

SCFB

MARCH 2023

news

ARE YOU OKAY? *Mick Rausch*

Looking back on 2022 and thinking about 2023, I like to reflect on what can I do better in the new year. If I can't control the weather or prices, then what can I do differently? What happened yesterday is in the past, so I will look to tomorrow and the things I can manage and control.

Managing one's mental health is a work in progress. We can't always control situations in life, but we can try to manage our emotions and responses. First thing every morning, I thank God for giving me another day; I enjoy some quiet time to collect my thoughts on the day and what it will bring. This is something that I can control. Plans may change later, but I try to begin with some control, so to speak, on the day and where I see it headed.

If you are having difficulty with life's troubles, or a loved one isn't quite themselves, ask a simple question—"are you okay? You don't seem like yourself?" Don't take a chance that they will get better. Professionals can provide help as well as recommend other resources. It's worth the effort to help someone who may struggle to see answers for their own problems. I thank God every day someone was there for me and willing to ask, "Are you okay?"

On another note, there is a "grandparent scam" happen-

ing that preys on elderly. An elderly person receives a call about a loved one who needs an operation or is in the process of going to jail; the caller shares personal details about the individual needing assistance and says they need cash immediately to help this person

out. The "police office" or "doctor" calling is very convincing as they attempt to talk the elderly individual into going to the bank and withdrawing a large sum of money. Beware if you have an elderly parent

or relative. A good friend had a parent fall for this scam, so be alert and know this is actually occurring near us. Please tell your elderly relatives to call someone first before being made a victim.

Finally, as spring arrives, it brings with it longer hours, so please be careful and safe!



Mick Rausch (l) and Donna Wise (c), Sedgwick Co., and Ashley Beying (r), Osage Co., shared their experiences with mental illness in agricultural settings during the KFB Annual Meeting in December.



OTT FAMILY *honored as a* KANSAS FARM FAMILY OF THE YEAR

Kent and Rebecca Ott were named as one of Kansas Farm Bureau Farm Families of the Year in 2022. Kent and his daughters, Lindsey and Rachael, accepted this award at the 2022 KFB Annual Meeting on behalf of their family, including Rebecca, who passed away in 2021.

Kent and his late wife, Rebecca,

worked side by side for 40 years. After she passed, Kent's two daughters, Lindsey and Rachael, have become much more involved in the family operation and have started learning the role their mother once filled. Kent has served in the Kansas House of Representatives, Sedgwick County Extension Council, Mulvane School Board, and U.S. Soybean Board, as well as two terms on the SGFB Board of Directors.

Sedgwick County Farm Bureau Agricultural Association's mission is to help members identify their needs and provide services and programs to meet those needs. SCFBAA will work for the success of the farm community which we serve. We will broaden our base by being proactive in community participation which enhances all phases of farm life.

SCFBAA SCHOLARSHIP



The deadline for the Sedgwick County Farm Bureau Agricultural Association scholarship is approaching; applications are due March 15. We have great scholarships at both the university and community college level. If you know seniors who will be headed off to college next year, especially if they are majoring in agriculture, encourage them to apply.

SCFBAA AG AMBASSADOR



We also have two ambassador positions for students who will be seniors in high school next year. SCFBAA Ag Ambassadors get to join us in whatever we're doing to get a good look at Farm Bureau. If you know any juniors who are interested in agriculture, be sure to have them apply for our ambassador positions. We love to support our students!

Applications can be found by scanning the qr codes above or visiting www.scfbaa.org.



There's so much happening with Farm Bureau during the first of the year, it's hard to know what to write about, but a definite highlight is Day at the Statehouse. If you've never been to this event, you should definitely consider going. Between our legislative luncheon in January, DATS in February, and our legislative tour in April, we strive to make good connections with several of our legislators. It was involvement in Farm Bureau that made me aware of how accessible our legislators truly are. I don't expect that my input

will always sway a vote, but the personal relationship does allow my viewpoint to be heard and considered.

As the rural community becomes a smaller part of the population, having our voices heard will become even more important. Another bonus of attending DATS is hearing from great speakers on topics that affect us. Consider getting involved!

Pictured above: Governor Laura Kelly addressing KFB members during Day at the Statehouse in February. Photo credit: KFB

AGRICULTURE NETWORKING NEAR & FAR

Ashton Schneider

What networking in the agriculture industry once looked like for me has gone to an even greater level since becoming a member of the Sedgwick County Farm Bureau Board of Directors. As I have shared our family farm story and advocated agriculture on social media for quite some time, I have also followed fellow farmers and ranchers all across the United States that do the same by simply connecting with them through the phone. I had no idea that growing my involvement in Farm Bureau would advance my networking in agriculture. Those relationships that I once only had through social media are now personal friendships. While attending the American Farm Bureau Federation Convention, I had the pleasure of meeting those that I only knew through their social media page—now shaking their hands, sharing hugs, and con-

versing in person. Natalie Kovarik from Nebraska and Tara Vander Dussen from New Mexico are just a couple of the people that I got to meet in person at the convention and expand my agriculture friendships. They are both in production agriculture, share their farm and ranch stories on social media, and are the founders of Elevate Ag, an online community and courses for those that want to share their ag story. How cool to network with those both near and far—all because we are a part of the agriculture industry and the Farm Bureau community.

Whether you are in production, innovation, or education—whatever it may be—I encourage you to share your agriculture story. If you don't know where to start, reach out to those that already share or even invest in courses like Elevate Ag. Social media is a great device for teaching, advocating, and networking near and far for the agriculture industry.

Follow my ag story on Instagram @ [ashton.heartlandfarmer!](https://www.instagram.com/ashton.heartlandfarmer/)

SOIL HEALTH & WATER

Joseph Neville

These days, there is a lot of talk about soil health, cover crops, and regenerative ag. I was first introduced to cover crops my freshman year of college by a professor and have been intrigued with and passionate about it ever since. The more I have learned about it, the more I realize how much it just makes sense.

I started growing covers in 2019 and have been pleased with it ever since. A few of the results I have experienced already are lower inputs, increased yield, reduced soil and wind erosion, weed suppression, and high quality feed for cattle. I am amazed when I go out into a growing cash crop in the middle of the summer and everything is rock hard and dry in our conventional tilled fields. I dig below the residue from the previous cover crop in the no-till/cover crop field, and it is instantly wet, black soil. In an area where we always want more rain, there has been a noticeable difference, and I have been able to make the best use of the rainfall we do get. No, it is not perfect and not everything you try will succeed, but overall, I have found cover crops to be extremely beneficial. If I can get the cash crop a few more days or weeks down the road and closer to the next rain, the better. I thoroughly enjoy checking on the covers, crops, and soil to learn

what I can each time.

I recently attended Soil Health U in Salina. This event has provided continuing education and growth learning from other producers. I attended a session titled "Water Use and Aquifer Recharge." This session stuck out to me due to the many conversations about water we have had locally within our county and also with the state legislators about water rights and the diminishing levels of the aquifer. This session featured a producer, Chris Grotegut, from the panhandle of Texas where irrigation is their lifeline. He talked about how they have monitored and witnessed their aquifer levels continually decreasing since the 1950s. In 2010, they started utilizing cover crops on their 10,000-11,000 acre row crop and ranch operation to manage their water. The last several years, they have seen rising levels of water in the water table where they monitor, which is unheard of in their area.

Growing covers and increasing our soil health to be more efficient with irrigation water may have a role to play in the future. Learning more about farming and the Ag industry is something I love and will constantly be pursuing!

AGRICULTURE IS UNIQUE

Zach Simon

Attending the American Farm Bureau Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico was an amazing experience. Puerto Rico is bright and loud with culture. From vibrant murals, loud upbeat music, and tropical views, it was amazing.

I enjoyed learning about the roots of Puerto Rican culture. With heavy influence from Spanish and African roots, it morphed into its own unique culture that seems to be ever evolving. The Governor of Puerto Rico said it best at the AFBF confer-

ence: "We are a confusing blend of cultures; don't try to understand us, just enjoy it!"

I also witnessed another culture while in Puerto Rico: the Farm Bureau culture. The annual meeting brought together agriculturists from around the United States and Puerto Rico. Even though the members come from different areas and grow a variety of different foods and fibers, we all share the same culture of "agriculture".

I believe the culture of agriculture is evolving, and in many ways, for

the better! Anyone that comes from a farm family knows that hard work is expected and is extremely rewarding. However, hard work and long hours can come at a cost. It

can cost us time with family, physical exhaustion, and disappointment. All of these add additional stress especially when challenges arise that we can't control or overcome by working harder or planning more such as drought and equipment failures.

Stress in agriculture is real and unique. Luckily, I think we are seeing a shift in ag culture that recognizes the distinctive challenges in our industry. Groups, including Farm Bureau, are finding ways to support those that need help with managing these stresses. I'm referring specifically to mental health in agriculture. Farming is vastly different than other industries, and techniques used to help others maintain stress levels in other industries don't always apply.

March is Mental Health Awareness month. Please take the time to find a resource or two particular to agriculture and mental health. Brush up on the signs of mental stress and arm yourself with the tools to help those around you that may be struggling or to help yourself manage stress.

<https://www.kfb.org/Article/Mental-Health-Resources>

<https://www.kansasagstress.org/>

THINKING ABOUT RUNNING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE? CHECK OUT KFB CAMPAIGN SCHOOL THIS APRIL 19-20
WWW.KFB.ORG/ARTICLE/CAMPAIGN-SCHOOL



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WE ARE AGRICULTURE *Meghan Mueseler*

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines agriculture as, “the science, art, or practice of cultivating the soil, producing crops, and raising livestock, and in varying degrees, the preparation and marketing of the resulting products.” Synonyms or similar words provided in the online dictionary include farming, horticulture, agribusiness, agronomy, aquaculture, hydroponics, and animal husbandry

In the past year, Sedgwick County Farm Bureau Agricultural Association has changed their charter to say if you have a ROLE in agriculture, be that tilling the soil, raising chickens, or even lending monies to the agricultural community, you have a place in the organization as a voting member.

On our recent board trip to Puerto Rico for the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention, our board wanted to showcase to others that those in agriculture may not look

like the farmer clothed in coveralls and carrying a pitchfork that many people have in their minds. Instead, you may have a

member who has both a dairy farm and also works as a dietician in the local school system. Yet another may spend her day advocating for agriculture via social media. Still another may find herself ensuring the workers in a meat processing facility have the best experience they can processing the food that helps to feed the world.

Our message, “We are Agriculture”, was shared as a simple slogan on a t-shirt on our travel day to San Juan. I enjoyed the camaraderie it brought to our team. I also welcomed the questions by other travelers....what do you do in agriculture? Where is Sedgwick County located? What is Farm Bureau?



Ashton Schneider, Meghan Mueseler, and Heidi Wells, SCFBAA board members, advocating for Kansas agriculture as they flew to the AFBF Annual Convention in January

When you see the words, WE ARE AGRICULTURE, what thoughts/emotions come to your mind?