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January 6, 2023

Texas Agriculture

**Texas Farm Bureau
sets state, national
legislative priorities**

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Recognizing TFB successes in a year of agricultural hardships

The following are excerpts from Texas Farm Bureau President Russell Boening's address on Dec. 3 at the organization's 89th Annual Meeting in Waco. Boening grows feed grains, cotton and wheat, as well as operates a dairy and a beef cattle operation with his brother and father near Floresville. The fourth-generation farmer was first elected president of Texas Farm Bureau and Affiliated Companies in December 2014.

It has been an incredibly challenging 12 months, for sure.

If 2022 was a math word-problem, it would go something like this: If you're going down a river at 2 miles per hour, and your canoe loses a wheel, how much pancake mix would you need to re-shingle your roof?

Just like the math problem, there are no easy answers for what we endured this year.

But we battled. We persisted. We never gave up.

We battled on our farms and ranches amid the struggles of drought, inflation and high input costs.

We persisted and promoted Farm Bureau policy goals in Austin, Washington, D.C. and in the courts.

We never stopped fighting.

I use the word "we" when I talk about Farm Bureau.

We must focus on our mission. We must focus on what we are about. We are about being the Voice of Texas Agriculture.

I had the honor this year of representing you and our organization in many settings.

I am there not because of my name. I am there because of Texas Farm Bureau and you—its leaders and members.

I speak for all of us when I travel and wear the Farm Bureau hat. I never forget that.

I was on Capitol Hill in September. Our message to the House Ways and Means Committee was a new trade agreement with Taiwan is needed now.

International trade must be a priority for this administration.

I visited with reporters and news outlets throughout the year. Our message was drought, inflation and high production costs are squeezing family farmers and ranchers.

The higher prices for food are not landing in the pockets of farmers and ranchers.

I visited with elected leaders who influence farm policy. Our message was the current safety net for U.S. agriculture must be strengthened.

We are ready for the upcoming farm bill debate and discussion in

Congress.

One reason we are ready is because of the ballot box. We helped elect members of Congress who will support our farm bill positions.

We are celebrating another year of membership growth. Twenty two consecutive years.

It would not have been possible without your efforts as a county Farm Bureau and as an individual.

We have to be smart as a community of farmers and ranchers. One and a half percent of our population is not going to roll over anybody.

We must have a sense of purpose. We cannot appear fragmented.

If we are divided, we lose our influence.

Folks will use any appearance of fragmentation in our community against us.

I am proud that Texas Farm Bureau stands apart. We believe in dialogue and conversation, rather than anger and controversy.

Thank you for your contributions and efforts.

God Bless you all and God Bless Texas Farm Bureau.



Texas Farm Bureau President Russell Boening addresses members during the organization's 89th Annual Meeting in Waco.



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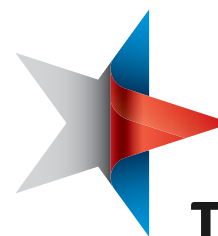
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FCC releases new national broadband maps

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a pre-production draft of its new national broadband map.

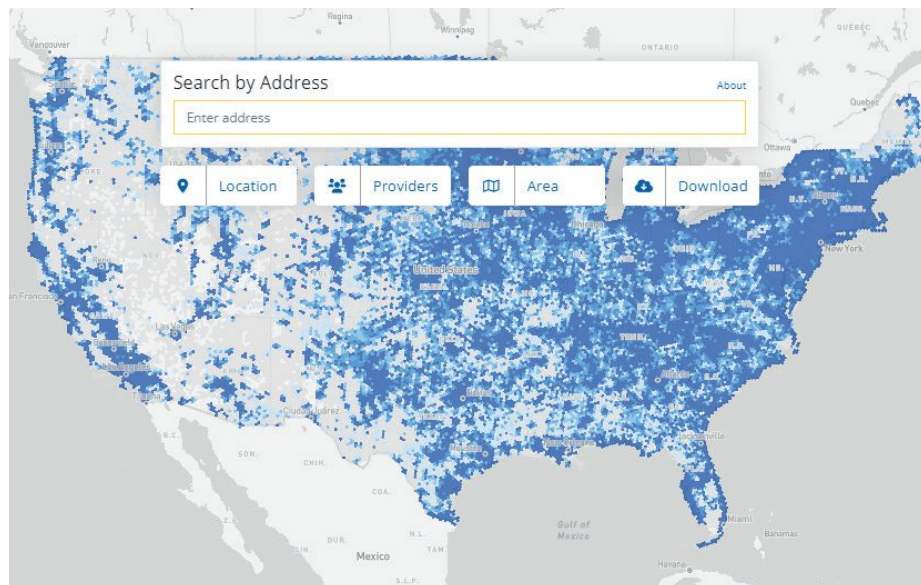
The map will display specific location-level information about broadband services available throughout the country. This release of the draft map kicks off the public challenge processes that will play a critical role in improving the accuracy of the map.

An accurate map is an important resource for targeting funding and other efforts to bring broadband to unserved and underserved communities.

The public is able to view the maps at broadbandmap.fcc.gov and search for their address to see information about the fixed and mobile services that internet providers report are available there.

If the fixed internet services shown are not available at the user's location, they may file a challenge with the FCC directly through the map interface to correct the information.

Map users will also be able to correct information about their location and add their location to the map if it is missing. The draft map will also



The draft FCC broadband maps are available for the public to review and provide feedback on broadband and wireless coverage.

allow users to view the mobile wireless coverage reported by cellular service providers.

FCC also announced the launch of an updated version of the FCC Speed Test App that will enable users to quickly compare the performance and coverage of their mobile networks to that reported by their provider.

The app allows users to submit their mobile speed test data in support of a challenge to a wireless ser-

vice provider's claimed coverage.

New users can download the FCC Speed Test App in both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. Existing app users should update the app to gain these new features.

A video tutorial and more information on how to submit challenges is available at fcc.gov/Broadband-Data/consumers.

For more information about the Broadband Data Collection, visit fcc.gov/BroadbandData.

2022 Census of Agriculture survey now underway

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) mailed survey codes to all known agricultural producers across the 50 states with an invitation to respond online to the 2022 Census of Agriculture at agcounts.usda.gov.

The ag census is the nation's only comprehensive and impartial agriculture data for every state, county and territory. By completing the survey, farmers and ranchers across the nation can tell their story and help generate impactful opportunities that better serve them and fu-

ture generations of producers.

Paper questionnaires were also mailed in December. Producers need only respond once, whether securely online or by mail.

All responses are due Feb. 6, 2023.

Farm operations of all sizes, urban and rural, which produced and sold, or normally would have sold, \$1,000 or more of agricultural products in 2022, are included in the ag census.

The survey is conducted every five years by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The

Census of Agriculture is a complete picture of American agriculture today. It highlights land use and ownership, producer characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, among other topics.

NASS will release the results of the ag census in early 2024.

To learn more about the Census of Agriculture, visit nass.usda.gov/agcensus. On the website, producers and other data users can access frequently asked questions, past ag census data, special study information and other details.

Beef Council highlights successes in annual report

In late November, the Texas Beef Council (TBC) approved and released evaluations of its fiscal year 2022 programs. This information is available in TBC's annual report titled "Building Beef-Loving Communities."

The report gives Texas beef producers the opportunity to see how their beef checkoff dollars were used to drive beef demand over the last year.

A few key highlights from the report include launching *BBQuest: Beyond The Pit*, season 3 of TBC's popular video series that has surpassed 2.9 million total views.

TBC delivered beef nutritional messages to 750 medical offices and drove 1.4 million recipe views to the recently refreshed BeefLovingTexans.com website.

TBC targeted online grocery shoppers with holiday and summer grilling campaigns, resulting in 15% and 20% respective sales lifts. They also partnered with food influencers for a TikTok campaign that received 1.5 million views.

Sponsored international retail campaigns led by TBC generated nearly 4.6 million pounds in U.S. beef sales.

"We've produced a TV show (*BBQuest*) that highlights beef as an integral part of Texas barbecue. Not only that—we made Texas ranchers the hero of that story as stewards of their animals and land," said Molly McAdams, TBC's executive vice president "This is just one example of how we help people feel good about choosing beef for their families."

Visit TexasBeefCheckoff.com/Annual-Reports to access the entire Annual Report.

Expanded revenue protection for oat, rye farmers

The country's oat and rye farmers can now benefit from revenue protection, a crop insurance option available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

After hearing directly from producers, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) expanded Small Grains Crop Provisions to now offer revenue protection for oats and rye for crop year 2023, which is already offered for barley and wheat.

"This enhanced coverage for oats and rye is a direct result of RMA listening to and prioritizing the requests and feedback we get from producers," RMA Administrator Marcia Bunger said.

Prior to this program change, RMA established prices for oats and rye up to 11 months prior to harvest.

For the 2021 and 2022 crop years, oat prices increased about 30% during that time, leaving oat farmers with insurance coverage valued below the actual value of their crop.

With this expanded revenue protection, the insurance coverage price would have risen to follow the higher oat prices, providing coverage that better reflects the value of the crop.

These changes to add oat and rye took effect with a Nov. 25 final rule in the Federal Register.

Revenue protection policies insure producers against yield losses due to natural causes such as drought, excessive moisture, hail, wind, frost, insects and disease and revenue losses caused by a change in the harvest price from the projected price.

Learn more at [rma.usda.gov](https://www.rma.usda.gov).

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FMCSA denied extended trucking hours for agriculture

By Julie Tomascik
Editor

The Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) denied an exemption from hours-of-service rules for drivers transporting live animals.

The request for exemption applied to all livestock, insect and aquatic animal haulers and their drivers.

The exemption would have allowed drivers, after taking 10 consecutive hours off duty, to drive through the 16th consecutive hour after coming on duty and to drive a total of 15 hours during that 16-hour period.

FMCSA said the request would not lead to safer conditions for drivers.

"If the agency were to grant the exemption, drivers transporting agricultural commodities would be allowed six or more hours of driving time within the 150 air-mile exempt zones for the transportation of agri-

cultural commodities, in addition to the 15 hours of driving time outside the zone," FMCSA said in the Federal Register notice. "Allowing 21 or more hours of driving during a work shift would not likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent the exemption."

The request for the exemption was made by the American Farm Bureau Federation, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), Livestock Marketing Association, American Beekeeping Federation, American Honey Producers Association and the National Aquaculture Association.

The agricultural groups have long voiced concerns over the hours-of-service rules and electronic logging device requirements. The groups said hours-of-service regulations place the well-being of livestock at risk during transport and impose significant burdens on livestock haulers, particularly in rural com-



munities across the country.

"We are disappointed in FMCSA's decision, especially when the cattle and beef supply chain faces continued stress from driver shortages," Kent Bacus, NCBA executive director of government affairs, said. "Hauling

cattle is very different from hauling consumer goods, which is why NCBA will continue urging Congressional leaders to support expanded hours-of-service flexibility for livestock haulers so they can continue making their critical deliveries."

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Higher calf prices projected for Texas, U.S. ranchers this year

By Julie Tomascik
Editor

Cattle ranchers should see higher calf prices this year, according to multiple agricultural economists and market analysts.

Continued high demand for beef, strong export markets and tightened supplies due to drought are expected to push cattle prices higher.

“Our numbers are tightening up as a result of the drought that we’ve experienced and record high feed costs. The herd has downsized more than we’d anticipated. That’s going to lead to even tighter fed cattle and beef supplies in 2023, 2024 or into 2025,” Randy Block, chief executive officer of CattleFax, said.

He noted over 50% of the nation’s beef cattle herd suffered from drought conditions in 2022.

Prolonged drought conditions and high feed costs led to a significant liquidation of the cow herd in the Lone Star State, as well as other states like Oklahoma and Kansas. Block estimated that cull cow and heifer slaughter numbers were projected to total over 700,000 head in 2022—one of the largest liquidation rates seen over the last 30 years.

Lack of available hay and high corn prices also led to higher feed costs for ranchers last year, and those prices are expected to stay high in 2023.

“We just don’t have enough hay.



Higher calf prices are projected for 2023, a result of drought conditions in Texas and throughout the U.S. that has taken a toll on cattle numbers.

We’ve seen record high hay prices, and that’s hand-in-hand with what we’re seeing with grain prices,” Block said. “We’re just flat looking at the highest cost to put on a pound of gain of any time in the history of our industry.”

With a smaller cattle herd expected this year, it should take some pressure off of processing plants.

“It’ll be critical for the industry to have some new harvest capacity if we’re going to be able to expand into the second half of this decade,” he said.

Last year will be the largest beef production year in the history of the U.S. beef industry, Block noted.

“That was done with 30 million less cattle in our inventory than what we had when we did that back in the 1970s,” he said. “So, it’s pretty phenomenal the productivity, the animal husbandry that we have out of our producers today. The U.S. beef industry is the leader and obviously has the smallest environmental footprint of any industry anywhere around the globe.”

Consumer demand for beef continues to remain steady despite inflation and increased costs at the grocery store.

“Beef demand has been phenomenal over the last several years, and the industry has been very inten-

tional in producing the highest quality beef product that we ever have,” Block said. “Over 80% of our animals that we produce today are choice and prime.”

And exports also help drive value for the fed beef carcass. Currently, exports add an additional \$425 per head.

Overall exports of U.S. red meat, and specifically beef, were up in 2022.

“Not only are consumers in the U.S. loving the consistency and quality and the eating experience of that product, but more and more of our customers in the global market are, as well,” Block said.

USDA finalizes the rule for cattle contract library pilot project

Final regulations for a new cattle contract library pilot project were published in December by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

The rule goes into effect Jan. 6, giving cattle producers more details about marketing contracts.

The final rule will require packers that slaughtered an average of not less than 5% of the number of fed cattle slaughtered nationally during the immediately preceding five calendar years to submit contractual information for the purchase of cattle.

Packers will be required to provide contract information and the number of actual and estimated cattle purchased under active contracts within particular timeframes. AMS will only record contract terms without any personally identifiable information to protect the confidentiality of participants.

“The contract clauses required to be submitted include contract method, contract start and end dates, base price source and adjustment, selling basis, premiums and discounts, specifications relating to cattle at-

tributes, delivery and transportation terms and payments, financing, risk-sharing, profit-sharing or other financial arrangements and volume provisions,” AMS said in the rule published in the Federal Register.

Demands for a contract library for cattle heightened after the record spreads between live cattle prices and boxed beef prices due to situations such as the fire at a Tyson plant in Kansas in 2019 and the pandemic shutdowns that hit meatpacking processors in spring 2020.

According to USDA, alternative

marketing arrangements (AMAs) for cattle feeders jumped from about 35% in 2005 to more than 73% now. Since 2005, negotiated cash trade nationally for cattle has fallen from 65% to 27% during the same period.

AMS stated the agency will host a listening session this month before the cattle contract library is officially rolled out.

If successful, the pilot project would likely be rolled into extended authorization under the Livestock Price Reporting rule or in the next farm bill.

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It's time once again for the annual Texas Farm Bureau photography contest, when you or someone you know can share your best pictures with the entire Lone Star State and maybe even win a cash prize.

The contest is limited to members of the Texas Farm Bureau and their immediate families.

Rural settings and rural lifestyles are the preferred themes for all submissions, and contestants are limited to one entry per person. Only digital entries will be accepted this year. Four top winners will be selected and published in the July edition of *Texas Agriculture* and the summer edition of *Texas Neighbors*.

Visit www.texasfarmbureau.org for complete contest rules

ENTRY DEADLINE: JUNE 1, 2023

Texas Farm Bureau sets state, national legislative priority issues

By Julie Tomascik
Editor

A new year brings new legislative and advocacy efforts for Texas Farm Bureau (TFB).

“Farm Bureau will make sure the Voice of Texas Agriculture is heard in both Austin and Washington, D.C. during the sessions this year,” Regan Beck, TFB Government Affairs director, said.

State priorities

Thousands of bills are expected to be filed in the 140-day regular session, but TFB will focus on 10 legislative priority issues set by the state board of directors.

TFB will continue to prioritize protecting property rights by opposing unnecessary regulatory authority over the use of private property and to continue to ensure that property owners’ rights are protected under eminent domain law.

“We know our state is rapidly changing and growing, and we want to make sure private property rights are protected,” Beck said.

In addition to property rights, TFB is prioritizing right to farm legislation to make sure farmers and ranchers are able to engage in normally accepted agricultural practices on their land.

“Local municipalities are enacting ordinances to regulate farms and ranches as a nuisance or threat to public health and safety,” Beck said. “Common-sense changes to the state’s agriculture code are needed to preserve current right to farm statutory protections.”

Truth in labeling of meat products is also a priority again this session. TFB believes legislation is needed to make it illegal to use deceptive labeling of food products to influence consumers to purchase the products.

Other issues central to farming, ranching and rural prosperity are on the organization’s agenda as state legislative priority issues.

Beck noted water—groundwater or surface water—is an important issue for agriculture.

“Protecting the rights of farmers,



Texas Farm Bureau represents Texas farmers, ranchers, landowners and rural residents at local, state and national levels to influence policy decisions and to help keep the state growing for generations to come.

ranchers and landowners to surface water and groundwater is critical,” Beck said. “We will oppose legislation that attempts to take away any constitutionally-protected rights to water.”

Taxes and land use regulation are also among the state priority issues.

TFB will work to ensure state tax policy does not adversely impact or burden farmers, ranchers or the agricultural industry. The organization will also advocate to protect the current state tax provisions that limit the burden on producing food, fiber and other agricultural products for consumers.

With the feral hog population on the rise, the threats to fields, pastures, livestock and farm income are also increasing.

Farm Bureau supports legalizing reasonable chemical controls for feral hogs and supports all legal methods of controlling feral hogs.

“Feral hogs are destructive, and they continue to wreak havoc on Texas farms and ranches,” Beck said. “Despite the best efforts through trapping, hunting, aerial shooting and state incentivized depopulation programs, the feral hog population still is not at a manageable level. Farm Bureau supports legislative

action that would provide additional methods to control the invasive species.”

Other state priority issues named by the TFB board of directors includes: sunset legislation, animal care, rural connectivity and transportation.

National priorities

On the national level, TFB will focus on eight issues, including the farm bill.

“TFB will participate in the formulation of the upcoming farm bill to ensure the needs of Texas farmers and ranchers are addressed and an effective safety net is maintained,” Beck said.

Working to strengthen and enforce existing trade agreements and enacting new trade deals that benefit agriculture is also on the organization’s agenda for national efforts.

Ag labor and the food supply chain are two issues that were highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to remain concerns today.

“Agriculture needs a reliable, legal workforce, and legislation that addresses both farmer and worker concerns would provide certainty and job security in rural Texas,” Beck said.

Efforts to expand rural connectiv-

ity and ensure federal regulations don’t negatively impact farmers’ and ranchers’ ability to operate are also among the national priorities for TFB.

Securing the border and assisting farm and ranch families experiencing issues with illegal immigration remains a priority, as well.

“Farm and ranch families, many of whom have owned land for generations, are bearing the brunt of this unprecedented influx,” Beck said. “Landowners are experiencing cut fences, destroyed crops, compromised water sources, vandalism, litter on their property and more. Most importantly, the security and safety of these families are at stake given the current circumstances at the border.”

Also on the agenda is to maintain funding for control and eradication of invasive species and prevent introduction of foreign animal diseases.

More information

For more information on the legislative priorities, visit texasfarmbureau.org/advocacy.

To sign up for the weekly *Austin Newsletter* email for updates throughout the session, login to MyTFB and select *Austin Newsletter* from the Contact Preferences.

New Golden Buckle Awards program to highlight county Farm Bureaus

By Julie Tomascik
Editor

A new county awards program is launching this year to help promote membership and incentivize county Farm Bureaus for excelling in participation of purpose activities.

The Golden Buckle Awards Program will run concurrent with Texas Farm Bureau's (TFB) membership year Nov. 1, 2022 through Oct. 31, 2023.

"The Golden Buckle Award is designed to document, incentivize and reward county Farm Bureaus for participating in purpose activities," Charles Benton, TFB director of Field Operations, said. "This pro-

gram is designed to be a program of work that, if the county follows the guidelines, they're going to have a really good year because this program touches every aspect of Farm Bureau."

Purpose activities include membership drives or events, legislative advocacy efforts and local agricultural promotion. It also includes attendance or participation in TFB events and conferences, as well as Young Farmer & Rancher programs and educational and urban outreach activities.

County Farm Bureaus will receive points for attendance or participation by county leaders.

"County Farm Bureaus earn points for basic purpose activities such as membership work, local ag promotion and attendance at state meetings and some district meetings. Additional credit can be earned by participation in organization programs and legislative activities," Benton said.

County Farm Bureaus must complete and submit the awards program worksheet and essay questions by Nov. 7.

"The area where the county Farm Bureau gets to shine is the County Specific Activity with three essay questions. This section is where the county has the opportunity to tell

their story and why they are deserving of the award," Benton said.

The winning county Farm Bureau will receive \$10,000 and an appropriate prize package. The first runner up will receive \$5,000, and the second runner-up will receive \$2,500.

In addition to the state Golden Buckle Award, each district will also have a winner and runner-up. The top two counties in each district will receive \$1,000 to help with expenses of attending the TFB annual meeting.

For more information on the program, contact Benton at cbenton@txfb.org or call 254-751-2282.

Lesser prairie-chicken populations listed as threatened, endangered

By Jessica Domel
Multimedia Reporter

More than a year after public comment closed on the topic, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announced in mid-November it listed two distinct population segments of the lesser prairie-chicken under the Endangered Species Act.

The southern population segment, which includes lesser prairie-chicken populations in eastern New Mexico and the southwest Texas Panhandle, has been listed as endangered.

The northern population segment of lesser prairie-chickens has been listed as threatened. That population segment includes the prairie-chickens in southeastern Colorado southcentral to southwestern Kansas, western Oklahoma and the northeast Texas Panhandle.

According to FWS, the listings are needed as lesser prairie-chicken populations have declined drastically over the years due to habitat loss and fragmentation. The agency said lesser prairie-chicken habitat has diminished across its historical range by about 90%.

Aerial survey results from 2012-2022 estimate a five year average lesser prairie-chicken population of 32,210 across five states.

The service reports that a review of past, present and future threats to the lesser prairie-chicken finds the southern population segment is in danger of extinction, and the northern population segment is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

U.S. Rep. August Pfluger of Texas said the move will have a disastrous impact on energy and ag production.

"This decision will wreak havoc on our local and state economies and make it even harder to produce oil and gas in the midst of an energy and economic crisis," Pfluger said. "President Biden needs to get out of the business of over-regulating and focus on unleashing American energy dominance. The federal government must do so in a balanced manner through ongoing local and state conservation efforts. We can protect important species without devastating our local and rural communities."

Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) is also opposed to the listing, citing concerns with how it would impact animal agriculture.

"We are deeply disappointed by the endangered and threatened listings. Farmers and ranchers have enrolled hundreds of thousands of acres in conservation programs that have helped recovery efforts. Un-



The lesser prairie-chicken is now listed as threatened and endangered. Photo courtesy Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

fortunately, lesser prairie-chickens are highly susceptible to drought, and 2022 has been an extremely difficult year," Jay Bragg, TFB associate director of commodity and regulatory activities, said. "There is also concern that the endangered listing may disincentivize voluntary conservation efforts due to liability risks and take provisions associated with the Endangered Species Act."

FWS also announced it is finalizing a section 4(d) rule designed to conserve the northern population segment of lesser prairie-chickens while allowing greater flexibility for landowners and land managers.

The 4(d) rule allows farmers to continue their routine agricultural activities, according to FWS.

"Farmland is not considered habitat and grazing is generally beneficial, as long as areas are properly rotated and not over-grazed," Bragg said. "As such, FWS issued a 4(d) rule to provide incidental take protections for farming activities and grazing that is done in accordance with a grazing plan developed by a FWS-approved provider."

Allowing third-party verification is concerning as it could allow non-friendly organizations to control agricultural practices. TFB will be monitoring this issue closely.

TFB believes to truly support lesser prairie-chicken habitat, FWS should make it easier for ranchers to graze, not more difficult.

The listing goes into effect Jan. 24.

Ag, farm groups ask Congress to reaffirm FIFRA authority

In a letter to congressional leaders, more than 300 agriculture, environment, academic, infrastructure and other stakeholder groups called on Congress to reaffirm federal pesticide preemption on labeling and packaging.

The groups said failing to do so could result in dangerous consequences for food security, the environment, public health, vital infrastructure and other uses where pesticides provide important societal benefits.

The letter calls on Congress to reaffirm that states may not impose additional labeling or packaging requirements that conflict with federal findings under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

“Lack of certainty on EPA-approved, science-based nationwide labels will erode access to current and future pesticides, threatening crops and grower incomes, conservation practices, public health, vital infrastructure and ultimately raise food prices for families amidst record-high inflation,” the letter reads. “Growers and users need reaffirmation from Congress that states have every right to build on the federal government’s baseline regulations but cannot directly contradict the scientific conclusions of the EPA.”

The groups, including the American Farm Bureau Federation and Texas Farm Bureau, said Congress needs to consider the far-reaching

implications.

“The ability of farmers, land managers and other users to produce an abundant food, feed and fiber supply, combat public health threats, implement important conservation practices and maintain vital transportation and utility infrastructure will be significantly impaired,” the groups said.

FIFRA is the primary statute governing pesticides, and EPA is the agency with authority to make foundational, science-based decisions on how pesticides can be labeled and used. States have enforced their own

statutes on pesticide products, including through the use of labeling and regulations.

“These actions risk creating an unworkable, inconsistent patchwork of state or municipal pesticide labels that can quickly disrupt commerce and access to these much-needed tools,” the groups said.

They ask lawmakers to reaffirm that EPA is the primary, federal authority under FIFRA for making pesticide findings and decisions and that states may regulate their use but not impose additional labeling or packaging requirements.

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Farmers, ranchers establish policy goals at annual meeting

By Julie Tomascik
Editor

Texas farmers and ranchers established policy to help guide the agricultural advocacy efforts of Texas Farm Bureau (TFB), the state's largest general farm and ranch organization.

Policies regarding renewable energy, tax abatements and foreign ownership of agricultural land were among the policies approved by the nearly 800 voting delegates gathered at the organization's 89th annual meeting's business session held Dec. 4 in Waco.

"The business session provides Farm Bureau leaders from across the state the opportunity to set the policy goals for our organization for the coming year," TFB President Russell Boening said.

Delegates approved several resolutions related to renewable energy, including support for the state regulating solar and solar battery storage facilities.

Farm Bureau leaders approved tax abatements being considered and approved at the local level and that projects seeking tax abatements on agricultural lands design their projects in such a way as to

maximize the potential for continued agricultural production where feasible.

Delegates supported policy that opposes any foreign entity or persons receiving tax credits, abatements, incentives or any other in-kind contribution that affects the taking of agricultural land in the U.S.

Other resolutions approved by delegates related to feral hogs, drone use and transporting agricultural products.

On the national level, delegates supported a list of considerations and protections for farmers and ranchers regarding carbon credits, opposed any form of a Securities and Exchange Commission ruling that would require emissions reporting that could directly or indirectly impact farmers and ranchers and supported a limited irrigation category in the crop insurance program.

State resolutions adopted at the TFB annual meeting become policies that guide the organization in 2023. National resolutions adopted by the voting delegates are sent to the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) for consideration in its resolutions process.

Resolutions approved by AFBF



Texas Farm Bureau voting delegates considered state and national policy resolutions during the business session of the organization's 89th Annual Meeting in Waco.

delegates in January provide a roadmap for the national organization.

In other action, Walt Hagood of Lynn-Garza County, John Paul Dineen III of Ellis County, Warren Cude of Pecos-Reeves County, Mickey Edwards of Lampasas County, Pete Pawelek of Atascosa County and Brian Adamek of Victoria Coun-

ty were re-elected to two-year terms on the state board of directors.

Mark Daniel of Baylor County was elected vice president, and Hagood was elected secretary-treasurer.

Coverage from the AFBF annual convention will be in the February issue of *Texas Agriculture*.



Kacy Mitchell of Smith County Farm Bureau addressed the voting delegates during the business session.



National policy resolutions approved by voting delegates were forwarded to American Farm Bureau Federation for consideration.

County Farm Bureaus show membership growth again in 2022

By Emmy Powell

Communications Specialist

County Farm Bureaus across Texas were recognized for membership achievements during Texas Farm Bureau's 89th Annual Meeting.

"Texas Farm Bureau is the state's largest general farm and ranch organization, and we continuously work together to represent agriculture throughout the Lone Star State," Texas Farm Bureau President Russell Boening said. "Without our members, we wouldn't—and couldn't—be the Voice of Texas Agriculture."

TFB gained 2,450 members for a total of 538,064 member-families. Out of 205 organized county Farm Bureaus across Texas, 142 counties gained members during the year, and a statewide retention rate of

88.11% was achieved.

The top 10 county Farm Bureaus in new member acquisition were: Collin County, 1,731 members; McLennan County, 1,701 members; Brazoria-Galveston County, 1,518 members; Harris County, 1,468 members; Fort Bend County, 1,249 members; Gregg County, 1,182 members; Ellis County, 1,141 members; Bell County, 1,086 members; Jefferson County, 1,079 members; and Johnson County, 1,003 members.

County Farm Bureaus reporting the largest total membership growth include: Gregg County, 576 members; McLennan County, 473 members; Hunt County, 236 members; Ellis County, 214 members; Guadalupe County, 191 members; Bell County, 188 members; Cass

County, 187 members; Smith County, 162 members; Wilson County, 157 members; and Johnson County, 151 members.

The highest membership renewal percentages were achieved by: Mason County, 96.60%; Dickens County, 95.30%; Motley County, 94.87%; Cottle-King County, 94.16%; Crosby County, 93.37%; Blanco County, 93.07%; Lavaca County, 93.05%; Coke-Sterling County, 93.02%; Colorado County, 93.01%; and Lampasas County, 92.93%.

County Farm Bureaus with the largest membership include: Collin County, 13,191; Brazoria-Galveston County, 12,499; McLennan County, 11,047; Fort Bend County, 10,043; Ellis County, 9,576; Jefferson County, 8,687; Bell County, 8,389; Grayson County, 7,320; Bexar County,

7,268; and Kaufman County, 7,221.

County Farm Bureaus with the longest continuous growth in membership include: DeWitt County, 73 years; Franklin County, 42 years; Henderson County, 33 years; and the following were recognized for 31 years: Atascosa County, Bell County, Comal County, Gillespie County, Hill County, Medina County, Navarro County and Tyler County.

"This achievement marks 22 consecutive years of membership growth, and we're very proud of that accomplishment," Boening said. "Our mission is to be the Voice of Texas Agriculture, and our continued membership growth shows the value of Farm Bureau to agriculture, rural communities and everyone connected to the production of our food, fiber and fuel."

TFB members graduate from combined AgLead-FarmLead program

By Julie Tomascik
Editor

Twenty Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) members completed an intensive leadership development program and were recognized during the organization's 89th annual meeting in Waco.

The two-year leadership development program takes participants across Texas, the country and the world to discover agriculture and leadership from a new perspective.

"AgLead-FarmLead is a program designed to cultivate and enhance skills and traits needed to be an effective agricultural leader," said Roger Hall, TFB associate director of Organization division, Leader Development. "Through this program, members cultivated opportunities and developed a strong voice for agriculture in their various communities, whether that's at schools, local politics, the state legislature or city and county government."

Members also developed a deeper



understanding of communication, public policy, regulatory activities and political advocacy.

"The AgLead-FarmLead program empowers farmers and ranchers to continue the proud legacy of Texas agriculture," Hall said. "Through this program, they learn more about the intricacies of agribusiness, as well as the political and regulatory pro-

cesses that influence agriculture at state and national levels."

The program's sessions included stops in Waco, the Panhandle, Austin, Rio Grande Valley, the Midwest and the Pacific Northwest. Virtual trainings and sessions were also included as the cohort continued its leadership training throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

The AgLead-FarmLead cohort members included:

Adrienne Synatschk—Lamb County
Justin Stoerner—Hale County
Austin Miles—Grayson County
Justin Hannsz—Erath County
Winston Millican—San Saba County
Meagan Ezzell—Nacogdoches County
Kristin Warner—Hays County
Brian Nielsen—Caldwell County
Isaac Sulemana—Hidalgo County
Matt Moore—Wheeler County
Todd Straley—Hale County
Steve Evans—Coleman County
Jim Hudson—Taylor County
John Evans—Bell County
Charlotte Kneupper—Kendall County
Richard Fry—Austin County
Frank Massey—Bee County
Kacy Frazier—Nueces County
Chase Holub—Matagorda County
Sam Scott—Henderson County

TFB 89TH ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Young farmers, ranchers named winners in TFB state contests

Fueled by passion and hunger for knowledge and leadership, young farmers and ranchers are cultivating the future. Texas Farm Bureau's Young Farmer & Rancher program helps them strengthen their impact.

During the 89th Annual Meeting, the winners were named in the three contests—Outstanding Young Farmer & Rancher, Excellence in Agriculture and the Discussion Meet.



Outstanding Young Farmer & Rancher

Bethany Wanoreck

Bethany Wanoreck of Nueces County won the 2022 Outstanding Young Farmer & Rancher competition.

Bethany Wanoreck co-owns the farm with her husband, Travis. They grow corn, grain sorghum and cotton in Bee, Jim Wells and Nueces counties. They also provide custom planting and harvesting to other farmers in the area.

In addition to farming, Bethany is the district nurse for Orange Grove ISD.

As winner of the contest, Wanoreck received a \$60,000 member dealer voucher to be used at Ford, Case IH, Grasshopper, CAT or John Deere, courtesy of Texas Farm Bureau Insurance Companies, and a \$5,000 cash award, courtesy of Farm Credit Bank of Texas.

Runners-up in the contest were Jay and Francie Clark of Brownwood and Slayton and Abby Hoelscher of Wall.



Excellence in Agriculture

Kristin Warner

Kristin Warner of Hays County won the 2022 Excellence in Agriculture competition.

Warner is a technical sales representative and product development specialist with Syngenta Vegetable Seeds. She helps bring new vegetable varieties to market for growers to plant. Her responsibilities include trial development and grower and dealer engagement.

Warner received a \$15,000 member dealer voucher to be used at Ford, Case IH, Grasshopper, CAT or John Deere, courtesy of Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company; and a \$5,000 cash prize, courtesy of Farm Credit Bank of Texas.

Runners-up in the contest were Cody Berry of Hudson and Chase Brooke of Anna.

Discussion Meet

Chase Brooke

Chase Brooke, a Collin County Farm Bureau member, won the 2022 Discussion Meet contest.

Brooke is the County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources in Collin County with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. He provides education and research-based information to farmers, ranchers and landowners to help them find solutions to the challenges they face.

Brooke took home an ATV, courtesy of Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company, and a \$5,000 cash award, courtesy of Farm Credit Bank of Texas.

The Discussion Meet finalists were Kelsey Chopelas of San Patricio County, Zac Goodwin of Johnson County and Sophia Kelley of Parker County.

Bethany, Kristin and Chase will compete at the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention Jan. 6-11 in Puerto Rico.



Bludau named 'Outstanding Teacher' by Texas Farm Bureau

By Julie Tomascik
Editor

One teacher's efforts to plant seeds of knowledge about agriculture has her harvesting the fruits of her labor in the classroom.

Janice Bludau, a kindergarten teacher at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Hallettsville, was named Texas Farm Bureau's (TFB) 2022 Agriculture in the Classroom Outstanding Teacher.

She incorporates agriculture in fun and exciting ways for her students.

Each year, students focus on building unique farms during the Farm Unit. These activities, Bludau said, help reinforce creativity, enhance fine motor skills and allow students to recognize the importance of equipment, crops and livestock that are found on a farm. The farms are then displayed for the public during Catholic Schools Week open house.

Her passion for teaching agricul-

tural concepts stems from the community's rich farming and ranching heritage and her students' sense of wonder and excitement when lessons come to life.

"Janice is a great example of the difference a teacher's attitude can make for students," TFB President Russell Boening said. "She truly wants her students to understand where their food and fiber comes from, so she creates engaging and hands-on lessons for them to learn these concepts. We're proud to recognize her agricultural education efforts in the classroom."

Bludau was nominated for the award by Lavaca County Farm Bureau (CFB).

"Mrs. Bludau has continued to educate her students about the importance of agriculture. I have heard about and seen some of the fruits of her teachings. I know she is respected by her peers, school admin-



istrators and current and former students," Lavaca CFB President David Wagner said in the nomination letter. "She continues to teach the importance of agriculture to her students in their lives and how much we all depend on it."

Bludau earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin. She has been teaching for 29

years, with 21 years at Sacred Heart Catholic School.

In recognition of her accomplishment, Bludau received a \$600 cash award, as well as an expense-paid trip to attend the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference next summer. Lavaca CFB also received a \$400 cash award for nominating Bludau.

Texas Farm Bureau recognizes the 2022 media award winners

By Emmy Powell
Communications Specialist

Two media members earned recognition from Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) for telling the story of Texas farmers and ranchers and highlighting the issues rural communities face.

Each year, superior agricultural journalism is recognized by the largest general farm and ranch organization in Texas. This year, two awards were given in Excellence in Journalism for markets less than 50,000.

"This year, farmers and ranchers have faced prolonged drought conditions, inflation and supply chain issues. These trending topics have kept agriculture in the news," TFB President Russell Boening said. "We are proud of the efforts of reporters, broadcasters and editors who continuously strive to tell the story of Texas agriculture, farmers and

ranchers throughout the year."

Russel Skiles

Lamesa Press-Reporter

TFB awarded the Excellence in Journalism award to Russel Skiles, the publisher and editor of *Lamesa Press-Reporter*.

Skiles was nominated by Dawson County Farm Bureau for his coverage of local and state agricultural news.

"Russell joined the local paper in the '70s and has been a leading advocate for all of agriculture in Dawson County since," Val Stephens, Dawson County Farm Bureau president, said in the nomination form. "Russel works to share news related to agriculture from across the state and Washington D.C."

Nanette Kilbey-Smith

Wilson County News and

La Vernia News

Nannette Kilbey-Smith, editor of *Wilson County News* and *La Vernia*



Russel Skiles



Nanette Kilbey-Smith

News, was also awarded TFB's Excellence in Journalism award.

Wilson County Farm Bureau nominated Kilbey-Smith for the award. She has covered youth activities and Farm Bureau, as well as highlighted agricultural issues that farmers and ranchers face.

"Nannette has highlighted many of the agricultural issues our grass-

roots organization is trying to put before our state and national legislators and keep both our membership and the public updated. We thank her for all she does and look forward to being able to continue working with her in helping promote and protect agriculture," Wilson County Farm Bureau said in the nomination form.

TFB 89TH ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

HONORING OUR PIONEERS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ CLASS OF 2022

They give everything to their farm, ranch, communities and consumers. For that, Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) recognizes them for what they are: pioneers in Texas agriculture.

Each year, 13 Texas farmers and ranchers and one retired professional staff member are honored with the Texas Farm Bureau Pioneer Award. They are selected for their contributions to agriculture and the organiza-

tion, both through service and leadership.

Members of the 31st class of TFB Pioneers were recognized at the 89th Annual Meeting.

Their photos and names will join the more than 300 previous Pioneer Award winners positioned outside the Walter Hammond Auditorium in the TFB Conference and Training Center in Waco.



District 1 | Larry Don Smith

The late Larry Don Smith of Perryton joined Ochiltree CFB in 1971 and was elected a board director in 1975. He served as president, vice president and secretary. Smith was a member of all the county committees and chaired numerous committees during his leadership tenure, including the Scholarship and Stock Show committees.

Smith served on the state YF&R Advisory Committee, Resolutions Committee and was a voting delegate at many annual meetings.

After graduating from West Texas State University, he assumed the reigns of his family farm and ranch. He never met a stranger, was known for helping others and never missed an opportunity to “pay it forward.”



District 4 | R.E. “Butch” Aycock Jr.

The late R.E. “Butch” Aycock Jr. was an active member of the farming community in North Texas and joined Farm Bureau in 1982.

Aycock became a director of Collin CFB in 1989, and over the next 32 years, served on various committees, held numerous offices and was an integral part of its growth and success.

He was a supporter of area young farmers and ranchers and mentored young farmers as they began their careers.

The Collin CFB board honored Aycock with an endowed scholarship with Collin College. The annual scholarship serves as a way to support the growth of agriculture and a student with an interest in farming and ranching.



District 2 | Dan Smith

Dan Smith is a fourth-generation farmer from Lockney. He joined Farm Bureau in 1973. He served 10 years, in multiple terms, as president of Floyd CFB and also was vice president and secretary-treasurer.

Smith served on 10 county committees and seven state committees. He served on and chaired the TFB YF&R Advisory Committee, and in 1987, was named Outstanding Young

Farmer & Rancher.

He served on the TFB state board of directors from 2012-2018. He provided testimony on behalf of TFB to the Texas House Ag and Livestock Committee, the Texas Senate Ag Committee and the U.S. House Ag Committee.



District 5 | Gaylon Tidwell

Gaylon Tidwell of DeKalb joined Bowie CFB in 1971. He served 18 years as county president and five years as vice president. He served on the county's Hay and Forage, Beef Cattle, AGFUND, State Affairs, Row Crop, Policy Development, Horses and National Affairs committees and the state Hay and Forage Commodity Advisory Committee. He attends TFB annual meetings, twice attended the National Affairs

Awards Trip to Washington, D.C., and twice attended the AFBF convention, once as a voting delegate.

He grows hay and soybeans on his farm that has been in his family for three generations and works for another farm that grows crops in several states.



District 3 | W.R. “Bob” Clemans

The late W.R. “Bob” Clemans touched the lives of many during his years of service to the Wise County farm and ranch community. He was a longtime rancher in Paradise.

Clemans joined Farm Bureau in 1981. He served the Wise CFB board of directors for 35 years as treasurer and served on both the county and the state Resolutions Committee. He kept alive the Ag Field Day to communicate the importance

of agriculture. He was the face of Farm Bureau at the Wise County Fair and his outstanding contributions benefited local youth.

He attended every board meeting he could. If Clemans wasn't at the CFB office or on his tractor, he was at church working on something for someone.



District 6 | Mike Moates

Mike Moates is a fourth-generation farmer and rancher. He joined Farm Bureau in 1974 and became a director for Howard-Reagan-Glasscock CFB in 1984.

Moates served on the Membership, Policy Development and Economic Service committees. He's the longest-serving president in the county's history, serving more than 31 years. He has served as vice president and served on the state Cotton Advisory Committee and the Resolutions Committee.

He encourages youth to participate in TFB programs. He organized the county's first Ag in the Classroom event and continues to help with the annual event.

TFB 89TH ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



District 7 | Darrell Richards

Darrell Richards is a lifetime farmer of Jones County and has worked considerably to promote agriculture. He joined Jones CFB in 1962, serving on the board and as president and vice president.

He served on the state Resolutions Committee, was on the strategic planning TFB Blue Ribbon Goals Committee and has attended many district and state annual meetings.

Richards is a valuable asset to local youth and has encouraged their participation in agriculture to prepare them for the future. He entered the Young Farmers of Texas program and was runner-up in 1979. Richards was awarded Farm Bureau Member of the Year in 1981.



District 8 | Damon Chumney

Damon Chumney of Evant joined Hamilton CFB almost 43 years ago. He has served on the board of directors since 1987, was president for three years and vice president for two. He served as county committee chair for the YF&R, Policy Development, Hay and Forage, Tax Watch, Dairy, State Legislative and National Affairs committees.

Chumney assisted in the annual Ag Day and activities for Texas Food Connection Day. He was a host in 1996 of TFB's Farm and Ranch Visit program.

He has attended many TFB commodity and leadership conferences, policy development meetings and was once a voting delegate at AFBF convention.



District 9 | Larry Joiner

Larry Joiner has been a Farm Bureau member for over 40 years and has been a leader of Angelina CFB for more than 20 years. He and his wife raise cattle, registered quarter horses and grow hay.

He served as president of Angelina CFB for eight years and served on many committees. Joiner also served on TFB's board of directors for six years. While a state director, he chaired the TFB Equine Advisory Committee and was a member of the TFB Small Farm and Ranch Advisory Committee.

Joiner taught agricultural education for over 30 years. He said without the U.S. Navy, Texas FFA and TFB, he would not be the person he is today.



District 10 | Mario A. Escobar

Mario A. Escobar joined Farm Bureau in 1985. He has been on the Zavala CFB board since 2000 and president since 2007.

He has served on all county committees and the state Resolutions Committee. He has been instrumental in the county achieving a membership gain throughout the years.

Escobar assisted local youth with show animal purchases and helped secure buyers and donations for the junior livestock show.

He has operated and maintained over 300 personal acres and over 35 leased cattle and livestock operations, served with the Soil Conservation Service, worked as a supervisory inspector for USDA APHIS and for Homeland Security.



District 11 | Larry J. Poenitzsch

The late Larry J. Poenitzsch of Columbus ranched 58 years, grew corn, grain sorghum and wheat, harvested pecans and worked 40 years as a cattle ranch manager.

He became a Farm Bureau member in 1988 and served on the Colorado CFB board for over 30 years. He attended many TFB annual meetings as a voting delegate.

He was involved in policy development procedures, helped organize the county's annual Ag Day, youth scholarships and encouraged students to attend wildlife and leadership camps. He promoted adult programs, including defensive driving courses, wildlife management, pesticide licenses, teacher leadership seminars and Texas A&M Fire School.



District 12 | Obert Sagebiel

Obert Sagebiel joined Farm Bureau in 1970 and raises cattle and sheep.

He served on DeWitt CFB board for 35 years. He was president nine years and served as vice president, secretary and treasurer. He served as Policy Development chair and was on the Economic Services and Membership committees, influencing the decades of continuous membership gain.

He has assisted with Ag Days, youth contests, Food Connection Day and county conventions. He served on the state Resolutions Committee, attended most state meetings, two National Affairs Awards Trips and three AFBF conventions, once as a voting delegate.



District 13 | Faye Pauline (Dobie) Word

Faye Pauline (Dobie) Word joined Farm Bureau in 1994. She was a director of the board for 19 years and served as treasurer, secretary and was the first woman president of Live Oak CFB.

Word served on the Food Checkout Day, Youth Scholarship, Policy Development and Youth committees. She initiated the county's annual Ag Field Day for county fourth grade and home-schooled students, chairing the Ag in the Classroom Committee for the better part of 20 years. She continued coordinating the event for several years after stepping down as director.

Word also served as the office manager of Live Oak CFB.



Staff | Slade Hornick

Slade Hornick, former vice president of Information Systems, retired July 1, after 22 years of service to Texas Farm Bureau and Affiliated Companies.

In 1999, Hornick joined the TFB staff as supervisor of CRKP (County Record Keeping). He was appointed as system administrator in 2001 and later assumed the role of director of Information Technology in 2009. He and his staff maintained the TFB network, email, web services and PC support for TFB users and county Farm Bureau Leader-Link users.

Hornick became the vice president of Information Systems for TFB Casualty Insurance Company in 2014.

TFB 89TH ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

TFB Annual Meeting Kickoff event a success with members

The Annual Meeting Kickoff event, hosted by the Young Farmer & Rancher Advisory Committee, was

a social gathering to promote an evening of fun and fellowship.

The event featured entertain-

ment by country music singer Holly Tucker. She was named Texas Country Music Awards “Female Music Vo-

calist of the Year” in 2017 and 2018. The night also included axe throwing and casino games.



Ukrainian farmer shares update with TFB members

Ukrainian farmer Kees Huizinga visited with TFB members live via Zoom from Central Ukraine during the Sunday luncheon.

He said only about 70% of Ukraine's export grain is expected to be shipped due to Russian impacts at the ports. He said there is concern that Ukrainian farmers may not have enough diesel fuel for the upcoming season.

Huizinga also described his recent trip to Washington, D.C., where he met with U.S. senators, the Business Council for International Understanding, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development as a representative of the Global Farmer Network.



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Scholarship opportunities help Texas Farm Bureau members

By Julie Tomascik
Editor

Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) continues to invest in youth, devoting large amounts of money and time to help students develop leadership skills and a future in agriculture.

That investment comes through scholarships at the state and county levels. Each year, TFB awards more than \$235,000 in scholarships, and over \$590,000 in scholarships is provided through county Farm Bureaus.

“Our scholarship program offers a variety of scholarships available for high school seniors, enrolled college students, students pursuing technical degrees and veterinary students,” McKenna Bush, TFB youth outreach coordinator, said. “These scholarships and awards are another way that TFB and county Farm Bureaus invest in the future of our communities, state and agriculture.”

There are four high school scholarships available from the state’s largest general farm and ranch organization: Memorial/Honorary and District Scholarships, Young Farmer & Rancher Scholarship and the Dick Mitchell Memorial Scholarship.

Enrolled college students can apply for four scholarships at the state level: Young Farmer & Rancher Scholarships for Enrolled College Students, S.M. True Jr. Agricultural Scholar Award, Mia Balko Student Teaching Scholarship and the Rural Veterinary Scholarship.

Application instructions

All scholarships require the student to be part of a TFB member-family to apply, and membership must be maintained for the duration of the scholarship.

The deadline to apply and submit completed 2023 scholarship applications online is March 15 before midnight.

Visit texasfarmbureau.org/scholarships for scholarship details and a link to apply.

Email youthactivities@txfb.org or

call 254-751-2258 with questions.

Scholarships for High School Seniors

Dick Mitchell Scholarship

This \$1,000 scholarship is awarded to one high school senior who completed the Thrive Event through TFB’s Student Success Series in August 2022.

Young Farmer & Rancher Scholarship

High school seniors pursuing a degree in agriculture are eligible for TFB’s Young Farmer & Rancher scholarship.

Each of TFB’s 13 districts will award one \$1,000 scholarship.

Memorial/Honorary and District Scholarships

In each of the 13 TFB districts, one student will be awarded a \$1,500 scholarship.

Three students from each district also will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

Scholarships for Enrolled College Students

Young Farmer & Rancher Enrolled Scholarship

The Young Farmer & Rancher Enrolled Scholarship is for students already in college pursuing undergraduate degrees. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 45 credit hours and a GPA of 2.5 or higher to qualify. Applicants must also intend to pursue a career in agriculture.

Three \$2,000 Young Farmer & Rancher Enrolled scholarships will be awarded.

Mia Balko Student Teaching Scholarship

This scholarship was renamed in honor of the late Mia Balko, who was the associate director of youth outreach which oversees the scholarship program for TFB. Prior to joining TFB, Balko was an agricultural science teacher for many years.

Four senior agricultural education students will receive the Fall 2023 Mia Balko Student Teaching

Scholarship.

The scholarships, valued at \$1,500 each, aim to help college students cover expenses during their semester of off-campus student teaching.

A second application process will open later this year for those student teaching in spring 2024.

S.M. True Jr.

Agricultural Scholar Award

To acknowledge former TFB President S.M. True Jr., a \$20,000 scholarship was established for college students enrolled in an undergraduate degree program with at least 60 hours of college credit and declared agriculture as their major.

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must be a Farm Bureau member-family for at least three years at the time of application. Applicants must submit a completed application and two letters of recommendation—one from the county Farm Bureau president and one from the dean or head of the agricultural department of the applicant’s college or university.

Students are encouraged to apply at the end of their sophomore year for TFB’s most prestigious scholarship.

Rural Veterinary Scholarship

The Rural Veterinary Scholarship

was announced last year. Four scholarships valued at \$10,000 each will be awarded.

Applicants must be a second- or third-year veterinarian student at Texas A&M University or Texas Tech University with a GPA of 2.5 or higher. The applicant must also plan to enter a rural and/or food animal practice in Texas after graduation.

TSTC Scholarships

TFB is increasing the scholarship funds to \$50,000 available to first-year and enrolled students attending Texas State Technical College (TSTC).

Forty \$1,000 scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis through the Texan Success Scholarship.

Another \$10,000 is available through the “helping hands” scholarship, which is meant to help students with unexpected costs that are not usually covered by traditional scholarships.

The link to the TSTC scholarship applications can be found on TFB’s scholarship page at texasfarmbureau.org/scholarships. Students will need to follow up with their enrollment coach after submitting the online form to determine if they received a scholarship.

TEXAS FARM BUREAU SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Apply by March 15, 2023

Details at texasfarmbureau.org/scholarships



Teachers can grow ag literacy in the classroom with TFB program

By Julie Tomascik
Editor

Texas teachers can grow agricultural literacy in the classroom with help from Texas Farm Bureau (TFB).

TFB is launching the second-annual Ag Literacy Week Book Program, which will be held in conjunction with National Ag Week on March 20-24.

Teachers can sign up to receive an accurate ag book to read during Ag Literacy Week, and it's free.

"This program offers teachers an opportunity to increase agricultural literacy among their students through the use of an accurate ag book and accompanying activities," said Jordan Bartels, TFB associate director of Organization Division, Educational Outreach.

The book that will be provided by TFB is *I LOVE Strawberries!* The short book offers a child's perspective on growing strawberries. It also helps students understand the hard work and dedication it takes to get

food from the field to the table.

"The program takes place over one week and is a fantastic way to easily make an impact on students using a food that most students can't resist—strawberries!" Bartels said. "K-5 teachers of all subjects can incorporate the book into their classrooms, and Farm Bureau will provide activities and resources for teachers to use."

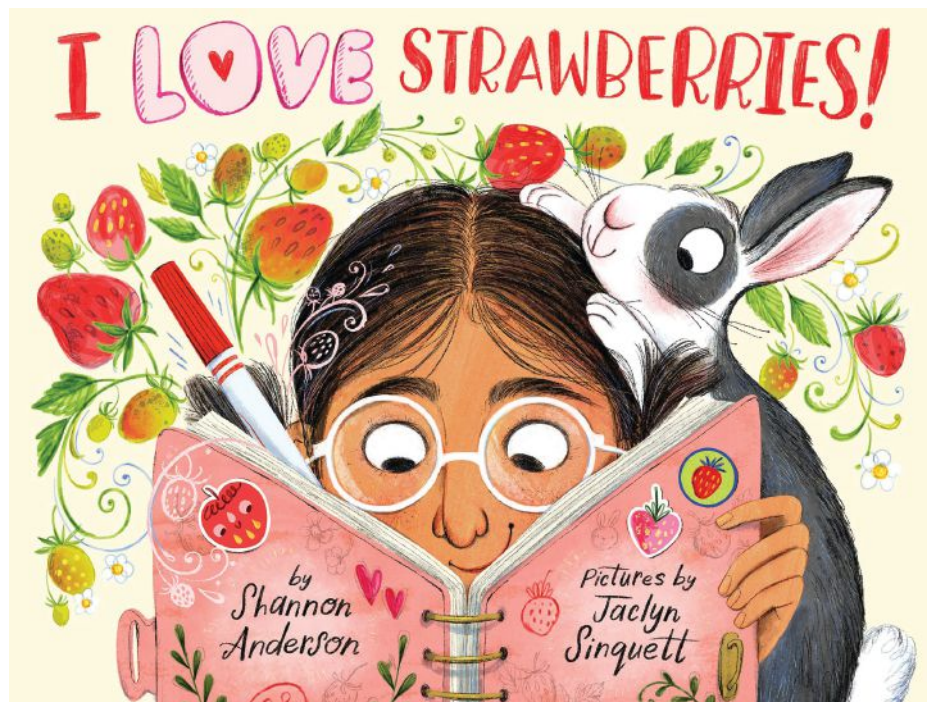
Those free resources include an educator's guide that provides lessons and activities that focus on science, math, ELAR and nutrition.

The Ag Literacy Week Book Program is open to Texas public, private or homeschool educators who teach kindergarten through fifth grade.

Bartels noted that participating classrooms will receive a special message and reading from the book's author, Shannon Anderson.

Sign up for the free program closes Jan. 23.

For more information and to direct teachers to sign up, visit the Ag



Literacy Week Book Program section on texasfarmbureau.org/aitc.

TFB also works year-round to increase agricultural literacy in classrooms through a variety of in-classroom programs, lessons, resources,

grants and teacher professional development. More information on those opportunities and resources is available at texasfarmbureau.org/aitc.

Email edoutreach@txfb.org or call 254-751-2569 with questions.

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'Cowboys Without Borders' documents the heart of cowboys

By Emmy Powell

Communications Specialist

From ranches in Montana to ranches in Argentina, the film *Cowboys Without Borders* explores agricultural roots and the true heart of cowboys.

The independent film was directed by sixth-generation Texan Gaston Davis.

"*Cowboys Without Borders* seeks to bridge the gap between rural America and urban America," Davis said. "We all have agricultural roots and come from someone who is working in agriculture. The further and further we get removed from that, the more distant that we get to knowing what agriculture is. We wanted to shed light on an industry that does not seek much attention or shed light on itself."

After spending almost six months learning about ranching and the way of life in South America, Davis saw the need to tell the story of the cowboy.

"It was a humbling experience. I have the luxury of coming back home to my wife and son, but these individuals, for the most part, are separated from their families, earning a living and only able to see them three or four times a year, if they're lucky," Davis said. "They're very humble. They're hard workers. They're independent. I saw that in Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, all these different countries."

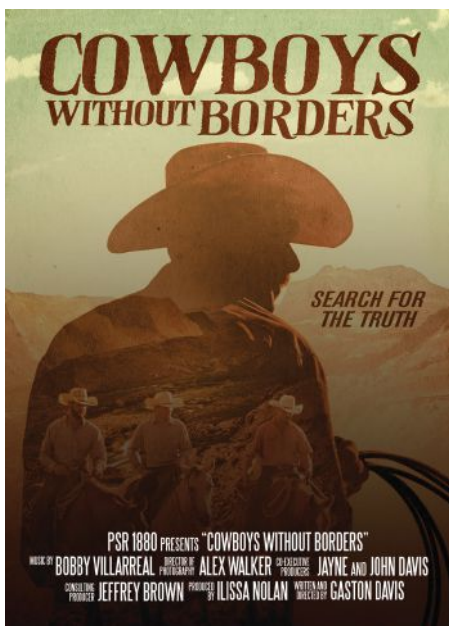
Davis noticed the cowboys he worked with shared similar characteristics—their passion and hard work.

The film explores ranches and shares the stories of cowboys from Argentina, Mexico, Montana and Texas. Davis noted that from North America to Central and South America, there were many differences, but one end goal.

"You go to each location, and everyone has a sense of humility, of independence, but they want to work together as a team," he said. "The differences are the way of accomplishing each task and how it looks. For example, in Montana they use dirt



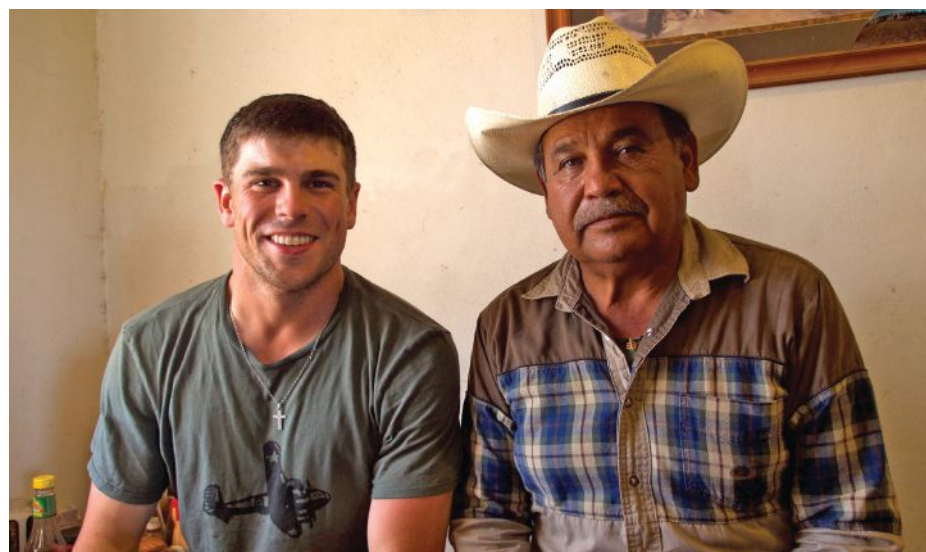
The focus of the documentary is on cattle ranches from Montana to Argentina, but the core of the story is for audiences to see that even though they are thousands of miles apart and separated by decades of advancement and technology, the heart of the cowboy remains the same. Courtesy photo.



bikes. They stress that it takes horseback, too. They need both. Whenever you're breaking a horse in Mexico, it's the way it's always been done."

The techniques and practices varied in each area. The technology and tools each ranch had access to depended on their location, too.

Davis created the film with pro-



Gaston Davis (left) is a sixth-generation Texan dedicated to sharing the stories of cowboys across the U.S. and the globe. Courtesy photo.

ducer Ilissa Nolan and cinematographer Alex Walker.

"From the beginning, Ilissa and I wanted to show the heartbeat behind the agriculture industry, which are the people hard at work within it. I hope people take away a better understanding and appreciation for the service they provide. It's more

than just boots, spurs and chaps. It's a lot of hard work, relentless effort and grit," Davis said.

Cowboys Without Borders is available to stream on Amazon Prime, Apple TV and iTunes, Google Play and YouTube. To learn more about the film, visit [CowboysWithoutBorders.com](https://www.CowboysWithoutBorders.com).

Thompson elected U.S. House Agriculture Committee chair

By Julie Tomascik
Editor

U.S. Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-Pa.) was elected as the next chair of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, which is charged with legislative oversight relating to U.S. agriculture, forestry, nutrition and rural development.

Thompson, who was elected by the House Republican Steering Committee, is the first chairman from Pennsylvania in nearly 170 years.

“I am honored to lead the Committee on Agriculture and build on the accomplishments of the past two years as ranking member. The political landscape in Washington may be fractured, but as chairman, I will prioritize the needs of our producers and rural communities—the backbone of this country,” Thompson said. “We will keep our foot on the gas to deliver principled solutions, robust oversight and a farm bill that is responsive to the needs of the country’s farmers, ranchers and foresters.”

Thompson was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2008. He served as the ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee for the 117th Congress and vice chair during the 116th Congress. He’s also served as chair of the Subcommittees on Conservation and Forestry and Nutrition and ranking member of the Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management.

With serious challenges facing agriculture, underscored by even deeper concerns in margins and input costs, farm bill discussions will be key in 2023, as Thompson assumes the leadership role.

Those concerns, along with discussions on drought conditions, disaster assistance and other issues related to Texas agriculture and rural communities, were discussed with Thompson when he visited with Texas Farm Bureau leaders and members during a trip to the state in November.

“Texas Farm Bureau congratu-



Texas Farm Bureau President Russell Boening (left) with Congressman GT Thompson during his visit to Texas last November.

lates Congressman Thompson on being selected to serve as the next chairman of the U.S. House Ag Committee,” said TFB President Russell Boening. “He is a steadfast champion for agriculture who has visited Texas regularly to learn about the issues impacting farm and ranch families in our state. He has also made it a point to visit with farmers

and ranchers across the country to ensure specific needs are addressed in the upcoming 2023 Farm Bill. We look forward to our continued work with Chairman-elect Thompson to achieve success for American agriculture.”

The position was previously held by Rep. David Scott (D-Ga.), who was elected in December 2020.

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Texas Farm Bureau names 2022-23 garden grant recipients

By Julie Tomascik
Editor

Texas Farm Bureau named the recipients of the Learning From the Ground Up garden grants for 2022-2023.

Thirty-nine grants were awarded to schools and educational programs across the Lone Star State for their projects that help increase agricultural literacy and awareness.

“This year’s application pool was incredibly competitive and a true testament to the good work that teachers and programs across the state are doing to incorporate agriculture into lessons,” said Jordan Bartels, TFB associate director of Organization Division, Educational Outreach. “Helping students grow an understanding of agriculture and food production while connecting the information to concepts taught in the classroom is a win-win.”

Projects include establishing or improving school gardens, raised beds, greenhouses and outdoor

classrooms that provide students with hands-on experiential learning about agriculture and food production.

The next application process will open in summer 2023.

For more information about garden grants, other educational opportunities and Ag in the Classroom materials, visit texasfarmbureau.org/aitc or email edoutreach@txfb.org.

Garden Grant recipients for 2022-23 include the following:

Southcrest Christian School
Primrose School of Lubbock South
Nazareth Elementary
Donna Zimmerer Licensed Daycare
West Foundation Elementary School
Era ISD
Fellowship Academy
Honey Grove Elementary
Garner ISD
Oakmont Elementary
Rock Hill High School
Douglas Elementary

Alba-Golden Elementary
PE Wallace Middle School
Garden City High School
Alpine Christian School
Sierra Vista CDC
Merkel High School
Clyde Intermediate School
Lohn Elementary
Williams Ledger Elementary School
Dew ISD
St. Mary’s Catholic School
Full Armor Christian Academy
Hemphill Middle School
Groveton Elementary

Luckey Ranch Elementary
Poteet Junior High School
Utopia High School
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Jessie Lee Pumphrey Elementary
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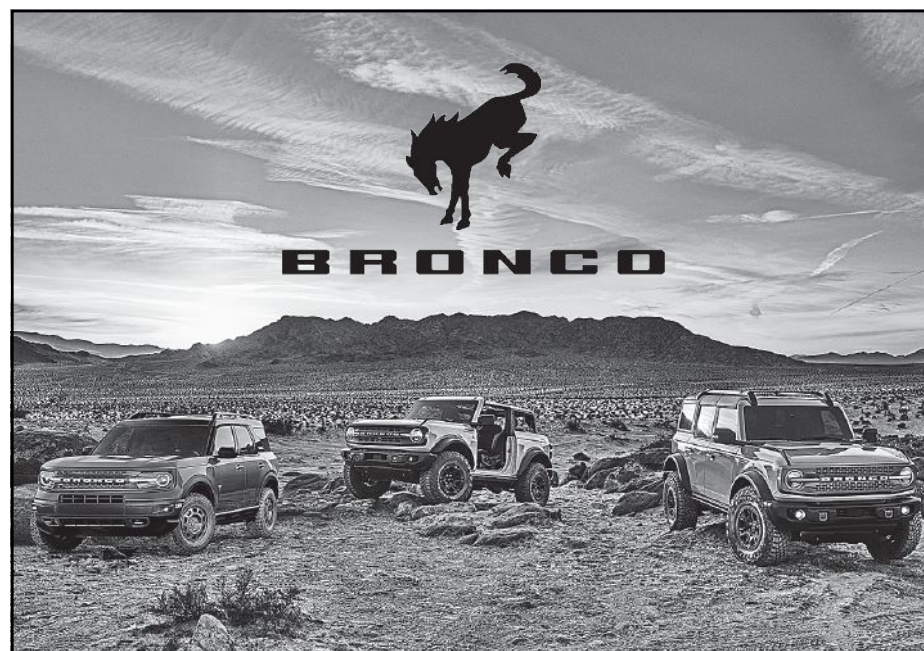
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Study examines rotational grazing adoption by cattle producers

A report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) found about 40% of U.S. cow-calf operations report using rotational grazing.

In rotational grazing, livestock are moved through multiple fenced grazing areas in order to manage forage production and quality. Rotational grazing is a management practice which benefits both the rancher and the land. It has been found to improve animal health, forage productivity and is a more drought resilient grazing livestock system.

The management technique has also been found to improve soil health and increase soil carbon sequestration.

Christine Whitt and Steven Wandler, ERS researchers and the report's authors, found that while only 40% of cow-calf operations report using rotational grazing, only 40% of rotational grazing operations use intensive rotational grazing.

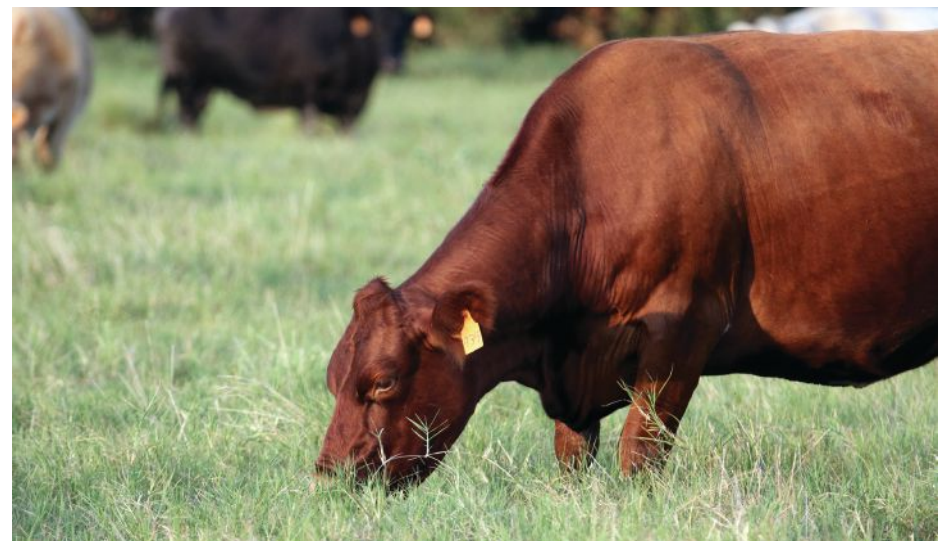
The study reported that retained

stockers, operations that retain the majority of their calves through the initial feeder stage for later sale to feedlots, are the most likely to adopt intensive rotational grazing.

The operations practicing intensive grazing were found to have a significantly higher average stocking density, which means they have more beef cattle per total grazing acres. Basic rotational grazing operations tend to have larger herds and more grazing land on average than either intensive rotational grazing operations or continuous grazing operations.

Although adoption rates vary by regions, the researchers found that about 50% of operations that have adopted rotational grazing are in the Northern Plains and Appalachian regions.

The Appalachian region commonly sees intensive rotational grazing more than basic rotational grazing, and operations have a smaller acreage average.



Rotational grazing practices are used by about 40% of U.S. cow-calf operations.

In the Delta States and Southeast region, a greater share of rotational grazing operations practice year-round rotational grazing with the most densely stocked grazing land.

The researchers noted each rotational grazing system varies. Some use five or fewer paddocks, which are typically 40 acres or more with per-

manent fencing. More intensive rotational grazing systems have more paddocks and are on smaller acreage.

The study was conducted through a survey of U.S. beef cow-calf producers. The population for the survey consists of cattle operations, with cows, heifers and calves, in the 23 largest cattle-producing states.



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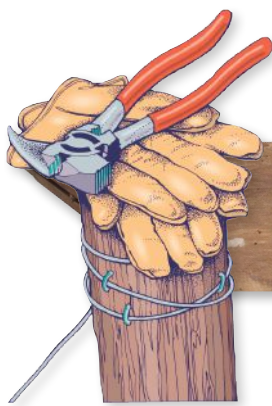
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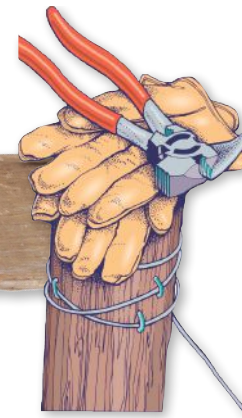
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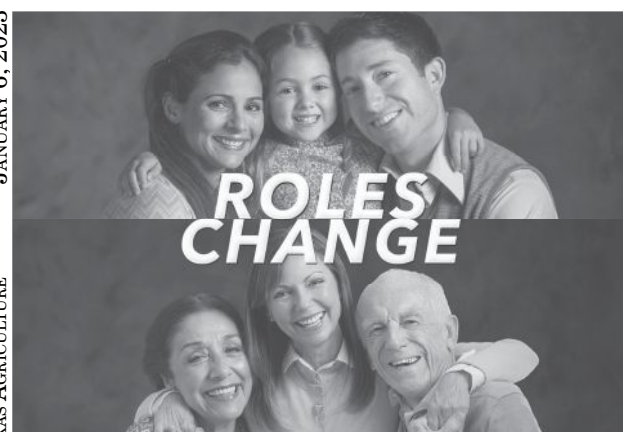
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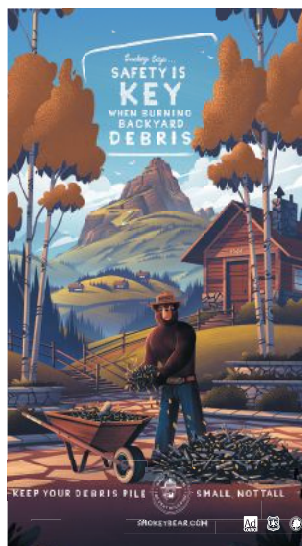
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


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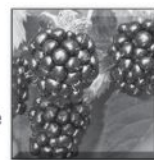
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