The Way I See It
— Charles Wilfong
Commentary on Statewide and National Issues by the President of the West Virginia Farm Bureau

Around the Dome
— Dwayne O’Dell
Our Director of Government Relations keeps us up to speed on the latest legislative issues

The Zipline
— Zippy Duvall
Viewpoints from our AFBF President

County Corner
News from our county boards from across the state

From the Attorney General
— Addressing Public Issues from Patrick Morrissey

From the Kitchen Table
— Pam Hessler
News from our Women’s Leadership Chair

Growing Young
— Michelle Wilfong
News from the Young Farmer and Rancher Chair

A June Wedding Tradition
— Maggie Blankenship, WVFB YF&R Committee Member

From Ironworker to Farmer
— Lacen Forbes, WVFB YF&R Committee Member

God, Farming, and Sourdough Bread...Stories from the Farm
— Susan Wilkins Taylor
Getting by with Faith and Family

Thank you for Giving —Our Food Link

How Farm Families Balance Children and Work
— Shoshanah Inwood and Florence Becot

Growing a State and a Nation
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Allied Food Safety's two-day HACCP training is for industry professionals and those working or planning to be working in the food industries, specifically in meat processing. The training will be held in the Agricultural Sciences Building room 2003 on West Virginia University's Evansdale Campus. Lunch from the Beehive Cafe will be provided by the West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

Visit our website or send us an email today to register!

aginnovation@easternwv.edu    easternwv.edu/ag-innovation
We are excited to be nearing the roll-out of the FB Insurance Company of West Virginia. This is the culmination of a tremendous amount of work and we look forward to the many positive aspects it will have for the West Virginia Farm Bureau and the people all across our state. It has been a true pleasure working with all the folks from the Kentucky Farm Bureau to make this happen. They have many very talented people working on this project.

Kentucky Farm Bureau has the reputation of being the best of the best among the Farm Bureau companies. One thing that is always obvious when working with them is their level of commitment to making Farm Bureau better. Back in April, we spent 3 days traveling around West Virginia with all of their top management people to introduce the program and future plans to our members and others. We appreciate all of you who came to these meetings in Parkersburg, Morgantown, Moorefield, Lewisburg, Flatwoods, and Hurricane. These meetings were all well attended and it was very obvious that people all across the state are happy to find an insurance company that will serve their insurance needs while also being tied to West Virginia Farm Bureau as a member-only service.

We have had a lot of people ask where we are in the process and how soon they will have coverage available. At this time, they are in the process of getting regional managers and agents into place. Once these folks are ready, we hope that you will give them a chance to take care of your insurance needs. They will be introducing themselves at local Farm Bureau meetings and working to develop relationships with our county boards. This is a grand opportunity for all of us at West Virginia Farm Bureau, and a great service for the people of West Virginia.

Kentucky Farm Bureau Leadership

Mark Haney, KFB President
Eddie Melton, KFB 1st Vice President
Sharon Furches, FFB 2nd Vice President
Drew Graham, KFB Federation Executive Vice President
John Sparrow, KFB Insurance CEO
I hope each of you are doing well. Spring has been a great time, but also a busy time of planting, turning out cattle on grass, and other farm work. Please consider the following agricultural information:

In mid-May, the United States Supreme Court upheld California Proposition 12 in a 5-4 decision. As a reminder, Proposition 12 was passed by California voters to ban the sale of pork in that state from hogs not raised by California standards. California production standards exceed commonly accepted practices followed by farmers and that are supported by scientific protocol. AFBF and National Pork Producers Council challenged the law, believing it violated the dormant Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

The Court was split in its fractured opinion. Justices Gorsuch, Thomas, and Barrett were skeptical of the very existence of the dormant Commerce Clause, arguing that Congress is the place to settle these disputes. U.S. House Agriculture Chairman Glen Thompson is considering the addition of language to the 2023 Farm Bill that would apply to state laws similar to Proposition 12 that regulate how food animals are produced. Justices Sotomayor and Kagan found that AFBF and the Pork Council did not adequately allege a substantial burden on interstate commerce. Chief Justice Roberts wrote the dissent, joined by Justices Alito, Kavanaugh, and Jackson.

Justice Kavanaugh wrote that state restrictions like Proposition 12 undermine federalism and serve as a blueprint for a new era where states force other states to obey their moral and policy preferences. At any rate, Proposition 12 stands, and many believe it will be a blueprint for other production rules that may make meat so expensive that we will be forced into a meatless society.

Colorado and Oregon have had ballot initiatives to address animal welfare issues that exceed scientific standards. These proposals have included ideas such as outlawing artificial insemination, allowing slaughter of animals only after 5 years of age, and other extremely restrictive standards. Some animal rights groups are calling for video surveillance of all slaughter plants. Many believe the Supreme Court decision will embolden such groups to escalate efforts to pass restrictive state-by-state laws based on unscientific data.

In the past six years in West Virginia, at least five bills have been introduced that had the potential as written to restrict animal agricultural production as we know it today. These bills included felony convictions for violators. This writer believes WVFB and other agricultural groups will need to be even more vigilant to educate consumers, legislators, and others on keeping our laws based on scientific data rather than on emotions and concepts of complete vegetarian diets.

State health officials expect West Virginia to receive $19 million of federal money to address PFAS (per and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in various public water systems. PFAS are known as “forever chemicals” and are used in a variety of products including fabric, carpet, cookware, and firefighting materials. EPA is preparing to issue new health regulations regarding six different chemicals. The Bureau of Public Health has not issued any health advisories. In a national meeting, EPA said agricultural producers will not be considered for regulation; however, these chemicals may have some affect on agricultural products.

Currently, there is no language in the rulemaking process that protects farmers. Farmers do not produce PFAS, but the chemicals can be found in water provided to livestock and crops. In certain areas of the country, PFAS levels have risen in milk, beef, and row crops. Another source of PFAS has come from an EPA-supported practice of soil amendments of biosolids and paper products that may elevate certain PFAS compounds. This will be a major issue facing all agriculturalists in the coming months.

In legislative news, Delegate Erikkka Storch from the fourth district of the House of Delegates has resigned due to accepting a new position in private
industry. The Legislative Interim Committees met in early May and received new revenue reports, updates on broadband issues, and information on trends in artificial intelligence. The Forest Management Review Commission received information on a post-audit division legislative audit report for the managed timberland program. Legislators also heard from various public officials from the Huntington area on economic development projects. The next interim session will be held in August.

Finally, I believe we live in the greatest country in the world. One of the major challenges I see to the continuation of the United States of America is the individuals who seek to diminish or step away from the principles of our Constitution. President Abraham Lincoln said, “We the people are the rightful masters of both Congress and the courts, not to overthrow the Constitution but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution.” He also said, “My dream is of a place and a time where America will once again be seen as the last best hope of earth.”

Have a great day!
Strong Grassroots Create a Strong, United Voice

As farmers and ranchers, we know our work is never fully done. There is always another seed to plant, another crop to harvest, another animal to care for. And our work doesn’t stop at the farm gate either. We must also be actively engaged in shaping the policies that impact agriculture and our rural communities. That’s why it is critical for our grassroots Farm Bureau members to make their voices heard on policies that directly impact their farms and ranches.

Across Farm Bureau, the 2024 policy process has already begun. Our Issue Advisory Committees (IACs) came together in February to kick off this year-long process. These committees, made up of grassroots members and supported by state and national Farm Bureau staff, are tasked with identifying the most pressing issues facing agriculture and developing policy proposals to address them. The reports from these committees are used to inform the policy development work of state and county Farm Bureaus, which eventually make their way to the American Farm Bureau Convention in January, where we finalize our national policy priorities.

Why is this grassroots policy process so important? Because together we can speak as the national Voice of Agriculture, and our lawmakers know that the policies we’re advocating for are coming straight from farm and ranch families. Whether I am meeting with leaders in Washington, or AFBF staff is weighing-in with federal agency staff, or Farm Bureau members and leaders from across the country are sitting down with their representatives—we are telling the story of how federal policy directly impacts your farm or ranch.

Federal laws and regulations also impact our rural communities and the ability of farmers and ranchers to pass our farms down to the next generation. For example, changes to labor policy impact the availability of workers for agriculture, as well as other jobs supported by agriculture across the food chain. Investments in infrastructure, including broadband, impact the ability of our communities to attract and retain young people. And funding for research and development will have long-term impacts on advancements in innovation on the farm and career opportunities to spur growth in agriculture.

It is critical for farmers to be at the table providing feedback on regulations and policy proposals that impact our ability to safely and sustainably grow our nation’s food, fiber and fuel.

As stewards of the land, we are committed to protecting our natural resources and ensuring that our farms are sustainable for future generations. But it is critical for farmers to be at the table providing feedback on regulations and policy proposals that impact our ability to safely and sustainably grow our nation’s food, fiber and fuel. Farm Bureau is leading the way to ensure that farmers and ranchers are treated as partners in our efforts to protect our natural resources through voluntary programs that are grounded in science and flexible, recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach just doesn’t work for agriculture.

I could fill a whole book with examples of how grassroots policy strengthens agriculture across the country as it guides our advocacy efforts and ultimately helps shape federal laws and regulations. That’s why it’s so important for every member of our organization to be engaged in the policy development process. This is your opportunity to make your voice heard and shape
the policies that will make a difference on your farm and in your community.

Farm Bureau’s success depends on our members attending county meetings and participating in policy discussions. It depends on members sharing their experiences and insights with policymakers and advocating for policies that support the long-term viability of agriculture and rural communities. Together, we can ensure that the unified Voice of Agriculture is heard loud and clear in Washington and that our policies help strengthen American farms and ranches for generations to come.

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

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Gilmer County

Bee Hotel

The Gilmer County Farm Bureau and WesMonTy Resource Conservation and Development collaborated to construct and place a Bee Hotel mid-way on the Pioneer Trail located adjacent to the Glenville State University Football field. The Bee Hotel is designed to provide a shelter for pollinator insects to live and stay throughout the year.

The hotel was assembled and placed on the trail by Mr. Levi Good on Friday March 31. Along with Mr. Good, West Virginia Farm Bureau members Chester Sholes, Jane Cain, Pat Nestor and WesMonTy member Bud Sponaugle were all on hand for the installation.

For more information on pollinator hotels you may email Donnie Tenney at treeedm02@yahoo.com.

Invasive Species and Grassland Management Workshop

This educational workshop was held at the Holt House in Glenville on April 25 and was sponsored by the Gilmer County Farm Bureau.

The workshop was designed to help educate on problems with autumn olive, multiflora rose, and Japanese stilt grass in pastures and meadows as well as instruction on methods to control and eliminate these invasive grasses and brush. Mr. Bruce Lloyd, WVU Extension Agent, was the featured presenter at the workshop.

Thirty-five folks from three different counties attended this workshop. Additionally, 7 volunteers helped with the planning and organization.

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Putting ‘West Virginia First’: Agreement Will Help All West Virginians

The opioid scourge is one of the greatest challenges West Virginia has ever faced. The vast oversupply of prescription opioids caused or contributed to too many senseless deaths, and too many broken families, over many, many years.

We have fought hard—and we’re still fighting—to bring a sense of healing to the state. While litigation and settlements will not bring back the lives lost from the opioid epidemic, our hope is that the monies garnered will provide much-needed help to those affected the most.

Gov. Jim Justice recently signed into law Senate Bill 674, which codifies the West Virginia First Foundation in statute. We now have the platform desperately needed to manage the nearly $1 billion in opioid settlements available to our state and political subdivisions. This represents a major step forward in the fight against this devastating epidemic. Far too many lives have been lost to this epidemic—enough is enough.

Pursuant to SB 674, the Governor will appoint members to the Foundation’s board of directors, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The West Virginia First Foundation is a private, nonstock, nonprofit entity created to distribute opioid abatement funds throughout six regions of the State. The Foundation will operate pursuant to Articles of Incorporation that will soon be filed as well as the terms of the West Virginia First Memorandum of Understanding.

The MOU created the first plan of action to address the opioid crisis and was the first step toward healing the battered communities in this state. Standing together, the State, all 55 counties, and 220 of 229 cities and towns signed onto the MOU.

The MOU details the allocation method for any settlement funds or judgments received as a result of the various lawsuits against opioid manufacturers, distributors, and other parties in the pharmaceutical supply chain. As the central entity dedicated to addressing the opioid crisis throughout our state, the Foundation will receive 72.5% of all settlement and judgment dollars. Another 24.5% will go directly to local governments, while 3% will be held in escrow by the state.

Importantly, the MOU sets forth a basic framework of opioid abatement strategies that both the Foundation and local governments will use to help ensure that all monies received are put to good use. This framework along with the allocation mixture will help maximize the impact of every opioid dollar throughout the six regions of the state in a manner that helps families and funds projects most in need.

Between 1997 and 2018, drug companies shipped 4.9 billion pills to our state, which at that time had a population of roughly 1.84 million. That equates to 2,679 pills for every West Virginian.

Comparatively, New York and California during that same period received 1,457 and 1,168 pills per resident, respectively.

The communities of our state have been ravaged by the wrongdoing of those within the pharmaceutical supply chain. With this MOU, West Virginia has dramatically improved its ability to take action to protect all the citizens of our state from this epidemic.

The severity of this problem and the harm done to West Virginians cannot be overstated nor ignored. And that’s especially true in light of the proliferation of fentanyl coming in from China, into the Mexican drug cartels, and across the border, eventually making its way to West Virginia. Given this fentanyl threat, the creation of this structure and plan couldn’t come at a better time.

We must prevent another generation from falling prey to senseless death. The West Virginia First Foundation will be a major step forward on the path to recovery.
Although in my part of the state we didn’t have a lot of rain in April, we sure did in May. As I’m writing my article for the June edition, I look out the kitchen/dining room windows to see everything so beautiful and green. Not only are the flowers and trees blooming or full of green leaves, but the hayfields are also looking ready for mowing. In fact, a few neighbors have already started mowing down some of their hay. Just remember to all be safe. Farming is an extremely dangerous job. We get complacent because it is repetitious and tend to take too many chances. Please don’t be a statistic!

**Ag in West Virginia Poster Contest** – I’m so excited to report that 22 counties participated this year in the contest. Judging took place just a couple of days ago from this writing and I’m happy to report the winners:

1st Place – Josie Davis, Glenwood School, Mercer County

2nd Place – Sidney Adams, Lewisburg Elementary, Greenbrier County

3rd Place – Hajnalka Denes, Suncrest Elementary, Monongalia County

As in years past, all first-place county winners will be taken to the Cultural Center in Charleston and be on display later this fall in the Grand Hall. The top 3 posters will also be on display at the State Fair in August and then at the WVFB Annual Meeting. We have some really artistic 4th graders across the state as the posters were extremely difficult to judge. I want to thank all the counties who participated and hope we can continue to grow this contest to even more counties and schools next year.

**Our Food Link** – Well we have had some snafu’s this year with event dates (thanks to yours truly with the first set of dates being published incorrectly) and then the Charleston House asked to change the shopping date. Finally, we had to cancel the Morgantown event but for a good reason. They finally got approval for a year-long full renovation project. This includes enlarging and adding more rooms and even an elevator to be handicap accessible. With that said, they are not be able to store that much food at one time. For those counties who support the Morgantown House, if you have non-perishable foods or money, please contact Kara Kimble in Morgantown at 304-322-2073 or email her at kara@rmhcpgh-mgtn.org to make delivery arrangements. They can accept food, but only in small amounts at one time during their renovations. The state WLC will be meeting in June and will discuss how better to set the dates, so we don’t repeat the same mistakes. I truly appreciate all the patience and flexibility and promise we will make this better for next year. I will report on totals later in the year as counties continue to submit their donations and hold events. Our totals so far are close to last year, so despite the changes, we were still successful with our support this year thus far.

**Ag in the Classroom/National Ag Day** – I want to thank all those who spent time in the classroom this school year with students reading or doing experiments. I want to give a SHOUT OUT to the YF&R Committee for their involvement in the classrooms this year during National Ag Day/Week in March. I enjoy going back into the classroom each year. This year I spent the entire school day at Pleasant View Elementary in Morgan County reading, “I Love Strawberries” while using the educator’s guide for that book, and selected one of the hands-on lessons for the classrooms. On March 24th, I spent time in each classroom (K-5) and before each student could enjoy the strawberries I provided, they learned how strawberry seeds are located on the outside of that fruit. Each student picked off 5 or 6 seeds, placed them in a paper towel, folded it, and placed it inside a Ziplock bag that we spritzed with water to help germinate their seeds. Students were instructed to place their bags in a window for sunshine so the seeds would grow into seedlings to plant at home.
The classrooms all enjoyed the book, the hands-on lesson, and especially eating the strawberries afterwards. I would recommend planning an event with your schools for next year. I’m exhausted at the end of the day but when students ask if you can come back next week, I know it is all worthwhile!!

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!
The West Virginia and Virginia Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee held their 2nd Annual Retreat on April 28-29 in Petersburg, WV. There were 6 from Virginia and 14 from West Virginia that attended. This was a great opportunity to hear from speakers, visit area agricultural enterprises, and network.

The weekend started off with Jaimee Carr, Mariah Hatton and myself delivering a book barn to Maysville Elementary School. A group of 2nd graders had the joy of being in the library when it was delivered. Our committee members were able to introduce themselves, talk about their farming background, and read a few ag books to these students. They were so excited to look at the 20+ new books that were placed in the book barn.

Everyone then met at The Hermitage to begin the weekend sessions. We were honored to hear from Farm Credit of the Virginias’ representatives Andy Cumberland and Ivy Ward. Andy spoke about the loan process, what is needed, and general information about credit scores, etc. Ivy spoke about the Farm Credit Knowledge Center and what opportunities are available to young and beginning farmers. Dr. Alt, the assistant state veterinarian, spoke about over-the-counter sales of specific medically important livestock antibiotics in the United States. These medications will still be available, but they’ll require veterinarian prescriptions after June 11, 2023. The FDA’s intent is to combat resistance to drugs. Matt Monroe, assistant director of environmental programs spoke about the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Project.

Brainstorming and team-building activities were then conducted with WV and VA members. After that, we were off onto the tours. The first tour spot consisted of visiting the Spring Run Fish Hatchery. We learned about the various types of fish that are raised there and the general purpose of the hatchery. The kids thoroughly enjoyed getting to feed the fish! The group then traveled to Lost River, WV to tour Lost River Butcher Block and Teets Cattle Company. This state-of-the-art facility offers custom processing, retail cases that are loaded with a wide variety of fresh meat, and a retail front with an assortment of items. We would like to thank these two places that allowed us to tour their facility!

This was once again a great opportunity to network with other YF&R members and see agriculture in Hardy and Grant Counties. Once again, thank you to everyone who was able to participate and be involved!

Our next activity will be our Summer Picnic on June 11 at Camp Pioneer 4-H Camp in Randolph County. If you are involved in the WV YF&R Committee, please feel free to come and join us for this or any of our activities! Follow our Facebook page for more details or reach out to Dakota Pritt at 304-940-9070.
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A June Wedding Tradition

by Maggie Blankenship,
Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee Member

Here on Just Our Luck farm in Putnam County spring has sprung and we are gearing up for another year. Our tulips have come and gone and our summer garden has made its way into the ground. We also started having our spring crop of calves a month ago and are starting to separate the herd from last year’s crop. With all the typical things going on at our farm, none of them are the most exciting. In fact, they aren’t even what we are working the most on. Currently, our evenings and weekends are being spent on wedding preparations.

You read that right. Wedding prep on our traditional cattle farm is in full swing with our fifth wedding, of the second generation, of the Raines family weddings that have happened in the month of June. Megan Parsons, my little sister will be the fifth woman in our family to get married on the dirt that raised my mother and all eight of her siblings. Susan Raines Lewis got married here first on June 5, 1982, then our mother, Patty Raines Parsons on June 18, 1988, followed by Judy Raines Pauley on June 8, 1996. Cody and I continued the tradition after celebrating our marriage on the farm in our working cattle barn on September 3rd of last year. Finally, this fifth wedding will be my little sister on June 17, 2023.

Weddings are a lot more than they used to be, but the work is so worth it to have a special day where we have countless childhood memories. An old field that was once used as an elementary school ball diamond, then turned pasture ground, now holds the location of sacred vows of our family. Endless hours, blood, and sweat have gone into making our farm pristine for these events, but our father, Greg, wouldn’t have had it any other way. Truth be told, he’s getting a lot of farm projects done and has a lot of great memories with his girls preparing for their big day. While these events are special and dear to our hearts, we all believe that cattle are easier to farm and will transition the ground back into pasture come July.
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From Ironworker to Farmer

by Lacen Forbes,
Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee Member

When I was a little girl, I always imagined that I would marry a zoologist, a veterinarian, or a farmer. I expected to be with someone that loved and grew up around animals. This idea probably began about the same time I was obsessed over the Animal Planet characters like Steve Irwin and Jeff Corwin. I grew up on the farm and I knew I wanted to maintain the farming lifestyle for the rest of my life.

As I got older, I realize that my ideology of the perfect husband had narrowed down quite a bit. I was the girl in college that dated cowboys and shepherds instead of doctors and lawyers. I thought I wanted to have a partner with the same passion as me and I often wouldn’t consider someone that was not involved in agriculture in some way. I looked for a man that lived in the country with pigs, cows, goats, horses, and a garden...someone who would mesh into the farming lifestyle. They’d get bonus points if they drove a truck and liked sweet tea.

I married an ironworker.

I married an ironworker (Kris) with no farming experience besides a small garden in his backyard. He didn’t grow up helping his grandpa bale hay, raise farm animals, or collect eggs from the chickens. He didn’t know about cuts of meat to order from the butcher or varieties of tomatoes. He wasn’t accustomed to ALWAYS having a million things on the “To-do” list. Chaos was not a word in his vocabulary. He was an ironworker, not a farmer.

I would be lying if I told you that I “eased” him into the farming lifestyle. In fact, it was quite the opposite.

Once, I had a momma cow having issues calving. I had gotten up early in the morning and very sadly found a calf stuck halfway out of her, dead. I tried to pull it myself, but the calf was much too large, and I didn’t have any luck. Kris was my only option for help. I was bawling because it was my favorite cow, and I knew it didn’t look good for her. (P.S.- never have a favorite cow).

We worked and worked and worked... trying to get the calf out of her. When we finally did, I found Kris bent over in the weeds almost puking from the smell. After he tried to collect himself, we
We must remember to include everyone. Not only in our relationships but in all agriculture outreach activities and even everyday conversations. I think farmers sometimes overlook the folks new to the game or the non-traditional crowd in different professions.

Give everyone a chance. Don’t hold it against someone if they weren’t born into a 4th generation farm. Teach them what you’ve learned, and you may be surprised at how many people get excited and start their own farm ventures. For many, there is an interest in agriculture once it is sparked.

Over time, Kris started asking me about the animals while he was away at work. He works on farm projects over the weekends without me ever mentioning them. When farm babies are born, he oohs and aahs just like me. He seems to enjoy strolling around Rural King for minerals or feed and canning our garden treasures.

I’m so proud of him and all the knowledge he's collected so far. Kris is an ironworker, but man is he becoming the everyday Old McDonald.

We hopped on the four-wheeler to grab a few things for the cow and he said, “I don’t know if I can do this anymore.” “Working with the cow, or us?” I asked. There was a long pause I’ll never forget.

Kris experienced farming life in a very short period. He’s seen sickness and loss of animals. He’s fought with wild sows while I was away at work and chased the neighbor’s cows back into their field more times than I can count. He’s learned the farm chore routines of feeding and how to trim goat hooves. He’s picked up on so many things in the garden and was there when equipment broke repeatedly.

**DATING A FARMER IS HARD.** There is frustration and bad timing. It involves incredible dedication and long hours. It is so overwhelming at times and is often all work and no play.

The man I wouldn’t even consider at first has become everything I need and want. You see, it really doesn’t matter if someone has experience or a background in farming. It matters if they’re eager to learn, if they have the patience that farmers tend to lose, and if they stick around after the runaway animals and birthing difficulties.
How do you say the word peony? Is it PEE-OH-KNEE, PEE-AH-KNEE, PINE-KNEE, or PEE-KNEE? It is always interesting to me all the pronunciations folks have for this flower. I fell in love with peonies when I saw them growing in my mother-in-law’s yard a few years ago. Such a gorgeous, old-fashioned flower. When we planned our wedding for early June, I knew I wanted a local farmer to make my bouquet and I crossed my fingers when I asked her if she would still have any peonies left in bloom. I enjoyed those flowers for only a couple of days before having to leave them behind when we went on our honeymoon.

Determined to have my own peonies, later that fall, we dug up six small clumps of peonies from my mother-in-law and I planted them in my own flower garden. They looked pretty straggly. I hoped they would survive. For two springs, my peonies formed little buds but they never opened. Finally, last spring, they bloomed. And they were beautiful. The literal years of waiting for them to bloom were worth it. I filled the house with peonies, wanting to enjoy them as much as possible.

Now, the peony watch has begun again. Every evening I check them with anticipation. The waiting makes it even sweeter. This year, my plants are filled with dozens of buds. It is going to be a magnificent show when they all bloom out.

Waiting on my peonies is a bit like waiting on God’s timing. There have been many times that I have questioned God’s timing for my life. Times that I have felt truly to be in some sort of holding pattern, just waiting. God’s plan may be revealed a bit more slowly than what we prefer. A devotional reading the other day said that every book in the Bible has a story about waiting. And in every case, you will discover that the waiting is never in vain.

I certainly do not prefer to wait three years on peonies to bloom. But they need those years to grow deep, strong roots before putting their energy into forming flowers. That same logic can be applied to our lives. Spend the time waiting to grow deeper roots in God’s word, so that when His time is finally right, you will be ready to bloom as well.

“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” -- Isaiah 40:31
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Huntington Ronald McDonald House Shopping Day

West Virginia Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership Committee spearheads the annual Our Food Link food drive for Ronald McDonald Houses in Huntington, Charleston, and Morgantown. This year, the Morgantown house was in the process of remodeling, so they were sent a check for $1,450 in lieu of food.

A total of $1,500 was spent at Kroger for the Huntington RMH. Farm Bureau members from Wood, Calhoun, and Braxton Counties were on hand to shop on May 6th. Wood County added to the total with $1,850 in food and cash, while Calhoun County donated an additional $350 in food. Braxton County also sent along some food that they had collected.

Bruce McGlothlin & Beckie Powell from Wood County, Janet & Roger Wigal from Wood County, and Dean & Sue Miller from Calhoun County pose with Ronald during shopping day at the Ronald McDonald House in Huntington.
The Hampshire County Farm Bureau recently purchased and donated over $100 of food to the Romney Food Pantry. This is the second time this year they have donated in honor of their members. A special thank you goes out to Omps Grocery in Bloomery for their donations.

In addition, the Hampshire County Farm Bureau Woman’s Leadership Committee recently met to fill 75 bags of hygiene items. The bags were delivered to students in need at Capon Bridge Elementary School. The ladies worked to collect items for the bags including shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothpaste and toothbrushes. The group plans to continue the effort in the fall delivering items to other schools. If you are interested in joining the woman’s committee or donating items, please contact Dottie Wood at 304-359-7969.

A total of $1,540.31 of food was purchased at Kroger in Charleston. In addition, Mercer County purchased $1,300 in gift cards and Greenbrier County bought gift cards totaling $1,010. Nicholas County also brought along some additional food collected recently.

Groceries were loaded up and taken to the Ronald McDonald House, at which time we were given a small tour of the facility and treated to a lunch.
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Regional Offices Expected to Begin Opening Soon
How Farm Families Balance Children and Work

Lack of affordable childcare is hurting young farm families’ ability to grow their businesses – the US farm bill may finally offer some help

Co-authored by Shoshanah Inwood, Associate Professor of Rural Sociology, The Ohio State University and Florence Becot, Associate Research Scientist in Rural Sociology, Adjunct Faculty - National Farm Medicine Center, The Ohio State University

Editor’s Note: A few months ago, we shared a Facebook link, reaching out to ask if you would be willing to share information about how farm families balance children and work. Over 860 farm families from 47 states responded. The research team wrote a press article to share the findings from the study and help inform conversations around rural childcare, farm business viability, and the upcoming Farm Bill

Kerissa and Charlie Payne are beginning farmers living their dream of raising two daughters on a farm in Central Ohio. By conventional measures, their livestock farm, Covey Rise, is a success. Yet, below the surface, the challenge of finding quality affordable child care has kept their business from growing and reaching its full potential.

“It feels like we’re always split between keeping the kids safe on the farm, being a good parent, and the needs of the farm,” Kerissa Payne said.

The United States has a child care crisis, yet the issue remains largely invisible in the farm sector. For too long, the nation has ignored the fact that farm parents are working parents who must juggle child care while working what can be one of the most dangerous and stressful jobs in America.

But as Bob Dylan might say, “The times they are a-changin.”

For the first time in history, the two largest farm organizations, the American Farm Bureau and the National Farmers Union, have included child care in their policy priorities for the 2023 federal farm bill, a massive spending bill that passes every five years. As rural researchers, our conversations with policymakers suggest that there may be bipartisan support to help increase access to affordable quality rural child care as lawmakers hear from families.

Over the past 10 years, we have interviewed and surveyed thousands of farmers across the country to understand how child care affects farm business economic viability, farm safety,
farm families’ quality of life and the future of the nation’s food supply. What we found debunks the three most common myths that have kept child care in the shadows of farm policy debates and points to solutions that can support farm parents.

**Myth #1: Child care is a not a problem in the farm sector**

Despite hearing from countless parents about their challenges with child care, the issue has been largely invisible among farm business advisers, farm organizations, and federal and state agricultural agencies. When we were interviewing advisers and decision-makers about this topic early in the COVID-19 pandemic, common first reactions we heard were: “child care is not an issue for farmers,” “we have never thought to ask about it” and “does it affect the farm business?”

Nationally, three-quarters (77%) of farm families with children under 18 report difficulties securing child care because of lack of affordability, availability or quality. Almost half (48%) report that having access to affordable child care is important for maintaining and growing their farm business.

Our research has consistently found child care is an issue that affects all of agriculture regardless of farm size, production system or location.

Access to child care is especially acute in rural areas, where even before COVID-19, 3 in 5 rural communities were categorized as child care deserts. The high cost of child care left the Paynes in a position familiar to many Americans — they make too much to qualify for child care support, but they don’t make enough to afford the type of quality child care they want.

The Paynes’ experience reflects what we consistently hear from farmers: Child care affects the trajectory of the farm business and the ability of a farm family to stay on the land.

**The stresses and challenges in raising children on farms**

A nationwide survey of 860 farm and ranch families conducted from January to March 2023 highlighted the child care struggles U.S. farm families face.

**Myth #2: Farmers don’t want or need help with child care because they have family help**

Perhaps one of the biggest myths we have heard is that farm parents want to do it all on their own, and when they need help, they have family members who can watch the children.

This might work if relatives are nearby, but almost half of farmers we surveyed said their own parents were...
too busy to help with child care, had died or were in declining health.

Often, farm parents have had to move away from family and friends to find affordable land. These parents consistently said the lack of community made it harder to take care of their children.

Farmers have repeatedly said that it is a myth that they don’t want help taking care of children. The problem is that they cannot find or afford help.

Farm safety programs have traditionally focused on education. However, our research shows that farm parents are highly aware of the risks. Instead of education, parents explain that they need resources to help with child care – 86% said they sometimes bring children to the farm worksite because they lack other options.

**Finding solutions to support child care**

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to America’s child care problems, particularly for farm parents, who are juggling raising their own families while working to feed and clothe the nation.

In our research, farmers spoke about a wide range of solutions: free or affordable quality child care, before- and after-school programs, better parental leave policies for wage and self-employed workers, financial support for safe play areas on the farm, college debt relief, free college tuition and more affordable health insurance.

Seeing his farm community struggling with child care, Adam Alson, a corn and soybean farmer in Jasper County, Indiana, co-founded Appleseed Childhood Education, a nonprofit dedicated to creating care and education opportunities for children from birth through high school. It opened its first early learning center in 2023 with a mix of public and private support.

Alson sees investing in child care as a path to attracting and retaining young farmers and families, and a strategy for growing and retaining the rural workforce.

“Throughout our country’s history, we have valued the importance of our rural communities and have invested in them and in sectors where the market does not go,” he said. “In 2023, quality child care is one of those sectors.”

As one Ohio farmer put it: “If America wants farmers, farm families need help with child care.”
Editor’s Note: The following is an excerpt from a newly published book titled “Stories of True Grit in Barbour County, West Virginia” by Randall McCauley (McClain Printing Company, Parsons, WV, © 2023, 22 pages). Perhaps you have some stories and/or photographs to share. If so, kindly submit them to ronw@wvfarm.org.

I was around eight years old when my Dad, Delbert (Deb) McCauley, loaned his Jersey bull to Ike Mitchell. It was a tri-colored, beautiful bull, but would fight if disturbed. As usual, I had to go with Dad a few months later to bring the bull back home. At first, Dad used a crowd stick, which is similar to an axe handle with a chain attached. He connected this to the ring in the bull’s nose. (More about this later.) The bull was too much for Dad to handle...at first. Now mind you, you weren’t allowed to show fear or cry around Dad! Dad said, “Rannie! Come here!” He threw me up in a big tree and tied a rope around the bull’s rib cage just behind the shoulders. I could not count how many times Dad got bucked off, but each time, he was right back on within seconds. After about 20 minutes, the bull could hardly walk! With the crowd stick in one hand, he rode the bull under the tree and said, “Rannie! Get on!” We rode that bull home. Now I know why bull riders good enough to stay on for eight seconds jump off...

Now about that bull ring...Dad would sharpen a large screwdriver and tie a bull’s head secure. He would then pound the screwdriver through its nose and insert the bull ring. He would also de-horn cattle with ropes and a saw. As a child, I thought this was normal. As an adult, I think it’s unbelievable.

“Deb, where are you going to mow?” His exact words were, “I don’t rightly know.” These words have become infamous in our family and we jokingly use them when we ‘don’t rightly know’.

Dad was known as a horse trader and he sold horses to the coal mines. No horse was too crazy for him to work or use on the farm. Sometimes, friends and neighbors would come just to watch! One time I remember well... It was early summer and a crowd had gathered to watch him mow hay with a team of crazy mules that he had saved from the slaughter house. Someone asked,
unbreakable. This horse was literally scared of its own tail when it was wet! I had to ride him bareback because a saddle made too much noise!

I remember one summer, Dad asked Uncle Buck to use his very nice and gentle bay mare, named Pearl, to work as a team with Mike. With the help of Four Roses Bourbon, Uncle Buck was in the driver’s seat and Dad was on a 25 foot jerk line attached to crazy Mike’s double-wire bit. They were hitched to a hay tedder, (some called it a hay kicker). With rotating forks to ted (stir) hay, this thing was dangerous with a good team of horses! Everything went well until they tried to cross a cement bridge over a culvert in the creek. When the huge steel wheels of the tedder hit the concrete, crazy Mike went straight in the air and ran off dragging Pearl! Dad fell in the creek, but didn’t let go of the jerk line. Somehow, the tedder got in gear and started spinning the forks. The jerk line got tangled in the forks, jerking Mike back and Dad forward! When the calamity ended, Dad realized he had rope burns clear to the bone on both hands. But, the next day, Dad was at work in the mine. He never missed work. Pearl was unscathed, and undaunted after this ordeal, and less excited than anyone else there. The only funny part of all this? Uncle Buck swallowed his big chew of Red Man tobacco.
Recipe Possibilities

Prioritize Heart Health with a Balanced Eating Plan

(Family Features) No matter your motivations, it’s never too late or too early to start focusing on your heart health, and taking steps now can make a big difference. Small changes, like following a healthier eating plan, can help you start down a path toward improved heart health.

One step you can take is following the DASH eating plan, which is a flexible and balanced way of eating that stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension and was developed by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Requiring no special foods, DASH provides daily and weekly nutritional goals to help lower two major risk factors for heart disease: high blood pressure and high LDL (bad) cholesterol. Learn more about heart health and find DASH-friendly recipes at nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH. Recipes courtesy of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

Greek-Style Flank Steak with Tangy Yogurt Sauce
Prep time: 25 minutes, Cook time: 25 minutes, Servings: 4

Marinade:
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 teaspoons fresh oregano, rinsed, dried and chopped
1 tablespoon garlic, minced (2-3 cloves)
1 beef flank steak (12 ounces)

To make marinade: In large bowl, combine lemon juice, olive oil, oregano and garlic. Lay steak in flat container with sides and pour marinade over steak. Marinate at least 20 minutes, or up to 24 hours, turning several times.

Yogurt Sauce:
1 cup cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
1 cup nonfat plain yogurt
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon fresh dill, rinsed, dried and chopped
1 tablespoon garlic, minced (2-3 cloves)
1/2 teaspoon salt

To make yogurt sauce: Combine cucumber, yogurt, lemon juice, dill, garlic and salt. Set yogurt sauce aside at least 15 minutes to blend flavors. Sauce can be prepared up to 1 hour in advance and refrigerated.

Preheat broiler to high with rack 3 inches from heat source. Broil steak about 10 minutes on each side to minimum internal temperature of 145 F. Let cool 5 minutes before carving. Slice thinly across grain into 12 slices. Serve three slices with 1/2 cup yogurt sauce.

Tip: Serve in sandwich with pita bread, lettuce and tomato.

Hawaiian Huli Huli Chicken
Prep time: 10 minutes, Cook time: 30 minutes, Servings: 4

Sauce:
2 tablespoons ketchup
2 tablespoons light soy sauce
2 tablespoons honey
2 teaspoons orange juice
1 teaspoon garlic (about 1 clove), minced
1 teaspoon ginger, minced

To make sauce: Combine ketchup, soy sauce, honey, orange juice, garlic and ginger; mix well. Separate into two bowls and set aside. Preheat grill to medium-high heat. Preheat oven to 350 F. Alternately thread three chicken cubes and three pineapple chunks on each skewer.

Grill skewers 3-5 minutes on each side. Brush or spoon sauce from one bowl onto chicken and pineapple every other minute. Discard remaining sauce from first bowl.

To prevent chicken from drying out, finish cooking to minimum internal temperature of 165 F in oven. Using clean brush or spoon, coat with sauce from remaining bowl before serving.
Come Sit a Spell

Monthly Puzzles with a Few Words of Country Wisdom Tossed in fer Good Measure!

Theme: Outdoor Fun

ACROSS
1. Bryan of “Summer Of ’69” fame
6. Lake in Provence
9. _____ good example
13. Hypotenuse/opposite side
14. Fuss, to Shakespeare
15. Pine
16. Filthy dough
17. Marxism or Taoism, e.g.
18. Skylit lobbies
19. *Outdoor repast
21. *Two-wheeling
23. Agreement word
24. *Climbing turf
25. “I wish I _____, I wish I might…”
28. Cracked by yegg
30. Cowardly color
35. Slightly (2 words)
37. Matterhorn location
39. Charles IlI’s ex
40. She played Carla on “Cheers”
41. Nev’s neighbor
43. Rotisserie skewer
44. Indianapolis team
46. Color of a bruise
48. Trying experience
50. “The Breakfast _____”
52. p in mph
53. Rane’s husband
55. _____ de plume
57. *Gather berries, e.g.
60. *Water slaloming
61. Person, place or thing
62. Swirling vortex
63. *Part of a bikini
64. *Sun “kiss”
65. Leave speechless
67. Morning condensation

DOWN
1. Knee-related acronym
2. Make pretty (2 words)
3. Mushroom spore sacs
4. Shawn Mendes’ 2016 hit
5. Parts of a play
6. Secular
7. Commercial break clips
8. Fast food option
10. Get bacon?
11. H.S. math class
12. All Nippon Airways, acr.
15. Rattled on
20. Writer Asimov
22. Like ice
24. Not an original
25. *Call to Polo
26. Opposite of adore
27. Triangular road sign
29. *Capture it!
31. Speech defect
32. Drink like a cat (2 words)
33. Chilled (2 words)
34. *Balloon filler
36. U.K. art gallery
38. Place for a house plant
42. Get an F
45. Serape, alt. sp.
47. Color of a bruise
51. Water-heating apparatus
54. Bulwark
56. Hundred Acre Wood creator
57. Wing motion
58. Exude
59. Fish eggs, pl.
60. Winter precipitation
61. Person, place or thing
66. Beau’s and Jeff’s acting dad
68. Cut-down sailing sheep
69. How many “if by sea?”
70. Have effect
71. Gibbons, e.g.
72. Coniferous tree
73. Rejuvenate or renovate

As of December 27, 2020, West Virginia’s New River Gorge became our nation’s newest National Park. The New River is one of West Virginia’s most interesting places. The name possibly comes from it being overlooked in early survey maps—and then discovered, hence “new”—or from a forgotten native name. Whatever led us to call it the New River, geological studies have led experts to conclude that it might actually be the second oldest river in Earth (after the Finke River in Australia). The south-north flowing river is even older than many of the mountains around it. (https://www.infoplease.com/us/states/west-virginia)

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