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PRESS



More than 200 fourth-through sixth-grade students from White County Central School had the opportunity to see how blackberries, blueberries, peaches and other fruits are grown during a visit to the farm of State Rep. Jeremy Gillam (back row). **The Farm Day**, sponsored by White Co. FB and the Cooperative Extension Service, also included stations where the children could milk the FB cow, plant their own bean seeds and learn how fruits are used in various grocery items.

KEITH SUTTON photo

In Farm Bureau

New ArFB Foundation

Arkansas Farm Bureau has established a new foundation that will be a tremendous asset for the organization and its members. The Arkansas Farm Bureau Foundation will help further efforts to support Arkansas' agriculture industry and rural communities. All contributions are tax deductible.

The Arkansas Farm Bureau Foundation has been created as a 501 (c)(3) to further understanding of agricultural and rural issues, and to support the agriculture and rural community through financial support for education, research, litigation and disaster relief. Contributions to the foundation can come from individuals, county Farm Bureaus, agricultural and related industries and many other sources. ArFB's board of directors already has committed \$200,000 in start-up money.

All money raised through the foundation will be segregated from the organization's general funds. Foundation funds will not be used in advocacy. They

are solely for the purposes noted above and will primarily be used to enhance efforts to educate youth and the general public about agriculture and rural communities. The foundation is managed by the board of directors of Arkansas Farm Bureau, which is elected by the membership at the annual convention.

County Farm Bureaus and individuals are encouraged to make a tax-deductible donation to the Foundation. Send checks to Arkansas Farm Bureau Foundation, P.O. Box 31, Little Rock, AR 72203.

ArFB policy development

The statewide policy development kickoff video conference previously scheduled for July 6 has been canceled. Additional policy development activities in other venues will be undertaken instead.

"To further assist counties in their local policy development work, we will produce an annual video that will be made available to all counties," says ArFB Executive Vice President Warren Carter. "This piece will be educational and informative, and we hope that each and every county will use

Farmers traveled to Washington, D.C., March 20-22, to highlight the threats of the Endangered Species Act and promote change in Chinese policy regarding approved biotech traits. Among those attending were (l-r) Zach Hunnicutt, Nebraska; Rusty Smith, Arkansas; Jeff VanderWerff, Michigan; Mike Ver Steeg, Iowa; Brian Scott, Indiana; and Tommy Young, Arkansas.



KEITH SUTTON photo

it as a kickoff in their own county policy

development meeting. The video will cover our policy development process and provide information on important issues anticipated to face our organization and our industry in the future. In addition, we plan to have policy development conferences along with other informational conferences at our annual Officers and Leaders Conference in July. These will be designed to provide additional information and opportunity for questions and discussion on emerging issues.”

Several years ago, Arkansas Farm Bureau made a significant change in its policy development process by consolidating eight area meetings spread over a three-week period into a one-night policy development kickoff video conference. This conference eliminated a significant amount of meeting time and allowed Farm Bureau to refocus its efforts on grassroots county policy development work. This change was extremely successful as indicated by a significant increase in the number of counties having well-organized and productive county policy development meetings.

However, technology has since changed, and other opportunities are now available that will allow further strengthening of policy development work at the county level, which led to the latest change.



RUSTY SMITH photo

Judy Riley of El Paso, co-chair of the White Co. FB Women’s Committee, shared informative facts about local agriculture with media representatives who attended a March 31 **appreciation luncheon** at the FB office in Searcy. County President Michael Oxner and Women’s Committee co-chair Dana Stewart also addressed the group and thanked them for their service.



KEITH SUTTON photo

Rice planting in Arkansas has begun in earnest, as growers seed their fields beneath dark skies and intermittent rains. UA rice agronomist Jarrod Hardke said despite weather forecasts that have contained much rain during the past two weeks, the prep work completed by many growers this winter allowed farmers to move into their fields in mid-March.

New Market Intel reports

The American Farm Bureau Federation has announced the launch of Market Intel, a new series of market intelligence reports available at fb.org/marketintel and on Twitter (@FBMarketIntel). Market Intel will provide timely market intelligence on the agricultural economy for farmers, ranchers, lawmakers and consumers.

“Soybeans Trumping Corn in 18 States,” by AFBF’s Dr. John Newton, is the first Market Intel report in the new series. It features insights on the implications of the

Agriculture Department’s just-released Prospective Plantings and Grain Stocks reports.

“Our aim with Market Intel is to analyze current events in agriculture – related to both crops and livestock – through an economic lens,” said Newton, AFBF’s director of market intelligence. “The timely market intelligence on the agricultural economy that we provide will be useful for farmers, lawmakers and consumers. Farmers and ranchers will find Market Intel to be a useful decision-making resource for marketing and planting.”



BAXTER CO. FB photo

STEVE EDDINGTON photo

The Baxter County FB Women’s Committee recently made a \$200 donation for the kids’ backpack program at the Food Bank of North Central Arkansas. Attending the presentation were (left to right) committee member Misty Nuckols, committee chair Roberta Golmon and Jeff Quick, president and chief executive officer for the Food Bank.



ArFB President Randy Veach spoke April 5 to 60 leaders from Louisiana Farm Bureau who visited Farm Bureau Center during a three-day “Beef Tour” throughout Arkansas. The tour included stops at Plyler & Sons Charolais Farm outside of Hope, the Rockefeller Center at Petit Jean Mountain, Tyson Food’s Discovery Center in Springdale and more.

FB thanks Monsanto

The American Farm Bureau Federation has expressed its appreciation to Monsanto Company for its generous wildfire relief donation of \$200,000 to be shared equally among Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas Farm Bureaus. Kansas Farm Bureau will dedicate its \$50,000 to the YF&R Wildfire Relief Fund for beginning and young farmers and ranchers in the four affected states.

“The American Farm Bureau Federation is grateful that Monsanto has remembered this nation’s farmers and ranchers in a time of real need,” AFBF President Zippy Duvall said. “These wildfires have been especially tragic for families who already were struggling with depressed prices for the food they raise. A gift this large at a time like this means the world to those affected.”

In Arkansas

Arkansas teacher recognized

Sarah Glenn, a teacher at Huntsville Intermediate School in Elkins, is one of 11 educators recognized by the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture for their exceptional efforts to encourage agricultural literacy. As a recipient of a 2017 White-Reinhardt Educator Scholarship, she will receive \$1,500 to attend the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, June 20-23. The conference helps educators from across the nation learn how to incorporate real-life agricultural applications into science, social studies, language arts, math and nutrition lessons.

Scholarship recipients were judged on past use of innovative programs to educate students about agriculture as well as plans to implement information gained at the AITC conference in their own lesson plans and share the information with other teacher and volunteer educators. The foundation sponsors the scholarships in cooperation with the American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee to honor two former AFBF Women's Leadership Committee chairwomen, Berta White and Linda Reinhardt, who were leaders in early national efforts to educate about agriculture and improve agricultural literacy.



Traci Beene (left) and Dana Pittman, agents for Lee Co. FB, recently read to the preschool and kindergarten students at Lee Academy in Marianna. The book is a children's story written by Alan Williams, which helps children understand the importance of good sportsmanship. Each child received a copy of the book, compliments of Lee Co. FB Agency Manager Art Bratcher.

LEE CO. FB photo

New soybean facility

Southern soybean growers will reap the benefits of an expanded breeding program from Bayer, which includes a \$6 million Soybean Breeding and Trait Development Station surrounded by 180 acres of research and showcase plots in Marion. Bayer and local leaders celebrated the grand opening of the facility in Marion last month.

The innovative station builds on a proven history of profitable, high-yielding soybean varieties that Bayer brings to market through its flagship Credenz soybean brand. Work there will focus on providing the maturity group (MG) 4 and 5 varieties that are essential to soybean production in the South.

"When launched in 2014, Credenz soybeans added strength to the production opportunities available to growers," said Chris Tinius, Bayer global soybean breeding director. "This new facility adds weight to the bar Credenz raised."

The Marion Soybean Breeding and Trait Development Station was part of Bayer's commitment to invest nearly \$1 billion in the United States between 2013 and 2016 in new facilities and capital expansion to complement the approximately \$1 billion invested globally in research and development each year.

Elsewhere

Investing in ag's future

Two recently introduced bills give a boost to young people in agriculture by allowing 4-H and FFA students to keep more of the modest income they earn. The students can use the money for their education or future agricultural projects.

The Agriculture Students Encourage, Acknowledge, Reward, Nurture Act and the Student Agriculture Protection Act would create a tax exemption for the first \$5,000 of income students 18 years of age or younger earn from 4-H and FFA projects. The measure was supported by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

"The long-term sustainability of agriculture depends on talented young people pursuing careers in farming and ranching and other agricultural production and food chain professions," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "Student agricultural projects increase awareness of and foster an interest in fields of study that will provide the next generation of farmers and ranchers, food scientists, agricultural engineers, agronomists, horticulturalists and soil scientists."



KEITH SUTTON photo

Officials with the **Arkansas Rice Expo**, scheduled for Aug. 4 at Stuttgart's Grand Prairie Center, want to see your special recipe entered in the sixth annual Rice Expo Recipe Contest. The entry deadline is June 16. The top three winners will receive prizes of \$200, \$150 and \$100. Complete rules are available at www.uaex.edu/rice-expo.

In the Market

As of April 11, 2017

U.S. beef exports to expand

President Donald Trump achieved a big prize during his recent meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping by expanding U.S. beef exports to China, White House spokesman Sean Spicer said, without offering details on any tangible steps taken toward ensuring greater access.

China in September removed a ban on shipments of some U.S. beef products, opening up the trade for the first time since 2003 as the Asian nation sees a surge in imports of the meat. Still, conditions attached to the reopening, including Chinese requirements for an acceptably traceable U.S. meat supply, have held up sales.

No concrete changes to the earlier agreement resulted from last week's meeting, but "the plan was to put together a plan" on beef and other issues, Spicer told reporters in a White House press briefing.

Chinese bean, corn imports

China's ag ministry raised its 2016-17 soybean import forecast by 1.24 MMT to 86.55 MMT, as the country raised its soybean consumption peg. The ag ministry now expects China to run a soybean balance deficit of 1.89 MMT, versus its prior forecast for a deficit of 2.19 MMT. The ministry also raised its 2016-17 corn import estimate by 200,000 MT to 1 MMT. It expects corn ending stocks to total 5.11 MMT this marketing year, which is up 700,000 MT from its previous peg.

Cotton AWP moves lower

The Adjusted World Price (AWP) for cotton was 67.41 cents per pound, effective Apr. 11, down from 68.03 cents per pound the prior week. This

is the lowest the AWP has been since it was at 66.59 cents the week of March 3 and came after three out of the last four weeks have seen the AWP at 68 cents per pound or more.

Global food prices soften

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation's (FAO) Food Price Index averaged nearly 171 points in March, which was down 5 points (2.8 percent) from February, but still up 20 points (13.4 percent) from year-ago levels. All of the commodity indices except meat fell last month, with sugar and vegetable oil prices leading the retreat. FAO's initial world cereal supply-and-demand outlook for 2017-18 "points to another season of relative market tranquility, with global production declining only slightly." But with relatively weak growth in utilization, it says world cereal stocks will remain near record levels. FAO projects global wheat production will drop 20.3 MMT from a year ago to 740 MMT in 2017 due mainly to "price-induced cuts" in Australia, Canada and the United States.

Soy pulls Brazil from recession

Brazil's economy grew between 0.1 percent and 0.3 percent for the first quarter of 2017, with the record soybean crop credited for pulling the nation out of recession, according to economists. While Brazil's ag output accounts for just 5 percent of Brazil's economy, the sector may have climbed as much as 8 percent from the fourth to the first quarter, according to private estimates. Economists expect a broader recovery later this year, with annual growth projected at 0.5 percent.

Strong pace for meat exports

February results for U.S. pork and beef exports were well above year-ago levels, with pork exports posting the strongest February volume on record, according to statistics released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and

compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation. Beef exports totaled 90,417 MT in February, up 9 percent year-over-year, with value up 16 percent to \$508.5 million. Through February, beef exports were up 13 percent in volume (186,905 MT) and 17 percent in value (\$1.02 billion).

Updated supply and demand numbers

Rice: U.S. rice ending stocks for 2016-17 are lowered 3 million cwt on increased exports. At 49.1 million cwt, these would still be the largest ending stocks since 1986-87. The 3-million-cwt export increase is all rough rice, which is a record large at 46 million cwt, but split with 2 million for long-grain and 1 million for medium and short-grain.

Soybeans: U.S. soybean supply and use changes for 2016-17 include higher seed use, reduced residual disappearance and higher ending stocks. Seed use is raised in line with the record plantings indicated in the March 31 Prospective Plantings report, and residual use is reduced based on indications from the March 31 Grain Stocks report. With exports and crush unchanged, soybean ending stocks are projected at 445 million bushels, up 10 million from last month.

Cotton: The 2016-17 U.S. cotton supply-and-demand forecasts show higher exports and lower ending stocks relative to last month. Production and domestic mill use are unchanged. The export forecast is raised 800,000 bales to 14 million, based on strong export sales during March. This would be the fourth-largest volume ever for U.S. exports, accounting for nearly 40 percent of world trade. Ending stocks are now forecast at 3.7 million bales, equivalent to 21 percent of total disappearance.

CONTACT

Matt King 501-228-1297,
matt.king@arfb.com