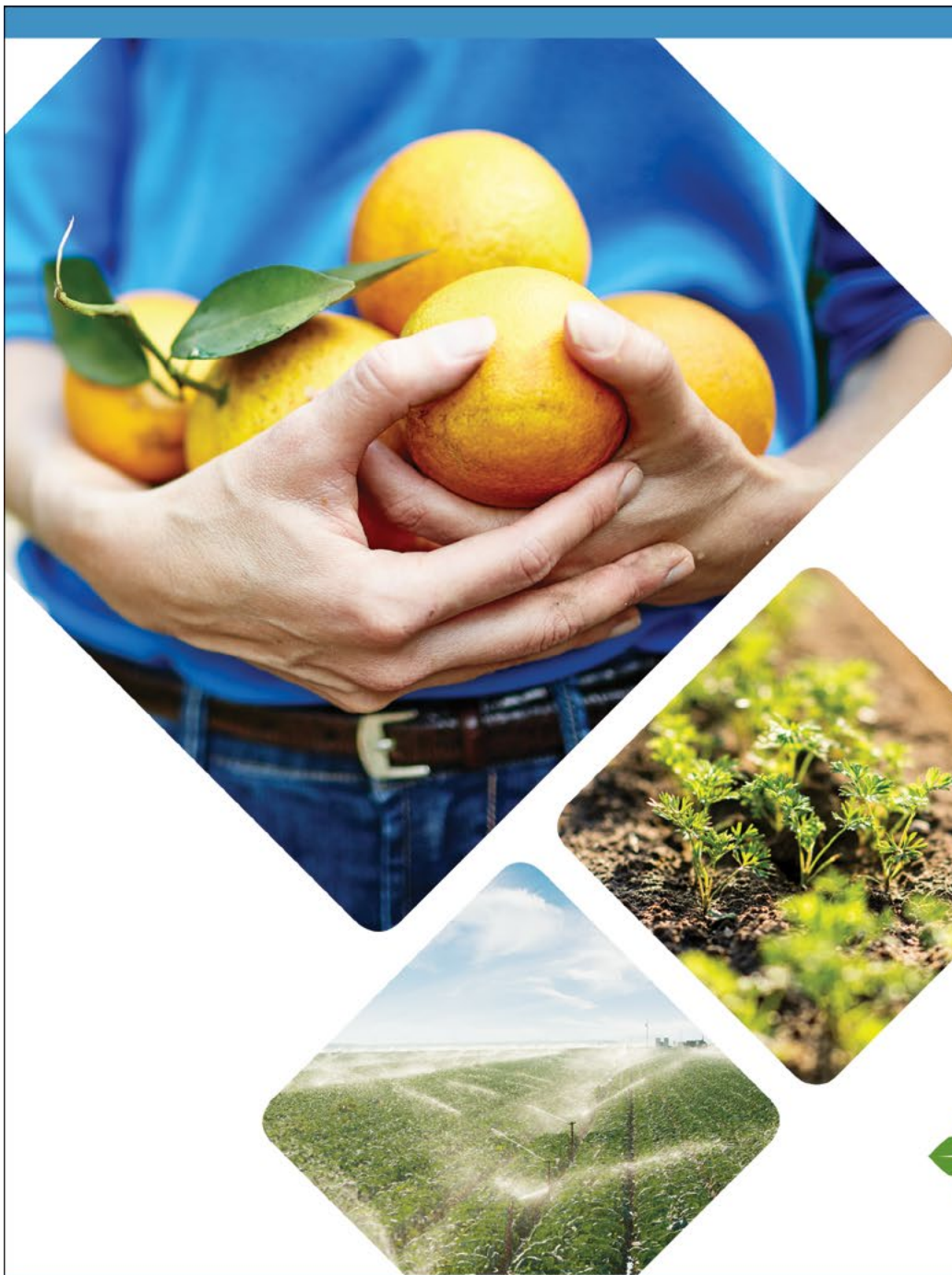
Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse and First Vice President John Boelts discuss the issues during AFBF's delegate session.

Resolutions approved by farmer and rancher delegates from across the nation ran the gamut of issues, from trade to regulatory reform, crop insurance, biotechnology and more.

"Today's actions give us a clear roadmap at a time when farmers are on the verge of their fifth consecutive year of shrinking net farm income," Duvall said. "Despite these difficulties, we remain optimistic: Official Washington feels more like a partner than it did just a short time ago. We have real opportunities to make progress in policy that we have not had in the past."

In the meantime, three of Arizona's measures pushed to the national level were approved. Among other things, delegates approved measures supporting:

- An improved Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) program to decrease risk-management disparities across counties
- A flexible cotton support program that considers cotton seed, cotton lint or both to help beleaguered cotton growers
- Strengthened and more flexible risk management and safety-net programs for dairy farmers
- Permission for workers to seek employment from more than one farmer under the H2A program
- Trade and trade agreements that strengthen market opportunities for U.S. agriculture
- Elimination of sunset provisions in trade agreements, to give certainty to businesses into the future
- Modification of NAFTA to improve market access to difficult Canadian dairy markets, in addition to improved food-safety standards for imported products
- An end to use of non-GMO labels on products that do not have GMO alternatives
- A \$1 per member increase in dues paid by state affiliates of the American Farm Bureau Federation
- Support for the use of gene-editing techniques such as CRISPR, along with a voluntary and uniform labeling program for such products. 🐄



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Why Grassroots Involvement is a Real Game Changer

By State Senator Sine Kerr (District 13) and partner in Buckeye-based Kerr Family Dairy

It only took one unpleasant experience speaking with individuals at a casual dinner party to realize I needed to make a change in the way I approached socially-and emotionally-charged topics related to agriculture.

Initially, the conversation was amicable with thoughts and ideas freely exchanged. But when I mentioned that conventional and organic milk had the same nutritional value, oh my, did that set one of the guests off on a tirade against conventional farmers. I felt I needed to match her level of hysteria – and I easily obliged!

Nothing positive was accomplished through that exchange and it left me feeling upset and angry with myself for not maintaining my composure. I missed a fantastic opportunity to at least give some thoughtful, calm insight about how every type of farmer cares for their animals and the quality of the milk they produce.

I decided to get help and get help fast! I needed to only look as far as my Farm Bureau.

I began to participate in training events that offered resources and genuine



Surrounded by family, Sine Kerr was sworn in last month as senator from legislative district 13.

experience in how to relate to people's concerns regarding how their food is produced. I learned why I needed to keep my emotions in check, how to listen first, ask a few key questions, then calmly and factually share how we care for our cows and crops on our farm.

It took some practice shaping my message, but over time it became easier to control my own emotions and I could tell that people really were listening even when they

didn't completely agree. I no longer dread an encounter or embarrass myself. Not every conversation ends with the other person totally on board, but at least the needle moves in the right direction.

When Duty Calls

In the meantime, I became more and more involved. It really began through Arizona Farm Bureau's Women's Leadership Committee's events such as Legislative Ag Fest and Legislative Day at the state capitol, plus Farm Bureau trips to Washington D.C. to meet our congressional delegation. Ultimately, because of a vacant seat in my district for the upcoming election in 2018, I filed the necessary paperwork early with the Secretary of State's office and just like that I became a candidate running for the Arizona House of Representatives.

Then, in an unforeseen turn of events, Arizona Congressman Trent Franks resigned his seat, my legislative district Senator then resigned to run for the congressional seat, and our district was left with an empty senate seat. To fill the seat, three of us were nominated from the same area of the district. Each of us gave a three-minute speech with the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors ultimately voting on a chosen candidate.

Their vote placed me in the Legislative District 13 senate seat formerly held by Steve Montenegro, R-Litchfield Park, who is now running for the congressional post formerly held by Representative Franks.

As I write this (January 7th), tomorrow morning I will raise my right hand and with my left hand on my late father-in-law's Bible, I will become the next state Senator from LD13.

When passion for your livelihood meets leadership training and preparation, there is no limit to what opportunities are available.

Farm Bureau not only teaches and trains you, they take you!

With so few of us producing our food and fiber, it is even more critical that when we have opportunities to engage with our non-farming friends, we do so in a manner that has the best chance of success to change their mind and transform their view of modern agriculture.

I encourage everyone to take advantage of the fantastic seminars and courses available through Arizona Farm Bureau on the topics of consumer engagement. It can be a real game changer for you too! 📱

Editor's note: Senator Kerr is a recent graduate of Project CENTRL, the statewide rural leadership training program.

Grain Commodity Experts See No Major Changes in Grain Prices

Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

U.S. grain prices and crop demand for 2017-2018 will likely show no major changes, according to Dr. Keith Coble, former chief economist for Senate Agriculture Committee Republicans and the head of the Agricultural Economics Department at Mississippi State University. Coble spoke to workshop attendees during the American Farm Bureau Federation's 2018 Annual Convention & IDEAg Trade Show recently about global crop trends and the U.S. farm policy outlook for the upcoming year. Trends for 2018 will be like 2017, unless a major disruption occurs, such as weather or foreign market changes, Coble said. "We are really not seeing anything that is significantly moving the markets up or down in the short-term," said Coble. "Markets are going to see mostly sideways movement. Cotton is the most promising of the commodities."



Arizona's own grain commodity expert concurs. "Without a significant crop production disruption in a major production hub there will be little reason for price strength," concluded Eric Wilkey, Arizona Grain, Inc. President. "Further, pressure on U.S. prices will be exerted by the relative dollar strength, threats to export trade by lack of progress on NAFTA updates and any meaningful progress in bi-lateral trade negotiations in lieu of the multilateral negotiations that have been abandoned."

Wilkey didn't stop there but suggested clear strategies for improving agriculture commodity markets. "Improving our rural and transportation infrastructure, bringing meaningful competition to rail transportation rates and the successful engagement in new trade agreements that are mutually beneficial are the best way out of the malaise of our growing surplus of farm commodities. Our competitors in the world are all working diligently to capture our market share as we wallow in dysfunctional behavior."

The Workshop's Coble addressed the outlooks on global and U.S. markets for each of the major crop markets separately – corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton and rice – predicting not much change will occur.

He also spoke about the future of crop insurance.

"The overall percentage of the farm bill taken up by the farm commodity program has diminished, because of the shift away from Title I programs toward crop insurance programs," he said.

The presentation concluded with audience questions about Coble's opinion of the next farm bill and the North American Free Trade Agreement. Coble said the farm bill will likely receive minor tweaks because of the shortened window that comes with an election year. 📱

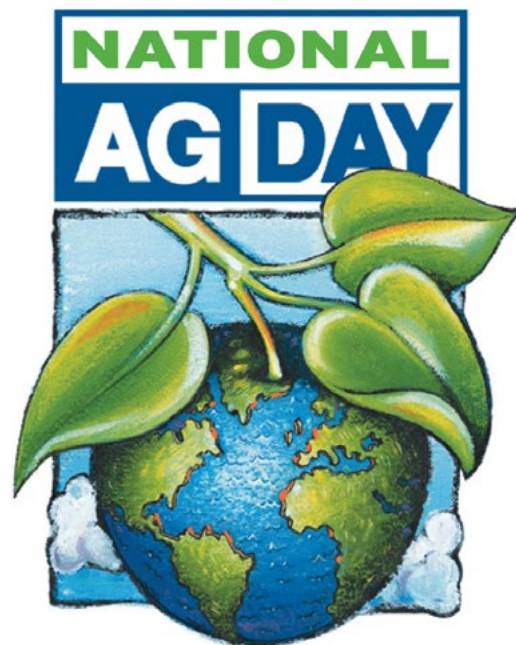
Celebrate Ag Day with Ag in the Classroom!

National Ag Day began 44 years ago. It was created to recognize and celebrate the contribution of agriculture in our everyday lives. At a time when people are so far removed from agriculture, on average 3 to 4 generations, it is important that they understand where their food and fiber come from.

Did you know that today, one farmer can produce enough food to feed 155 people for the entire year? In 1960, that same farmer could provide enough food to feed just 26 people. Come learn farm and ranch facts such as these and participate in hand-on activities with Ag in the Classroom at the Roots N Boots Rodeo in Queen Creek March 16-18.

This FREE educational booth will be open March 16th from 2:00pm-7:00pm, March 17th 9:00am-7:00pm, and March 18th 11:00am-4:00pm.

Questions? Contact Ag in the Classroom at aite@azfb.org 📱



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 \$67,000. We extend a hearty "Thank You" to the many donors that contributed either through our letter writing campaign or through a special grant. Your generous donation to the Educational Farming Company helped us reach our goal of connecting with nearly 100,000 students, teachers and parents.

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! This school year we believe we can reach over 100,000 students, parents and teachers.

Please consider a donation in 2018! 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 Katie Aikins at 480.635.3608. 📱

Arizona Agriculture Loses Another Hero

Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

On my hero list, I have those who I call the quiet heroes. Sylvia Manterola, who passed away recently, was one of those.

She and her sisters were always doing. Doing something. And, that's besides running a family business, which I'll get to in a moment.

Her family will remember Manterola for all sorts of things, but the Farm Bureau family will remember her for her work, along with her sisters Marie and Carmen, cooking the lamb burritos at Arizona Farm Bureau's annual Ag Fest. Over the decades if you've eaten at least one lamb burrito you can say you've digested a bit of history and tradition.

"She always just kept the family together and the business," says her younger sister Carmen Auza, former Arizona Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Chair and rancher with her husband, Joe. "Regarding the lamb Burritos, Marie and I would always cut up the meat and Sylvia would cook it that morning, pack it up and head into Phoenix. She always had to taste it to test the flavor and make sure everything was just right. She was a really good cook. She and mother would cook a big dinner when we'd shear and ship [the sheep]. They cooked a gourmet meal for everyone. And, anyone who came was welcome."

This year, everyone noted something was missing at Ag Fest. It was the Manterola sisters. It was a bit of tradition for them to be there with their smiles and engagement. But, we took our posts and moved on during the event. Sylvia would want it that way.

"I don't know if I can stop crying," said Rhonda



The three Manterola sisters, Marie Guappone, Sylvia Manterola and Carmen Auza, have always been involved in industry and community activities and fully devoted to family.

Vanderslice, Farm Bureau member from Pinal County and agent for Farm Bureau Financial Services that evening at Ag Fest. "Sylvia was so special to me; to all of us." Vanderslice helps with the Pinal County Farm Bureau booth at Ag Fest and has done so for years. She's shouldered right along with the Manterola sisters in passing out the popular lamb burritos. "They made me an expert burrito tortilla roller. Sylvia is truly a legacy. All the sisters are a legacy."

Sylvia's Story

Inheriting a rich Spanish and French Basque heritage, Sylvia Manterola was born in Winslow, Arizona the oldest of three sisters and one brother. She grew up on the

Tillman ranch 75 miles south of Winslow. She spoke only Spanish when she started school in Glendale but quickly learned English and taught the rest of the family. She and her sisters were instrumental in helping their parents become American citizens.

She attended ASU when it was Arizona State College and majored in business. While trying to decide what her career would be, she tragically lost her Dad at age 21 and began helping her Mom manage the family's farm business. She quickly became the Chief Executive Officer. If you want to know about what it takes to get sheep herders from Peru, Mexico and Chile, ask the Manterola family. She was active in her church, the Arizona Wool Producers, Cattle Growers and Pinal County Farm Bureau.

In 2014, Sylvia Manterola received the Arizona Farm Bureau Heritage Award during the organization's 93rd Annual conference celebrating farmers and ranchers throughout Arizona. The Heritage Award is given to individuals and families that are involved in agriculture and have given extraordinary voluntary service to their industry and to their Farm Bureau.

With never much fanfare, Sylvia simply did what had to be done. And, my take on how she approached things is that she was a bit stubborn. We've all been told that even when bankers and other business professionals told her to just sell the family business, she and the family remained steadfastly determined to succeed.

So, Sylvia Manterola is one of my heroes: Much was done; little was said. She was a doer and will always be loved and appreciated by family and friends. 🐾

Rural Leadership Program Applications Due March 15th

Arizona's Center for Rural Leadership, Project CENTRL, is now accepting applications for Class 27. Rural leaders, farmers, ranchers, and individuals working in businesses that serve agriculture or rural Arizona who want to make a difference in their community are encouraged to apply.



Project CENTRL is a premier leadership development program with over 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.

"Project CENTRL gives participants a life-changing experience in just one year," explains CENTRL Board President Cheryl Goar. "The people you will meet in your class, the travel across the state and the leadership skills you will gain promise to give you that boost you might be looking for to go to the next level, whatever it is you choose to do to improve rural Arizona." Goar serves as the Executive Director of the Arizona Nursery Association, and is a Past President of AZ Society of Association Executives.

The program is a competitively selected, tuition-free, 12-month leadership development program. Each class has 16 people, and visits seven different sites throughout the state and includes seminars in Mexico and in Washington, D.C. The curriculum is designed to meet you where you are in your leadership journey and builds personal leadership skills, educates on issues facing rural Arizona, and connects leaders to each other and experts.

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). Applicants must be at least 25 years of age by June 2018 and a full-time resident of 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 602-827-8227. All application materials are due on March 15, 2018 but candidates are encouraged to complete and submit earlier. 🐾



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