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A Conversation About UArizona's Next Decade: Shane Burgess

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

Native of New Zealand, Dr. Shane C. Burgess, has worked around the world as a practicing veterinarian and scientist. Currently, the University of Arizona Vice President for the Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension, and Charles-Sander Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Dr. Burgess' areas of research expertise include cancer biology, virology, proteomics, immunology, bioinformatics and computational biology.

The division has a total budget of \$142 million with over 3,400 students and nearly 1,400 employees. UArizona has been ranked as the top-performing university in the world in water resources. Its master's degree program in Agricultural and Resource Economics recently was ranked as the 11th best M.S. in Economics in the United States, and US News and World Report ranked UArizona's programs in plant and animal science as #22 internationally.

Under Dr. Burgess' leadership, the division launched the Yuma Center of Excellence in Desert Agriculture and the Gary and Barbara Pasquinelli Career Center.

To foster student success and meet workforce demands, Burgess has overseen the addition of eight undergraduate degrees: Applied Biotechnology, Biosystems Analytics and Technology, Fashion Industry Science and Technology, Food Safety, Nutrition and Food Systems, Personal and Financial Family Planning, Precision Nutrition and Wellness, and Agricultural Systems Management (UA Yuma).

He guided the development of online degree programs in CALS, and one of the university's two global campuses in China, which offers joint bachelor's degrees in applied biotechnology, environmental science and plant sciences.

Burgess also led the last chapter in establishing UArizona's highly innovative College of Veterinary Medicine and served as its interim dean.

In 2015, CALS completed a donor-funded \$1.9 million remodel of the Forbes building lobby. The project celebrated the building's 100th year by becoming the embodiment of the college's commitment to professionalizing student support and focusing on the outcome of graduate employment, and not simply degrees, through Career and Academic Services. The additions of the Gary and Barbara Pasquinelli Career Center

and Perricone Family Academic Advising Center were cornerstones to the Forbes remodel under Burgess.

A "first-generation student," Burgess graduated with distinction as a veterinarian in 1989 from Massey University, New Zealand. He has worked in and managed veterinary clinical practices in Australia and the United Kingdom, with services in horses, farm animals, pets, wild and zoo animals, and emergency medicine and surgery. He did a radiology residency at Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia, where he co-founded Perth's first emergency veterinary clinic concurrently, and he has managed aquaculture facilities in Scotland. He did his Ph.D. in virology, immunology and cancer biology, conferred by the University of Bristol Medical School, U.K. while working full time outside of the academy between 1995 and 1998.

Burgess volunteered to work in the U.K. World Reference Laboratory for Exotic Diseases during the 2001 U.K. foot and mouth disease crisis, where he led the diagnosis reporting office for the Office of Prime Minister Tony Blair. He was awarded the Institute for Animal Health Director's Award for Service.

In 2002, Burgess joined Mississippi State University's College of Veterinary Medicine as an assistant professor. He was recruited from Mississippi State as a professor, an associate dean of the college and director of the Institute for Genomics, Biocomputing and Biotechnology to lead the UArizona College

of Agriculture and Life Sciences in 2011.

Burgess is honored to lead the University of Arizona Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension as they advance their mission as a land-grant university by preparing students to be leaders and job creators, researching solutions to society's biggest challenges, and bringing the science of the university to the families and communities of Arizona.

I first interviewed Dr. Burgess in October 2011 for Arizona Farm Bureau's Arizona Agriculture publication. Today, we chat about the next decade in his division at UArizona.

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Seen here with Alison Williams (left) and Wen Chen, both students in the School of Plant Sciences working in Dr. Rebecca Mosher's lab with veterinary students, Dr. Burgess describes that after about 150,000 Arizona road miles, everything he continues to see and experience is as exciting as when he first arrived. He advocates that we keep developing the bioeconomy and growing our global preeminence in agriculture.

What's going on with the America the Beautiful Initiative?

By Victoria Okula, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

Since President Biden announced the national goal to conserve at least 30 percent of America's lands and waters by 2030, many questioned exactly what this meant and how the Administration planned to accomplish this goal. Last year's January 27th Executive Order (EO) on "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad" directed agencies across the Administration to take various actions. The EO specifically directed the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture and other agencies, to submit a report annually on progress towards that goal. So, when the report was released in December, we were interested to see what it entailed.

Of particular importance, this report does not include any measurement of conservation. This means that the Administration still does not have a baseline as to what percentage of our nation's land and water are already in conversation and how much we need to conserve to reach the goals outlined in the EO. However, in January, the Department of the Interior released a Request for Information soliciting comments to inform how the American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas (Atlas) should be developed. This Atlas will attempt to "provide a more accessible and more comprehensive picture of conservation and restoration work in America." Arizona Farm Bureau will submit comments to ensure that the actions of farmers and ranchers are considered in the baseline measurement of the percentage of our land and water already in conversation.

This report also spends time highlighting work that is already well underway and sheds light on programs such as the Conversation Reserve Program that incentivizes farmers to conserve their land. This is in line with one of the goals laid out in the initial plan of incentivizing and rewarding the voluntary conservation efforts of fishers, ranchers, farmers, and forest owners. It is important that the Administration recognizes that to reach their goals of conserving 30 percent of the land by 2030, there will need to be voluntary and incentive-based programs that work for farmers, ranchers in the West.

Finally, the report stresses the need to respect private property rights. This is

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Powerful – Page 6

Arizona Wins Big at AFBF Convention in Georgia

Staff Reports

Arizona Farm Bureau earned American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) New Horizon Award at its 103rd Convention this week in Atlanta. The award honors the most innovative new state Farm Bureau programs and membership achievement. Arizona Farm Bureau won on NRCS's Conservation Agriculture Mentoring Program.

In partnership with Arizona Farm Bureau, the April 2021 launch of NRCS's Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program (CAMP) drove a unique partnership that paired 10 NRCS employees with 10 Arizona Farm Bureau member farmer and rancher mentors. While several other states have the CAMP program, Arizona is unique in the partnership effort with Arizona Farm Bureau. Arizona Farm Bureau helps manage the program and field mentors for the NRCS proteges.



American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall presents Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse with the New Horizon Award during the Opening Ceremony at last month's AFBF Convention.

Said USDA/NRCS State Conservationist Keisha L. Tatem, "Partnering with Arizona Farm Bureau is just good business for us as they broaden our reach to engage with various sectors within the agriculture industry. Tapping into their experienced membership to mentor our new employees was a win-win and we are humbled to be recognized for the amazing partnership we share."

At the beginning (Spring 2021) of this 18-month effort with the first class, Arizona Farm Bureau and NRCS continue to shine a bright light on this exciting program and the experiences our mentors and protégé are going through. These partnership works to understand Arizona agriculture and conversation opportunities, joining forces to provide firsthand experience of the conservation practices and agricultural happenings throughout the state.

USDA/NRCS Assistant State Conservationist Rebecca M. de la Torre in charge of Employee Engagement added, "We went the extra step here in Arizona. We saw an opportunity to strengthen our partnership bonds between Arizona NRCS and the Arizona Farm Bureau. Their business acumen, resources and membership add an enhanced layer to this national mentoring effort that no other states have tapped into in the nation."

Arizona Farm Bureau's CEO echoes this same gratitude. "We are very appreciative of this recognition and the partnership with NRCS," said Arizona Farm Bureau CEO Phil Bashaw. "More importantly, this provides us with a great opportunity to highlight successful efforts to help our NRCS partners become more engaged with Arizona agriculture."

Arizona Farm Bureau also won all four Awards of Excellence categories. This effort recognizes state Farm Bureaus that demonstrated outstanding achievements in: Advocacy, Coalitions & Partnerships, Engagement & Outreach, and Leadership & Business Development.

Additionally, Arizona Farm Bureau Young Farmer & Rancher competitor Ashley Menges made it to the Sweet 16 during AFBF's competitive Discussion Meet. 🚗

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a principle that was highlighted in the original report, and we are pleased to see that this is a pillar that remains a priority moving into the second year of this initiative. These policies need not and must not infringe upon private property rights. Instead, they should support the stewardship values that are shared among families, businesses, and communities who make their livings off the land.

After nearly a year, we still don't have much information about how the Administration will reach their goals outlined in the January 27th EO, but we are relieved to see that those who have been stewards of the land for generations are recognized as a stakeholder group needed to accomplish this goal. 🚗



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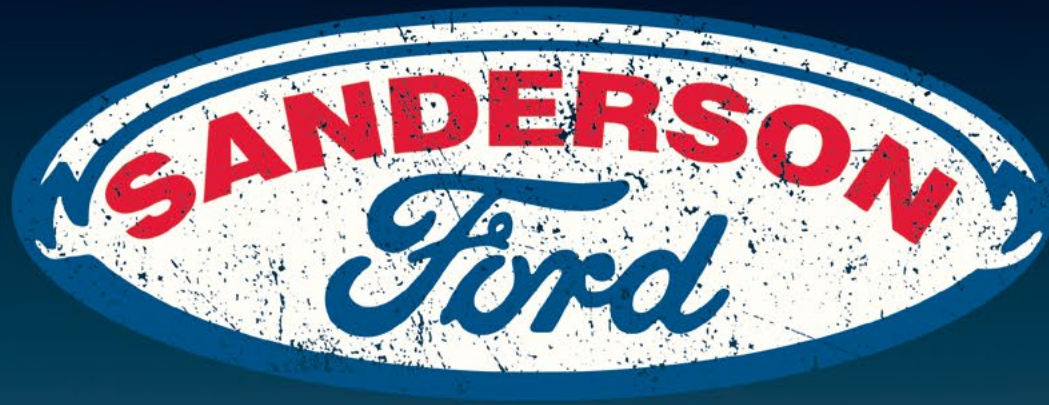
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Arizona Agriculture: In 2011, I asked you to describe your work and team philosophy. You'd described engagement as a key theme to your team philosophy. In this last decade of your leadership talk about how you've made application of this and what do you think, if anything, needs to be added to the mix in our modern era?

Burgess: The first component is engaging with those for whom the university works. A great example is the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM), which our stakeholders, including many from the Arizona Farm Bureau, really wanted. We needed to identify where the key issues lay, and where the key support needed to come from. It was only because we had extremely engaged and incredibly talented people, working together as a team, that the CVM came to fruition.

In the University of Arizona Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension, the key to engagement is to enable people to do the best job they can by giving them the autonomy to do so. That means we needed to allow people to be innovative, and move the money to where the action is, meaning out of central control and into the academic units in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and into the counties in the Cooperative Extension system. I believe strongly that those who will deal with the consequences of decisions, and who are accountable for delivering on our mission, need to have the decision-making authority and this includes over money.

I think we also need to be able to let people define what would be the best work environment for them and their colleagues. We always can do more. This is a never-ending process, and we cannot ever forget that engagement is key; that people are involved with organizations because of the people they work with day-to-day. I need to ensure we can make the environment, for ourselves, our students, our stakeholders, our partners, the best it can be under the providing circumstances and the rules we live under.

Arizona Agriculture: Describe to us what's been most exciting and rewarding for you in this last decade with UArizona.

Burgess: Getting to know our employees, our stakeholders, our partners, everybody we are involved within this incredibly diverse state. There hasn't been a year that I haven't learned as much as the year preceding it; our division and university are so broad and so impactful and so evolving that there's always an amazing thing to find out every time I look around or I talk to someone. After about 150,000 Arizona road miles, everything I see is as exciting as it was when I first arrived.

Arizona Agriculture: The next obvious question involves the coming decade? With your team in place, what's your hope for the next 10 years?

Burgess: Arizona has some incredible opportunities because it can be central to the solutions for the many challenges the world is facing. The Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension is positioned to make a contribution as important as any we've made in our past 137 years. Because we cover so many areas that impact people, at the state and city level but especially in the rural parts of the state, including human wellness, the bioeconomy, natural resources, future agriculture, food security, and much more, we can have a real and positive effect.

Just as important, we will continue to provide incredible graduates who are going out now and are being more competitive for jobs than they've ever been. They're leading the way in embracing opportunities that didn't even exist when they started going to college.

Arizona Agriculture: While we touched on it in the last conversation article of a decade ago, let's talk about the balance between university-based research and practical production advances for Arizona agriculture. While we can claim lots of success in this balance, where do we need to go from here?

Burgess: I think we need to continue along the path we're on and have been since we started higher education in Arizona. The U.S. government set up an incredible public education system in 1862 through the Land Grant Act, created Experiment Stations in 1887 with the Hatch Act, and then the Cooperative Extension system was codified in the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 to ensure university knowledge, advances and inventions impacted the private sector powering the country. In the late 1800s, our predecessors' focus was of course agriculture because that was such a massive part of the economy, employing more than 20 percent of the counted population. Today just more than one-half of one percent of the U.S. population is employed in agriculture. Agriculture is as important to the economy as ever and it also spun off a massive new economy called the "bioeconomy," which is now worth over \$1 trillion to the U.S. economy and directly employs ten times more Americans than agriculture. We need to keep developing the bioeconomy and growing our global preeminence in agriculture that is critical to Arizona.

This is a formula that works. We can't afford to just build on our heritage — we need to double down on it. All our primary economy sectors have always embraced new technology. I think the challenge we have today is that there are so many voices in the room, and we need to ensure that we have an organized system to make sure that the new ideas and new technologies are able to be tested at our Land Grant Universities so that they can be rapidly implemented in the pragmatic private sector, the Yuma Center for Excellence in Desert Agriculture is a prime example.

Arizona Agriculture: How do we compare to other land-grant universities?

Burgess: My answer is that you should tell me how we are doing. The Land Grant Universities work for the state they're in, and I'm always open to hearing what we should do better. How do we compare to our Land Grant University peers in other states? Our reality is that we are part of Arizona's competition with other states to hire the very best people for the state and we do need to have the funding to do so. Nationwide, the Land Grant Universities objectively do, and always have done, a phenomenal job for their states and the nation. I aspired 10 years ago that if such a ranking could ever rationally be done that we would be amongst the very top. That's why we have our foundational strategic intent of being the most sought-after place to be a part of.

Arizona Agriculture: What makes us unique?

Burgess: If "us" means the state of Arizona, and its primary production industries, then I would say that if not unique we are amongst an incredibly special group that includes an incredible diversity of plant and animal products, as well as a mining sector that will become even more important as we move into newer economies, as well as being a major tourist economy. We work in all these sectors.

Our engagement in the agricultural sector is well-established. Our division is involved in two of three parts of mining — we aren't involved in the most obvious part, extraction, but our graduates and our faculty are heavily involved in the front-end work for a mine to be established, and all of the back-end work to remediate the mine and its tailings so that the people who live in that area can live safely forever after a mine closes.

Tourism is the other key component. We are a natural resources state, and of course

one of Arizona's Five C's is climate. Really, that's a synonym for everything we do with tourism. And tourism in Arizona really cannot be separated from the management of the natural resources all around us whether it's our watersheds, our ski areas, or the Grand Canyon or hunting or birding or many other things that people do, from primary production which is ranching. It's ranchers who are also land stewards. Arizona is a significant agricultural state, we are the country's salad bowl in the winter, and a net exporter of food to the rest of the United States.

I see us as a nutrition state; we produce a diverse range of food that is good for us, a key to our wellness. I think we really are unique and leading in all of these areas of our primary economy, and we should embrace this because it provides a plethora of economic opportunities.

Arizona Agriculture: What's the next big thing, if it's fair to ask about the next big thing?

Burgess: Rationally, the next big thing is going to be defined by the private sector, and we must see where it's going. The Arizona Board of Regents last year defined the next big thing as the New Economy Initiative, which is around incredible job growth in Arizona.

I think our division's contributions to that initiative are going to be in two areas: the first is in the bioeconomy, including things such as introducing new technologies into our agricultural production systems, to our farmers and ranchers, but also new processes which give our farmers and ranchers more scope to generate a greater margin of what they produce and be less reliant as price takers and to be price setters. One enormous opportunity is to take what are now waste streams and costs to primary producers and find and identify technologies that will solve our largest environmental challenges by providing mechanisms by which these waste streams can be converted into high-value products.

I think this will extend into technologies that will be of direct benefit in human medicine, as we already do and have done to a greater and greater extent over the decades. We also need to be a part of driving the professionalization of what is the world's \$5 trillion wellness industry. That's why we launched the School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness. There are so many questions around human wellness, but if the pandemic taught us anything, human wellness is fundamental to everything we do and everything we think about.

Arizona Agriculture: What's Arizona agriculture's most important issues from the perspective of the land-grant university?

Burgess: First, not forgetting that a nation's security is built on its ability to feed itself. Next is supporting other key aspects of our primary economic sector, including finding the energy we need to be self-sufficient. As a society to ensure we don't forget these aspects of our higher education system which are the provenance of the Land Grant Universities. This was clear in the Civil War when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Land Grant Universities into being; this led to the U.S. becoming an economic and military superpower, and so long as we continue investment in our Land Grant Universities, it will lead to the U.S. leading the world into a sustainable future in all that sustainability means.

Arizona Agriculture: What keeps you awake at night?

Burgess: It's not the very real challenges that Arizona faces, for example the food-water-energy nexus in our state — although these are very real and serious — because I have no doubt that between the universities and the private sector, we will identify sustainable solutions.

What keeps me up at night is ensuring that we can deliver on our vision of being the most sought-after place to be a part of, and therefore deserving of the support of not just our stakeholders and our parents and our students but primarily of our employees, whether they are faculty or staff or our designated campus colleagues because we depend on them absolutely.

Arizona Agriculture: What would you tell our aspiring students pursuing careers in agriculture?

Burgess: There are two kinds of students who can pursue careers in agriculture. The first is the tiny minority who genuinely understand what agriculture is. The second is a vast majority who have a purpose that is directly in agricultural production, or something closely related and often around other associated natural resource areas. What I would say is that there are tremendous opportunities in our food, fiber, fuel, and bioeconomy industries for which any one of CALS' 23 degrees will prepare them to be highly employable, to be able to create growth in the economy and have an impact, and enable them to embrace whatever challenges or opportunities will be thrown at them in life.

Arizona Agriculture: Why should students go to UArizona?

Burgess: The primary thing about going to a university is the environment you're in.

Our traditional students, who come to us straight from high school, are making the transition from childhood to young adulthood. And the environment at the University of Arizona, because of where it's placed in the state, because of the size of the city it's in, because of its campus and its people and the academic and personal support that they will receive from admittance to graduation — and beyond — is an exceptional environment for this growth to happen.

For those who don't fit into this demographic, the special things about the environment at University of Arizona transfer into our online programs and our distance programs, and I would say proudly, led by our college and the sense of family and support and the belief that if you matriculate into the University of Arizona then we need to do our best to work with you and ensure that you'll graduate in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Arizona Agriculture: What message do you wish to convey for Arizona Farm Bureau's farm and ranch members?

Burgess: My gratitude to them. I just want to say thank you for your support for everything we've achieved together over the past decade.

The Arizona Farm Bureau's farm and ranch members have provided vision for Arizona since it was a territory. Their ancestors coalesced and decided the territory needed higher education, and ever since their support for higher education has been paramount. In the past decade, I've been blessed to have that support, including making me think better and harder about our ideas and how they affect Arizona. 🍌

Latest Poll Suggests We're Better at Discussing Mental Health

Staff Reports

Have you recently discussed your anxiety with a family member or friend? Or, has a friend of yours with anxiety or depression been more open with you? If so, we're on the right track, according to a new research poll from the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF). Farmers, ranchers and people in rural areas are more comfortable talking about stress and mental health challenges with others. And the stigma around seeking help or treatment has decreased in rural and farm communities but is still a factor.

This encouraging news means that it's important to keep the momentum going in talking about mental health and providing resources for our farm and ranch families.

"I tend to believe at the root of agriculture, after God, is family and then friends," says Arizona Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Chair and AFBF western region director Shawn Wood, also in generational farming with her family. "Our core family concerns at the end of the day for one another is a package of considerations: are they fed, are business matters tended to, and how are they 'doing.'"

AFBF conducted the survey of rural adults and farmers/farmworkers to measure changes and trends in stigma, personal experiences with mental health, awareness of information about mental health resources and comfort in talking about mental health with others. The poll results were compared with previous surveys AFBF conducted in 2019 and 2020 focusing on farmer mental health, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on farmer mental health, respectively.

"Farm Bureau has been encouraging conversations to help reduce stigma around farmer stress and mental health through our Farm State of Mind campaign," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "This poll shows that we are making a difference, but we all still have work to do. It's up to each of us to keep looking out for our family, friends and neighbors and let them know they're not alone when they feel the increased stress that comes with the daily business of farming and ranching."

Morning Consult conducted the poll on behalf of AFBF and the state Farm Bureaus in December 2021 among a national sample of 2,000 rural adults. Specifically, the Stigma around seeking help or treatment for mental health has decreased but is still a factor, particularly in agriculture. Over the past year, there has been a decrease in rural adults saying their friends/acquaintances (-4%) and people in their local community (-9%) attach a stigma to seeking help or treatment for mental health. But most rural adults (59%) say there is at least some stigma around stress and mental health in the agriculture community, including 63% of farmers/farmworkers.

Arizona Farm Bureau is focused on this issue on behalf of its farm and ranch members. In addition to a conference this summer on the topic, Arizona Farm Bureau

is working with University of Arizona Extension to provide resources for the rural and agriculture community.

"Working in the agriculture industry can be difficult and stressful," says Arizona Farm Bureau President Phil Bashaw. "Sometimes the responsibility that comes with caring for their land, animals and families can be overwhelming. No one should have to carry this weight on their own when friends, communities, and resources exist to help.

I am encouraged to know the efforts that make it easier for our members and rural communities to access assistance in shouldering these burdens are working."

Maricopa County Farm Bureau Executive Director Liz Foster says, "Farm Bureau has worked hard over the last couple years to take the stigmatism away from mental health and get resources to our rural communities. It used to be something we didn't talk about but now we are treating mental health like heart conditions, cancer and other medical conditions. Instead of ignoring it, we are seeing doctors, starting treatment instead of ignoring the problem. The work done to train both gatekeepers (those in the community who are not medically trained) and professionals on signs

to look for with the agriculture community is starting to show results. Professionals are learning that just because demographics are similar on paper, those in agriculture have been raised vastly different and the emotional response to situations is very different and needs to be handled and treated differently."

Both Bashaw and Foster are working with U of A Extension on the Mental Health efforts to provide more information and resources.

If you or someone you know is struggling emotionally or has concerns about their mental health, visit the Farm State of Mind website at farmstateofmind.org for information on crisis hotlines, treatment locators, tips for helping someone in emotional pain, ways to start a conversation and resources for managing stress, anxiety or depression. Additionally, stay tuned for additional resources from Arizona Farm Bureau and U of A Extension.

Adds Wood, "If these last two years have brought anything to light, it's that life is precious, how we live life matters and those in our lives are important. The care for one another's health, whether it's mental health or any other aspect of health, isn't hard, it's simply caring. The added layers of the last two years, I believe have shed some light on the importance of taking care of ourselves and one another, including mental health."

This year's summer leadership conference in July, hosted by the Arizona Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee, will focus on mental health. Watch for more information at azfb.org.



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Mentor Protégé CAMP Profile, 4: Sharla Mortimer and Xavier Alfaro-Lopez

By Yavapai County Farm Bureau President and farmer/rancher Sharla Mortimer and NRCS Team member Xavier Alfaro-Lopez

Continuing our CAMP mentor/protégé series, we profile Yavapai County Farm Bureau President and farmer/rancher Sharla Mortimer and NRCS employee Xavier Alfaro-Lopez in this latest article.

With the launch April 2021 of the Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program (CAMP), in partnership with Arizona Farm Bureau, The NRCS team has been front and center in enthusiastically driving this unique partnership. While several other states have the CAMP program, Arizona is unique in the partnership effort with Arizona Farm Bureau.

At the beginning of this 18-month effort, Arizona Farm Bureau and NRCS continue to shine a bright light on this exciting program and the experiences our mentors and protégé are going through.

The Mortimer Xavier partnership works to understand Arizona agriculture and conversation opportunities, joining forces to provide firsthand experience of the conservation practices and agricultural happenings in the northern Arizona area.

From Sharla

What's been the biggest takeaway so far with your meetings over the telephone and/or zoom and/or face-to-face gathering? It has been great to get to know Xavier. It has been very helpful for me to see and understand his perspective of agriculture.

Why have you felt this program has been helpful? During our meetings, we have been able to discuss multiple aspects of agriculture and conservation. We have the same goals and love for the environment.

What do you hope to learn more about? How we can work more closely to protect the land, animals, and water resources.

What are you looking forward to in your other meetings/gatherings/learning and sharing sessions? I want to learn more from Xavier about what he and his coworkers need to be successful.

From Xavier

What's been the biggest takeaway so far with your meetings over the telephone and/or Zoom and/or face-to-face gathering? Getting an education in natural resources helps you understand the processes and cycles that the land goes through, which connects you to the land on some level. However, working lands add a unique layer to the ecosystem and all that's required to understand that process is for you to make time to listen, understand and exchange ideas with the producer. Connecting with producers connects you with the land.

Why have you felt this program has been helpful? This program reiterates the importance of slowing down and putting effort into connecting deeper with producers. As an agency employee, it is easy to get lost in the fast-paced environment of deadlines that we forget to set aside time to have genuine conversations with producers that could open doors to unknown conservation alternatives.

What do you hope to learn more about? I hope to learn Sharla's perspective on the role the farm plays in the surrounding community, and where conservation fits in that role.

What are you looking forward to in your other meetings/gatherings/learning and sharing sessions? I am interested in learning more about where Sharla envisions the farm in 15 years and seeing where NRCS could support that. 🐝

Redistricting: A Lesson in the Power of Our Voice

By Chelsea McGuire, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Director

It was the Christmas present that politicians across the state had been waiting for: on December 21, 2021, the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) approved its final legislative maps. We now know (pending the inevitable, but hopefully quick, legal challenges to come) what Arizona's legislative and Congressional districts will look like for the next decade.

Just when it seemed we had finally memorized the legislative district (LD) numbers and who represents which district, we're now making flashcards to try and wrap our heads around the new numbering. We will spare you an analysis of all 30 legislative districts and 9 Congressional districts and focus instead on districts that are heavily agricultural.

Legislative Districts

LD5 (now LD30): The River District encompasses most of Arizona's western border. It looks very similar to its current counterpart, but with a newly added block that follows the US60 as far east as Wickenburg. This is a solidly red district where Biden won only 27 percent of the vote in 2020, so expect to see it maintain the status quo with three Republican members.

LD6 (now split between LD1, LD6, and LD7): While the northernmost parts of current LD6 will be encompassed into a new LD6, which reaches across the northern border of the state to encompass the Apache and Navajo reservations, the southern sections are now in neighboring LDs 1 and 7. Both lean heavily Republican. LD1 includes Prescott, Cottonwood, Chino Valley, and Paulden. LD7 is far more winding and includes Flagstaff south of I-40, Payson, Snowflake, Globe, and has its southern tip in San Manuel. LD1 is expected to be solidly D, while LDs 1 and 7 are solidly R. But look out for some election fireworks (or, at least, friendly conversations) in LD7: there are currently two Senate incumbents, Wendy Rogers and Kelly Townsend. Townsend has filed her intention to run for Congress, so that likely leaves Sen. Rogers as the frontrunner. There are also three House incumbents: Brenda Barton, David Cook, and John Fillmore. How those folks will decide to compete for the two House seats remains to be seen.

LD8 (now LD16): Follows I-10 through Pinal County, encompassing Maricopa, Casa Grande, Florence, and Coolidge. The new district is rated highly competitive by the IRC, but current trends would suggest the likelihood of Republicans keeping control of this district is high.

LD13 (Now LD25): Similar to the current district, this is a solidly R LD that encompasses the west Phoenix valley along I-10 to the north and runs west with I-8 to the South. This district is significantly different in Yuma, however, and uses the Colorado River as part of the northern border but does not stretch far enough east to encompass Somerton. We're excited about this district, which will place current incumbents Rep. Tim Dunn (Yuma) and Rep. Joel John (Buckeye) together in the same district with Sen. Sine Kerr (Yuma).

LD14 (now LD19): This is another district that looks substantially like its predecessor, minus some changes to its outermost borders. The new district will no longer encompass all of Cochise County but will relinquish most of the border areas and carve out Bisbee. It will continue to encompass all of Graham County and most of Greenlee, save the northern edge. It remains solidly Republican, and current LD14 incumbents Sen. David Gowan, Rep. Gail Griffin, and newly appointed Rep. Lupe Diaz are joined

by one other incumbent, Democrat Andrea Dalessandro. Dalessandro has expressed that she has little interest in running in a district she's unlikely to be able win, so expect some familiar faces to go along with the new district number.

CD1 (Now CD2): Though trimmed slightly, the new CD2 will continue to be one of the largest districts in the nation in terms of landmass. It will include the Apache and Navajo nations, the San Carlos and Gila Indian Community reservations, but stops short of including areas south of Casa Grande including Eloy. The new borders look worse for incumbent Congressman Tom O'Halleran, but metrics still project a Democrat win in 5 of 9 simulated scenarios.

CD2 (Now CD6): Southern Arizona's new district looks similar to the new LD19 and encompasses most of Cochise, Graham, and Greenlee counties, as well as Pima County east of Tucson. Currently held by Democrat Ann Kirkpatrick, who is not seeking re-election, this new district leans Republican but is rated highly competitive. There's an impressively large field of Democrats with their hat in the ring already.

CD4 (Now CD9): Another district that looks very similar to its legislative district counterpart, this district encompasses Arizona's western border along the Colorado River and ends just south of I-8. It also encompasses Wickenburg and Luke Air Force Base to the east. It's heavily Republican, and Paul Gosar has already stated his intention to defend his seat.

To see all of the maps, and to get far more detail than what is summarized here, go to the mapping hub on the Independent Redistricting Commission's website: <https://redistricting-irc-az.hub.arcgis.com/pages/final-draft-maps#finaldraftmaps>

Your Voice Made the Difference

As with any redistricting process, agricultural producers can claim some wins and some losses in this final map. But this year, there's one big win that we hope the agricultural community will not only celebrate but replicate in years to come.

As the final drafts were being circulated, it looked as if the agricultural community in the west Phoenix valley would be arbitrarily broken up, with key production areas moved into a district with little agricultural interest. As a result, this important sector of farming would have diminished influence within its district, and diminished influence in the Legislature as a whole. Realizing this, farmers and farm families mobilized to send the redistricting commission comment after comment describing how this break-out would harm their businesses and livelihoods. According to one commissioner, the IRC was "inundated" with comments asking to keep the agriculture in Buckeye and the surrounding communities together. And, in the end, that's precisely what happened: The new LD25, which is similar to current LD13 in that it stretches from the west Phoenix valley to Yuma, incorporates both Buckeye and the town of Liberty, and therefore, all (or mostly all) of the agricultural production in that area.

This story highlights how something as simple as an email, comment, or phone call can make a difference when it comes to the future of Arizona politics. Sometimes, participating in the political process may seem like shouting into the void, but this is just one example of why it's not. When amplified through participation across multiple families and multiple farms, your concerns make a difference to decision-makers across the state. And sometimes, that difference means better legislative representation for the next ten years. 🐝

Dr Seuss Brings Ag into the Classroom

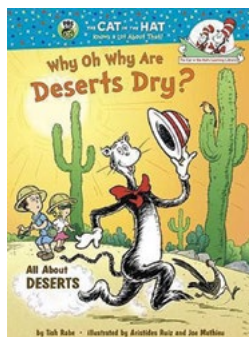
By Katie Aikins, Arizona Farm Bureau Education Director

Most everyone knows that one of the world's most beloved authors, Dr. Seuss, celebrates a birthday on March 2nd. So, it's time to celebrate.

To be part of the celebration, schools across the country participate in "Read Across America" to bring the love of reading to children. Arizona Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom is one of the many organizations that participate in "Read Across America" activities. In fact, between February 14 and March 4th Ag in the Classroom, along with its amazing volunteers, will be reading and providing hands-on activities to 850 Kindergarten through 2nd-grade students. Wondering what students will be learning about? See below for a taste of each presentation!

Kindergarten – Show Me the Honey

Students will learn about agriculture and the importance of bees focusing specifi-



cally on the way that bees communicate within the hive. Students and teachers will be showcasing their moves as they participate in the bee dances.

1st Grade – Oh Say Can You Seed

Students will learn about agriculture and the oh-so-important seed. You can't have agriculture without seeds! After engaging in the story Oh Say Can You Seed students will have the opportunity to learn the parts of the seed as they dissect their very own!

2nd Grade – Why O Why Are Deserts Dry

Students will learn about the importance of water in their lives and agriculture. They will engage in discussions about how agriculture conserves water through the many different irrigation techniques as well as participate in a hands-on irrigation challenge. 🐝

Arizona Leafy Greens' \$2 Billion Contribution

Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

A 2019 Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study found that only 12.3% of U.S. adults consumed recommended levels of fruits and 10% got the recommended levels of vegetables. Data showed that overall, Hispanic adults had the highest rate of meeting fruit consumption recommendations, while men had the lowest prevalence, and adults ages 51 and older were best at meeting vegetable consumption recommendations.

Ultimately, we have a long way to go to eat more fruits and vegetables and certainly our leafy greens. And I'd suggest we eat more Arizona leafy greens since our Arizona farmers are so good at producing safe and nutritious leafy greens.

Arizona Ag Facts about our Arizona Vegetable Production

We may be a small agricultural state and we might be more known for our desert vistas. But our Arizona agriculture statistics on vegetable production and leafy greens specifically are impressive too.

- As the latest U of A economic study indicates, Arizona Agriculture is a \$23.3 Billion industry. The vegetable production part of this number is \$2 billion alone.
- The month of November is always "Arizona Leafy Greens Month." It celebrates the kickoff of Arizona's leafy greens season, with abundant growth, harvest and shipments of Arizona-grown lettuce throughout the United States and Canada.
- The desert southwest is the only place in the U.S.A. that can grow these tender crops in the wintertime, providing a fresh, wholesome, home-grown source of vegetables.
- Yuma County ranks in the top 1/10th of 1% of U.S. counties in vegetable production.
- Daily between Thanksgiving and Easter, 1,000 to 1,200 semi-truckloads of leafy greens leave Yuma to deliver all over America and Canada so all of us can enjoy our leafy greens even during the wintertime.
- Nearly 20% of Arizona's leafy greens are produced organically and 80% conventionally to meet consumer interest in both farming methods.
- Americans eat an estimated 130 million salads a day.
- Arizona's 15 leafy greens covered by the Arizona Leafy Greens Agreement (AZ LGMA) which assures stringent food safety practices follow:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Endive | 9. Green Leaf Lettuce |
| 2. Escarole | 10. Red Leaf Lettuce |
| 3. Spring Mix | 11. Baby Leaf Lettuce |
| 4. Cabbage | 12. Spinach |
| 5. Romaine Lettuce | 13. Kale |
| 6. Butter Lettuce | 14. Chard |
| 7. Arugula | 15. Radicchio |
| 8. Iceberg Lettuce | |

• Yuma County is considered America's winter salad bowl. But lots of leafy greens are coming from Arizona's Maricopa and Pinal Counties too.

Here's why you and I Need to Eat More Arizona Leafy Greens

I've bought in so seriously on how healthy these leafy Greens are that I even add them to my scrambled eggs each morning, especially Kale, mustard and collard greens. Here the overview of the health benefits of leafy greens.

1. Leafy greens, especially the dark green ones, are packed with phytonutrients, protein, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
2. The darker leafy greens are rich in A, C, E and K, and broccoli, Bok choy and mustards are also rich in several B vitamins.
3. Kale contains more Vitamin C than oranges.
4. The Vitamin K contained in dark leafy vegetables is good for protecting bones from osteoporosis and helping prevent inflammatory diseases.
5. Romaine lettuce is one of the five lettuce types and an excellent source of folate and vitamin K.
6. Bok Choy, though celery-like in appearance, belongs to the cabbage family.
7. Collard greens have been studied for their ability to lower cholesterol.
8. Cabbage dates to the 1600s. Some drink juiced cabbage for stomach and intestinal issues.
9. The most appealing benefits of dark green leafy vegetables is their low calorie and carbohydrate content and their low glycemic index.
10. Spinach is a natural hydrator with raw spinach 91% water. It's an excellent source of vitamins A, C, and K, folate, potassium, and fiber.



What is the Arizona Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement?

Arizona Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (Arizona LGMA) provides rigorous, science-based food safety audits to the Arizona produce industry and is managed by the Arizona Leafy Greens Food Safety Committee. Arizona is the second-largest leafy green producer in the United States. Arizona Leafy Greens members represent 98% of leafy green products grown in Arizona.

The California and Arizona LGMA agreement is designed around constantly challenging current food safety practices. As they self-evaluate their safety protocols, they seek new opportunities and strategies for ensuring a safe food supply of an extremely healthy food category.

Next time your in the produce aisle or at your local farmers market, remember what our Arizona farmers do for your health and eating enjoyment. 🍴

Rural Leadership Program Applications Due March 15th

What are some of the issues you see on the horizon for Arizona agriculture? As the Voice of Arizona Agriculture, Arizona Farm Bureau has been partnering with Arizona Center for Rural Leadership since its conception in the late 1970s and launching its first class of rural leaders in 1983 to equip and empower leaders to meet the needs of rural Arizona.



**ARIZONA
CENTER
FOR RURAL
LEADERSHIP**

Today, you are encouraged to consider and help find farmers and ranchers to join the over 650 alumni who are making a difference in rural Arizona communi-

ties by applying for Class 31 of the flagship program: Project CENTRL. It is a competitively selected and tuition-free experiential-learning leadership development program. Over the course of nine seminars across Arizona, Washington, DC and Sonora, Mexico participants build personal leadership skills, learn about the issues facing rural Arizona and connect with leaders and experts.

"As a founding partner in the creation of Arizona Center for Rural Leadership, Arizona Farm Bureau has a strong legacy of sending members, volunteer leaders and staff through our premier leadership development program." shares the Center's Board Chair, George Seperich Emeritus Professor, Agribusiness and Food Science at the Morrison School of Agribusiness at Arizona State University. "Farm Bureau members are a critical component of each CENTRL Class as they provide the 'boots on the ground' perspective with their classmates who are involved with other parts of the rural economy and may know less about production agriculture."

The CENTRL curriculum is designed to meet you where you are in your leadership journey and provide the personal tools, increase knowledge across several rural issues and strengthen your network. As a public-private partnership between the non-profit Center and the University of Arizona Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences and Co-operative Extension participants and alumni are backed by organizations invested in and committed to rural Arizona.

Detailed program information and an application packet are available online at www.centr.org/apply Additionally, you can inquire with questions to Executive Director, Scott Koenig a graduate of Class 21 by calling the Center's office at 602-827-8227. Applicants must be at least 25 years of age by June 2022 and a full-time resident of Arizona.

All application materials are due on March 15, 2022, and candidates are encouraged to complete and submit them earlier. 🍴



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Arizona Agriculture Remembers Joseph Sigg



Joseph Sigg

Arizona agriculture recently lost a strong advocate, Joseph Sigg. His passing brings a myriad of memories to his fellow lobbyists and colleagues that have worked hard to protect one of Arizona's most vital industries.

Sigg served for approximately 16 years as Director of Government Relations for the Arizona Farm Bureau, working on water, air quality and other major issues on behalf of our industry. One of his signature and ongoing efforts was always around the need for available, legal labor. For some of our more nuanced issues, including politics, he had the capacity to see future outcomes.

Previously, he served as the Deputy Director for both the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the Arizona Department of Agriculture. In between government stints, he spent 25 years in the banking and trust business, all of it in agriculture, in 35 states and abroad.

With a Bachelor of Arts from Ohio Northern University and a Master of Arts from Ohio State University, Sigg was born on a family farm in Ohio with four other brothers, making for a rowdy and memorable time for the Sigg family growing up.

He leaves behind a son and daughter and grandchildren. 🚗

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