

May, 2017

*Sedgwick County Farm Bureau
Agricultural Association*

316-773-9851

“Farm Bureau News”



President's Report: Max Tjaden

This past Monday evening, just a few miles east of where I live, there was an accident at dusk involving a farm tractor and an SUV. The tractor had its lights on, however, in trying to avoid colliding, the SUV crashed and one occupant was killed and the other ended up in the hospital in very serious condition.

No one leaves, comes home, or goes to the field for that matter, expecting to have a serious mishap. Accidents are very unexpected surprises that oftentimes could have been avoided with some precautionary sensibilities on someone's part.

As I write this article it has been wet to really wet at my place now for the last 48 days, (with a few more to go). This is a time when most of us who farm get a lot of work accomplished: haying, spraying, fertilizing, tillage, planting, etc. Also, the earlier spring weather has us anticipating an earlier-than-usual wheat harvest coming our way. Late field work is now meeting an early harvest. Fast encountering Slow are not favorable combinations in our line of work. All of a sudden time is being compressed and opportunities diminished to get things done. "We have only just a minute, only sixty seconds in it."

Most of us are now behind with a lot of things left to do and once we get started, we want to get the most accomplished in the shortest length of time. In our attempt to falsely speed up time, we get in a hurry in the shop, on the road, in the field, etc. The problem with being in a hurry is that it always takes too long. Consequently, we are quite tempted to do things faster that we should, travel faster down the road and in the field, forego proper maintenance, or make impulsive decisions. Throw in fatigue and possibly a growing impatience and you have the ingredients for a potentially very unexpected surprise.

It'll get done.

"The hurrier I go, the behinder I get". Lewis Carroll.

Joe Youngers:

Several weeks ago the Farm Bureau board held our annual legislative tour. This year we were able to tour the Limagrain facility near Valley Center. At this location they breed, grow and harvest hundreds of varieties each year. During the tour, they discussed what it takes to operate the facility for a year including planting, harvesting and analyzing the different varieties. As a producer it was interesting to see what really goes into breeding and selecting varieties that get released for production.

The second tour of the day was at Grain Craft in Wichita. Grain Craft is a flour mill that uses roughly 50,000 bushel of wheat each day. They gave us a presentation in their office and then a tour of the flour mill. The presentation gave a brief synopsis of how the evolution of milling wheat has progressed over the years. We discussed how different varieties of wheat possess different milling qualities each year. Last year's bumper crop turned out to have poor protein quality. Due to this poor protein, Grain Craft is railing in wheat from other states. Historically, our protein and milling qualities have been very good and they normally do not have to rail in this much wheat. This tour was impressive and it was interesting to see our grain beyond the field.

Donna Wise:

Whew! Why didn't someone tell me how busy I would be when I accepted the position as Women's Chair? It's been a crazy busy - but wonderful - time since our last newsletter. For my newsletter article I want to relate the many ways that your Farm Bureau is working for you.

In late January, I went with several other board members to Advocacy Training in Winfield. We heard from Bernie Koch, a lobbyist in Topeka, about the best ways to have our voice heard by our legislators and the importance of doing so. He gave us a lot of great information.

On February 3, our Office Administrator and I went to Franklin Elementary school in Wichita to teach the second grade children about home safety. It's amazing how many treats look very similar to toxic things in the home. Have you ever compared red hot cinnamon candies to Sudafed? Tic Tacs to medicine? We had a great time with the children and they left having a good feeling about Farm Bureau and, hopefully, farmers. We were there with police officers, health professionals, and many other organizations working to help children grow to be effective adults. I think they left with a positive impression of Farm Bureau, as well.

February 8, my husband, Phil, and I went with others to Day at the Statehouse in Topeka. It was a great day of getting to know what life is like for our legislators. (They are working hard up there!) It was also a chance to have lunch with a representative and tell them about some of the issues that are important to us.

On February 25, I went to Kansas Farm Bureau's "Be Ag-Wise" training in east Wichita. It was a day of getting to know other Farm Bureau advocates and learning some fun ways of sharing the realities of agriculture with those who have no farm experience. I came home with more materials and information than I will be able to absorb in months, but also with wonderful resources for when an opportunity arises.

On March 6, we went to the issue surfacing event in east Wichita. Did you know that Farm Bureau began as a "grass-roots" organization and remains so today? The Issue Surfacing sessions are how the Farm Bureau policies at the State and National levels are developed. If you think of something that you think is important regarding agricultural operations while you are out there driving your tractor for hours, talk to one of our board members about it. You may be the catalyst for new policies!

We took the County Commissioners to lunch on March 7 with no particular agenda other than to get to know them and to give them a chance to know us and what we are about. We had some really good discussion about things such as county roads and how the county relates to townships.

On March 14, representatives from several surrounding county Farm Bureaus joined us at Leeker's Foods to shop for groceries for our local Ronald McDonald houses. Ronald McDonald houses provide a place for families of hospitalized children to stay. The food we provided gives them a chance to prepare meals for themselves or for the house mothers to prepare meals for them to enjoy.

On March 20, we set up our prize wheel at Mize's Thriftway in Clearwater in celebration of National Agriculture Week. Shoppers had the opportunity to spin the wheel and receive whatever prize the wheel landed on. Prizes were a loaf of bread, carton of eggs, bunch of asparagus, package of sausage, pound of ground beef or gallon of milk. We plan to do this event again next year at another rural grocery store in the county.

Finally, on March 30, we participated in the We All Eat event at the Sedgwick County Extension Center. This was a gathering of over 40 organizations with a connection to the food industry. It was attended by over 450 people and was a perfect opportunity to tell people who are concerned about the food they eat all of the good things modern agriculture provides. We were able to provide information about the safety of GMO's, that gluten isn't bad for you unless you have a particular disease, and a lot of other things they didn't know about agriculture. We plan on participating next year!

We have been busy in April and May, too, but I think you get the idea. All in all, it's been a very positive few months. One of the next things up will be the Sedgwick County Fair in July which I will not be able to attend because of prior commitments. If you would be available to help our Office Administrator with some fun activities one afternoon or evening of the Fair, please call 316-773-9851 or email sedgwickfb@kfb.org to let them know.

Bill Carp:

My oldest son, Brandon, will be competing in the FFA Extemporaneous Speech contest later this month. In this contest, participants draw three random agricultural topics and are given thirty minutes to prepare a speech on one of them. This morning he asked my opinion on farm subsidies as a potential topic matter. I immediately responded, "Hey! There's the topic for my article!" To which my wife immediately responded, "Do you really want to bring this up? Not everyone is going to agree with you." First, this required a little bit of research. What is Farm Bureau's policy on government subsidies? In brief, the web site states, "Farm programs are written to provide a basic level of risk protection to help offset bad economic times and severe weather. No one buys insurance for the good times, and similarly, farm bill programs provide critical tools to help farmers and ranchers manage risk."

Now I know you're all dying to hear what I told Brandon about farm subsidies. But first, I have a question for the producers. If you woke up tomorrow and subsidies did not exist, would you quit farming? Given time, do you think you would be any less prosperous?

And crop insurance is important, but if it were not subsidized would you be forced to quit?

Now back to my response to Brandon. My wife's probably right. I shouldn't give my opinion. So how would you answer? Would you tell him that without the government's assistance we could never run our farming operations? Or would you tell him that we don't need other taxpayers' help, we'd be fine on our own? Just some things to think about as we get into discussion on the 2018 Farm Bill.

Byron Wells:

"Well life on the farm is kinda laid back. Ain't much an old country boy like me can't hack". Lyrics from one of John Denver's most well known songs, "Thank God I'm a Country Boy". Well, there are days on the farm that are not that laid back, and sometimes make it hard to hack. We have gone from a weather pattern on the verge of drought and raging wild fires, to a time of too much rain and flooding. Add to this less than favorable agricultural prices and you have a scenario that could weigh heavily on anyone's shoulders. It is at these times when we need to keep family and friends close, remember to laugh, and take comfort in knowing the sun will shine again. When the sun does shine again, make sure to take care and error on the side of caution. Have a safe and Happy Harvest!!!!

Get involved with YF&R

I am a co-chair on the Sedgwick County Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee. YF&R is a great way to get young people interested in Farm Bureau and agriculture. When I was asked to be a co-chair I was very excited, but due to busy family schedules, and just a general lack of time, not much has happened on my watch. So what I am asking is, if there are young people 18-35 that would like to get more involved in any capacity? You do not have to be on the board to be a committee member, but if that is not your thing maybe helping plan an event or coming up with an idea for an event would be helpful. If this is of interest to you please shoot me an e-mail at: bmwells1978@gmail.com.

Kent Ott:

Just as spring brings about increasing activity on our farms, it has been the same for our county Farm Bureau. I want to highlight two of those activities.

The first was our annual legislative farm tour, for which we decided to tour some of our local agribusiness. We started at the Limagrain Wheat Research Center. There we saw some of their research and heard about the process they use to develop new wheat variety. We then toured the Grain Craft Flour Mill. They gave us a thorough explanation and actually view the process of turning wheat into flour. My take away from this tour is that wheat is not just wheat. Variety, protein, milling and baking characteristic, sprout damage, moisture, test weight are just some of the factors that are important to making a good product of fiber. Generic wheat is currently worth very little, but good quality high protein wheat is bringing a substantial premium. Grain Craft has even published a list of preferred varieties they would like to see grown to make better flour. Hopefully we begin to see alignment by our industry in what is grown and what our customer needs.

We also had a meet and greet gathering on the Mick Rausch Farm for our new Congressman, then candidate, Ron Estes. We were given the opportunity to visit with Mr. Estes. We were able to present him with issues that are important to the Ag community. Also we were able to question Congressman Estes on his views.

All the people who put these activities together are to be commended. They were successful in fulfilling our mission of advocating and educating our political leaders.

Todd Kissinger:

Well, what has happened in the first 100 days of this new administration? Haven't we all heard enough about fake news? I think we all have a grasp on fake news now. We have a new Supreme Court justice that was filibustered by Democrats, and then Republicans used the NUCLEAR OPTION to get him nominated. The wall is built or is it? What doesn't make the news is we finally have a new Secretary of Agriculture and his name is the Sonny Perdue.

For those who don't know Sonny Perdue's real name is George Irvin Perdue the III. Mr. Perdue has a degree in veterinary medicine and rose to the ranks of captain in the Air Force. He has been a State Senator, and the Governor of Georgia. In 2007 he led a prayer for rain in Georgia and I Quote "We've come together here simply for one reason and one reason only: To very reverently and respectfully pray up a storm" and "God, we need you; we need rain". During a policy speech in Iowa Mr. Perdue made it clear this administration supports the renewable fuel standards and will be looking into new technologies for efficiencies. He supports trade in agriculture and realizes the importance. It was also mentioned that programs in the NRCS and FSA offices might get easier to work with.

He seems to be a man with morals and integrity and believes in American Agriculture. Hopefully he helps put Agriculture at the table so were not left out. I think the most important qualification Mr. Perdue has is he knows who to ask for help.

Brian Wetta:

In March, Sedgwick County Farm Bureau Agricultural Association awarded four \$1000 scholarships and two \$500 scholarships to six very deserving high school seniors from the county. These candidates completed the application and interviewed with the scholarship committee. The scholarships are renewable if the student maintains a 3.0 GPA. Congratulations to the following senior scholarship winners:

Isaac Albert (Mechanical Engineering/WSU)-Andale HS

Timothy Albert (Accounting/Newman)-Bishop Carroll HS

Jayden Linnebur (Farm & Ranch Management/Allen CC)-Andale HS

Peter Martin (Accounting/KSU)-Andale HS

Janae Pauly (Biology/Washburn)-Conway Springs HS

T.C. Poynter (Elementary Education/KSU)-Maize South HS

It is never too early to be thinking about next year. Any current junior whose parent is a member of Sedgwick County Farm Bureau can apply next spring.

Jon Kerschen:

I recently read an article titled, "This is the REAL reason why wheat is making you sick." Within the article, the statement, "While the farmers are profiting, consumer health is suffering," stood out in large, bold letters. To summarize, the article essentially tries to tie a myriad of health issues to glyphosate. One of the first lines of the text says, "Protocol for wheat harvesting in the U.S. is to drench the field with Round-Up." Much of the information is not factual and misleading at best. I did find it a bit humorous that the picture accompanying the article is a man with a handheld sprayer applying something to a...rice field.

One of the "experts" cited in the article is Dr. Stephanie Seneff of MIT (whose Ph.D degree is in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science). The article described Seneff's research: "She found that desiccating non-organic wheat crops with glyphosate just before harvest was so popular by the 1990s that most of the non-organic wheat in the United States has become contaminated with it." There is so much wrong with just this one statement that the credibility of the article is compromised.

However, if we as producers don't offer rebuttals to these false claims, people will continue to be misled. This type of pseudoscience plays off of people's fears and lack of knowledge; we can combat this by telling our side of the story and doing a better job of educating people. I mean, a doctor from MIT surely knows what she is talking about, right?

Benefits:

Are you looking for something fun to do this summer? Check out www.kfb.org for your seasonal benefits which include Great Wolf Lodge, The Orpheum Theater, Silver Dollar City/White Water, Showboat Branson Belle, T-Bones Baseball, Exploration Place and Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun for destinations. Also available are several hotel discounts. Don't miss out on the fun that is included in your membership.