

SCFB

news

SEDGWICK COUNTY FARM BUREAU AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

February 2019



Rich Felts, Kansas Farm Bureau President, carries the state flag across the stage at the opening session of the American Farm Bureau Federation National Convention in New Orleans. The national convention is an opportunity to see how the grassroots efforts of Farm Bureau members not only have an impact at the county and state levels, but at the national level as well.

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

My name is Anthony Seiler, and for the past two months, I have been serving as the Executive Director of the Sedgwick County Farm Bureau Agricultural Association. When our long-time office administrator, Gayle Ross, announced that she would be retiring, the board wanted to use the transition to innovate. After much thought and deliberation, they created the first County Executive Director position in the state. They hoped this position would enhance the organization's relationships and visibility in the community.

I am very excited by this opportunity. When I moved back home to Sedgwick County last fall, it was to attend graduate school and help on my family's dairy and crop farm west of Valley Center. My goal through graduate school was to find a position where I could

continue to learn about and serve the community I had grown up in. It turned out I didn't have to wait long. Before moving home, I served for three and a half years on the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee for Chairman

Pat Roberts. Having been part of the team that wrote the most recent Farm Bill was an unbelievable privilege, and I am excited to apply the knowledge and experience I gained to advocate for Sedgwick County farm families. In addition to advocacy, we have a unique opportunity in Sedgwick County with both large urban and farming populations to connect consumers and producers. The board and I will be looking for new ways for us to carry the story of agriculture to consumers.

If you see me at an event, please come up and introduce yourself. Also, if you have ever thought about being more active in Sedgwick County Farm Bureau, there has never been a better time. The strength of our organization is our member volunteers, and it is only by their passion that we can continue to claim to be the "Voice of Agriculture."



NOTES FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Jon Kerschen

AS WE FINISHED OUT 2018 AND STARTED 2019, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HAS BEEN ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE PILLARS OF FARM BUREAU OF ADVOCACY, EDUCATION, AND SERVICE. THESE PILLARS FORM THE FOUNDATION OF OUR GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION.

ADVOCACY

As the new year starts, so does a new legislative session. The board of directors is committed to building relationships with our legislators and other elected officials. After the November elections, several new faces are representing Sedgwick County. It is important that we get to know these officials to ensure that our policies are sound and beneficial to the agricultural community. On January 3, we had a legislative luncheon and invited the entire Sedgwick County delegation and our members. We had a great turnout of officials and members. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet the legislators and county commissioners face-to-face and build positive relationships. Lots of good discussions were held. Another opportunity to meet with our legislators will be in early February. Kansas Farm Bureau will host A Day at the Statehouse where we go to Topeka and talk with our legislators. If you have any issues you would like for us to take to Topeka, please call the office or a board member, and we will pass them on.

EDUCATION

The board has had several education opportunities. In December, we attended the 100th Kansas Farm Bureau annual meeting. At the meeting, we reviewed policy, which is the framework of our organization. Also, there were several workshop opportunities covering a wide variety of topics. One really exciting thing was that both Senator Jerry Moran and Senator Pat Roberts attended and spoke as well as U.S. Representatives Roger Marshall and Ron Estes. This shows our organization's viability with elected officials. When we need pro-farm legislation, we have a delegation that respects

our policies.

In January, we attended the 100th American Farm Bureau Federation National Convention. Again, there were a multitude of workshops to attend. It is a great opportunity to network with other Farm Bureau members from all around the country. Also, we were able to hear from Zippy Duvall, American Farm Bureau Federation president, Sonny Perdue, United States Secretary of Agriculture, and finally President Donald Trump. What a rewarding and educational experience it is to hear such high ranking officials address our organization. It also is a testimony to the grassroots efforts of Farm Bureau. We truly are the voice of agriculture.

SERVICE

In December, there was a public comment hearing held in regard to the proposed changes to the ASR project, which is the city of Wichita aquifer recharge project. Kansas Farm Bureau as well as Sedgwick County Farm Bureau both voiced on the record in opposition to the proposed changes. Sedgwick County Farm Bureau also will submit a formal letter stating why we are not in favor of the proposed changes. If you would like to be better informed about these changes, please contact us, and we can get the information to you. Also in December, the board approved every board member to make a donation to a charitable organization in their community. It is important that we are able to help others in our community.

As you can see we are representing Sedgwick County Farm Bureau members in various ways and are focusing on our pillars of advocacy, education, and service.

FEEDING THE WORLD

innovative farming giving hope for the hungry world

Kent Ott

Wow! Another new year is upon us! It is that time when we close the past year and make plans and preparations for a new year. Howard Buffet's book, *Forty Chances: Finding Hope in a Hungry World*, starts with the premise that we as farmers have about 40 years or 40 chances at a crop. Howard's chosen career as a farmer has given him the vision to help solve world hunger, and it is now his life's mission. Howard's father, Warren Buffet, gave him seed funds of a billion dollars for that pursuit.

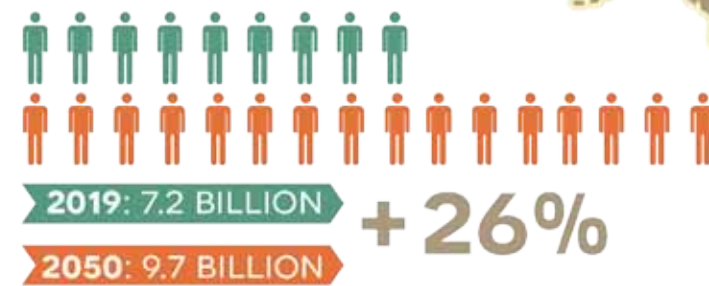
As food producers, we should have the same vision. According to the American Farm Bureau website, a U.S. farmer

feeds 165 people annually in the U.S. and abroad. Our global population is expected to increase from 7.2 billion to 9.7 billion people by 2050. What does that fact mean? In just a little over 30 years, the world's farmers will need to grow 70% more food than today. How are we doing? In 1935, the average yield of corn was 24.2 bushels to the acre. In 2005, it was 147.9 bushels to the acre. The average corn yield in 2017 was 176.6 bushels to the acre. In a little over 80 years, the U.S. farmer with innovative hard work and the help of agricultural partners has increased corn yields almost 6-1/2 times! Coupling our knowledge from the

past with new farming techniques and innovations, we should seek to make appropriate changes in this new year to help meet that goal of feeding the hungry.

Here at Sedgwick County Farm Bureau, we have also been pursuing that vision of hope for the hungry world in our own neighborhood. We have welcomed new staff members who will help move us toward fulfilling that goal. Anthony Seiler is our new executive director, and Rhonda McCurry is our new district administrator. The Sedgwick County Farm Bureau board and the current and new staff members will set our sights on feeding our ever-enlarging world population for this new year!

WORLD POPULATION



AVERAGE CORN YIELD BUSHELS/ACRE



INVITATION

SEDGWICK COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



ANNUAL MEETING

When: Wednesday, February 27, 2019

Doors open at 6:00 pm, program begins at 6:30 pm

Sedgwick County Extension Education Center
7001 West 21st Street North, Wichita KS

Please RSVP by February 17, 2019

All are invited. This event is free, but RSVP is required.

Speaker: Katie Schmidt, Grounds Manager/Horticulturist at Dyck Arboretum

"Bros, Bugs, and Beautiful Gardens: Designing Ecological Landscapes"

Please RSVP to Catherine by phone: (316)721-6127 ext 7970 or email: sedgwickcountycd@gmail.com

Dinner by Fence Post Catering | Agenda: Short meeting with elections of new supervisor(s); recognition of new FFA chapters

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?

A bale of cotton can be made into 680,000 cotton balls, 215 pair of jeans, 750 shirts, or 4,300 pairs of socks.

Who's Right? Who's Wrong? Byron Wells

Heidi and I had the great opportunity to attend the American Farm Bureau Federation National Convention in New Orleans. Anyone reading this and thinking, "Man, I wish I could be a part of that," all you need do is run for a position on the Sedgwick County Farm Bureau board of directors, and you, too, could have that chance!

One of the perks of the convention is the tours they offer. The tour that Heidi and I went on included a couple of sugar cane plantations on the Mississippi River near New Orleans. The history of our nation has always been of great interest to me, so getting to tour these plantations and hear about their history was very enjoyable! The tour guides gave us a glimpse into life on the plantation through the eyes of the owners and their slaves. Slavery was once widely accepted in our young developing country. It was one of, if not the issue, that brought about the Civil War between the states. Southern farmers viewed slave labor as the only way they could profitably produce their crops. Slavery will forever be a scar on the face of this great nation, but scars always serve as gentle reminders of the pain caused by such actions.

Regardless of what side of an issue you choose to be on, there is someone on the opposite side who is just as passionate about their view. So, who's right and who's wrong? It's obvious to us all today that slavery was wrong,

and the abolishment of slavery was the right move forward for America and all of her people. But after visiting the plantation, we saw a bit of perspective from the opposite side. Many slave owners who believed they were providing a good life for their slave workers and recognized their talents and potential were passionate about the benefits of slavery. In the context of that time, they felt they were right.

Who's right and who's wrong? Whether concerning topics like politics or religion--and in the agriculture world, issues like GMOs and animal agriculture--divisive issues where sides are claimed is no different today than 150 years ago. The plantation was a reminder that while history and context may prove otherwise, in the moment, both sides felt convicted in their beliefs. Knowing what side of an issue to be on requires us to be informed and stand up for our values; it also requires us to look at the issue from the other side's perspective and be willing to find some middle ground to build compromise. Maybe it's not always a matter of who's right and who's wrong, but rather a matter of taking what is right from both sides to form a strong compromise. Compromise may have made early America a better place, and lessons learned from those scars of the 1800s should be the driving force for modern day America showing us that sometimes the painful scars of being wrong can help move us closer to getting things right.



From right to left: Famous Oak Alley Plantation; slave housing at the Laura Plantation; slave cabin at Oak Alley Plantation

GROCERY STORE GATHERINGS Todd Kissinger

Are smart phones and techy conveniences hurting small town stores and a sense of community? I bring this up because for a while now my wife will be lying in bed on her iPhone ordering groceries. Because I'm curious, I asked her what she was doing, and she said ordering groceries. I thought, wow that's neat, and she began to tell me about how she clicks the products she wants, store employees shop for her, and she picks a pickup time to get the groceries. On a few occasions, she tells me when I need to be at the store for the pick up, and it's very convenient. I open up the hatch, the attendant puts the groceries in the car, I say thanks, and I'm on my way. What would typically take over an hour with two kids now takes 15 minutes. I have shopped with my two daughters before, and it's a complete disaster; we could have a reality TV show.

I went to our local grocery store this last Saturday to get a few things before the Chiefs game. I got my basket and was strolling through the store (without kids), and I ran into my aunt and little cousin and got to catch up with them. As I continued to wander through the store, I ran into a friend from high school. We exchanged kid stories, and then a few volunteer firefighters joined into the conversation. After I checked out, I went to Stroot Lockers and got an assortment of meats; while I was paying, I told a few jokes, cussed and discussed politics, and was on my way.

The techy conveniences are a great tool for busy families, but I got a lot of enjoyment from shopping at the local businesses. If you can make the time to stop and smell the roses, you will not be disappointed.

A RANCHER'S VIEW OF BORDER SECURITY Joseph Neville

I recently returned from a trip to New Orleans for the annual American Farm Bureau Federation National Convention. It brought many new experiences and learning opportunities, one of which was a visit from the President of the United States. President Trump spoke on many of the current issues, most notably border security, the wall, and Farm Bureau's presence in Washington.

The President explained how they've made improvements to the current wall with 1,300 miles left to build. The wall has proved beneficial for some and been a pain for others. Good for those with the wall and bad for those in areas with no wall. An Arizona rancher, Jim Chilton, was invited on stage and briefly shared his ranch's experience of living where there is no wall. He talked of continuous damage to fences, animals, and property from illegal immigrants, cartels, and human traffickers. His wife constantly worries if he'll return from checking cattle and other daily activities on the ranch. The problem is real at the border.

President Trump then talked of recent political agriculture activity and what lies ahead. Our Farm Bureau voice and influence in the nation's agricultural decisions has assisted the President as a knowledgeable source to lean on.

One final note: the annual Young Farmers and Ranchers Conference was recently held at the end of January, and Sedgwick County had great representation. Look for more to come on that later.



Photo Credit: AFBF

FARM BUREAU PROVIDES AVENUES TO REACH OUT & OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN Mick Rausch

As this new year begins, I would like to share what has been happening these past few months and into the new year.

As most of us know, last fall was extremely challenging. First, all the moisture we received made it extremely difficult to get wheat planted. It also made fall harvest of corn, milo, and soybeans one to be remembered. I really don't know what color the grain cart tractor was, and it really tore up the fields. What ruts we have had to deal with! It has remained wet, so I didn't get much fall work done either. Now everything will be pushed into spring. I hate to track the fields up and be so hard on equipment, but we really didn't have a choice. Second, it all but put a stop to running cows on stalks, and we were so late in finishing harvest that I burned through my hay pile. Luckily, we had a good prairie hay summer, so I had enough to get me through. Fall is also filled with farm meetings, board meetings, and year-end tax planning. So there you go--our busy fall.

Recently the SCFB board hosted

the Sedgwick County Legislative delegation to lunch before the sessions started. We have several new legislators along with some who have new committee assignments. With over 30 legislators in Sedgwick County, it is very important that we engage and tell our side of the story with our urban legislators. In fact, we had several there who don't farm an acre in their districts. We had some good discussions concerning topics like property taxes, school finances, and health care. We were pleased with the turnout

with over half of Sedgwick County's representatives finding it important enough to attend.

Finally, several board members just got back from AFBF convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. I feel it is important to

keep educating myself on agriculture, and the annual convention provides a wonderful opportunity to do that. I attended several workshops on different topics, such as, rebuilding infrastructure, the new tax changes, and the farm bill. The highlight was President Trump addressing the convention. Getting through

security was interesting, but I made it through. What an experience! We also took a tour later of a brewery and a gator ranch. It really makes you think about all the challenges we face here in Sedgwick County. Some farmers face a whole new

set of problems along with what we face.

In closing, I would like to thank our members for allowing me the opportunity to advocate for you. Farm Bureau really is the voice of agriculture.



AFBF I just returned from my first American Farm Bureau Federation Convention where we celebrated the AFBF's 100th anniversary. At the convention, we learned a lot of useful information, gained much insight, and had a great time. I had the opportunity to talk with farmers and ranchers from around the country about issues they are facing in today's farming environment. During the Monday session, President Trump stopped by and gave us an hour long talk on the future of agriculture and the role that Farm Bureau played in the formation of the Farm Bill. We believe the Farm Bill keeps the farmers' and ranchers' best interest in mind and is a step in the right direction. I would like to personally thank all of the Farm Bureau members for providing us with the opportunity to travel to New Orleans and engage with fellow farmers and ranchers. It was a very memorable experience.

Jay Pauly

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Donna Wise

I'm sure you will be reading in some of the other board members' articles about the American Farm Bureau Federation meeting most of us were able to attend in New Orleans in mid-January. Some may have mentioned the Kansas Farm Bureau annual meeting we went to in Manhattan in early December. My husband and I were able to attend both of those events, and they were very informative about a number of issues directly affecting farmers today. Rather than focus on specifically what we learned at the workshops and speakers that were a major part of those events, I would like to talk about *why* we go and participate in events like these and why you might want to get involved, too.

We farmers know that farming is a very difficult occupation. It is physically demanding, requires many hours of hard work, and the reasons we continue as agricultural producers are often more about the lifestyle than financial rewards. We know that we have enormous amounts of money invested in our operations that, quite frankly, might make more money for us if we sold the farm and invested the proceeds.

We all know that, but many of our neighbors in the city have no knowledge of what actually happens on the farm. They know that what they see on the farm when they drive past on the highway is far different from what they saw when they went to visit grandpa or great-grandpa on the farm. When they see the large grain storage bins and enormous tractors that are part of farming for many of us, they feel a disconnect. If our farms look that much different from what they knew as children, they assume that the values of farmers have changed as well. They see the machines that

enable farmers to be more productive today as a symbol of "corporate farms" and farmers that don't care about consumers. There are many anti-agriculture groups in the world today that are quite willing to enhance the fears of consumers as well.

Farm Bureau exists to tell the story of agriculture to people who have no access to our story any other way. That is why your board members spend their time trying to prepare themselves to tell our story and in the most effective way possible. We **MUST** educate consumers about who we are and what we do. We must be knowledgeable enough about GMOs to help our neighbors who don't know what to think. We have to know the difference between conventionally produced foods compared to organically grown products. We have to be able to teach consumers about gluten, its role in the foods we eat, and why only a very small percentage of the population shouldn't eat it.

We need your help. We appreciate that you are a member of our association and that the dues you pay help provide the resources we need to tell the story. But *your* voice is also needed as well. We have many events where we need volunteers willing to plan and coordinate, teach on a specific topic, or simply share their story. If you could arrange your schedule to be able to help with this kind of event occasionally, please contact us. If you would like to help, but don't feel that you know enough, please contact us; we can provide support and training until you feel confident.

None of us has all the answers, but when we work together with a unified voice for agriculture, we can make a difference!

Food security is a topic that frequently pops up at Ag conferences and seminars I have attended. Probably the only time I have experienced food insecurity has been when a blizzard was predicted and the local grocery store was cleaned out of bread, milk, hot dogs, and bologna. Many people are not as fortunate.

This past January when I attended our AFBF convention in New Orleans, I could look out my hotel window above the Mississippi River and watch dozens of grain freighters and countless barges moving up and down the river. Over 60% of U.S. grain is exported from the New Orleans port.

However, in stark contrast, I had the opportunity to see real food deprivation in Niamey, Niger. I visited there for the second time this past December, this time with my wife. We went to visit our son, Kirk, and his family. For the geographically challenged, Niger is a landlocked country in Northwest Africa. It is almost twice the size of Texas with over 60% of it covered by the Sahara Desert. The remainder is called the Sahel Region (a fragile 600-mile-wide arid region with sparse shrubs and short grass that borders the southern expanse of the Sahara Desert).

The population is over 21 million; in 2014 it was only 18 million. The population in Niamey, the nation's capital, is now over 1 million (up from 800,000 in four years) in an area smaller than the size of Wichita. On the U.N.'s Human Development Index, Niger ranks 185th out of 186 countries. Four of the next bottom five are its neighboring countries. Poverty is extreme and everywhere. Polygamy is lawful for men to have up to four wives, and Niger also has the highest birth rate in the world calculating over eight births per woman. Over 25% of children die before they reach the age of four, and if one chooses to have a birth at a maternity or general hospital, there is a standing DNR (do not

resuscitate) order for newborns.

Regarding what is available for consumption in Niamey, almost all fresh, dried, packaged, and prepared foods are sold by stationary or mobile vendors on the street. Keep in mind that the daily average high temperature in Niamey is 100-107 degrees for nine months of the year with November to January only being 92-95 degrees.

It does rain May through September with Nia-

a day, they would still be lacking in a number of essential vitamins, minerals, amino acids, etc. It is malnutrition on a full stomach. All of this is grown without mechanical inputs. It is manual, subsistence agriculture.

"Food security" can be defined as a state of having reliable access to sufficient quantity of nutritious and affordable food.

On my most recent trip, I had the opportunity to tour the Ag College and Farm at the

99% Muslim. I purposely did not tell them that over 1/3 of it goes to making ethanol.

When asked if anyone grew millet, I told them yes, but I knew only one who did. Try to imagine their disbelief when they were told that millet was primarily grown and fed to pet birds and for bird feeders in people's yards.

In my two visits to Niger, I have been overwhelmed at seeing such a struggling part of the world, which has as its



A FIRSTHAND ENCOUNTER WITH FOOD SECURITY & ITS IMPORTANCE

Max Tjaden

Yours truly checking out a recently harvested field of millet with Malyki at the Abdou Moumoumi University Agronomy Farm, Niamey, Niger.

me usually getting 20 inches, which is the highest recorded in the country. But with sandy soils, high evaporation, and six to seven rainless months, one's choices for food production are very limited.

Consequently, due to the harsh growing conditions, millet (pearl) and sorgho (grain sorghum) are the two primary grains grown for human consumption; millet, is the number one grown and consumed grain in the country. It would take 10-12 cooked cups of millet to supply the needed calories for an adult. If one could eat that much

Abdou Moumoumi University with a student friend of my son named Malyki. I was able to see the plant science lab, the animal and agronomy farms, and to meet and visit with some of the faculty and department heads. In our conversations (in French through an interpreter), they wanted to know what I grew. When I told them I also grow grain sorghum, they could hardly imagine that it was fed to cattle (they said the cattle should eat grass) and why would anyone feed it to a pig, let alone OWN a pig since Niger is

main concern whether there will be enough consumable food. It should give farmers here an appreciation for how important growing food is and how vital it is to our national security.

Once when I was at a farm event in Whitewater, Kansas with my friend, Tom Dorsch, who also lives in Niger, he made the memorable statement about the eating conditions there: "When you are always hungry, you'll eat a lot of things."

Be grateful.

SHARE YOUR TALENTS! VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

Sedgwick County Farm Bureau invites you to join us in representing agriculture. Our activities in *advocacy*, *education*, and *service* are only possible because of the passion and talent of our members. A few of our committees and activities include:

Women's Committee

Young Farmers and Ranchers

Policy Committee

Agriculture Education

Media Training

Marketing Committee

Farm Safety

If you would like to help, please contact the office at: 316-773-9851 or email us at SedgwickFB@KFB.ORG Tell us what you are interested in.



Sedgwick County Farm Bureau®
Agricultural Association



Helping Feed the World™

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OPPORTUNITIES WITH SCFB *Joy Carp*

Winter is always a flurry of activity for Farm Bureau, and this year has proven to be no exception. December was a chance to see what is going on at the state level at the KFB annual meeting. It was my first time as a voting delegate, and it was interesting to see all the details involved in that. In January, we held a luncheon to get to know and build relationships with our local and state representatives. At any level, there is too much for one person to know, so it is good to be able to share our knowledge with our elected officials and let them see a face behind our concerns. Also in January was the AFBF National Convention. It was my first visit to New Orleans, and while it was an interesting place to visit, I am glad to live where I do. In addition to all the great workshops, general sessions, and the trade show, I enjoyed seeing the local culture and architecture. There's not much Cajun food in Wichita, so that was a real treat, too. All these events serve as a reminder that we are part of a bigger organization working on our behalf in ways we are not always aware of. I really appreciate the opportunity to participate in all these events and would like to thank our members for making it possible.

This year I am chair of the scholarship committee. I would encourage everyone who has kids who are seniors this year and heading to college next fall to visit the Sedgwick County Farm Bureau website and click on the "Benefits & Services" tab. Now is the time to be filling out the scholarship application. In addition, we have a program for current juniors in high school to apply to serve as an ambassador with our county Farm Bureau during their senior year; this program also comes with a scholarship. So if you are a junior and are interested in learning more about Farm Bureau and seeing advocacy in action, be sure to look for the application on the website. We would love to have you join us next year! While there is no question that considering a major in agriculture gives you a leg up, don't hesitate to apply even if you are considering a different major. As you might have seen in our most recent commercials, we have given scholarships to all kinds of majors. And if you haven't seen our latest commercials, be sure and visit our website and click on the "About" tab, and then "Videos." Maybe you'll see someone you know!



SCFB's website contains information, videos, and resources about SCFB including the scholarship applications for high school seniors and the ambassador applications for high school juniors.

www.SedgwickCountyFarmBureau.org