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On the Cover: Greenbank in Winter, Pocahontas County.
Photo by Al Tucker
The first session of the 86th West Virginia Legislature kicked off on January 11. Roger Hanshaw of Clay County was elected to his third term as Speaker of the House. Craig Blair of Berkeley County was reinstalled as Senate President. As I write this article, nearly 900 House bills and over 400 Senate bills have been introduced. About 2,000 bills are expected to be introduced, but only about 250 will receive serious consideration.

Certainly, the two major issues of this session will concentrate on taxes and DHHR. Other important issues will focus on early childhood education, PEIA, and forest carbon sequestration. All bills, resolutions, and legislators’ contact information may be found at www.wvlegislature.gov.

Nationally, the unemployment rate is about 3.5 percent, and 10 million jobs remain unfilled. Increased auto loan defaults, continued high inflation, and large layoffs in the tech sector are troubling signs to the economy. The American consumer is experiencing ongoing increased food costs and energy expenses. In 2023, the agricultural sector will face numerous challenges of high input cost, increased credit cost, and, in some cases, reduced labor availability.

In other national news, the legal battle over EPA’s new WOTUS rule has begun. The lawsuit, which has been filed in the Southern District of Texas, alleges the rule extends federal jurisdiction to nearly all land, no matter how remote the property is from navigable water. Plaintiffs include American Farm Bureau Federation, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, National Corn Growers, American Petroleum Institute, General Contractors of America, and National Association of Realtors. Don’t forget that we are currently awaiting a decision from the United States Supreme Court on Sackett vs. EPA concerning this issue. The WOTUS rule is set to go into effect on March 20, 2023.

The Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is planning an environmental impact statement to assess the effects of its avian flu response activities on commercial and backyard poultry operations. The outbreak has resulted in approximately 58 million birds being depopulated. APHIS wants to take an “adaptive management” approach to future outbreaks. Its current methods of depopulation are under review, and new “non-standard” methods are being considered.

APHIS is also proposing to amend its animal disease traceability regulations to require both visually and electronically readable ear tags for interstate movement of cattle over 18 months of age. The proposed rule seeks to amend definitions for dairy cattle and approved tagging sites, and to more accurately define livestock certificates of veterinary inspection paperwork. Interested individuals may submit comments by March 22, 2023, at www.federalregister.gov.

Congress will be working on the new Farm Bill in the coming months. Certainly, there is much work to be done in order to accomplish educating members of Congress on this issue. Since the development of the last Farm Bill in 2018, 81 members have been newly elected, and 179 others were not in Congress at that time.

Last year was filled with several mountains for U.S. cattle producers to overcome. Many economists believe inventory of cattle and calves will be down another 2 to 4 percent in 2023. Data from 2022 revealed the inventory as being 2 percent below 2021. The most recent cattle on feed report placed inventory at 11.7 million head in feedlots. Placements for November 2022 were down 2 percent from 2021, while marketing was up 1 percent. Most national reports show farmers are reducing inventory because of drought and high feed costs. Accumulated beef production for 2022 was 26.07 billion pounds, up 2 percent over 2021. The West and the Southern Plains experienced some of the worst drought conditions in recent history. Some signs indicate La Nina weather conditions may be weakening.

Currently, most of the trade for fed cattle is $1.56 to $1.58. Many believe feeder cattle prices will cont.
increase significantly in 2023. High feed costs, increased debt, and high land costs will be major factors in 2023. Also, there is concern about the consumer’s ability to pay higher retail beef prices. Average retail price remains elevated, with the November 2022 price at $7.37 per pound. Top export markets for U.S. beef are South Korea, Japan, China, Mexico, and Canada. These five countries account for 82 percent of all beef exports.

In summary, it appears the beef outlook for 2023 is very positive. Cash prices are up due to strong exports, declining cattle supply, and continued domestic demand. Weather, possible recession, and high input costs will have significant impact on U.S. cattle producers.

I appreciate your membership in the West Virginia Farm Bureau. Spring will be here before you know it. Remember what President Theodore Roosevelt said about the future: “In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.”

Have a great day!
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E. Garry Shanholtz is a lifelong resident of Hampshire County, where he owns and operates Shanholtz Orchard along with his wife, Sandra and son, Kane. They are blessed with four sons (Kirk, Kent, Kane, and Keenan), three grandsons (Ellis, Easton, Everson), and three granddaughters (Kendra, Avery, Addlie). Shanholtz Orchard was started by Garry’s parents in 1952, and continues to be one of the premier orchards in Hampshire County, and in the region. The original part of the orchard business began in Levels, WV. “I was born and raised in Fort Ashby. My dad bought a piece of land in 1952 that had eight acres of orchard. That’s how we got started,” Garry said. He took over the orchard in 1978 when his father passed away. Garry recounts that he started working for his father on the orchard in 1966, working for $1.00 per hour. Shanholtz Orchard currently raises peaches, plums, apples, nectarines, and cherries. The orchard produces approximately 25,000 bushels of apples and 10,000 bushels of peaches a year, depending on weather conditions. Garry grows over 30 different varieties of apples, including Red and Golden Delicious, Fuji, York, Suncrisp, and McIntosh. Shanholtz Orchard produces fruit that is sold locally, but also shipped to neighboring states, including Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Garry has served on various boards and committees that promote agriculture and fruit production on the local, regional, state, and national levels. His orchard has been visited by many political representatives and valued as an example of a successful agricultural business. He was awarded by Governor Underwood the Governor’s Millennium Small Business Award and from WVDA Commissioner Gus R. Douglass the 1976 Horticulturalist Award. He is a National Peach Council Bronze and Gold Member, and has a Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival membership in recognition of his support. Garry has been a member of the Hampshire County Farm Bureau for 53 years, and has served on their board. He is a past member of the WV Horticultural Society, a member of the National Apple Growers Board, served as Hampshire County Commissioner for 16 years, and past board member of the First National Bank of Romney.

The Hampshire County Farm Bureau Receives White-Reinhardt Mini-Grant

The White-Reinhardt Mini-Grant award is $1,000. Five hundred dollars was received and has been used towards purchasing educator guides and books that were distributed to approximately 32 teachers at Slanesville and Romney Elementary Schools to supplement their classrooms. Funding was also used to purchase materials for educational days at two county schools. Each lesson included the reading of the book Popcorn Country: The Story of America’s Favorite Snack by Chris Peterson. Students learned about the four different kinds of corn and examples were passed around. Students participated in two corn themed games. The younger students crouched down to imitate popcorn and “popped” up by jumping when they heard something that identified with them. Some examples included if they were wearing green that day, if they lived on a farm, and if they liked to read. Older students played a game similar to the heads-up game, where they were assigned, an item made from corn products without seeing what the item was. Their classmates gave them clues to help them guess their item. Items included types of corn.
diapers, batteries, fireworks and more. The day was filled with smiles and laughter!

Each student went home with a mini-bag of popcorn as a special treat. Students in 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grades also took home Corn Ag-Magazines purchased with grant funding.

We plan to use the additional $500 to do similar education days in the other three elementary schools and additional purchase more books and educator guides for the Book Barns.

Kanawha County

Miss West Virginia in Kanawha County

The Kanawha County Farm Bureau had our January monthly meeting on the 19th of this month. We started our meeting with an acknowledgment of our oldest and very active member, Fred Gainer, age 93.

After a meal, we introduced our guest and invited her to speak to our large crowd.

Miss West Virginia, Elizabeth Lynch spoke eloquently about growing up in this state and loving the agricultural environment. Elizabeth’s Social Impact Initiative “Growing Up, Growing Ag: Advocating for Appalachian Agriculture” seeks to promote agricultural literacy and raise awareness about the benefits of farming and agriculture, especially in the Appalachian Region.

Elizabeth was crowned Miss WV in June of 2022 and competed for the title of Miss America pageant in December.

Elizabeth competed and advanced to 3rd runner up, this is the highest finisher of a West Virginian in the Miss America pageant since 1964, Ella Dee Kessel, then second runner-up later served the state as First Lady when married to Governor Gaston Caperton.

Elizabeth was asked many questions concerning our state, its agriculture and the pageants she competed in. She also graciously allowed those wanted to have their picture with her to do so.

Our county also started its first FFA classes at Sissonville High School with Mrs. Pheobe Taylor as teacher. Mrs. Taylor and a few of her students spoke to our members and was presented a check from our members to help with FFA jackets.

We challenge our other Farm Bureau counties to invite Miss Lynch as a speaker to your meetings.

Morgan County

Pam Hessler Receives 2022 Distinguished Service Award Winner

Pam Lewis Hessler was born in Washington County, Maryland and at age 13 moved with her family to Berkeley Springs, WV next door to her maternal grandparents. She is a graduate of Berkeley Springs High School, Hagerstown Business College & attended University of Maryland University College. She currently works full-time as a Senior Executive Assistant for the Dean of the WVU Health Sciences Center School of Medicine in Martinsburg, WV and has worked there for 18+ years.

Pam was not born on a farm but spent time growing up on her paternal grandparent’s farm in Washington County, Maryland, where they raised beef cattle, hogs, chickens and a very large vegetable garden. She remembers spending lots of time mainly picking beans, peas, and digging up potatoes but she never thought she would later live on a farm. Pam married a high school classmate, Craig, 31 years ago and they built their home and raised their three children on what was left of his grandparents’ farm in Morgan County. Soon after moving to their little Hereford and hay farm, they both became active members of the Morgan County Farm Bureau (MCFB). Pam was quickly groomed to take over as Women’s Committee Chair and has been serving in that role for the past 27+ years.

During this time, she has been involved in planning many of their county farm bureau events like farm/chamber dinners, FARMEDIC safety training, safety day camps, ag in the classroom events and Farm Olympics and Kiddie Tractor Pulls at the county fair. Her favorite memories are the yearly trips to the WVFB Annual meetings in a 15-passenger van with 8 county members and her two youngest children who grew up attending these meetings.

The same year she became the county WLC chair, Pam was elected to serve on the WVFB WLC representing Region 1. She has served on the state committee these 27 years with some of the most amazing women leaders from across
WV. During those years, Pam has served as the secretary, vice chair, and chair the past 9 years. She has made a lifetime of precious memories and through this opportunity has represented WV across the country. Along with her involvement with the MCFB and WVFB, Pam served as the Mighty Iroquois 4-H organizational leader for 30 years and served as a past president, vice-president and treasurer for the Morgan County 4-H Leaders Association and is a 4-H All-Star. She spent many years volunteering as a county 4-H camp counselor as well as serving for over 10 years on the Camp Frame 4-H Board and as co-coordinator of the beef barbecue fundraiser event for several years. During her time as President of the 4-H Leaders Association, she served on the Morgan County Extension Service committee and was involved in hiring two county extension agents. Pam became a founding board member of the resurrected (41-year hiatus) Morgan County Fair Board, where she served as president for 5 years.

Pam has stayed involved with her children and served as a little girls’ softball head coach for 11 years and later served several years as a Little League volunteer with her son’s baseball teams. Pam is an active member of the Michael’s Chapel United Methodist Church and serves as Song Leader and youth Sunday School teacher. She enjoys baking, crafting, reading, and traveling to her children and now grandchildren’s events. Pam feels blessed to have a supportive husband and family who have allowed her to spend time away from home and “drag” them all over the place through the years. All three of their children have graduated college, are now all married and she loves every single minute spent with her four grandchildren (ages 18, 15, 4 and 7 months).

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.
I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas holiday. As I write this article, it is January 20th and the weather from my part of the state (Eastern Panhandle) has been pretty mild for January. With the prices of fuel oil and electricity, I’m hoping that continues for all of us, but February usually packs a punch or two. One of the things I do during these two winter months of the year is plan - plan projects and events for the remainder of the year both for our county and the state. If you happened to notice, the title of my article has changed. I’m not sure if this is the case at your home or not, but since Craig and I have been empty nesters for several years, my dining room table has quickly become my event planning and staging area, most of the time for Farm Bureau activities, so I decided to make a change to the title of my thoughts to each of you.

By the time this edition reaches your mailbox, we will have already held our Ag Days at the Legislature and Taste of WV Reception. I hope as many as possible came and spoke to their representatives. But if you were not able to, your VOICE is important. Reach out to your legislators whether it be by phone or email. If they don’t hear from us about the issues that are vital to us, they listen to other interest groups. Be sure to stay current on the issues during the legislative session by reading the Legislative Action Report that our state office emails or mails to you. This document keeps us up-to-date weekly as to what Senate and House bills the WVFB is monitoring, in favor of or opposes. When it states the latter two (in favor or opposes) TAKE ACTION and let them hear your voice.

What other things can we be doing at this time of the year? Well, there is the Ag in West Virginia Poster Contest with the 4th graders from around the state. If you haven’t already started it’s not too late to speak with the elementary schools and teachers about it. The office will even order the poster board for you. The deadline to have your 1st place county poster to the state office is May 12th so you will need to plan to judge in your county prior to that date.

Next to the yearly planning for the collection of food and money that benefits our three Ronald McDonald Houses across the state, coming in a very close second is visiting classrooms. Try planning an event on National Ag Day, March 21st. Pick one of your favorite Ag Books of the Year and plan a lesson around it. Each of these books has an educator’s guide that can give you some activities around that specific book. There are other handy resources as well. Just visit the AFBF Foundation for Agriculture website: www.agfoundation.org and order Ag Mags on the subject that best fits with the book you plan to read or order other resources as there are lots to choose. I try to plan my lesson around the book and incorporate as many school subjects as possible like science, math, language arts, geography, etc. While I’m on the subject of Ag Books of the Year, at the AFBF Annual Convention held January 6-10 in San Juan, PR, this year’s newest winner was unveiled, I LOVE Strawberries. This book and so many other wonderful, ag accurate books are available through the website above.

Remember, if any of you have questions or want to brainstorm and need someone to bounce ideas off, please call me or any of the state WLC members. We are truly here to help you. Remember, “We Pull the Most When WE PULL TOGETHER.”

May you all be safe, healthy, and warm while we wait on the warmer weather that is just around the corner. Blessings from my home to yours!
Michelle Wilfong, Chair

Michelle grew up in Hardy County on a poultry farm where her parents raised cattle and sheep as well. She showed livestock at the county and state fairs and was active in both 4-H and FFA. Michelle graduated from WVU in 2014 with a degree in Agriculture & Extension Education, received a Master’s degree in Education from Fairmont State University in 2017, and another Master’s degree in Reading from Fairmont State University in 2021. She resides in Pocahontas County with her husband, Charles and son, CW. Throughout the past few years, Michelle has focused on expanding the agritourism offerings on the farm. They primarily raise sheep and cattle, but also have many “projects” such as a corn maze/pumpkin patch, high tunnel and strawberry patch. Michelle’s favorite Farm Bureau activity is reading to students during National Ag week. Her goal for the YF&R is to increase membership and allow the committee members to tell their individual stories. As young farmers, she feels it is very important to educate the public and not lose that connection between the producer and consumer.

Mariah Hatton, Vice Chair

Mariah was born & raised just outside of Morgantown, WV where her parents bought the land that they farm today. They started out with beef cows, added the sheep when Mariah was in middle school, and a high tunnel when she was in college. Mariah graduated college in 2014 with an undergraduate degree in Agribusiness Management & Rural Development and in 2015 received her Masters in Agriculture with a certification in GIS and Spatial Analysis in 2017. After graduating, she moved to Richmond, VA to work for USDA Rural Development in the Virginia State Office but came back in 2019 and accepted a job in the WV State Office in Morgantown and is still in the State Office today. Along with being the WVFB YFR Vice-Chair, she serves as the Monongalia County Farm Bureau President and the Region 5 Vice-Chair for the WVFB Women’s Leadership Committee. Mariah volunteers once a week at On Eagles Wings Therapeutic Horsemanship Center where individuals with disabilities learn independent riding skills through the Therapeutic Riding Program and has been there since 2007. Mariah’s favorite Farm Bureau activity is the farm tours and meeting other farmers. Her goal for the YF&R is to do more outreach throughout the state to reach young farmers and introduce them to Farm Bureau.

Sara Wayne, Secretary

Sara, and her husband, John began farming in 2008. Since November of 2009, agriculture has been their sole source of income. What began as a cow/calf herd, has grown and expanded to include pre-conditioning cattle, marketing hay, custom grazing, selling freezer beef and marketing their local beef, pork, and lamb at their retail store in Gassaway. Sara and John have 2 boys who share their passion for agriculture. Sara is a 4-H club leader, a member of her county Farm Bureau, and also serves on the state Young Farmer and Rancher Committee as the secretary.
Sara’s favorite Farm Bureau activity is getting to network and learn from farmers all over the state and country. Her goal for the YF&R is to establish a statewide event for 4-H and FFA members that provides an opportunity to be introduced to YF&R and hone their skills both personally and professionally.

As the new YF&R committee will soon be appointed, we want to give a sincere thank you to the outgoing committee members. These include Jeremy & Danielle Grant, John King, Silas & Nicole Sattler, Jonathan Wilkins, Tom Huber. We are so appreciative of their time and dedication for the past several years. We wish you all the best of luck in your future endeavors.
Who’s the No. 1 protein source in chicken feed? YOU are. That’s right. You’re winning.

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Prepare for spring by starting seeds indoors

In the dark, short days of winter, it's easy to daydream about the sunny days of spring and summer when your lawn and garden are filled with blooming flowers and fresh produce. Thankfully, we can find joy in getting garden plants ready indoors, even if the snow is still falling outside in early spring.

One of the first steps is selecting seeds. Select varieties that will meet your gardening goals. Also, consider the source of your seeds and purchase from reputable suppliers. Some varieties can be started outside, while others should be started inside.

There are several container options available to start seeds. If you have a restrictive budget or plan to start a few plants, old butter or yogurt containers are good options. If you plan to have several different varieties or want to start several seeds, try using solid trays or plug trays. When choosing a container, consider the size of the plant. If the plant will be large and grows fast, you may want to use a larger container, such as a cell pack or yogurt cup.

As for growing medium, do not use soil from your garden. There are several options for potting mix, and you can even mix your own. Soil temperature is key to successful germination. The seed packet will indicate the optimal soil temperature range for germination. A soil thermometer can help you avoid the guessing game. Bottom heat can be provided by placing them on top of the refrigerator or using a heat mat.

Once your seeds germinate, lighting is key. If you are seeding your plants inside your home, place your seedlings under an east- or south-facing window and rotate to keep them from stretching, resulting in leggy plants. If you do not have an ideal place in your home under a window, you may want to use grow lights. When using grow lights, keep them just above the plants and gradually raise the lights as the plants grow.

The bigger the seedlings get, the more water they are going to require. If your seedlings are inside your home or a greenhouse, they are going to need watered about once a day.

Starting seeds indoors can be a rewarding experience as you watch the change from seed to seedling to a thriving plant.

By Jennifer Friend, WVU Extension Agent – Harrison County, and Michael Shamblin, WVU Extension Agent – Clay County
Explore agricultural topics at regional dinner meetings in March

Each winter, WVU Extension brings education, know-how and research to communities around the state through a series of educational dinner meetings. Following a virtual program on mental health in February, individuals are invited to participate in regional in-person meetings in March.

Participants will have an opportunity to learn from WVU Extension specialists and industry experts.

Topics will range from specialized grazing techniques to high tunnel management to parasite management in livestock. Pesticide recertification credits will be offered at each of the March sessions.

For more information about the dinner meetings in your area, visit https://extension.wvu.edu/2023-agriculture-series.

WVU researchers dig into manure as organic fertilizer study

These West Virginia University researchers are the No. 1 experts in No. 2.

Elizabeth Rowen, of the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design is studying the use of manure as an organic fertilizer, thanks to a recent $750,000 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture. She and her team will be looking at ways to reduce the insects and pathogens that threaten crops.

The U.S. is the world’s largest consumer of beef and spends $233 billion annually to import organic livestock feed. However, domestic field crop producers might have an opportunity to meet those needs if the barriers to organic production, like pests, were lowered.

The key may be cow manure, which buoys soil health by building nutrients and organic matter.

“In organic production, manure is very common because it is one of the only sources of nutrients that you can have,” said Rowen, assistant professor of entomology.

Manure fertilizes effectively, meets plant nutritional needs, and is readily available in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, where the livestock and dairy industries are prevalent. Agricultural managers can apply manure in dry-stacked, liquid or composted form, but it may also bolster weeds, insects and soil pathogens.

“We have put together a team that’s going to look at the soils, the weeds, the microbiome of these plants,” Rowen said, adding that evidence indicates manure can make plants more resistant to insect pests.

The right soil conditions will also encourage beneficial insects that prey on destructive insects.

“We know that organic systems tend to have fewer insect pests even though they’re not getting sprayed with insecticides,” Rowen said.

Rowen and her colleagues are preparing for the three-year study at the WVU Agronomy Farm.

Rowen hopes the results will support decision-making in the future. In a nation with growing interest in organic milk and beef, she sees the potential to increase organic feed production and help farmers transition to more profitable organic production.

“We drink a lot of milk, and we eat a lot of beef,” she said. “We’re not getting rid of cows anytime soon.”

By Laura Roberts, Communications Specialist/Research Writer, West Virginia University
Improving grassland habitat to support grassland bird population

While West Virginians embrace our state’s forested identity, we also recognize that our grassland areas, which are patchy but widely distributed across our state, provide habitat that is critical for several grassland birds. These grasslands are mostly small agricultural fields, such as pastures and hayfields, or larger reclaimed mine lands.

The primary goal of our agricultural grasslands may be for grazing livestock or growing hay, but these habitats also can support strong grassland bird populations of Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrows and Bobolinks, for example. Some species of grassland birds have been experiencing significant population declines, losing more than 70% of their populations since 1970. Habitat loss is the primary driver of these population declines, and West Virginia farmers have the opportunity to play a significant role in reversing this downward trend.

Since agriculture and wildlife are certainly not mutually exclusive, simple changes in pasture and hay management can provide big benefits for grassland bird populations while allowing farmers to continue their important work.

Grassland habitat is lost when fields are no longer mowed or grazed, allowing woody plants to encroach in the natural succession of fields turning to forests. This changes the vegetation from mostly grasses and forbs – broad-leaved herbaceous plants, such as clovers – to shrubland-type vegetation dominated by pioneering trees, such as hawthorne, wild plum, black locust, eastern red cedar and autumn olive, which is non-native.

When woody trees and shrubs move into a field, it becomes less desirable for grassland birds and no longer provides the habitat they need. Understand that this shrubby type of vegetation does provide habitat for a number of other birds, but that is a topic for another time.

Grassland birds rely on our farmers to keep this natural succession of vegetation from occurring by either grazing or cutting these grasslands. However, some of our fields may be overgrazed with an overstocking of cattle that keep the grass too low or sparse to provide adequate structure and cover for nesting and foraging. In addition, the first cutting of hay usually falls in the middle of nesting season and that necessary practice of harvesting hay can result in a complete loss of grassland nests. But where possible, changes in farm practices can reduce the negative impacts and strike a balance between livestock and wildlife.

Work with your county WVU Extension agent or grazing specialist to ensure proper stocking rates to not only improve forage quality and quantity for your livestock but also provide nesting habitat for grassland birds. Consider rotational grazing to allow vegetation to regrow between grazings, establish deeper root systems, improve soil health and provide the above ground structure needed by our grassland birds. If possible, delay hay harvest until after July 15 or set aside portions of fields in which to delay harvest.

County agents and wildlife biologists understand that these are working farms and that delaying harvest can impact not only a farmer’s revenue but quality of forage. However, forage quality resulting from a delayed harvest is still adequate for beef cattle. Forage quality testing is key and needs to be performed to determine appropriate use and if protein supplements are required.

We need to work together to incorporate these conservation practices in ways that benefit both the farmer and wildlife. For example, conservation programs to help offset any economic impacts of delayed grazing may be available in your area through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Also, value-added livestock products grown with bird-friendly practices have become popular through voluntary certification with the Audubon Society. Additionally, since birdwatching (or “birding”) is one of the fastest-growing outdoor activities in the U.S., consider adding ecotourism to your agritourism business.

Talk to your local WVU Extension agent, who can assist you and put you in contact with your local NRCS soil conservationist or a WVU Extension grazing specialist or wildlife specialist.

By Sheldon Owen, WVU Extension Specialist – Wildlife, and Ed Rayburn, Retired WVU Extension Specialist – Forage Agronomy
Tips for winter wellness

Winter's cold has settled in, and with it comes an instinctual desire to enter physical and emotional hibernation. The change in temperature beckons our taste buds to indulge in calorie-laden, comfort foods.

It's also common in winter for people to experience lower levels of social, emotional and physical energy. So, it's important to eat foods that can help stave off the winter blues and keep our immune system strong. Oranges are a great choice. They're packed with vitamin C, which helps keep your immune system strong, and fiber.

Incorporate foods that allow you to soak up plenty of vitamin D since there are fewer hours of sunlight to get our daily dose naturally.

You can still enjoy your favorite stews or comfort foods, but look for ways to cut the fat and sodium in these dishes by using lower fat, reduced sodium ingredients.

For instance, when preparing mashed potatoes, place the washed, peeled and cubed potatoes in a bowl of water and let them sit for up to two hours to drain some of the starch from them before boiling. For an extra punch of nutritional goodness, leave some of the skin on them. You'll get a healthy dose of vitamins and minerals, and fiber, too! Use reduced sodium broths in your favorite soup dishes, and remember to mix it up by adding carrots, peppers and greens to your dishes – you won't be disappointed.

Making a habit of moving more throughout the day will benefit more than your waistline, it also will help your feel better mentally. Incorporating two healthy food choices each day can add up and help keep winter weight gain at bay, too. Need ideas for healthy recipes? Check out WVU Extension's healthy recipe library at https://extension.wvu.edu/food-health/recipes.

By Dana Wright, WVU Extension Agent – Logan & Mingo Counties
Photo Submission

Sadie and Luke help Papaw feed the cows

by Terry Thompson
Prichard, WV - Wayne County

We can’t get our hands on enough pictures! Send along your photos (one per email) along with title or byline, the name of the farm, the closest town or road name and county where the photo was taken, and the names person or person(s) in the photograph (optional). Please see our photo release on our November 30, 2022 Facebook post. Send your photos to ronw@wvfarm.org

Genetic Alliance bull sale
March 11, 2023 | 1pm | Franklin, WV

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(Logan) 540.405.2419
glenfieldfarm@gmail.com
My husband was giving me the rundown of his upcoming meetings and re-enactment events the other day and I mentally started calculating how many weekends he was going to be busy. Then I quickly told him no more commitments. He looked at me strangely and I said, “It’s going to be time to tap trees.”

Since September, on nice evenings and an occasional Saturday, he has been working on our very own sugar shack. It has been a slow process, but he has worked alone, with only me to help lift heavy stuff and hold up a board here or there. When he first started, maple season seemed a long way off. But now, at the beginning of January, I can almost hear the trees starting to drip. By the time you read this, we will most likely have already boiled down our first sugar water in our new shack!

I think I have shared in this space before how this little adventure began. Several years ago, a cousin of my father’s began a large sugar camp in Randolph County. My dad was intrigued and for Christmas that year I gave him a half a dozen buckets, some spiles, and a “how to make syrup” book. My dad and I tapped a couple trees on the mountain and after that it became my job to collect the sugar water each day. I boiled down the water on a single propane burner, in the backyard, in my mother’s canning pot. The propane flame made a huge mess of her pot. She was not amused.

We were not sure how to know when to pull the taps. So of course, we turned to my Great Aunt Ruth. She gave us lots of signs – when the frogs start to peep, when you see the buds start to plump, when the robins appear, when there are bugs in your sugar bucket. So, basically, when it is almost Spring. If we left the taps too long and kept collecting water, Aunt Ruth said our syrup would be “buddy,” which I never really understood. (I finally figured it out a couple years ago when my husband and I had wanted to try to get one more week of sugar water. Our syrup had a strange licorice taste to it. It was “buddy.”)

After that first year, tapping a couple trees and boiling down the water each year became a fun little weekend hobby, during a slow time of year. A learning experience for my nephews and any friends who were interested in helping. An initiation for a nice boy I was dating.

Eventually, that nice boy decided that a couple trees should be a few more, and then we invested in a double propane burner and used an actual sap pan. This worked somewhat better than my previous method.
Last year, with dreams of more trees (and free firewood), we boiled over a real fire in a pit. And this year, we have our sugar shack.

We will certainly never make money on this little venture. But money has never been the goal. The memories we are making now, the stories shared with family and friends while we cook, the tradition we are keeping alive is why this time of year is so special to us. And it occurs to me that this time of year is often a season of dread for many folks. These dark, long, cold months of winter that seem never to end before the glorious months of spring. Even to me, these months were once dead months. Days simply to be ticked off the calendar between Christmas and Easter. But even in these dreary months of winter, life is just below the surface. The sugar trees are running. Getting ready to burst out in green buds and leaves. There is something to look forward to in the long dark days of winter.

God is preparing the earth for Spring. Just as He is preparing us. The long days that seem not to end, the trials that we may be going through, the darkness we may feel around us. He is preparing us. Our season is coming. We must remind ourselves not to hasten the wait. Even the waiting can be a sweet time. Spring is coming.
Thousands of outdoor enthusiasts from the tri-state area will be heading to Morgantown’s Mylan Park on March 4th-5th for the 21st annual WV Fishing, Hunting & Outdoor Sports Show. Recognized as the largest outdoors show in the region, the 100,000 sq. ft building is packed with EVERYTHING OUTDOORS! Over 200 Vendor booths from all over the US and Canada will be selling thousands of products and services.

“We are so excited for this year’s show,” says Labeth Hall Director of the Event. "We have the largest show ever with everything you need to go fishing, hunting, camping or to just enjoy the great outdoors. In addition to ATV’s, campers, boats, trucks, trailers, tractors you can find jerky, outfitters, charter boats, and much more. We have added a lot of new vendors this year as our show has doubled in size. It is an outdoorsman’s paradise!”

For those who are serious fishermen, they will find a variety of fishing trips in the US and Canada, bait, tackle, reels, area fishing guides, as well as numerous charter boat captains from the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay. Professional anglers and fishing enthusiasts will find everything they need to catch the Big One.

The avid hunter can browse through lots of guns, archery equipment, knives, ammo, hunting associations, DNR, taxidermists, camo gear and lots of new gadgets. There will be turkey calls, tree stands, scents and a variety of new hunting products also. Hunting outfitters will be there to book bear, whitetail, wild boar, moose, turkey and game birds trips to a variety of destinations.

Fishing and hunting seminars will be held daily. Special guests at this year’s show include the Davison Brothers performing Saturday at 4:30pm, followed by World Champion Turkey Caller Chris Walls. Attendees can check the website for the updated schedule of other seminars.

Families are also welcome at the show. You will find something for everyone. Women can shop for camo purses, marinades and spices, unique jewelry and decorative items with an outdoors theme. Children can enjoy meeting birds of prey, Smokey Bear, Outer Rim Praxem Lightsaber School, face painting, a movie theatre and more.

The Outdoor Sports Show hours are Saturday from 10am-7pm and Sunday 10am-4pm. Tickets can be purchased at the door and admission is $10 for adults, children 7-12 are $2, and there is no charge for kids under 6 years. The first 50 people each day will receive a FREE gift. VETERANS receive a $5 DISCOUNT AFTER 4pm on SATURDAY ONLY. Proper Military ID must be presented. For those going to the WVU basketball game, stop by afterwards and show your ticket to receive $5 off admission.

Guests can register at the Prize Table to win lots of great prizes given away hourly, as well as two Grand Prizes including a week-long fishing adventure at Bear Lake Wilderness Camp in Canada, in addition to a hunting adventure to be announced.

The “WV Fishing, Hunting & Outdoor Sports Show” is owned and organized by WVRC Media. For more information visit the website at wvoutdoorsportsshow.com.
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Monday - March 6, 2023 - 12:30 PM
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10 spring calving cows
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West Virginia Farm Bureau News 21
Snow Daze

By Mike Snyder

When I got my monthly haircut at Barber Bill’s in Elkins in mid-January, Bill made an interesting observation: “This winter is up and down like the WVU basketball team, it just can’t seem to make up its mind what to do.”

I have been thinking about the winters of 1976-77 and ’77-78, for those readers who can remember them. We rural residents felt the brunt of them full-force. The thermometer took a nose dive those winters and never came back until springtime which seemed like it was never going to arrive. Along with temperatures below freezing and below zero for days on end, there was also the snow which just keep coming and coming without much let up.

In January of ’77, 104 inches fell in Terra Alta, and it also was the coldest month ever recorded in West Virginia. Snowdrifts eight and ten feet high piled up beside the roads in the mountain counties. Government offices, schools and businesses were shut down and many secondary roads had to wait their turn to be plowed. Our family was snowed in for two straight winters and had to be dug out by the state road crew.

We were living on a Laurel Fork sheep farm a half-mile upstream from the U.S. Rt. 33 bridge over that stream. Our driveway had a good stone base because it was an old logging railroad grade. As the snow piled up and the temperatures dropped, we had to figure how we were going to get in and out.

We didn’t have a tractor or snowplow of our own, and relied on two neighbors’ help with their tractors, but it got too deep for the tractors to handle. The snow covered our mailbox and I had to stick a stovepipe in it with a red flag on the end for Elmer, the mailman, to insert our mail. The first winter I kept the entrance of the driveway shoveled out and left our Volkswagen microbus parked close to the highway. We had to hike out but it was manageable. The next winter I didn’t get the VW out in time and we were stuck in the deep snow without transportation for six long weeks.

The low porch roof of our old farmhouse, most winters, had icicles that nearly reached the ground. Our coal burning Warm Morning stove kept the living room and bedrooms above it warm and snug around 80 degrees in the daytime. The house wasn’t insulated, however and the kitchen was a lot colder until we cut through the wall and installed a fan into the living room. The bathroom was extremely cold and getting in and out of the bathtub was done shivering and as quickly as possible. We had good water from a spring box on the mountainside above the house. We had to keep a small stream of water running out of the faucet at all times in order to prevent it from freezing up.

Lots of canned food from our large and ample garden lined the shelves, but we still had to get out to stores in Harman or Elkins, periodically. I kept pathways shoveled out in the waist-deep snow to the blacksmith shop and coal shed, and to the dog and chicken houses. The barn was farther away so I pretty much just wallered out a path to it in order to feed hay to the sheep every day. Being self-employed, I worked in my shop making hand-forged ironwork which we sold at fairs and on commission, so I had work most days regardless of the bitter cold temperatures.

I never kept a log on the weather, but January 1977 was the coldest month on record for the state. The Laurel Fork was frozen and we could walk up and down it which we did some days when the sun came out. In
fact, the Ohio River also froze up that year and people were walking across it. We were young, healthy and hardy. It was so beautiful where we lived between Rich and Middle mountains that it was like living in our own state park. While it was an adventure for me, it was much harder on Jill who had to deal with it all, as well as being a loving and devoted young mother to our little boy, Enoch, who was not yet school age. She was a long way from the Charleston suburbs where she grew up.

I tried to look up some of the record temperatures from those two years of Randolph County winter blizzards and sub-zero temperatures but didn’t find them. I did find out that the coldest temperature on record was in 1917 when it reached 37 degrees below zero in Lewisburg. The most snowfall ever recorded in 24 hours was 35 inches at Flat Top in Raleigh County in 1998. I can remember two winters later when it was 20 and 25 degrees below zero on the Dry Fork where we live now.

Early in our Laurel Fork days, my brother had given us an eight-foot bobsled toboggan. I used it to pull our supplies with Enoch on top from the highway to the house over our foot tracks when it didn’t get plowed. We couldn’t get back up Middle Mountain to Lambert Mennonite Church services for weeks on end.

Both years we were snowed in for six weeks. The state could only dig citizens out on an emergency basis. The first winter Enoch’s eardrums burst and he was crying and in a great deal of pain, so the state came to our rescue. We jumped with relief and joy when that big snow grader made in all the way to our house. An ear doctor in Elkins inserted tubes in his ears which helped him recover. He always was a happy little boy, eager to help whenever asked, and never a problem. The love we had for him, each other and the Lord, sustained us through thick and thin no matter how extreme the weather.

The next winter, my grandfather Snyder was dying in Ohio and I had to get out and drive there to be with him in his final days. Once again, the big state grader plowed through with smiling Ed Mullennex at the controls. He was glad to come to our rescue and we were ever so grateful for his help. I made it over the snow-covered highways all the way to Papaw Snyder’s. He had operated a mining machine in the Monongah mines and later supervised a small manufacturing plant owned by his in-laws in Ohio. His was a long, active and healthy life of 89 years.

Papaw was pretty much in a final coma when I sat beside him in the hospital. “Listen, Jim, do you hear the whistle blowin’?” was about the last thing I heard him say. I’ve always wondered where that whistle was that he heard. He was a hero-figure to me as a boy and I loved him greatly.

Those rugged winter days remain part of our family legacy. Our daughter Joy was born during the eight years we lived on Laurel. And like her brother, she rode on that loaded bobsled I pulled over the winter snow, even though she was too young to remember. Hard? Maybe, but it energized and exhilarated me, challenging though it was. My wife and homemaker Jill and the good Lord were always there every step of the way.

THY WORD IS A LAMP UNTO MY FEET, AND A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH—Psalms 119:105
Recipie Possibilities

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Recipes Courtesy of BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com and the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association

BEEF ENCHILADA SOUP

Conceived by rancher and blogger, Debbie Lyons-Blythe, this recipe is expertly tested while staying true to those homespun flavors.

It’s hard to deny that a warm, savory bowl of chili brings a certain nostalgia to the table. Whether it’s a weekly tradition or a special occasion dish, chili is one of our favorite ways to warm the soul.

INGREDIENTS:

2 pounds Ground Beef (93% lean or leaner)
2 cans (14-1/2 ounces each) reduced-sodium beef broth
1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes
1 can (19 ounces) mild enchilada sauce
1 can (15 ounces) black beans, drained and rinsed
1 can (15 ounces) kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1 can (15 ounces) sweet corn, drained
1 can (4 ounces) diced green chilies
2 packets (1 ounce each) taco seasoning mix
8 sliced flour tortillas (1/4-inch strips)

Garnishes:
Shredded cheese, sliced avocado, sour cream, taco seasoning (optional)

COOKING:

Heat large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Add Ground Beef; cook 12 to 15 minutes, breaking into 1/2-inch crumbles and stirring occasionally.

Cook’s Tip: Cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed ground beef. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F. Color is not a reliable indicator of ground beef doneness.

Transfer beef into 4-1/2 to 5-1/2-quart slow cooker; add all other ingredients. Cover and cook on HIGH 2 hours or LOW 4 hours until flavors are blended. Garnish soup with tortillas, cheese, avocado, sour cream and taco seasoning, as desired.
MEDITERRANEAN BEEF MEATBALL KABOB

Be warned - once you serve these bad boys you’ll be on appetizer duty for life. Lean Ground Beef, fresh parsley and cumin are formed into meatballs and served in flatbreads. Customize with your choice of chopped veggies and tzatziki sauce.

INGREDIENTS:
1 pound Ground Beef (93% lean or leaner)  
1/4 cup dry breadcrumbs  
2 egg whites or 1 whole egg  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley  
2 tablespoons water  
2 teaspoons minced garlic  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon pepper  
4 flatbreads (such as naan, lavash or pita bread)

Toppings (optional):
Chopped tomatoes, chopped cucumber, chopped red onion, chopped fresh parsley, Tzatziki sauce

COOKING:
Heat oven to 400°F. Combine Ground Beef, breadcrumbs, egg whites, parsley, water, garlic, cumin, salt and pepper in large bowl, mixing lightly but thoroughly. Shape into 12, 2-inch meatballs.

Thread meatballs onto 4, 10-inch skewers. Place on rack in broiler pan that has been sprayed with cooking spray. Bake in 400°F oven 24 to 27 minutes.

Cook’s Tip: Cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed Ground Beef. Ground Beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F. Color is not a reliable indicator of Ground Beef doneness.

Remove meatballs from skewers. Serve in flatbreads. Garnish with Toppings, as desired.

ALTERNATIVE COOKING METHOD:
Recipe can be made in a 8-quart Air Fryer. Heat Air Fryer to 350°F. Place un-threaded meatballs into Air Fryer basket sprayed with cooking spray. Bake at 350°F for 24 to 27 minutes or until instant-read thermometer inserted into center registers 160°F.
Monthly Puzzles with a Few Words of Country Wisdom Tossed in for Good Measure!

Theme: VALENTINES DAY

ACROSS
1. "Without further ____," pl.
5. Sweet 16 gift
8. Steps to the river, in India
12. *Michael Bublé’s "____ the Last Dance for Me"
13. Bigger than big
14. Nonkosher
15. Big-ticket one
16. October birthstone
17. *#5 Down’s target
18. *Reason to celebrate Lupercalia, Valentine’s Day predecessor
20. Make over
21. Omit
22. Hexagonal fastener
23. December birthstone, pl.
26. Most gemütlich
30. Ed’s request
31. Two dots above a letter
34. Brussels org.
35. Church recesses
37. ___ or chicken?
38. Encourage (2 words)
39. What hoarders do
40. He crossed the Rubicon
42. Jet follower
43. English county courts, in the olden days
45. Gentlemen’s gentlemen
47. Chop off
48. Paparazzo’s quest
50. Port in Yemen
52. *Heart-shaped box content
56. Range
57. Top notch
58. Baron Munchhausen, e.g.
59. Journalists and reporters
60. Speed unit
61. All is well that does this well
62. Bald eagle’s nest
63. Ever, to a poet
64. Tinkerbell’s powder

DOWN
1. "Clueless" catch phrase
2. *Get-together
3. End of a break-up phrase
4. Explosive of Czechoslovakian origin
5. *Winged one
6. September stone
7. Bank on
8. *____ card
9. Not tails
10. ’70s hairdo
11. Sylvester, to Tweety
12. Wholism, alt. sp.
14. Monotonous hum
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Cow Cud...

If George Washington were alive today, why couldn’t he throw a silver dollar across the Potomac? A. Because a dollar doesn’t go as far as it used to.


DID YOU KNOW?

Four Presidents were born in February – Abraham Lincoln, Ronald Reagan, George Washington and William Harrison.

James Madison (1809-1817) was the shortest president at 5’4” and weighed barely over 100 pounds.

Andrew Jackson (1829-1837) once killed a man in a duel.

Harry S. Truman (1945-1953): The “S” in Harry S. Truman was just an initial; it didn’t stand for any name. (The “S” in Ulysses S. Grant didn’t stand for anything either.)

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