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A free country depends upon having a legal system that we, the people, can have confidence in, and one that will treat everyone equally. We must trust that we are innocent until proven guilty and not the other way around. We must also trust that when a crime is actually committed that there will be punishment for those who commit the crime. Today, especially in our large cities, we see career criminals being released without bail only to return to their communities and commit more crimes. Many criminals continue this cycle and end up not being prosecuted at all. Gangs are looting stores and are never charged with a crime.

Most of this lack of justice is a direct result of the Biden Justice Department in combination with elected prosecutors, whose political campaigns were paid for by extremist liberal activists like George Soros, whose goal is to tear down this country by creating anarchy in our streets. The poster boy of these anarchist prosecutors is Alvin Bragg in Manhattan, New York. George Soros provided over a million dollars to get Bragg elected. Now, Alvin Bragg is doing exactly what Soros paid for him to do. He is letting criminals go free, while at the same time doing anything and everything to manufacture charges against former President Trump in an effort to prevent him from running again. They know that it would be nearly impossible for Trump to get a fair trial in Manhattan, where the overwhelming majority of residents are very liberal Democrats.

Donald Trump once again has to spend huge amounts of money to defend himself from seemingly baseless attacks. It is hard to imagine that this could happen to this country’s former (and possibly future) president. I used to think that this kind of thing only happened in some third-world country. It seems that Biden and company are trying their hardest to turn the United States into one of those third-world countries where your political rivals are prosecuted and removed as a threat to their political power.

Biden and family have already proven that they no longer care about this country. This is evidenced by the millions of dollars that his family has received from the Chinese government and others so that they may get what they want. It seems strange that there is no equal justice for the treacherous activities of the Biden family.

Now let’s get on to one of my biggest concerns about the Biden Justice Department and those rogue prosecutors. If they can do what they are doing to a former president, just imagine what they can do to any of us, for any reason whatsoever. If we are deemed to be any kind of adversary, they could use the EPA, IRS, ATF, etc. to come after us. As with President Trump, instead of being innocent until proven guilty, we would likely be guilty until proven innocent. I believe we will continue to see this kind of persecution until we conform to extremist governmental policies such as the environment, guns, and other woke proposals such as DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), which are all threats to our nation’s continued success.

If we are to remain a free country, it is up to all of us to do a better job of raising our children and grandchildren. We must raise them so that they too value the freedom and rights we enjoy in this country. The forces of evil are working against us every day through many social media platforms and even some of our school systems. We must instil in our children the principles that this country was founded upon, and teach them to be proud of American exceptionalism. The fate of our country depends upon it.
Farming families are being sought as applicants for the 2023 Farming Heritage Award that is being offered by the State Fair of West Virginia and West Virginia Farm Bureau.

The Farming Heritage Award will be presented to a family that has strived to maintain its rural lifestyle by contributing to the community, acting as role models, dedicating time to efficient agricultural production, and maintaining the upkeep of their farm through generations.

“The Farming Heritage Award honors an agricultural family and their multi-generation contributions to their community and to West Virginia. The official state seal of West Virginia, featuring a farmer, is also the logo of the award program,” said Kelly Collins, CEO of the State Fair of West Virginia.

Entry forms may be completed by family members or by someone who wants to nominate a family for consideration. Judging will be conducted by an independent panel of judges.

All entries must be postmarked or emailed by Thursday, June 1, 2023. See application for full details. Entry forms are available by calling the WVFB office at 304-472-2080.

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**Photo Submission**

Can we help dad?

by Carl Nelson

Knights Bridge Farm

Summit Point Road, Summit Point, WV

Jefferson County

This group of young heifers would follow me whenever I did any work in their pasture. I took this while spraying for thistles.
I hope each of you are enjoying the spring season. Please consider the following issues:

In mid-March the Food Industry Association and 24 other agricultural groups released the seventh annual “Feeding the Economy” white paper which outlines the agriculture sector’s impact on local and nationwide economic activity. This year’s report shows $8.6 trillion of economic activity impact from agriculture on the American economy, up 22 percent since 2019. The report also shows that agriculture is responsible for over 46 million jobs with total wages of $2.61 trillion. Total taxes paid by agricultural entities were $947 billion, up 3.8 percent, and export values of $202 billion were reported. Overall agriculture-related economic activity accounts for 20 percent of the U.S. economy.

President Biden has released the FY 24 Budget Request which, if enacted, would authorize $6.9 trillion in spending. USDA’s request for discretionary budget authority is $32.6 billion, which is $4.7 billion above FY 23. Each year, the president releases a budget request that Congress uses to craft a final budget resolution. The USDA budget request includes the following:

- $35.4 million for Packers & Stockyards to regulate livestock, meat, and poultry marketing practices
- $400 million for Reconnect Program for infrastructure
- $65 million for distance learning and tele-medicine grants
- $1.9 billion for ARS research funding
- $1.2 billion for adoption of conservation practices through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics has announced that February consumer prices were 6 percent higher than a year ago. This is the lowest since September 2021 but still higher than any month since December 1990. Most economists believe the higher inflation rate in 2021 and 2022 was caused by massive amounts of “new money” created by the Federal Reserve Board (Fed). The Fed loaned trillions of dollars to banks at near zero interest rates and purchased trillions of dollars in government-backed securities. The Fed’s dramatic reversal of the money supply is expected to help rein in inflation over the next year. The Fed’s interest rate increases have created pressure on banks. Certainly, credit rates to farmers for 2023 will increase overall production costs.

Finally, the 2023 Legislative Session ended on March 11. Over 2,000 bills were considered, with 333 receiving approval from both Houses. Several major actions were taken, including cutting personal income tax by 21.25 percent, as well as allowing rebates of the vehicle tax. The Legislature voted for pay increases for teachers and state workers and approved an increase in PEIA contributions by employees. Several bills were passed on education, including funding to place teacher aides in grades 1 through 3 and CPR instruction for high school students. Considerable time was spent dividing DHHR into three agencies in an effort to improve services and better identify problem areas. Efforts failed to regulate carbon offset agreements on forest land. It is anticipated that this issue will be studied during future interim sessions. Also, Governor Justice has indicated that a special session may occur soon to address pay for Department of Corrections employees.

Don’t forget that on Memorial Day (May 29) Americans will remember the sacrifices of military service members who gave their lives in the fight for our country. Memorial Day was originally known as Decoration Day, as many people decorated gravesites with flowers and flags. In 1971, Congress set Memorial Day as the last Monday in May.

As I think of the sacrifices of our forefathers, I am reminded of what Nathan Hale said: “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.” May we, as Americans, never forget that freedom isn’t free.

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Missing: New Export Opportunities

America’s farmers and ranchers work hard every day to raise a source of food, fiber, and renewable fuel for families all over the world. We rely on trade agreements and global cooperation to get products from our fields to tables worldwide. And while the last year had some promising developments in international trade, there are more challenges on the horizon.

In 2022, the value of our agricultural exports was up, but the amount of product we exported decreased. Last year was only the second time in the last decade that the U.S. imported more agricultural products than we exported. These statistics are concerning, as they highlight the challenges that our farmers and ranchers face in accessing international markets.

While the pandemic disrupted global trade patterns, the ongoing disputes between the United States and Mexico over genetically modified corn have further complicated the trade landscape. Mexico is an important market for U.S. corn growers with nearly 30% of our corn going to Mexico. Still, at the end of 2020, the country announced it would ban genetically modified or glyphosate-protected corn. Then this February, Mexico updated its decree to state certain U.S. corn, specifically white corn that is produced with biotechnology, will not be imported, but that yellow corn produced with biotechnology can continue to be imported while Mexico looks for alternatives. This kind of flip-flopping makes it clear these moves aren’t about science.

“While we have made progress in some areas of international trade, there is still much work to be done.”

The science shows that genetically modified crops are not only safe but also critical in helping achieve sustainability goals. It is important that biotechnology is recognized as safe, no matter the final use. We should be working together to find solutions that benefit both of our countries and that help us deliver safe, sustainable products to customers everywhere.

I’m grateful to Secretary Vilsack and U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Tai for listening to U.S. farmers and initiating the enforcement mechanisms of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement to stop Mexico’s ban. By enforcing the agreement, we can ensure that our farmers and ranchers have access to the markets they need to be economically sustainable as well.

While we have made progress in some areas of international trade, there is still much work to be done. The lack of any new trade deals during the Biden administration is concerning. Other countries aren’t waiting for us either: they are moving ahead with trade agreements, which give...
them strategic advantages and access to new markets. If we don’t act soon, America’s farmers and ranchers will be left behind.

Greater access to international markets could help farmers as inflation and increased supply costs have left many operating on razor-thin margins. The past year has brought unprecedented inflation in agriculture input costs, from fertilizer to seed to fuel. By expanding access to new markets, we can create more opportunities for farmers and ranchers to sell their products, which can help offset these increased costs. We need the administration to get serious about reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers to U.S. agricultural exports. This will require strong leadership and a willingness to engage in meaningful negotiations with our trading partners.

Ultimately, farmers and ranchers across the country must engage and advocate for stronger trading relationships. We need to ensure policymakers understand the importance of international trade and its vital role in supporting rural communities across America. By working together and speaking up, we can help ensure that America’s farmers and ranchers continue their mission of providing the world with the food, fiber, and renewable fuel that we all rely on.

Vincent “Zippy” Duvall, a poultry, cattle and hay producer from Greene County, Georgia, is the 12th president of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Upcoming West Virginia Farm Bureau Newsletters will sport a new column called “Growing a State and Nation...A Photographic History of Agriculture in West Virginia. We are going to rely on your photos and short stories to help “tell the tale” of farming in West Virginia. So get those old photos scanned and send them to ronw@wvfarm.org. Tell us as much as you know about the photo.
2023 Summer Agricultural Institute for Educators

June 21 -22 at Wingate by Wyndham Vienna
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- 3 hours of graduate professional development credits available* from WVU (registration with BOTH WVFB and WVU required)
- Approved by WVDE for recertification credit
- FREE teaching materials
- Practical, hands-on applications for your classroom
- Lessons in math, science, reading, writing and social studies your kids will love
- Learn about vast areas of agriculture and potential careers


Summer Ag Institute (SAI) registration fees to West Virginia Farm Bureau range from $85-$275, depending on lodging preferences.

PAST PARTICIPANTS OF THE INSTITUTE MAY REAPPLY AS COURSE CONTENT IS NEW FOR 2022.

Online registration or downloadable application available at www.wvfarm.org. Some county Farm Bureaus offer scholarships - call 800-398-4630 x. 313 for more information.

For certification renewal: AGEE930 section 6AC PRDV: Ag for PreK-HS Teachers CRN: 52620 - Cost $75 per credit hour.

Registration & info available online at: https://online.wvu.edu/admissions/professional-development

Additional coursework including lesson plan development will be required in addition to the two-day conference for WVU credits.

Registration with BOTH WVFB & WVU required for credits.

Registration fees paid to WVFB do not cover cost of credits at WVU.

**ENROLLMENT IN WVU NOT REQUIRED TO ATTEND SAI.**
Monongalia County
March Meeting Hosted WVDA Veterinarian
On March 2, Monongalia County Farm Bureau hosted Dr. Maxwell from the WVDA to have a presentation and discussion on the new antibiotic laws. We invited some surrounding counties to attend since this law will affect all of us and had an awesome attendance of over 60 people! Based on the attendance you could tell how concerned we are with being able to care for our livestock. While the purpose of the event was to discuss the new antibiotic laws, we also discussed how to establish a relationship with a vet if we don’t already have one, how to find a large animal vet that covers your county, the possibility of a new vet tech school at WVU and what it can mean for us, and biosecurity along with various animal diseases. Thank you to the WVDA Veterinarian, Dr. Maxwell, for taking the time to come speak to us and for all of the great discussion we had from all of the participants. We encourage other county Farm Bureaus to host a similar event!

Wetzel County
Scholarship Awarded at Ham, Bacon & Egg Sale
The Wetzel County Farm Bureau was on hand for the 55th Annual Wetzel County 4-H and FFA Ham, Bacon & Egg Show and Sale held at the Mollohan Center on the Wetzel County 4-H grounds.

In addition to presenting a $250 scholarship, the Wetzel County Farm Bureau also purchased a dozen eggs and a ham.

FFA members from Valley, Hundred, and Magnolia High School as well as Wetzel County’s 4-H clubs participated. Auctioneer Mr. Ron Morrison of Glenwood auctioned off a grand total of $97,144 worth of ham, bacon and eggs! Most of the money raised will go directly to the participants and a portion will go to scholarship funds.

ATTENTION COUNTIES!
WE NEED YOUR NEWS.
Whether you want to show off an event or highlight a member or a success story, this is a great place to sound off.

All articles are due by the 20th of the month prior to publication. And don’t forget a photo... they speak a 1000 words.
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As I’m sitting at my breakfast bar looking at my dining room table, I see everything I’m taking with me for my Ag in the Classroom this week. I’ve read over the Ag Book of the Year, *I Love Strawberries* a few more times and have my hands-on activity planned. This year students are going to learn all the processes from a tiny seed to harvesting strawberries and are going to grow strawberry seedlings in a Ziplock plastic sandwich bag. With a few seeds, a paper towel, a spritz bottle of water and the sunshine from their classroom windows, students will be able to watch their seeds germinate and grow small seedlings that they can take home and plant. They will also take home a recipe for homemade, all-natural strawberry fruit roll-ups from the Educator’s Guide for the *I Love Strawberries* book. I so enjoy reading and fielding their many, many questions and I am thrilled to be back in the classroom again!

I hope many of you used National Ag Day to put an article in your local newspaper, posted something on social media about the importance of agriculture, or planned ag in the classroom activities with your elementary schools in your county. If you ever need ideas, please reach out to me.

I was so excited when asked to attend the AFBF Fusion Conference – On Friday, March 3rd, seven state WLC members along with YF&R committee members flew into Jacksonville, Florida for the AFBF Fusion Conference. This conference is held every other year and brings together the WLC, YF&R, and P&E (Promotion & Education) Committees from all across the country. There were over 9,000 participants and I was thrilled to see that nearly two-thirds of the participants were young farmers and their families. What a great time we all had with lots of informative workshops, speakers, activities, and tours. It sure was hard to leave the nice Florida weather too!

Let me close with a quote from Thomas Jefferson, “Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness.” Thank you for what you do each and every day for America. You feed, clothe, and fuel our country regardless of the weather, 365 days a year!!

Until next month, may you all be safe, healthy, and always remember to give thanks for the many blessings granted to us from God.

Blessings from my home to yours!

From the Kitchen Table

Pam Hessler, WVFB Women’s Leadership Chair

**Our Food Link** - So, in last month’s article I erroneously listed the Our Food Link dates for shopping for the three Ronald McDonald Houses in the state. Hopefully, your counties have received the corrected dates and the state office has been posting the correct dates on the WVFB Facebook page as well.

Boy, when I mess up, I certainly do it right. So sorry for all the confusion and I want to the say a special thank you to the state office staff for all their help to correct my error, especially Patty & Ron. County Farm Bureau offices can still submit their financial contributions until May 1st and that total will be divided among the three RM Houses. Please host non-perishable food drives in your counties, if you can, to help fill the RM House pantries. Last year we collected and donated over $20,000 in total food and cash to all three houses. Let’s see if we can beat that total this year.

**Charleston:**
Friday, May 5 – 10 am – Kanawha City Kroger

**Huntington:**
Saturday, May 6 – 10 am – Barboursville Kroger

**Morgantown:**
Saturday, May 6 – 10 am – Patteson Drive Kroger

**RMHC**

Blessings from my home to yours!
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WVU Farm - Morgantown
20 First Calf Heifers with calves by their side
Angus and Hereford

Riverfront Cattle Company
10 First Calf Heifers with calves
5 Bulls • Kinseys Oak Front
2 Bulls

For More Information Contact:
Quill Ward 304-672-5347
or Sam Garrett 304-871-6789
Taking the fight for fairness in female sports all the way to the US Supreme Court

It’s a case of simple biology.
It’s a case about fair play.
Most of all, it’s plain common sense.

Our case is about the issue of fairness in women’s sports, a West Virginia law that we are taking all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. We believe the Court will see the issue the way we do: this is about protecting opportunities for women and girls in sports because when biological males compete—and win—in a women’s event, female athletes lose their opportunity to shine.

We are asking the Supreme Court to allow us to enforce the Save Women’s Sports Act, which simply demands that all biological males, including those who identify as transgender girls, are ineligible for participation on girls’ sports teams. Some will claim this is simply discrimination, but nothing could be further from the truth.

The injunction reinstated by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit against the state law harms biological female athletes, who will continue to be displaced as long as biological males join women’s sports teams. In that way, the Fourth Circuit’s decision undermines equal protection—it doesn’t advance it. If males are allowed to compete alongside females, fairness evaporates.

Lainey Armistead, who played soccer at West Virginia State University, intervened in the case when a biological male student identifying as a female at Bridgeport Middle School challenged the Act.

Lainey’s story echoes the experiences of female athletes across the nation.
She had the opportunity to play soccer in college on a level playing field because of Title IX, a federal statute that was signed into law on June 23, 1972. It prohibits sex-based discrimination in any school or any other education program that receives funding from the federal government. It’s really quite simple: Title IX dictates that girls and women get their fair share of opportunities in education, and its regulations make it clear that this could be accomplished in school athletic programs by having “separate teams for members of each sex” where the teams are based on competitive skill.

West Virginia enacted HB 3293 on April 28, 2021. It was designed to maintain the integrity of girls’ and women’s sports in both secondary and postsecondary public schools. The Act was in furtherance of Title IX’s efforts to promote athletic opportunities for female athletes.

This is the first case of its kind to reach the high court. Make no mistake, we will keep fighting so female athletes can compete on a level playing field.
West Virginia’s law protects fairness and safety for girls and women in sports.
It’s really that simple.
The West Virginia Farm Bureau Young Farmer & Rancher Committee had their first in-person meeting on February 19th at the WV Farm Bureau Office. This was an opportunity for committee members to meet one another, receive an overview of the committee and discuss new ideas for the upcoming year. 14 current YF&R members were present.

The meeting began by everyone introducing themselves. This year, we have several new committee members who are scattered throughout the state. A powerpoint presentation was displayed that showed all of the opportunities within the YF&R program, as well as things that WV has participated in. We also had the pleasure of the current American YF&R chair, Matt Fimon, join us via zoom. Matt is from Virginia and a few members of our committee had the pleasure of meeting Matt and his family last year at our YF&R retreat with Virginia YF&R. Matt spoke to us about the FUSION conference, developing a mission statement and much more!

We had a delicious lunch and returned back to work. We discussed the calendar of events as well as dividing up into sub committees. Members signed up for committees that included promotion/outreach, fundraising and events. We feel that this will be important so that everyone can participate and play an active role. Since National FFA Week was taking place the following week, we did something fun to show our support. A short video was created describing what FFA meant to each of us while displaying our FFA jackets from our home chapters. If you haven’t seen the video, we would encourage you to check out our Facebook page.

In conclusion, we felt that this meeting was a great success. Since everyone is spread out throughout the state, it is nice to have the opportunity to see each other face to face. We are excited to see what this committee can do to make a positive impact!

OUR NEW DISPLAY!

The YF&R committee display has been traveling throughout the state! Have you seen us? It was first displayed at the WV State FFA Ham Bacon & Egg Sale and then at the Eastern WV Community and Technical College Potomac Highlands Agritourism Summit in Fisher, WV! Pictured here is Michelle Wilfong and Maggie Blankenship.
The 2023 FUSION Conference was held March 3-6 in Jacksonville, Florida. The WV Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee was well represented. Members attending included Charles II, Michelle & CW Wilfong, Mariah Hatton, Lacen Matheny, Elizabeth Lynch, Jessica Hoover & Wesley Mills.

This conference was unique in the fact that there were participants from the three program areas--Promotion & Education, Women’s Leadership and Young Farmers & Ranchers. There was great speakers, breakout sessions and evening events that offered opportunities to grow and network with members from across the country. A few of the committee members went on awesome tours as well. The first stop was Eat Your Yard JAX, a non-profit edible plant nursery and education center. The next stop was Blu by U Blueberry Farm, which was a pick your own blueberry farm.

Michelle Wilfong, West Virginia Farm Bureau YF&R Chair, attended the YF&R Program Chair Enhancement and Networking session on Friday afternoon. This provided her with a great opportunity to meet state chairs from throughout the United States, share ideas and gain a better understanding of the importance of the state chair’s role. She hopes to bring this knowledge back to the state committee and put it into action. Members attending brought back many new and exciting ideas! We were all blessed and thankful for the opportunity to attend FUSION and look forward to going to Omaha, Nebraska next year!

Jessica Hoover stated that “FUSION was a great opportunity to meet with people from all across the country who were involved in the same industry as me and gain insight about the different things that work for them and how we could potentially use some of that in what we do. The breakout sessions were also really interesting and informative and provided lots of new ideas.”

Lacen Matheny said that “Fusion was a wonderful opportunity to connect with farmers and ranchers from all over the US. It was eye-opening to learn about how such a wide array of enterprises work together to fuel the agriculture industry. I especially enjoyed learning from folks a few years ahead of me in their operations. I felt I took home knowledge that will benefit me and my farm business for years to come. My favorite part was spending time with people with the same type of passions and ambition that I have. Conferences like Fusion make me realize that there are other people that love farming just like I do, and it makes me feel like part of a huge family. I would recommend trips like this for ANY young person interested in agriculture. It truly is a once in a lifetime trip.”

Mariah Hatton stated that “I always enjoy FUSION for a few reasons. There are always really good sessions to attend with a wide variety of topics to learn about; there’s always networking and I love meeting people from other states. The tours are always a great learning experience for learning about different aspects of agriculture that aren’t as common in WV or are done differently in other parts of the country.”
YF&R Fusion attendees included: l. to r. CW and Charles Wilfong II, Michelle Wilfong, Marah Hatton, Lacen Matheny, Jessica Hoover, Wesley Mills, Elizabeth Lynch and WVFB Administrator Steve Butler
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It will feed your plants adequate Calcium and Phosphorus all season long!
My husband and I helped my brother weigh one year old heifers a few weeks ago. We sorted them out according to what we would like to keep for replacements and what will be sold. My brother is a tough herdsman. It did not matter how pretty a heifer was, if her grandmother had bad feet or her mother had been a little reluctant to take to actual motherhood, she went in the group to be sold.

One pretty red heifer came through the chute, but she held her head a bit too high and acted a little high strung. My brother and I both agreed. She went in the “to be sold” group. My brother commented that when our dad came in from feeding, he would probably want to keep her. It made me laugh when, after we were done sorting and were looking at them in the pen, my husband (who had not heard our initial conversation) immediately pointed to the same red heifer and said, “You don’t want to keep that one?”

It might seem a hardnosed process. This one stays or this one goes. But spring calving can be an intense few weeks; and those problem cows that have to be brought in for “help” of some kind make days and nights that seem never to end. If we can eliminate potential problems, maybe those days and nights will be a little more bearable in a couple years.

Growing up, my brother and I both participated in 4-H Livestock Judging. I remember my dad volunteering to host the group at our farm for a practice session. He and a couple other local farmers wanted us to be exposed to judging working livestock, as well as show animals. Sometimes my brother asks me what I think of an animal, and I flashback to those days, “I place this group 4-2-1-3.” They were good times. My brother, sister, and I had never been into sports during school; but we did love 4-H and FFA. (My sister’s basketball career never really bounced back after she made that big basket for the opposing team.) Our livestock judging competitions, especially, were an activity that my dad took a huge interest in. Even chauffeuring us to Morgantown once overnight, without my mom, for a contest with the rest of our county team.

My brother was always better than I was at it and he always came in a place or two higher than me. It goaded me a little; I was the big sister after all. But now when we sort heifers and he stops and looks at one, thinking, I see all the questions he is answering in his head. I realize how much more he was probably paying attention when we looked at the EPDs of certain classes of livestock; when my eyes just glazed over at all the numbers.

It seems like yesterday and a long time ago all at once. Just thinking about standing in front of the judges’ panel giving my “reasons” is enough to make me shiver even today. Oral reasons was when each of us on the team individually presented to the judges how we placed a class and why we did so. I remember one time I got so nervous I forgot everything about how I had placed the class. So I made the entire thing up. I might have been giving reasons about pigs rather than for a class of steers, I was so nervous. I never admitted what had happened. But I am sure our coaches wondered when they got our individual results back.

Sorting out replacement heifers is a lot different than judging a class of four heifers. But the very basic rules are the same. I am thankful that giving “reasons” is no longer necessary; but the consequences of judging wrong these days are a little more important than whether we will come home with a trophy or not.
Using Small Ruminants to Control Perennial Weeds

by Jody Carpenter, WVFB YF&R Committee Member

The current mentality around weed control is that our pastures need to be comprised only of grasses and legumes, but some “weed” content isn’t necessarily a bad thing. We can categorize weeds into several groups; those that have a toxic potential, those that are unpalatable, and those “forbs” that have some nutritional content. With an increase cost of chemical herbicides, other control options should be on your mind.

When I first purchased my own property in 2019, I noticed this area that flourished in ironweed. Instead of a costly herbicide application, I decided to see if I could graze the population out or at least decrease it. The grazing behavior of small ruminants (sheep/goats) differ than that of cattle, eating a lot of what cattle will not preferably graze, one of which is ironweed. Ironweed is unpalatable to cattle, but small ruminants can be forced to graze it. When I tell you they strip it, they most certainly do. You can tell by the pictures below that they indeed stripped the plant of it’s leaves. Over the summer and fall of 2022, I rotated sheep through this patch twice. The thought is, that over time the ironweed will deplete its energy reserves and thin itself out.

Picture #1 was taken on June 26, 2022 when the sheep were introduced into the paddock. I used several rolls of the ElectroNet to divide my paddocks. Picture #2 was taken after 7 days of letting the sheep graze the paddock, and clearly you can see what they did to the ironweed. It is just stripped of leaves, what they could reach at least. Sometimes, when making checks, I would bend the tall ironweed over, so they could eat it.

The paddock was allowed to regrow before another grazing could happen. I kept doing this, over at least two rotations through, while trying not to overgraze the paddocks. However, I could be alright with a slightly overgrazed area if all ironweed was eaten. Picture #3 is 21 days regrowth, so you can see some new leaves on plants. Sheep were not reintroduced until September 8, almost 60 days after the initial grazing, and Picture #4 shows some ironweed in various stages. Some plants are vegetative, or producing leaves, and some is reproductive, or flowering. Plants were defoliated again, stripped bare, before winter months. We shall see what late spring regrowth looks like, and after two years I should see a significant decrease in ironweed.

The cool thing about farming, is that you can run little experiments like this and see if it works or not. What have you lost if things don’t work out? You now have the experience to inform others about your successes or failures. As agriculturists, that’s how we should think of ourselves, because what we do is far more complex than we give ourselves credit for. Do your part to help feed and fuel the world. Be proud of yourselves!
79th Annual West Virginia FFA State Ham, Bacon & Egg Show & Sale is a Big Success!

The Annual FFA Ham, Bacon and Egg Show and Sale was held March 13th at the Cedar Lakes Conference Center in Ripley, West Virginia. The show is sponsored by the Governor’s Office, the West Virginia Department of Education, and the West Virginia Department of Agriculture and presents the opportunity for students to exhibit and sell their products.

As an FFA student, this sale is the culmination of their SAE (Supervised Agriculture Experience) project. Students raise their project animals, send the pigs to slaughter, and cure them in time to compete at the Ham and Bacon Show. A lot of hard and year-long planning is necessary to complete the project. The pigs are taken to a federally inspected facility for slaughter and the carcasses are brought back to meat processing labs where they are processed and then brought to their respective schools for the duration of the curing process.

The FFA raised $72,810 that evening, and extends its sincere appreciation to the many people who continue to support this event, making many dreams become reality for FFA members.

Special thanks also goes to Ronald Morrison Auction Services who, for the last 35 years, has donated his time and talents to the FFA auctions. Thank you to Tyler County FFA for the ham and bacon samples for refreshments.

Sponsors of the event included the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, West Virginia Farm Bureau Foundation, Chestnut Holdings LLC, Yauger Farm Supply and the West Virginia Department of Education.

Kent Leonhardt, WV Agriculture Commissioner, opens the show and sale with a few words.

Greg Murphy and Ron Morrison of Ronald Morrison Auction Services
Grand Champion Ham
Hannah Bassett, Pine Grove, WV; 23lb. Ham; $450/lb
James Menees, Kroger Corporate Affairs Manager; Hannah Bassett; Bryan Boutell, Division Finance Manager; Kent Leonhardt

Grand Champion Bacon
Russel Vancamp, Pine Grove, WV; 8lb. Bacon; $450/lb
Brian Moore standing in for David Pierson of Pierson Lumber; Russel Vancamp; Kent Leonhardt

Grand Champion Eggs
Braden Greathouse, Tyler County, WV; $4,500/dozen
Bryan Boutell, Division Finance Manager; Braden Greathouse; Kent Leonhardt; James Menees, Kroger Corporate Affairs Manager

WV Foundation Ham
Donated by Tyler County, WV; $5,000 purchased by Howard Henderson
Auctioneer Greg Murphy, Howard Henderson, Caroline Greenleaf, Auctioneer Ron Morrison, Kent Leonhardt.
Reserve Champion Ham
Emily Bassett, Pine Grove, WV; 23lb. Ham; $260/lb
Triple H Enterprises Representative; Emily Bassett; Kent Leonhardt

Reserve Champion Bacon
Whitney Brown, Pine Grove, WV; 8lb. Bacon; $125/lb
JD Morris of Dreaming Big Livestock; Whitney Brown; Kent Leonhardt

Reserve Champion Eggs
Kayley Smith, Cabell Midland; $2,600/dozen
Bryan Boutell, Division Finance Manager; Kayley Smith; Kent Leonhardt; James Menees, Kroger Corporate Affairs Manager
We understand building a new home can be challenging.

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Most folks from the country have a dog of some sort. They have to have some value as pets, herders or protectors. If livestock and poultry are raised, the dogs increase in importance. This article comes from my first-hand experiences, observations and a lot of reading about canines.

As a boy, I grew up with my dad’s English Setter bird dogs and very scrappy little Rat Terrier named Tippy. He was black and white and had pointed ears that flopped over. Tip would fly into dogs twice his side and was pretty snappy to just about anyone he didn’t like. He was my loyal sidekick delivering morning newspapers in the dark down in the Hartland neighborhood of Clarksburg. A speeding truck rolled him coming home one time. I carried him home in my empty paper bag, he recovered and lived on for years.

The smartest dog I ever owned was a long legged Rat Terrier named Sparky. A very obedient dog, she was with us on the Dry Fork for about six years. Rat terriers are an American breed fancied by Theodore Roosevelt who kept them at the White House to keep rats in check. Sparky kept groundhogs in check as well, was friendly to everyone, a good watchdog, and stayed close to home. They are very biddable (teachable) and performed all sorts of tricks in circuses. Sparky was also a hunter and treed critters.
Like all the dogs we’ve owned she was kept outside in a wooden, hay filled dog house under a shade tree. A ten-foot chain that swiveled 360 degrees confined her at night which is very important in sheep country where it is lawful to kill any sheep chasing dog. It was a sad day for us when she was run over by a truck.

Another very biddable (trainable) and important dog to sheep raisers is the Border Collie. They are instinctive herders and will guard their property and herd sheep or cattle. They are intelligent, high energy and like to chase and this can include cars. We have a 106-year-old friend, Ira Miller, now living in a personal care facility. His farm is on the Lanesville Road in Tucker County. Whenever I visited the Millers, I always looked for a rock because their male Border Collie, Sweep, was a mean dog that would bite. His female would not.

Curs are an interesting southern dog--Blackmouth, Catahoula, Brindle. They are good farm dogs and herd cattle and pigs and also hunt and tree. A similar type canine, well established here, is the Australian cattle dog also called Blue and Red Healers. They are protective, can be mean, and will go for the heels of livestock and humans alike.

Terriers are high strung and bred for action. They’re very alert and quick, always ready to kill rodents and vermin. Some were used to control rats in coal mines. Most of them are fearless and protective. The handsome Airedale, the largest of the Terriers, is seldom seen anymore. They are big with curly hair and were used for hunting bear and mountain lions. The popular Jack Russell Terrier will be discussed further on.

Labradors are a breed we see a lot of today and for good reason. They are gentle and good natured, very biddable and don’t generally wander too far away. They will retrieve waterfowl and game birds and just about any objects thrown out in front of them. The beautiful Golden Retriever is also right there with the Lab for being smart and good tempered. The Norwegian Elkhound is regarded as one of the most intelligent breeds. They were very common here in years past. They were bred to hunt moose (called elk in Europe) but when our deer herds returned, they chased them creating major problems, and have died out in popularity.

For many years, I raised beagles for rabbit hunting. Hard hunting bloodlines usually produced like offspring. They can be headstrong and hard to control unless they are trained. Females, as in most breeds, are usually more controllable.

When deciding which pup to pick from a litter you want one that is not shy, will come to you and lick your hand. Always check out as much about the parents as you can. You definitely can’t rely on registration papers alone. Hounds of any kind are going to go off and hunt, it’s in their blood. So, if you want a dog that sticks around, hounds aren’t for you. They are best kept penned or chained. They will bark at disturbances or intruders and that’s good if you don’t mind them waking you up at night.

The most common Terrier breed these days is the Jack Russell. It is a cute little dog but prone to frenzied barking. A close friend of mine in West Milford has two of them. He says they are great watchdogs, but “one is crazy and two are nuts!” I saw one over in Virginia kill a rat as fast as a bolt of lightning. In the past, small Terriers were kept in coal mines for just that reason. They will also kill possums and groundhogs and can also be used to flush foxes from their dens.

Jack Russells are used in Tidewater and Piedmont country by fox hunters on horseback behind fox hounds. If the hunt master declares the fox to be killed after it’s flushed, the “brush” or ears may be awarded to the best hunter. The old-time fox hound hunters in West Virginia usually didn’t kill foxes. Their sport was the chase and listening to their foxhounds baying through the night. They mostly let the foxes go so they could chase them again.

There were mainly two breeds of farm dogs when I was a boy in the 1950s—the Shepherd and the Feist. The long haired, brown and white Shepherds resembled a collie with darker hair. They were fuller bodied than a Collie, and had a shorter, softer muzzle. They were usually gentle and loyal, and were good herders that stayed close to their home turf. This strain has largely disappeared, although there are ongoing efforts in the South to save the American Shepherd from dying out.
Another variety of shepherd, the Australian shepherd, is about the closest thing to the old-time shepherd dog. I recently met up with a Monterey, VA stockman who had two of them and praised them for being good guard dogs and livestock herders.

The *fice as George Washington called Feists is a rugged, catch-all dog. They are small to medium sized and can range from yellow and russet, to black, white and tan. Their tails are often bobbed. They’re bright and high energy and are good watch and squirrel dogs. They usually have erect or pricked ears and fox-like muzzles. They make great companions and are quick to kill any varmints or vermin around barns and homesteads. Mountain or Treeing Feists are common names for them. I am partial to Feists, which may have descended from Indian dogs.

What about a Heinz 57, a mixed breed mutt? The first dog that Jill and I owned came from the Charleston pound. We were newlyweds and picked it up as a young pup while exiting the Kanawha Valley, headed to a farm home in Randolph County. The dog had a nice, long haired coat, colored like a reddish Collie and was nearly as large as one. Blue was friendly, faithful and kept a close watch on our sheep and farmland. He loved our youngsters and let them waller him to their hearts’ (and his) content. Blue was death on groundhogs. He’d snatch one in his jaws with a jerk and toss it in the air. They were stone-cold dead before they hit the ground.

He was our loyal companion for over a decade. The only time I saw him scared was one dark night when we heard a panther scream up on the mountain. It made the hair on my neck rise up. I can guarantee you that I was just as scared as Blue was.

*Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.*
– PSALM 31:24
Recipe Possibilities

Brunch Made Easy

(Family Features) When charged with hosting a mid-day gathering, a little pre-planning can go a long way toward ensuring your brunch get-together is as simple as it is scrumptious.

Get creative with decor. When prepping your tablecape, think outside the box. Opt for unexpected serving dishes such as tartlet tins and vases, and transfer syrups and jams from their everyday containers to glass bowls or creamers. Fresh flowers and produce can add natural pops of color to the table and a bowl of fruit can make for an eye-catching centerpiece.

Plan a variety of dishes. Make sure you have a mix of both sweet and savory dishes on the menu that can please a wide variety of palates. Earmarking some recipes that can be made ahead, like pastries and casseroles, can be a simple way to avoid waking up extra early to prepare. Save the morning of your event for dishes like this Herbed Spanish Omelet, which features potatoes; fresh, spring herbs; and red onions, and packs protein, B-vitamins and cancer-protective phytochemicals.

Serve it buffet-style. Setting your spread out on the counter and allowing guests to help themselves not only makes it easier for the host to mingle, but it allows guests to customize their meals as they wish and gives the gathering a more casual vibe. Try themed stations, such as a coffee or mimosa bar, parfait bar or bread bar, in addition to more traditional dishes to let guests take the customization to the next level.

For more brunch ideas and recipes, visit Culinary.net.

Herbed Spanish Omelet

Reprinted with permission from the American Institute for Cancer Research
Servings: 4

1 pound potatoes, peeled and diced or shredded water
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup diced red onion
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 large whole eggs, lightly beaten
2 egg whites, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh basil
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh chives
salt, to taste (optional)
fresh herb sprigs, for garnish (optional)

Place potatoes in large pan. Cover with water. Bring to boil and cook, uncovered, 3 minutes. Remove from heat. Cover and let stand about 10 minutes, or until potatoes are tender. Drain well.

In deep, 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion and garlic. Cook about 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add potatoes and cook 5 minutes.

Combine whole eggs and egg whites. Stir in parsley, basil and chives. Season with salt, to taste, if desired. Pour mixture over potatoes in hot skillet. Reduce heat and cook, uncovered, about 10 minutes, or until bottom of omelet is golden.

If desired, brown top under toaster oven. Garnish with fresh herb sprigs, if desired.

Nutritional information per serving: 260 calories; 12 g total fat (2 g saturated fat); 28 g carbohydrates; 11 g protein; 2 g dietary fiber; 106 mg sodium.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images
Source: Culinary.net
**Theme: ANATOMY 101**

**ACROSS**
1. Emir, alt. sp.
6. Comic book cry
9. *One of 27 in hand*
13. Dhaka, formerly
14. Half man, half goat
15. Pressure ulcers, e.g.
16. Type of wrap
17. Old fashioned "before"
18. Do like ivy
19. *Smooth, skeletal or cardiac*
21. "Gray's ____"
23. Gardener's tool
24. Detected by olfactory system
25. Acronym-named sandwich
28. Sore throat voice
30. Retires from military service
35. Steak option
37. Place at angle
39. Double, in French
40. *Certain apple's namesake*
41. Fork pokers
43. Heavy metal's Quiet ___
44. *Pelvis bone*
46. *Hardened keratin plate*
47. Wedding promise?
48. Mandela
50. *Part of eye, not flower*
52. Tokyo, formerly
53. Alpine transport
55. Cuckoo
57. *Vein to "go for"*
61. *Cell body, axon and dendrite*
64. Use the other side of pencil
65. Caviar alternative
66. Speak one's mind
67. Like a Haunted Mansion visitor?
70. Fuss
71. Modern correspondence
72. Opposite of want
73. Japanese currency
74. Pep gathering

**DOWN**
1. Annoying pop-ups
2. "Yes, ____!"
3. Beige
4. E-wallet content
5. Resentment
6. Musketeer's sword
7. "Smallest bones location"
8. Work the dough
9. Diamond in a cutting tool
10. "Wonderfilled" cookie
11. a.k.a. Indian Lilac
12. *Grammar of sports*
15. Like a Haunted Mansion visitor?
20. Minimum
22. Endorsement
24. Alfresco
25. *It contains cerebellum and parietal lobe*
26. Big Dipper shape
27. Hiker's path
29. *Largest organ*
31. Fogginess
32. Speak one's mind
33. *AB+ or B-
34. Vigorous fight
36. Outback birds
38. Dam-like structure
42. Snail trail
45. Like certain Crue
49. Giannis' league
51. Cup holder
52. Tokyo, formerly
53. Alpine transport
55. Cuckoo
57. *Vein to "go for"*
61. *Cell body, axon and dendrite*
64. Use the other side of pencil
65. Caviar alternative
66. Speak one's mind
67. Like a Haunted Mansion visitor?
70. Fuss
71. Modern correspondence
72. Opposite of want
73. Japanese currency
74. Pep gathering

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**Memorial Day** was originally called Decoration Day, a day to honor deceased soldiers by decorating the graves of the fallen with flowers, flags and wreaths. Approximately 40 million people will travel at least 50 miles from home this Memorial Day. In 1966 Congress unanimously passed a resolution to officially recognize Waterloo, NY as the birthplace of Memorial Day.

After the Civil War, the honoring of soldiers was originally observed every May 30, but due to the Uniform Monday Holiday Act of 1970, the celebration of Memorial Day was moved to the last Monday in May.

The National Moment of Remembrance is at 3 p.m. Monday. In December 2000, Congress passed a law requiring Americans to pause at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day to remember and honor the fallen.
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