

SCFB *news*

MARCH 2022



The Sedgwick County Farm Bureau Board toured Kansas State University's pilot scale flour mill during a board retreat.

START THE CONVERSATIONS

Mick Rausch

For resources that can help care for and assist Kansas farmers and ranchers in their well-being visit kansasagstress.org. You'll find help with stress management, financial and legal challenges, and many other needs. As more tools are developed, this website will be updated and serve as a hub of current information and resources.



For help 24/7, call
1-800-447-1985.

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.

As we get along with the new year. A couple of things come to mind. First, I am thankful 2021 is finally past, and second, I hope 2022 brings some normality back to us.

The Sedgwick County Farm Bureau Board has been very busy this winter. Before the Kansas Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, our board spent a whole day learning about our leadership characteristics and toured innovative agriculture facilities in Manhattan. After the new year, we held our annual Legislative Luncheon with our county legislators before they went to Topeka. We discussed the upcoming year and possible bills that could be brought up for consideration. Several members also attended to address their concerns to their own legislators.

Next, we attended the American Farm Bureau Convention in Atlanta,

Georgia. In addition to attending the general session, we also had the opportunity to attend workshops with various topics presented. Topics included input costs and projection for markets in 2022, national politics and a lecture on mental health. With the current prices, most people don't realize how much stress farmers and farm families are experiencing now. But you think about input costs, health care and the violative nature of markets; rural Americans are having mental health crises.

If you or anyone close to you is saying or doing things that don't seem right, it is better to intervene and direct them toward help. The Kansas State Department of Agriculture has websites available for help day or night. Go to kansasagstress.org or call 1-800-447-1985 for help 24/7. This mental health seminar was an eye opener for me, especially some of the horror stories from videos they presented. My main point is if you suspect someone is having difficulties or they have said something that is out of the ordinary, talk to them, or at least talk to a person who is able to offer help. Most clergy are trained in helping with mental health. Mental health is an illness that requires some sort of professional help. It's so easy just to blow it off thinking, they are having a bad day, but it's so much more than that. I am sick of attending funerals that may have been avoided if help was found.

Bottom line is if you think someone needs help, they probably do, they just don't know or are too proud to ask for it.

In closing, as we get ready for spring and summer, get enough rest and eat healthy. I hope 2022 is a good year for our members and families in Sedgwick County.

PROTECTING YOURSELF ONLINE

Joy Carp

January was once again time for the American Farm Bureau Convention, held in Atlanta. Although attendance did not seem to be back to pre-pandemic levels, it was nice to be back in person. Learning at the AFBF Convention is one of the big perks of being on the board, so thanks for sending us!

I attended a workshop on cyber security, something all of us should be concerned about. One of the questions was, "What do cyber criminals want?" The answer, of course, depends on who they are. The Chinese, they said, are looking for intelligence. So, one less thing for me to be concerned about! Most criminals though are looking for money. It can seem overwhelming to be up against opponents who are applying all their efforts to part us with hard earned cash.

But there are things we can do to make us less likely targets. On any electronic devices, keep the software up to date. Use anti-virus protection and firewalls. Use strong passwords and don't use the same password for everything. If offered, use two-factor authentication. Be aware of phishing scams – these are often in the news. But remember they are trying to prey on emotions. Fear that a grandchild is in

trouble and needs cash, fear that you need to immediately make a payment to the government or excitement that a Nigerian prince has chosen you to bring his millions to the United States. If it seems off to you, take time to verify. Don't click on links, even if it seems legit. Take the time to look up the website or phone number. I could keep going, but there are so many situations that there's really no good stopping place.

One of the guest speakers in the workshop was an FBI agent. He said if you were the target of a cyber-attack of any type, they like to know about it. Not sure I'm inclined to call the FBI, but documented reports is how they know what's going on. So, if you want to help them out, give their local office a call.

The threat is real and is not going anywhere. It's time to be aware of the dangers surrounding security on electronic devices.

ONE OF THE QUESTIONS TO ASK IS "WHAT DO CYBER CRIMINALS WANT?"



American Farm Bureau Federation

Sedgwick County Farm Bureau sent four board members and their spouses and two staff members to the American Farm Bureau Convention in Georgia.

Connecting with Legislators

Jon Kerschen

The beginning of a new year turns our focus to policy issues. As tradition, Sedgwick County Farm Bureau hosted a Legislative Luncheon for our delegation before the start of the new legislative session in January. We had a good turnout of members, state representatives, and senators which was great. It was also very nice to have all five of our county commissioners attend. This event allows us to continue to build relationships with our elected officials; it is also a great opportunity to see what topics are on the minds of legislators as they prepare to go back to Topeka.

One item discussed was the possibility of removing the state food sales tax. With a current state budget surplus, legislators are looking at ways to give back to the citizens. Farm Bureau usually is a supporter of lessening the tax burden on citizens but is not a supporter of taking this tax away. Several of the legislators we talked to were surprised at Farm Bureau's stance. What a great opportunity for us as individuals and an organization to talk to legislators directly and explain our position. We know taxes are a three-legged stool consisting of sales taxes, property taxes and income tax. Our concern is that by taking away the food sales tax, one leg of the stool is weakened and therefore more weight is put on the others. The fear is that when the state is not in a finan-

cial surplus and needs to raise more revenue, that shortfall revenue could be pushed on property taxes. Sales tax is one tax that everyone shares because everyone purchases food. Property tax only affects part of the population, and as land-owners, producers will unfairly be relied on to carry this tax burden. It'll be interesting to see how the state moves forward with handling this budget surplus.

February afforded us another chance to visit our legislators, but this time in Topeka, while they were in session. Kansas Farm Bureau's Day at the Statehouse is a great opportunity as an organization to meet with legislators in Topeka and get an idea on how the session is progressing as well as allowing us to voice any concerns directly. Kansas Farm Bureau staff and policy team host-

ed a great program that really helped Farm Bureau members make the most of their visit to Topeka.

Being a part of an organization that has staff dedicated to keeping us up to date on what potential policy issues may affect our operations is quite valuable and gives us a stronger voice. If you have questions or concerns that you feel need to be addressed, please utilize the resources of Farm Bureau. Also, be thankful you are a part of an organization that is constantly trying to help make sure policies benefit you.

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WINTER BLESSINGS

Meghan Mueseler



As I sit down to type this note, I am looking out the window to still see the welcomed February snow on the ground.

I may not have to do extra chores like I did as a child, but instead I am reminded of the blessings of growing up on the farm in the winter!

The picture included with this article is one of my grandfather and several family members going for a ride on our family's bobsled. Every snowstorm, families would travel ten to fifteen miles to the sledding hill, which was walking distance from our house, better known as Mueseler Hill. It was legendary in our area—even a bit scary to some!

The highlight of my sledding experience was when a group of us would tear down the hill with my dad at the helm of my grandfather's bobsled! The laughter! The occasional spill spewing us across the sledding hill! It was epic!

Do you have a favorite childhood memory of that winter blanket of white snow?

I was blessed to have a community that slowed down for an afternoon to come out and not only celebrate the moisture but the fellowship of community and the history it was built on!

Appreciation for the Lifestyle

Donna Wise

I guess I should be accustomed to plans being changed by COVID-19, since that's what we have been dealing with for the past two years. Still though, I was surprised when what I thought was a cold turned into a positive COVID-19 test. Yes, we had been quarantining and, therefore, Phil, my husband, and I couldn't follow our plans to attend the American Farm Bureau Convention. I'm appreciative our vaccines and boosters were current as I only had mild symptoms and Phil displayed no symptoms.

Having grown up on the farm, I adopted my mother's shopping habits. Her belief was that there was no need to go to town more than once a week. If we ran out of something, we just figured out how to get along without it until our next trip to town. Today, I keep our pantry stocked with a lot of things I can use to make a lot of different meals. It's just how I grew up, but it sure paid off when we couldn't go to the store.

There are many things that those of us who grew up on farms think of a little differently than our city cousins. Most farmers I know make sure their livestock is fed before or shortly after they eat. Because the profit margins for farmers are often slim or non-existent, we have learned



Those sound like old-fashioned values, but I wonder sometimes if our world would be better off if more people practiced those values.

who recognizes the value of checking on your neighbors when you drive by their place. Thank you for being someone who sees the beauty of a calf frolicking in the pasture and who appreciates a good rainstorm in a drought.

We truly are privileged people who have learned the values that come with life on a farm. Thank you and keep up the good work!

BENEFITS PROGRAM

Sedgwick County Farm Bureau is revamping their member benefit program. This program will create additional value for all our members, much like the statewide benefit program. As this program launches, more benefit providers will be added. Find more information on our website: scfbaa.org.

FARMING IN 2022

Michael Speer

Total U.S.
corn yield
(tons per
acre) has
increased
more than
360% since
1950.

For as long as I've been involved in farming, it seems like there is always something that makes it challenging. Whether it is the weather, grain markets or crop input issues, there is always something that creates challenges. Since March of 2020 when COVID-19 hit, we all knew eventually that supply chain issues would hit us, but I don't think too many of us foresaw \$1,500 anhydrous, \$900 diammonium phosphate (DAP) or \$60 glyphosate. The question is how long will this last?

From what I have been reading and hearing at meetings this winter, it will be the 2023 growing season before we see much relief. If grain prices stay where they are or go higher, relief may be limited. Which in the grand scheme of things it will still be good for us to have higher priced commodities, but it will make our exposure and risk higher. From my best estimations for this year, cost per acre will be up 15-25% depending on the crop and type of nutrient, seed and chemical plan you have.

It appears although inputs will be higher

for this growing season our suppliers have done a pretty good job of making sure we will have options come planting, spraying and harvesting time. On the flip side of crop inputs for this year, it does seem like equipment parts may become hard to get for this growing season.

So, what does all this mean? When I visit with input suppliers, their ask is to communicate your needs early with them and create a plan to ensure that you will be able to get what you need, when you need it. With high commodity prices there is still plenty of margin to be had, but nobody wants to get caught without what they need to successfully grow a crop.

In closing I will leave with positivity, while we do have issues facing us on many fronts right now. Commodity prices are at very high levels and the potential for another good year is in front of us if we can get mother nature to cooperate a little bit. Good luck to all of you with the upcoming planting and growing season!



Above: KFB President Rich Felts presented Michael Speer with the Young Farmer and Rancher of the Year Award.



Right: Sedgwick County sent 14 delegates to the 2022 YF&R Conference.

FLAWLESS EXECUTION

Plan, Brief, Execute and Debrief

Joseph Neville

My wife and I were able to attend the American Farm Bureau Convention with some of the other board members. We enjoyed our time learning and obtaining new skills to help us be more productive board members. We got a chance to tour part of Atlanta and learn about its history on a convention tour. Not only did we get the chance to spend time with some of the other board members and find out who the best pitch player is, but we also networked with others from Kansas and around the country. It is exciting to hear what other members are doing, and the successes and failures they have had in their local Farm Bureaus and operations.

A major theme that stuck with me was shared during a general session from keynote speaker, Jim Murphy. Jim joined the United States Air Force and learned to fly F-15's, eventually becoming an instructor. After his time in the service, he started Afterburner, a training and consulting program. He works with companies and teams to share his knowledge of leadership and skills from his experiences in service. He described in length one of the processes they followed on every mission to achieve flawless execution:

plan, brief, execute and debrief. Jim explained the importance of each step, but really stressed the importance of the last step, debriefing.

I can relate to executing each of the first three steps, but never gave much precedence to debriefing. Seems kind of silly to sit down after a long day of harvest to debrief, but it does have a place in both short-term and long-term. Jim's team would sit down, remove their rankings from their uniforms to signify they are all equals and discuss everything that went right and wrong on that mission. The most important thing in the debriefing room, "It's not about who's right, but what's right." It is important to be honest about everything that happened, because mistakes, even small ones, could lead to the most devastating consequence, loss of life. This debriefing step is important to gain understanding, receive constructive criticism and promote conversation to learn and grow together.

I appreciate the opportunity to represent our county and state at the AFBF Convention and thank you for investing in my growth as a board member to better serve you and all our members.



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**MARCH
10**

**POLICY ENGAGEMENT SERIES -
TRANSPORTATION**
Kansas Farm Bureau Webinar
Register at kfb.org

**APRIL
11-12**

**KFB COMMUNICATIONS, MEDIA &
SPOKESPERSON (CMS) TRAINING**
Hays, Kansas
Registration due March 10, 2022

**MAY
15**

**CENTURY & SESQUICENTENNIAL
FARM APPLICATIONS DUE**
scfbaa.org/awards

UPCOMING DATES