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A CONVERSATION ABOUT GENERATIONAL FARMING: THE SOSSAMANS

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

The Arizona agriculture history of the Sossaman farm family in Queen Creek is amazing. Lifelong Arizona Farm Bureau members, we begin their history with Jasper and Nancy Sossaman, originally from Oklahoma, who came to Arizona looking for a better life in 1914 after their pig farm near Galveston, Texas, was wiped out in a hurricane. Shortly thereafter, another tragedy hit in 1918 when Jasper passed away, leaving Nancy and three sons to manage by themselves. Luckily, homesteads became available in Queen Creek, and the family obtained not one, but two! Gradually, they extended the farm to 1,000 acres and grew cotton, watermelon, potatoes, Durham wheat, castor beans, corn and sugar beets.

One of the three sons, also named Jasper, married Faith Mather and continued farming. Their only child, Jamie, inherited the farm in 1962. Today, their son, Stephen, and wife, Chris, now manage the farm including their innovative marketing of heritage grains and more.

On politics and service, Jamie and Steve both served as presidents of Maricopa County Farm Bureau and on the state board. Besides farming, Jamie served 24 years in the state Legislature, both in the House where he served as Speaker and in the Senate. In 1992, the Arizona Farm Bureau recognized Jamie for his Distinguished Service to Agriculture.

Jamie's wife, Sue, was also active in county politics during some very turbulent times.

Over the years the farm has always been an innovative family-centered business run by people who cared not just for the land, but also for the community.

And last year, Arizona Farm Bureau awarded the family the Century Farm recognition as they have been in continuous operation for more than 100 years.

Steve and Chris Sossaman's business mantra is, "Say YES to opportunities." It's the best way to meet new people with new ideas. And in this conversation, we talk to Steve and his daughter, Caroline, to discover what it means to be part of a generational farm family.

Arizona Agriculture: Talk about all the crops the Sossaman family has grown over the generations?

Sossamans: We have grown almost everything over the years: Sugar beets, Cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, potatoes, cotton, corn, alfalfa, triticale, durum wheat, sesame, black-eyed peas, barley, and ancient/heritage grains (white Sonora, einkorn, farro, red fife, etc).

Arizona Agriculture: Caroline, what's your take on your family heritage in farming?

Sossamans: I feel so lucky to be part of such rich Arizona history and to come from a long line of hard-working men and women. Growing up on the farm and seeing how important agriculture is in society has really shaped my life in so many positive ways. I feel proud to be part of such a great legacy of farming and finding my passion for everything grain related.

Arizona Agriculture: Last year the Arizona Farm Bureau recognized you as a Century Farm during our Annual Meeting. What do you think was/were the key element(s) for ensuring 100 years of continuous business?

Sossamans: Family continuity and a legacy of community service. Always being involved in Agricultural organizations and community organizations (church, local and state politics, charitable groups). Also, a sense of what our forefathers endured to get where we are today through hard work and fiscal responsibility.

Arizona Agriculture: How'd you get into ancient grains?

Sossamans: I was approached by Jeff Zimmerman of Hayden Flour Mills to grow some ancient varieties of wheat. He tried working with other farmers for two years without success. I said yes just to see what would happen. We've grown alongside them over the last 10+ years; they now have a facility on our farm.

Arizona Agriculture: Why Arizona and ancient grains?

Sossamans: Arizona is the perfect environment for these grains since their history can be traced back to the fertile crescent in the middle east thousands of years ago.

Arizona Agriculture: Caroline, why'd you get inspired to be in this aspect of the business?

Sossamans: I spent around seven years helping Hayden Flour Mills become a national brand and learning every aspect of the flour industry. I've always had an interest in where the grain goes - beer, bread, whiskey, etc. - so coming on board with my dad seemed like the perfect next step!

Arizona Agriculture: Talk about all the diverse markets for Ancient Grains. Who all is using the Heritage Grains?

Sossamans: Markets include craft millers for bread flour, mixes, crackers and porridge. Craft brewers for beer. Distillers for whiskey.

Arizona Agriculture: Where do you see the market growing?

Sossamans: The market trend is to grow with our population of younger people that appreciate the flavor of ancient/heritage grains and craft/artisan products.

Arizona Agriculture: What farmers are currently growing some of these unique grains?

Sossamans: Farmers in other states and a few in other counties here in AZ (Noah Hiscox in Coolidge). Grain RD here at Sossaman Farms is the only operation that we know of in the valley. Our grain operation is vertically integrated: selecting the seeds, growing them, processing/cleaning to food grade, and shipping to our customers directly. We are also home to Hayden Flour Mills which stone mills our grains into flours and mixes.

Arizona Agriculture: Where will Sossaman Farm be in another 100 years?

Sossamans: Sossaman Farms will probably just be a memory along with the other farms that once called Queen Creek home. We will have a heritage corner on the original homestead. Restaurants, shops, and educational opportunities will showcase agriculture and focus on grains. Think places for beer, pizza, tortillas, baked goods, etc.

Arizona Agriculture: You all have the entrepreneurial bent; Chris has her tea business. Talk about this.

Sossamans: Chris is very talented, and we have always been serial entrepreneurs. Together we have over 5 businesses. She has her Tea Royalty plus a commercial property enterprise. We farm, have Grain R&D, plus I do land development. We both get a little inspiration from our grandparents.

Arizona Agriculture: Where is Arizona agriculture in 100 years and what might be the major crops then?

Sossamans: My crystal ball broke a while ago. Farming will follow the water and probably be more intense and mechanized.

Arizona Agriculture: What do you love in general about farming and ranching in Arizona?

Sossamans: The people that are part of agriculture are some of the finest we have met. All over our country and here in Arizona. Plus, farming in Arizona is year-round, not like other parts of the U.S. 🚜



Daughter, Caroline (left), has joined her dad in the business. Their business endeavors today, reflect an adaptation to changes in the market and keeping an eye on opportunities. Steve and his wife, Chris (far right), might be considered serial entrepreneurs by most standards



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SUPPLY CHAIN HICCUPS IN AG LAND

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director and Joel Carr, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Manager

We reached out to our farm and ranch members asking them about the supply chain challenges they are facing in their businesses today. We asked two questions.

1. In your farming/ranching/agribusiness efforts, what disruptions in the supply chain are you experiencing, either in getting parts and/or input costs?
2. What are your future predictions for your supply chain challenges?

Common themes include extended inventory stock-up to create a buffer if an item cannot be obtained, prolonged delivery times and overall price increases on everything. Additionally, cash management disruptions are big since the farm and ranch businesses must buy much more volume at a higher price.

Kristen Nelson, Territory Manager for Corteva Agriscience and co-owner in NT Farms in La Paz County

I know firsthand that most agriculture chemical products are 1) 7 to 10% on average more expensive than last year and continuing to go up, and 2) in short supply. Growers and PCAs have had serious challenges this season with access to tools to control pests. The same is true for parts, more expensive and harder to get.

This isn't fixing itself anytime soon. I think these challenges will continue into 2023.

Jordan John, owner of Desert Chemical, Inc. in Maricopa County

Depending on the product there are some pesticides that are either still short or not available. Some of the products we use for worm control in alfalfa are already sold out from manufacturers and we haven't started to spray. Recently sulfuric acid was in short supply and the price increased substantially but that issue seems to have been resolved. Glyphosate has started to soften in price but depending on if the supplier has it in stock and if the package size is available. Some other pesticides were short but are starting to open up on availability, but prices have increased. Fertilizer is available but prices increased substantially. Some prices are starting to come down.

Future predictions will continue into 2023 from what suppliers are telling me. Seems that most suppliers are producing products but not at the capacity they were pre-covid. China is the issue since most products are manufactured there and formulated in the United States. If China wants to stop production and shut the U.S. supply down, it can do that. These issues were supposed to be resolved in 3rd and 4th quarters of 2020 but we're halfway through 2022. I'm hoping this isn't the new normal.

Ron Rayner, co-owner of A-Tumbling T Ranches in Maricopa County

The food and ag supply chain hiccups are truly evident in our business each day. First, we see the lack of supply in areas of inputs such as fertilizer. We have reduced our application to wheat by half so far in the crop. We know this may have a negative impact on our yields, but we are carefully monitoring the crop progress.

We anticipated the tightness of supply and higher prices, so we decided to apply a light rate of dairy manure over most of the acreage. We also applied a lighter rate of urea but ordered it with an inhibitor to slow down leaching by irrigation water and make each pound of N (Nitrogen) more efficient to promote plant growth. We are worried about the availability of some herbicides for our cotton because we plant no-till and strip-till thus depending on herbicides to control weeds without cultivation.

Our farm is planning to make additional capital investments to replace equipment instead of making repairs. In December we purchased two new tractors to replace two high-hour ones. We have ordered two more pivot sprinkler systems to supplement the one we already have, and plan to continue mechanizing as quickly as time and capital allows. Labor availability is also a

concern and is helped through investment in mechanical irrigation technology as well.

Harold Payne, president and owner of Agri Services, LLC, and technical consultant for Fort McDowell Farms in Maricopa County

Regarding disruptions, plowshares, wear parts for scrapers, loaders, pecan harvesters and sweepers, and specific types of fertilizers beyond N, P, K are part of the mix.

Reading information from other ranchers, industry contacts, and truckers shrinking supplies of diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) is occurring. DEF is manufactured from water and urea fertilizer, with a large portion of the urea being supplied to the world market from Russia. If the DEF supply becomes short, trucking across the United States will be severely limited and the panic that would ensue as food supplies become short would be incredible. I am also reading about an impending shortage of 15- to 45-weight motor oils, which are specific to diesel engines. The author of the article had done his research and attributes this potential shortage to the fact that only two companies manufacture the additives that are used in the manufacturing of diesel engine oils. His suggestion was to stock up because his analysis show a shortage for about one year.

Vegetable producers are finding shortages of packaging materials for their products. Of course, the shortage of Roundup and its genetic equivalents has been with us for a while, causing price increases and short supplies. Baling twine is harder to get, and we have had to use types and brands that are of inferior quality or less strength. An order from a local dealer to purchase a John Deere Gator utility truck is taking almost one year to get delivered. Parts for irrigation pumps are being delayed as vendors search for the proper types of equipment.

Looking to the future, as diesel has now surpassed \$6.00 per gallon at Pilot/Flying J, truckers who transport our farm products have stated that their associates are parking their trucks due to high fuel prices. When that happens to a significant extent, grocery stores run short of food products, the public panic-purchases cleaning out the shelves and chaos ensues. Some of the shortages currently and soon are caused by shortages of labor to manufacture and transport normal supplies, some are caused by delays in getting products off-loaded at the ports, compounded by the new regulations in California that only trucks that meet the new emission standards,

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which require the use of DEF, can enter the ports to load and unload. A visit to a local tractor dealership in Pinal County reveals bare spots on their shelves of familiar items such as hitches, antifreeze, electrical supplies, and other items commonly seen at their stores.

In short, farmers are having to think through very carefully the supplies they need to grow next year's crops. Compounded by the severe water shortage in parts of our state, the economic pressure on local growers is unprecedented and many Arizona growers are facing a very uncertain future. The supply chain concerns are just one of many production components to be monitored and dealt with as the national politics are causing great uncertainty and chaos in a previously stable and predictable economy.

Adam Hatley, Owner of Associated Farming Company in Maricopa County (recent testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Ag)

While cotton prices are stronger than in recent years, higher input prices and severe supply chain issues have resulted in significant increases in production costs. Most producers are expecting a 25% to 40% increase in input costs for 2022 largely due to higher

See **SUPPLY CHAIN HICCUPS** Page 5



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LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2022: A SUMMARY

By **Chelsea McGuire**, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Director

The second regular session of Arizona’s 55th Legislature has officially come to a close. At final count, the session lasted 166 days. Legislators introduced 1,851 bills, passed 398, and Governor Ducey signed 388.

The bill that really stole the show, of course, was the overhaul and investment in the [Water Infrastructure Finance Authority](#). But there were plenty of other good bills to celebrate this session, too. Agriculture’s priorities fared very well, and we are excited to see the positive impacts these bills will have on members across the state. Here are just a few:

H2400: TPT EXEMPTION FOR USED AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT (REP. TIM DUNN)

This bill extended sales tax exemption for farm equipment to include used equipment – after all, used equipment will go to make a consumer product as well. The bill also clarified the definition of “OHVs” for sales tax purposes, making sure that farm-related OHVs are exempt from the tax.

H2101: ENERGY DEREGULATION REPEAL (REP. GAIL GRIFFIN)

One of the session’s hotly debated bills, this bill repealed and replaced the “competition” statutes enacted in the 1990s to try and encourage additional electrical power providers from coming into Arizona. While these statutes were originally thought of as a way to increase competition (and decrease prices) in the electrical utility world, experience showed that they actually decreased reliability and left consumers open to massive volatility (see, for example, Texas power customers after the 2021 freeze). Farm

Bureau supported this bill because it protects consumers from unstable energy prices and predatory pricing practices.

S1596: OHV ISSUES STUDY COMMITTEE (SEN. SINE KERR)

Any public lands rancher knows too well the damage to lands and injury to people resulting from an increased use of OHVs. Recognizing the complexity of this issue and the need to come up with quick and useful solutions, this bill established a stakeholder committee to examine OHV-related land use and damage issues.

H2130: RECREATIONAL LIABILITY (REP. GAIL GRIFFIN)

Related to the OHV issues, this bill strengthened Arizona’s existing recreational immunity statute. In doing so, it ensured that landowners and lessees are not liable for damages sustained by recreational users.

S1564: ON-FARM IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY GRANT PROGRAM (REP. TIM DUNN)

Passed as part of the state budget, this bill allocated \$30 million to UA Cooperative Extension to fund the installation of irrigation efficiency projects. We’re excited to see what kinds of on-farm technology our members can now deploy with the use of these funds!

We are grateful to all the hard-working Arizona legislators and staff who did so much to make this session a success. Arizona agriculture’s future is that much brighter thanks to the sound policy enacted by these lawmakers. 🚜

WHAT’S THE POOP ON FERTILIZER AND LOOMING SHORTAGES?

By **John J. Harper**, Fertilizer Sales for Hickman’s Family Farms’ The Farm Choice and former owner of Harper’s Nursery

No one needs to tell this audience what effect the global supply chain issues and oil/petroleum pricing has done on the price and availability of conventional fertilizers. According to CNBC, Russia and Ukraine combine to produce 28% of the world’s urea and ammonium nitrate. Brent Crude Oil was trading at 110.30 per barrel at the time of this writing (May 18, 2022). The combination of the war in Ukraine, high oil prices, and the disruption in production and distribution has put tremendous pressure on the pricing and availability of fertilizers that are derived from oil and natural gas production.

This isn’t exactly news at this point, but it begs the question, “How long will this last, and what are the alternatives?” As far as the duration and depth of the pricing and supply chain issues, no one seems to have any clear answer to when it will ease up, let alone get back to some sense of normality. Alternatives just might be right under our nose, pun completely intended.

Alternatives Smell Much Sweeter than Before

Natural or organic fertilizers are obviously not new. The use of animal manures; mainly cattle, chicken, and swine have been around for a very long time. Their use began to wane in the post-WWII era as farming became more conventional and the push for efficiencies increased. Manures at that time were unwieldy, a bit cumbersome, unpleasant, and perhaps expensive to transport compared to the conventional alternatives.

Huge strides have been made in recent years regarding the handling, processing, and delivery of manure and compost products. Environmental and food safety concerns along with organizations like Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI), California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) have developed guidelines to encourage producers to adhere to guidelines and best management practices (BMPs) that help make organic fertilizer production a modern and safe component of the fertilizer industry. Pricing for many was an obstacle that now may be worth a second look.

Farmers who are growing for the organic marketplace perhaps have had limited op-

tions as to which products to use for fertility. There are specific compliance regulations and food and safety protocols that must be adhered to, and the organic food segment has factored pricing to comply with the finished product. Those who are not growing for that “market” have long considered organics too expensive to be a viable fertility alternative.

That might have changed with the price of oil and the hiccup in the world’s supply chain along with the war in Ukraine. According to a recent article by Bloomberg, “Fertilizer Shortages Finally Give Dung a Chance,” farmers across the country are now not only considering manure fertilizers they are procuring them in states like Iowa, Nebraska, and Illinois at increases of 100% over 2021. As of this writing, on May 12, 2022, the price from a major retailer for UN 32 was \$790 per ton and Urea \$1,000. For comparison, a ton of unscreened dehydrated chicken manure is \$65 per ton. Doing the math for the value per pound of Nitrogen only, Urea and UN are over \$1.17 per pound of Nitrogen. One pound of Nitrogen from chicken manure (unscreened, unpasteurized) is .81 per pound and screened is about 1.25. This pricing takes only the value of Nitrogen into consideration which also limits the value of using organic products. You would also receive 40 pounds of Phosphorus and Potassium per ton along with Ca (calcium) and microbes that conventional fertilizers will not provide. One other thing to consider about using organic material, especially here in the desert: according to USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) an increase of organic material by 1% can increase the soil’s water holding capacity by as much as 20,000 gallons per acre (may vary depending on exact soil type). In our region and in this time of drought, this alone might make increasing your organic use worth a second look.

If you’re feeling the pinch of the global supply chain and petroleum situation, then perhaps following your nose to the local source of organic fertilizer might lead you to a viable alternative you’ve been smelling but not considering for years. And finally, today’s looming fertilizer shortages bring home the importance of animal agriculture, now more than ever. 🚜



Thank goodness for animal agriculture and our ability to adhere to safety protocols and best management practices when composting animal waste. In today’s supply chain environment and rising input costs, natural fertilizers may be our one saving grace.

NEW RESOURCE ON AZFB.ORG: DIRECT MARKET FARMING

Staff Reports

Arizona’s farms and ranches come in all shapes and sizes including organic, conventional, biotech, animal agriculture, and more. And, we have our share of retail or “direct-market” farms, businesses that sell directly to you and me, the customer.

Often, these retail farms sell their products via Internet-based sales, farmers’ markets, farm stands and country stores. Many are small and feature organic produce. Our retail farmers happen to be one of our best connections between farmer/rancher and enthusiastic consumers of Arizona-grown produce and other agricultural products.

Additionally, these retail farms, like most businesses, need a variety of resources. So, Arizona Farm Bureau worked with several of our retail farmers to find out what resources they would want us to feature on azfb.org.

From there, we built a resource page specifically for our retail farmers. You can now go to [azfb.org/News/Direct-Markets-Farming-Resources](#).

We will continue to add to this resource page as we come across other resources our retail farmers would find valuable. In the meantime, check it out. 🚜





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SUPPLY CHAIN HICCUPS

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fertilizer, energy and pesticide costs. As compared to a year ago fertilizer prices have increased by 55% to 120%. Supply chain and logistical challenges have wreaked havoc on our ability to get necessary inputs and equipment parts while creating major disruptions in delivering cotton to our customers. As producers, we must have an effective safety net. This includes a commodity policy that provides either price or revenue protection for prolonged periods of low prices and depressed market conditions. It also must include a strong and fully accessible suite of crop insurance products that producers can purchase and tailor to their risk management needs. The non-recourse marketing loan program for upland cotton remains the cornerstone for our industry regardless of market conditions. The marketing loan is important to multiple industry segments to effectively market cotton and provide cash flow for the producers.

There are important policy considerations for extra-long staple (ELS) cotton, or Pima cotton, grown here in Arizona. Overall, the ELS cotton competitive program and the ELS loan program should be maintained with potential enhancements in the next Farm Bill.

Perspective from the Retail/Direct Market Farmer

Joseph Dominguez, Produce Farm owner of Hill-side Farms in Yuma County

Besides the cost of shipping that is hitting hard, the one product I need is 200 cell plastic growing trays. The company says it will be the end of the year before they order more. So now I am stuck paying outrageous prices if I want growing trays. I need the trays at the beginning of September. My price has doubled per tray. I am up to \$1.50 to \$2.00 per tray if I get them in bulk from my normal vendor. Getting trays from small vendors raises the cost of trays.

Robert McClendon Owner of McClendon Select in Maricopa County

Packaging, corrugated cartons, plastic bags, clam-shell containers, and bottles for honey.

All the above have increased in price by as much as 60 to 70%, and the lead time has extended from 30 days to 90 to 120 days.

Carrie Schnepf, co-owner of Schnepf Farms

in Maricopa County

So many different things that it absolutely is affecting us. So, we are just improvising or doing without. Here are some things that are really making us re-think what we must do:

First Hay prices are \$25 a bale. That's a killer with a petting zoo.

To-go containers for our bakery are never in stock, so we are just using paper bags.

We have been ordering things for Christmas since February in hopes that we get them in time for our Christmas event.

We have ordered seeds for extra plantings. Just in case there is low stock. Our vegetables are important for



our wedding catering.

We have ordered extra of EVERYTHING. So, if we order typically one set of Wheels, we are ordering 5 sets, just to have plenty of backups.

When I order my bottled product, I must order it earlier, and give it time to get to me. So instead of 2 weeks, it will be 4 weeks.

We are continually listening to what is happening and adjusting as needed.

In the wedding business, we do all the catering, so we are really watching the cost of food.

We are asking our employees to do more with less, and they understand.

We are tightening the belt and making sure we don't have a lot of waste.

Everywhere you are seeing higher prices, higher food prices, higher gas prices and more.

We just made it through the pandemic and people were going stir crazy staying home. Now they are being asked to watch what they spend. So, whatever we do, we must be aware of the rising cost of everything. We want people to still be able to come to the farm for a day of fun without breaking the bank. Cutting some things out because we can't get them is not going to make my life miserable. We just need to be smart.

Chaz Shelton Founder and CEO of Merchant Gardens in Pima County

Yes, we have had issues with fertilizer and growing media. We don't use soil but substitute with something like coconut husk and that has been extremely difficult to obtain. Lead times on material are extremely long and, we are trying to stock up on material as best we can to get ahead of it. This really disrupts our cash management because we need to buy much more volume at a higher price, but our customers aren't willing to accept a price hike.

International production of nitrogen and packaging material has made it difficult to get too.

Sharla Mortimer co-owner of Mortimer Family Farms in Yavapai County.

Supply shortages and major cost changes are making growing and raising food ever more challenging! From seed to strawberry packaging, we have found many things we need to farm unavailable this year. When the products we need are available, prices and shipping have increased substantially. To feed our ever-growing population, supply shortages need to be mitigated.

When everything shut down due to Covid-19 it created an unprecedented disruption to our supply chains, it created a global catastrophe. When ports shut down and shipping containers weren't being transported and this created a bottleneck situation. Limited trade has also created problems for import suppliers, and ultimately the consumer faces the extra cost. 🚜

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ARIZONA'S FARMERS AND RANCHERS TESTIFY BEFORE U.S. HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE DURING FARM BILL LISTENING SESSION

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

Last month, the U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee held the first in a series of listening sessions entitled "A 2022 Review of the Farm Bill: Perspectives from the Field" at Central Arizona College in Coolidge, Arizona. Several Arizona farmers and Farm Bureau leaders spoke during the event.

Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse, Maricopa County Farm Bureau member Adam Hatley, Maricopa County Farm Bureau member Jim Boyle, Pinal County Farm Bureau member Nancy Caywood, and Pinal County Farm Bureau member Paco Ollerton shared their feedback about the 2023 Farm Bill with members of the House Ag Committee.

Arizona cotton farmer Adam Hatley spoke as "the first producer of the afternoon," speaking on the cotton portion of the Farm Bill. "While cotton prices are stronger than in recent years [.96 cents on July 15, 2022; as high as \$1.45 per pound on June 6, 2022], higher input prices and severe supply chain issues have resulted in significant increases in production costs. Most producers are expecting a 25% to 40% increase in input costs for 2022 largely due to higher fertilizer, energy and pesticide costs. As compared to a year ago fertilizer prices have increased by 55% to 120%. Supply chain and logistical challenges have wreaked havoc on our ability to get necessary inputs and equipment parts while creating major disruptions in delivering cotton to our customers," said Hatley who also grows corn and organic produce. "As producers, we must have an effective safety net. This includes a commodity policy that provides either price or revenue protection for prolonged periods of low prices and depressed market conditions. It also must include a strong and fully accessible suite of crop insurance products that producers can purchase and tailor to their risk management needs. The non-recourse marketing loan program for upland cotton remains the cornerstone for our industry regardless of market conditions. The marketing loan is important to multiple industry segments to effectively market cotton and provide cash flow for the producers. There are important policy considerations for extra-long staple (ELS) cotton, or Pima cotton, grown here in Arizona. Overall, the ELS cotton competitive program and the ELS loan program should be maintained with potential enhancements in the next



Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse was among a group of farm and ranch producers that testified before the U.S. House Agriculture Committee during a listening session regarding the Farm Bill.

Farm Bill. I may add in conclusion since this testimony was written four days ago, the cotton prices have dropped 20 cents in the last three days which compounds the problem that I've already talked about."

During the testimonies, Chairman David Scott highlighted the important fact that 90% of our domestic food supply comes from only 12% of America's agriculture producers.

"Having been an advocate for agriculture for decades now, the Farm Bill is a heavy lift," said Arizona Farm Bureau President and southern Arizona rancher Stefanie Smallhouse. "As we can clearly see here from the group of people today the Farm Bill touches everyone. We are in a totally different world in agriculture than the 2018 Farm Bill. Lots of things have changed. One of those things is attention to regional differences. There are a lot of programs within the Farm Bill that are one size fits all. The world we are living in Arizona right now is what's being called a mega-drought. This has impacted all commodities, all different sectors and specialty crops. It's impacted our access to water, it's impacted our access to feed, and it's impacted our commodity prices. So, a lot of the programs we have used traditionally to offset those impacts are looked at on a national level, not so much on the regional level. We need to ask ourselves, what can we tweak to make them work better compared to the last couple of years considering those regional differences. They had a lot of ad-hoc programs that came out of the pandemic and the market disruptions we had with trade,

it's great to know the government can bring something to offset a problem but then we have unintended consequences that brings us back to those regional differences and access to some of those programs where there was not enough knowledge in who needed the programs, a challenge for some of our specialty crop growers here in Arizona. We are all aware of the disruptions that have happened because of the pandemic and because of the drought. On wildfires, we've obviously seen a lot more intense wildfires in the southwest and specifically in Arizona negatively impacting our ranchers and rangeland production. Right now, there are very few programs that could be integrated into the Farm Bill program to offset the losses that happen during a wildfire. Right now, emergency watershed protection is a very slow-moving program. It's very cumbersome and a lot of times here in Arizona when we hope to get a lot of this water comes right after our wildfire season. We end up with a lot of money and a ton of resources going into wildfire mitigation then everyone picks up and leaves and there's nothing left. On the conservation title, we need more flexibility. Right now, a lot of people are canceling contracts with the NRCS because the cost lists don't match inflation. So, the offset is much more minimal than it was in the past.

"I'd also like to talk about creative solutions within the Farm Bill. Within ELAP and LIP, we are working with Congressman O'Halloran on a co-existence program to offset the loss from wolf depredation. We would solicit you all in sup-

port of that program. I'll end with climate smart agriculture. It's a big concern that [Climate Smart Ag] will be made a condition of participation instead of an incentive for participation. In Arizona, a lot of those techniques that are readily available around the country are not available here."

Pinal County cotton, wheat and alfalfa farmer Nancy Caywood thanked the committee for coming to Arizona and listening to their comments regarding the Farm Bill. "My name is Nancy Caywood and I am an owner of Caywood Farms, a 90-year-old, 5th Generation farm located east of Casa Grande, Arizona. Nutrition Starts on the Farm. As I listened to so many comments from people representing food and nutrition programs including the SNAP Program, I cannot help but say that all these important programs cannot exist without farms. They cannot continue to distribute food if we have no farms.

"Our need for water is critical. We are in the San Carlos Irrigation District and must pay for two-acre-feet of water whether it is available or not. Currently, San Carlos Lake/Coolidge Dam is empty, and no water is available to us. Our water rates increased from \$50.00 an acre-foot to \$79.00 an acre-foot this past year. Water Rates are attached to our tax bill so we will see a significant increase in the next tax bill. If we cannot make this payment, we could lose our land.

"A solution that I would like to suggest is that farmers receive assistance money from the Farm Bill to help cover the water portion of tax bills during drought years when water is not available. It is our job as farmers to provide food and fiber for our nation and our world and without water that is not possible. Farmers need financial assistance so they can continue farming. Ag land needs to be cherished and preserved.

We need money for infrastructure. Without concrete-lined canals in our water district, for example, we were unable to receive Central Arizona Project Water (when the water was available). Infrastructure money to drill wells so that water can be pumped into our canals is also needed. Finally, agriculture is Freedom and Food Safety."

-Nancy Caywood

See FARM BILL Page 8

SECOND QUARTER 2022 REGULATORY COMMENT REVIEW

By Ana Kennedy Otto, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

The load of regulatory comments in the second quarter of 2022 although not as heavy as the first quarter was still steady. Below is a summary of the regulatory dockets that AZFB engaged in during the second quarter of 2022.

Environmental Protection Agency – Proposed Interim Decision for Several Pesticides – Iprodione – AZFB's comments responded to EPA's proposal to limit all outdoor uses, including agricultural uses, to one application per year. Outreach to those familiar with the products used in Arizona determined that the proposal would not inhibit current practices.

Food and Drug Administration – Standards for Growing, Harvesting, Packing and Holding Produce for Human Consumption Relating to Agricultural Water – AZFB's comments are supported and incorporated by reference to those prepared by AFBF. The comments highlighted various areas of the proposal that needed additional clarification and guidance related to the proposed rule that creates a pre-harvest agricultural water assessment, mitigation measures, and other revisions.

Bureau of Land Management – Use of Motorized Vehicles and Aircrafts in the Management of Wild Horses and Burros – AZFB joined a coalition of Western State Farm Bureaus to express collective support for the continued use of motorized vehicles and aircraft to manage wild horse and burro populations in the West.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) – Draft Recovery Plan for the Mexican Wolf, Second Revision – A second round of revisions was made to the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan in response to a court order directing the FWS to add site-specific management actions to address the threat of human-caused mortality. AZFB's comments addressed specific management actions impacting livestock producers including outreach efforts and promoting flexibility with conflict avoidance practices.

Environmental Protection Agency – Notice of Intent to Suspend tetrachloroterephthalate (DCPA) – AZFB provided comments to EPA to highlight the important role DCPA plays as an herbicide in the production of certain crops in Arizona including broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and other Cole crops, as well as onions. AZFB's comments urged EPA to work cooperatively with the registrant of DCPA, AMVAC, to work through the issues that resulted in the Notice of Intent to Suspend DCPA.

Environmental Protection Agency – Voluntary Cancellation of Certain Pesticide Registrations (Chlorpyrifos) – AZFB provided comments to EPA urging the agency to refrain from canceling the registration of chlorpyrifos in light of ongoing litigation regarding the retention of food tolerances for this product.

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service - Preserving Trust Benefits Under the Packers and Stockyards Act – AZFB's comments supported the comments prepared by AFBF, which noted support for creating a workable and effective livestock dealer trust that would provide recourse for unpaid sellers of livestock in the event of default.

Securities and Exchange Commission – Enhancement and Standardization of Climate-Related Disclosures for Investors – AZFB's comments supported AFBF's technical comments which outlined the ways in which SEC's proposed rule to enhance and standardize climate-related disclosures for investors should be modified to avoid negative impacts to the agricultural industry. The proposed rule in its current form would be excessively burdensome and costly for most farms to comply with.

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



Arizona Farm Bureau

Please join us during
November 2 - 4, 2022
for our 101st
Annual Convention.
The conference will be
held in person at the
El Conquistador Resort
in Tucson, AZ.

AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM BOOKS NOW OPEN!

By Katie Aikins, Arizona Farm Bureau Education Director

Ready or not, school has begun, and Ag in the Classroom (AIRC) couldn't be more excited! Now is the time for teachers to request their classroom presentations and curriculum kits and to schedule their Science Nights, Stem Nights, and Career Events with AIRC. Be sure to share all the opportunities with your local teachers.



New and continuing resources to be on the look-out for: First Reader Books
Ag in the Classroom, in partnership with the University of Arizona and the Arizona Beef Council has developed several First Reader Books. These books are designed to be the perfect first book for those early readers in Kindergarten through 2nd grade. And of course, they are all about our farmers and ranchers! Be sure to follow us on social media @AZFB_AIRC for updates on releases and how to get yourself or your local classroom a set!

From Farm Field to Football Fields

A sister program to our previous From Farm to Football Program (2016-2019) in partnership with Hickman family Farms and the Arizona Cardinals, we bring you From Farm Fields to Football Fields. This program is in partnership with the University of Arizona and will allow students to see the importance of agriculture to the sport of football. Participating classrooms and individuals will be able to pen pal with local Arizona farmers and ranchers as they learn the importance of agriculture in not only football but their everyday lives. Be sure to sign up for the program at www.azfbaitc.org. The program will run from September to November and all those that participate will receive a one-of-a-kind From Farm Field to Football Fields poster!

Virtual Ag Tours

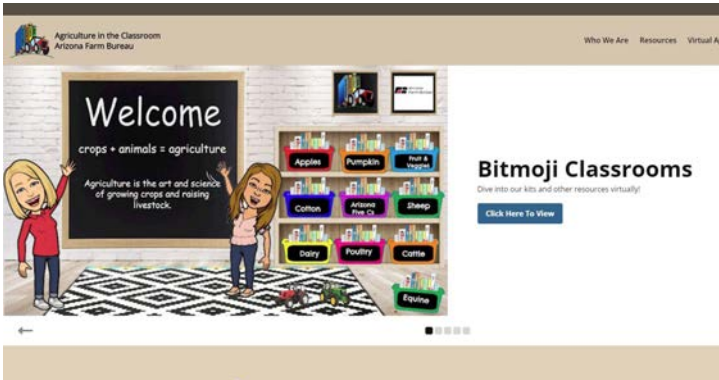
AIRC is excited to continue the Virtual Ag Tour Series. Individuals and classrooms can log on to the monthly live tours and interact with Arizona farmers and ranchers. If you are unable to log on for the live tour, you can always catch the recording on our AZFB AIRC YouTube Channel. Be sure to subscribe to the channel to get updates on all new program videos and follow us on social media @AZFB_AIRC for tour dates!



AG IN THE CLASSROOM HAS A NEW LOOK!

By Katie Aikins, Arizona Farm Bureau Education Director

Although the program is the same, Ag in the Classroom (AIRC) has a new look online. To market the quality programs and resources provided by AIRC, a website has been created specifically for teachers and other educators to discover all that AIRC has to offer. Be sure to check out the new site at www.azfbaitc.org and see all the amazing resources that Arizona Farm Bureau's AIRC has to offer your local school! 🚜



Classroom Presentations

AIRC will continue to offer the many classroom presentations it has year after year with the addition of a few new ones! We are excited to include the 2022 American Farm Bureau Book of the Year: How To Grow A Monster as part of our Spring Ag Literacy Event. Although Spring might seem like a long way away, spots will be filled for this and our other Ag Literacy Events by September. Be sure to share with your local teachers so they can be sure to be one of the first 800 teachers and secure their spot for each event.

Curriculum Kits

They are oldies, but they are goodies! The AIRC Curriculum Kits are once again available for check-out by schools, homeschool groups, and clubs. Reserve a Poultry Kit and hatch chicks in the classroom, reserve a Cotton Kit and hand-gin cotton with your students as you teach about the importance of technology in the industry, or reserve one of our other 9 Commodity Curriculum Kits for some hands-on fun. Remember, all Curriculum Kits can be reserved at no cost through the AIRC Program.



Farm Friday Fun With Arizona Agriculture

Teachers looking for a fun way to engage their students on a monthly basis with Arizona agriculture should be sure to sign-up for Farm Friday Fun. This digital curriculum is delivered monthly to their email boxes and includes farmer profiles, videos, lessons, and facts about the commodity of the month.

Want to learn more about these programs and others provided by AIRC? Visit our newly launched website at www.azfbaitc.org to view all the FREE resources for teachers, students, and schools! 🚜

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ELECTIONS RESOURCES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Staff Reports



The Primary Election is here, and early voters have already cast their ballots! We know that Arizona Farm Bureau members are some of the most politically engaged citizens in the state, and it's our goal to help you stay informed on all things related to the 2022 Election.

Arizona Farm Bureau's www.azfb.org/vote page is your one-stop resource for important information related to agriculture's election priorities. This page includes announcements regarding AgPAC's endorsements, candidate surveys, and Get Out the Vote information that you can use and share. For example, AZ Farm Bureau surveyed all gubernatorial candidates to ask them for their plan regarding a sustainable water future for Arizona. Here's an excerpt of the responses we received:

Karrin Taylor Robson (R)

Ensuring access to a clean, reliable and sustainable water supply is arguably the greatest challenge facing Arizona. . . . As Arizona Governor, I will protect consumers, preserve legacy industries like agriculture, defend Arizona's way of life and plan for the future by augmenting supplies and improving efficiency. I have released a [detailed water-security plan](#) built around the concepts of Augmentation; Stewardship; and Innovation.

Katie Hobbs (D)

Arizona should be the best place to live, work,

and raise a family. But today compounding threats – to our water, our natural resources, and our climate – are already disrupting our economy, our livelihoods, and our way of life. Without reliable access to water, our economy and Arizona jobs will be put at risk. That's why we need real leadership that brings people together and creates innovative solutions to expand job and economic opportunities that will help secure our future water supply. As Governor, I'll provide the leadership needed to address the growing water crisis, preserve our natural resources, and build a 21st century clean energy economy that puts Arizona on a path to long-term prosperity.

Marco Lopez (D)

The passage of S.B. 1740 is a win to ensure water security for all Arizonans. . . . However, this bill is just one part of the solution. There needs to be additional legislation to protect aquifer levels and groundwater pumping, especially in rural areas. As a former mayor, I know how important this is—and making sure we are funding state departments so they have the staff and capacity to ensure quality oversight of water access. We also need to address the issues behind Arizona's water crisis: the Southwest's drying climate and drought, exacerbated by climate change. Water security is critical for our state and what we've been lacking most is leadership from the top to make those tough decisions. As governor, I will focus on bringing key stakeholders together, including Arizona's tribes, and work with them, agriculture, developers, and cities and counties, CAP, and SRP leaders to find solutions for sustainable water management.

To see their full responses and to see if your local elections were featured on our surveys, go to www.azfb.org/vote today.

DON'T MISS YOUR COUNTY FARM BUREAU ANNUAL MEETING!

Staff Reports

Influence Policy, Elect Leaders, and Have a Great Time!

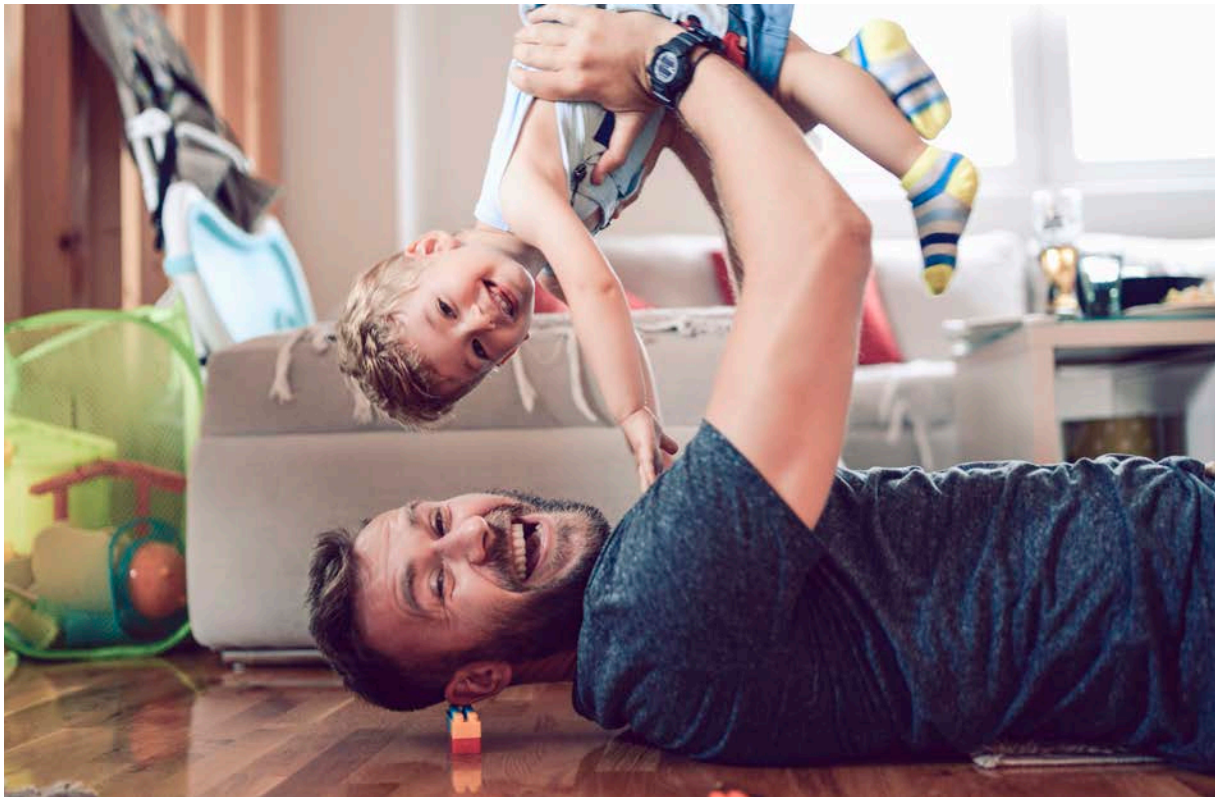
One of the highlights of the Farm Bureau year is your County Annual Meeting. Members can spend time with fellow farmers and ranchers from their area, hear from a speaker or two, and work on solutions for the issues affecting agriculture. In addition, members get to elect leaders for their county Farm Bureau as well as who will represent them as delegates at the state annual convention in November.

Once a suggested solution is approved by your fellow members as official Farm Bureau policy at the County Annual Meeting, you are no longer a single voice in the field. You now have the power of the Farm Bureau behind you, and that is a formidable force for getting things done.

John Boelts is 1st vice-president of the Arizona Farm Bureau and chair of the Policy Development Committee. "Farm Bureau is the Voice of Agriculture because we speak for our members. I encourage all Ag members to have their voices heard by attending their county's Annual meetings," says Boelts.

County Annual Meeting information is available online at www.azfb.org under the Events tab.

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FARM BILL continued from Page 6

"I'm Jim Boyle from Casa Grande Dairy Company. We milk 3,500 dairy cows and farm about 1,000 acres," said Jim Boyle before the committee. "Dairy milk pricing causes everybody to glaze over. Traditionally, dairy has had very hard caps on funding and the size of dairy operations that get the full funding. In the 2018 Farm Bill, there was a change in the pricing of Class One milk, which is fluid milk. It was to the detriment of dairy producers across the country, particularly those in markets that sell a lot of fluid milk, like Arizona. All of Arizona's milk is produced here in the state. So, we have a very large Class One market. Because of the pricing change in the 2018 Farm Bill, we estimate Arizona Dairy farmers lost a combined \$21 million in 2020 due to just that simple change in the milk pricing system. It's also important to understand there are only 50 of us [dairy producers] in the state. We have large dairies. The west has always had large dairies. That differs from the Midwest and that's always been an issue with dairy policy in D.C. where it's much more suited to smaller producers in the Midwest and northeast.

"When the pandemic Market Volatility Assistance program was introduced to rectify that, it was capped at 5 million pounds of milk per year. That's equivalent to 220 cows per dairy. Arizona averages about 3,000 cows per dairy. We estimate we lost \$21 million because of the Class One mover price. We were compensated with two [million]. National Milk Producers and the industry are working on the next Farm Bill to come up with a solution to this problem but in the short term, we are asking the House for Fiscal Year 2023 to rectify that cap that will allow dairy farmers to recoup those losses greater than that 200-cow limit. In terms of risk management, the 2018 Farm Bill came up with a great program the Dairy Margin Coverage program. It's a successful program and much more successful than the previous program. But again, it's got that 5-million-pound cap which really limits its use to larger producers out west. We'd really ask you to consider raising that. Even in the Midwest, dairies are growing to the 2,000, 3,000 and 4,000-cow dairy."

Testimony also came from Paco Ollerton, Will Thelander and Larry Rovey all agriculture producers in Arizona and members of the Arizona Farm Bureau.

Three Members of Congress participated with approximately 140 members of the public participating in person or streaming online. Audience members discussed topics including nutrition, conservation, water, and regional differences in Farm Bill needs. Following the listening session, Members of Congress participated in a tour of Knorr Farms' cooling facility and visited a drip-irrigated cotton field at Tempe Farm Company.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, there are more than 19,000 farms in Arizona covering approximately 26,200,000 acres. The Arizona Department of Agriculture and Arizona Farm Bureau reports that agriculture contributes \$23.3 billion to the state's economy and supports more than 138,000 full and part-time jobs, both directly and indirectly. Arizona is the third-largest producing state for fresh market vegetables and fourth in acres of organic vegetables.

Editor's Note: To watch the entire session that occurred in July, the link can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do5Mu7MtIWA>

¹For ages 18-60, subject to underwriting guidelines. Securities & services offered through FBL Marketing Services, LLC,* 5400 University Ave., West Des Moines, IA 50266, 877.860.2904, Member SIPC. Advisory services offered through FBL Wealth Management, LLC.* Farm Bureau Property & Casualty Insurance Company,** Western Agricultural Insurance Company,** Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company**/West Des Moines, IA. *Affiliates. **Company providers of Farm Bureau Financial Services. LI204-ML(6-22)