

SCFB *news*

SEDGWICK COUNTY FARM BUREAU AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2021



Whether through connecting with someone from another continent, a Senator representing your best interests, meeting other members at a conference, or teaching future consumers, Farm Bureau helps foster meaningful relationships that strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans.



NOTES FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Jon Kerschen

The old saying, “it’s all about who you know” is an old saying because in a lot of circumstances, it’s true. One of the great benefits to being part of an organization like Farm Bureau is that it can create opportunities to make connections with the people you “need to know.” Whether it is a trade specialist, an end user, a politician, or another producer, making those connections often-times allows you to have a seat at the table when changes are made, and these same connections are what allows Farm Bureau to be the voice of agriculture.

Even with the challenges we are facing with COVID-19, the board has recently had several opportunities to make some meaningful connections. At our January board meeting, we first heard from our fourth district Kansas Farm Bureau board member Steve McCloud who also works as an agricultural appraiser, and he gave us a presentation on use value tax on agriculture land. We know that this issue is always hanging out there. It is very important that we stay on top of use value discussions as it could definitely negatively affect those owning farmland.

Also at our board meeting in January, we had the chance to visit with Attorney General Derek Schmidt. We were able to ask him several questions and had a very informative discussion with him. What a great asset it is for our organization to be able to have genuine conversations with our elected officials. It is a big advantage for you when you need help from someone if a relationship has already been built and they know who you are and what you are representing.

We were also afforded the chance to meet with Senator Marshall’s newly formed agriculture team. Several board members were able to talk one-on-one with the people who will be working in Washington, D.C. for the senator and will be integral in forming national Ag policy. This is especially true as we draw closer to the next Farm Bill. It was a great opportunity to sit and talk with Gregg Doud, former trade ambassador under President Trump. Gregg was responsible for negotiating the trade deals we currently have with other countries, and we all know how important that is for us in agriculture. Farm Bureau allows us to make these connections with people that truly do have the ability to change agriculture from the highest level of government down to the farmers producing our food fuel and fiber.

Kansas Farm Bureau was also able to put together a virtual meeting with the Small Business

Administration (SBA) regarding the second draw of the PPP program. It was good to hear straight from the SBA about the program and the details within it. Farm Bureau is able to make these opportunities happen for us, and it ultimately benefits our bottom line as members and producers.

At a more local level, our staff has been busy building relationships and making connections themselves. Anthony and Kaci have been trying to connect with all of our local insurance agents in an effort to build those relationships. When people sign up for an insurance policy, they know that Farm Bureau is an advocacy organization as well. Kaci is making progress in finding ways to promote agriculture in some of the local schools, which is a board focus. She even has had the chance to physically get in to some of the schools in person, which is definitely an accomplishment in the age of COVID-19. Finding teachers that will help us get agriculture into the classroom is one of those connections we must make to help educate kids.

Farm Bureau allows us to meet the people that will help us get our story out there to protect our way of life that we all enjoy so very much.



Using tools from Kansas Corn STEM and Kansas Farm Bureau, Kaci Foraker helped students at Renwick USD 267 become more informed consumers by teaching about genetics in agriculture and genetically modified organisms (GMO) as they just concluded learning about genes in class. If you’re a teacher or educator interested in incorporating agriculture into your plans, send us a DM or email sedgwickfb@kfb.org.

Represent AGRICULTURE & Celebrate ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Anthony Seiler

My grandpa used to say that he didn’t have 50 years of experience farming, he had one year of experience 50 times. That sentiment was certainly true for us at Sedgwick County Farm Bureau in 2020 as we worked through a year unlike any other in our organization’s history. Many of the traditional events and gatherings that form the structure of our calendar had to be canceled or changed to virtual. We hope that we’ve learned lessons and new skills from this experience, but we are also looking forward to being able to return to meeting with each other in person and gathering to represent agriculture and celebrate our accomplishments.

We also want to use this year as a chance to grow

our activity as an organization in our mission areas of advocacy, education, and service. If you are a teacher or have connections to teachers, we would love to visit with you about how we could help in the classroom. We have overhauled our agriculture education offerings and can help provide resources and presenters for standards-based lessons in person or virtually.

Lastly, if you do not already follow us on Facebook, I encourage you to visit our page. It is the best way to get information about our upcoming activities and events and find stories about the great work Farm Bureau members are doing in our community.



Left: Awards presented to Sedgwick County Farm Bureau during the virtual 2020 Kansas Farm Bureau Annual Meeting.

- New Horizon Award for Advocacy
- Division 1
- Excellence for Service
- Excellence for Advocacy
- Overall Outstanding Award
- Achievement Award: Advocacy, Education, Service

Right: Kansas Farm Bureau Fourth District Director, Steve McCloud, presented the Farm Family of the Year Award to Bill, Joy and Gavin Carp at the January Board meeting.



Above: Alice Templeton and Devin Duerksen, were 2020 SCFB Century Farm Honorees for their family farm in Valley Center that was started in 1909.

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.



Did You Know?

On any given day, one in eight Americans will eat pizza.



OUR VOICE ON THE HILL Michael Speer

During the past couple months, we have gotten to know our new presidential administration and his cabinet appointments and the new senators and members of congress in office. These changes have brought quite a bit of uncertainty and unrest in the ag community with the possibility of new policies and people appointed to the Ag committees.

I tweeted my concerns about Senator Cory Booker's appointment to the Senate Ag Committee and it was met with widespread concern, but there were a few good questions asked as well. Obviously, any time someone with Mr.

Booker's background is on the Senate Ag Committee, it raises many questions about his ambitions. Some people will say he is asking the tough questions nobody else is asking, and others will say some of his ideas about ending animal agriculture as we know it is scary. I think both viewpoints have merit. It will be interesting to see how it all unfolds ahead of the farm bill in 2023; there will undoubtedly be many challenges between now and then.

The one thing I know is I am glad we have the American Farm Bureau lobbying on our behalf in Washington D.C. during these uncertain times.



BE INVOLVED. BE INFORMED. BE HEARD.

Zach Simon

Our world is ever-changing. We go through many changes every year on the farm: weather struggles, new equipment, varying markets, or perhaps handing over the reins to the next generation. The agriculture industry is accustomed to adapting because of a constant string of changes, many of which we cannot control.

However, there are changes that we can influence. Policy changes happen all the time. With a new president, cabinet, legislators, and a farm bill on the horizon—changes are coming. We have an opportunity as agriculturists to voice our opinions to the elected officials that will be forming the new policies. We must voice our needs and concerns, as they will affect our business in the future.

So how do we accomplish that? Although ranting and arguing online through your pick of social media platforms may give you a quick sense of gratification, in most cases it is not directly effective. There is still a lot of power in the pen, or keyboard in today's world. Writing to your legislators is a great way to communicate your challenges. Attending local town hall events could be another option. One of the most effective ways, in my opinion, to communicate specific issues is through organizations such as Farm Bureau.

I was never asked to sing a solo in school choir, and for good reason. Though, when my fellow classmates and I all sang together, we created something wonderful... at least that is what our teacher said. Maybe she was just being nice. Anyway, the same concept applies to communicating agriculture's needs. There are times that "solos" are effective. However, the entire choir can be much louder, can harmonize, and be magnificent! Farm Bureau is the choir. They hear our grassroots issues, bring members together as agriculturists, and amplify our message.

I say this about Farm Bureau to remind us that it is important to be involved and informed. We all have opportunities as members to attend meetings and conferences, which give us a chance to be heard as well as educate ourselves. Kansas Farm Bureau provides information on policy and other important news relevant to our industry. Simply browsing Kansas Farm Bureau's website is a great way to stay plugged into the recent agriculture issues. It is important to equip yourself with current industry knowledge, but giving that knowledge and real-life experiences a voice should take even more precedence.

If we choose not to use the information and not to speak up, we will not be heard. As a young farmer trying to establish my business, I cannot afford to be silent. I can accept that policy or other outcomes may not angle in my favor, but I cannot accept that I didn't represent my lifestyle. Remember, if you educate yourself on the issues and use your resources, your voice will be heard.

STAY CONNECTED WITH KANSAS FARM BUREAU'S ADVOCACY NEWS AND ACTION ALERTS

When policy is being discussed in Topeka or Washington D.C., there may be a short opportunity for you as a constituent to have your say. Getting timely alerts from Kansas Farm Bureau can help you act quickly.

You can choose your preferred method of communication and get KFB news and action alerts your way—through email or text messaging on your phone.

Visit

<https://www.kfb.org/Advocacy/Action>
to sign up today!



BENEFITS OF CONFERENCING

Joseph Neville

Some meetings, conferences, and clinics have yet to resume in-person events. A couple of positives include less travel time on the road and being able to review those meetings and sessions again at a later time. With road conditions and obligations at the farm, it is a perfect opportunity to attend meetings on a remote level from the comfort of your home. Being able to review sessions after a conference is definitely a benefit; you can pause and rewind to catch something you've missed or settle a debate of what was really said. If you missed a session (or the whole day), you can still attend at a more convenient

time. Furthering education is critical to the growth of agriculture and our own minds. Now is a great time to take advantage and attend some of these conferences and learning sessions to stay current. However, while online workshops have a lot of benefits, I'm still ready for them to be back in person!

The 2021 Young Farmer's and Rancher's conference has been rescheduled for July 30-31! Stay tuned for more details and feel free to reach out with questions.



Save the date for the 2021 Young Farmers & Ranchers Leaders Conference on Friday, July 30 to Saturday, July 31, 2021!

Join young men and women from across the state at the 2021 Young Farmers & Ranchers Leaders Conference. The event will focus on connecting you with practical tools and resources to add value to your daily work, expanding your peer and professional network and providing encouragement and motivation to keep pushing forward in a tough time for agriculture. Regardless of the crops you grow, animals you raise or off-farm role you play, this conference has something for all young people connected to agriculture and will empower attendees to return home with the tools and knowledge to make positive changes for their farms, families and communities.

DEALING WITH STRESS ON THE FARM

Donna Wise

Recently I participated in the Women Managing the Farm Conference, which was held virtually on February 10-12. There were many great sessions over the three days of the conference. One thing that struck me was that nearly a third of the sessions dealt with some aspect of stress on the farm. ONE-THIRD! That points out the very real fact that farming is a stressful occupation in many ways. It always has been stressful, but more people are now beginning to realize how common that stress is and the need to take steps to help people cope with the stressors that are inherent in our agriculture profession.

One of the difficult aspects of stress is that the more we are impacted by stress, the less we are able to deal with it. When our mind and body are overwhelmed by the pressure we have been under for too long, we can't think as clearly to be able to find our way out of the situation we are in. Most of us can identify with those feelings that we experience from time to time, but when it becomes overwhelming, it seems as though it is going to last forever.

We have all seen the statistics showing that the rate of suicide among farmers is much higher than that in the general population. Part of that is due to farming being a largely solitary occupation. Farmers spend long days alone on the tractor in the field or in the shed repairing machinery. If we do have interactions with a neighbor or at the repair shop, those are often very brief. We can feel very alone and that there is no one who is able to help us.

I want to let you know of some resources

that I learned about at the conference. Farm Bureau has created a website called Farm State of Mind at www.fb.org/land/fsom. This website has many resources for family, friends, and neighbors to use to know how to help someone who is struggling with depression as well as resources for someone who is recognizing the need for help themselves.

Another site that offers many resources is www.kansasagstressorg, including those for family support, financial counseling, mental health counseling, and more. K-State Research and Extension, www.ksre.k-state.edu, also has many resources on dealing with stress either online or in their bookstore. If you feel you are at a crisis point, the National **Suicide Prevention hotline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, **Comcare of Sedgwick County** can be reached at **316-660-7600** and the **Kansas Suicide Prevention hotline is 785-841-2345**.

My father died of suicide in 1970, and I can guarantee you that your family will NOT be better off with you gone. Do not let that be part of your thought process. As I write this article, the temperature is negative 7 degrees, but I am confident that by the time you are reading this the weather will be much more temperate. If you ever find yourself in a dark place emotionally, know that it will get better and asking for help to get through it is no more a sign of weakness than asking for help changing a tire would be.

Take care of yourself and use the resources listed to help take care of your neighbor! We need you!

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

When loved ones, neighbors, or others you care about are experiencing mental health challenges, they may not even realize it. **Here's how you can identify someone who may be at risk.**

- Changes in routines or social activities
- Decline in the care of domestic animals
- Increase in illness or other chronic conditions
- Increase in farm accidents
- Decline in appearance of farmstead
- Decrease in interest of activities or events
- Signs of stress in children include struggles with school

Learn more about recognizing the signs of chronic depression or suicidal intent and what you can do to help at NY FarmNet.



<https://www.fb.org/land/fsom>

FARMING IN BRAZIL

Mick Rausch

Not long ago, I had the opportunity to attend a meeting where I had the chance to talk with someone who has spent time in Brazil. We began talking about the differences between farms in the United States and those in Brazil. Here is my takeaway from this conversation:

1. **Acreage:** In the U.S., a 1,500-acre operation is about the national average while in Brazil, a 1,500-acre farm is considered a hobby farm. In Brazil, the average farm is close to 30,000 to 40,000 acres.
2. **Seasons:** The growing season allows most of Brazil to grow two crops in one year. Double cropping is considered a norm. First corn is planted, and then the farmers follow up with planting beans.
3. **Transportation:** I asked about roads; he just laughed and said they do not exist. Image getting from Kansas to North Dakota by way of Denver. Brazil has four major roads that run north-south. The road conditions are absolutely awful with potholes and traffic. Often semi and farm vehicle accidents happen that result in tragic outcomes.
4. **Money:** Brazil has its own currency, but all agriculture trading is done based on bags of beans. You buy all your inputs in prepaid bags of beans. You transfer the beans to cash out at banks in Miami, Florida. Imagine the headaches and hassles!

The largest farms have their own barges to get crops to the terminals. There is no on-farm storage, so everything goes to the terminal. Day-long waits to get a truck back to the combine is a normal wait time. There are no traffic safety laws, either. If it will haul grain, it is on the road. Based on that conversation, I am very thankful that I am here in the good old USA!



HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS?

Byron Wells

How does one even start to measure success? It can be measured in many ways, and there are just as many paths that can be taken to achieve it. Hard work and determination are definitely the cornerstones of success, but luck can also play a factor. Unfortunately, this could be good or bad luck.

I think about this topic from time to time, maybe because I want to evaluate if my current path is pointing me in the right direction. When my travels take me past a farm, I often wonder about how they achieved success, or adversely, were unable to. Could it have been because of the day-to-day decisions, the long-term decisions, or that little variable, luck! Soil types can change across the county road determining if certain crops are profitable or not. Weather can be your best friend or your worst enemy. A lender may make a loan based on the character of the borrower more so than the health of their balance sheet. All of these can play a role in the level of success that can be reached. Even with all of these variables there is something to be said about being prepared. When you are prepared, good times can be really good and the bad times maybe don't hurt as much.

As I said, I think about this topic from time to time, but prob-

ably more so these days. Between trade wars, a pandemic, and political agendas, there have been many road blocks on any path to success. There are so many farms and businesses that are struggling during these trying times, their idea of success may be just holding on until brighter days.

In closing, I suppose that is my point; success may not always be gaining. It might just be maintaining and waiting for better days. However you measure success, do not be afraid to use all the resources you can and lean on those you can trust to help and support you. Hope everyone has a great 2021!

**ENJOY YOUR SWEAT
BECAUSE HARD
WORK DOESN'T
GUARANTEE
SUCCESS, BUT
WITHOUT IT, YOU
DON'T HAVE A
CHANCE.**

ALEX RODRIGUEZ



SEDGWICK COUNTY FARM BUREAU®
 AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION
 The Voice of Agriculture®

889 N Maize Road
 Suite 100
 Wichita, KS 67212
 316-773-9851
 SedgwickFB@kfb.org

ADVOCATING FOR AGRICULTURE

Meghan Mueseler

While in college at K-State as part of my job with Barn Tours, I was giving a group of second graders a tour of the livestock barns at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, and I remember a bright-eyed little girl asking me how a chicken had eggs. “Does the chicken go around and find the eggs in the yard?” she asked. Or another commonly asked question, “Are bulls and steers related?”

As the number of farmers producing food to feed the population in the U.S. and the world declines, so does the number of consumers who may have contact with a farmer and the likelihood they truly understand where or how their food is produced. As an advocate for agriculture, I ask myself daily, “How do I ensure the voice of rural America will be heard in future years?”

For me, the first step in addressing the challenge is to step outside of my comfort zone and educate the very people I sometimes fear the most, the “city person.” Urban and suburban people have many stereotypes of who a farmer is and what a farmer does. On the flip side, we in agriculture sometimes form our own stereotypes and forget to explain in terms that the average consumer can relate to the many practices that are crucial to producing a safe and affordable food supply.

I believe if we communicate the everyday

happenings of the agricultural world to the “city person” in easily understood terms, at the end of the day, we can all begin to understand that both worlds really aren’t that different. Let’s humanize the farmer in that individual’s mind. Are we both trying to provide a living for our families? Do we both want an abundant, safe, affordable food supply?

For those living in the city, I think this education can take many shapes including being involved in an urban 4-H club, volunteering at a local soup kitchen, or simply talking to church members about what is happening to help preserve a lifestyle that helps feed them. I admit I have talked to that ‘glossy-eyed’ consumer at the meat counter a few times!

Again, we must step outside of the tractor and communicate our message in order for the voice of agriculture to remain strong!

