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*Sedgwick County Farm Bureau
Agricultural Association*



"Farm Bureau News"

President's Report: Max Tjaden

One winter morning in early 2014, I made my way to the Tom Bergkamp farm west of Haysville, along with our then county president Kent Winter, to hear from our 4th District congressman, Mike Pompeo. We met in the heated (fortunately) farm shop, enjoying hot coffee and fabulous cinnamon rolls. There were several in attendance from other farm organizations as well to hear the Congressman's announcement. He wanted to let us know he was going to introduce legislation on Kansas agriculture's behalf concerning the "Hot Topic" of GMO's, (Genetically Modified Organisms). Understanding that genetic biotech engineering has become an essential tool for Kansas Agriculture over the last 20 years or so, he saw the need to address the assault from very vocal elements in our society that would like to see the elimination of GMO products through the avenue of forced labeling of any and all food items that would contain them.

Food industry sources estimate that 75-80% of all purchased food products contain GMO ingredients mainly from corn and soybeans. The FDA is adamant that GMO's pose no risk to one's health and that they are safe. A lot of political science has been trying to overshadow sound science on the issue.

Through the "sausage making" process in congress, Congressman Pompeo was able to introduce the *Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act* in the U.S. House in 2015. A number of states were beginning to put into place their own state labeling laws concerning the use of ingredients derived through bioengineering with Vermont actually implementing its own regulations in July of this year. The prospect of 50 states having their own separate food labeling regulations was mayhem on the horizon for the food production and processing industries all around. The bill congressman Pompeo submitted would make the federal Government the arbiter over the states on the matter thus superseding any states implementing their own set of rules.

The bill passed the house in 2015 and the Senate finally took it up this summer with Senator Roberts' help, and their "sausage making" began. After debate and compromise, the outcome was the law mandating disclosure of biotech ingredients other than "on package," meaning there is no sticker proclaiming GMO's but there is required information as to where one can scan, call, or inquire as to the ingredients. The final version know as SB 764 passed the Senate 63-30 on July 7, passed the House 306-117 on July 14, and was signed into law July 24 by the President. A bi-partisan achievement that is rather remarkable these days. The Department of Agriculture will oversee the implementation and oversight of the new legislation.

Farm Bureau, as well as over 1,000 other Ag industry and farm organizations, was essential in working with and supporting our legislators in taking up this issue and arriving at a definitive outcome.

Joe Youngers:

This past August, many of you attended our annual meeting at the extension office. For those of you who were not able to attend, I thought it was a great meeting. The board had the opportunity to give awards to deserving individuals and their families. The annual meeting marks a time where certain board members are termed out or move on due to circumstances in their lives. This year, those board members were Kevin Kohls and Peggy Hill. I would like to thank them for their years of service and all they did for agriculture and Farm Bureau. I look forward to working with the new board members this upcoming year. I appreciate the fresh perspective new members bring to the board. Our new and veteran board members are what keep Sedgwick County Farm Bureau a strong organization

Kent Ott:

“To sit at home and read one’s paper, and scoff at the misdeeds of men who do things is easy, but it is markedly ineffective. It is what evil men count upon the good men’s doing.” Teddy Roosevelt

As I observe this fall’s election it would be easy to do as TR’s quote, especially when our choice for president is between the creep and the crooked. But we must not let them make us be passive bystanders because there are issues of great importance being determined for our nation’s future. Elections have consequences, remember. There are many offices also being decided beyond the president. We are selecting our US Senator and Congressman, our Kansas Senators and representatives, county commissioner and several state and local judges. Whoever wins these positions will make decisions that will impact your farm and family.

Your county Farm Bureau is not sitting idly by but has been actively working to select and support the candidates that have shown support for our interest. This process is done through the political arm of Farm Bureau, Vote FBF (Farm Bureau Friends.) By becoming a member of Vote FBF with as little as a \$5 donation you become a part of the process. The decisions of which candidate to support is started at the county level, in Sedgwick County is being led by local farmer Mick Rausch. Mick, along with your local board, research and select which candidate more closely supports issues of importance to our industry. The decision of which candidate to support is not always easy. None of us agree completely with every candidate’s views. If we want that, then of course we should run for office ourselves, but short of that we look for the candidate whose positions more closely align with ours.

So, I would encourage you to get involved. Contribute to Vote FBF or to a candidate directly. Work on behalf of a candidate or position you support and finally vote.

See you at the polls.

Todd Kissinger:

I finally got some tractor time in this week after several days of rainy weather and I started to think about what a farmer really does and how we are constantly defending the chemicals we use or the shots we give. Has the general population lost touch with what we really do? Have American farmers become just a producer of a raw material and that’s it? Is that all we do? We forget that the American farmer produces 46% of the world’s soybeans, 41% of the corn, and 13% of the wheat.

After reading this you might be thinking I just had a bad day and I’m venting in this newsletter. However, I was recently around the Derby area preparing the combine for harvest. The wind was blowing hard that day and as a gentlemen stranger approached me, I figured the worst was coming because I have had people ask me not to harvest because of the dust. But this man was different. We had a conversation about the combine and as he walked away he thanked me for being a farmer...I’ve never in my life had anybody thank me for being a farmer.

The point is, there are people who actually care about what we do. People care that we produce a good that allows them to have an affordable, nutritional diet. What that gentleman said to me made me feel better than a limit up day across markets. So thank YOU for your role in agriculture and have a safe harvest.

Brian Wetta:

It is that time of year again. Fall harvest is underway and wheat sowing is taking place. Farm life can consume most of every hour of the day it seems. I am writing to encourage everyone to set some time aside to study the candidates before the election on November 8th.

We all have choices to make. Some choose candidates by party affiliation. Some choose for religious reasons. Or perhaps choices are made on a variety of issues such as the economy, environment, gun control, social security, or immigration. These are all issues we must consider when choosing a candidate for election, but I also hope each of you considers the candidates' views and voting records when it comes to agriculture as well.

Kansas Farm Bureau has released their endorsements for this year's election. While their selections may not match exactly with yours, it gives the voter a list of candidates that KFB feels will represent agriculture the best in years to come. Please take time to check out the web link below for a list of candidates endorsed by Kansas Farm Bureau.

<https://www.kfb.org/Article/Kansas-Farm-Bureaus-VOTE-FBF-Announces-General-Election-Endorsements>

This web link is sponsored by Kansas Farm Bureau therefore only has endorsements for Kansas candidates. As far as the presidential election is concerned, I encourage you to check out the websites for both presidential candidates. Vote for the one who aligns best with your political values.

Good luck with your fall harvest. Don't forget to vote November 8th and let your agricultural voices be heard!

Donna Wise:

My name is Donna Wise. I grew up on a farm near Cheney where I still maintain the family farm and I have always lived in South Central Kansas – primarily Sedgwick County. I have been married for 45 years to my husband, Phil, who served on the Farm Bureau Board twenty-some years ago. We have two grown sons. Our eldest, Douglas, lives in Baltimore, MD and our youngest, Matthew, lives next door to us on the farm that has been in Phil's family since the late 1800's. Matthew is now the family farmer – with a little help from dad. In 2002 I received a call to ministry and attended seminary in Kansas City. I am an ordained United Methodist pastor and served several rural churches. I retired from ministry in 2013. Phil and I love to travel and have been to Turkey, Costa Rica, Mexico, Australia, and New Zealand. Additionally, I have been to Guatemala and all 50 states.

We have been Farm Bureau members since before we got married and appreciate how Farm Bureau works to advocate for the interests of agriculture. Since I am no longer concerned with the daily operations of the farm, I now have the time to get involved in that advocacy. I see my role on the Farm Bureau Board as primarily being involved with public relations and helping teach children and adults how much they depend on farmers – that their food does not magically appear on the grocery store shelves.

In the month since I was elected, I have already been able to participate in Ag Magic at the Sedgwick County Extension Center. This is a program where fourth grade classes from several schools in the county get to learn a little bit about what happens on a farm and see how it impacts them. We also participated in Cowtown Education Day. We had a table set up that allowed children to see and feel sunflower seed, wheat, soybeans, corn, oats and milo and learn some of the products that are made from them.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve as Women's Chair this year and look forward to hearing from you if you have ideas on ways that we can advocate for agriculture or if you'd like to volunteer to help.

Byron Wells:

Fall is in full swing; harvesting, planting, tending to livestock, the list goes on and on. It is easy to get caught up in all the things to do this busy time of the year. Carelessness can run rampant during the busy seasons, your mind is in twenty different places, and your body is in another. What a great opportunity to stop, take a breath, slow down, and ensure that tomorrow you can continue to mark tasks off your list. We need all the help we can get out here, so let's all try to stay around as long as the good Lord will allow us.

Along with all the other stuff going on it is also election season. If you all are as excited about the election as I am, it rivals a trip to the dentist or the D.M.V.. That said we still have the right, and the privilege to vote so make sure to exercise that right. Even if the choice may be the lesser of two evils.

Jon Kerschen:

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve on the board of directors. My wife, Emily, and I have three children and live north of Garden Plain where we farm with my dad and uncles.

In September, I had the chance to help with the Ag Magic Day at the Extension Office. Several hundred Wichita area fourth-graders attended. During the day, they were able to go to multiple stations to learn about agriculture. I was responsible for the Holstein calf station. What a rewarding experience to be able to share with these kids where their food comes from and how farmers care for the environment and livestock. The kids were genuinely engaged and asked many questions. It was obvious that many of them had very little exposure to agriculture. It is very important that we take the time to educate and share what farmers do. Thank you to the Pauly family for letting us borrow one of their calves for the day.

As we continue into the busy fall season, please be careful on your farm. I just attended a funeral for a farmer that was tragically killed in a farming accident. It only takes one mistake, one misstep, or a second of inattention to have tragic results.

Rhonda McCurry:

As farmers and ranchers move into this beautiful fall season most are so busy they don't have time to admire the sunset or a pumpkin spice latte like the rest of us. This season is busy for farmers because we are literally watching them produce food that we can enjoy all year long. Sedgwick County folk drive past fields of beans and milo and complain about having to slow down behind the combine or grain truck going down their path to work. But, these same consumers will not complain when their favorite soy milk or when their dark chocolate KIND bar, made from Kansas grain sorghum, are both available in mass quantities at the grocery store.

Take time during this season of pumpkin patches, candy bars and spiced lattes to be grateful for every farmer and rancher you see. And for those of you who are too busy in the field to read this newsletter, thank you for what you do to put food on the table for me and my neighbors. Happy fall ya'll.