

SCFB

news

SEDGWICK COUNTY FARM BUREAU AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

February 2020



ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Sedgwick County Farm Bureau member Brian Wetta and other members of the Resolutions Committee Photo by Kansas Farm Bureau staff

NOTES FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Jon Kerschen

January through March is a very busy time for Farm Bureau board members. As the winter months go on, fieldwork is usually at a minimum, which allows your board of directors more opportunities to be able to educate, advocate, and serve.

Advocacy has been a major focus as we kicked off the new year. Sedgwick County Farm Bureau hosted a luncheon for our local legislators and county commissioners at the beginning of January. We had a very good turnout of legislators and Farm Bureau members. It is a great opportunity to build our relationship with our elected officials before the legislative session. We followed up this event by attending the statewide Kansas Farm Bureau Day at the Statehouse last week. While in Topeka, we heard from our lobby team on what their thoughts are of the legislative session and what bills and issues are at the top of the priority list. In the afternoon, our board tries to meet one on one with as many of our legislators as possible. With 32 total representatives and senators in Sedgwick county, it is difficult to reach each one but this also shows the importance of us being able to reach such a large portion of the state delegation. If there is a need or an issue you have that should be passed on to your legislator, we would be glad to help make this connection. Take advantage of this resource that our organization has in the relationships we have built with our policy makers.

Another opportunity in advocacy awaits us in the coming months through the grassroots effort of Farm Bureau members to select which legislators will receive an endorsement from Farm Bureau. Each county in the state will convene a County Evaluation Committee (CEC) meeting in which members will review the candidates and make a recommendation to the state Vote FBF board. They will gather all the information from the counties and then make a final decision on which candidates receive a Farm Bureau endorsement. If you are interested in participating in the CEC meetings, please contact the office or a board member so that we can get you the information on when we will meet.

As for the education pillar of Farm Bureau, your board has been busy. Several board members were able to attend the AFBF convention in Austin, Texas. A variety of workshops are offered as well as the opportunity to network with Farm Bureau members from around the nation. In December, we as a board spent an afternoon with KSN news teams to help us better understand how our local news media develops stories. We want to be a resource to local media on agriculture issues so we can tell our story as producers.

Last week I had the opportunity to attend the county presidents meetings in Manhattan. Kansas Farm Bureau gave the county presidents a wide variety of workshops aimed at creating more effective county boards. One of the areas of focus was how we as a board can build our relationship with Farm Bureau Financial Services. We want to work together as a board with our agents to help strengthen the Farm Bureau brand.

As for service opportunities, once again we showed our thankfulness to the local volunteer fire departments by providing them a pizza dinner. Also, last year's number one advocacy project has turned into our top service project: the implementation of the Kansas Farm Bureau health plan. Starting January 1, Kansas Farm



At the KFB annual conference in Mahattan, Sedgwick County Farm Bureau was named the divisional Award for Excellence winner in Education, and at the state level, we were recognized as the New Horizons county in Advocacy for the creation of the Executive Director's position.

Donna Wise accepts the awards from Steve McCloud, 4th District board member.

Bureau began enrolling members in the new health plan. As of the end of January, over 1,400 plans have been signed up covering over 2,900 individuals in every county of the state. If your current health insurance premiums are too high or if you don't have any coverage, you may want to check out the new health plan. You can call a Kansas Farm Bureau insurance agent or go to www.kfbhealthplans.com to get more information.

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.



ADVOCATING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL FOOD SYSTEMS MASTER PLAN

Advocacy is the first and most fundamental task we carry out in Farm Bureau. While most people might think of advocacy as our national staff working with politicians in D.C. to draft the next Farm Bill or trade agreement, policy work is just as important at the local level. Currently, the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County governments are developing a long-term Food Systems Master Plan. The city and county use planning processes like these to set goals for everything from bicyclists to swimming pools. While most of the planners' focus is on issues like food deserts and specialty crops, there are certainly ways in which conventional farmers and ranchers could benefit as well. Your county Farm Bureau has been engaged in the process to make sure that none of the proposals negatively impact our members. We've also suggested that our urban neighbors should consider how their use of resources, like groundwater, will affect the farmers and ranchers that help support their economy. I would encourage you to visit the Master Plan's website to learn more about the process and complete the survey wichita.gov/foodplan. Also, if you have ideas about how the city or county governments could be better neighbors to those of us in agriculture, please contact us in the office, and we can advocate for your ideas.

Anthony Seiler

WHAT IS A FOOD SYSTEM PLAN?

A Master Plan is a long-range planning document that lays out a community's vision for its growth. Communities use Master Plans to guide land use, economic development, transportation, health, and other dimensions of civic life.

A healthy, sustainable regional food system can bring economic, environmental, and social benefits to a community. But these benefits don't happen automatically. Food systems need planning, too! Planning brings structure and strategy to local food systems growth, and helps align policies, such as ordinances, zoning, and incentives to support the local food system.

A Food System Master Plan can:

- Foster profitable agriculture and food business,
- Support entrepreneurs in agriculture and food,
- Create new jobs and opportunities,
- Increase access to healthy, nutritious foods for all,
- Support skills in gardening and food preparation,
- Protect soil, water, and air quality,
- Reduce food waste,
- Celebrate diversity of food and agriculture in our community, and
- Empower all to participate in the food system.

Information provided by wichita.gov/foodplan

NEW HEALTHCARE COVERAGE OPTIONS FOR KANSANS

Kansas Farm Bureau Health Plans provides members with affordable competitive rates for medical and dental coverage. No matter what stage of life you're in, Kansas Farm Bureau Health Plans will have options that fit your lifestyle. Plus, our network of providers is one of the largest available throughout the state of Kansas and beyond.

To get a quote or apply for coverage, visit your local Farm Bureau Financial Services agent, go to www.kfbhealthplans.com or call 833-282-5928.



Did You Know?

Careful stewardship by America's food producers has spurred a 34% decline in erosion of cropland by wind and water since 1982.

ADVOCACY & GETTING INVOLVED

Joy Carp

We are in the thick of travel season for Farm Bureau. I consider it one of the great privileges of being on the board, and want to say a heartfelt thank you to the members who make it possible. I always enjoy the National Convention, which was in Austin, Texas this year. It is fun to meet people from all over the nation, all engaged in agriculture in some way. While we all have different operations and face different challenges, there's something special about being together for a common goal. Due to President Trump's visit, there weren't as many breakout sessions this year, but I did learn a few new tips on a specific story organization method. Hopefully it's as effective as the speaker claimed! I could go on, but will end with saying if you ever get a chance to go to the National Convention, don't hesitate to take the opportunity.

Day at the Statehouse occurred at the beginning of the month, and it is another highlight of the year. I may be slow, but last year was the first time it really dawned on me that unlike Washington, our state legislators don't really have staff to research topics for them. It made me real-

ize how important our advocacy is because that's a key way our senators and representatives learn about what is important to us. And there's always someone telling a different story than ours, so it's crucial that we're represented there through our own voices.



And on a completely different topic, applications will soon be due for scholarships and our newish ambassador program. If you know any juniors who would be interested in being an ambassador next year or seniors who are looking for a college scholarship, be sure to have them visit our web site at www.sedgwickcountyfarm-bureau.org/ and click on the Benefits and Services tab. Our ambassador program will be entering its third year, and all who have participated so far seem to really enjoy it. We continue to try to improve the program, so hopefully this year will be the best so far! Please help us in spreading the word about these great opportunities.

Several members of Sedgwick and Chautauqua Farm Bureau with Senate President Susan Wagle at Day at the Statehouse.



Welcome to 2020! Ready or not, 2020 is an election year, both in the Kansas Statehouse and the U.S. Capitol. We will be electing a President, a Kansas Senator, and four Kansas Representatives to represent us in Washington. Locally, the Kansas House of Representatives and Kansas State Senators are up for election.

Vote FBF is a committee of elected people from our Farm Bureau districts. The sole direction of these people is to gather information provided by the local County Evaluation Committees (CEC) and make recommendations on how the possible office seekers will view and support Farm Bureau policies. The process is as follows.

First, the county policy chair or committee researches all candidates for the selected position. They then convene the county level CEC committee and recommend to the CEC board who they select for the office and why. The CEC board is chaired by the local county president



and any members who wish to become involved in the CEC election process. The results are then forwarded to the state where they are compiled with all the other county recommendations for the same elected spot.

The Vote FBF committee meets several times a year and more often in an election year to make final decisions based on the county recommendations on whether to endorse a candidate. The Farm Bureau endorsement is one of the most sought after endorsements in Kansas, mainly because of the fact that Farm Bureau involves so many members across the state.

I hope I have cleared up many questions people have about the CEC election process. The whole endorsement process begins at the county level. Nothing starts unless the local county makes a decision first. I also want to add that the CEC election process is open to any voting member who pays their CEC dues. So few people understand just what we do and why, so electing friends in congress is the reason the Vote FBF is so involved in electing those people who do understand farming and ranching.

Finally, as we move forward to another spring and summer, be sure to be safe.



Photo by Kansas Farm Bureau staff

WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Donna Wise

When told that it's time to write another newsletter article, I'm always amazed at how much has happened since our last newsletter. We had the Kansas Farm Bureau annual meeting in early December in Manhattan, Kansas, which is pictured above. It is great to get together with farmers and ranchers from across our state to share our successes and our challenges. The week after we got back from Manhattan, several of our board members went to KSN studios to engage with the program director about what they are looking for in news stories and how we can help the local media find stories about agriculture that will meet their needs. The upshot of that is that on January 29, board member Byron Wells was featured in a news story about taking care of livestock in winter. I hope you got to see it!

One thing many of you probably don't know that we do is take pizza to our volunteer firefighters in rural Sedgwick County to show our appreciation for what they do for our communities. We usually try to do that in October for Fire Prevention Month, but many of us did that later this year because of other activities.

We hosted our legislative luncheon on January 7th, the week before the Kansas Legislative Session began in Topeka. We had many of our state representatives and senators attend as well as county commissioners and other government representatives. This is an opportunity to hear the concerns of our officials in their various capacities and for them to hear ours. We appreciated our KFB Vice President Jeff Grossenbacher along with other folks from Manhattan and Topeka being present to help tell the Farm Bureau story.

Many of us on the Sedgwick County Farm Bureau

Board traveled to Austin, Texas from January 17-21 for the American Farm Bureau Federation convention. It's always a great event seeing so many of the Young Farmers and Ranchers competing in the discussion meets and telling the story of agriculture. Kansas's own Jacqueline Leffler placed fourth in the competitions, and we are very proud of her. There were many seminars and workshops where we got ideas on how to support our members and their interests better.

While in Austin, we had the opportunity to get together with others from Kansas for a dinner together. Senator Jerry Moran was present. Farm Bureau takes seriously our role of representing agriculture to our state politicians and they very much desire endorsement and support from farmers for the work they do in Topeka and Washington, D.C. Because of our engagement with politicians, they know who we are when we have issues where we need their support. I was surprised last year that when the Farm Bureau Health Benefit Plan was being discussed in Topeka, I had two state representatives from our area call me to get my take on the plan. We don't always agree, but it's great to have a relationship of mutual respect.

During the first week of February, we headed to Topeka for our Day at the Statehouse where we have the chance to learn about issues before the legislature that will impact farmers and ranchers and then visit with our legislators about how those issues will impact us.

Many of our activities are not just for board members; we would love to have you get involved, too. It feels good to make a difference! Thank you for being a member. Call us if you would like to help us represent you better.

SUSTAINABILITY: A BUZZ WORD OR SOLUTION?

Meghan Mueseler

The National Pork Board, the North American Meat Institute (NAMI), and the US Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (USRSB) recently presented at the AFBF Conference in Austin a workshop on sustainability in the agriculture industry and how we as farmers and ranchers can play in the sustainability journey.

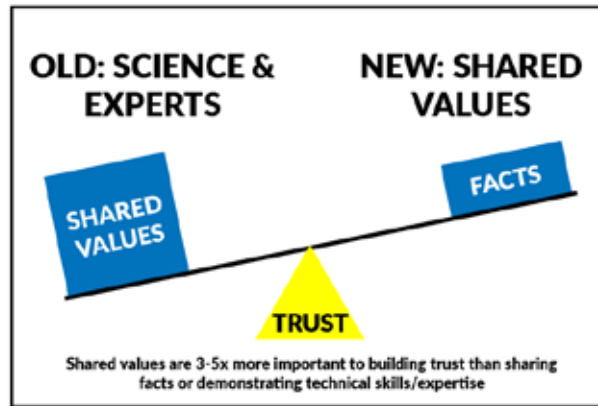
What hit home to me was the graphic included in this article from NAMI, where in the eyes of the consumer today, science and expert testimony is being replaced by shared values as the basis for their 'trust' in the food system. As I type this article, I continue to ponder what that means for me and for farmers/ranchers in Sedgwick county.

For years, we have been told to share our story with the

consumer. Today, part of that story needs to now include how I as a farmer/rancher too am concerned about the environment where we are raising our family and are growing our world's food. How do I as a farmer/rancher conserve the limited natural resources so that my children are able to take over the farm? How do I as a farmer/rancher remain relevant in an ever changing food scene?

This workshop and others centered around sustainability presented work done by organizations like NAMI and USRSB who alongside the whole supply chain are trying to solve the problem of feeding more

people with fewer resources. How can we as Sedgwick County play a role in the solution?



THE *Miracle* CROP Kent Ott

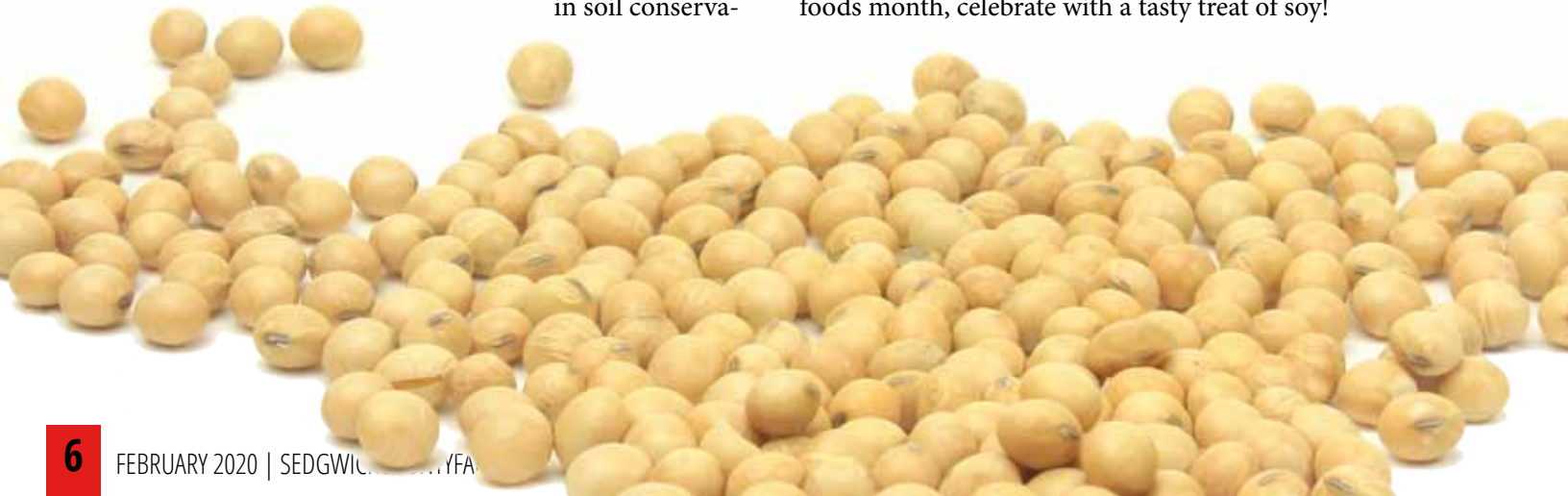
During the growing season on our farm, my wife and I have a regular disagreement. We grow soybeans on our farm as part of a good steward rotation plan. My wife looks at the soybeans when they are tall, lush, and green and says they are so beautiful with the canopy they create. At harvest time, when the soybeans are brown sticks with pods at regular intervals on them, I say the soybeans are so beautiful. My wife asks me if my eyes aren't working. I say they are working; they see green dollars!

All joking aside, soybeans are considered a miracle crop. Why a miracle crop? Soybeans love the hot climates. As a legume, the soybean plant waste is rich in nitrogen. This nitrogen goes back into the soil. With minimum and no-till practices, soybean farmers from 1980 to 2015 cut their energy use by 35 percent and invested in soil conserva-

tion to preserve the land. Lastly, soybeans are a miracle crop to humans. They are rich in complete protein at 38%. This is two times more than pork, three times more than eggs, and 12 times more than milk. Soybeans are rich in vitamins like C and minerals like iron and zinc.

Domesticated soybeans in China date back to around 3000 B.C. They were introduced to North America in 1765 by a sailor who brought the seed from China. In 2018, Kansas was the 10th largest producer of soybeans in the United States with Sumner county having the most soybean production in the state. The soybean crop itself is divided 80/20; 80% of it is processed as meal, and 20% of it is oil. 97% of the meal is for animal feed, and 68% of the oil is for human food. Other products of soybean oil are biodiesel, bioheat, and industrial uses.

Hats off to tofu, edamame, and soy sauce. In April, soy foods month, celebrate with a tasty treat of soy!



FARMING IN A GLASS HOUSE

Zach Simon

While at Kansas Commodity Classic, I listened to Allan Gray, an economist from Purdue University present. His presentation was titled "Capitalizing on the Greatest Sustainability Story in History." Mr. Gray focused on the evolving consumer preferences of today. He discussed things like block chain and traceability and how this "trend" may become the "norm" of the near future.

So what is block chain and traceability, and how does it affect agriculture and my farm? A short version is that data is collected along every step of the process and then made available to the consumer. They will be able to scan a code on the product they want to buy and then see on their phone various information, things like: the day that the seed was planted, how much fertilizer was put on, what was sprayed on the field, where the grain was milled, and other processes along the way to becoming the food product they are buying.

While this is daunting to most of us as producers and may seem like an invasion of privacy, it's also an opportunity. Consumers today are further removed from the farm than they have ever been. Knowledge of how their food is actually grown and what farmers really do is going to continue to decline. Traceability gives us a tool to educate the consumers on what we are doing and why. Our customers are asking for transparency, mainly because they want to be educated. The demand for this does not appear to be going away anytime soon, and

actually it's growing. Embrace it. Embrace it as a tool to educate and advocate for our industry, your farm, your business. Use it to tell the great story of agriculture and how we are truly stewards of the land. Use it as an opportunity to add value to the products you are selling!

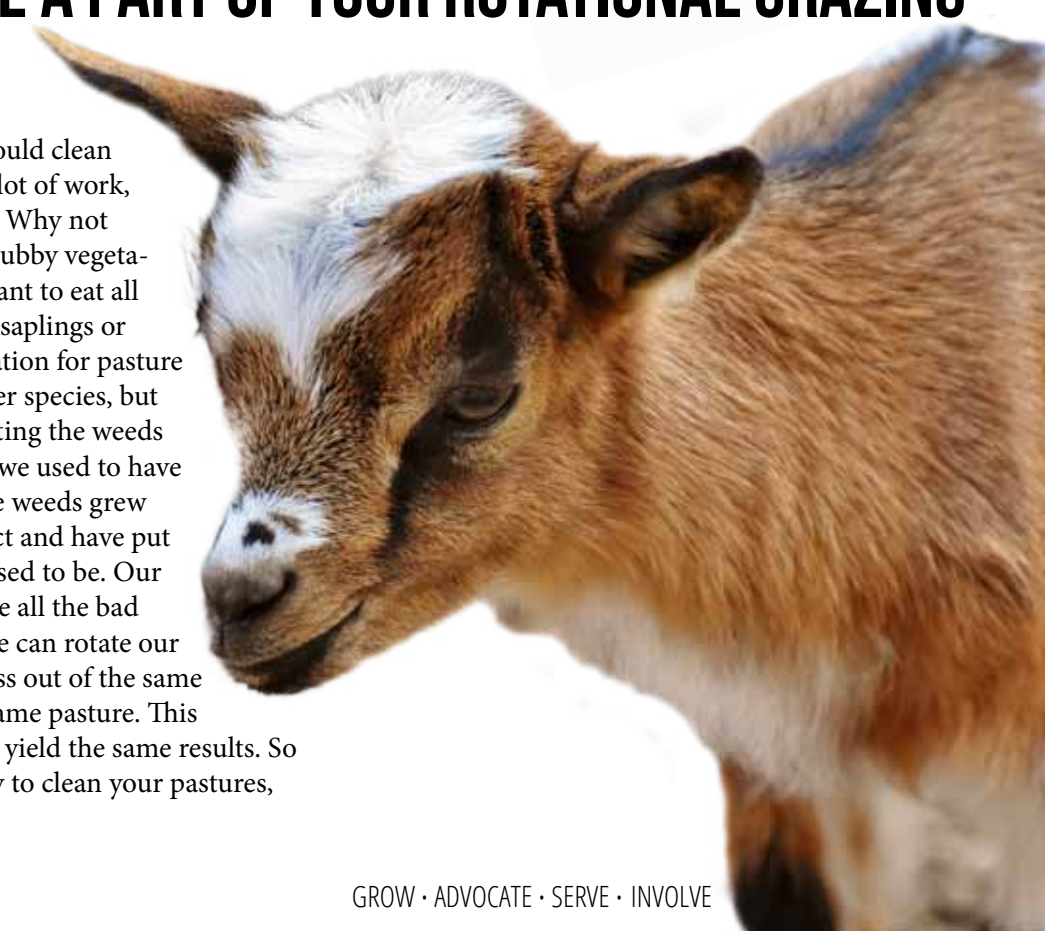
We are blessed to be stewards of the land. If what we are doing wasn't sustainable, we wouldn't be in business. We all know and respect the land better than many because we rely on it for our livelihood. Consumers of today and the future need and want to understand how their food is grown. It may seem as if we are farming in a glass house, and to an extent that may be true, but can you think of a better way for us to tell our story?



WHY GOATS SHOULD BE A PART OF YOUR ROTATIONAL GRAZING

Gavin Beesley, SCFB Ag Ambassador

Are your pastures always overgrown or have lots of woody areas? It would be great if you could clean up the land for more grazing area, but that's a lot of work, and tree clearing companies can be expensive. Why not throw some goats in? Goats love woody or shrubby vegetation and will kill young saplings. They don't want to eat all the grass that cows or horses eat. Goats prefer saplings or weeds to grass. So if you put goats in your rotation for pasture grazing, they will not eat the same stuff as other species, but they will actually clean up your pastures by eating the weeds and undesirable plants. Just behind my house we used to have horses pastured, and they ate the grass, but the weeds grew out of control. Then I got goats as a 4-H project and have put them in the same pastures where our horses used to be. Our pastures have never looked better; the goats ate all the bad weeds and left only high-quality grass. Now we can rotate our horses through, and they are getting more grass out of the same pasture while the goats also get fed from the same pasture. This same thing could be done in cattle and should yield the same results. So if you want a cheap, efficient, and effective way to clean your pastures, consider buying some goats.



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SCHOLARSHIP & AMBASSADOR PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM FOR JUNIORS

The Ag Ambassador program is open to students who will be seniors in the fall, are members (or have parents who are members) in good standing of the Sedgwick County Farm Bureau Agricultural Association, and are interested in agriculture. Each ambassador will serve a 12 month term starting in August of their senior year and ending the following August. There will be a maximum of two participants each year. Each Ambassador or their parents must be Farm Bureau members by January 1 of their junior year in high school. The purpose of the program is 1) for ambassadors to gain a better understanding of Farm Bureau with an emphasis on the Kansas Farm Bureau mission of advocacy, education, and service, 2) to develop future leaders for agriculture and rural communities, and 3) familiarize the ambassador with Sedgwick County Farm Bureau.

SCHOLARSHIP FOR SENIORS

Sedgwick County Farm Bureau Agriculture Association will award six scholarships this year. Four scholarships will have an annual value of \$1,000, renewable for three years, for a potential value of \$4,000 each. These will be for students attending a four-year college or university with priority to those enrolled at Kansas institutions. Two scholarships will have an annual value of \$500 for a potential value of \$1,000 each. These scholarships will be for students attending a two-year college or vocational school.

**APPLICATIONS FOR BOTH SCHOLARSHIPS & THE
AMBASSADOR PROGRAM ARE DUE MARCH 1, 2020
VISIT SEDGWICKCOUNTYFARMBUREAU.ORG
BENEFITS & SERVICES TO DOWNLOAD APPLICATIONS.**