

# news

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## Farm Bureau delegates set policies

American Farm Bureau Federation voting delegates met Jan. 22-23 at the AFBF annual meeting in Tampa, Fla., to decide the policy direction AFBF will take over the next year. The 409 delegates' top priorities included securing weather disaster assistance for farmers and ranchers with crop and livestock losses in 2001 and 2002, and preventing the 2002 farm bill from being reopened.

The delegates voted to strike language added last year prohibiting packer ownership of livestock. But, they added language encouraging the Agriculture and Justice Departments to "closely investigate all mergers, ownership changes or other trends in the meatpacking industry for actions that limit the availability of a competitive market for livestock producers."

In addition, the delegates recommended that AFBF establish a task force to examine the impact to agriculture of a ban on packer ownership of livestock.

Shortly after the delegates finished their voting session, the AFBF board of directors met to decide the organization's priority issues for the 108th



Illinois Farm Bureau President Ron Warfield (standing) and hundreds of other voting delegates approved AFBF policies that will guide the organization's actions throughout 2003.

Congress. While AFBF policy covers a much broader range of issues, AFBF concentrates its lobbying efforts most heavily on the priority issues in order to achieve the goals that are most important to Farm Bureau's farmer and rancher members. The board added

"maintain competitive agriculture" to the list. They also updated the list as it applies to the farm bill by adding "protect the integrity of 2002 farm bill."

In other action, the delegates reaffirmed Farm Bureau policy that sup-

*See Delegates, page 4*

## Stallman: Farmers deserve recognition

American Farm Bureau Federation President Bob Stallman launched a yearlong campaign to recognize farmers' importance to the fabric and security of the nation during his annual address at the 84th AFBF annual convention. He also detailed a few of the organization's new initiatives and key policy issues for the coming year, including emergency assistance for producers whose operations were hit with weather disasters in 2001 and 2002.

"We believe in fiscal responsibility, but we also believe in responsibility to the men and women who work so hard to deliver our nation's food security," Stallman said in his annual address. "Congress has the opportunity to pass weather disaster assistance now. We hope they will do so as soon as possible."

While listing Farm Bureau's policy successes over the past year, Stallman said the organization's growing strength would be needed to help farmers face future challenges. One of



Stallman's address at the AFBF convention hewed to the theme of recognizing farmers' contributions and working to enact policy to ensure agriculture's future success.

Farm Bureau's biggest victories, he said, was passage of the 2002 farm bill,

which provides a price safety net for producers when commodity prices dip below target levels.

"In many commodity sectors, until the marketplace significantly overtakes the cost of production, and remaining trade barriers are dismantled, support needs to be in place to bolster the many families who ensure our nation's food security," he said.

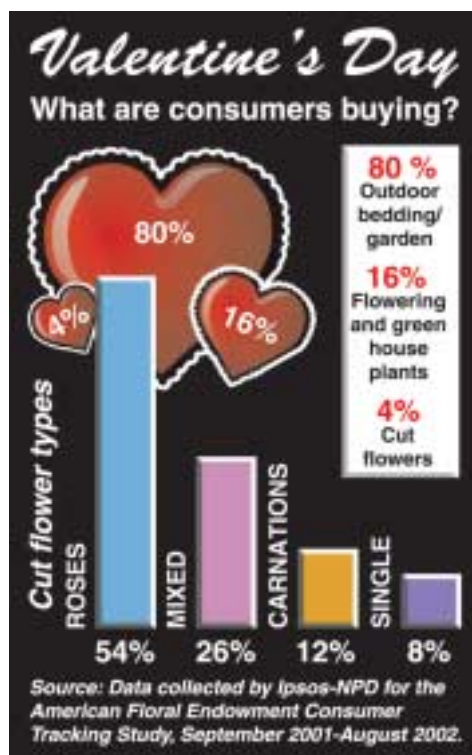
He also called the 2002 farm bill the "most conservation-friendly farm program in history."

Stallman said work that remains on the legislative front includes permanently repealing the death tax and creating a new national energy policy that carves out a larger role for renewable fuels made from agricultural commodities.

Other unfinished business includes boosting market access for U.S. farm exports, Stallman said. He repeated Farm Bureau's call that the United States should challenge the European

*See Stallman, page 3*

## Corner Post



## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

## Florida initiative supports farms in urban area

Steady urban growth has exerted a significant impact upon farm production in many areas of the nation for decades. This pattern threatens the livelihoods of agriculturists and raises genuine concerns about the future of our domestic food production capability.

But according to participants involved in an initiative in Florida's Hillsborough County, which includes the city of Tampa, farm producers can assume an active role in protecting and promoting agricultural production located near a large urban center.

While speaking at a conference held during the 84th American Farm Bureau Federation annual convention, the Floridians noted that producers have the power to shape land use regulations, economic development efforts and other local public policy matters in ways that maintain and enhance agricultural enterprise.

Stephen Gran, manager of Agriculture Industry Development for Hillsborough County, observed that the economic impact of agricultural pro-



**Dennis Carlton, Hillsborough County Farm Bureau president, has made it his business to keep farming alive in his urbanized area of Florida.**

duction throughout the county is \$2 billion a year. Thirty-seven percent of the county's territory is devoted to farming.

In addition, for every dollar of local

tax paid by farm producers, they receive governmental services worth 16 cents. Urban homeowners receive governmental services worth \$1.53 for every dollar of tax they pay. "This shows it is in the best interest in local government in both the tax base and in economic contribution to have agricultural production," Gran said.

Dennis Carlton, president of the Hillsborough County Farm Bureau, said farmers first attracted much more supportive attention from the county commission by helping to arrange for an economic impact study in the mid-1980s. Paid for by farm commodity groups, the local Chamber of Commerce and the Hillsborough County commission, the study highlighted how much the county's 2,600 farms contributed to the area's economic life.

"Once they understood the economics of it, we got a Stephen Gran and a department," Carlton said. "The county commission has somebody on staff to advise them. That gives us a strong leg up."

The commission also appointed an

Agricultural Economic Development Council to provide expert information on farm-related matters. Chip Hinton, chair of the council and executive director of the Florida Strawberry Growers Association, reported that the farm community developed its own leaders who have educated county officials and the general public about the importance of local agriculture.

A long-term commitment of time and labor to make the council a dependable resource has given it a powerful voice in the creation of land use rules and most other measures issued by county government. For example, the council wrote the text for the agricultural component of the county's most recent comprehensive plan—a growth management document required by state law.

"We are here today to tell you that agriculture and urban areas are not diametrically opposed," Hinton said. "You must look beyond your fence posts and develop leadership if you hope to survive."

## Crop, livestock prices on course to improve this year

Market prices for soybeans, corn and cotton, as well as beef and pork, could increase this year, according to speakers at two issue conferences at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 84th convention in Tampa, Fla.

Bill Tierney, state Extension crop marketing specialist with Kansas State University, said December corn stocks are larger than the Agriculture Department predicted last fall. But more corn is being used for industrial purposes, and production is down because of weather problems. As a result carryover stocks are down and are expected to be relatively low at the end of this year.

That means prices could go up.

Soybean stocks also are much larger than the industry expected, Tierney said. But, export commitments are the fastest they have ever been at this time of year. Soy oil commitments are a little less, but are expected to inch back up a little, he added.

"Exports are very important to the soybeans outlook, and they are performing extremely well," Tierney said. "In addition, the soybean crush rate is amazingly stable from month to month."

Taking all the bullish and bearish factors into consideration, Tierney predicted prices are more likely to go up this year than down.

O.A. Cleveland, Extension marketing and price specialist at Mississippi State University, predicted that cotton prices also will go up. The stocks-to-use ratio will be the lowest since 1994-95, he said, although prices will not increase to what they were in the mid-1990s. He estimated cotton prices would approach 70 cents per pound.

Cleveland said several factors would likely push cotton prices up, including the weakening of the U.S. dollar, production and quality problems in several cotton-producing countries, and the fact that China should continue to be a large importer. However, lower quality cotton will not see as much of a price increase, simply "because there's too much of it out there," he said.

Downward pressure could come from the continued sluggishness of the U.S. and world economies, potentially larger crops in China and the United



**Speaking at an issue conference on the commodities outlook for 2003, Bill Tierney, state Extension crop marketing specialist with Kansas State University, said prices are more likely to go up than down.**

States and some shift in demand from cotton to polyester if cotton prices rise. Still, Cleveland believed there are more bullish factors than bearish.

Continued strong demand for beef and the first drop in annual production in 20 years should provide relief for U.S. cattle producers in 2003, according to Michael Sands, vice president of the Sparks Cos., a Memphis-based market research firm. He said beef production is expected to decline about 3 percent this year, after reaching record levels in 2002.

At the same time, Sands said, consumer demand continues to grow,

which should boost returns for cattle producers by 4 cents to 5 cents per pound—a 6 percent to 7 percent increase that could mean the difference between a small profit and continued losses.

"The best thing that can be said for 2002 is it's over," Sands said. "We're looking at a lot of positive signs going into 2003."

Sands said pork and poultry production also appear to be trending lower this year, which should also help keep prices above the break-even point for beef producers. Declining beef production should also help pork producers, although Sands was less optimistic that 2003 would see a turnaround in the pork industry, which has seen several years of low prices.

"There will be some improvement, but that's not saying much," Sands said. Although he said he expects U.S. pork exports to increase, particularly to Mexico, Japan and South Korea, he also expects imports to rise, especially from Canada, where the industry has been expanding rapidly.

Sands also cautioned that favorable trends for beef producers could change in a hurry because of world events.

"I would argue that 2003 should be much better for all segments of the livestock industry, including beef, pork and poultry, but 2002 proved again that we are not immune to outside factors," Sands said, pointing to foreign trade decisions that restricted meat imports from the United States and the continuing effects of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

### Farm Bureau news

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## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

## U.S., EU officials differ on scope of WTO reform

While the United States is seeking major reform in international trade rules in the current World Trade Organization negotiations, the European Union is seeking a more incremental approach, according to trade officials who spoke at the "Ag Trade and Your Future" conference at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 84th convention.

Allen Johnson, chief agricultural negotiator with the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, said the United States has a very "ambitious" proposal. "We're willing to cut if everyone goes along," he said. "But we're not going to unilaterally disarm."

But Gerard Kiely, a longtime EU agriculture official who is now a counselor with the European Commission delegation in Washington, D.C., said the trade bloc has made considerable progress in the last 10 years in cutting back on trade-distorting subsidies and practices.

He said the EU wants a WTO agreement, but one that builds on the Uruguay Round framework and not the one proposed by the United States last summer.

Both Kiely and Johnson acknowledged that in the eyes of the rest of the world, there isn't much difference between the EU and the United States. Both are considered trade transgressors who over-subsidize and make life difficult for the 140-plus WTO members



Allen Johnson, chief agricultural negotiator with the office of the U.S. Trade Representative (left), and Gerard Kiely, counselor with the European Commission delegation in Washington, D.C. (near left), outlined the differences between the U.S. and European Union proposals for agricultural trade reform. AFBF President Bob Stallman (near right) and Paul Drazek, a Washington-based trade consultant (at podium), also spoke at the trade conference.

that don't pay their farmers anything.

Kiely explained that the EU has little political support for wide-scale reform. In addition to farmers who demonstrate frequently, the bloc faces considerable opposition from environmentalists, animal welfare advocates and consumer groups.

"The animal welfare lobby is prob-

ably even stronger than the agricultural lobby," Kiely said. Any agreement has to be "politically acceptable," he added.

Johnson said the United States won't "stand still" during the drawn-out WTO process. It is going ahead with several regional and bilateral trade agreements, such as the recently com-

pleted one with Chile, and proposed accords with Australia and Central American nations.

Those agreements, however, cannot address the key issue of reforming all nations' domestic supports, Johnson said. That can only be done, he stressed, in the WTO talks.

Paul Drazek, a Washington-based trade consultant, also spoke at the conference, outlining the major issues raised by the U.S. WTO agriculture proposal and the EU's expected proposal. The EU released the proposal a week later on Jan. 27.

Drazek said the U.S. proposal to increase market access would "dramatically reduce disparities" in tariffs worldwide. While the world average tariff for agricultural products is 62 percent, the United States only imposes tariffs that average 12 percent.

He noted that some developing countries with growing markets, such as India, have stiffer tariffs. If the tariffs aren't lowered, he said, they would continue to hurt U.S. exports. India, for example, has an average tariff of 114 percent on farm imports.

Developing countries will play a key role in the new round of trade negotiations, Drazek said, explaining they are "reluctant to open markets to subsidized products" from the United States and Europe without getting "safeguards" that will protect their interests.

## Beef industry adding value to beef cuts

The beef industry's "R&D Ranch" has been profiling the characteristics of individual muscles of the beef carcass to develop ways to add value for beef producers. Industry representatives showed off some of their findings at a conference at the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention in Tampa, Fla.

Until 1995, the hamburger was the definition of a value-added beef product and the industry was facing declining demand, said Carl Blackwell, executive director of product marketing for the Cattlemen's Beef Board. The "R&D Ranch," funded by beef producers' check-off dollars, was created to serve consumer needs better and add value to the underutilized chuck and round. These cuts, which account for 53 percent of the beef carcass, declined in value by 27 percent between 1992 and 1998.

Working in collaboration with large manufacturers, food service operators and grocery chains, beef industry scientists helped these partners introduce 1,100 new value-added beef products from 1999 to 2001, Blackwell said.

Many of the products are already familiar to food shoppers: cooked and lightly seasoned ground beef ready to



A demonstration at the AFBF convention showed how the beef industry is exploring new ways of cutting and packaging chucks and roasts to increase their desirability.

use in recipes, and fully cooked beef roasts that are ready to serve after a few minutes in the microwave. Sales of convenience beef products currently total more than \$1.5 billion a year, according to Blackwell.

A boneless beef fillet, to be commercialized this spring, is modeled on the

boneless chicken breast and is expected to compete with that chicken cut on price, convenience of preparation and nutrition. A home-style beef roast, quickly prepared in grocery store delis, has been introduced in limited markets in the South and is expected to compete on a par with rotisserie chicken for the takeout customer.

The successful new products, and more to come, are the result of exhaustive research to identify the individual characteristics of each muscle in the chuck and round, said Dwain Johnson, a University of Florida meat scientist. The research identified what he called "Diamonds in the Rough"—or beef value cuts—that can have much higher value and selling price when cut and marketed separately.

"There are muscles in chucks and roasts that can provide a great steak-eating experience" if cut separately and cooked differently, said Ken Johnson, a meats consultant for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

As the beef industry responds to this research, consumers can expect more beef value cuts that will be all-meat and more attractive to consumers who, Johnson said, "eat with their eyes."

## Stallman

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Union's moratorium on the importation of biotech crops in the World Trade Organization.

Farm Bureau will work in support of the Bush administration's "aggressive" proposal for the WTO agriculture negotiations, Stallman added. "We will stand firmly behind our administration's demand that any new limits on trade-distorting domestic support be fair," he said.

Farm Bureau also has much to accomplish on the natural resource front, according to Stallman. He pledged that AFBF would continue to stand up for the multiple use of public lands and better forest management to prevent forests from becoming "an overgrown box of kindling." Ensuring that new environmental regulations allow farmers and ranchers to continue producing was another top priority Stallman cited.

"I know that you will join AFBF during the 108th Congress in working to achieve our common goals for 2003 and beyond," Stallman said.

## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

## Gilbert emphasizes women's role in Farm Bureau

Farm Bureau women play an essential role in their organization, their industry, their communities and their families, said American Farm Bureau Women's Committee Chair Terry Gilbert during the Women's business meeting at the 84th AFBF annual convention.

Gilbert, a cattle and corn producer from Danville, Ky., was re-elected chair of the AFB Women's Committee during the meeting.

She was first elected to the post in January 2001 and has served as a member on the committee since January 2000.

In her speech, Gilbert referred to a classic movie as inspiration. "My all-time favorite movie is 'The Wizard of Oz.' My brother and I watched it

together as children and it was a big treat to get to go to a neighbor's home and watch it on her color TV," Gilbert said. "I know you are asking: 'What does this have to do with Farm Bureau and FB women in particular?' I think these (brains, heart, courage, home and faith) are all things we want to have in our own lives and in our Farm Bureau work."

Utilizing those elements, Gilbert called on women to work on a variety of issues in the coming year. Among the top priorities Gilbert outlined were building leadership skills, continuing agriculture education efforts such as Ag in the Classroom programs and increasing education on the benefits of biotechnology.

Gilbert also highlighted some of

the work Farm Bureau women accomplished in 2002, including the fifth national commemoration of Food Check-Out Day, and the successful completion of four Regional Women's Multi-State Conferences held in April.

A special part of the multi-state conferences was the launch of the White-Reinhardt Fund for Education. Administered by the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, the fund focuses on agricultural education efforts and honors two former AFB Women's Committee chairs, Linda Reinhardt and Berta Lee White. According to Gilbert, a fund-raising goal of \$25,000 was established, with more than \$15,000 already raised in 2002.



Terry Gilbert, chair of the AFBF Women's Committee, rallied Farm Bureau women.

## Ohio leader earns Distinguished Service Award

Retired Ohio Farm Bureau Executive Vice President C. William Swank was honored for his commitment to agri-

culture with the American Farm Bureau Federation's most prestigious award—the Distinguished Service

Award. Swank accepted the award at a special presentation during the 84th AFBF annual convention.

Born and raised on a farm near Greenville, Ohio, Swank learned early in life that hard work and farming were synonymous. Not only was he the first from his family to graduate from college, he earned an undergraduate degree from Ohio State University, served in the U.S. military, and then returned to complete his master's and doctorate degrees in economics.

Swank has served the agriculture community through his visible leadership at both the state and national levels. He has received several national appointments, including serving as chairman of the National Panel on Cost Effectiveness of Ethanol Fuel Production. During his tenure with the Ohio Farm Bureau, membership grew from 52,000 to more than 180,000, with a gain in farmer members for many consecutive years.

Swank also has been instrumental in

creating an atmosphere for agricultural groups in Ohio to work together. In addition, he has served as president of the 112,000-member Ohio State University Alumni Association and recently was the namesake of the C. William Swank Endowed Chair in Rural/Urban policy, a position funded to provide solutions to problems associated with urbanization of agricultural land.

Following retirement, Swank was appointed by Ohio's governor to tri-chair, with the state's lieutenant governor and agriculture director, a task force to make recommendations on how best to preserve Ohio's prime farmland. He was inducted into the Ohio Agricultural Hall of Fame in 1997 and the Cooperative Hall of Fame in 2002.

AFBF's Distinguished Service Award is presented to individuals who have devoted their entire careers to serving farming and ranching, and who continue to display a concern for the agricultural industry.



C. William Swank (left), retired Ohio Farm Bureau executive vice president, received the AFBF Distinguished Service Award from AFBF President Bob Stallman in honor of Swank's leadership in Farm Bureau.

## Farm Bureau delegates set policies

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ports labeling of agricultural products as "grown in the USA."

The policy states that for animal products to receive the label, the animal must have been "exclusively born, raised and processed in the United States."

The delegates also asked the AFBF board of directors for a study of the impact of country-of-origin labeling on producers of livestock and livestock products.

Addressing the issue of homeland security, the delegates urged the new Cabinet department to ensure the continued safe production of food and fiber.



To bolster rural America, the delegates called for federal lending programs to provide adequate resources for beginning farmers. They also en-

dorsed federal and state rural development programs.

In other convention news, state Farm Bureau presidents Alan Foutz of Colorado, Craig Lang of Iowa and Kenneth Dierschke of Texas were newly elected to the AFBF board of directors.

Also serving on the board will be Jeff Gatzke of South Dakota, the newly elected chairman of the AFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee, and Terry Gilbert of Kentucky, who was re-elected to another two-year term as chairperson of the AFB Women's Committee.

In addition, Helen Norris of Kansas was newly elected to the AFB Women's Committee.

### Editor's note

The photos in this issue of Farm Bureau News were taken by Ken Kashian, photographic services, Illinois Farm Bureau; Mike Danna, information and public relations director, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation; and Liz Neighbors, graphic designer, American Farm Bureau Federation. Thank you to each of these photographers for their fine work.

For more coverage of the AFBF 84th annual convention, visit [www.fb.org/programs/2003/annual](http://www.fb.org/programs/2003/annual).

## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

## South Dakota farmer elected YF&R chairman

In addition to the competitions and awards, young farmers and ranchers elected a new chairman of the Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 84th convention in Tampa, Fla.

Jeffery Gatzke of Hitchcock, S.D., will take over from outgoing chairman Kerry Gibson of Utah and serve a one-year term.

Gatzke and his wife, Sheila, grow 4,000 acres of corn and soybeans in partnership with Jeff's parents. They are also part owners in the family feedlot. Gatzke attended Lake Area Technical Institute. He and his wife have been involved in Farm Bureau since 1991, serving in several leadership posts, including president of the Spink County Farm Bureau. They were also the South Dakota YF&R Achievement Award winners in 2001. The Gatzkes have three children.

Gatzke said he accepts AFBF President Bob Stallman's challenge to him



Kerry Gibson (left) of Utah, outgoing chairman of the AFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee, congratulates Jeff Gatzke of South Dakota on his election to the post.

to come up with ideas for helping young producers get going in agriculture. It will be the main goal of his

chairmanship, he said. Gatzke also acknowledged that times are tough on the farm, especially for young farmers.

"When times get tougher, you need to get tougher," Gatzke said. "Get involved. Have a voice. Stand up and show what you really want to stand for. There's a lot of county Farm Bureaus that need leaders."

He said young farmers should contact their county Farm Bureau and be part of Farm Bureau's efforts to improve farmers' profitability. "And if they don't have a local county Farm Bureau, go to the state and get one going."

Gatzke acknowledged Sheila's support and the important role she will play in his chairmanship.

"My wife is my backbone," Gatzke said. "She keeps me thinking positive—keeps me on the right track. She's just as excited about this as I am."

Topping Gatzke's post-convention schedule was a tri-state (South Dakota, Nebraska and Wyoming) leadership conference last week in Nebraska, as well as the upcoming national YF&R Leadership Conference, Feb. 15-17, in Hershey, Pa.

## Young farmers and ranchers match wits, win awards

Winners of the Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award, Discussion Meet and Excellence in Agriculture competitions were announced at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 84th convention.

John and Jennifer Smith of Tennessee received the Achievement Award. Denise Skidmore of California won the Discussion Meet. And, Matthew and Andrea Lohr of Virginia won the newest honor for YF&R members, the Excellence in Agriculture Award.

The Smiths farm 3,000 acres, including 1,800 acres of row crops, 70 acres of tobacco and 45 acres of hay. In addition, they have 150 head of registered Angus cattle.

They took home a fully-loaded 2003 Dodge Ram 3500 Laramie SLT Quad Cab 4x4 pickup truck with a Cummins high output diesel engine, courtesy of Dodge; a \$2,500 voucher from Syngenta Crop Protection; and free registration to the 2003 YF&R Leadership

Conference in Hershey, Pa.

The Achievement Award recognizes young farmers and ranchers who have excelled in their farming or ranching operations and exhibited superior leadership abilities. Participants are evaluated on a combination of their agricultural operation growth and financial progress, Farm Bureau leadership and leadership outside Farm Bureau.

Skidmore is the education coordinator for a cheese company's visitor center. She enjoys educating customers about the benefits of American agriculture. To date, she has taught more than 500,000 people. She won a fully-loaded 2003 Dodge Ram 2500 Laramie SLT Quad Cab 4x4 pickup truck with a Magnum V10 engine, courtesy of Dodge, plus free registration to the 2003 YF&R Leadership Conference.

The Discussion Meet program simulates a committee meeting where active discussion and participation are expected. Participants are evaluated on their ability to exchange ideas and information on a predetermined topic.



Denise Skidmore of California, winner of the YF&R Discussion Meet, receives congratulations and the keys to a new Dodge truck from Jack Warren of Dodge.

The Lohrs have a motivational speaking business, and since 1996 they have traveled to all 50 states, entertaining and inspiring members and staff of agricultural organizations and businesses. They also enjoy helping out on their family's beef and

poultry operation.

They received a Dodge Ram 1500 pickup truck, plus free registration to the 2003 YF&R Leadership Conference.

The Farm Bureau Excellence in Agriculture award is designed to recognize young farmers and ranchers who do not derive the majority of their income from an agricultural operation that they own, but who actively contribute and grow through their involvement in Farm Bureau and agriculture. Participants are judged on their involvement in agriculture, their leadership ability and participation in Farm Bureau and other organizations.

Runners up for the Achievement Award included Frank and Stacy Konyn of California, Chris and Jill Kummer of Kentucky, Chad and Latisha Hardy of Utah, and Randy and Marilyn

Julka of Wisconsin. They each received their choice of either 250 hours usage of a Case IH tractor or full ownership of a selected Case IH compact tractor. In addition, Syngenta Crop Protection recognized nine out of 10 Achievement Award finalists with \$1,500 vouchers.

The three runners-up in the Discussion Meet were Herber Loughmiller of Idaho, Brittany Friars Whitmire of North Carolina and DeWayne Burns of Texas. Each received a \$6,000 U.S. Savings Bond, courtesy of Cummins Engine Co.

The three runners-up in the Excellence in Agriculture competition were Regan and Dawn Kucera of Nebraska, Elizabeth Foote of New York and Brian and Carrie Bolt of South Carolina. Each received a \$2,000 U.S. Savings Bond and a Farm Boss chainsaw, courtesy of Stihl Outdoor Power Equipment.

All the YF&R competition contestants received inscribed plaques.



Achievement Award winners John and Jennifer Smith of Tennessee pose with Jack Warren (right) of Dodge in front of the Smiths' prize, a new Dodge truck.



Matthew and Andrea Lohr of Virginia won the newest YF&R honor, the Excellence in Agriculture Award. They also were presented the keys to a new Dodge truck by Jack Warren (right) of Dodge.

## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

# PAL program develops advocates for agriculture

Altria Group Inc., through its Shared Solutions program, and the American Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) Committee are joining forces to create tomorrow's agricultural leaders.

Together, they created the Partners in Agricultural Leadership (PAL) awards program to strengthen participants' leadership skills.

Upon completion of the program, participants will be able to represent agriculture whenever opportunities arise in the news media, in speaking circuits or in presenting testimony before Congress or government agencies.

"Agriculture is faced with substantial and constant challenges," said Katherine Trent, director of agricultural relations for Altria, formerly Philip



Morris Management Corp., which changed its name last week. "PAL gives participants a complete understanding of critical issues and helps them become seasoned spokespeople. Participants are able to expand leadership roles in order to serve the entire agricultural community."

Altria worked with AFBF to develop the PAL program after AFBF identified a need for trained spokespersons and advanced leadership training that would capitalize on the enthusiasm of its YF&R program participants. The partnership was formed through Altria's Shared Solutions Agricultural Initiative, which works with farmers and ranchers to address issues common to agriculture and ag-based consumer products companies like those

in the Altria family, which includes Kraft Foods Inc.

"PAL is a wonderful example of how organizations can come together to identify needs and resources that ultimately benefit more than the organizations involved," said Trent. "We are thrilled to be working to help develop leadership that will keep agriculture strong."

AFBF's YF&R program is already known for its work to develop young leaders. YF&R sponsors several competitive events and fosters the exchange of ideas to stimulate leadership development among farmers and ranchers aged 18 to 35.

The PAL program fills the gap where YF&R leaves off. PAL helps younger

people in the industry gain skills to transition more rapidly into leadership.

PAL participants will spend six months receiving advanced leadership training in media relations, crisis communication, public policy development and global and emerging issues in agriculture. The program is open to current-year "Sweet 16" finalists of the YF&R Discussion Meet, the top 10 finalists of the YF&R Achievement Award and YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award competitions, and retired members of

the YF&R Committee.

Applications for the PAL awards program are being mailed to all eligible YF&R members, and can be requested by calling AFBF at 847-685-8600.



# Farmers tuning in to consumer preferences, expectations

Farmers and ranchers are becoming more aware of what consumers expect from their food supply system, but must keep working to meet those expectations. That's the bottom line from a new study of U.S. farmer and consumer attitudes, released Jan. 20 at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 84th annual convention.

AFBF commissioned the study in partnership with Altria Group Inc. (for-

merly Philip Morris Management Corp.), one of the nation's largest purchasers of agricultural products. RoperASW conducted the 100-plus question survey in August and September 2002. Researchers asked 1,000 consumers to share their opinions of modern farming practices and how well farmers are meeting food supply needs. At the same time, they asked 700 farmers and ranchers to assess consumer

expectations and to predict their future farming practices.

The study is a follow-up to a 1999 research project sponsored by AFBF and Philip Morris, which revealed significant gaps between farmers' and consumers' views on important food and agricultural issues. At the time, it was one of the most comprehensive farmer-consumer studies ever undertaken.

"The new research shows that farmers are much more in tune with consumers than they were three years ago," said AFBF President Bob Stallman. "Yet, farmers need to better understand some of consumers' gravest concerns, and realize that consumers may be willing to act on those concerns."

Farmers did the best job of closing the "gap" between themselves and consumers in the area of food safety. The study also revealed continued consumer support for agriculture.

In a new series of questions, researchers asked consumers and farmers about the relationship between farming and the environment, revealing new gaps in attitudes. More than half of consumers said that it is important for food to be produced in ways that maintain environmental resources and productivity for the future, but less than half were satisfied that their food was being produced in that manner. Farmers underestimated consumers' expectations—only 44 percent of them said that this was an important consumer concern.

Water quality emerged as a key issue for farmers and consumers. Consumers and farmers also agreed that farm subsidies should be based on environmentally sound farming practices, as opposed to production levels, as they have been paid in the past.

Additionally, the research revealed a

potential for consumers to act on strong beliefs about farming methods. When asked whether they would be willing to switch to a food company whose suppliers use farming practices that preserve environmental resources for the future, 42 percent said they would be "very likely" to switch and 44 percent said "somewhat likely."

In addition, 85 percent of consumers said that they would be willing to pay more for food produced with these methods. Asked to predict what others would do, two-thirds still responded that people would be likely to pay more.

"This indicates a 'latent readiness' to act," said Bob Pares, RoperASW senior vice president. "Consumers have attitudes that could lead to action if some kind of triggering event takes place."

In spite of this potential acceptance of higher food costs in exchange for environmental gains, 85 percent of consumers said they would prefer to have taxes cover the additional costs of those gains, rather than paying more at the supermarket.

The research indicated that farmers still may be able to educate consumers, but the window of opportunity is starting to close.

"Compared with 1999, fewer consumers answered 'don't know' to questions relating to food and farming," said Pares. "The question is—where are they getting their information? Consumers may be open to farmers' point of view, but the educational job will be much harder once they've made up their minds."

To receive a full research report, contact Karen Potratz, Morgan&Myers, 606 E. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202, 800-647-7294 or e-mail [foodresearch@morganmyers.com](mailto:foodresearch@morganmyers.com).

## How satisfied are consumers on those things that are most important to them?

What practices are important: How satisfied are you:	Consumer importance rating	Consumer satisfaction rating	Gap
Minimizing risk of bacteria	9.1	7.8	1.3
Freshness	9.4	8.4	1.0
Maintaining nutritional value	8.9	7.9	1.0
Livestock and poultry being treated humanely	7.6	6.9	.7
Meat and poultry not being given antibiotics	7.2	6.6	.6
Taste	9.2	8.7	.5
Foods grown without pesticides	7.6	7.1	.5
Producing foods in ways that maintain environmental resources and productivity for future	7.4	7.0	.4
Meat and poultry bred to be low in fat and cholesterol	7.1	7.1	0
Foods available year-round, even out of season	7.0	7.0	0
Dairy products that are low in fat and cholesterol	7.2	7.6	(.4)

Ratings are on a scale of 1 to 10.

## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

## FBs win 'Gold Stars' for programs, membership gains

A galaxy of state Farm Bureaus shone brightly during the Gold Star Awards ceremony held Jan. 19 at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 84th annual convention.

Sharing top honors for offering stellar programs for members in 2002 were Farm Bureaus in Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee and Utah. Those six states each earned plaques adorned with the maximum 12 gold stars, which recognize superior work in the organization's 12 program categories.

Gold stars were awarded in the categories of: membership; commodity

marketing and marketing information; Farm Bureau Women's program; Young Farmers and Ranchers program; public relations; state and local governmental affairs; leadership and organization development; public policy implementation; special programs; political education programs; Agriculture in the Classroom; and agriculture promotion.

Earning 11 gold stars in the competition were state Farm Bureaus in Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Texas. Six state Farm Bureaus captured 10 gold stars each, including Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa,

Kentucky, Minnesota and North Carolina.

Other gold star rankings and state Farm Bureaus recognized for their outstanding program work were:

- Nine stars—Florida, New York and Wisconsin.
- Eight stars—Kansas.
- Seven stars—Louisiana, New Mexico and Washington.
- Six stars—Georgia, Mississippi and Nebraska.
- Five stars—Arizona, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Virginia and Wyoming.

- Four stars—Nevada, South Dakota and Vermont.

- Three stars—New Hampshire, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina and West Virginia.

- Two stars—Alabama.
- One star—Delaware, Massachusetts and North Dakota.

In addition to the gold star designations, six state Farm Bureaus earned the prestigious President's Award for overall program and membership achievement. The winners included Connecticut, Utah, Idaho, Missouri, Ohio and Illinois.

## Kentucky farmer honored for top farm innovation

Robert Bedford, a farmer from Cynthia, Ky., claimed the top award in the American Farm Bureau Federation's 15th annual Farmer Idea Exchange for his "Taking the Farmers' Market to the Farm" program. Bedford received the top award during AFBF's 84th annual convention in Tampa, Fla.

Bedford created a pamphlet that listed commodities available and a map of the county showing where the farm growing each commodity is located. This idea was especially effective for producers with a need to inexpensively market commodities that

cannot be displayed in a farmers' market environment.

The pamphlet contains goods and services ranging from shelled corn to earthworms and tree trimming to birds. The pamphlet is available free to consumers at the county Farm Bureau office and other locations around the county.

As the top winner, Bedford was awarded one year's free use of a New Holland TV 140 Bi-directional tractor. In addition to Bedford's top honor, AFBF awarded three checks for \$250 each for other achievements.

The award for the "most innovative

idea" went to Ron Cole of Vici, Okla., for his "All Terrain Cedar Saw, L.L.C." Cole adapted his 4-wheeler by building a special saw to cut cedar trees out of pastures. Cole developed the saw to address the problem of Red Cedar trees taking over grasslands in his area.

The award for the "most widely usable idea" went to Richard and Cathy Layden, who farm near Hoopston, Ill., for their "Tire Changer Wheel Lift Support." Their invention allows one person to safely and efficiently change tires, especially large diameter tires. The stabilizer can be

used in a farm shop or open field setting and is suitable for use on dry or wet ground, soft or firm ground, and level or uneven terrain.

Bedford also received the award for the idea "most likely to improve a farmer's net income."

In all, 30 innovative ideas from 11 states were entered in this year's contest. The three special awards were determined by a vote of the 15 farmers and ranchers who were selected to exhibit their ideas during the meeting. Pictures of the winning ideas can be viewed at AFBF's Web site, <http://www.fb.org/programs/farmerx/fbidea.pdf>.

## AFBF recognizes excellence in crop advising

An Oklahoma retail field-man was honored as this year's Excellence in Crop Advising award recipient at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 84th convention in Tampa, Fla.

Kenneth Failes, a retail field-man for Burlington Cooperative Association in Cherokee, Okla., accepted the award in a special presentation at the convention. In nominating Failes, the Oklahoma Farm Bureau said he deserved the award because he "is recognized as one of the top crop advisers in the state."

The Excellence in Crop Advising awards program, sponsored by AFBF in association with the American Society of Agronomy, recognizes certified crop advisers who have performed superior service for farmers in nutrient management, soil and water management, integrated pest management and crop production.

In addition, the award increases awareness of the fact that farmers and their service people strive to do their best in not only making economically sound cropping decisions, but also environmentally sound cropping decisions.

In his position at Burlington Co-op, Failes emphasizes service to producers along with sales. Embracing a philosophy that if it isn't good for the pro-

ducer, it isn't good for the co-op, Failes' goal is to increase producer profitability. He takes soil samples annually, servicing 50,000 acres (80 percent of the area of land in production). In addition, he was instrumental in "on-farm wheat cleaning services" for area producers and initiated lime application to area soils to help solve pH balance problems.

Failes shares his knowledge through a variety of community presentations each year. He has received several awards throughout his career, including the 1996 Oklahoma State University Agronomy Department's annual Master Agronomist award and the Alfalfa County Soil Conservation Board's Banker's Award in the mid-1980s. Failes has served as a member of various groups related to his work, such as the Farm Service Agency County Committee, Alfalfa County Agriculture Advisory Committee, Farmers Home Administration board and the Oklahoma State University Fertility Research and Education Advisory Board.

Now in its fifth year, the Excellence in Crop Advising awards program produced a record-breaking 14 nominations for this year's award. The remaining 13 state Farm Bureaus participating in the program recognized their nomi-

nees with state awards. State award winners included: Hans Kvist, Plainfield, Conn.; Michael Pochop, Laurel, Del. (nominated by Maryland Farm Bureau); Wayne Simmons, Immokalee, Fla.; John Walker, Rexburg, Idaho; Matt Montgomery, Springfield, Ill.; Casey Ryan Finlay, Syracuse, Kan.; Joe McCormick, Hopkinsville, Ky.; Kevin Rugaard, Spring Valley, Minn.; Regan Kucera, Adison, Neb.; Bryant McCoy

Spivey, Kenansville, N.C.; Stuart Newcomer, Seville, Ohio; Jeff Schneck, Reading, Pa.; and John Robert Henley, Hillsboro, Tenn.

Funding for the program was provided by a grant from Syngenta Crop Protection Inc., to the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. For additional information, contact Jim Porterfield of AFBFA at 847-685-8782 or [jimp@fb.org](mailto:jimp@fb.org).



### All smiles for ice cream

Ice cream and all the fixings were popular with Farm Bureau members of all ages at the annual AFBF ice cream social.

## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

# AFB Inc. launches farm-oriented online auction

American Farm Bureau Inc. on Jan. 19 launched "FB Auction," an online auction tool that is the newest addition in a line of benefits and services offered exclusively to Farm Bureau members

through its new Web portal, [www.fbcountry.com](http://www.fbcountry.com).

Following a ribbon cutting ceremony at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 84th annual convention, AFBF

President Bob Stallman officially opened FB Auction by placing the first live bid on the new Internet platform. FB Auction was demonstrated live throughout the convention.

FB Auction works similarly to other popular Internet auction Web sites in that it guides users step-by-step through how to place a bid, sell an item and create their own auction or store. Visitors to the site can view featured stores, browse listings by product categories, place bids, track auctions for items ending soon and watch for new listings.

FB Auction is unique in that it provides a direct path for consumers to find the agricultural community and their products.

"People can now bid on a home-made quilt in Idaho, or antiques in Vermont or equipment in Tennessee—simply by clicking their computers," said Casey Wojciechowski, AFB Inc. general manager.

Wojciechowski predicts that FB Auction will help expand the way farmers and ranchers do business. Designed exclusively as a means to help Farm Bureau members expand their agribusinesses across the country, FB Auction promises to be a powerful sales vehicle and marketing tool.



AFBF President Bob Stallman places the inaugural bid on [fbauction.com](http://fbauction.com).

"Many farmers and ranchers are involved in cottage businesses as a means to earn extra income," Wojciechowski said. "If they could reach the entire country with their products without having to travel or leave home, or without paying huge advertising dollars, that could have a real impact on their bottom lines."

For more information, visit [www.fbauction.com](http://www.fbauction.com) or contact Cyndee Muska, AFB Inc., at 847-685-8888.



## Bidding for good

Farm Bureau members got the chance to bid on unique donated items and help raise more than \$12,000 for the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture at the ninth annual Silent Auction.

# Foundation names Eagle Award winners

The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and Alaska Farm Bureau soared high in 2002 to earn the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture (AFBFA) Eagle Award, presented during the afternoon general session at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 84th convention.

Since 1996, AFBFA has presented two awards to state Farm Bureaus that have demonstrated outstanding support to the foundation and its programs. The Eagle Awards are presented to the state

with the highest total contributions from the state, and to the state with the highest average contribution per member.

Total contributions to the foundation from Mississippi were \$12,921 last year. Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation President David Waide accepted the award on behalf of the state.

Second place in this category was the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, followed by South Carolina Farm Bureau Federa-

tion, Illinois Farm Bureau and New Jersey Farm Bureau.

Alaska Farm Bureau received the Eagle Award for an average contribution per member of \$1.46. Alaska Farm Bureau President Bob Franklin accepted the award.

Second place in this category was Delaware Farm Bureau, followed by New Jersey Farm Bureau, Nevada Farm Bureau and New Hampshire Farm Bureau.

"Congratulations to all of these state Farm Bureaus, and thank you to each donor for your support," said AFBF President Bob Stallman during the awards presentation. "In these times when our economy is under stress, we ask you to include the foundation on your list of charitable organizations receiving your support. Our programs of education and research depend on your generosity."

The convention also included events to help raise more funds for the foundation. The third annual Golf Classic, held at The Eagles Golf and Country Club in Odessa, Fla., the day before the convention started, raised about \$30,000 for AFBFA education programs.

In addition, the ninth annual silent auction, held in the Tampa Convention Center during the convention, raised more than \$12,000 for the foundation through conventioners' bidding on several donated items.



The annual Golf Classic at the AFBF convention helped raise about \$30,000 for the agricultural education activities of the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

## Correction:

In the Jan. 20, 2003, issue of *Farm Bureau News*, it was reported erroneously that Arkansas Farm Bureau would like to see a state department of agriculture created. In fact, ARFB opposes the creation of a state department of agriculture. *Farm Bureau News* apologizes for the error and any confusion or difficulty it may have caused.

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