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Legislative Leaders Establish Their 2022 Priorities



**By Russell Bowers (R-Dist 25)
House Speaker**

What a great year! The older I get the more folks understand when I tell the same stories over and over. I just forget and if I talked less, I would remember a bit better...or at least that's the lie I tell myself. Even with all the age stuff hiding behind the hills of opportunity, I had no idea what I would be getting myself into looking forward from the vigor of youth and even the sobriety of middle age. The resignation of old age is very imposing, and yet I don't want to give up on some little nuggets that still gleam from the bedrock

of life experiences... and there are enough of all of you who have gone through so much more than Donetta and I have, that I am humbled to even mention little details of the last year.

Losing Kacey, who had battled courageously for years and had so much promise, has made me think of so many friends who have lost children to all manner of circumstances, ALL of which have a visceral, wrenching effect on parents and family who love them and see a future of hopeful expectation flee from their grasp. But were it not for tragedy, if all of life had a guarantee of existence without pain, of expectation without risk, of labor with a contracted success rate, we would forego the profound and

penetrating gratitude and solace that we feel from supporting friends and timeless "beyond this vale of tears" truths, that carry us through the darkness to light.

We also would be left without a character tried and tested and found sufficient to carry harder things coming beyond the present. As I and many others walked up through the ashes of the surrounding landscape to the burnt-out ruins of our places in the Telegraph Fire; as I pulled out a warped frying pan, the head of a two-tined pitchfork, a rust-cankered debarking knife without handles, or a hundred other tools or melted glass, it wasn't that I lost the utility of any one object, it was a realization that all they represented were little nuclei with surrounding electrons of memorable experiences I would have to work harder to remember without.

That is the feeling that I have sitting in my office thinking of what we will have to build this year: greater investment in bringing water to our state, and convincing so many of you that have sacrificed that we can find solutions together.

That is a top priority in my mind, and in yours. Also, as I have said and continue to say, I hope that we can live to merit the attention of a loving God who wants us to have experiences of all kinds that will bring our better angels forward in humility as we pray for His help. Yes, iterations of all we have worked on before will return, but someday we will remember... and it will be worth it. 🍷



**By Rebecca Rios (D-Dist 27)
Senate Minority Leader**

Moving into the 2022 Legislative Session, we have a myriad of challenges, but also opportunities ahead of us. We are still during the COVID-19 pandemic, our Democracy is at risk thanks to Republicans' embrace of conspiracy theories, and our public schools, already stretched thin from the pandemic, are at a breaking point from years of deliberate defunding in favor of tax cuts. Last but certainly not least, we face the existential threat of an imminent water shortage in Arizona. This sounds dire, but every session is a new chance for legislators to come together and fight for what's best for Arizona.

First, we must address the COVID-19 pandemic and its ongoing repercussions. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed severe cracks in Arizona's foundation and shortcomings in the ability to address statewide emergencies, especially in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Our main goal is distributing the rest of Arizona's share of the American Rescue Act funds. Senate Democrats directed more than \$32.8 million from President Biden's American Rescue Plan Act funds to non-profit organizations working to end homelessness and provide domestic violence services. But more needs to be done to ensure these funds make it to where they belong-which is with the people of Arizona.

We also expect an ongoing assault against voting rights because of inaccurate and conspiracy-riddled fraud. Last session we were able to successfully stop several bills that would make our Democracy less secure, but we're preparing to see much more anti-democracy legislation again. We're committed to stopping these bills and pushing our own voting rights legislation that will keep our elections secure, fair, and free. Our other priorities include ensuring all of Arizona's children should have access to a quality education and sustainably funded schools. We know Republicans are furious that voters passed Prop 208 to do what they won't fund our public schools. We'll fight to protect this funding for our school children and defend our schools from further attacks.

Finally, one of our top priorities is securing Arizona's dwindling water supply. Water levels at Lake Mead are falling faster than anyone projected and this year the government declared a first-ever water shortage on the Colorado River, announcing mandatory cutbacks in 2022 that will bring major challenges for Arizona farmers. Prioritizing funding to conserve water for millions of people in the West and in Arizona will buy more time to come up with more long-term solutions.

These are huge challenges to tackle, but Senate Democrats remain committed to creating an Arizona that works for everyone and we look forward to working on these priorities in this coming session. 🍷

Arizona Farm Bureau Establishes its 2022 Priority Issues

By Chelsea McGuire, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Director

Each November, the Arizona Farm Bureau Board of Directors adopts the organization's policy priorities for the upcoming year. These priorities don't reflect all the work that our Advocacy Team will undertake, but they serve as our guiding principles as we decide where and how to prioritize our time.

This year's priorities were adopted by the Board on November 13, 2021. Over the next year, we will focus our lobbying and government relations efforts on the following priority areas:

Stopping Animal Rights Activists:

- Cage-Free Eggs: Prevent adoption of an administrative rule requiring that all eggs produced and sold in the state of Arizona be from cage-free production systems. Prevent any proposed initiative with similar requirements from qualifying for the 2022 ballot.

Protecting Agriculture's Access to Water and Power:

- Rural Groundwater: Work diligently to uphold the principles set forth in our policies articulated by the Rural Groundwater Working Group report.
- Active Management Areas: Unite agricultural stakeholders and represent agriculture's concerns with impending updates to the Management Plans in the Active Management Areas. Ensure legislative proposals extending the terms of the 1980 Ground water Management Act past 2025 do not harm agricultural water users.
- Colorado River: Continue outreach on and surface solutions for challenge faced by shortages on the Colorado River. Uphold our partnership commitment to Pinal County irrigation district's NRCS grant application.

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The Family Farm Relies on Fair Tax Treatment

By Philip Bashaw, Arizona Farm Bureau CEO

There are many stresses on our industry: water and workforce shortages, market volatility, supply chain issues, rising costs for fuel, and natural disasters like ongoing drought and wildfires in the West. Meanwhile, the Biden administration and Congress have proposed a host of corporate and inheritance tax increases that would significantly hamper Arizona farmers and ranchers already operating on razor-thin margins.



Philip Bashaw

It is fair to point out that the intent of these tax provisions is to make the “big corporations” and “wealthy” pay their fair share. However, it does not change the fact that these provisions significantly impact our family farms and ranches. Despite many being structured as corporate entities, these are still family businesses and are certainly not the target of their ire. The family farm remains the backbone of agriculture in Arizona where 95 percent of farms are family farms. That’s also true nationally, where small, family-owned operations comprise 9 out of 10 farms.

If we want to protect family farms in this country, it’s vital that we make it possible for these operations to be passed down to the next generation. Increasing capital gains taxes while repealing the beneficial provisions of stepped-up basis would create enormous tax burdens to family-owned farms in Arizona and nationwide. It is important to keep in mind that this would be in addition to the already existing estate tax. The next generation of farmers and ranchers should not have to sell parts of the operation just to pay their tax bill.

It’s also vital that the federal government retain Section-1031 exchanges, a century-old tax provision that gives farmers and ranchers financial flexibility to purchase equipment and merge agricultural land. Farmers and ranchers invest thousands of dollars in irrigation technologies and climate-smart practices, which are made possible due to provisions like Section 1031.

We have been successful so far in pushing back on these provisions. Our Arizona Delegation deserves a lot of credit in helping us keep these provisions from becoming part of the final package so far. However, we must remain diligent and make sure that changes to the tax provisions do not harm our farmers and ranchers.

Now is the time to support Arizona agriculture, which contributes \$23.3 billion to our economy and is an integral part of our state’s history. We urge all our members to reach out to Arizona’s congressional delegation to oppose tax increases and the elimination of beneficial provisions that would hurt the agriculture industry and impact the ability of farmers and ranchers to pass their operations down to the next generation. 🚗

President Signs Infrastructure Package into Law

By Victoria Okula, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

After months of discussion and partisan holdouts, President Biden signed the 1.2 trillion-dollar infrastructure package into law in November. Arizona Farm Bureau worked from the start to ensure this package included provisions that would be beneficial to Arizona’s farmers and ranchers while not including “pay-fors,” such as changes to inheritance taxes that would have been detrimental to our members.

The bill outlines \$550 billion in new spending over the next 5 years. This bipartisan agreement includes several provisions designed to boost the resiliency of our farms, ranches, and rural communities. It makes significant investments in western water infrastructure that is necessary to ensure future production opportunities for our members being negatively impacted by prolonged drought conditions. Finally, the bill includes an exemption for livestock and insect haulers from Hours-of-Service regulations within a 150 air-mile radius from their final destination, which is a welcome modernization.

“Arizona’s farmers and ranchers are experiencing unprecedented challenges due to the drought, which are exacerbated by aging infrastructure. Arizona Farm Bureau conveyed this message to Senator Kelly and Sinema and we’re grateful that the Senators kept the needs of Arizona’s farming and ranching families at the forefront of the discussion on this historic bipartisan infrastructure bill. This is a critical investment in the sustainability of Arizona agriculture,” says Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse.

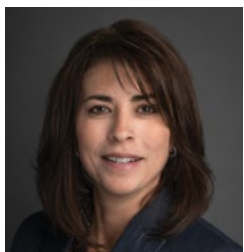
Amongst other beneficial provisions, the bill funds:

- \$110 billion to repair bridges and roads and build major highway projects, including unsafe rural roads, \$5 billion is expected to go to Arizona for federal-aid highway apportioned programs and \$225 million for bridge replacement and repair;
- \$65 billion to expand affordable, high-speed internet access, with at least \$100 million expected to go to Arizona;
- \$8.3 billion for western water infrastructure, with specific funds going towards repairing aging dams in Arizona and funding the Drought Contingency Plan, among other things;
- \$65 billion to improve grid reliability and resiliency and allow for the increased use of renewables;
- \$8.25 billion for wildfire management, including bill to study and recommend wildland fire prevention, suppression, management, and rehabilitation policies.

Thank you to Senators Sinema and Kelly for your work on this historic investment in Arizona’s infrastructure! 🚗

About the Next 100 Years...

By Stefanie Smallhouse, Arizona Farm Bureau President



It’s somewhat fitting that our Centennial year falls in the year immediately following one of the most turbulent periods in recent history. To come through that and other challenges in previous decades stronger than ever is a testament to our resilience. But how do we as individual farmers and ranchers, as an industry and an organization stay on this path?

In the last 18 months, I have participated in multiple forums where resilience has been the focus of discussion, especially in the food system. But resiliency can be somewhat of an abstract concept. Jamie Stone, who studies agri-food supply chains, defines resilience as, “the

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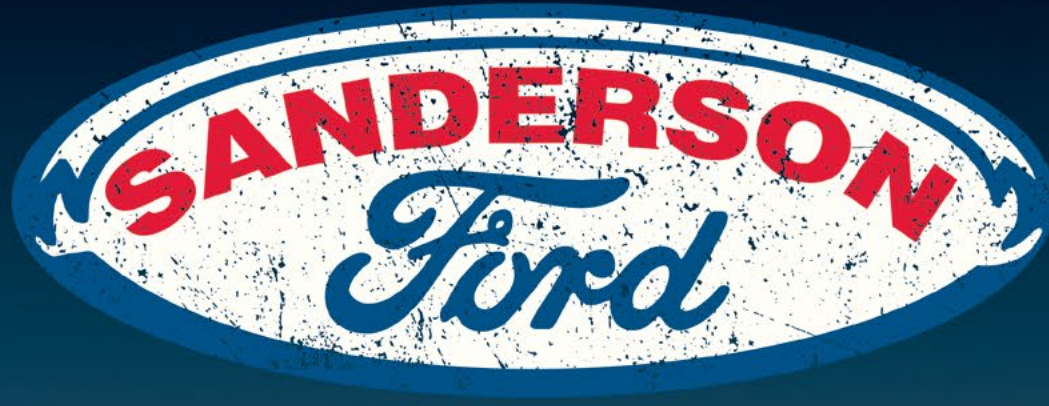
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PRIORITY ISSUES

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Oppose efforts to transfer on-river agricultural entitlements of the Colorado River to off-river municipalities.

- **Adjudications:** Fight for agricultural water users to maintain their historic water rights in the face of ongoing surface water adjudication. Continue participation in the Upper Gila River Alliance. Continue pushing forward solutions for the issues of forfeiture and sub-flow.
- **WOTUS:** Ensure agriculture's perspective is heard and heeded in the next round of WOTUS rule promulgation.
- **Arizona's Water Future:** Actively participate in the Governor's Water Augmentation, Innovation, and Conservation Council. Support efforts to fund and encourage water augmentation in Arizona.
- **Hydropower:** Monitor and participate in consultations regarding the generation of hydropower in times of drought to ensure that agriculture's access to affordable power is protected.

Taxes:

- **County Assessors:** Work to protect agricultural land from being over-taxed by uninformed or overzealous County Assessors.
- **Livestock Feed Tax:** We will find opportunities to work with cities and towns who have adopted a sales tax on livestock feed to conform to the state code, which exempts feed from sales tax.

Arizona Department of Agriculture:

- **Resources:** Work with the Department of Agriculture to implement needed improvements to the Livestock Inspection Program, salary increases for key staff, and upgrades to outdated equipment. Find opportunities to expand livestock producer access to locally based State and USDA inspected processing facilities, including through the Cooperative Interstate Shipping Agreement.

State and Federal Lands:

- **Fire Response:** Work with state and federal agencies to optimize wildfire response and recovery programs, minimizing the financial and physical burdens of fires on ranches. Continue to provide information and support to help members access state funds for wildfire recovery.
- **Archeological Clearances:** Continue our partnership with fellow agricultural

stakeholder groups, NRCS, the Arizona State Land Department, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Arizona State Museum to clear the backlog of archeological clearances for conservation projects.

- **Recreational Damage:** Escalate our work with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the US Forest Service, the State Land Department, and other land management agencies to promote good neighbor etiquette, prevent damage to public lands, and improve the public's relationship with public lands ranchers.
- **Depredation Compensation:** Implement meaningful changes to programs available to compensate for predator damage in the 2023 Farm Bill.

Ag Labor:

- **Visa Reform and H-2A:** Work with our Congressional delegation to amend current efforts to reform agricultural labor visas. Oppose legislation that does not provide for a reasonable, competitive wage, exposes farm employers to the extensive additional legal liability, fails to include year-round visas, or unfairly imposes E-Verify.

Industry Fairness:

- **Cattle Markets:** Fight for better transparency in cattle markets. Work with sister organizations to find policy or regulatory fixes that ensure producers receive a fair price for their cattle.
- **Frivolous Lawsuits:** Provide resources and policy support so our members can protect their operations from unnecessary and frivolous lawsuits.
- **Produce Safety:** Work with Congress to ensure that regulatory agencies like the FDA do not overstep the bounds of their authority during an outbreak investigation. Demand accountability when FDA prematurely releases damaging information about a grower or producer without adequate verification. Ensure produce growers continue to have access to insurance coverage, and we will seek out ways to ensure continued coverage for these producers.
- **Alternative Protein:** Push for clear and accurate labeling of alt-meat products and place an increased focus on the benefits of traditional animal protein.

For more information and to view the updated 2022 AZFB Policy Book, go to www.azfb.org.

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ability of an entity or system to react to disruptions in such a way that core functions are maintained." I like this definition because it can also be applied to us individually, our own individual resilience within the bigger picture. Alternative language might be - the ability of a farmer to react to adversity in such a way that his or her spirit, motivation, and productivity remain strong.

Dr. Lucy Hone is a senior fellow at the University of Canterbury, author and corporate consultant specializing in well-being science and resilience initiatives. Most of her work is focused on "Finding Strength and Embracing Life After a Loss that Changes Everything," also the title of her best-selling book. We all know a life in agriculture means you will experience adversity and that adversity can often feel like loss. Loss can be experienced in many ways, by way of lost loved ones, a lost crop, access to water, wildfire devastation, and drastic economic losses, just to name a few.

Successfully Navigating through Loss: 3 Strategies

Hone has spent considerable time researching resiliency through loss and found that the people who come through hardship act in similar ways to help navigate through adversity. So, what are those actions or reactions? Outside of any one person's spiritual beliefs and faith (because that cannot be overlooked), how can we as individuals, an organization and an industry emulate this behavior and apply it practically to what we encounter in agriculture?

Dr. Hone found there are three strategies to resiliency. Number one: we should get that "stuff" happens. Suffering is part of life and human existence in the same way that adversity is part of agriculture. For example, pandemics happen, trade wars often accompany geopolitical disruptions, climate variability is inevitable and elections that result in leadership changes can challenge our ways of operating in business. As Hone points out, these situations should not position us as victims, but as problem solvers and adapters.

Number two: ask yourself the question, is what I'm doing helping me or harming me? During this time of Mega Drought, is it helpful to dwell on those decisions that are out of your control or necessary but not what you would choose to do otherwise? For instance, sitting in the sale barn all day watching pairs and bred heifers, some of them yours, go through at rock bottom prices is likely not helping you be more resilient. Watching in anxiety as your only feed on the ranch goes up in smoke during a back burn in June, is likely not making you more resilient. Becoming more insular by closing off from your greater community, friends and family when all you can think about are the fields that will sit fallowed this year because of the Colorado River Shortage declaration, is not making you more resilient. Figure out where in your life you can be in the driver's seat and place your energy and your time there.

Number three: we must focus on the things we can change and get past the things we can't. As Dr. Hone explains, we are essentially hard-wired to focus on the negative for survival. It's smart to see threats and risks but don't become so obsessed that we become incapacitated by fear and anger that we miss an opportunity, or we simply don't relish or refuel in those blessings that might be fleeting.

Farm Bureau Syncs on Number Three and the Life Cycle of Industry

This third strategy is where Arizona Farm Bureau syncs with its members to ensure resiliency. Farm Bureau cannot make it snow and it's very unlikely we will alter the 100-year-old Colorado River Compact to prioritize alfalfa growers in Pinal County over city dwellers in Los Angeles, but we can advocate for improved infrastructure and a more streamlined permitting process. We can assist our members in seeking out different markets when our ability to farm and ranch in previous ways has been impacted. We can be both fully aware of the threats of certain disruptive technologies while also seeking out their benefits or using those circumstances to differentiate products to our members' advantage. We can track opportunities in the ever-changing consumer de-

mands and advocate for the deregulation of niche markets to fill those voids.

Many of the issues we have worked on as an advocacy organization both early in the previous century and now again today are directly and indirectly related to the Life Cycle of Industry and quite predictable. According to multiple business insider organizations, there are five stages in this life cycle that impact price, innovation, market share, disruption, and consolidation. Just being aware of this cycle might help us to affect change in some areas and move on from those efforts which are greatly out of our control. The stages follow.

1. **Introduction:** this is when massive investments in innovation, distribution and marketing occur.
2. **Growth:** increasing sales, growing market share, meeting benchmarks, and continuous innovation occur.
3. **Shakeout:** growing competition, price reductions, and product development occur.
4. **Maturity:** minimal growth, constant sales, less innovation, and saturated consumer awareness occur.
5. **Decline:** consolidation, reduced sales, competition decreases, and innovation slows.

Now obviously this is generic, but it can be applied to any industry -- even with some more complex than others -- especially the agri-food system. I believe if we have a basic understanding of this life cycle, we can more successfully identify opportunities and determine the likelihood that we might impact change.

When I originally presented these thoughts to the delegates at the 100th Annual Meeting of the Arizona Farm Bureau Federation, I took a moment to hold up a can of our Old Ellsworth Brewery centennial craft brew – Cien. This was to shamelessly promote our celebratory brew and as a visual to use the craft beer industry as an example of where the unexpected change happened in a highly consolidated industry and what this might mean for other commodities and specialty crops trying to navigate their way through price volatility, supply chain disruption and market control, basically that life cycle I just referred to.

As reported by Derek Thompson in the Atlantic, in almost every economic sector in the U.S. a handful of companies control a prodigious share of the market. This is largely due to a general lack of concern by the consumer as to consolidation - that fourth stage of the industry life cycle - along with shifts in anti-trust enforcement. Thompson argues that the beer industry has been one of the worst offenders. In fact, as of 2012 only two companies, Anheuser-Busch and MillerCoors, controlled nearly 90% of beer production. From 2002 to 2007 growth in production at these large companies was on the decline, as well as the demand for beer overall. However just a short time later, during a time of economic instability and disruption (2008 to 2016), the number of brewery establishments expanded by a factor of six and workers grew by 120%. Again, all during a time of consumption decline. This means, while Americans are drinking less beer, they are paying more for a superior product.

After Thompson interviewed several economists and beer industry experts, he concluded that the craft-beer revolution that occurred despite globalization and behemoth efficiencies is driven by two factors: consumer preference and how the combination of rules and regulations can either spur innovation or crush it. He further explains, early in the 20th Century the alcohol industry came under heavy regulation to make it deliberately inefficient based on morality arguments and to make it very hard to monopolize. This worked until the enforcement of anti-trust laws changed in the 1980s.

However, since that time, there have been many other rule changes that have created space for upstarts while still regulating the larger firms. Like in 1978, the legislation that legalized home-brewing and the more recent legislation allowing craft breweries to sell beer directly to consumers in taprooms. They can cultivate customers, but these

Joel Carr Joins Arizona Farm Bureau's Outreach Team

Staff Reports

The Outreach team is proud to introduce our newest member, Joel Carr. Carr joined our team in November as Outreach Manager, Membership Value.

Originally from Denver, Joel earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Colorado in journalism.

Joel comes to us with several years of client experience in digital marketing and communication, SEO/SEM, social media marketing and management, content creation, web design, graphic design, photography, and project management. In addition to serving as the Outreach Manager for Maricopa County and our member benefits coordinator, Carr will be working with the outreach team on communications and content management.



Joel Carr joins Arizona Farm Bureau as the newest member of the Outreach team.

One previous client was Arizona Sustainability Alliance, so Carr has even had a bit of agriculture marketing experience. He's looking forward to broadening and diversifying his agriculture experience.

"I can say with confidence that my enthusiasm to work with the Farm Bureau team and volunteer leaders and members and my perspective on details coupled with my educational background and work experience has prepared me to give this position my all," said Carr.

"We're excited to have Joel on our team, especially with his content development and management experience to help us with our 30+ outreach channels," said Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director. "I also know he'll enjoy working with Maricopa County as he looks forward to being more embedded with our Maricopa County farmers and ranchers."

Welcome to the Farm Bureau family, Joel! 🍷

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allowances phase out as they become bigger. During the pandemic, state laws were adjusted to allow for flexibility in alcohol sales direct to consumers in 35 states, up from just 12 before.

So basically, a more flexible regulatory environment according to size, fosters innovation and more quickly reacts to consumer preferences while maintaining consumer protections. This was very evident during the pandemic and has been a significant topic of conversation when speaking about resiliency in the food supply chain.

I think we can see some opportunities in this space for more farm and ranch products. It's certainly not easy to do this and can be very risky – but we are in the driver's seat. This is recognizing where we can spur change and move away from areas we cannot change. Old Ellsworth Brewery is not competing with MillerCoors on price or efficiencies, but on consumer preferences of which taste is only one factor. We know there are advantages to when consumers prefer local, less processed, and at-home eating. That is because a greater percentage of the dollar goes to the farmer or rancher. Today 80% of the consumer dollar goes to post-harvest services rather than the farmer, in 1950 it was more like 60/40.

We Are Not Victims; We Are Resilient

The last two years have been tough for many in our Farm Bureau family and some of those stressors are not going away any time soon. So, I offer these thoughts to you in summary: First and foremost, we are not victims. We are vital contributors to the food security of this state and nation. Secondly, let's not be divisive, insular, or angry in our response to adversity because that's not helping us. Thirdly, there are opportunities around us and by recognizing this we can change many circumstances that might threaten our resilience; we must be focused and in the driver's seat. **But most importantly, let's not allow adversity to define Arizona's most important industry, instead, let our response be an example of strength.**

Arizona Farm Bureau has been and will continue to be that partner who works alongside you at the legislature, in the halls of Congress, in the social media stratosphere and in the classroom, promoting this industry through our ACE's platform of Advocacy, Communication and Education. Farm Bureau's resilience at every level and through a Century of time is because of its passionate, dedicated and thoughtful volunteers, members and staff.

I am so very proud to be a part of this century-old organization and this agriculture family! Cheers to another 100 years and thank you so very much for this great privilege to serve as your Arizona Farm Bureau President! 🍷

Mentor Protégé CAMP Profile, 3: Adam Hatley and Paul Catalino

By Maricopa County cotton farmer Adam Hatley and NRCS Team member Paul Catalino

Continuing our CAMP mentor/protégé series, we profile Adam Hatley, Maricopa County Farm Bureau member and owner of [name] and NRCS employee Paul Catalino 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 Hatley Catalino partnership will be working together for the next several months, joining forces to provide firsthand experience of the conservation practices and agricultural happenings in the southern Arizona area.

From Adam

What's been the biggest takeaway so far with your meetings over the telephone and/or zoom and/or face-to-face gathering?

Despite the challenges we have faced because of the pandemic and working conditions we have had a couple of productive phone conversations. I was reminded of the programs the NRCS has that I could perhaps implement in the future. I was able to share with Paul some of the specifics about my farm and we are looking forward to meeting in the future.

Why have you felt this program has been helpful?

I feel it is helpful when I can build a relationship with people in my industry that can help me with future projects.

What more do you hope to learn about in your area?

I hope to learn more about Paul and his experiences on other farms and any ideas he may have to improve my operation.

What are you looking forward to in your other meetings/gatherings/learning and sharing sessions?

I'm looking forward to sitting down over lunch with Paul and having face-to-face conversations.

From Paul

What's been the biggest takeaway so far with your meetings over telephone and/or Zoom and/or face-to-face gathering?

I would say that the workplace operating conditions required during the Covid pandemic have not been optimal for doing business. The foundation of NRCS services

See MENTOR Page 6

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Aerial Ag Application: The Pilot is the Hero

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

Coming from a family of pilots, I was again struck by the power of aviation when I read that a single aircraft flown by a pilot can spray thousands of acres a day. Still, some might say, “so what.” Our farmers and ranchers don’t think “so what” when they’re faced with wet soil conditions, remote locations, rolling terrain or dense plant foliage in battling a powerful and rapidly moving pest infestation. For Arizona, it’s also about large tracks of land.

I landed on this topic thanks to Arizona Department of Agriculture’s Jack Peterson, associate director of the Environmental and Plant Services Division. “Aerial application professionals [pilots] are often underappreciated; all they do to prepare, to be licensed, the concerns they face, the technology they use and so much more.”

Serving the agriculture and forestry sectors for 100 years, America’s aerial application industry of piloted aircraft is still the truest means of getting it done big, fast, and right. As hinted earlier, manned aerial application of crop protection products often provides the only practical method available for protecting our food supply if we’re talking large and/or complicated terrain. Large and often remote areas can be treated quickly, far faster than any other form of application, especially when pest infestations are quickly destroying the crops.

“Abnormally wet weather conditions ... make aerial application an indispensable tool for ensuring high yields,” said Andrew Moore, Chief Executive Officer of the National Agricultural Aviation Association (NAAA) in an article regarding aerial application and challenging conditions. He went on to explain that while unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV, also known as drones) technology is improving, even large UAVs used for agriculture are slow. So far, the typical UAV sprays on average seven to 10 acres an hour. During a 10-hour day of applications, this equates to only 70 to 100 acres treated per UAV.

Of note, aircraft used for aerial application hold between 100 and 800 gallons of product. UAVs don’t have payloads approaching anything this size, nor can they achieve speeds even close to the 90 to 150 mph speeds piloted ag aircraft travel across a field during an application.

“The USDA estimates that the average farm size in the U.S. is 444 acres and the most important principle in combatting a pest is to eradicate it immediately before it spreads,” Moore added. “A single manned aircraft can spray upwards of 2,000 acres a day. This is one of the benefits of manned aerial application that is unmatched by current UAV technology.”

Perhaps Moore’s bias shines through because he represents aviation that has a pilot in the cockpit. But when large acreage becomes part of the equation, Arizona’s farms are even bigger than the USDA’s 400-acre average. And while drones are getting bigger and future advances in technology may continue to make opportunities for unmanned aircraft brighter, that pilot you see flying low and precise over large corn, wheat and soybean fields will continue to be a common sight.



Today’s manned aircraft used in agriculture applications come equipped with built-in crash protection.

A Few Interesting Points

Technology continues to advance the phrase, “more with less.” Both the National Agricultural Aviation Association and USDA point out that since aerial application can result in greater crop harvest yields, less land is being used for agricultural production, preserving important wetlands and ecosystems important to carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat. In one study, applications on corn showed aerial application increased yields by eight percent over ground application.

According to the NAAA, aerial application is conducted in all 50 states by licensed pilots treating an average of 130 million acres of cropland each year, basically 28% to 30% of all croplands in the country. Not only do pilots have to hold the traditional pilot’s license, but also must be an ag operator under FAA oversight. Additionally, they must renew their license in crop protection from the pesticide regulatory agency in the state, most commonly the state’s department of agriculture. These rigorous standards ensure protection for the pilot, for agriculture and for the security of our food system.

Plus, manned aerial application isn’t just for agriculture. Nearly 100 percent of forest protection applications are made by the agricultural aviation industry. In addition to agricultural aviation, the industry provides firefighting and public health application services to combat disease-carrying mosquitoes. Findings from the latest NAAA survey (2019) reveal the industry has grown. In the previous survey (2012), NAAA reported approximately 1,350 ag aviation businesses in the United States. The results of the 2019 survey report approximately 1,560 ag aviation businesses today are operational, a 15.5% increase.

Based on the same NAAA survey, the five most treated crops among aerial application operators are corn, wheat & barley, soybeans, pastures & rangelands, and alfalfa. But aerial applications are used on nearly all crops throughout the United States.

Whether for organic or conventional agriculture, all chemical treatments are highly regulated by the EPA, FDA and USDA, in addition to each state’s department of agriculture.

“Knowing all that these applicators must contend with and know, the outdated term of endearment no longer fits. They are not ‘crop dusters,’ they are professional aerial applicators,” explained Arizona Department of Agriculture’s Peterson.

Ultimately while technology in traditional and non-traditional aerial application improves, wet soil conditions, remote locations, rolling terrain, dense plant foliage, along with hundreds of acres requiring treatment, continue to drive the use of a trained and licensed pilot in a cockpit. Plus, plant-nutrient application and even cover-crop seed spreading drive the use of manned aircraft, again most often because of vast areas to cover.

Editor’s Note: Watch for a video on azfb.org we produced on this topic coming out early in the new year.

Mentor

continued from page 5

is relationships- in the community, meeting face-to-face with our partners & producers- and the impersonal virtual workplace has made building personal relationships vastly more difficult.

Why have you felt this program has been helpful?

To date, the value derived has not reached its full potential, as I am still on maximum telework and have been unable to participate in any in-person activities with my mentor. However, Adam is a positive force & great to talk with, and I am looking forward to learning more from him as the pandemic winds down.

What more do you hope to learn about in your area?

I would like to learn more from Adam about how farming has changed since he first started and what has stayed the same over the years. I would also like Adam’s perspective on what the best avenue is to encourage innovation and change with producers, whether it be adopting practices like no-till, replacing flood irrigation with more efficient water delivery systems, or reducing the energy consumption of farming operations. For example: What are the primary motivators that drive changes for our producers- is it cost? Is it peer/community influence? Or are there other factors?

What are you looking forward to in your other meetings/gatherings/learning and sharing sessions?

Getting out of the virtual environment and meeting face-to-face. 🚗

AgFest, Reconnecting with our State Legislators In-Person

By Ana Otto, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

We are excited that AgFest will once again be an in-person event! This year’s AgFest will be held on Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at the Arizona State Capitol House Lawn from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM. AgFest is our annual event that occurs just as the legislative session is beginning and provides state legislators and Arizona Farm Bureau members an opportunity to meet and reconnect with elected officials. Each county will have its own booth to share with legislators not only our legislative priorities but also highlight the diversity of agriculture across the state.

What’s New

There are also some new components to expect at this year’s event. First, there will be some modern as well as antique agricultural equipment on display on the street adjacent to the lawn event to bring attention to advancements in agricultural technology over the years. Then, for those of you who engage in social media, we will be providing a social media guide to help our members amplify the event to a broader audience. And finally, to bring greater attention to the importance of agriculture to Arizona’s landscape and economy, we have invited our allied agricultural organizations to participate in AgFest.

Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Managers will be working with the county Farm Bureaus to make sure everyone knows how to plan for this year’s AgFest. Any questions may also be directed to Chelsea McGuire at chelseamcguire@azfb.org or Ana Otto at anakennedy@azfb.org. 🚗

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Arizona Farm Bureau Celebrates its Century Farms and Ranches

By Joel Carr, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Manager - Membership Value

Arizona Farm Bureau celebrated seven families during its Annual Meeting in November that earned Century Farm and Ranch recognition, a new program the organization will celebrate each year. Themed ‘100 Years and Growing,’ the Annual Meeting theme aptly described the work that Arizona Farm Bureau (AZFB) has done and continues to do, alongside Arizona’s farmers and ranchers. This theme also represents the legacy of individual farm and ranch families in our state.

The history of Arizona’s farms and ranches is rich, and the family’s lengthy tenure in agriculture signifies a heritage of determination, innovation, and resiliency. In that spirit, AZFB launched the Century Farm & Ranch Program to recognize and honor the following seven family farms and ranches that have thrived for more than a century.

The Rayner Family, A Tumbling T Ranches

The Rayner family purchased the A Tumbling T Ranches in 1913. Today the fourth generation of Rayner’s run the 5,500 acres of cotton, alfalfa, and barley. A Tumbling T Ranches is in the West Phoenix Valley.

The Brown Family, Brown Farms

John W. Brown, in the 1890s, purchased the Brown Farm. Today, Brown Farms is a thriving cattle ranch in St. Johns.

The Smallhouse Family, Carlink Ranch

William Bayles first purchased Carlink Ranch in 1879. The ranch spans more than 60,000 acres (10,000 private) in Redington. Carlink ranch is a sixth-generation family

farm and ranch first established in the late 1880s. Andy and AZFB’s current president Stefanie Smallhouse currently manage Carlink.

The King Family, King’s Anvil Ranch

King’s Anvil Ranch was first purchased in 1885 by Manuel & Marguerite King. Together they raise cattle as the third and fourth generations tend to the ranch.

The Rovey Family, Rovey Farms

Rovey Farms was first purchased in 1912 by Albert Rovey. Today the fourth generation on the farm grows alfalfa cotton and small grains including dairy.

The Sossaman Family, Sossaman Farms

The Sossaman Farms in Queen Creek was first homesteaded in 1919. Today the fourth generation of Sossaman’s manage the 800 acres of ancient grains, including barley and bread kinds of wheat.

The Thompson Family, YY Ranch

Brannick Riggs first purchased YY ranch. David and Tina Riggs Thompson currently manage YY Ranch, the fifth generation to tend to the ranch. YY Ranch is in Co-chise, where they raise beef cattle.

Editor’s Note: This newest program of Arizona Farm Bureau (AZFB) is evergreen. The organization will release the application every year and ask our Arizona farm and ranch families to apply if their family runs a century farm or ranch.



Arizona Farm Bureau’s Century Farm and Ranch Recognitions were given out during the Governor’s Reception Wednesday, the kick-off event to the 100th Annual Meeting

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They spent several hours developing a process to better showcase talents, hard work and dedication of community members to the Arizona agriculture industry. Their efforts paid off.

During the committee's work over the summer, they added an additional award to recognize those in agribusiness who contribute to the industry. They also changed the name of three awards to better identify what the award represents: Our Distinguished Service to Agriculture is now the Lifetime Service to Agriculture. Our Heritage Award that recognized long-standing service to Farm Bureau as an individual or as a family is now the Lifetime Service to Farm Bureau and our Media Award is now the Ag Communicator of the Year Award including a social media element - allowing us to recognize our own farm and ranch members who may be working to educate the public about agriculture through social media platforms. Many thanks to Chair Richie Kennedy, Arizona Farm Bureau 2nd Vice President and Pinal County Farm Bureau President, and the committee, for your hard work!

AG COMMUNICATOR OF THE YEAR: TREVOR BALES

We are excited to present to you our 2021 "Ag Communicator of the Year," Trevor Bales. Bales is a 6th generation farmer of Bales Hay Sales located in Buckeye, Arizona. According to the "About Us" on their company's website, we're jokingly told "no one knows what Trevor does." Well, whatever he is doing with his social media presence, it's working exceptionally well for him and agriculture.

Besides his duties on the farm, Bales has had a social media presence for several years. He is responsible for the Bales Hay social media, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. He has over 24,000 followers on Instagram and over 29,000 subscribers on YouTube, where he shares about farming in Buckeye and various things in and around the farm. The number of followers directly reflects all the hard work Bales has put in to build an audience. A maverick in his own right, Bales has an innate ability to influence and educate his audience on Arizona Agriculture.

Bales has also been active with Instagram live interviews such as Talk to a Farmer Friday with Arizona Farm Bureau's Julie Murphree. Bales has participated in several podcasts, including Farm Side Chat with American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duval.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD: DARIC KNIGHT

A 4th-generation rancher, Daric Knight operates White Mountain Herefords in Springerville, Arizona. In addition to the ranch, The Knight family has a hunting guide business as well as Knight Environmental Services, a natural resources business. Knight received Arizona Farm Bureau's Environmental Stewardship Award last month during its 100th Annual Meeting.

A member of Arizona Farm Bureau, Knight has dedicated his life to both conservation projects on his own ranch as well as overseeing environmental projects in his leadership position with the Apache Natural Resource Conservation District in Apache County. Knight has been involved with Conservation Districts for a cumulative 28 years and is the current chairman of the Apache NRCD and AACD Executive Committee Member.

LIFETIME SERVICE TO AGRICULTURE: DEWAYNE JUSTICE

Maricopa County's DeWayne Justice received the 2021 Lifetime Service to Agriculture Award this past November during Arizona Farm Bureau's (AZFB) Annual Meeting. The recipient of this award has contributed significantly to Arizona's agriculture and in Justice's case, also Farm Bureau.

Justice operates the Justice Brother Ranch. Their operation is the definition of a family farm having farmed in Arizona since 1928. Justice was born into agriculture, and his family runs a cattle ranch and a citrus farm. The Justice family also runs the U of A Extension Citrus farm.

Justice has created quite a legacy of service for Arizona agriculture while at the same time considered a leadership icon for Maricopa County and Arizona Farm Bureau. Justice serves on the Arizona Farm Bureau Board of Directors and is an Electrical District Number 7 Board of Directors member. Justice is also the president of the Irrigation and Electrical Districts Association of Arizona.

LIFETIME SERVICE TO FARM BUREAU: THE MCGIBBON FAMILY

In November, Arizona Farm Bureau (AZFB) presented the McGibbon family of Pima & Santa Cruz counties the Lifetime Service to Farm Bureau award during its 100th Annual Meeting. The recipients of this award have shown longstanding service to Arizona agriculture and have made significant contributions to Arizona Farm Bureau.

The McGibbon family of the Santa Rita Ranch moved to Arizona from the Midwest after purchasing the Santa Rita in the late 1960s. Currently, the McGibbon's run a Red Angus cow-calf and seed stock operation. The McGibbons also assist with the University of Arizona's Santa Rita Experimental Range (SRER).

FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD: GARY J. PASQUINELLI

Adhering to a personal "God, Family, Country, and Industry" motto, Gary Pasquinelli is a 2nd-generation farmer in the Yuma area, and a successful leader, innovator, and advocate for the vegetable industry. He received Arizona Farm Bureau's Farmer of the Year award during the organization's 100th Annual Meeting in November.

Recently retired, Pasquinelli built Pasquinelli Produce Company that farms 8,500 acres of winter vegetable and watermelons, and rotational crops, all in Yuma County. While Pasquinelli has not been actively involved with the leadership of the Farm Bureau, he has always worked with and supported the efforts of the organization, along with his company maintaining membership in Arizona Farm Bureau. He and his wife of 51 years, Barbara, have raised 4 daughters, and have been blessed with 10 grandsons.

Bringing Pork into the Classroom

By Katie Aikins, Arizona Farm Bureau Education Director



Pork in the Classroom

2021 Grant Recipients

Basha High School	Megan Hartfield
Chandler High School	Kari Williams
Chandler High School	AJ Argueta
Canyon View High School	Kerilyn Brothers
Casa Grande High School	Kevin Curtis
Desert Ridge High School	Joyce Gifford
Desert Ridge High School	Cheri Compton
Douglas High School	Brita Kimble
Mesa Community College	Dennis Bushong
Mingus Union High School	Eric Banuelos
Queen Creek High School	Lewis Brown
St David High School	Dustin Hancock
Tanque Verde High School	Kimberly King
Westwood High School	Jimmy Wojcik
Yuma High School	Jaclyn Brown



Congratulations to all our Pork in the Classroom Grant Winners!

The Ag in the Classroom Program is excited to bring pork into classrooms across the state, thanks to funding by the Arizona Pork Council. Scholarships in the amount of \$100 were recently distributed. Fifteen high school teachers, a mix of both agricultural and culinary, have received \$100 to purchase pork to use in their classroom instruction. As part of the Pork in the Classroom Grant, teachers will also be teaching a minimum of one pork lesson that was developed by an Arizona teacher.

We look forward to seeing all the great pork education! 🐷

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