

A Conversation about Ag Supply Chains and the Impact on Farming: Ron Rayner

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

A third-generation Arizona farmer, Ron Rayner is a partner in A-Tumbling-T Ranches with his family, growing cotton, alfalfa and grains in the Goodyear, and Gila Bend, Arizona areas. He also farms in California.

With extensive service to agriculture, much of his work has been in the cotton industry. He is a past Chairman of the Board of the National Cotton Council (NCC), after serving as the organization’s president in 1999. The NCC is an organization that encompasses all seven segments of the industry – from production to shipping to manufacturing. Prior to serving as president, he served as chairman of the American Cotton Producers, the grower segment of the Council. He also served as a director and executive committee member of Cotton Council International, the NCC’s export promotions arm and served as a member of Cotton Incorporated’s board.

Since 1999 he has served as a director of Calcot Ltd., a cotton-marketing cooperative for Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas growers. He served as Calcot’s chairman of the board for four years, retiring from that position in 2015. He also is a director and past president of the Arizona Cotton Growers Association.

At home, Ron is an organizing director, stockholder and president of Farmer’s Gin, Inc. in Buckeye, serves as chairman of the Board of Electrical District No. 8; served as a member of the Central Arizona Project Board of Directors; and has served as a member of the Arizona Water Resources Advisory Board.

The Arizona Farm Bureau recognized Ron as its Farmer of the Year in 1998. He is a lifelong member of the Maricopa County Farm Bureau and served on the county board. He’s also served as chairman of the Arizona Farm Bureau Water 2000 committee.

In 2021, Arizona Farm Bureau recognized A-Tumbling-T Ranches as a Century Farm and Ranch. And this last February (2022), Ron received the Harry S. Baker Distinguished Service Award from the National Cotton Council (NCC).

Ron has a passion for agriculture and a commitment to seeing this industry con-

tinue to thrive despite its varying challenges. He’s developed an expertise in low-till cotton farming and water management.

The most problematic supply chain issues for the farm and ranch industry include transportation costs, labor availability, rising energy costs and challenges with obtaining inputs and products for the ag sector.



Heather and Ron Rayner joined the rest of the Rayner farm family clan during last year’s Annual Meeting in Glendale to celebrate their Century Farm, A-Tumbling-T Ranches. This year, Rayner discusses the business challenges to mitigate hiccups in our agriculture supply chain and ensure a continued legacy for their business’ next 100 years.

The causes of today’s supply chain issues cover a variety of factors. Tariffs and recent trade wars disrupted markets. Cyberattacks have taken down grain elevators and a packing plant. The West and Upper Plains have suffered recent droughts, reducing forage, increasing irrigation needs and lowering river levels. Hurricane Ida closed the Gulf port, slowed Mississippi River traffic, and closed chemical plants. Perhaps most significantly, the COVID-19 pandemic hammered every aspect of the supply chain, from transportation costs to labor availability. And now, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine may exacerbate already volatile global markets.

And most logistics experts point to the ripple effect of China’s influence on global supply chains. Ambrose Conroy, CEO of Seraph, a U.S. supply chain consulting firm, told Voice of America at the end of January that the supply chain crisis is probably manageable if only factories are temporarily closed, but port closures in China and other parts of the world become a more critical issue.

With the United States the world’s largest consumer market, months of poor logistics result in a severe shortage of goods in large supermarkets and a spike in consumer prices. Increasing energy costs are not helping. In fact, the latest data released by the U.S. Department of Labor on February 10, put the U.S. inflation rate at 7.5% in January, the highest inflation point in 40 years.

With soaring commodity and transportation costs having a huge impact on the global economy and supply chain, the Federal Reserve has invented a new analytical tool called the Global Supply Chain Stress Index (GSCP). It will use

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Ranchers and Arizona Farm Bureau Driving Toward Off-Road Solution

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

Since the pandemic in 2020, there has been a dramatic increase in outdoor recreational activity in Coconino County and throughout the state. Arizonans have been using the outdoors to escape from the mundane activities of everyday life, especially when we were all sheltered in place. This has spurred the rise of the ownership and use of Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs).

With more OHV riders on the trails, an increase in OHV incidents, including the destruction of natural resources, injuries, and even death, are more common than ever before. In 2020 the Coconino County Sheriff’s office responded to an unprecedented number of calls for service. And with these calls, a massive increase in OHV crashes and fatalities occurs, according to Jon Paxton’s, Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Rollover Results in Serious Injury recent article.

With these increased injuries and fatalities comes concerns from local ranchers who worry about the damage being done to their allotments, as well as whether they will be held liable for any injuries these riders endure on their property or leased land.

Working Toward Solutions

Some Arizona Farm Bureau (AZFB) members are a part of a committee spearheaded by the Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, organized



Here campers park near USFS 525. With their off-roading, campers have expanded damage to the land since the pandemic. Photo provided by Becky Ross.

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to advocate for ranchers by partnering with local land management agencies to curb this problem. Their goal is to help ranchers and other interested parties find solutions to protect the environment and lives of those off-roading.

“Things are progressing well to slow this problem down; it’s going to take years, and we need to educate these folks on the harms they are causing,” said Benny Aja, Coconino County Farm Bureau President and rancher.

“No one better understands or appreciates the value of our state’s public lands than Arizona’s ranchers,” added Chelsea McGuire, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Government Relations. “That makes it all the more difficult when they see the work they’ve done in stewarding and caring for that land undermined by recreational users who don’t know or don’t respect what it means to be a good neighbor. Our grassroots members are looking forward to working with our land management agencies, fellow outdoorsmen, and policymakers across the state to help find solutions to keep our public lands healthy and thriving for everyone.”

When riders take their OHVs where they shouldn’t, the vehicles damage the soil, creating dust and other harms, including destroying native grasslands making the land harder to manage and graze cattle on. It takes many years for the land to return to a usable state, decreasing the bottom line of the rancher. Additionally, off-roaders sometimes cut fences to access unrestricted areas.

“These folks have been coming up north with their OHVs and tearing up these grasslands, which takes years for growth to occur; because of erosion, these folks have no regard for the destruction they are causing,” said Aja.

Another northern Arizona rancher points out the downstream effect. “This causes a ripple effect, and not only does it impact the rancher, but all the vendors the rancher works with feel the brunt of it as well,” said Michael Macauley, a rancher from Coconino County.

“Natural resource managers, whether it be Game and Fish, USFS, BLM or State Land must address and mitigate increasing OHV damage that is currently happening statewide on many grazing allotments,” said Becki Ross, rancher and Arizona Farm Bureau member. Ross regularly reports on the damage done to their grazing lands by off-roaders.

It has become such a massive problem that OHV incidents make up most of the calls the Coconino’s Sherriff’s Office receives. As a result, the Sheriff’s Office responds to a multitude of OHV related crashes regularly. “The number one call we receive at the Sheriff’s Office is OHV related,” said Sheriff Driscoll of Coconino County.

Liability Issues

Ranchers are concerned about being held liable for any injuries sustained on their privately owned or leased land. To limit your exposure for a potential claim being brought up against you, law enforcement and insurance experts, like Farm Bureau Financial Services, suggest you never take matters into your own hands when trying to deter OHV riders. The State of Arizona permits OHV riders to access the land, with some restrictions in many areas of Arizona.

Legislation, like HB2130, which limits a landowner’s liability for any injuries to educational or recreational users

The Arizona State Land Department defines an Off-Highway Vehicle as “A motorized vehicle operated primarily on land, water, snow, ice, or other natural terrains. “OHV” includes a two-wheel, three-wheel, or four-wheel vehicle, motorcycle (greater than 49cc), dune buggy, amphibious vehicle, ground effects, or air-cushion vehicle, and any other means of land transportation deriving motive power from a source other than muscle or wind. ATVs, UTVs, side by sides, RZR[®]s, ROVs, motorcycles, mopeds, and snowmobiles

Arizona Farm Bureau Engaging with Members of Congress in Arizona

By Victoria Okula, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager



Arizona Farm Bureau’s farm and ranch leaders met with Senator Kyrsten Sinema in February; a variety of issues top of mind for our members were discussed. Pictured left to right: Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse, Government Relations Manager Victoria Okula, Yuma County farmer David Sharp, Maricopa County farmer Mark Schnepf, Maricopa County Dairy farmer Wes Kerr and Graham County rancher Ben Menges. In the foreground with Senator Sinema is Pinal County farmer Nancy Caywood.

The ACEs – Advocacy, Communication, and Education – drive the work of the Arizona Farm Bureau staff. Each pillar is comprised of many moving pieces, and these serve as the foundation for the robust organization that we know as the Arizona Farm Bureau.

For example, advocacy consists of providing Farm Bureau staff with the direction to advocate on behalf of farmers and ranchers through our grassroots processes and foster opportunities for Farm Bureau members to advocate for themselves. And throughout the first quarter of this year, we have been extremely fortunate to have had multiple opportunities for Arizona Farm Bureau members to meet with both elected and appointed officials to do exactly that.

In January

In January, Arizona Farm Bureau members joined a roundtable discussion at Rovey Farms with Senator Kelly and Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack. The meeting was primarily focused on increasing meat processing capacity for small and medium processors, but also shed light on other priority issues such as the lack of staff and USDA field office and the need for ag labor reform.

In February

In February, Arizona Farm Bureau hosted Senator Sinema at our office to discuss a variety of issues top of mind for our members. We had members from all corners of our state present at this meeting to share diverse stories and ask

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nearly 25 years of data and a variety of indicators to map, measure and manage the adverse impacts on global supply chains.

Specific to the agricultural industry, the cost and availability of fertilizer alone have been extremely challenging. The primary feedstock and process fuel for ammonia production is natural gas. The recent doubling of the Henry Hub natural gas price dramatically increased the cost of production, the building block of all nitrogen fertilizers.

It's in this setting that Arizona Agriculture reached out to Ron Rayner to get boots-on-the-ground insights on what's happening at the farm level. We wanted his take on some of the finer points with our current supply chain management challenges in the agriculture industry with its direct impact on farming management and inputs.

Arizona Agriculture: The food and ag supply chain hiccups are daily evident especially when we see empty store shelves. But how have these supply chain hiccups been impacting you as a farmer? What else needs to be done.

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

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

Arizona Agriculture: How are you mitigating for all of this?

Rayner: Our farm is planning to make additional capital investments to replace

equipment instead of making repairs. In December we purchased two new tractors to replace two high hour ones. We have ordered two more pivot sprinkler systems to supplement the one we already have, and plan to continue mechanizing as quickly as time and capital allows. Labor availability is also a concern and is helped through investment in mechanical irrigation technology as well.

Arizona Agriculture: Energy costs are a factor too, correct?

Rayner: Regarding the rise in natural gas prices, I have already mentioned fertilizer use earlier but rising natural gas prices have directly affected our irrigation pumping costs. A lot of the power purchased by our electrical district is generated with natural gas. Our district was forced to enact rate increases that in some cases doubled our pump costs over last year. To counter that sudden jump, we have ordered two more pivot sprinklers and ordered a mobile drip system for an existing pivot. All this is to immediately increase our application efficiency and to reduce our pumping costs.

Arizona Agriculture: The agriculture supply chain is both upstream and downstream, acquiring and selling. Talk about this.

Rayner: Our supply chain usually involves thinking about our suppliers, but it also impacts what we sell. Even though cotton prices have risen quickly, and demand is good, you can't sell your product unless you can tell your buyer when he will receive your product. Our cotton marketing cooperative, Calcot, has created innovative ways to get our cotton in containers and delivered to the port when a ship is available. However, trucking and ocean freight continue to be very uncertain when scheduling customers' deliveries. Some forecast a correction of these problems may take another six months or more. 🚚

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on the owner's land will help with this issue; additionally, the legislation makes users responsible for any damage they cause to the land.

Other legislation is currently being drafted to address the influx of OHV incidents, like SB1377, which allocates resources to put more enforcement officers on the ground to enforce OHV laws.

Deputies will vigorously enforce OHV laws and regulations throughout Coconino

County. The Sherriff's offices encourage riders to be safe and use these vehicles responsibly.

"As our state continues to grow, so will the impacts to public lands from recreation, travel, and climate change. Our charge is to provide effective management of these lands to ensure sustainability for future generations," said Sheriff Driscoll of Coconino County, 🚔

How a War in Ukraine Led to a Fight Over CRP Acres

By Chelsea McGuire, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Director

The heartbreaking situation in Ukraine is, rightfully, at the forefront of many political conversations today. And while the geopolitical, military, and humanitarian questions being raised by this conflict are many, there is one question that I didn't expect to see discussed: should the United States allow grain production on Conservation Reserve Program acres?

This seeming non-sequitur has been at the forefront of conversations related to the impacts of the Russian invasion on European food security. Over the last few years, Ukraine has become an increasingly important player in global food production. It is one of the top four exporters of corn and USDA's February predictions showed that Ukraine would produce 33 metric tons of grain for the 2021-2022 marketing year. But now, there are questions about whether farmers will be able to harvest crops already in the ground or plant spring crops while they, quite literally, fight for their survival.

Sanctions against Russian exports, including grains, will also cut off much of Europe from another large source of grain. We are also dealing with rising prices worldwide on key inputs like fertilizer and the decreased yields that result when those inputs are either unavailable or unaffordable. Then, consider the European Union's "Farm to Fork" program which was already leading farmers to shift to lower-yield organic production methods in the first place. In the midst of this perfect storm, European leaders are warning of an impending grain shortage that would have disastrous consequences.

All of this has led the international community to ask questions about the best way to use our most sensitive land resources: do we encourage farmers to keep them out of production to protect the long-term viability of those lands, or do we allow production even with sensitive resources in order to meet immediate needs? European economists and agronomists are urging the EU to rethink its Farm to Fork requirements and allow crop production on more acres – as many arable acres as possible – in order to meet existing food needs. And during these conversations, agricultural thought leaders in the U.S. are trying to determine how we can help. And one of our options may be to relax

the restrictions of the Conservation Reserve Program.

The What and How of the Conservation Reserve Program

The Conservation Reserve Program, or CRP, pays farmers a yearly rental payment in exchange for a promise that those farmers will remove sensitive land from intensive crop production. Enacted in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the nation. In 2021 alone, 5.3 million acres of land across the U.S. were enrolled in the program. (Notably, Arizona has almost no CRP acreage because of our low percentage of private land and because the program's rental rates are too low to make the program feasible.) Many of these acres are in the grain belt, and there are increasing calls for USDA to open CRP for cropping to put more grain on the market and avoid a global food shortage. As of now, this option does not look likely. Leading Democrats have already expressed disapproval for the idea, and we would expect similar objections from environmental groups. But it does raise larger questions about the balance between conserving resources and using those resources to meet the basic food needs of people worldwide. Just as the pandemic made consumers start to think differently about the resiliency of our food supply chain, I believe the war in Ukraine has the potential to make elected officials think differently about the resiliency – and flexibility – of our resource management philosophies.

Unfortunately, there is no rosily optimistic conclusion with which I can end this discussion. But I can at least end with an observation: what we do as Farm Bureau matters. Decisions about a country's viewpoint on how resources should be managed and how food should be produced are not abstract philosophical discussions. They are decisions that will impact whether someone will be able to afford, or find, the food they need to feed their family. The burden of advocating for our industry is heavy, but that's because the issues are so important. And we continue to appreciate each of you for the work you do in producing our food and strengthening our industry for the next generation. 🚧

Arizona Pork Council Supports Youth Through Swine Project Starter Grants



The Arizona Pork Council has dedicated \$20,000 to help students get involved in the pork industry through their Swine Project Starter Grants. Arizona 4-H and FFA youth that participate in their 1st year with a swine project to show at their local fair are eligible to apply for this \$500 Grant.

Applications are now being accepted and will be accepted until all 20 Grants have been awarded. Individuals can apply for the Swine Project Starter Grant at any time throughout their project. Have you already purchased your animal and your Fair is right around the

corner? Apply for the grant now! Are you purchasing your animal in the next couple of months to begin your project? Apply for the grant now! Remember, this is for first-time swine projects only. Grant awardees will receive their checks after they have purchased their animal. For more information or to apply for the Swine Project Starter Grant please visit www.azpork.org. 🐷

Teachers Can Learn About Agriculture On the Farm and Ranch

By Katie Aikins, Arizona Farm Bureau Education Director

Are you a teacher who would like to bring agriculture into your classroom? Do you know a teacher who would like a hands-on opportunity to learn about their food and fiber, where it is coming from and who is producing it?

Well, do we have an opportunity for you! The Arizona Agriculture Institute (AAI), formally known as Summer Ag Institute, will occur June 14-16, 2022. This 3-day immersion program will allow teachers to see first-hand how their food and fiber are being produced and give them the opportunity to ask questions of those producing it.

Only 30 teachers will be accepted into the program. Points of interest for this year's AAI are Triple G Dairy, Maricopa Ag Center, Quarter Circle U Ranch, Yogurt processing facility, Rousseau Farms watermelon, Pinal Feed, Caywood Farms cotton, the AZ Worm Farm, Sossaman Farms, Hayden Flour Mill, Old Ellsworth Brewery, Mountain State Wholesale Nursery, and Stotz Equipment. There are also opportunities to participate in virtual lessons and gain access to a plethora of resources and materials for the classroom.

Be sure to visit <https://sites.google.com/email.arizona.edu/arizonaaginstitute2022/> home for more information and an application. Apply today! 🚚



Use Our Videos to tell Your Story

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

Struggle with explaining farming to your network of friends? At a loss for words and visuals to explain a complex farm and ranch issue? Then let Arizona Farm Bureau’s videos help you. After all, many of you have cameos in our videos anyway!

Arizona Farm Bureau feels like it’s dipped its farm boot into the movie business, sort of. To date, we’ve created more than 250 videos. We moved seriously into video production when social media analysts were telling marketers that videos became the number one way to view content in the social media space.

Our advocacy, communication and education (the ACEs) have realized the benefits of the effort including explaining complex issues with the ease of a modern-day video. Having covered simple to complex topics about Arizona agriculture, there isn’t a topic we haven’t tried to tackle. The average length of our videos is 90 seconds to four minutes. They’re concise, well written and it’s become a team effort.

Use this Resource to Tell Your Story and the Arizona Agriculture Narrative

We upload all our videos to azfb.org and you’ll find them all posted on our social media channels, especially the “Friends of Arizona Farm Bureau” Facebook page. Since we’ve covered so many topics a simple “search” on azfb.org will determine whether you have a video you can share with your network. For example, plug into the search window in the upper right corner of azfb.org, “sustainability,” and you’ll find a video and articles on the topic. Here are other points to help you exploit this Arizona Farm Bureau resource.

1. **Share the videos with friends.** On our www.azfb.org/news/videos page, is our complete list of videos we’ve produced.
2. **Share on your social media channels.** On average, we release a video a week. If you follow us on “Friends of Arizona Farm Bureau” Facebook, share with your network to organically extend the video’s reach.
3. **You’ve made cameo appearances, let your network know.** Family and friends love to see our wins and successes. So many of our farm and ranch leaders have become part of our videos.
4. **Send your friends to azfb.org/news/videos.** Since we’re always releasing new videos, it might not hurt to let your network know about our video page on the web.
5. **Make the videos part of your presentation.** Going to give a presentation about Arizona agriculture? Start by showing one of our videos. Staff often does this to set the stage for a presentation on a specific topic in agriculture.

Finally, we continue to stay committed to one of the more important tools to stay connected to the public. So, if you have an idea for a video topic, let us know. Contact us at outreach@azfb.org. 🚗

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about water infrastructure, labor, taxes, and public lands management. Senator Sinema was also awarded the American Farm Bureau ‘Friend of Farm Bureau’ award for her voting record in the 116th Congress.

Also in February, Maricopa County Farm Bureau hosted a tour and roundtable discussion for Congressman Stanton in the East Valley. We showcased Rousseau Farms where Congressman Stanton was able to see workers harvesting celery. This meeting was followed up by a lively discussion at the Freeman Corn Patch about how significant federal investments in replacing, repairing, and building new water infrastructure systems are critical in ensuring we can continue farming in the West.

In March

March ended with a stop in Pinal County. Where we hosted Congressman Biggs’ legislative assistant for a tour of Caywood Farms and had the opportunity to meet with both Maricopa County and Pinal County Farm Bureau members to shed light on the water situation in Pinal County.

Since Capitol Hill is only partially open for visitors and still has many restrictions, we have built upon the proven track record of success and decided to continue meeting with members of Congress and officials from the Administration in Arizona. This not only means that our farmers and ranchers don’t have to travel all the way to D.C., but it means that our elected officials can learn about these issues with a “boots on the ground” perspective.

We look forward to continuing to develop these opportunities for our farmers and ranchers, but also can’t wait for the day until we can walk through the halls of Capitol Hill once again. 🚗

Mentor Protégé CAMP Profile, 6: William Jeffers

By Navajo County Farm Bureau Member and rancher William (Bill) Jeffers

Continuing our CAMP mentor/protégé series, we profile Navajo County Farm Bureau member and rancher William Jeffers in this sixth article in the series.

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.

As this effort rolls forward, 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. Each mentor/protégé partnership is different with unique experiences.

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



Rancher Bill Jeffers and Jodi Poole confer on boots-on-the-ground issues with ranching.

From Bill, A Rancher

What’s been the biggest takeaway so far with your meetings over the telephone and/or zoom and/or face-to-face gathering? The biggest takeaway has been the necessity of flexibility for NRCS employees. The effects of COVID-19 and all the rules and restrictions have limited our ability to spend time together. Shutdowns, closures, canceled meetings have certainly made business as usual a challenge.

Share specifics about one of your meetings? What did you learn? We met out in the field, in October, for a review of a reseeding project. We spent the day going from site to site collecting data and taking pictures. I continue to realize how professional, educated, and dedicated Jodie and Kent are in their occupational settings. I also see the importance of them getting out of the office for practical hands-on experience. I learned about different plant communities and examples of how data is collected.

Why have you felt this program has been successful? There is a benefit to getting to know the USDA employees in different settings. Although I have not had the opportunity to visit and see Kent Curley in a setting other than the office and in the field, the knowledge that we are both committed to this program’s success provides another bond. I did have the opportunity to attend a Navajo County Farm Bureau meeting with Jodie. The members at the meeting welcomed both of us and we had the opportunity to see how the leadership of the County holds meetings. There was also the benefit of traveling together and learning about each other’s family and lives.

What more do you hope to learn about in your area? Challenges and issues affecting my fellow ranchers and farmers, technology breakthroughs, best practices, government programs and grassroots organizations’ effectiveness.

What are you looking forward to in your other meetings/gatherings/learning and sharing sessions in the future? Much the same as the answer in number four. In addition, I look forward to seeing my proteges grow in their positions, watch them develop the respect of their cooperators, and be proud and satisfied with their contribution to agriculture. As we go forward, we planned to attend an extension service workshop that occurred in March! 🚗

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Ag in the Classroom Brings Dairy to the Classroom



Cream Wish. Ag in the Classroom will be donating a copy of the book to all 850 classrooms that are participating in the event.

Be sure to follow us on social media @AZFB AITC throughout April to catch a glimpse of the presentation! 📷

Ag in the Classroom is celebrating Spring with Arizona Dairy! In partnership with the Arizona Dairy Council, which has provided the 27,000 students with fabulous dairy leave-behinds. AITC is providing dairy-themed presentations to 850 Kindergarten through 2nd-grade classrooms throughout the state.

The focus of the event's presentation is the 2021 American Farm Bureau Book of the Year: The Tales of a Dairy Godmother: Chucks Ice



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Contact Outreach@AZFB.org

The 2022 Census of Agriculture is Around the Corner

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

Every year, the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) estimates acreage, yield, production, price and value for several of the major commodities produced in each state. In Arizona, annual estimates are made for cotton, durum wheat, alfalfa, cattle inventory, milk production, and more. What about the relatively minor commodities like sorghum, potatoes, or grapes? These commodities are counted every five years in the Census of Agriculture.

The Census of Agriculture provides answers to questions, "How many acres of sorghum were grown in Arizona in 2017?" (Answer: ~13,500) How about potatoes? (~3,400) Grapes? (~1,340) Since these commodities are not in Arizona's annual estimating program, only the USDA's Census of Agriculture provides answers to these questions.

How many female producers are there in Arizona? (~16,000 or 49% of all producers) How many young producers, those 35 and younger? (~2,500 or 7.6%) How many American Indian producers? (~19,300 or 59%) How many of Arizona's farms have less than 100 acres? (~14,000 or 74%, accounted for about 10% of Arizona's total value of sales in 2017.) How many Arizona farms have more than 2,000 acres? (~1,300 or 6.8%, accounted for just under 50% of Arizona's total value of sales.)

Getting to A Complete Count to Show Our Value

The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. It looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income, and expenditures.

The Census of Agriculture provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agriculture data for every county in the nation. Through the Census of

Agriculture, producers can show the nation the value and importance of agriculture and can influence decisions that will shape the future of U.S. agriculture.

"So, what, big deal, who cares?" one might ask. The answers to the questions posed earlier may not be important to you directly, but the information may be very important to someone else. The Census of Agriculture data is used by those who serve producers and rural communities — federal, state and local governments, agribusinesses, trade associations, for example. Companies and cooperatives use the data to determine where to locate facilities that will serve agricultural producers. Community planners use the information to target needed services to rural residents. Legislators use census data when shaping farm policies and programs.

Over the next couple of months, Arizona enumerators will be asking producers questions about statistically sampled plots of land across Arizona. This activity is the normal preliminary work that needs to be completed in order to have a successful 2022 Census of Agriculture.

The 2022 Census of Agriculture is scheduled to be mailed out at year's end to known producers and potential producers across the United States. Those who receive a form are encouraged to respond electronically, the most efficient and least costly to taxpayers. Those producers who have not responded will be contacted either by phone or in-person by enumerators beginning mid-February. The results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture will be released in early 2024.

For the 2017 Census of Agriculture, Arizona had the 6th highest response rate nationally. We hope the Arizona producers respond similarly, if not better, to the 2022 Census of Agriculture. For Arizona's farmers and ranchers, the Census of Agriculture is about their voice, their future, and their opportunity. 📷

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Century Farm and Ranch Families: We Want You!

Staff Reports

As the sun daily rises on your 2022, you look over at the horizon sipping that cup of coffee (or tea) and you might be reflecting on all the years your generational farm or ranch family has been in business. Arizona Farm Bureau wants to recognize you and your farm and ranch legacy. We're looking for those Arizona Farms and Ranches that have reached the 100-year mark or will by the end of this year!

During the program's first year, Arizona Farm Bureau celebrated seven families during its Annual Meeting in November that earned Century Farm and Ranch recognition. Themed '100 Years and Growing,' the Annual Meeting theme aptly described the work that AZFB has done and continues to do, alongside Arizona's farmers and ranchers.

An ongoing program of the Arizona Farm Bureau (AZFB), The Century Farm and Ranch Program launched last year during AZFB's own 100-year celebration. If your family's farm or ranch is eligible this year (2022), go to <https://www.azfb.org/News/Century-Farms-Ranches> to download and fill out the application listed online.

Application Details

The application deadline is the first Monday in July (July 4, 2022) and must

be received by Arizona Farm Bureau by that date (this is not a postmark deadline). Qualified applications received after July 5 will be considered for the 2022 Century Farm and Ranch Program, as the effort will be ongoing.

Because Arizona Farm Bureau and participating Farm Bureau counties are underwriting the effort, those farm and ranch families must be current members of Arizona Farm Bureau.

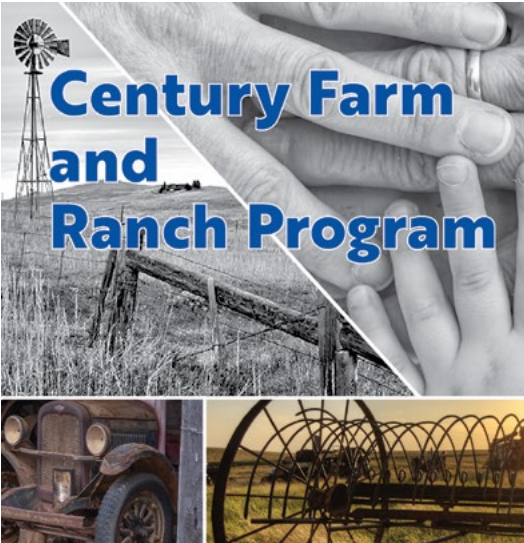
If Selected, What Happens Next?

Once applications are received by the July 4, 2022, deadline and reviewed, AZFB will notify qualified applicants. In addition, a variety of recognitions will take place.

1. You'll receive a certificate from your county Farm Bureau leadership.
 2. During Arizona Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting in November, you'll be recognized before your peers during an awards dinner.
 3. Additionally, Arizona Farm Bureau will send you home with a sign recognizing your farm or ranch as a Century Farm/Ranch.
- 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 will continue the Century Farm and Ranch Program to recognize and honor our Arizona family farms and ranches that have thrived for more than a century.
- Editor's note:** Please return the completed application to Arizona Farm Bureau Century Farm Program to attention Julie Murphree to 325 South Higley Road, Gilbert, AZ 85296. Or email your application to outreach@azfb.org.



Ron Rayner (left) and son, Ross, celebrate their family's achievement of 100 years of continuous business in agriculture by the new sign they received from Arizona Farm Bureau.



Celebrate 100 Years with Arizona Farm Bureau by celebrating your 100 years!

Voter-Approved Prop 208 Dead After Court Ruling

Staff Reports

Maricopa County Superior Court Judge John Hannah last month (March 11) declared that a tax on high-earning Arizona residents to fund education spending that voters had approved in the 2020 election can't be enforced due to an earlier state Supreme Court ruling. As a result, the judge ordered its collection permanently blocked.

Judge Hannah's ruling was widely expected after the Supreme Court ruled in August that the tax was unconstitutional if it put schools above a legal spending cap. The Supreme Court sent the case back to Hannah to make that final determination. "This ruling is a win for Arizona taxpayers," Arizona Governor Doug Ducey tweeted out the day the ruling was announced. "It's another step in undoing the damage of Prop 208 and making sure we continue to benefit from having the lowest flat income tax rate in the nation. While we expect the ruling may be appealed, we are confident the Arizona Supreme Court will find 208 unconstitutional, as they did last year. Arizona is – and will remain – a state that knows how to prioritize education while keeping taxes low and attracting jobs."

Backers of Proposition 208 and Republican opponents that included the House Speaker and Senate President agreed in January that new revenue from the tax on the wealthy was almost certain to put spending over that cap threshold.

"This Court understands the remand order as a direction to declare Proposition 208 unconstitutional in its entirety and to enjoin its operation permanently, if the Court finds as a fact that the annual education spending limits imposed by the Arizona Constitution will prevent Arizona's public schools from spending a "material" amount of Proposition 208 tax revenue in 2023," Hannah wrote. "On that basis, the Court is obligated to strike down Proposition 208."

The Supreme Court decision last August said that a Proposition 208 provision that created a workaround for the spending cap was unconstitutional.

The initiative was expected to raise about \$800 million a year for K-12 education and got around the cap by calling the money "grants."

Officials with the Goldwater Institute, which first filed the lawsuit that challenged the initiative, spoke out about the ruling. "This initiative included two parts: a massive tax increase, and then another part that required the government to spend a bunch of money on schools, but the state constitution includes a limit on how much money the government can spend," said Timothy Sandefur, the Goldwater Institute's Vice President for Litigation. "What today's decision says is that everybody agrees the spending would cross the constitutional limit, and therefore, the entire initiative is invalid."

The Goldwater Institute in a statement also said, "fueled by a campaign of class warfare and false information—and funded by unions and out-of-state special interests—Proposition 208 sought to double the income taxes imposed on small-business owners and individuals making over \$250,000 a year."



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Check Out Arizona Farm Bureau Speakers' Bureau: Fence Line



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

Fence Line speaker topics include:

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

Here are a few comments about our speakers:

I just wanted to thank you for putting me in contact with John Boelts. It was a wonderful day of learning, and he went out of his way with my students. We were all very impressed. My students and I were astounded by his depth of knowledge and his ability to convey it. All of us felt privileged to have had the opportunity to learn so much. He is passionate about his crops and cares that he is helping to feed the people of the United States a quality food product. -- **Brophy College Preparatory**

I just want to thank you for arranging for Sonia Gasho so speak to our Nature Club tonight. She was a wonderful speaker and I think there were more questions than we have had for any other speaker. After the meeting a few of us enjoyed her company at dinner.

Thanks again for arranging such an interesting and informative speaker. -- **SaddleBrooke Nature Club**

We contacted you for a speaker for our staff training. You contacted Wes Kerr who gave us a training on his family's dairy farm. His presentation was ranked extremely high by our staff due to his knowledge of the farm, science, etc. And staff thought he was one of the most relatable and dynamic speakers that we have had in a long time. --- **Maricopa County Environmental Services Department**

For more information about Fence Line, call 480-635-3609 or email joelcarr@azfb.org. We can handle any topic you're interested in as it relates to Arizona agriculture! Or, if you are one of our farm and ranch leaders and you're willing to speak, just alert us and we'll keep you as a speaker in our Fence Line database.

Prop 208 continued from page 7

Arizona Farm Bureau's Position on Prop 208

In 2020, Arizona Farm Bureau took a "no" stance on the proposition.

Quoting from an article Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Director Chelsea McGuire wrote, "Speaking of unwise tax measures, the Invest in Education Act would hamstring Arizona's economic progress when it's needed the most. The initiative would impose a 3.5 percent surcharge on all taxable income over \$250,000 for single filers and \$500,000 for joint filers. Money collected by the tax will be distributed to school districts and charter schools, proportionate to their student population, to fund increases in teacher salaries, hire more teachers, and support new and prospective teachers to help them stay in the classroom. While we agree with the wisdom of finding a stable and adequate

funding stream for Arizona's educational system, Proposition 208 simply does not create that funding.

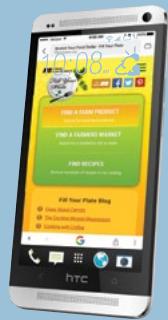
"Because the tax is based on income, it's not a dedicated funding source – it's based on the most volatile tax brackets in the state and will be wildly unpredictable from year to year. Even more damaging, the initiative would increase Arizona's overall tax rate to 8 percent, in the top ten highest nationwide. This would create a significant disincentive for businesses to relocate to Arizona, and the increased tax burden on existing businesses has been projected to lead to significant job losses over the first ten years of the tax. Small businesses will be the hardest hit, with a marginal income tax increase of more than 77 percent."

Proponents of the tax on high earners are expected to appeal.

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