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THE LEGACY OF KEVIN ROGERS WILL LIVE ON IN EACH OF US

By Stefanie Smallhouse, Arizona Farm Bureau President

To build a legacy, you must leave something behind that will endure long after you have gone. We often recognize legacies by naming buildings, streets, or towns after great people who made great contributions in the way of ideas, service, or financial support. Other legacies are much more subtle, not because they are any less meaningful, but because their mark is left behind through their influence on others. Kevin Rogers did just that with almost everyone he knew. He was a man of God, family-focused, an agricultural statesman, a friend to all, and a champion for young people.

The best way to teach is to lead by example and Kevin's faith in God was evident in the way he led his life from day to day. He always conducted himself as if God were sitting at his side. During a time when the expectations of society have fallen – Kevin never lowered his own standards or strayed from his moral compass. **As part of his legacy, others will understand that you do not have to bend to the "ways of the world" to influence outcomes.**

Second, only to his faith, was his family. Kevin's family was the center of his universe. Although his service in Farm Bureau took him away from home so many days a year, his family was always top of mind. I had many conversations with him over the years about what the kids were doing and how much he appreciated and loved Janel for her willingness to keep life "in order" while he was away. He especially loved his time helping the kids with their show animals, traveling the country looking for the best swine genetics, or moving them back and forth to school. **As part of his legacy, others will understand the importance of loving and supporting your family at every opportunity, even when you cannot always be with them.**

Kevin had farming in his blood and invested much of his life in service to farming and ranching families. Whether this was for the cotton industry, serving on national advisory boards, or his decades of service to Arizona Farm Bureau – most notably his 14 years as President and Assistant Goodwill Grill Master – I knew him to be an agricultural statesman. While serving on his officer team, I learned about his way of diplomacy through observing how he interacted with policymakers, members, and staff. He had a way of disarming people and making them feel comfortable in every formal setting. He opened every congressional meeting by first relating to whomever we were meeting with on a personal level - which meant he took a lot of time building relationships. I never went into a meeting feeling he was unprepared to lead us, and he never excluded anyone from participating in the conversation. If you have never moderated such a meeting, it can be difficult. Kevin placed foremost importance on members being able to speak for themselves and easing them into the conversation, so it was seamless. I do not believe I ever saw him lose his temper or disrespect others during what were at times difficult and tense conversations over especially critical issues. In fact, a couple of those very situations were between the two of us; we did not always agree on how to get the job done but we respected each other for our differences and perspectives. I do not think I have ever known a person so willing to set aside personal hubris to preserve a friendship or working relationship as I knew Kevin to do. **As part of his legacy, others**



Kevin Rogers passed the Arizona Farm Bureau presidency on to Stefanie Smallhouse at the end of 2017.

will understand how important relationships, temperament, and humility are to advocating for something bigger than oneself.

No matter if you had met Kevin 4 months ago or 40 years ago – he treated everyone as if they were long-time friends. In traveling around the country, I often meet folks for the first time who ask me, "How is Kevin doing?" He was a great ambassador for Arizona agriculture just through his friendly nature and he took a sincere interest in the lives of others – there are many who have leaned on him during especially tough times. He liked to tease and banter back and forth, which I always appreciated because we would have a good laugh and it would sometimes take the sting out of a hard day. **As part of his legacy, others will understand that to have good friends you must be a good friend.**

He had a way of interacting with kids that really connected with them. I know this because my daughter, Hannah, adored him. I think it is because he took the time to talk

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A CONVERSATION ABOUT ARIZONA'S BIOECONOMY AND AG'S OPPORTUNITIES: GEORGE FRISVOLD

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

Recognized along with colleagues Ashley Kerna Bickel and Dari Duval for the Extension's Economic Impact Assessment Team Award, George Frisvold, Ph.D., leads what I personally call the "A-Team" in economic research. Their agricultural-based economic assessments on the local, state and national levels have helped define and advance the true contributions of Arizona agriculture's \$23.3 billion industry. Dr. Frisvold and the team approach their economic research with the expected caution, calmness and curiosity required of one mining for nuggets of understanding.

Joining the faculty UArizona in 1997, Dr. Frisvold previously was a visiting scholar at the National Institute of Rural Development in Hyderabad, India, a lecturer at Johns Hopkins University, and Chief of the Resource and Environmental Policy Branch of USDA's Economic Research Service.

His research interests include domestic and international environmental policy, as well as the causes and consequences of technological change in agriculture. In 1995-96, Dr. Frisvold served as a Senior Economist for the President's Council of Economic Advisers with responsibility for agricultural, natural resource, and international trade issues.

He is currently the Bartely P. Cardon Chair of Agribusiness Economics and Policy and an associate editor for two journals: Pest Management Science and Water Economics and Policy. In 2020, Dr. Frisvold co-authored the National Academies of Science, Engineering, & Medicine report, Safeguarding the Bioeconomy: *Finding Strategies for Understanding, Evaluating, and Protecting the Bioeconomy while Sustaining Innovation and Growth.*

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UArizona's Frisvold, "Agriculture is absolutely central to many of the recent scientific and economic changes we've seen in the last 30 years."



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FIRST QUARTER 2022 REGULATORY COMMENT REVIEW: A FLURRY OF LETTER WRITING

By Ana Otto, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

The Arizona Farm Bureau Federation (AZFB) regularly prepares regulatory comments in response to federal and state agency proposed rules, requests for information, and other agency actions. This year there was an uptick in the number of regulatory comments AZFB submitted in the first quarter of 2022 with 11 comments letters submitted as compared to 6 last year. Below is a summary of the regulatory dockets that AZFB has engaged in thus far in 2022.

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) – Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) on Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Settings – AZFB’s comments noted that given the various programs and standards already in place to address heat injury and illness prevention the advanced notice of rulemaking by OSHA is unnecessary. Instead, more effort should be put into promoting a better understanding of current laws, regulations, and programs for both employers and employees. The comments also noted a single heat standard or temperature does not consider variability in temperature and heat across the U.S and that there are a number of factors outside of an employers’ control that can affect an individual’s sensitivity to heat.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) – Revision to the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Wolf – AZFB’s comments opposed the FWS proposal to revise the target population of Mexican gray wolves that would essentially create a population floor with no cap or upper limits. The comments also noted the following: our opposition to the proposal of temporarily restricting take provisions and thus limiting the ability to protect livestock and domestic animals from wolf depredation and attack; the need to include and compensate for indirect losses caused by wolf presence; and maintaining the designation of the Mexican gray wolf experimental population as nonessential.

Arizona Department of Game and Fish (AZGF) – Proposed Hunt Guidelines for Fall 2023 through Spring 2028 Hunting Season – AZFB’s comments noted the important role AZGF plays in managing the state’s wildlife, including predators, as excessive populations can be destructive to both farmland and livestock. The comments also raised a question of concern regarding the Department’s proposal to remove a provision allowing for additional spring bear seasons.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration – Adverse Effect Wage Rate Methodology for the Temporary Employment of H-2A Nonimmigrants in Non-Range Occupations in the United States – AZFB’s comments incorporated by reference an analysis conducted by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), which noted the proposal by DOL would result in significant additional labor costs for Arizona farmers who use the H-2A program.

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) - Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Implementation – AZFB’s comments incorporated by reference the comments submitted by AFBF, which answer specific questions posed by the NTIA related to the development and implementation of new broadband programs. AFBF’s responses addressed the questions for which the organization has policy and is relevant to our advocacy efforts regarding broadband.

Environment Protection Agency, Revised Definition of Waters of the United States – AZFB’s comments noted our strong support of the Navigable Waters Protection Rule (NWPR) and explained our concerns with the proposed rule, which would revert to definitions of WOTUS that were unclear and test the limits of federal authority. Our comments also urged the agency to pause its rulemaking until the Supreme Court has had a chance to make a decision in a current case that is reviewing the proper scope of jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act.

Arizona Department of Agriculture (AZDA) – Cage-Free Egg Rulemaking – AZFB’s comments outlined the organization’s reasons opposing the proposed rule mandating cage-free egg production including among others the rulemaking does not reflect objective best management practices, exceeds the authority of the AZDA, and lacks an adequate economic impact evaluation.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services – Threatened Species Status with Section 4(d) Rule for the Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl – AZFB’s comments opposed the proposal to list the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl in particular because

a majority of its range is in Mexico and the listing places an undue burden for conservation in the U.S. However, should FWS move forward with its proposal, AZFB noted the 4(d) rule does provide those impacted by the listing with the flexibility needed to effectively implement conservation, restoration, and habitat improvements.

U.S. Department of State – Schedule of Fees for Consular Services; Nonimmigrant and Special Visa Fees – AZFB’s comments incorporated by reference to an analysis conducted by AFBF and noted our concern for farmers who use the H-2A program and their ability to absorb the increased costs of obtaining labor due to increased visa fees. The comments also noted that the Department of State did not provide a reasonable explanation for increasing visa fees or how the additional funds would improve services.

U.S. Department of Interior - Request for Information (ROI) to Inform Interagency Efforts to Develop the Stewardship Atlas – AZFB’s comments noted that if the 30 x 30 initiative focuses on lands outside of those already managed by the federal, state, and tribal our members will be further hindered to use private land to the benefit of our state. The comments also noted the following: our opposition to any effort by the federal government to purchase state lands to meet the 30 x 30 initiative; the need to recognize conservation practices and programs already implemented by farmers and ranchers; recommended the Atlas account for regulations and programs that discourage conservation on federal lands, thus recognizing conservation efforts that would be in place, but are not due to delays outside of the control of lessees; and that the Atlas recognize the benefits of working lands and rangeland health actives and projects.

Arizona Department of Water Resources – Proposed legislation to create the Arizona Water Authority – AZFB’s comments shared observations and perspectives regarding legislation that would create the Arizona Water Authority. The comments noted several areas of concern where additional guardrails are needed to ensure that a new water entity is effective in serving the needs of all water users.

For more information about a specific comment letter, contact Ana Kennedy Otto at advocacy@azfb.org.

CHICKS, CHICKS AND MORE CHICKS!

By Katie Aikins, Arizona Farm Bureau Education Director

What came first, the chicken or the egg?

Hundreds of Arizona students discussed this and more as they cracked into the world of embryology with the Ag in the Classroom (AIRC) Poultry Curriculum Kit. This highly coveted resource provides lessons and all the materials needed to hatch chicks in the classroom. Sixteen Poultry Kits visited classrooms and over 100 chicks were hatched.



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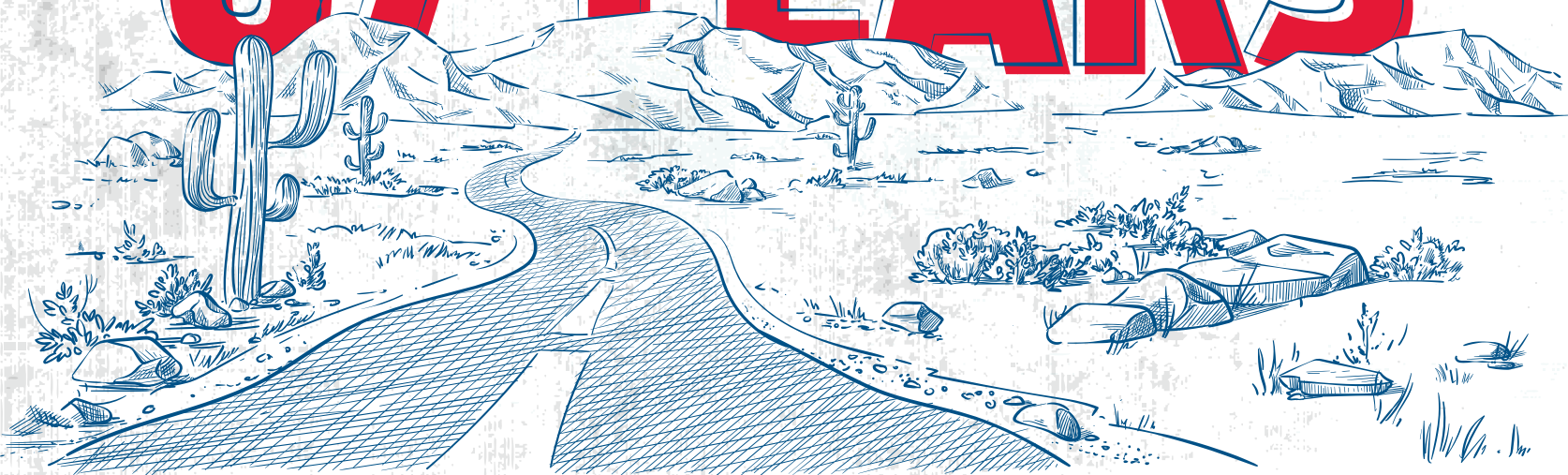
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THE LEGACY OF KEVIN ROGERS *continued from Page 1*

to them and not past them. He respected young people and in turn, they respected his thoughts and advice. He was known for his service to youth organizations like 4-H, FFA, Maricopa County Fair, and the Arizona National Livestock Show. The last communication I had with Kevin was a text about 10 days before his passing asking that I remind folks about the different fairs coming up and the priority for fair animals at processing facilities. He was worried that all the issues with processing delays would impact kids selling their animals. **As part of his legacy, others will understand to take time with the youth and respect their individualism and ideas.**

Kevin was always very meticulous and ran a tight ship during meetings, which set the bar high for me when he passed me the gavel. For the past four years during the AZFB Annual Meeting, he chose to sit directly in front of me during the delegate session – to my chagrin. At first, I thought it was to rattle me a little in his amusing way, but in the later years, I realized it was actually to keep me calm and focused. Over the years he and I would connect via text, phone call, or the occasional lunch to catch up with the goings-on in Arizona agriculture and life in general. I appreciated his input and occasional counterviews because I knew that his ultimate concern was always for the success of the agriculture industry. There is no question that he loved Farm Bureau and all the people who make up our organization. **As part of his legacy others will understand that if we look out for each other, we all succeed.**

Life's journey is mostly about the people we meet and how we choose to let them influence, for the good or bad, this ongoing process of who we become as individuals. The legacy of Kevin Rogers will live on in how he influenced others for the good, and in turn, made the Arizona agriculture community that much stronger. I will miss him and hope that Janel, Taylor, Kevin Gary, and Morgan will find comfort in the blanket of healing prayer from people all over Arizona and the country who respected and found friendship in Kevin. 🚗



Kevin presenting the Arizona Flag at American Farm Bureau Federation Conference.

ARIZONA'S BIOECONOMY AND AG'S OPPORTUNITIES *continued from Page 1*

And so, with his research efforts in the bioeconomy recently completed, I decided to ask him in our conversation series just what “nuggets of understanding” we in agriculture can glean from the research and why we can be excited about the future.

Arizona Agriculture: Please give an overview of the Bioeconomy. Kind of the 30,000-foot view.

Frisvold: In their recent report, *Safeguarding the Bioeconomy*, *The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine* (NASEM) recommended the following formal definition:

“The U.S. bioeconomy is economic activity that is driven by research and innovation in the life sciences and biotechnology, and that is enabled by technological advances in engineering and in computing and information sciences.”

In the last 30 years or so, there have been tremendous advances in biological sciences and information and data sciences, and computing capacity.

The bioeconomy represents the coming together of these advances, not just in terms of scientific knowledge, but in terms of practical commercial applications. This means new goods and services that were science fiction years ago that are fast becoming part of the economy. This includes bio-based products, the use of genetic information, and advances in medical diagnostics and devices. There are applications in food and agriculture, energy, and medicine.

Arizona Agriculture: What does this mean for agriculture and especially Arizona agriculture? Perhaps, this is the “What’s in it for me” question.

Frisvold: Different countries and groups have different definitions of the bioeconomy, but a central theme is developing new bio-based products, particularly those that substitute for fossil fuels. All agriculture and forestry are bio-based.

Arizona agriculture is right at the center of the bioeconomy as it is constantly adopting cutting-edge advances in biological and information sciences. Think of genetically modified crops, using CRIPR technology for gene editing, precision agriculture relying on advanced geographical information systems, growing crops for energy production, or growing guayule to substitute for synthetic rubber in tire production.

Certain advances could pose challenges for traditional agriculture as well. For example, “cellular agriculture,” may use animal cell culture technology to grow animal tissue in a lab, rather than from a live animal. If accepted by consumers, what would this mean for cattle ranching?

Arizona Agriculture: According to your research paper on this, under the Bioeconomy’s agriculture section, we’ll have four main criteria for inclusion: genetic engineering, advanced molecular biology techniques, large informatics databases and computational techniques. Is there one main area or criteria in this section where you see Arizona really excelling? Or all areas? And why?

Frisvold: Arizona has the capacity to excel in all these areas. One key part of the bioeconomy is biofuels and bioenergy. Traditionally there has been a lot of emphasis on bioenergy from corn and soybeans; the Midwest has a huge advantage there. There’s a reason they call it the Corn Belt. But researchers here in Arizona have been working on biofuels from algae and sorghum, so time will tell.

People are also developing DNA-based tissue diagnostics to manage plant diseases as well as applications in genomics in bioinformatics. In Arizona agriculture, the adop-

tion of genetically modified (GM) cotton and corn is widespread. But advances go beyond GM crops. Growers are adopting precision agriculture techniques. They are using data systems not just for production, but also to assure food safety. It is really the marriage of infotech and biotech.

This will also include the use of drones and robotics. For decades, growers have been adopting IPM (integrated pest management) techniques. IPM basically substitutes better information about biological processes for chemicals. Cotton production in Arizona has gone from a high-pesticide using system 30 years ago to a low-use one today. That’s been achieved by advances in both biotechnology and applying knowledge of biological systems.

Arizona Agriculture: In some respects, the Bioeconomy already exists, right? What’s making it so important now?

Frisvold:

The examples I’ve just given show that, yes, the bioeconomy is already here. Humans have been growing crops, raising livestock, brewing beer, burning wood for fuel, and using timber for building for millennia. And humans have been gathering biological materials to test their nutritional and medicinal potential for even longer. Economic activity surrounding the use of biological resources remains a fundamental part of modern

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economies. So why the recent surge in interest in “the bioeconomy?”

Three factors have contributed to this. First, advances in genetic engineering, DNA sequencing, and high-throughput molecular operations facilitated by robotic technologies have changed the way biological research is done and really opened the door for many commercial applications. Second, switching from exhaustible fossil fuels to renewable biological resources to produce electricity, fuel, and chemical-based manufactured products has become a priority in many countries. This shift to biological resources has been motivated by different policy goals: rural economic development, addressing climate change and energy self-reliance. In light of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, countries are thinking more of getting energy from domestic agriculture rather than from imports for Russia and others. Third, genetic materials and biodiversity have increasingly been viewed as inputs to the discovery and production of new pharmaceuticals and other biobased products.

Companies with histories in agricultural, chemical, and pharmaceutical production merged, reorganized, and acquired seed companies (and their stocks of crop germplasm) to expand into the development and sale of genetically modified (GM) crop varieties. The boundaries between the agribusiness, pharmaceutical, and chemical industries have been blurring. Companies are vying to be dominant players in not just one, but all three of these.

So, the bioeconomy represents new kinds of jobs using new kinds of technology to produce new bio-based products for companies organized in new ways.

Arizona Agriculture: What can we prepare for to take advantage of some of the Bioeconomy’s benefits?

Frisvold: This starts with education. What we found in the NASEM report is that there are a relatively small number of “hubs” (metro areas) that account for the bulk of biotechnology R&D and employment. These, in turn, are places with major research universities. Not everyone is going to be a university or spinoff company researcher, though. So, you must work down. What jobs are going to be possible for people with a bachelor’s degree? What types of training and certification opportunities could be made available at the community college level?

Next, is the biological science curriculum at the high school level adequate to prepare young people? So, looking at strengthening biological science learning at the high school level (or even earlier) is not too soon.

Good schools are also important as a means of attracting scientists to Arizona. A high-tech, science-based workforce is going to want high-quality education for their kids.

Arizona Agriculture: How should the UArizona prepare, or how have they been preparing, especially in their research, education and extension roles?

Frisvold: The UArizona is already right in the thick of things. Researchers are getting competitive federal grants for research; extension is helping farmers and ranchers adopt cutting-edge technologies.

4-H has an ongoing role in earlier-stage education in agriculture which relies so much on the biological sciences. In general, though, I think there is an underappreciation of how cutting-edge agriculture is in terms of science and technology applications.

If you look at the things I listed – genomics, genetic engineering, informatics, computation, climate change mitigation, renewable energy, energy self-reliance – agriculture is absolutely central. So, “selling” agriculture to younger folks is not just quaint and traditional but cutting edge in terms of advanced methods to address pressing social issues.


Arizona Agriculture: Says nationally-recognized farmer Larkin Martin, “Agriculture suffers from a lack of data interoperability. Pieces of software are often a special purpose. File formats are not standardized, often proprietary, and often incompatible across different pieces of software. Software is also designed primarily to quietly gather information from the farmer rather than assist the farmer with private business decisions.” I hear this often from our producers managing sophisticated agriculture operations. To move forward in a Bioeconomy, especially with large informatics databases and computational techniques, do we have the promise that some of these software/data-gathering challenges can be fixed? And how can farmers and ranchers be assured their data sharing is protected?

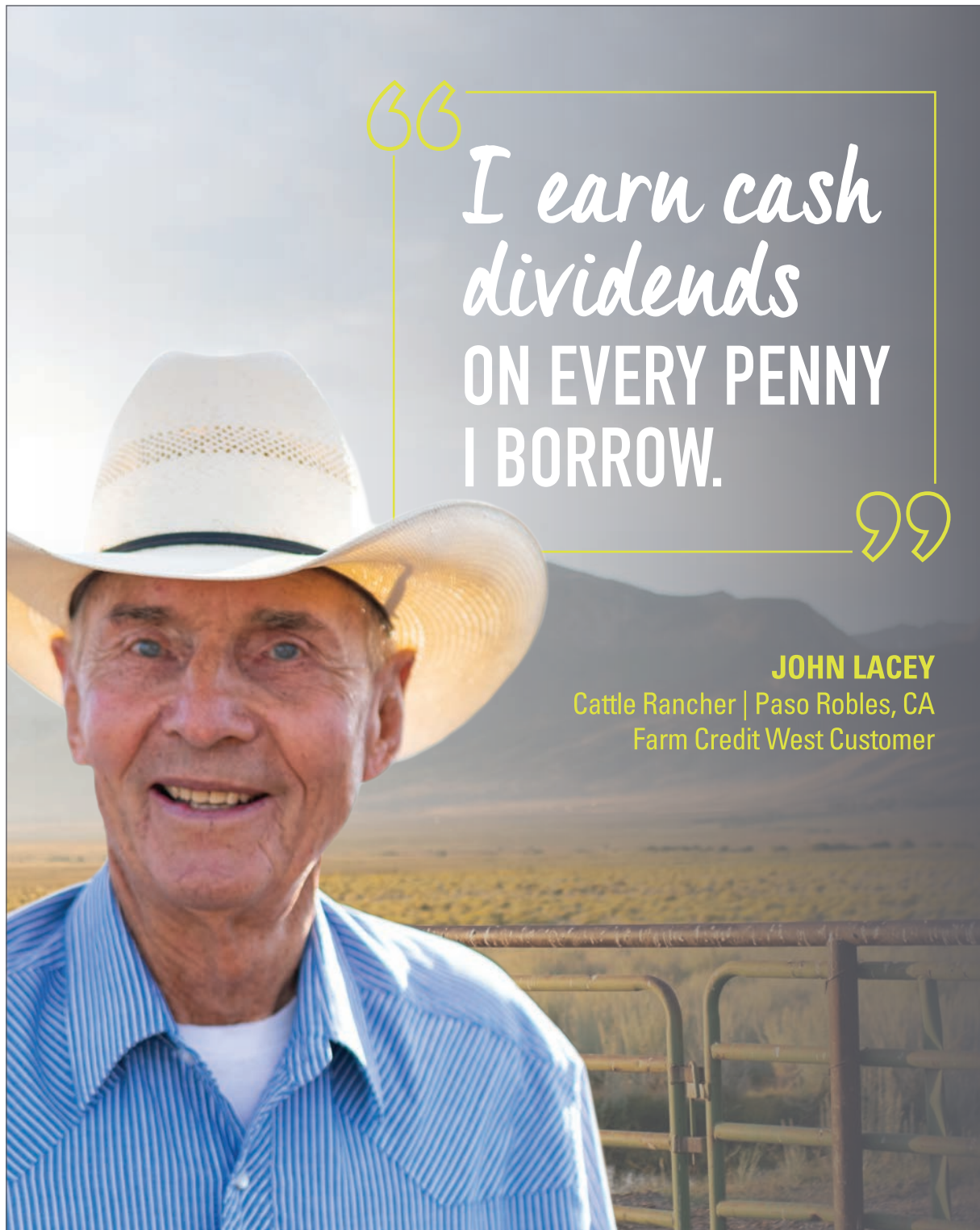
Frisvold: There’s a lot going on in this question, so let me unpack it a bit. There are two issues here. First, there has been a growth in lots of apps and decision tools that are cumbersome to use and not well integrated. Will this improve? Second, these systems gather a lot of personal and business data. How can we know the data provided will be secure and not misused? Let’s go to the first question. Many apps and decision tools advertise themselves as “one-stop shopping” for organizing data for planning and decision making. This promise is never really fulfilled. I’ve studied how people use different data sources for things like water management or wildfire management. What I’ve found is that people end up using multiple sources, because no single thing is sufficient. This leads to the problem that different systems are not standardized or compatible. You have multiple businesses developing different applications, so this shouldn’t be too surprising. How this often gets resolved is one company gets very large and crowds out the competition. This means that you have more compatibility but fewer choices.

The second question has to do with the security and uses (and potential misuses) of data people provide to businesses. I was part of the writing team for the NASEM Safeguarding the Bioeconomy report. The report was actually commissioned by the Office of Defense National Intelligence. One of ODNI’s concerns was potential future misuses of genetic and medical information that is being collected and compiled. Farmers and ranchers should always investigate how firms say they are using of sharing data that is provided to them. Look at the fine print. In addition to company practices, there are also risks from hacking by third parties. So, look at company track records with data security and security breaches. Cybersecurity is just part of doing business in the 21st Century. There might well be business opportunities for Arizona’s younger generation providing cybersecurity services for agricultural producers.

Arizona Agriculture: What excites you about the potential of the Bioeconomy and especially as it relates to agriculture and our economy?

Frisvold: As I said above, agriculture is absolutely central to many of the recent scientific and economic changes we’ve seen in the last 30 years. Also, agriculture is seen by many outside of agriculture as a key to solving many of society’s pressing problems.

This is refreshing as agriculture is often viewed unfortunately as backward or a culprit. I am currently working with colleagues in my department and in the Department of Biosystems Engineering to measure the economic contribution of Southern Arizona’s bioeconomy. It should be done sometime this fall. Nationally, we had estimated that the bioeconomy contributes about \$1 trillion (yes, trillion with a “t”) to the U.S. economy in today’s dollars. I’m curious to see what we find for Southern Arizona. I think it will highlight how important the bioeconomy is for the region’s overall economic health. It will also highlight how much activity is going on in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. 



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SCOTUS: HERE TO SAVE OUR BACON

By Chelsea McGuire, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Director



This Spring brought some very exciting news from the United States Supreme Court: SCOTUS has agreed to hear a challenge to California's Proposition 12.

Passed by California voters in 2018, Proposition 12 imposed animal husbandry standards for pig housing that go well beyond those that farmers and ranchers know to be effective. These standards required, among other things, a certain amount of space per hog, and will require costly and time-consuming changes to most pork production facilities.

And while farmers and ranchers are more than happy to adopt practices that actually track with animal husbandry and welfare realities, Proposition 12's rules are largely arbitrary – based more on consumer perception than on sound science.

Disagree as we may with standards set forth by California, there's little debate that the state has a right to impose those standards – however misguided – on producers within their borders. But here's the catch: California hardly raises any of its own pork. Instead, it imports more than 99 percent of the pork products sold in the state. That means that Proposition 12's impact will disproportionately fall on producers outside of California. Should California be able to tell Iowa, Minnesota, North Carolina, Illinois, or even Arizona farmers, how to house their hogs?

We believe the answer is a resounding no, and later this Fall, SCOTUS will take up that very question: does a state law with dramatic economic effects outside of the state, requiring widespread changes to a nationwide industry, violate the US Constitution?


The case will turn on how the Court decides to apply the Constitution's "dormant commerce clause." I will try to refrain from giving you too much of a Constitutional law lecture, but the commerce clause outlines that Congress shall have the power to regulate commerce among the several states. The Court has interpreted this to mean, by definition, the states do *not* have the power to regulate interstate commerce, and

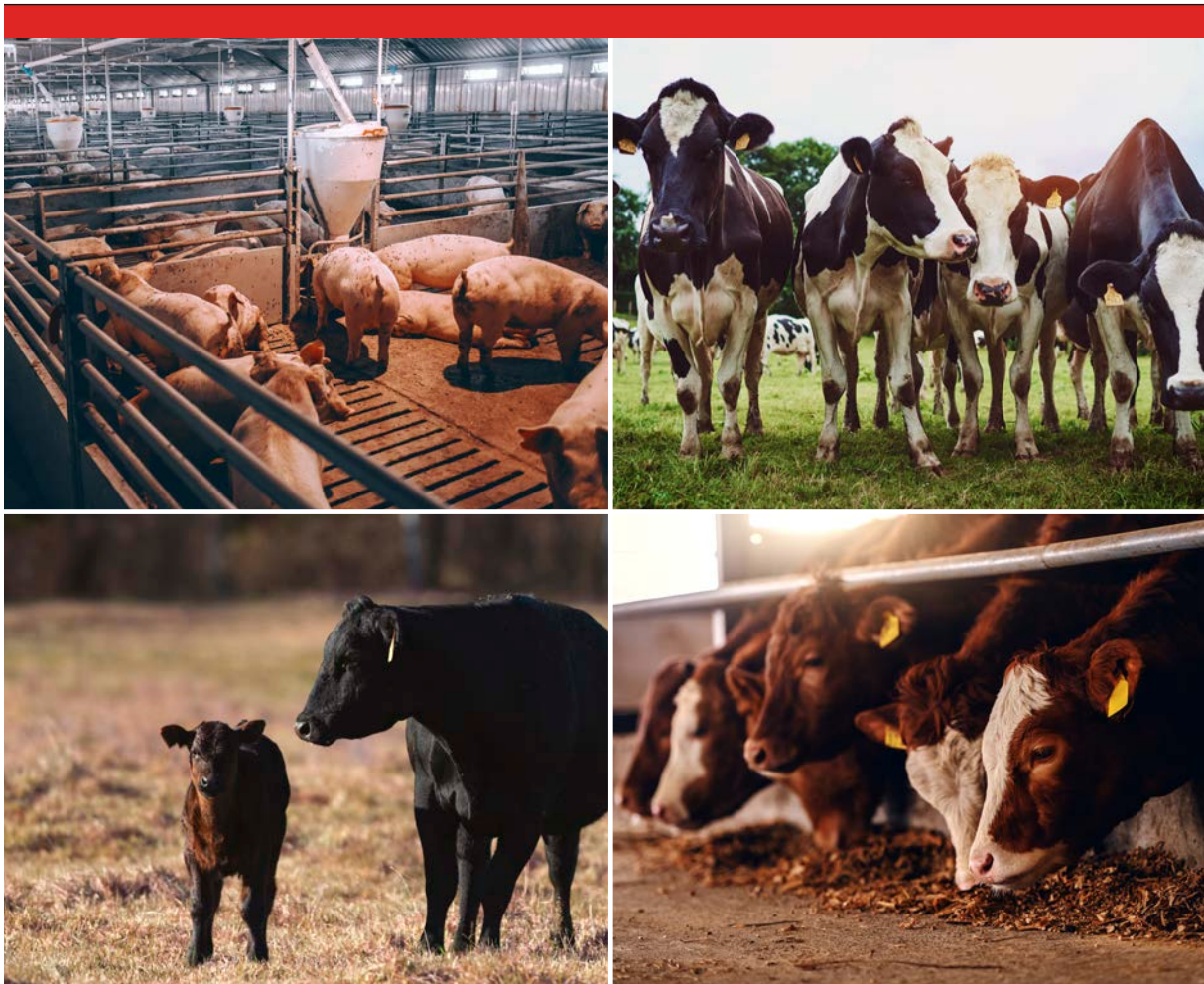
any state attempting to do so runs afoul of the US Constitution. This is known as the dormant commerce clause, and it has led to the Court invalidating state rules that make it prohibitively difficult for other states to engage in commerce across state lines. A state regulation cannot have a discriminatory effect on interstate commerce unless the local benefits of that rule are significant enough to outweigh the effect on out-of-state interests.

Why is this important? First, it's simply rare to see an issue we care about this deeply taken up by the Court (and with the Court's grant of cert on the WOTUS case, we're going to see it twice this year, a fact that has made this author far more excited than she cares to admit). Aside from a handful of cases that only SCOTUS can hear, the Court is not obligated the Supreme Court is not obligated to take a case simply because the litigants want them to. Instead, it takes four of the nine justices to decide that the case is worthy of the Court's consideration. This means that fewer than 1% of the cases sent to the Court are actually heard. So, on sheer numbers alone, the Court's decision to grant certiorari is exceptional. (Arizona Farm Bureau joined in an amicus brief urging the Court to take up the case.)

But more significantly, if the Court rules that Proposition 12 is indeed unconstitutional, it will put a huge roadblock in front of a thus-far successful tactic of radical animal rights groups. Using ballot initiatives to impose arbitrary standards in a state where such an initiative is politically popular but wording those initiatives such that they have an impact in states where they will have dire economic consequences, is a practice that stands to wreak havoc on agricultural production across the nation. The Court putting a stop to this tactic would be welcome news for farmers and ranchers across the country.

Finally, the outcome of this rule will be directly applicable to an administrative rule recently passed in our state. Despite the objections of the Arizona Farm Bureau, the Governor's Regulatory Review Council voted to approve a rule requiring that all eggs produced – and sold – in Arizona be from cage-free hens by the year 2025. If California's law is found to violate the Constitution, we will have another basis for challenging Arizona's rule, because it is yet another animal production standard that has a disparate impact on out-of-state producers.

Described by some as the "sleeper case" of this year's term, we agree that this case has the potential to have wide-reaching consequences across the nation. We will watch with great interest and participate however we can see this issue resolved in favor of the families who produce America's food and fiber. 



FARMER/RANCHER: SPEAK UP!

Advocating, communicating and educating your family and friends about Arizona agriculture might mean you must step out of your comfort zone. But you'll conclude it's worth it.



Even though public speaking is still ranked with death as one of the "most feared," it remains one of the "most important" ways to connect one-to-one and one-to-many with people. And, we have a solution: Fence Line.


Arizona Farm Bureau's Fence Line speakers' bureau is looking for our farm and ranch leaders willing to speak to the public and share a few stories and their passion for agriculture. Fence Line offers face-to-face presentations and the opportunity to talk directly with the public. The speakers' bureau also facilitates organizations' efforts to seek someone to speak about agriculture in Arizona.

You may end up as a guest speaker even without our help. If you do speak to a group about your agriculture practices, please let us know so we can track our outreach efforts and aggregate the numbers of people we reach.

Fence Line speaker topics include:

- Food Safety Today = Best practices
- Genetics
- Arizona agriculture history
- Arizona and Agriculture Water
- Understanding the Farm Bill
- Leadership: How to Pass the Baton
- Biotechnology
- What it Costs to Farm
- What Makes Arizona Agriculture Unique
- Buying Local
- Agritourism
- Animal Welfare
- Arizona's 5 C's... citrus, cattle, cotton, climate & copper
- Protecting your Agriculture
- How I grow/produce: Beef, Dairy, Grain, Hogs, Nursery plants, wine and more
- Yuma, "The Winter Salad Bowl" of the Nation

If you're willing to participate, give us a call. Additionally, we can assist you with any tips and insights you might need to participate as one of Arizona Farm Bureau's speakers.

For more information about Fence-Line, call (480) 635-3609 or email us at joelcarr@azfb.org. We can handle any topic you're interested in as it relates to Arizona agriculture! We'll keep you as a speaker in our Fence Line database. 

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TWO ARIZONANS GRADUATE FROM FARM BUREAU WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOOT CAMP

Staff Reports

Yavapai County Farm Bureau President and Mortimer Farms co-Owner Sharla Mortimer, and Arizona Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Chair and Arid State Land & Ag Associates Owner Shawn Wood, both from Arizona, graduated in March from Women's Communications Boot Camp hosted by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF).

The intensive four-day course completed by 16 farm and ranch women leaders featured hands-on sessions related to public speaking, working with the media and messaging. Graduates will use their training in a variety of ways such as participating in local media opportunities to strategically support Farm Bureau's policy work, sharing information with elected officials, and joining social media campaigns that spotlight today's agriculture.

"It's been only a few days since attending Women's Communication Boot Camp and I am still processing the experience," said Arizona's Wood. "The program provides an executive and quite honestly elite-level training in all facets of communication. I feel honored and privileged to be selected and attend the AFBF program in D.C. with 15 highly qualified women in agriculture from around the country. I highly encourage any woman considering the program to apply, and even again, until you get selected! It is a golden opportunity of executive-level training with the best mentors, coaches and knowledge base in the country."

"I loved boot camp," said Sharla Mortimer. "It is an amazing program and helped me to be a better advocate for agriculture. The American Farm Bureau Women's Committee Communications Boot Camp is definitely worth the investment. This program has taught me how to share my story in an effective way for our community to help us to protect American Agriculture. I look forward to speaking with people about my life's work."

From the national perspective: "Through this training, we're equipping women leaders with tools and skills they can use to effectively communicate about agriculture



Arizona Farm Bureau volunteer leaders Sharla Mortimer and Shawn Wood recently graduated from AFBF's Women's Leadership Communications Boot Camp.


in their communities and for Farm Bureau on local, state and national levels," said Isabella Chism, an Indiana row crop farmer and chair of the AFB Women's Leadership Committee.

Besides Arizona's Mortimer and Wood, Boot Camp graduates included Jana Carroll, Arkansas; Roxi McCormick, Colorado; Jennifer Duvall, Georgia; Theresa Gottbrath, Indiana; Melissa Huggett, Kentucky; Kayla Griffith, Maryland; Barbara Rogers-Scharneck, Massachusetts; Stacey Lauwers, Michigan; Emma Alexander, Missouri; Allison Cooper, North Carolina; Carie Moore, North Dakota; Melanie Fink, Pennsylvania; Megan Jernigan, Tennessee; and Sarah Scyphers, Virginia.

"AFBF is proud to continue offering this training, which provides a framework for participants to increase their engagement with consumers and elected officials while exploring new leadership roles," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall.

This is the 16th year of the program, which has 239 graduates and is open to all women involved in Farm Bureau. Another recent graduate from Arizona includes Pinal County farmer Nancy Caywood.

Added Wood, "Two issues I speak professionally in agriculture about are estate management and taxes, this typically takes place over tailgates and on front porches. Women's Communication Boot Camp provided a clearer picture and executive training to communicate concisely and confidently at any level of our government. I'm ready to voice the reasons to eliminate the estate tax for our farm and other farm and ranch owners to Congress if needed. It's vital to the preservation of agriculture and the food security of our country, that tax rates remain reasonable, estate taxes are extinguished and tools like 1031 exchanges remain available."

The American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee, in partnership with AFBF staff, hosts and provides training for Women's Communications Boot Camp. An application process is used to select the participants. A fall session of Boot Camp will be held Oct. 31 – Nov. 3, with applications opening in June. 

WEBINAR WEDNESDAYS ARE BACK! SAVE THE DATES!

By Elizabeth Rico, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Manager – Leadership & Business Development

Without a doubt American and Arizona farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses are some of the most resilient people in this country. They're steadfast, adaptable, innovative, and most importantly, they feed, clothe and provide essentials for the *entire world*. I'd even go so far as to say they're superheroes.

But what tools can we give our farm and ranch leaders when they want to improve their leadership and business skills? What resources are available to them to help them impact their communities and country? Personally, I think asking the question "How can we help?" and listening to the responses and giving them the tools to sharpen their skills is the best answer I've found.

The Answer, Webinar Wednesdays



Through our Webinar Wednesday series as part of our Leadership and Business development programming, we plan to host a series of webinars that are designed to cover topics that are relevant and on the forefront of our members' minds. We've designed a schedule of topics that we hope will be informative, start conversations, and help them grow personally and professionally.


This year, we have *four* dates set for our programs, so mark your calendars and be on the lookout for more detailed information as we approach these dates! **April 27th, July 27th, September 28th and December 28th** will be the live presentations. But don't worry if you cannot attend those live sessions, as with all webinars we have produced in the past, these will be recorded and available on our website to view and share later.

We know that our members' schedules are tight, often with a longer to-do list than there are hours in a day, so the goal of this series is to address topics that are worthwhile and interesting while being respectful of everyone's precious time. Our webinars will be under an hour and may even feature giveaways for participation and attendance.

There will be some webinars that feature our very own Arizona Farm Bureau staff, as well as other guest speakers that we consider experts in their fields. There will be an opportunity for attendees to ask questions, gain clarity, and interact with other Farm Bureau members.

Some topics to look forward to include:

- Deferring Capital Gains Taxes
- AZFB Delegates: What you need to know
- The Challenges of Rural Mental Health

If any of these sound interesting, or if you have ideas on a topic that might gain traction or you'd like to learn more about our series, let us know at outreach@azfb.org 

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ARIZONA FARM BUREAU OPERATIONS TEAM IS EVOLVING AND GROWING!

Staff Reports

In 2022, after a combined 74 years of service to the Arizona Farm Bureau, Operations Team members Ellen Miraldi, Paula Jensen and Carol Hilko will all be retiring. With all the changes afoot, we wanted to introduce you to the new Operations Team!

Ronna Lindstrom, CPA, CGMA - Chief Financial Officer and Director of Operations.



Ronna grew up in the Willamette Valley, Oregon wine county, and later moved to NE Oregon where vast dry-land wheat crops cover the landscape. She became a CPA in 2006 and earned her BS in Accounting from Linfield University. Ronna has over 25 years of experience in operations accounting, auditing, and taxation, having worked in governmental and nonprofit accounting. Most recently Ronna was with Pendleton Grain Growers, Inc., a farmer cooperative, and Medelez, Inc., a large trucking, harvesting, farm and ranch operation. In 2019, she and her husband John moved to Apache Junction where she enjoys music, gardening, and spending time with her horses.

Melissa Hogben – Operations Design and Layout Manager



Melissa has been with the Arizona Farm Bureau Operations Team for over 11 years and is looking forward to her evolving role within the new Operations Team. She provides a multitude of essential services, with her focus on the design and layout of all AZFB published materials. This includes the new modern

design layouts for Arizona Agriculture our monthly publication, CHOICES our quarterly publication, along with the fresh look that debuted this month on AZFB.org. In her off-hours, Melissa, along with her husband Gary, are working to keep their new Dobbie puppy Bubbles from chewing up their new home, while also spending time with her extended family.

Mary Anne Whittle, CMP – Operations Manager



Mary Anne comes to us from Benchmark Technologies where she served as an Executive Assistant & Corporate Meeting Planner. Before she and her husband Alan moved to Gilbert five years ago, she enjoyed a 16-year tenure working in agricultural crop protection in the Central California Valley. Mary Anne

is the current VP of Education and the President-Elect on the Board of Directors of Meeting Professionals International - AZ Sunbelt Chapter where she manages the CEU's program for state members. When Mary Anne has free time, she enjoys traveling with her family.

Katie Smith-Booth – Operations Membership Manager



Katie comes to us from the Cook County Farm Bureau (IL) where for the past 17 years she worked as the Director of Membership & Administration. She proudly hails from the Southside of Chicago and is an avid Bears fan, only leaving her beloved Chicago to marry and begin a new life in Arizona with her fiancé Brad. "I am really looking forward to starting my life out here in Arizona," said Katie. "If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me directly; I look forward to knowing all of you."

Ronna expressed the same sentiment, "I am looking forward to leading the new Operations Team and honored for the opportunity to join the Arizona Farm Bureau family. I look forward to meeting all of you and please reach out with any questions."

Join us in welcoming Mary Anne, Katie, and Ronna to the Arizona Farm Bureau Family! 🎉

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