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## Conversation on Leadership and Cooperative Extension: Jeffrey Silvertooth

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

Jeffrey Silvertooth graduated December 1986 with a Ph.D. in Soil Science (Soil Fertility) from Oklahoma State University. His dissertation at the time was on the “Methodology of total Nitrogen Determination in Plant Materials and the Distribution of Fertilizer Nitrogen-15 in Winter Wheat.” To be exact, he is an agronomist with a specialty or expertise in soil fertility and plant nutrition. And though not a native Arizonan, he came to Arizona, joined the UA team and began a meaningful career focused on Arizona agriculture.

Silvertooth also has a master’s degree in Agronomy, which he also received from Oklahoma State University and earned his bachelor’s degree in Agronomy from Kansas State University. At UA, he’s taught courses in the Management of Arid Lands and Salt Affected Soils, Introduction to Soil Science, and Soil Fertility (SWES Dept.), Crop Science and Production (PLS Dept.), along with a Soil, Water and Environmental Sciences modular course and freshman colloquium.

His research interests have been directed towards the development of crop production management strategies (primarily irrigated cotton, cantaloupes, and chilies (green, red, and jalapenos)) that optimize the soil-plant system agronomically and economically, with full consideration of the short- and long-term impact of inputs environmentally. A study of the soil-plant relationships regarding nutrients essential to cotton, cantaloupes, and chiles is an important part of the program as well as the management of salinity and sodicity in agricultural soils. The overall goal, by interacting with other programs, is to reduce the level of inputs such as irrigation water, fertilizers, and pesticides and maintain profitability and sustainability in both the short- and long-term agricultural production systems in the desert Southwest.

Dr. Silvertooth has received several awards and recognitions including the Ag-100 Award for Excellence in Agricultural Research and Extension, 1996 and the Arizona Farm Bureau Environmental Protection and Technology Award, 1995, Arizona Cotton Grower’s Association, Appreciation Award for Outstanding Service to the Industry in 1994, and he became a Fellow in the American Society of Agronomy in 2010 and a Fellow in the Soil Science Society of America in 2015.

The Murphree family has known Dr. Silvertooth since he first came to Arizona

in 1987 and have always appreciated his contribution to our state’s farming. Dad (Pat Murphree) recalls meeting Dr. Silvertooth at UA’s Safford farm after flying with Maricopa Ag Center Resident Director Jim Parks via dad’s plane, a Citabria. “Dr. Silvertooth makes science interesting, practical and exciting,” said Murphree. “He works well with Arizona farmers including farmers from around the globe.”

Dr. Silvertooth eventually went up in dad’s plane for some “fantastic aerial gymnastics” (aerobatics) and the big picture view of Arizona agriculture and remembers it well.

So, this month we celebrate Dr. Silvertooth’s contribution to the advancement of practical application science to Arizona agriculture.

**Arizona Agriculture:** I’m sure I speak for many when I say, we’ll miss you as Director for the University of Arizona (UA) Cooperative Extension System (CES) and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Associate Dean for Economic Development. While we all come to those “retirement” decisions in our lives, I thought yours was quite thoughtful and you had personally made a specific timeframe commitment. Please explain.

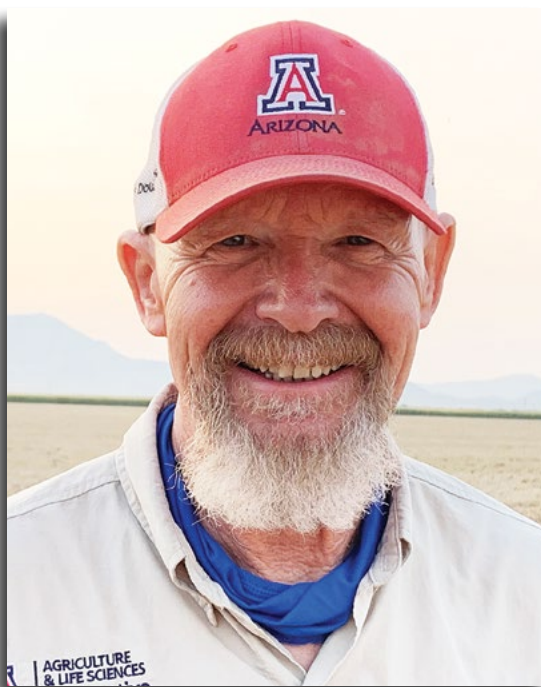
**Dr. Silvertooth:** Thank you for the kind comment. Yes, I have given this decision a lot of thought. As a student of leadership, I have come to believe that it is important to have turnover in leadership positions such as the UA Cooperative Extension System (CES) Director at an appropriate frequency. The proper time frame is a matter of debate, but I believe for positions such as the CES Director the proper window is approximately 7 to 10 years. Many people in positions like this will stay longer, and sometimes that is appropriate. However, quite often they stay for their own personal motivations.

I was nearing the end of my tenth year as the CES Director, and I could have stayed on, but I believe it is best for the organization to make the change and it is good for me to do so as well.

I believe in a peaceful transition of power, and I am working to demonstrate that in this move and process.

**Arizona Agriculture:** I noted that Dean Burgess said in the announcement letter that the CES Director role is quite challenging? Speak to this and how did you make it

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Though no longer Extension Director, Dr. Silvertooth remains a contributing stakeholder in the Arizona agriculture community through a full-time UA professorship of environmental science.

## That’s a Wrap: 2021 Legislative Session is in the Books

By Chelsea McGuire, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Director

Arizona’s Constitution dictates that the session shall last no more than 100 days without a motion to extend it. And while 100 days is always a bit of an overly optimistic estimate, we can typically expect that they will wrap up and pass a budget on or around Memorial Day weekend.

But not this year. This year, the action was drawn out a full 171 days. While it was not record breaking in terms of length (1988 and 1990 were longer; 2021 is tied with 1992 for third longest), it was certainly long enough to make us all take a huge sigh of relief when it was finally over.

### What We Expected Versus What We Got

At the outset of the session, myself and others in the lobbying community were already convinced that the session would drag out longer than usual; not because of the work itself, but because of COVID. With rules for remote participation still unclear at the opening day of session, we anticipated that outbreaks and difficulty getting legislators to the building to vote would require significant breaks throughout the session. I also thought these considerations might lead legislators to focus more on key bills, rather than throwing all their legislative ideas at the proverbial wall to see what stuck.

Ultimately, both of those predictions turned out to be wrong. While several members and staff were diagnosed with COVID during the session, the outbreaks were thankfully well-contained, and we are grateful that they did not lead to a widespread infection rate among the Capitol community. Although remote participation had its hiccups and opportunities for political gamesmanship, our legislators did not use it as an excuse to do less. We saw a record number of bills introduced: 1,774, by the time all was said and done. And with unanticipated revenues from both state and federal sources, we saw more projects and initiatives funded than anyone believed possible in January, when we still anticipated a budget shortfall nearing \$1 billion.

One thing that did pan out as we predicted was the confusion, and sometimes

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work despite the typical challenges?

**Dr. Silvertooth:** I will certainly not disagree with that. The CES Director is a challenging position for a lot of reasons but primarily due to the fact the CES is a large, very diverse, and distributed organization with 500 to 700 faculty and staff working in every county of the state during my tenure. Personnel are based in county offices, on our experiment station locations, on many American Indian reservations, and on the UA campus. The CES has more than 5,000 volunteers working with us from communities all over the state and approximately 5,000 young people enrolled in Extension programs, such as 4-H. The CES receives funding from federal, state, and county governments and there are community-based advisory boards in every county.

Besides the external groups to work with, the CES Director must also navigate the internal UA networks at the college, division, and university administrative levels and many of these UA entities do not understand the CES at all. There is a constant flow of personnel, financial, political, and tactical issues confronting the CES administration, and the Director is responsible. Collectively, there is a lot going on with the CES. I am obviously biased, but I believe the CES Director must deal with a greater level of diversity and complexity of issues and challenges than most other university administrators ever see. That is part of what makes it a very interesting job as well as challenging. It has certainly provided plenty of both to me the past 10 years.

**Arizona Agriculture:** The good thing is that the UA and Arizona agriculture is not completely losing you. You're returning to a full-time professorship of environmental science in the Department of Environmental Science. Tell us your "why" on this?

**Dr. Silvertooth:** I am an agronomist & soil scientist, and I am grateful to be able to return to the field, literally and figuratively. I have been working professionally as an agronomist for 45 years, which brought me to Arizona in the first place in 1987 as an Extension Agronomist – Cotton, aka Cotton Specialist. It is only natural that I make this transition consistent with that professional foundation. Things have changed a lot in the Arizona ag community over the past 35 years and I continue to seek positive ways to contribute at this stage in my career.

**Arizona Agriculture:** In any leader role, key elements of leadership must be recognized and applied. But what to you is the most critical aspect(s) of being a successful leader from your perspective, especially on behalf of higher education and extension?

**Dr. Silvertooth:** Leadership positions really have two fundamental functions, 1) leadership and 2) management. It is essential to do both simultaneously with a focus on the mission. Many people attracted to leadership positions are interested in the leadership aspects with an emphasis on the visions and philosophical points for the organization. However, the management of resources, e.g. human, financial, and physical plant resources, represents a huge part of the job and it requires a lot of hard work. I believe leadership positions place a significant demand on the individual and it comes down to the leader's character and commitment. Both will be revealed in the crucible of a leadership position. Fundamentally, what is needed in a leader is the same we should expect from all professionals: honesty, common sense, and a strong work ethic.

**Arizona Agriculture:** I like your, "bringing the university to the people and science to bear on practical problems." Certainly, that's so important in Cooperative Extension's role. Talk more about this for our readers.

**Dr. Silvertooth:** Thank you, I believe that is a succinct and simple way to define the Cooperative Extension mission. The CES has a nice mission statement but stating the mission in simple, practical terms can often be helpful. That statement comes from my readings of Thomas Jefferson in the early 19th century and his essays on the "General Diffusion of Knowledge" and the premise that the U.S. should have public institutions of higher learning and an essential part of the mission should be to bring the university to the people and bring science to bear on practical problems. This became a central element in the formation of land-grant institutions, such as the UA. It is still important today in our society and it is at the core of the CES mission.

**Arizona Agriculture:** If you can leave a note to the next person that steps into your position, what would you say?

**Dr. Silvertooth:** First, I should probably alert the next Director to the pitfalls and mistakes that I have made. But that would go beyond the scope of this conversation.

One thing that is important for sure is to listen to people from all aspects of the organization and from the communities we work with and serve, which I did diligently. However, one must also understand that not everyone will agree with you, nor will you agree with all of them. There will be a plethora of opinions that often offered quite vigorously and many of them do not agree. Nevertheless, one needs to listen openly and honestly, then decide and move on.

I do believe the CES Director needs to have a firm understanding and belief in the mission of the organization. I would say the same to an incumbent CES Director as I have stated repeatedly to myself every day and to everyone in the CES for the past 10 years which is to do your job, be a professional, be a good team player, and when faced with difficult decisions do the right thing.

Doing the right thing means being a good steward of all resources in your realm of responsibility, being fair and objective, and not acquiescing to loud or powerful factions. That all sounds easy but when faced with difficult cases and dealing with many critics who know very little of the facts on the case, it does take commitment and courage to maintain the focus and do what you know is best. In my view, it is essential to stay focused on the CES mission. There are many forces and elements working on the CES that can distract it away for the core mission of the organization.

**Arizona Agriculture:** Here's the crystal ball question: What's the future for Extension? What should all stakeholders expect?

**Dr. Silvertooth:** The UA Cooperative Extension System is certainly facing challenges today, but I am confident that it will prevail. The CES has repeatedly experienced challenges for 107 years since it was formally created by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. The CES is a partnership with the public and that relationship is central to the CES future.

In the short-term, the CES is dealing with very difficult budget limitations. The CES is subject to the costs or "taxes" imposed by the university in the new budgeting system that is heavily oriented towards revenues derived from tuition and student credit hours. The CES does not teach resident courses or offer degrees, so it has no access to the revenues in this university budget system, only the costs. Due to increasing internal costs and inflation, the CES has lost approximately \$2.7 million out of the \$16.1 million allocated budget. This has resulted in a reduction of CES faculty by about 20%. That pattern will continue unless additional permanent funding is secured. The future of the CES in Arizona is going to be dependent upon and connected to the public and the support of stakeholders and the Arizona Legislature.

**Arizona Agriculture:** Arizona agriculture faces tough issues: Water, labor, tough commodity markets and more. Give your 30,000-foot view on some of these topics.

**Dr. Silvertooth:** Yes, these are each among the most challenging issues facing the Arizona ag industry today. In my view, water is by far the most serious issue among these. Water is the lifeblood of agriculture in the desert. Based

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# On and Off the Farm, the Work is Never Done! #StillFarming #StillAdvocating

By Stefanie Smallhouse, Arizona Farm Bureau President



Stefanie Smallhouse,

While the legislature is out of session for the year and kids have been home enjoying a well-deserved break from masks and computer screens – there is no off season for farmers, or the Arizona Farm Bureau. The social, political and natural environments which impact our industry are constantly changing regardless of who controls the levers at the local, state or national level and AZFB is on the lookout.

I recently attended the Arizona Women in Agriculture Conference and had the opportunity to hear from a panel of consumers about what is important to them when making food choices for their families. What struck me was that even though each panelist was speaking

from a different perspective, with different priorities, they were all passionate about how food influences their daily lives. For a couple of panelists, the types of food they eat is literally a matter of life and death. For another panelist, food and the gathering around meals and flavors is essential for a sense of family and community. The fourth contributor to the food conversation was focused on the importance of creating a loving and flavorful meal for their family at an affordable price. This “Tailgate Conversation” encapsulated why what we do is so important, why the consumer cares so much and how we communicate matters.

While the average consumer might be focused on food choices, food safety and affordability, many others are focused on the natural resources vital to growing food, economies, and the environment. Earlier in the month I sat in on a Pinal County water stakeholder meeting where it was announced that no further development would occur in the Pinal Active Management Area (AMA) using groundwater within that AMA. As the competition for water increases, this will no doubt have an impact on farm water and value. This is happening at the same time everyone awaits the August 2021 24-months study which will likely confirm a Tier 1 Shortage declaration on the Colorado River, eliminating the ag pool allocation. What is being termed the ongoing mega-drought, has exacerbated the water availability situation in the Gila Valley where farmers operate under the heavy burden of the Arizona Water Settlements Act of 2004.

On a recent Arizona farm tour with American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall, every stop mentioned the ongoing struggle to find workers. The situation is especially challenging on Arizona dairies. There is no agricultural visa program in existence for year-round work. To date the only legislative offering is a temporary fix with long-term consequences for farms due to unsustainable wage requirements, limited worker visas and creating a high-risk litigious environment on your farm. It is certainly a labor bill, but not one for the farmer.

All said, it can be easy to get overwhelmed when considering the multiple outside forces impacting your ability to farm or milk cows. I am not sure how anyone could grow a crop or care for animals if it were up to each of us individually to defend our rights, secure our resources, advocate for a fair playing field, educate those around us and communicate to the consumer. In the last 100 years, several generations of farmers have been able to rely on Arizona Farm Bureau and its grassroots foundation to empower you to speak out on these issues through policy development, communication training and classroom resources. And when you can't leave the farm, the Farm Bureau family steps up and ensures your voice is heard. While we work on issues for all of agriculture, here are some of the recent actions beneficial to the crop and dairy industry:

#### • Communication & Outreach:

- o Member product highlights – radio, social media
- o Issues awareness – national media, social media
- o Engaging county leaders for county Farm Bureau support
- o Keeping membership informed – webinars, newsletters
- o Ultimately generating 17,654,270 impressions (reach) in the last fiscal year

#### • Education:

- o In classrooms all over Arizona presenting ag facts: multiple programs and teaching tools made available at no cost to teachers/students
- o Educating Arizona's Educators – Summer Ag Institute
- o Educating 141,662 students, teachers and parents in this last school year

#### Advocacy:

- Working with Yuma and Pinal Counties on air quality monitoring issues
- Advocated for a producer supported fee increase for Citrus Research Council, allowing them to raise more money for critical research

- Passed policy at the national level to ensure changes to American Farm Bureau dairy policy and make allowances to recognize the unique dairy industry in Arizona
  - o Secured an Arizona dairyman to serve on AFBF Dairy Working Group
- Successfully lobbied for \$6.6 million in additional funding for Arizona Department of Agriculture, including much needed updates to technology and equipment for the state agricultural lab, which is critical for dairy industry
- Conveyed the importance and use of pesticides for Arizona crops through comment letters to the EPA – on average, three per month
- Supported Right to Farm Legislation - Prevents unwarranted lawsuits against agricultural producers in Arizona by limiting punitive damages and allowing Courts to award costs and fees in favor of the agricultural operation (passed)
- Supported tax cuts and reform which will alleviate the impact of tax-increasing propositions on small businesses across Arizona (passed)
- Opposed a bill which would have mandated certain animal husbandry practices and set precedent for unfounded animal rights claims in Arizona (failed)
- Water
  - o Advocating for inclusion of \$55 billion for water infrastructure in bipartisan bill
  - o Supported a surface waters protection bill for the state that is clear, restrained, and puts Arizona on solid footing to challenge to federal overreach in WOTUS. (passed)
  - o AZFB served on ADEQ Stakeholder Advisory Group
  - o Continue to look for ways to help farmers in the Gila Valley find solutions to ongoing water allocation issues and maintain open communication with lawmakers on these issues
  - o Prevented passage (or hearings) of bills to limit use of groundwater outside the AMAs
  - o Advocated for the non-forfeiture bill (removes risk of forfeiture for non-use if water is being conserved) (passed)
  - o Engaged directly with ADWR to ensure significant stakeholder input for the implementation of the 4th Management Plan and the drafting of the 5th Management Plan – continuing to work closely with irrigation districts to make sure BMP program meets the needs of farmers across Central AZ
  - o AZFB serves on Governor's Water Augmentation, Innovation, & Conservation Council (multiple sub-committees)
  - o AZFB serves on Colorado River Arizona Re-consultation Committee
  - o AZFB doing multiple media interviews to bring awareness of the impending CO River shortages and the impact that will have on Arizona producers
  - o Supported budget funding for \$200 million in drought mitigation
- Lobbying for the reauthorization of WHIP+ for 2020 disasters
- Labor
  - o Facilitated communication opportunities with Senatorial offices on ways to improve the Farm Workforce Modernization Act in the Senate so that the H-2A program will be usable by the crop and dairy industries and highlight serious concerns with the current wage structure and liability risks
- COVID
  - o After they were left out of the first round of CFAP, successfully lobbied for inclusion of key Arizona crops such as alfalfa, Pima cotton, nursery crops, and floriculture in CFAP 2
  - o Helped lobby to include farm workers in 1st tier of COVID vaccine eligibility
- Food Safety
  - o AZFB has provided critical information regarding food safety practices and challenges to the AFBF Food Safety Issues Advisory Council
  - o AZFB has engaged on multiple occasions with news media and social media to bring awareness to all that is being done to maintain the high food safety standards in place on the farm
- Trade
  - o Advocating for fair trade agreements which do not discriminate

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## Legislative

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frustration, caused by rigid COVID prevention protocols. During a typical session, I am at the Capitol four to five days per week to meet with lawmakers, corner them in hallways when they do not have time for a formal meeting, testify on bills, and eavesdrop on conversations during committee breaks. This year, I was at the Capitol a total of four times, and all of them involved temperature screenings, interrogation by Capitol security as to where I was going and why, and a significant amount of hand sanitizer. Debates over legislators wearing – or not wearing – masks made headlines. There were even two separate swearing-in ceremonies in the House: one for masked legislators and one for unmasked legislators. Committee testimony was a hybrid of in-person and virtual participation in the House, while the Senate was almost exclusively virtual. Lawn events were almost non-existent, but that didn't stop Arizona Farm Bureau from serving breakfast and giving out gift bags in lieu of our normal Ag Fest event (and we even won the Arizona Capitol Times award for “Best Lawn Event” as a result!).

### Better Than Anticipated

While I admittedly entered this session with less-than-high hopes, its outcome exceeded even the most optimistic of expectations. We strengthened Arizona's Right to Farm laws to significantly decrease the incentives for opportunistic plaintiffs to file frivolous lawsuits. We created a framework for regulating Arizona's surface water re-

sources with clarity and restraint, setting us up well to challenge future overreach by the Federal government. We prevented radical animal rights activists from imposing California-style housing and commerce restrictions on Arizona's egg market. We passed a state budget that cuts commercial assessment and individual income tax rates while also making significant investments in debt reduction, infrastructure, and key government personnel. That budget included \$200 million for investing in Arizona's water future, in the form of long-term drought mitigation projects. It also secured \$6.6 million in new funding for the Department of Agriculture, including money to fill 2.5 full-time positions for new meat and poultry inspectors.

In a year where it would have been tempting to wave the white flag and give up on our normal advocacy plans, Arizona Farm Bureau instead doubled down on our efforts. We shifted, pivoted, and rolled with the punches to make sure that key needs of agriculture in Arizona were recognized and met. We kept our relationships with legislators strong, despite the relational challenges posed by a virtual environment.

And just a few months from now, we'll be ready to do it all over again.

**Editor's Note:** To stay up to date on all the latest political news from the Government Relations team, text “AZFB” to 50457 to sign up for our newsletter and Action Alerts. 📧

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on the conditions on the Colorado River and the declining levels in Lake Mead, due principally to more than 20 years of drought, we are very likely facing the imposition of Tier 1 reductions in the allocation of Colorado River water into Arizona in 2022, which is normally 2.8 million acre-feet (MAF). Based on the Drought Contingency Plan, under Tier 1 conditions, Arizona will be required to reduce allocations by a total of 512,000-acre feet, primarily affecting the Central Arizona Project (CAP). Tier 1 will reduce the CAP allocation by about 30% and most of that reduction will come directly from the CAP ag water allocations in central Arizona. That is a significant challenge for agricultural systems in central Arizona and water limitations exist in other parts of the state as well, particularly with groundwater resources in areas such as the upper Gila River Valley, southeast, and northwest Arizona, etc. We are good stewards of our water resources in Arizona agriculture, but we have no choice but to further tighten our irrigation management.

**Arizona Agriculture:** Even though not originally from Arizona, we consider you like a “native son.” Why have you had such a solid commitment to Arizona agriculture over the years?

**Dr. Silvertooth:** That is quite a nice compliment, I appreciate that a great deal.

I come from agricultural communities in Kansas and Oklahoma, where I lived and worked before coming to Arizona. These might be different regions but there is a commonality among agriculture communities that I like. I am drawn to that type of working world and the people, and I enjoying being a contributing part of it.

In my first year and crop season in Arizona, I was immediately impressed by how beautiful the landscapes of Arizona are and how hard and unforgiving this country is. Despite that, the folks in the Arizona ag community are out on the lands of Arizona and they are producing and doing so quite proficiently. I am continually impressed by that, and I have a lot of respect for the people out there in Arizona agriculture who are doing the work of producing, surviving, and serving as good stewards of land and water resources. I am impressed and encouraged by the many ways that they/we have adapted and changed during three and one-half decades that I have been here. I enjoy and appreciate being part of that. 🌱

**Arizona’s Certified Organic Ag Sales Increase Nearly 70% from 2016**

By **Dave DeWalt**, State Statistician, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Mountain Region - Arizona Field Office

In 2019, sales of certified organic agricultural production in Arizona totaled \$203 million, a significant increase from 2016’s \$118 million. The \$203 million of sales made Arizona the 11th ranked state in terms of certified organic value of sales. The number of certified organic farms in Arizona was 62, an increase of 24 farms from 2016.



Vegetable sales accounted for 64 percent of the total certified organic sales.

The 2019 Certified Organic Survey showed that vegetable sales accounted for 64 percent of the total certified organic sales. Top certified organic vegetables produced and sold in 2019 in Arizona included lettuces (\$32.7 million) and broccoli (\$15.9 million). Field crops totaled \$16.7 million, a significant increase from 2016. Other commodities accounted for the remaining \$138 million in sales. Many of these were not publishable due to confidentiality rules and included spinach, dates, milk, pecans, and various other vegetables and field crops.

Overall, sales of U.S. organic agricultural production increased by 31 percent from 2016. U.S. farms produced and sold \$9.9 billion in certified organic commodities. The number of certified organic farms in the country increased 17 percent and land used for certified organic production increased 9 percent. Here is a link to the highlights from the 2019 release.

California, with \$3.6 billion in certified organic sales, continued to lead the nation in sales, accounting for 36 percent of the U.S. total. California also had the largest share of certified organic acres. Ten states accounted for 75 percent of U.S. certified organic sales, slightly less than the 77 percent in 2016.

The survey was a census of all known U.S. farmers and ranchers with certified organic production in 2019. Producers must meet the standards set out by USDA’s



See **AG SALES** Page 6

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# The Latest on Proposed Changes to Inheritance Taxes

By Victoria Okula, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

Under current law, stepped-up basis allows a farmer to pay capital gains taxes only on property's increase in value since the date the land was inherited, not on the full increase in value since the date it was purchased by that farmer's parents or grandparents. Eliminating the stepped-up basis would make continuing on the family farm extremely costly since the value of many farms is tied up in land and equipment, which are highly illiquid assets. The next generation could be forced to liquidate assets – or even sell the farm – just to pay the taxes.

Unfortunately, there are several proposals to get rid of this beneficial tax provisions. The STEP Act announced by Senator Van Hollen proposes to eliminate stepped-up basis upon death of the owner, and the 99.5 Percent Act introduced by Senator Sanders decreases the estate tax exemption down significantly from where it is today.

Recently, the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University developed a study showing the impact of potential inheritance tax changes and found that if both the STEP Act and the 99.5 Percent Act were simultaneously implemented, 92 of the 94 representative farms would be impacted, with additional tax liabilities incurred averaging \$1.43 million per farm.

Stepped-up basis encourages families to grow their business and pass it on to another generation. Without this incentive, it would be difficult to enter a business-like farming and ranching. An estate tax does just the opposite, making it more difficult for families to pass along their farms and ranches to their children and grandchildren. Imposing both tax burdens at the same time would mean disaster for family farms across the nation.

Arizona Farm Bureau believes that, at the very least, capital gains taxes should not be collected at death, and the unlimited step-up in basis of inherited assets should continue. The good news is that Farm Bureau is working around the clock to advocate for tax policy that encourages family businesses, rather than hurting it. To contact your Member of Congress about the importance of protecting a step up in basis, visit: [www.azfb.org/Public-Policy/Action-Center](http://www.azfb.org/Public-Policy/Action-Center)

## Ag Sales

continued from page 5

Agricultural Marketing Service's National Organic Program and be certified compliant by an approved agent of the program. Survey results are available at [www.nass.usda.gov/organics](http://www.nass.usda.gov/organics) or the Quick Stats database at <https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov>.

The 2022 Census of Agriculture will be upon us in just a little over a year. Census of Agriculture forms will be mailed out in early 2023 and results from this massive data collection effort should be available by early 2024.

I want to personally thank each and every Arizona producer who responds to our important data collection efforts so that we can prepare estimates of Arizona's agricultural acreage, production, and value.

# Down the Long and Winding Arizona Roads

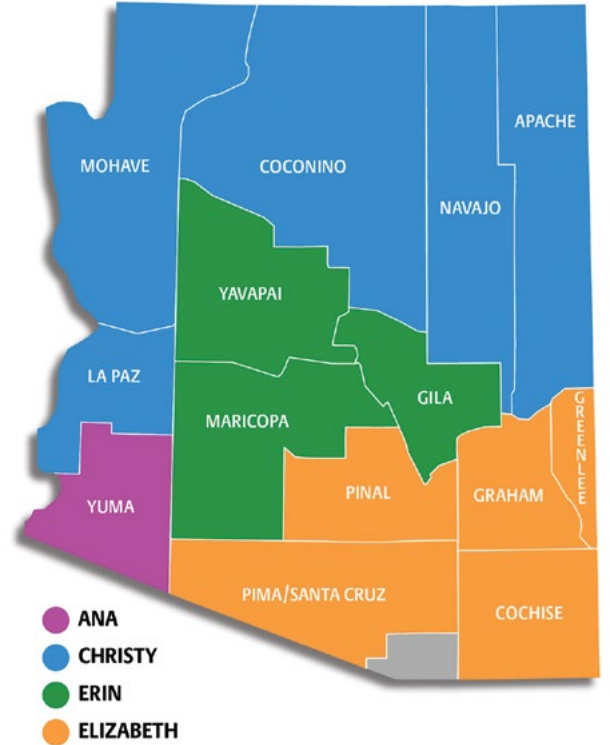
By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

The recent COVID-19 pandemic notwithstanding, the Outreach management team and county leadership possess a unique role and relationship in the annuals of Farm Bureau life. Without our county management support – that link between state and county work – our advocacy, communication and education work would be challenged to move the Farm Bureau efforts in the right direction. Structurally, it's what makes the work of the volunteer leader truly "grassroots."

It was humbling to recently hear one of our county leaders talk about the Outreach management support and perhaps what any of the county leadership might echo. "I am always personally struck by the miles logged to get where we are to support us, the county farm and ranch member leaders," said former Pima County Farm Bureau President Jack Mann.

I fully agree with volunteer leader Mann on this point. I will always call my Outreach Manager team, "Road Warriors." When you chat with them, the managers joke about their windshield time; the code appears to dictate that they make themselves available for our volunteer leadership and members, and effectively available.

And on the issue of travel and changes and challenges, county leaders and the outreach managers have had a big revelation about the use of technology when it makes sense. The virtual component became critically important as a few of our leadership families requested the virtual connection during the pandemic and Arizona's spike in cases. Travel restrictions were also enforced by efforts to also protect staff. We worked to not miss a beat with county management even during the pandemic. Regular county board meetings, county policy development and county Annual Meetings all still took place. The way they were conducted might have looked different, however meeting



See ARIZONA ROADS Page 7



With over 75 combined years of experience, Matt Eyrich, Carrie Morales, Cody Stephan and Candilee Struble bring a wealth of knowledge to their new roles as Agribusiness Relationship Managers.

The entire team comes from farming families and has hands-on experience in the agriculture industry. The team understands the complexity of farming/ranching operations and the diverse financial needs of farmers across the Southwest. They are excited to be a part of NB|AZ® and look forward to expanding its presence in the agribusiness market.



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## Arizona Roads

*continued from page 6*

content, debate, discussion, and policy development still took place.

Today, you can ask any one of the Outreach managers and they will tell you they are glad to be fully back “on the road again!” As the pandemic of 2020 becomes more of a bookmark in history, outreach managers are now on the road as in prior years serving as liaison linking Farm Bureau counties with the state organization, Arizona Farm Bureau.

### What our County Leaders Say about Outreach

Between Outreach staff and county leaders, we’ve determined that we are a part of a mutual admiration club. We appreciate our volunteer leaders, and they appreciate us.

“Staff’s role in assisting the county usually goes way beyond what most members realize,” explains Maricopa and Pinal Counties farmer, Pinal County Farm Bureau President and Arizona Farm Bureau’s Second Vice President Richie Kennedy. “Their support and guidance on all aspects of the counties function is second only to that of our volunteers but one doesn’t work without the other!”

“One of the best decisions made for Arizona agriculture by Arizona Farm Bureau was to assign a state staff person to each county,” said Yavapai County Farm Bureau President Sharla Mortimer and co-owner of Mortimer Farms. “They provide invaluable expertise and motivation to keep our Farm Bureau counties’ efforts efficient. This relationship creates open communication between our membership and our state organization. A relationship that elevates Arizona agriculture’s grassroots government relation efforts. Efforts that protect Arizona agriculture, give us a collective voice at the legislature, and defend us against unnecessary regulations and laws. Farm Bureau staff is talented, professional, knowledgeable, and passionate. Their positive attitude gives members the motivation to do better as leaders, farmers, ranchers, and agriculturalists. They are our cheerleaders, and they are our voice.”

Outreach team members include Christy Davis for Apache, Coconino, La Paz, Mohave, and Navajo; Erin Kuiper for Gila, Maricopa and Yavapai; Elizabeth Rico for Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, Pima and Pinal; Ana Kennedy Otto for Yuma.

County management support is the big, sweet spot of Outreach. We also cover the following areas:

- Marketing and advertising Outreach
- Publications Outreach (Arizona Agriculture, CHOICES, Ag & FB News and Agent Advantage)
- Social Media Outreach
- General Consumer Outreach

All these outreach efforts combined meant that we generated more than 17 million impressions in the last fiscal year. This number is conservative knowing that some of our outreach and engagement is too difficult to fully track.

So, when you see the Outreach managers roll up in their wrapped vehicles to a meeting, it’s good to know they are supporting your grassroots cause as a volunteer Farm Bureau leader. I’m proud of my team and appreciative of all they and you as county leaders do. 🐛

## Arizona Farm Bureau Transportation Handbook Highlights – Covered Farm Vehicles

By Ana Kennedy Otto, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

With the recent publication of the revised AZFB Agriculture Transportation Handbook there were several notable updates. This is the first article in a series that elaborates on some of the more prominent updates or sections of the Handbook. In this article we review covered farm vehicles (CFVs), a federal definition that is new to the Handbook, but one that has been in place since 2014. The CFV definition is notable due to the exemptions it provides from several Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) regulations.

To begin, a CFV is defined as a straight truck or articulated vehicle that:

1. Is registered in a State with a license plate or other designation issued by the State of registration that allows law enforcement officials to identify it as a farm vehicle. (In Arizona a farm license plate on a vehicle identifies it as a CFV.);
2. Is operated by the owner or operator of a farm or ranch, or an employee or family member of an owner or operator of a farm or ranch;
3. Used to transport agricultural commodities, livestock, machinery or supplies to or from a farm or ranch; and
4. Not used in a for-hire motor carrier operation

Thus, if your farm vehicle has a farm plate, the driver is exempt from the following Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulations: Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) standards (49 CFR Part 383), physical qualifications and examinations (requirement to have a valid certificate of physical qualification) (49 CFR Part 391 Subpart E), controlled substances and alcohol use and testing (49 CFR Part 382), hours of service (49 CFR Part 395), and some inspection, repair and maintenance requirements under 49 CFR Part 396. Depending on the gross vehicle weight (GVW) or gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR), whichever is greater, these exemptions apply either anywhere in the United States or statewide. If the GVW or GVWR of the CFV is 26,001 pounds or less the exemptions apply anywhere in the U.S. If the CFV’s weight is greater than 26,001 pounds the exemptions apply anywhere in Arizona or across State lines within 150 air miles of the farm or ranch. Note, the CFV exemptions do not apply to CFVs transporting hazardous materials that require placarding.

It is important to note, that Arizona state law provides a limited exemption for CDL’s separate and apart from CFVs. If a farm or ranch vehicle does not have a farm license plate but qualifies as a farm vehicle under state law (driven by farm/ranch owner, family or employee; transporting agricultural products; not used in for-hire operations), a CDL is not required when the vehicle is operated within 150 miles of the farm or ranch.

For more information regarding CFVs and other transportation topics, Arizona Farm Bureau members can obtain a free copy of the handbook by contacting [transportation@azfb.org](mailto:transportation@azfb.org) and including their full name, mailing address and the number of copies requested. Members can also login at [www.azfb.org](http://www.azfb.org) to access electronic versions of the handbook. 🐛

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## On and Off continued from page 4

- against Arizona farmers using biotechnology, sanitary and phytosanitary tools
- o Advocating for strict enforcement of terms in the USMCA trade agreement
- Provided congressional testimony as to the importance that farming plays in carbon sequestration and highlighted the regional differences in farming practices of the arid southwest

Some of these things you may already be aware of because you have stepped forward to engage in these efforts. But we know that not everyone can be on the front lines of every fight and still tend to crops and animals or spend time nurturing your families. That's why we have the Arizona Farm Bureau; through it, we can be involved in every effort and be on the front lines of every fight and help join the fray when it can have the most impact.

It is a privilege and an honor to stand at the farm's edge on your behalf and provide you with the tools to succeed in a rapidly changing environment both politically and economically. In our 100th year serving our members, we look forward to the next 100 years!

**Editor's Note:** This article is second in a two-part series about Arizona Farm Bureau's work on behalf of farmers and ranchers. First article appeared in July. 📱

## New Faces at Ag in the Classroom

### Staff Reports

Ag in the Classroom is thrilled to welcome several new faces to the Education Team, and they are here just in time for classes to start!



Alicia Gutierrez was hired July 6th to take on the role of Education Manager. Gutierrez comes to Farm Bureau with 10 years of classroom experience as a high school agriculture teacher. "We are thrilled to have Alicia join our Farm Bureau Team! Her creativity in lesson development, enthusiasm for teaching, and passion for agriculture makes her a perfect fit," says Director of Education

Katie Aikins. "Gutierrez will hit the ground running with schools starting later this month."

We are also excited to bring on two new Interns to work with the Ag in the Classroom Program for the 2021-2022 School Year. Ruth Price serves as our Tuesday/Thursday Intern and comes to us from Westwood FFA. Alina Pinkham serves as our Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Intern and comes to us from Dobson FFA.



Get ready for another super busy school year. Arizona Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom program will be out and about in a variety of ways. See adjacent article outlining the new school year. 📱



## A New School Year Brings New Resources to the Classroom

By Katie Aikins, Arizona Farm Bureau Education Director

The start of a school year brings excitement for new friends, new opportunities, and new experiences. This is exactly how AITC is feeling! Along with the oldies but goodies, AITC is bringing some new resources to classrooms across the state.

### Spanish Resources

AITC is thrilled to provide several of our most popular resources in Spanish. Teachers and community members can now log on to [www.azfb.org/aitc](http://www.azfb.org/aitc) and download a Spanish version of our Arizona Five Cs Ag Mag. Coming soon? Keep an eye out for several of our other AgMags to be translated, a Spanish Ag Lending Library with online story time sessions, as well as bilingual First Reader Books.

### Pork in the Classroom

Thanks to the Arizona Pork Council (APC), pork will now find its way into classrooms across the state. In addition to classroom lesson plans, classrooms can also apply for a Pork in the Classroom Grant. For more details about the Pork in the Classroom Program and resources visit the AITC page at [www.azfb.org/aitc](http://www.azfb.org/aitc).

### The Oldies but the Goodies

**Classroom Presentations** - are still being offered by the AITC Program. And we are excited to be back in person! However, if some classrooms require a virtual or hybrid learning experience, we are happy to accommodate.

**Curriculum Kits** - AITC is once again offering their commodity-based curriculum kits to schools this year. The kits are all inclusive and include not only the lessons plans but the materials to teach the lesson!



**Farm Friday Fun** - AITC's ever popular monthly digital curriculum is back. This year participating classrooms will receive lesson plans, videos and lesson plans on food safety, pigs, equine, beef, dairy, hydroponics, aquaculture, insects and eggs! Teachers can sign-up for this FREE digital curriculum at [www.azfb.org/aitc](http://www.azfb.org/aitc) New to the program this year: a Career Profile highlighting a career within the industry will also be provided for each month!

**Virtual Ag Tours** - AITC will once again be offering their very popular Virtual Ag Tour Series for the 2021-2022 school year. Using the Zoom platform, students and teachers will be able to take virtual tours of operations across the state and will be able to ask their questions directly to our producers! For a list of this year's virtual tours and dates visit [www.azfb.org/aitc](http://www.azfb.org/aitc) 📱

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**Remember talk to a farmer/  
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Friday morning.**