

The County Agent

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OF COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AGENTS

Volume LXXXI No.2 June, 2020

NACAA - 6584 W. Duroc Road - Maroa, IL 61756 - (217)794-3700

President's Corner

I am sure that every NACAA President and Board is unique and have their own distinct challenges and experiences during their tenure. A few short months ago we were actively planning for this year's AM/PIC in Virginia Beach in July and excited about the prospect of exploring the boardwalk, enjoying the camaraderie of old and new friends from across the country, taking advantage of the educational opportunities, and experiencing all that Virginia has to offer.

What a difference 120 days make! In the past three months the COVID-19 pandemic has exploded across our nation and the world, changing life in previously inconceivable ways. Social distancing, wearing masks in public, closing businesses, schools and universities, working from home, and attending virtual meetings have all become the new norm for most Americans.

As I mentioned in my previous message to you, given all the uncertainty and doubts about being able to successfully hold the meeting in July, the Board has moved to

reschedule the AM/PIC to September 29 -Oct 1, 2020 in Virginia Beach.

Our plan remains to focus heavily on professional development and member recognition along with a By-law mandated delegate session and regional caucuses. Unfortunately, due to financial constraints, tours, sons and daughter activities, and some spouse and life-time member activities will be eliminated or reduced.

We opted for a reduced 3-day schedule and elimination of some popular activities for several reasons:

- Anticipated reduction in attendance because of budgetary shortfalls and possible travel restrictions imposed at some institutions,
- Loss of national and state sponsorship for the meeting due to COVID-19 budgetary constraints,
- A reluctance on the part of some spouses and children to take time off from school especially after the long COVID-19 mandated absence from school this spring and the probable re-opening of schools next fall.

Since there is still a great deal of uncertainty regarding COVID-19 restrictions, we are also looking at other contingencies including the possibility of a virtual meeting or a hybrid virtual/in person meeting should the circumstances warrant.

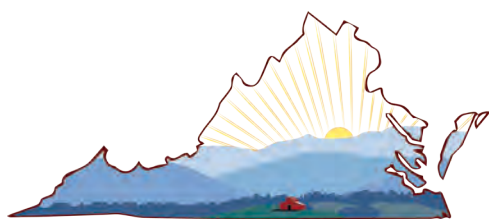
While it is impossible to predict the future, it is clear that the COVID-19 global pandemic will have a long-term impact on our economy and our society. It will change how we live, work and play well into the future. Whereas most businesses, institutions and individuals are working hard to survive the immediate crisis, we also need to think about



Gene McAvo
NACAA President

the months and years ahead and how we can adjust.

While COVID-19 poses many challenges, it may also provide new opportunities for those who can adapt to new circumstances.
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VIRGINIA | Where It All Began
NACAA 2020



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President's Corner....

internet access will be even more essential for everyone.

- ★ Digital and remote communications, including conference calls, video conferencing, webinars, email and other social media platforms, will likely become more of a way of life for all of us.
- ★ The trend toward telecommuting and working remotely is likely to expand even further.
- ★ Online learning will accelerate. This will have significant ramifications for Extension education at all levels. More and more, training and seminars will be conducted online.

The COVID-19 crisis has caused a run on certain commodities and disrupted agricultural supply chains at multiple levels. Hopefully this will focus American's attention on food security and the necessity of a strong domestic agricultural sector. We see already seeing increased demand for local food and support for American farmers and ranchers, all of this will present challenges and opportunities for Extension to support this movement and help clients embrace new technologies.

Through post-AM/PIC surveys over the past several years, members have discussed the format of the meeting including elimination of certain functions and reducing the length of the meeting. While this was not our intent, COVID-19 has required us to incorporate these suggestions on a trial basis. Our revised schedule will give the Board and members the opportunity to evaluate the changes that will be initiated this year.

Within this edition of *The County Agent* you will find several summaries from NACAA Scholarships which were awarded last year by the NACAA Scholarship Committee. Funding for these scholarship activities was made possible by the NACAA Educational Foundation (a separate 501 (c) 3 organization). Scholarship applications are due each year by June 1. The Scholarship Committee plans to meet in July via Zoom to review applications and make a final funding recommendation to the NACAA Educational Foundation for approval. This will allow agents hoping to use scholarship funds for Fall graduate school classes to be eligible to apply and keep the scholarship selection process on its original timetable.

As NACAA President it has been extremely heartening to witness the response of Extension Agents from across this great nation as you have responded to the challenges posed by COVID-19 and supported your communities in multiple ways. You are working hard keeping our farmers, ranchers and the general public informed and educated about COVID-19, diligently encouraging clients to adapt to the new reality – whether it be innovative ways of marketing crops to helping families grow their own food.

In these days of COVID-19 also highly contagious is kindness, patience, love, enthusiasm, and a positive attitude. Don't wait to catch it from others, be the carrier!

I am certain that in the future, I will look back with fond memories of my pandemic presidency.

As we move forward, you can rest assured that the Board and I are committed to ensuring that the health and safety of our members will take utmost priority. I look forward to the possibility of seeing you in Virginia Beach – September 29 – Oct 1.

Prayers for the safety of you, your families and our nation and keep up the good work!

Past NACAA President - Leslie N. Firth Passes Away

Four days before his 84th birthday, Leslie Neil Firth of Mercer, PA passed away peacefully on April 9, 2020 with his wife (Elaine) of 59 years by his side.



Les will long be remembered for his joyful laughter, kind heart, and steadfast leadership. Those who knew him will recall with fondness his bright blue eyes, farm boots, and walking stick. Les was a rare human being with love to spare for family, friends, farmers, colleagues, students, educators, church members, and community groups.

Les served as NACAA President in 1981 (Cornell University, NY location) and received the NACAA Hall of Fame Award in 2007.

Private services were held at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 110 E. Market Street, Mercer, PA 16137, on April 17th, with Rev. Dr. William P. Crooks and Rev. Dr. Catherine Craley officiating. The burial was at Mount Washington Cemetery, Jefferson Township, PA. A celebration of Les' life will be held at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Penn State University, College of Ag Sciences, 240 Agriculture Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802 (memo Leslie N. Firth Scholarship in Agriculture), or to Trinity Foundation at the Trinity Presbyterian Church, 110 E. Market Street, Mercer, PA 16137.



The County Agent



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Life Member Corner

ENCOURAGERS.....

It is often said that County Agents wear many hats and sometimes several in the same day. Although agents have been specializing in recent years, the public's questions are many and varied. Even though we have a wide variety of academic training, different experiences and length of service, many times in different areas of our state or other states, we do have one characteristic in common—we are encouragers. It makes no difference who our clientele are-- whether they are youth or adults, women or men, crop or livestock producers, home owners, rural or urban, they all need encouragement.

Through the years many of us have worked with 4-H youth in 4-H clubs, trained their 4-H leaders, and worked on various teams or project areas. A word of encouragement made a great difference with youth and their success. I trained many judging teams where the 4-H members needed to learn standards, make decisions and then defend their decisions with oral reasons. It took a lot of encouragement to get them through their early sets of oral reasons. We also emphasized 4-H public speaking and presentations. We were teaching life skills that served those 4-H'ers well no matter where their life paths took them.

Encouragement for adults comes in various forms. Most often Extension bases its educational approach on the Father of Cooperative Extension, Seaman A. Knapp. His philosophy states, "What a man hears, he may doubt; What he sees, he may possibly doubt; What he does himself, he cannot doubt. Most County Agents have used many approaches to help producers become more efficient, profitable and sustainable. New technologies, improved systems, researched-based products and yes, methods that conform to regulations. We have used personal conversations, meetings, producer panels of innovative producers and perhaps the most effective—field demonstrations on their own farm with hands-on education or a fall back to Seaman Knapp's philosophy. Encouraging people to grow is one of the most rewarding parts of Extension and has been a key factor in our great agricultural industry.

When I was a Peace Corp Volunteer working with agriculture in Tanzania, East Africa over 50 years ago, the Tanzanians admired American agriculture more than anything else about America and I feel that research-based Extension Education played the key role in America's agricultural success.



Dave Stenberg
NACAA Life Member

Whether you are an active member of NACAA or a Life member, being an encourager never stops. It is vital that we encourage each other and there is no better way than being an active participant in NACAA opportunities. Although the 2020 NACAA AM/PIC will be modified for Active/Life members and will have reduced Spouse activities due to the COVID-19 virus, I encourage you to participate in presentations, the poster contest, tours and awards events. Even though modified this year, proceed with great enthusiasm in 2021!

Attending AM/PIC has been of great personal value to me. Meeting new co-workers, renewing friendships, getting great ideas to adapt to many settings, seeing and learning about many areas of the United States, and attending leadership development sessions—the advantages go on. I have been to all 50 states and I credit NACAA AM/PIC for encouraging me to travel to many of them to attend the annual AM/PIC meetings. The desire to learn how other people live has also stimulated me to see other part of the globe. I have traveled to over 35 countries on six continents with Antarctica scheduled for 2021. Extension is a great encourager to learn, teach others and build relationships. I encourage all of you, Active or Life Members, to participate whenever possible in NACAA—it is a life-enriching and fulfilling experience.

105th Annual Meeting/Professional Improvement Conference PROGRAM

Sunday, September 27

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. NACAA Board Meeting

Monday, September 28

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon NACAA Board Meeting

12:00 Noon - 7:00 p.m. Registration

12 Noon – 5:00 p.m. Commercial Exhibit Trade Show, Educational Exhibits, and NACAA Poster Session Setup
Scholarship Auction Drop Off

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Nominating Committee Meeting

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. NACAA Educational Foundation Annual Meeting and Board of Directors Meeting

4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Joint Council/Committee Member Meeting
(All current and incoming National Committee members)

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. VIP Reception

Tuesday, September 29

6:30 a.m. - 7:45 a.m. Bayer CropScience Educational Breakfast

7:00 a.m. - 7:45 a.m. Voting Delegates Breakfast & Poster Judges

7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Commercial Exhibit Trade Show, Educational Exhibits, and NACAA Poster Session Setup

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. General Session
Presiding: Gene McAvoy, NACAA President

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Life Members and Spouses Hospitality Room

8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Registration and Scholarship Auction Drop Off
(Drop Off concludes at 5:00 p.m.)

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Commercial Exhibit Trade Show, Educational Exhibits and NACAA Posters Open

10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m. - 12:00 noon Regional Meetings (State Pictures)

12:00 noon - 1:15 p.m. Search for Excellence Luncheon
(Combined for ALL SFE Awards)

12:00 noon - 1:15 p.m. First Timer Attendee Luncheon

12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Past Officers Luncheon (Dutch Treat)

1:30 p.m - 3:00 p.m. Life Member Committee Meeting

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Early Career Development Presentations

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Teaching & Educational Technologies Presentations

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Natural Resources Presentations

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Agronomy & Pest Management Presentations

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Agricultural Issues Presentations

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Animal Science Presentations

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Horticulture & Turfgrass Presentations

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. First Lady's Tea & Reception

2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Break

2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Life and Spouse Workshops -
Ag in the Classroom
Virginia Ham
Grow Your Brain
Watchable Wildlife

4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Dinner (on your own)

Wednesday, September 30

6:30 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. Achievement Award Recognition Breakfast

6:30 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. Poster Session Breakfast

7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Life Member Breakfast & Meeting

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Registration and Scholarship Auction Drop Off

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Life Members and Spouses Hospitality Room

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Commercial Exhibit Trade Show, Educational Exhibits and NACAA Posters Open

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Committee Presentations:
Agricultural Issues
Early Career Development
Sustainable Agriculture
Agronomy & Pest Management
Animal Science
Horticulture & Turfgrass
Leadership & Administrative Skills
Agricultural Economics & Community Dev.

10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Life & Spouse Member Spirit of Norfolk Cruise
(includes lunch)

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Communications Awards Luncheon

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Developing Your State 4R Presence –
Luncheon
The Fertilizer Institute

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. New Agriculture Fencing Innovations and
Equipment Luncheon (limit of 50)
Sponsored by: Stay-Tuff Fencing and Madison
Wood Preservers

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Animal Nutrition Luncheon (limit of 50)
Sponsored by: Cargill Animal Nutrition

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Trade Talk Luncheon 1

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Trade Talk Luncheon 2

1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Committee Presentations:
Agronomy & Pest Management
Animal Science
Horticulture & Turfgrass
Teaching & Educational Technologies
Agricultural Economics & Community Dev.

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Voting Delegate Session

2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Break

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Commercial Exhibit Trade Show, Educational Exhibits and NACAA Posters Take Down

5:00 p.m. States Night Out

7:00 p.m. NACAA Scholarship Silent and Live Auction Preview

8:00 p.m. NACAA Scholarship Live Auction

1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Leadership & Administrative Skills Super Seminar: "Comprehending Your Leadership Style to Enhance Personal and Professional Growth at the Local Level" - Limited to 45

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Teaching & Educational Technologies Super Seminar "Innovative Extension Curriculum" Registration fee: \$10.00/person

4:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. NACAA Board Reception

5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. DSA & AA Recipients, Hall of Fame Recipients, NACAA Board Members, Region Directors, Past Officers, Special Assignments, Special Guests, Council Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs Assemble for Banquet

6:30 p.m. DSA and Hall of Fame Recognition Annual Banquet

9:15 p.m. - 10:30 p.m. Presidents Reception

Thursday, October 1

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. National Committee Members Breakfast

7:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Life & Spouse Half Day Fishing Excursion

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Registration

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Life Members and Spouses Hospitality Room

8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. General Session
Presiding: Gene McAvoy, NACAA President

9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Break

10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Life & Spouse Retail Therapy Outing

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Search For Excellence National Winner Presentations:
Young, Beginning, or Small Farmers/Ranchers
Sustainable Agriculture
4-H & Youth Programming
Horticulture & Turfgrass
Crop Production
Livestock Production
Farm and Ranch Business Management
Environmental Quality, Forestry & Natural Resources

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. NACAA Policy Committee Meeting

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance Educational Luncheon

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Agriculture Awareness & Appreciation Awards Luncheon

11:45 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Administrators Luncheon & Meeting

1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. ARPAS Testing, Animal Science

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Agricultural Issues Super Seminar: "Adapting Agriculture to a Changing Climate."

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Agricultural Issues Super Seminar: Keeping stress levels in check on the farm

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Sustainable Agriculture Super Seminar: Reading the Farm (Requires Site Visit on Friday)

Friday, October 2

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. NACAA Board Meeting

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. SARE Reading the Farm Site Visit (For participants in the SARE Reading the Farm Super Seminar on Thursday)

Saturday, October 3

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon NACAA Board Meeting

REGISTRATION

Registration for the 2020 NACAA AM/PIC will be online at www.nacaa.com. You will find the direct link on the homepage - underneath the VA Logo. If you prefer to register via hard copy (paper) forms - those forms can be found on the NACAA website underneath the online registration link.

Earlybird registration will run from June 15, 2020 to August 15, 2020. Following that date, all registration fee's will increase by \$100/person.

Please review the schedule closely, as some functions are on Monday, September 28, and Friday, Oct. 2.

Due to the change in AM/PIC dates - the number of contracted rooms at official NACAA hotels have been reduced significantly. Once the NACAA room blocks are full, additional hotel options will be made available. Hotel shuttles will not be provided, you will be responsible for your own transport between facilities. Beachfront properties (Hilton & Ramada) are approximately 1.5 miles from the VA Beach Convention Center.

Thursday, Oct. 1

Leadership & Administrative Skills Super Seminar: “Comprehending Your Leadership Style to Enhance Personal and Professional Growth at the Local Level”

1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Limited to 45 individuals

What’s your temperament style? Do you play well with others? Are you an excellent communicator? Find out in this unique four-hour super seminar with a focus on individual leadership growth from a professional vantage point. Focus on bridging the gap between complex foundational leadership potential and application in the Extension profession with a team-based approach.

Utilizing the Real Colors assessment tools, participants will take an active role in learning through small group integration and large group discussion (with a little fun built in throughout the process)!!! This seminar is an in-depth, hands-on approach to leadership style with the integration of various components adapted to both personal and professional enhancement, utilizing five team activities aimed at providing a more in-depth personal analysis of the leadership framework you can utilize in your own programs at home!

Intended audiences include all Extension professionals (even if you have participated in this before, you can benefit through

additional “brightening” exercises). Both seasoned and new hire professionals gain insight into their personal leadership style to enhance their professional growth in all facets of Extension work.

Instructors: David Yates and Melody Rose, University of Tennessee Extension Leadership & Admin Skills Committee: Melody Rose, Nathan Winter, Ed Martin, and Nicole Santangelo

Agricultural Issues Super Seminar - “Adapting Ag to a Changing Climate”

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Intended audience: County Extension Agents that want to learn more about the effects of climate change on crop and animal production.

Topics covered: Is agriculture ready for climate change? The adaptability of farmers and their crops will determine the future of agricultural sustainability and global food security. This presentation will discuss how to communicate the need to adapt and prepare for extreme weather events. It’s not about politics and it’s not about how or why we got here. It’s about doing what’s best for our farmers and making sure they have the facts they need to make informed choices about their farming operations.

Speaker: Pam Knox is the Director of the UGA Weather Network, a network of 86 stations around the state which have been recording weather and climate data starting in 1991. She is also an agricultural climatologist for the University of Georgia

in the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, which is part of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. In that position she provides outreach and education on climate and its effects on crops and livestock in the Southeastern US. She also provides weather and climate data and analyses to university scientists and user groups across the region. In addition, she is a regional coordinator for the volunteer CoCoRaHS (Community Cooperative Rain Hail and Snow) rainfall network in Georgia and is serving on the advisory board for the Georgia Weather Network. Pam is also an active Certified Consulting Meteorologist in the areas of forensic meteorology and climatology.

In the past Pam has also worked as the Georgia Assistant State Climatologist, the Wisconsin State Climatologist and in the National Weather Service. She also previously served as President of the American Association of State Climatologists and on the American Meteorological Society’s Board of Applied Climatology and Board of Continuing Professional Development. She now serves on the technical advisory boards for the Southeast Regional Climate Center (NOAA) and the Southeast Regional Climate Hub (USDA).

Teaching & Educational Technologies Super Seminar “Innovative Extension Curriculum”

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Registration fee: \$10.00/person

The TET Super Seminar will highlight extension curriculum incorporating 360-degree pictures to enhance traditional learning experiences. It will begin with

a general overview of technologies and platforms needed create innovative extension curriculum and then touch on important factors to consider before beginning, such as faculty appointment and university capacity to host hybrid and/or online extension programming. That will then be followed by an introduction into at least three 360-degree camera setups—varying in affordability and technicality. Finally, learners will be grouped and assigned to at least one of the cameras. Participants will have access to a Teaching & Educational Technologies Video Library at least one month prior the NACAA AM-PIC, with short instructional videos about the technologies used in the Super Seminar.

Agricultural Issues Super Seminar - “Keeping Stress Levels in Check”

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Intended audience: County Extension Agents that want to learn more about the effects of stress on farmers and ranchers.

Topics covered: Farmers and ranchers have many stressors in their lives. Weather challenges and disasters like many Nebraskans have recently experienced have led to uncertainty in their crop and livestock operations. Machinery breakdowns, debt loads, volatile markets, sleep deprivation, changing regulations, and the stress of holding onto a multi-generational farm/ranch all play a part of the stress and mental health of a farmer or rancher. Farmers and ranchers know the importance of planning and talking about their financial health to bankers, financial planners, spouses, etc. but might not realize how important it is to spend time on their mental health.

“Keeping stress levels in check” will be presented by Nebraska Extension Educators who have been teaching this and related topics throughout the year, as Nebraska has been dealing with the recovery from the “Bomb Cyclone”, in addition to the economic downturn. This workshop will provide strategies for dealing with the stress of farming or ranching in today’s difficult economic environment. Participants will learn: How to recognize the signs and symptoms of stress; understand the role stress plays in our lives; and strategies and resources to manage stress.

Sustainable Agriculture and Research Education (SARE) - “Reading the Farm” Super Seminar

1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Sustainable Agriculture and Research Education (SARE) has three overarching objectives: farm profitability, environmental stewardship, and quality of life for farmers, and ranchers, their communities, and society as a whole. Equity and sustainability in food systems are key education and research considerations. Helping farmers and ranchers improve the sustainability of their farm requires an integrated whole-systems approach that recognizes the complex interactions among the physical, biological, economic and social components. The primary goal of the Reading the Farm program is to enhance the ability of Extension agents and personnel to understand farms and ranches as integrated holistic systems so they can help farmers and ranchers improve the sustainability of their farms and ranches.

Reading the Farm will be conducted as a super-seminar that provides background information and training required to plan and facilitate a Reading the Farm program

and assessment of a host Virginia farm. **There will be a required farm visit on Friday, October 2 to complete the requirements of the program (see below).**

The Super Seminar and site visit will be hosted by the Virginia SARE

Space is limited to 50 people and pre-registration is required.

“Reading the Farm” Site Visit Friday, Oct. 2, 2020

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Participants of the “Reading the Farm” Super Seminar will participate in an assessment of Fritillary Farm on Friday, Oct. 2, 2020. Lunch will be provided.

Fritillary Farm is a multi-faceted vegetable and fruit farm owned and recently established by David Carter III in Suffolk, VA. David uses agroecological principles and practices on his farm to encourage biodiversity, pollinator habitat, and build soil and plant health. He installed high tunnel greenhouses this spring to extend the growing season. He markets directly to consumers and retailers but is adapting with new market realities. David holds a degree in Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture. Prior to starting his own farm, he was production manager of New Earth Farm in Virginia Beach.

Educational Breakfast/Luncheon Opportunities

Glyphosate – the Science and the Safety

***Educational Breakfast sponsored by
Bayer CropScience LP
Tuesday, Sept. 29
6:30 a.m. - 7:45 a.m.***

In 2015 the International Agency for Research On Cancer released its monograph on glyphosate and labeled it a probable carcinogen. Since then much has been covered in the press and on social media regarding the safety of glyphosate, putting increasing pressure on policy-makers to ban these products from use in agriculture and landscape use. How much of the information that you hear is fact, and what is fiction? Its time to hear the science behind glyphosate. Fortunately, we have forty years of research and regulatory studies that specifically address these concerns. This talk will discuss the agricultural and environmental benefits of glyphosate as well as its safety. It will also cover how pesticide residues are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency to protect human and environmental health. (*Seating available for 150 max.*)

Presenters:

Jim Hruskoci, PhD
Sr. Technical Development Scientist
Bayer CropScience

Katie Karberg, MD, PhD
Regulatory Scientific Affairs
Bayer CropScience

Developing Your State 4R Presence

***Educational Luncheon sponsored by
The Fertilizer Institute
Wednesday, Sept. 30
11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.***

Education and implementation of 4R Nutrient Stewardship practices at a local level are critical to agricultural sustainability efforts. This session will feature a panel of stakeholders who will discuss how regions from across the country have developed their own 4R strategies. The panel will include perspectives from agricultural business, a state nutrient specialist, and a farmer. Learn how to integrate 4R research, on-farm practices and stakeholder events into a comprehensive 4R plan. Find out more at <http://www.nutrientstewardship.org/4rs/>. *Seating is limited to 75 participants.*

Educational Luncheon: New Agriculture Fencing Innovations and Equipment

***sponsored by
Stay-Tuff Fencing and Madison Wood Preservers
Wednesday, Sept. 30
11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.***

Fences are an essential part of the farming operations that serve many different roles, but for farmers, they are usually an integral part of doing business. While animal safety may be the highest concern, animals that are lost, injured, or killed will have a detrimental effect on a farm's bottom line. Therefore, a reliable fence is an investment that pays for itself by limiting or reducing animal loss. Lewis Sapp, Stay-Tuff Fencing Specialist, will discuss new innovations in fencing materials, brace assemblies, essential equipment and fence energizers. And Nathan Kline, MWP Post Division Director, will show the importance of post treatment and selection of the right post to extend the life of your fence.

Seating is limited.

Educational Luncheon: Animal Nutrition

***sponsored by
Cargill Animal Nutrition
Wednesday, Sept. 30
11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.***

Cargill has the capability to help your producers with the best nutrition at the right cost, using information from the world's largest database of nutrient samples, cutting-edge research generated by our innovation teams, and our deep expertise on animal biology to solve your producers challenges with tailored solutions. Cargill has built a global nutrition business employing over 20,000 people with 280 feed mills in 40 countries producing nearly 20 million tons of feed each year. The work we do touches over 1 billion plates every day. Cargill representatives David Baber and Neil Bumgarner will discuss the basics and innovations that Cargill is bringing to the feed industry.

Seating is limited.



Educational Luncheon:

Trade Talk #1

Tentative Participants:

Bayer Crop Science LP, National Pork Board,

Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance

Wednesday, Sept. 30

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Trade Talk #2

Tentative Participants:

Explorations by Thor, AgSafe,

FDA - Center for Veterinary Medicine,

New for this year, we've moved our Trade Talks to a luncheon function. Each participating group will be giving a 10-15 minute talk on research based initiatives within their organization, followed by a short question & answer session. Enjoy your box lunch while learning more from each of these participating groups.

Seating is limited.

Educational Luncheon

Pipeline Safety

sponsored by

Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance

Thursday - Oct. 1

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.

The Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance (PASA) is committed to safety and preventing damage to buried utilities through education. PASA consists of a dedicated group of utility operators that have teamed up with the NACAA to help deliver safety messages to farmers and ranchers around the U.S.

Farming is one of the most dangerous jobs in America. By collaborating with PASA you can help educate your clients on working safely, protecting the environment, and avoiding financial implications that could result from a utility incident. Hear how agents are making a difference and learn how you can get involved. For more information on PASA, visit PipelineAgSafetyAlliance.com.

Seating is limited.



LIFE MEMBER & SPOUSES PROGRAM

NACAA and the Virginia are honored to welcome some very special groups to Virginia Beach, our Life Members, Spouses, and Special Guests. We have combined many of the activities again this year so we can offer some very exciting tours and activities, while keeping bus riding time to a minimum. The highlight of our offering this year is a lunch cruise on the Spirit of Norfolk! Even though this is a reduced schedule from the previous July plans, we hope you will enjoy the beautiful city of Virginia Beach and all it has to offer.

Tuesday, September 29

- Life Member, Spouse and Guest Hospitality Room
- Life Member Committee Meeting (1:30 PM to 3:00 PM)
- Life Member Workshops (2:30 PM to 5:00 PM)

Wednesday, September 30

- Life Member, Spouse, and Guest Hospitality Room
- Life Member Breakfast 7:00 AM
- Spirit of Norfolk Lunch Cruise and Speaker (10:30 AM to 3:00 PM)

Thursday, October 1

- Life Member, Spouse and Guest Hospitality Room
 - Life Member and Spouses Tours (7:00 to 2:30 PM)
- Two half day options available

Life Member/Spouses/ Workshops Tuesday - September 29

Agriculture in the Classroom

Learn to incorporate Agriculture into your classroom. This session will be taught by the Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom Director, using National AITC Curriculum. The projects learned during this workshop will help educators utilize hands-on agriculture projects to emphasize lessons in Science, Math, Reading, Social Studies, and more. These lessons will also help students better understand how Agriculture assists them daily.

The Delicious Virginia Ham

Do you enjoy the delicious Virginia Ham? Do you want to learn more about the curing and preserving process? You can learn this a so much more about this Virginia Delicacy and satisfy the foodie in you. This workshop is being presented by a retired Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent.

LIFE MEMBER & SPOUSES PROGRAM continued....

Let's Learn, Move & Play: Grow Your BrainEvery Day!

The Let's Learn, Move & Play: Grow Your Brain interactive session is for participants to learn various physical activity activities that can be adapted and implemented in and outside of the classroom. The participants will learn the daily physical activity recommendation for youth, along with the link between physical activity and academic achievement. In addition, the participants will learn simple yoga poses and breathing techniques can be implemented almost anywhere.

Watchable Wildlife

Learn more about the wildlife in your backyard. You will learn to attract and identify wildlife for you and your family's enjoyment. This program is being presented by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Life Member Breakfast Wednesday, September 30 (7 AM)

Life Member, Spouse, and Guest Lunch/Cruise Wednesday, September 30 (10:30 AM - 3:00 PM)

Sleep in a little bit on Wednesday morning and prepare to take a once in a lifetime ride. You will be spirited away for a Luncheon Cruise on the Spirit of Norfolk Cruise Ship. As they say on their website www.spiritcruises.com/norfolk nothing on land compares! While you enjoy a delicious buffet lunch in the comfort of a climate-controlled cabin, you will enjoy panoramic, stunning views of the Norfolk waterfront. The ship features a dance floor and DJ area that we are filling with a local expert to guide you along the route and make sure you do not miss a thing. Bring your camera and your appetite! Once the cruise concludes, we will again be offering you the opportunity to use the remainder of the afternoon as you wish.



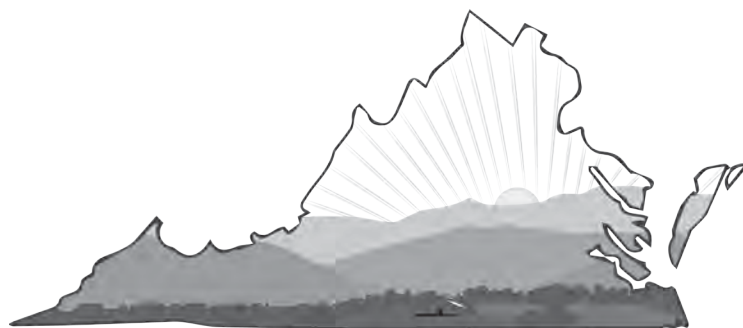
Life Member/Spouse Tours Thursday, October 1

Tour 1- Half Day Fishing Excursion (7:00 am bus loading to 12:30 return to VBCC) 50 person Max

Rudee Tours will be our host for a great morning on the water fishing. Their boats are equipped with two bathrooms, climate-controlled cabin, and a snack bar (which does take credit cards. You can bring food and drink on board in a small cooler but no alcoholic beverages (Beer is sold on board). You will be fishing in the Chesapeake Bay for mostly croaker, spot and small sharks. Everything including your license is provided. They do provide buckets for your catch and fish cleaning is available back at the dock for \$1 per pound. While you won't be walking too far, some things to note: wear comfortable clothes, sunscreen and a hat that secures would be beneficial, and shoes need to be non-skid/close toed. If you think you will get seasick, please make sure and take some non-drowsy Dramamine. Bring your camera to document the one that got away! The bus will leave the conference center at 7:00 am, we will need to board at 7:30 am, the boat will leave Rudee's Inlet at 8:00 am and return at noon, you will get back the conference center around 12:30 pm for lunch on your own. There is a small gift shop at the dock.

Tour 2 Retail Therapy (10 AM bus loading to 2:30 return) Light Walking

Enjoy a relaxing midday excursion to Norfolk Premium Outlets, located just a short ride from the VBCC. While at the outlet mall, gather in bargains from any of the 60 plus merchants. You can plan your shopping spree at <https://www.premiumoutlets.com/outlet/norfolk>. While there, you can purchase a variety of meals for lunch at their food court and be back to the VBCC in time to relax before dinner!



VIRGINIA | Where It All Began
NACAA 2020

NACAA Scholarship Highlights ***Funded by the NACAA Educational Foundation***

Each year, for NACAA members who are vested in the scholarship program, an opportunity exists to receive scholarship funding for educational development activities. Applications are submitted to the NACAA Scholarship Committee by **June 1st**, for review and consideration for funding. Funds for the scholarship program are provided by the NACAA Educational Foundation - a 501 c (3) non-profit organization (a separate legal entity from NACAA). In order to be vested in the scholarship program, a NACAA member must contribute a minimum of \$40 to receive up to a lifetime \$1,000 in scholarship. Contributions at the \$100+ level, allow for a lifetime scholarship of up to \$2,000. Applications are judged and funded based on completeness, plan for training, how it will be used/applied post training, and availability of funds. The scholarship is for individual or group professional improvement which

may include advanced degrees, graduate credits, tours, seminars, research or other specialized training. In order to be vested, the minimum donation of \$40/\$100 must be made to the NACAA Scholarship fund by the end of the previous AM/PIC. At anytime, a member may search the NACAA online database (<https://www.nacaa.com/scholarship/>) to view what level of contribution are currently recorded, as well as total scholarship funds received to date. For specific scholarship criteria please see (<https://www.nacaa.com/scholarship/criteria.php>)

Within this edition of *The County Agent*, are reprints of Educational Experience Reports which each previous award winner has submitted to the NACAA Scholarship Committee. These reports are from within the last 24 months and are quite impressive in regards to the educational value each individual/group experienced.

On average, approximately \$18,000-\$20,000 per year is awarded to NACAA members for scholarship purposes.

If you would like to make a donation to the NACAA Educational Foundation, you can do so via credit card on the NACAA website (www.nacaa.com - bottom left hand corner - Donate button), or you can send a check made payable to the NACAA Educational Foundation, and mail to NACAA, 6584 W. Duroc Road, Maroa, IL 61756.

Enjoy reading about the exciting opportunities many of our NACAA members had from receiving funding from the NACAA Educational Foundation . ☺

Studying Ireland's Farm Relief Service for Possible Adaptation in Maine

*By: Richard Brzozowski, University of Maine Cooperative Extension
June 2019*

For the past few years, I have been involved in determining the occupational health and safety needs of older farmers in Maine. Some of the areas of need that have been identified through surveys include the limited ability of older farmers to perform strenuous work and their need for periodic help on the farm. Trained farm workers could relieve aging farmers for specific tasks such as crop harvesting, produce handling, milking, livestock handling, feeding, tractor operation, tree pruning and fencing.

Traditionally, Maine farmers have found their own employees but have often had difficulty doing so when the state unemployment rate is so low. I was driven to determine how Extension might help address this need. I was aware of a relief service in Ireland from which the principles might be applied to Maine's situation. With the labor needs of older Maine farmers in mind, I applied for a NACAA Scholarship in 2018 to travel to Ireland to learn about their Farm Relief Service (FRS).

Ireland's Farm Relief Service is a farmer-owned cooperative that was formed in 1980. It has been successful in helping Irish farmers address labor gaps especially during peak periods on Irish dairy farms. Irish farmers use the service for the following reasons:

- after an injury or illness that prohibits them from daily physical chores
- when there is a need for dependable regular or temporary assistance for specific farm tasks or projects
- when farmers may lack the necessary skills or abilities to perform specific tasks

Dairy farming is the major agricultural enterprise in Ireland. It is a bit different than dairying in the US. Most dairy farms in Ireland are seasonal. All cows in the herd drop calves in February/March and are dry through the winter months. Grass pasture is the primary feed source for dairy cattle. This system fits perfectly to meet the needs of Ireland's international markets for butter, cheese, and infant formula. With such a dairy system, there are peak labor requirements at calving, for pasturing, and for milking. Extra workers are essential to the success of the farm.

continued on page 12



Dairy farms in Ireland are grass-based and seasonal with all cows calving in February and March.

In preparation for my time in Ireland, I interacted several months in advance via email with FRS Chief Executive Officer, Peter Byrne. He asked me what I wanted to learn and advised me of the best time to visit. He encouraged me to study the FRS website <https://frsfarmreliefservices.ie/> and to become more familiar with all of their programs.

In early April 2019, I travelled to Ireland flying to Dublin and driving to the national headquarters of the FRS in Roscrea, County Tipperary located in central Ireland. Upon my arrival at the FRS headquarters, I met with Mr. Byrne. He explained to me FRS history, how it is funded and how it has expanded over the years. He provided numerous promotional materials and printed information for my use. He arranged a full week of contacts for me and introduced me to several FRS staff. I met with staff who oversaw different programmatic aspects such as farm safety, technology, and fencing as well as managers for two regional FRS offices.

During my weeklong stay, I learned how the service is implemented and managed. I learned about their training programs and met relief workers, known as “operators”. I also interacted with Irish farmers who are members of the cooperative and use the service.

On my second day, I met with FRS Regional Director, Kate Fogerty. She brought me on visits to nearby dairy farms and a beef operation. I met a FRS operator who was hired to manage the dairy farm. Back at the office, she explained how the FRS operators are recruited, evaluated, keep records of their work and get paid. All paperwork recording the hours worked by the operator was triple checked for accuracy (by the operator, the farmer, and the FRS staff member). Most of the FRS operators are young men from farms. However, more women are being recruited as operators as the labor market has tightened. Two specific types

of people currently being recruited by FRS as operators included housewives who may have 2-4 hours of time each day for calf rearing as well as young adults from mainland Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand as milkers. In the afternoon, FRS employee, Pdraig, brought me to Gurteen College <https://gurteencollege.ie/>, a private agricultural college at which a brand new milking parlor was recently constructed. The FRS depends on agricultural colleges as a source for many of the FRS operators.

My third day in Ireland included a drive back to Dublin with FRS Farm Safety Specialist, Jim Dockery. We participated in a morning-long meeting of a national committee on farm safety. I made contacts there with Teagasc personnel. Teagasc is the national agency for agricultural research and education in Ireland <https://www.teagasc.ie/>

My next days included traveling to Castleisland, County Kerry where I met up with FRS Regional Director, John Brosnan. John brought me to two dairy farms which use the FRS. He also brought me to the Institute of Technology Tralee at which the European Union’s Commissioner of Agriculture & Rural Development, Phil Hogan, announced Ireland’s role in agricultural engineering on an international scale. From Kerry, we traveled to Teagasc’s Moorepark <https://www.teagasc.ie/animals/dairy/moorepark/> in County Cork where we met with a researcher Páidí Kelly whose research involves farm labor. There were several commonalities of Dr. Kelly’s research and Maine’s farm labor situation.

I believe I accomplished my goals to learn as much as I could about the Farm Relief Service and to determine the feasibility of modeling such a service in Maine. Since returning to Maine, I have communicated with several of the people I met in Ireland. One result of my trip is the strong possibility of arranging a paid work experience on Irish dairy farms through the FRS for University of Maine students in 2020.

I am grateful to the University of Maine Cooperative Extension for allowing me to make this trip and gather this information and for funding support from the NACAA Educational Foundation. ☺



Richard Brzozowski with a dairy farm manager from FRS.

Ohio Sheep Producers Tour to Argentina

By: Mark Badertscher, OSU Extension Educator-Hardin County



Argentine agronomist interpreter, Marcos Casares, explains sheep production practices and marketing methods to Ohio producers.

Four Hardin County people joined an Ohio Sheep Improvement Association and Ohio Farm Bureau International Sheep and Agriculture Tour of Argentina in October 2019. (Badertscher was the only one to receive financial assistance from the NACAA Education Foundation.) Local sheep producers Dave Burkhardt, Nancy Wilcox, Madelyn Lowery, and OSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator Mark Badertscher joined a group of 21 sheep producers, sheep industry personnel, and both current and retired OSU Extension Educators on a two-week trip to Argentina to study sheep production methods and marketing techniques. In addition to touring sheep farms, the group also stopped at various other agricultural production sites and related industry visits, ranging from beef cattle operations, field crops, a huge livestock market, a fruit tree farm, an olive plantation with an olive oil processing facility, a vineyard and winery, along with several cultural tours.

Sheep farms visited on the trip included Estancia Esperanza in the middle of the Santa Cruz Province Patagonia steppe. This farm has a 4,000 head Merino commercial sheep flock and provided a border collie sheepdog demonstration for the group. Another sheep farm visited was the Monte



Close-up of fine wool on a Merino sheep.

Dinero Merino farm, which began to develop the Corino breed forty years ago, joining the best of the Corriedale, the Merino and the Poll Merino; having as a result, an animal with great wool that yet gives good meat. La Constancia, a small farm where three generations live on the property, struggling to keep the farm in the family that has had to diversify their production by farming corn, soybeans and wheat, in addition to running a Hampshire Down and a poultry operation rounded out the sheep farm visits on the tour.

Other agricultural production farms and industry visits while in Argentina included Liniers Livestock Market. Occupying 34 hectares within the Buenos Aires city limits, between 2-10 thousand head of cattle are sold at this location daily for processing in the slaughterhouses around the city for domestic consumption. The group visited El Desafío, a 280-hectare farm where soybean, corn, wheat, barley, oats, green peas, and some other crops are grown. This farm also leases land, planting about 1,000 hectares every year in addition to an Aberdeen Angus herd, selling the production as bulls and heifers to commercial ranchers. Bodegas Zuccardi vineyard and winery was a stop in the Mendoza Province, located in one of Argentina's most important wine regions, accounting for nearly two-thirds of the country's entire wine production. Vesta SH fruit farm near Vista Flores, in the Uco Valley, where they grow peaches, cherries and other fruits was another stop on the tour for the Ohio group. Annual rainfall in this region is about 12 inches, so all the agriculture is done with irrigation of water coming from ice melted in the high Andes mountains. Aceites Maguay, an olive plantation where they also process olive oil was included on the itinerary. The group took a tour through their olive trees and production houses to learn about the entire life cycle of the olive. Maguay's flagship product is their collection of brined olives, but their extra virgin olive oils are elegant, refined and worthy of equal recognition.

Cities visited on the tour included Buenos Aires, El Calafate, Río Gallegos, Pergamino, Melincue, Potrero de Los Funes, Mendoza, and Puerto Iguazú. Tourist sites visited included Perito Moreno Glacier in Los Glaciares National Park, Glaciarium Museum, Buenos Aires city tour, and a Tango show. Other tourist sites included Three Borders Point to look at the confluence of the rivers and the Paraguay and Brazilian coasts, penguin colonies located at the most southeast point of continental Argentina, bordering Chile and the Magellan Strait, and the Iguazú Falls National Park in a sub-tropical forest area to see Devil's Throat, the largest fall in the whole complex, which is approximately 4 miles long. While on the trip, part of the group took an excursion into Brazil to experience a South American musical show. 🇧🇷

Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) Deer Stewardship Certification Program

By: Jeff Carter, University of Vermont Extension Jeff.carter@uvm.edu

My NACAA Scholarship Program educational experience was a study of whitetail deer, their behaviors and relationship to our intentional habitat management and the population dynamics of both deer and people. Over a 10-week period in winter 2019/2020, I completed the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) Deer Steward Level 1 Certification. The on-line training involved a six-part learning series hosted on the Clemson University's Canvas learning system. This training provided a framework for the basic understanding I needed, to support my professional sabbatical leave starting June 2020 to study and write about the planting of wildlife food plots. The outcome has been that I received a QDMA Level 1 Certification and a deeper understanding on how to describe these complex habitat and population dynamics to others.

The QDMA Deer Steward Level 1 training included 52 recommended readings of QDMA articles, 20 recorded presentations and session quizzes.

- Session 1 – History, Biology, and Ecology
- Session 2 – Herd Management
- Session 3 – Current Concerns
- Session 4 – Habitat Management
- Session 5 – Hunter Management
- Session 6 – Herd Monitoring



Food plots can attract and hold deer in Vermont, adding to landowner enjoyment and hunter success.

The writers and speakers were very well prepared with research-based information. They provided over 20 hours of high-quality education and thought stimulation. I want to recognize these knowledgeable professionals who presented the training modules. They are: Kip Adams, QDMA's Director of Conservation; Joseph Hamilton, the founder of the QDMA and currently Senior Advisor; Dr. Craig A. Harper, Professor of Wildlife Management and the Extension Wildlife Specialist at the University of Tennessee; Dr. Karl V. Miller, the Wheatley Distinguished Professor of Deer Management at the University of Georgia; Brian P. Murphy, Chief Executive Officer of the QDMA; and Matthew D. Ross, Assistant Director of Conservation for QDMA.

Thanks to the NACAA scholarship, I was able to learn these QDM concepts and purchase some more advanced references on deer and habitat management. Unfortunately, I was not able to complete the QDMA Level 2 certification because the COVID-19 pandemic forced cancellation of the program scheduled during May, 2020 in Alabama. I hope the unspent funds will help support the next round of successful scholarship applicants this year.

Attending and completing the QDMA Deer Stewardship Certification program helped me gain a more comprehensive knowledge base for developing an education program for landowners in Vermont and New England. The final outcome of my planned efforts for Deer Steward Certification and UVM sabbatical leave will be a published state-specific guide for landowners and practitioners, A Field Practice Guide for Growing Successful Wildlife Food Plots in Vermont, to help private landowners protect and enhance natural resources including soil, water and wildlife. This work will also provide Extension support for emerging NRCS initiatives for expanding wildlife habitat improvement practices in Vermont.

I have been growing and talking to other people about food plots for deer and turkeys for over 30 years because it is fun, and I like to hunt. What I have learned from my NACAA Scholarship Program sponsored study has opened my eyes to a more holistic approach to deer habitat management that combines agriculture, forestry and recreation. This has inspired me to continue my studies to learn even more so I can help Vermont landowners experience fulfilling wildlife encounters with habitat improvements and food plots in agroforestry settings. 🍷

Farm Transition Planning in Italy

By: David Baker, Iowa State University

The future of farms and the next generation of farmers are determined today by the decisions made by the current farm family business owners. Who will operate the farm family business, who will own the assets, who will be the stewards of the farmland and how will rural communities be affected are just a few of the important questions that will shape the future of agriculture? These are the decisions that are being made not only in Iowa but throughout the world. And, as in Iowa, the decisions will create the farm family business and communities of the future. In 1999 Iowa State University Extension and Seale-Hayne Agricultural College, England created the FARMTRANSFERS international research project to find the answers to these and other important questions. The objectives of this effort were to use a common survey questionnaire to determine 1) is there career ladder for new entrants, 2) to identify the educational needs of the current farm family business owner operators and 3) to create a data base for researchers.

Since the creation of FARMTRANSFERS the survey has been conducted in England, Ireland, France, Poland, Germany, Switzerland, Australia, Japan and several states. More than twenty thousand farm family business owners and operators have completed the survey. The result is a longitudinal study of their estate plans, transition of management plans, retirement plans and the long-term strategic plan for the farm.

The Beginning Farmer Center at Iowa State University used the results of the 2001 and 2006 survey to create and update the Returning to the Farm seminar. Returning to the Farm is a four-day seminar that assists the participants in the development of their farm family business succession plan. Additional information on the Returning to the Farm seminar can be found on the Beginning Farmer Center webpage- www.extension.iastate.edu/bfc.

This farm succession research involved two interviews with two farms in the Tuscan area of Italy. The information gathered did not include a survey but will be helpful in future projects that may allow for a formal farm transfer survey to be completed for Italian agriculture in the future.

Italy is the third-largest economy in the euro-zone, with a GDP estimated at \$2.3 trillion and a per capita GDP of \$38,200. Being a net agricultural importer, most raw materials and ingredients are imported, as Italy's economic strength is in the processing and the manufacturing of goods, primarily in small and medium-sized family-owned firms. Italy exports mainly consumer products to

the United States, while the United States exports mostly bulk commodities to Italy. In 2018, U.S. agricultural, forest, and fish exports to Italy were \$1.4 billion, while U.S. imports from Italy were \$5 billion. The northern part of Italy produces primarily grains, soybeans, meat, and dairy products, while the south specializes in fruits, vegetables, olive oil, wine, and durum wheat. Even though much of its mountainous terrain is unsuitable for farming, approximately 4% of the population is employed in farming. Most farms are small, with the average size being eleven hectares (27.17 acres). The Italian food processing industry continues to be highly fragmented, and depends almost entirely on imports of raw materials, many of which come from other EU countries. Italy presents a success story in organic fruit and vegetable production. Italian consumers continue to prefer fresh products rather than canned or frozen. While Italian agriculture is in a leading position in terms of organic farming, sustainable agriculture and being at the forefront of biodiversity conservation; water scarcity, illegal workers and the role of women and combined ageing of its workforce remain pressing concerns.

The family farms visited included one known for balsamic vinegar and the other Chianti wine. Both farms were sole-proprietorship operations with immediate family members as well as nieces and nephews involved. Both operations would be considered small to medium size farms here in Iowa. A common theme heard during the interviews was that young people were choosing not to return to the agricultural area of Italy as they are simply not willing to work hard in the farmlands as their parents and grandparents had done. It is feared that the succession of farm operations will become more difficult due to the lack of young operators with training and experience. Understanding the similarities of farm families between Italy and United States will help in developing strategies for successful farm business succession. The opportunity to sit down and visit with farm owners in Italy allowed a first-hand look at the process they utilize for transferring their businesses. Family heritage and legacies of farmers is very apparent when visiting with the owners and the family members involved. 🍷



Photos from family farms visited

2019 International Master Gardener Conference “Penn Wood’s” Digging into Our Roots”

By: Debbie D. Dillion, North Carolina Horticulture Extension Agent, Monroe, NC 28112

Philadelphia is a hub for ornamental horticulture in the United States. Within short distances in all directions there are botanical gardens, arboretums, and research centers, so it was a great location for the 2019 International Master Gardener Conference.

I began the conference by participating in a pre-conference tour of the Urban Gardens of Philadelphia. Our tour visited several gardens across the city, mostly focused on food production.



Mural depicting the beginning of the Las Parcelas Garden.

Las Parcelas Garden, and five other gardens in the Norris Square Neighborhood, were created between 1980 and 2006 by the women of Grupo Motivos, led by co-founders Iris Brown and Tomasita Romero along with community residents. Each of the six gardens represents and embodies the diversity of the Puerto Rican culture and West African diasporas in Philadelphia. These gardens serve as venues for family and community gatherings, weddings, corporate retreats, music & theater performances, and provide a place to teach young people about the importance of connecting with the earth. Other gardens we visited included the Eastwick Community Garden Association, The Spring Gardens, and Glenwood Green Acres.

Each morning of the conference began with a Keynote Speaker. Kirk Brown, one of our Keynote Speakers in costume and character, taught us about John Bartram in his presentation, “John Bartram Lives”. Dr. David Gibby was another Keynote Speaker and I had the opportunity to meet him, shake his hand, and have my photo taken with him! His presentation, “The Roots of the Master Gardener Program”, discussed how his idea for training volunteers to help answer common seasonal horticulture questions led to the development of the Extension Master



Dr. David Gibby, father of Extension Master Gardener program & Debbie Dillion.

and I had the opportunity to meet him, shake his hand, and have my photo taken with him! His presentation, “The Roots of the Master Gardener Program”, discussed how his idea for training volunteers to help answer common seasonal horticulture questions led to the development of the Extension Master

Gardener volunteer program as we know it today. Other Keynote Speakers were Julie Moir-Messervy (Landscaping Ideas that Work), Marta McDowell (All the President’s Gardens), and Jessica Walliser (Butterfly Gardening: It’s not all about the Grown-ups).

After Keynote presentations, conference attendees had the option to participate in concurrent sessions, tours, field study days, or advanced certifications classes. I chose to attend tours and field study days to visit and learn about places I had never been. All were wonderful opportunities to learn.

I attended the tour, Quaker Roots: Tyler Arboretum & Scott Arboretum - Our tour began at the Tyler Arboretum where we learned how the Arboretum got started and evolved from the time Thomas Minshall, an English Quaker, purchased the property in 1681 from William



Amphitheater at Scott Arboretum, Swarthmore College campus.

Penn. Between 1681 and 1944, the property was owned by eight generations of the same Minshall/Painter/Tyler family. Until 1944, it was a working farm and served as a summer residence for the Tyler family. The Arboretum itself began as the private collection of two brothers, Jacob and Minshall Painter. The brothers were fascinated by the popular 19th century study of natural history. During their lifetimes, they managed to amass large collections of dried plants, rocks, and other specimens. They even constructed a fire-proof building to house their research and collections. In 1825, the brothers set aside some of their land to begin the systematic planting of more than 1,000 varieties of trees and shrubs. Laura Tyler, a direct descendant of Thomas Minshall, bequeathed the property in 1944 to a board of Trustees that had been established to direct and oversee the land as an arboretum. Dr. John Casper Wister, was hired as the Arboretum’s first director and was considered by many to be one of the great American horticultural figures of the 20th century. Dr. Wister built upon the Painter legacy, creating extensive collections including representing conifers, magnolias, lilacs, hollies, narcissus, peonies and rhododendrons. Tyler Arboretum is celebrating its 75th year as a public arboretum in 2019.

The Scott Arboretum is located on the campus of Swarthmore College, just 11 miles from Philadelphia. The Arboretum is a living memorial to Arthur Hoyt Scott, 1895 Swarthmore graduate, and was started and funded by his wife Edith Wilder Scott in 1929.

Over 300 acres makeup the College landscape and provide a display of the best ornamental plants recommended for Delaware Valley gardens. There are over 4,000 different kinds of plants grown on the campus, selected for their outstanding ornamental qualities, ease of maintenance, and resistance to disease. Major plant collections include: flowering cherries, crabapples, hollies, lilacs, magnolias, tree peonies, rhododendrons, hydrangeas, conifers, vines, summer flowering shrubs, viburnums, and witchhazels. Mature trees planted in the late 1800s and early 1900s dominate the landscape. Many of these trees were planted to commemorate a specific date or occasion such as Founders Day, the anniversary of the founding of Swarthmore College. Graduating classes from early years carried on the tradition of planting trees as a gift to the college. The Scott Arboretum and Swarthmore College host both a Perennial Plant Conference and a Woody Plant Conference annually.

On Tuesday, I attended the Field Study Tour of the Southeast Area Research Extension Center, where we were treated to information on research related to barley (research for breweries), no-till production, cucumber, pepper, edamame, industrial hemp, and flower trials. After a wagon ride to view ongoing field research, we were split into two groups, one group for a walking tour of the flower trials and the second group for a vegetable intensive workshop on signs/symptoms and the thought process for diagnosis. We looked at insect, disease, and abiotic damage - don't just assume you know what the problem is, go through the process, ask questions (lots of questions!), often there is more than one problem happening at the same time.

Field Study Day at the Morris Arboretum. The Morris Arboretum began when siblings, John and Lydia Morris built a summer home, they called Compton, on the site in 1887. They were heirs to the I. P. Morris Company, an iron manufacturing business. Compton became the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania when Lydia passed away in 1932. Currently the arboretum has more than 2500 types of plants from temperate areas of North America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. Some plants date back to John and Lydia's time at Compton. Important plant collections include conifers, hollies, magnolias, oaks, maples, roses, flowering cherries, witchhazels, and a significant Asian collection. After a tour of the garden, the group learned about common insect and disease problems on ornamentals from Pennsylvania State University Extension Educators.

The Barnes Foundation Arboretum is the legacy of Laura Leggett Barnes. In 1922, when Laura and her husband, Dr. Albert C. Barnes bought the property, it already housed a collection of specimen trees that its previous owner, Captain Joseph Lapsley Wilson, had begun to assemble in the 1880s. The site became the home of the Barnes Foundation, and Wilson stayed on as the first director of its arboretum. While Dr. Barnes concentrated on collecting art, Laura devoted herself to the arboretum. She founded a horticulture school in 1940 that today offers a 3-year

certificate program at Saint Joseph's University. The arboretum has more than 2500 varieties of woody and herbaceous plants with the peony and lilac collections (dating from the early 1900s) serving as important genetic resources for conservation and study. John Fogg, a longtime instructor at the horticulture school, started an herbarium in 1968 and the collection contains more than 10,000 specimens used to supplement teaching and research. After our tour of the garden we participated in two lectures: Growing Small Fruit and Nursery Grown Production of Trees.

I also participated in the poster session where Extension Agents, Extension Specialists, Master Gardener Coordinators, and Volunteers highlighted their programming and research efforts. My poster was titled, Weed Identification & Management Workshop for North Carolina Extension Master GardenerSM Volunteers.

To end the conference, I attended a post-conference tour to Fookhook Farm/Burpee Trial Gardens and to the Delaware Valley University vegetable breeding program.

In 1888, W. Atlee Burpee purchased several hundred acres of farmland in Bucks County, Pennsylvania to be the home of his burgeoning seed company. The first Burpee catalog was compiled in his home on the property.



Burpee Seed Company Truck.

In the present day, dozens of new vegetables, annuals, and perennials are grown, tested, and evaluated on a sixty-acre test farm and network of gardens to guarantee Burpee's high standards of quality. This is the birthplace of some culinary favorites such as 'Golden Bantam', the first yellow sweet corn; 'Big Boy' tomato; 'Iceberg' lettuce; 'Fordhook' lima bean; and ornamental innovations such as the double-flowered rudbeckia daisy, 'Gloriosa'; 'African Queen', the first yellow garden impatiens and pure white marigolds. The property includes extensive display gardens that showcase perennials, trees, and shrubs.

We finished up the day with a trip literally across the road to visit Delaware Valley University and learn about their vegetable breeding program. They are getting students interested in vegetable breeding using hot peppers. They are working on a project to breed and develop the hottest pepper yet and take away that title from Virginia Tech!

This was a wonderful opportunity to see agriculture and horticulture in a different region of the country and to network with volunteers and agents from across the United States and world. I appreciate the support and thank you for the NACAA Educational Scholarship to attend the 2019 International Master Gardener Conference. ☺

District 5 Texas County Agricultural Agent Association - Georgia Professional Development Tour

By: Cary Sims, County Extension Agent, Angelina County, TX

May 5-10, 2019

In May 2019, 8 members of the NACAA were able to travel to Georgia and visit a number of production and research sites across the state. The group flew in on Sunday, May 5 to Atlanta and traveled to the Southern Woods Plantation to stay the night. On Monday morning, May 6, we were greeted during breakfast by the local County Extension Agent. He shared how the Georgia Extension program was organized and reached constituents in his county and surrounding counties. Later that morning the group received a tour of the plantations business operation. The hosts were apologetic that they were not in the busy time of the season. Southern Woods Plantation hosts guests from Oct thru March annually for the sole purpose of hunting quail. All land management practices are conducted with the intent of providing the customer a great time and chance of harvesting quail. Quail populations are not developed nor managed. The quail are purchased from a couple of out of state vendors and released for harvest. The quail vendors are located in Alabama and Florida. The land holdings of Southern Woods Plantation are timber. The

management of the timber is spaced much too wide for traditional silviculture practices. Any true forester would be appalled with the spacing per acre. This very wide spacing is solely for the benefit of the customers as they dismount the trailer they are riding to easily follow the dogs and shoot. One unique management tool that is the intense prescribed burning program. Again this is for the sole benefit of the customers to increase ease of shooting, yet enhances the ecosystem dramatically. They'll burn every acre every 2 or 3 years. The grasses and forbs are kept to more of a native state that, while creating an open understory for ease of shooting, greatly benefits wildlife.

Later that same day, our group travelled to Generation Farms to tour their organic fruit and vegetable production systems. The presenters explained how they were going thru a change in ownership. They spoke of investors and the goals they had of mainstreaming profitable, organic produce to a larger and larger audience. Interestingly, our original agenda clearly listed the tour on a Bill Gates Organic Farm. We had wondered if it was indeed backed by "the" Bill Gates that everyone knows as the technology billionaire. As we could find no direct link, we assumed there was indeed another person by the name of "Bill Gates". But as we asked the speakers and visited with local Extension personnel, it was apparent that there were indeed deep pockets backing this organic venture. When pressed, off to the side, it did seem that at least some funds came from a large benefactor. Generation Farms was able to hire top quality staff with worlds of experience and "go-get-em" but appeared more interested in learning and trying new things than profitability. If there was a sight that we should have pressed for more information regarding markets and profitability, this organic production would be the place.

After staying the night again at the Plantation, we travelled to visit with Dan Glenn at Deep Grass Graziers near Irvinville, GA. Dan was a self-described "English major that ended up with cattle". Dan inherited much of his operation from his father and grandfather. He took an interest in grass fed beef and has had a steep learning curve. We were able to walk over one of his pastures and look at his cattle. It was abundantly obvious that Dan did not come from a cattle or forage background and had a new, fresh approach to everything. He was working on beef genetics that clearly had to be easy going on nothing but a grass system without any supplemental protein inputs. Very small framed bulls were of the order. His grazing paddocks were, again, full of experimentation and learning. Trying to stay organic, Dan also allowed a good many weeds to choke out the existing forages. Some paddocks were quite devoid of available forages at a time of the year that our similar producers are absolutely flush with high



Texas educators at the Southern Woods Plantation

quality, grazable forages. He shared with us that he plans to plant okra as an experimental forage. When pressed where he heard that may be a good grazing option for cattle, he shared that an economist friend of his had suggested it. As Extension educators from a very similar environmental area, we know of so many other tried and true forages and it was hard to not try to correct him. All in all, it was a learning experience for our agents to visit with a producer that is trying to develop a niche market and experiment with new species in forage management. He was very proud to be able to share his story, his trials and the encouragement that he's received along the way. The remainder of Tuesday, the group toured the Andersonville Prison, the National POW Museum and the national cemetery there. It was a very sobering museum and historical site that is a valuable part of our nation's history.

Wednesday, May 8 was spent in Savannah. Some agents travelled just east of town to visit the Coastal Botanical Gardens while others toured the historical sights and gardens in the city of Savannah. I was a part of the Coastal Botanical Garden tour and thoroughly enjoyed the visit. The Gardens have a long history as a federal trial garden with a history of trying bamboo and several other species. My thoughts were that this facility was much like a "Ellis Island" of horticulture. Several new plant varieties came thru the garden. Today, the garden demonstrates a number of garden designs and miniature ecosystems that ranged from dry/southwest theme, a Mediterranean area, shade garden, a French par Terre, and of course a historical garden that showcased the original fruits, vegetables and economically important crops. I

found it fascinating that the very first crop that settlers in Savannah were required to grow were Mulberry trees for the production of silk! While this industry did not take off, the colony that was started eventually thrived in, what was then, a new world.

Our last full day was Thursday, May 9. We travelled to visit University of Georgia –Griffin Campus where we toured the Food Product Testing Lab and the Center for Urban Agriculture. The Food Product Testing Lab was definitely a fun and out of the norm tour for our group. The lab was there to assist individuals with getting new food products to market. At the simplest, they can test food products to find the nutritional facts that are required on the back panel of food packaging. Additionally, they also test products for their shelf life. We've seen the "best buy" dates on the packaging. These dates are determined by research facilities such as these. The process is that they leave several samples of the products in a variety of environmental conditions: refrigerated, room temperature, and warm locations. Next at the Griffin campus we toured the Center for Urban Agriculture. Their key focus areas are agent support, specialist support, urban water quality, industrial safety, school/community gardens, pollinator health, industry outreach and utilization of the latest technologies. One of the key areas that they were effectively reaching was green industry labor. Safety and conducted their job. Topics ranged from environmental stewardship to chainsaw safety. Publications were written in Spanish as well as English. Their on-site training and real world examples are a real part of their success and it was encouraging to see an Extension program make an impact. 🌱

Michigan Agents Teach at Israel Dairy School

By: Stan Moore, Phil Durst, Phil Kaatz - Michigan State University Extension

Dairy School: The Israeli Experience

The dairy industry in Israel boasts the highest per cow milk production in the world. For a relatively young industry, this is quite an accomplishment. This high level of production is even more impressive, recognizing that it is accomplished in a hot, arid environment.

Stan Moore, Phil Kaatz and Phil Durst were invited to participate as instructors in a training program titled: Dairy School: The Israeli Experience. The school, January 5- 11, 2020, was the first offering for participants from the United States. The school was specifically targeted to US dairy farmers and there were a total of 15 people that participated in the Israel Dairy School.

Alongside Israeli dairy specialists, the MSU Extension team taught and led discussions among the participants who enrolled. In total, the MSU team provided six unique sessions to participants, including Israel dairy producers and experts.



The Dead Sea. Kaatz photo.

The session topics provided by the MSU Extension team included:
Forage Management: Maximizing forage quality, Excellence in preservation, by Kaatz
Feed Management: LEAN Management Concepts, Forage Shrink, by Kaatz & Moore

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Employee management – the next frontier for dairy success, by Moore & Durst
 US dairy industry – What will it take for producers to survive? by Durst & Moore
 Health management of dairy cows – by Durst
 Calf Management – by Moore

During the school, we had the opportunity to stay in Degania, the first kibbutz, established in 1909. A kibbutz is a collective community in Israel that was traditionally based on agriculture. There are a number of kibbutzim (plural for kibbutz) in Israel, and these are communities where individuals voluntarily participate in a socialist type environment, sharing income and expenses. The kibbutzim host around half of the dairy cattle in Israel, and also have started a number of high-tech agriculture companies. One such company that we were able to visit was Afimilk. Afimilk is well known by U.S. dairy farmers as a technology leader in milk meters, heat detection, and in-line milk analyzers.

Five dairy farms were toured as part of the school including a robotic dairy, the only organic dairy in Israel, and the lowest elevation dairy in the world – located near the Dead Sea. In our dairy farm tours, we discovered that almost all farms utilize a compost pack system instead of freestalls. The downside of this system was a higher SCC than what we are able to achieve in Michigan on well cared for sand bedded freestalls. Where the Israel dairy farms shine is their ability to deal with heat stress in their arid environment. In addition to fans and sprinklers over the feed bunks, cows are also walked 5-7 times per day to “cooling” areas where cows are soaked by overhead water sprinklers and then returned to the housing areas. This extra level of cooling leads to an increase in feed intake and an increase in milk production. Reproduction levels are also maintained despite the summertime heat that is consistently over 100 F each day.



The Dead Sea marker. Kaatz photo

Consistency is one word that could be used for the Israel dairy industry. From a feed center that delivered a consistent total mixed ration to over 50 different herds, a veterinary association that services over 90% of the country’s farms, and a quota system for production. The Israeli dairy system leads to a relatively small difference between the highest and lowest milk/cow producing herds. Ninety-five percent of the land is owned by the government and leased to the producers. The vast majority of farms are under first generation management as well. All of these factors work together to provide a tremendous amount of data sharing, consistent and industry wide improvements, and a dairy system



An example of compost bedding. Kaatz photo.

that has garnered the interest of many other dairy producing countries.

The country of Israel and the Dairy School, The Israeli Experience would not be complete without recognizing the significant historical and religious settings of the nation. The school included visits to Galilee, Magdala, Nazareth, Caesarea, the Dead Sea, and Jerusalem. The visits included many ruins, churches, and traditional sites for important events in Christian, Jewish, and Palestinian history.

The Israeli dairy school experience is one that will impact the three of us in our Extension and personal lives for years to come. Lessons learned from this trip will be shared with

dairy producers throughout Michigan in programs and news releases. Friendships forged with dairy farmers and industry representatives that participated in this program, from across the U.S., will lead to future learning and teaching opportunities. We want to thank NACAA for making this professional development and teaching opportunity possible through the NACAA scholarship program. ☺



Kaatz, Durst, & Moore - Sea of Galilee. Kaatz photo.

2019 International Master Gardener Conference in Valley Forge, PA - June 2019

By: Hanna Smith, Horticulture Agent, North Carolina State University

With the help of the NACAA scholarship, I was able to attend the 2019 International Master Gardener Conference in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. This biennial conference's theme this year was Penn's Woods: Digging into Our Roots, and it was all about recognizing the regions rich history of horticulture. As a horticulture agent with master gardener responsibilities, I was drawn to this conference because it is geared solely to horticulture and Master Gardeners, but on a personal level, I was also excited about the fact that this conference takes place in an area with public gardens galore, including Longwood Gardens, a garden on the bucket list of almost every gardener.

The first day of the conference started with a state and county master gardener coordinator meeting. This was the perfect way to kick off the conference because it allowed me to meet and interact with several of the educators/agents and volunteer coordinators, many of which I would see throughout the conference, and allowed me to be able to find a friendly face in the sea of people. It was also a very productive meeting because we talked about the Extension Master Gardener National Committee (EMG-NC), who they are, what they do, and was able to give input on the strategic plan so that the committee can continue improving and helping agents. Even though this was one of the very first events I attended I felt that this was one of the most helpful in terms of networking and learning more about the EMG-NC.

The evening of the first day was the welcome reception, and the theme of the welcome reception was a Taste of Pennsylvania. Since we had just finished up the state and county coordinators meeting, I walked with several of the new friends that I met to the reception. The reception was filled with food and drink made in Pennsylvania or made famous by Pennsylvania, and it was a joke of the night that Pennsylvanians love their carbs. Sandwiches, pierogis, and pretzels, along with many other dishes and mouthwatering desserts filled tables throughout the room. No one left that event hungry!

The next day began the educational sessions, and the first one that I attended was called 'Trees... Below Ground', and focused on tree roots and how many of the challenges facing urban trees are below ground and are a result of the soils they are attempting to live in. As an agent in an urban county, this was a very informational session for me to attend as many of the problems I encounter when working with clients all stem from problems with the soil.

That afternoon, I attended 2 sessions really focusing on training techniques for Master Gardeners. The first one was about a different model for Master Gardener training. Instead of a lecture-

style 12-14-week course, an Agent in Virginia has online training modules his students complete, then they attend in person, hands-on activities. This is an idea that I had been thinking about recently so it was great to be able to hear someone talk about how they did it and their experience with it. The other afternoon session focused on building presentation skills in Master Gardeners so that they are more comfortable with public speaking and teaching. As the only horticulture agent in a county with over 500,000 people, I was really interested in learning how others nurture those skills in their volunteers, and the presentation I listened to really gave me some ideas of ways I can incorporate small speaking segments in my training so that they get more comfortable over time presenting in front of an audience.

The next day of the conference was a big one for me and for the Master Gardeners in my county. One of the programs that is a part of the International Master Gardener Conference is the Search for Excellence awards. There are many different categories, and in most states, local/county Master Gardener programs apply for Search for Excellence awards on the state level, and if they win

first on the state level it then goes to the International level to be judged. The Master Gardeners in Guilford County won first place in the International Search for Excellence – Demonstration Gardens category and I had the honor of accepting the award during the breakfast on Wednesday. The icing on the cake for me was that I was able to accept the award from David Gibby, the founder of the Master Gardener program. Now with over 95,000 Master Gardeners across the world, Mr. Gibby had no clue the impact his idea would have when he came up with the plan to train volunteers to answer the questions of backyard gardeners in 1972.

Wednesday after breakfast and Thursday was devoted to garden tours, and was arguably one of the things that I was most excited about. Chanticleer Gardens and Longwood Gardens were the two on my schedule that I was going to visit, with Chanticleer up first. I had heard that it was a favorite of some, even more so than Longwood, so I was excited to see what the



Accepting the First Place Search for Excellence - Demonstration Gardens category from David Gibby.

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States Night Out!

buzz was about. It's smaller than Longwood, and it doesn't have as much of a heavy focus on the arts, but it packs a huge punch. I was pleasantly surprised at how intensively planted the garden was and how it had very few natural or negative spaces. It was a joy to visit, and the cloud cover of the day made it even more enjoyable. After we got back to the hotel it was time for our own "states night out" that our State Master Gardener Coordinator organized. We met at a restaurant onsite, and it was wonderful to be able to meet all the other Master Gardeners and Agents from North Carolina that travelled to Pennsylvania. It ended up being around 25 people, which was a great showing for us.

The entire day Thursday was devoted to touring Longwood Gardens and my excitement was palpable. My graduate school program in Public Gardens Management was modeled after Longwood's program but I never got to visit when I was in school, so this opportunity was really appreciated. After a brief presentation by the Vice Director of Landscape Design, we were taken on an hour long tour through the conservatories. After that tour concluded we then broke out into different sessions. I was able to go behind the scenes and see their plant breeding program and tour some of their greenhouses where they grow many of the plants that are used in the gardens. That was certainly a treat to be



Longwood Gardens



Poster Session

able to see the beginnings of the new plant collections. I then had the chance to wander throughout the gardens on my own and I was on a mission to make sure that I saw all the different sections of the garden, from the trial garden to the Italian garden. It was worth the wait to be able to see Longwood and it was everything that I had hoped that it would be.

After the tour of Longwood Gardens, I went back to the convention center so that I could attend the poster session, where I was presenting a poster on "A New Model for Basic EMG Training." I actually changed up the way that I teach the Master Gardener program in my county this past year so I decided to submit a poster to hopefully give ideas to others who are looking to do something similar. There was a lot of great discussions during the poster session and I was excited to be able to share what I had done and how the new model was successful for me.

Without the scholarship from the NACAA, I would not have been able to attend the International Master Gardener Conference and I am so appreciative for the opportunity to go as I learned so much and also made so many new connections across the country, which I know will help me in the future. ☺

Kentucky Agents Participate in Montana Ag Study Tour - July 2019

By: Kevin Lyons, University of Kentucky Extension

Six agents from the Mammoth Cave sub-district in Kentucky had been wanting to do a study tour in Montana for several years. The NACAA Scholarship Committee awarded us the funds to make this happen. It was a trip full of learning and memories that brought us all closer together.

On Day 1, our group flew into Bozeman, MT and toured the Montana State University Plant Growth Center with David Baumbauer, then drove to our basecamp in Livingston, MT.



Visiting the Horticulture Farm

Day 2 was an opportunity to discover the beauty of Yellowstone National Park. Agents learned about various geological formations and the environmental concerns at Mammoth Hot Springs, Firehole Canyon Drive, Fountain Paint Pots, and Old Faithful.

Tracy Mosley, ANR Agent in Livingston MT, had arranged ranch tours for Day 3. She joined us as we toured and was an excellent host. We traveled to northern Park County in the Shields Valley area where we visited two ranches in Wilsall. The first stop was Muddy Creek Ranch. They raise lowline Aberdeen Angus cattle for direct marketing to local restaurants. We learned about how they maximize their grazing system and hay production in a short growing season. Water rights were a major concern. The second stop was Johnstone Ranch to hear about their forage production and challenges with irrigation. That afternoon we traveled to southern Park County in the Paradise Valley area. We visited Warfield Ranch and learned about the wildlife challenges ranchers face near Yellowstone as well as the governmental regulations in the area.



Muddy Creek Ranch

Day 4 was an opportunity to explore the east side of Yellowstone National Park. In the Lamar Valley, agents were able to view an abundance of buffalo. We also saw elk, bear, and pronghorns.

Later we visited the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone and witnessed the beauty of the Upper and Lower Falls. The amazing beauty of Yellowstone was inspiring to each one of us. It gave each one of us a greater appreciation for our environment and the blessings we all enjoy. Day 5 was spent traveling home.

Newer agents are not as familiar with how other State Extension Services operate. Meeting the local county agent in Montana was a great way to learn. Being able to hear her firsthand knowledge about the different operations we visited was excellent. The Montana State University horticulture farm enlightened us about the short growing season and its effects on different aspects of the operation. The variety of horticultural crops, high tunnels usage, short growing season, minimal insect and disease problems, demand for locally grown products, and delivery distance all combine for a unique situation. The horticulture research station tour made us deeply consider the importance of growing our own food.

The ranch tours showed us the unique challenges they face: long winters and short growing season, predatory and competitive wildlife issues, water right disputes, crop/pasture/hay decisions. It was very interesting



Learning about Montana forage options

that almost no corn is grown for grain and cattle are feed mainly forages. We were impressed by the adaptability of the ranchers. They can produce beef and forages in harsh environment. It was very impressive to witness their animal husbandry practices. We were fascinated with irrigation of forage crops. In Kentucky, we take our availability of water for granted.

Kentucky Extension Agents really appreciate the NACAA scholarship. It gave us an opportunity to travel across the country to Montana for a wonderful horticulture and agricultural education tour. It will help strengthen local programming, increase networking and was a great teambuilding opportunity for the group. 🌱

Reflections from years in Extension: *Perspectives of experience: Don't wait for it!*

We can all imagine the email that comes one day inviting us to speak at a conference in a location that we have wanted to visit. “Yes! My value, my expertise, has been recognized and now I will have my chance!” No doubt it is a gratifying time. I’ve had those emails and so, too, have you (or you will). Someone read what I wrote, or heard me speak in another meeting and would like me to speak to their group. And so, you can travel to a new place and speak to people you have never addressed before.

But if I could count the times that has happened, it isn’t as often as I would have liked. The truth is, waiting by the phone for speaking engagements or for anything except robocalls is a poor use of time. I prefer to be proactive and I recommend it to you.

Let me relate to you the shameless ways that I have received invitations to speak, or had articles published or had the advantage of some opportunity – in short, I’ve asked for it.

Several years ago, two of my Michigan State University Extension colleagues and I put our heads together during the NACAA AM/PIC and talked about how we might use an NACAA Scholarship. Where would we want to go to learn and teach about dairy? It turned out that we all had some connection with Ukraine and we decided to try that. Now, all we needed was a professional reason to go.

I searched the web and found out about an annual dairy congress (conference) there. Having learned that, the next step was obvious – offer ourselves as speakers! We, that is you and I, all have knowledge that we have gained through experience and education. We have perspectives that are valuable to others. These are worth sharing for the benefit of others. So, we, my colleagues and I, offered talk titles and a description of those proposed talks to the director.

It didn’t happen all at once. We started with emails, many in fact. But somehow it wasn’t quite coming together, in fact, it almost didn’t come to fruition at all. After one frustrating phone conversation in which I was not understanding his heavily-accented English and he wasn’t understanding mine, I decided that I needed to speak to him in person since he happened to be in Madison, Wisconsin, touring with a group of farmers.

Stan Moore and I received permission and drove the next day to Madison to meet with Andriy and his group over dinner. Speaking face-to-face we could understand each other and gauge one another. That meeting cemented the deal and we had an invitation to speak at the 2014 Ukrainian Dairy Congress.

While that in itself is another story, the point is that we were invited after we asked to be. This past January, we also received an invitation to be guest speakers, in much the same manner as before, this time in Israel with the Israeli Dairy School.

These unique experiences have come because we sought them out, not because we waited by the phone. One time I was asked by faculty at the University of Minnesota about my interest in speaking at a dairy conference in China. I developed four possible talks that I could offer to show them that I was versatile and could be a valuable team member. My intention was that they could pick the topics they most wanted me to speak about. The answer came back; sure, plan to speak on all four!

The point is, be specific in what you can offer. Of course, it takes some time to feel confident enough to take on four different topics. If you are just starting out, take a deep dive into one topic that is really important to your clients. More topics and invitations will follow as you build your base of expertise.

In addition to speaking, when I write articles, if I have something that I really like and think that it would fit a certain publication, I will often send an email and say; “here’s an article that I think may be of interest to your readers”. In that way, I have been published in national and international dairy publications. I simply took the initiative to offer my work to a larger audience. Several years ago, I proposed to Hoard’s Dairyman magazine a year-long series of articles for each issue (20) that I would write or edit. They accepted and then the work began.

In fact, this series of articles in The County Agent magazine began with an idea that I pitched to Scott Hawbaker and his acceptance of it. NACAA offers you opportunities each year to expand your reach. You may submit an abstract to present a talk during one of the professional improvement seminar sessions. Take advantage of these to share what you are doing. In addition, As I have used NACAA scholarships to go to Ukraine and Israel, take advantage of this great resource to further opportunities that you want to seize.

Make sure that you take every opportunity locally as well. When I go to a meeting of dairy farmers, I usually ask the leader for an opportunity to say something. While they may tell me “keep it short”, they usually provide me time on the agenda.

That is what it comes down to; take the initiative, search for opportunities and work to seize them and then use them well. Believe me, not all my offers have been accepted, but as you

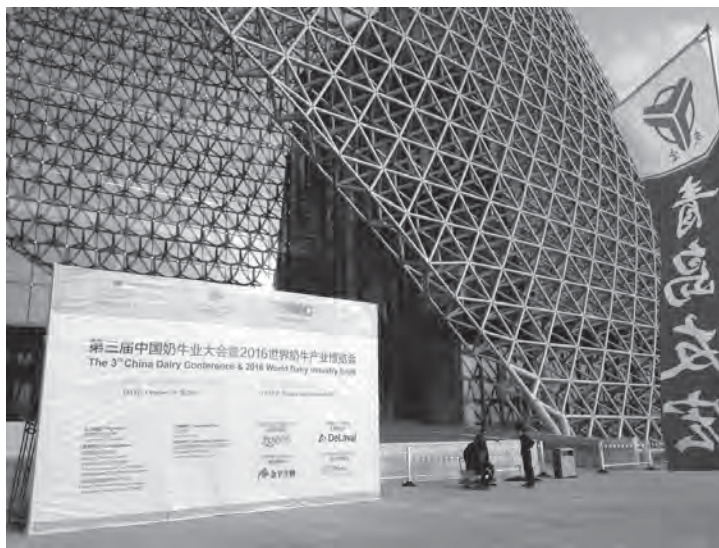
develop a reputation for excellence and for wisdom, more and more of your offers will be accepted gladly.

If you have been waiting by the phone, or waiting for that special golden email invitation, I want to encourage you to take not just the first step, but as many steps as are necessary to realize your dream. Share what you have learned. Share things of value. Share wisdom. And don't hesitate to offer it at a place you would like to visit!

Phil Durst

Michigan State University Extension

Sr. Educator – Dairy & Beef Cattle Health and Production



Partnership Equips Lenders and Stakeholders to Support Distressed Farmers

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For readers of this publication, it is common knowledge that farmers are experiencing stressful times. A number of circumstances have generated ongoing stress for farmers; low commodity prices, rising debt, rising land prices, and extreme weather are all contributing factors. Most recently the COVID-19 situation is resulting in significant stress across all sectors of the economy, including farming. Over the past year, Michigan State University Extension

(MSU Extension) and the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (N C R C R D) partnered with the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), the National Farmers Union (NFU), and Farm Credit (FC) to provide farm stress trainings to affiliates associated with these organizations. The purpose of these trainings is to equip those who work with farmers with information and skills to better assist farmers experiencing distress.

For context, the latest data show that net farm income is just 50 percent of its peak in 2013 (USDA, 2020), and there is a growing risk of loan default for many farmers. These pressures may result in increased difficulty managing the stress and frustration associated with ongoing financial challenges. On average, farmers experience more psychological distress and depression than the general population, but



are less likely to seek help (Roy, et al., 2013). Chronic stress can have significant impacts on overall health and well-being, and may even reduce propensities to adopt new technology, products and policies, thereby impacting farm productivity (Hounsoume et al., 2006). Mental health conditions such as depression can also increase the likelihood of farm injury (Xiao et al., 2013). Stress can also have a detrimental effect on decision-making and cognitive functions such as working memory; under stress, it becomes more difficult to assess circumstances and consider options (Starcke and Brand, 2012). For all these reasons, providing assistance to a distressed farmer is helpful, not only to the farmer but to families, communities, and broader society. *continued on page 26*

Those who work with or encounter a distressed farmer face the challenge of effectively communicating with them, and when appropriate providing them with assistance and resources. In some cases, farmers may even display warning signs or express thoughts of suicide. In situations like this, having the knowledge and skills to effectively assist people in distress can save lives, even if we are not mental health providers. For most of us, our role in working with farmers is not to provide counselling assistance, but rather to offer a range of agricultural and business services. Because of our relationship with the farmer, we may be uniquely positioned to provide assistance and direct the farmer to helpful mental health resources. Importantly, training and education can greatly increase our capacity to help and serve distressed farmers.

The training developed in collaboration with AFBF, NFU, and FC was adapted from a curriculum MSU Extension and the NCRCRD created for personnel of United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA). This training contained two components, online and in-person. The online component offered information on mental/emotional health and physical safety, communicating with farmers experiencing stress, de-escalation of tense or aggressive interactions, developing a stronger connectivity to local mental health resource partners, and strengthening one's own mental and physical health. The in-person component focused on applying knowledge learned online through role-playing and discussions about realistic farmer interaction scenarios. The in-person training enabled participants to practice communication techniques, which is essential to increasing confidence and ability to provide assistance to a distressed farmer. The idea is straightforward. Consider a child who is learning to play music. While it is essential to listen to a music teacher explain how play music, the student most effectively learns when there is an opportunity to practice. The same is true for improving our ability to skillfully interact with distressed farmers. The ability to listen, express empathy, and ask

thoughtfully-crafted open-ended questions can be improved with both knowledge and practice.

Both trainings were based on the farm stress curriculum "Communicating with Farmers under Stress," which was developed by MSU Extension over the past several years. This training was originally designed to assist agricultural business personnel working with distressed farmers to understand the sources and signs of stress, use effective communication strategies, recognize the warning signs of suicide, reduce stigma associated with mental health concerns, and to connect farmers with mental health and other helpful resources. The training also offers research-based stress coping techniques. The approach is built on the notion that it is not just events and circumstances that cause stress, but also how we think and behave in reaction to such circumstances. With practice in reframing thoughts, it is possible to alter our emotional responses and reactions to those stressors. This training is now being offered by Extension at over 20 Land Grant Universities across the country.

Evaluations from all the trainings indicate significant improvements in understanding the impacts of stress, ability to recognize warning signs of depression, suicide and mental illness, and increased knowledge of where to send people for help. Evaluations also indicate a significant increase in confidence in working with and providing assistance to distressed farmers. Ninety-one percent of respondents indicated that the training was helpful or very helpful in improving ability to serve farmers experiencing stress. Pre- and post-evaluation comparisons indicated a 20% improvement in overall knowledge.

The farm stress curriculum represents an outstanding collaborative effort on the parts of MSU Extension, NCRCRD, FSA, AFBF, NFU, and FC to develop and provide training to those who regularly work with and interact with farmers. Building on this momentum, MSU Extension in partnership with University of Illinois Extension, is now preparing a new online farm stress course

which be available on June 15 at no cost to those who interact or work with farmers. The key objective of the new course is to better serve distressed farmers by providing farm stress training to a broad array of people who regularly interact with farmers, whether one is a family member, neighbor, or business associate. The trainings include videos, digital stories, and activities combined with other learning tools designed with best practices for adult learners. The new online training can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/ruralresilience>. For more information about this training or any of the trainings discussed in this article, please contact Eric Karbowski at 989-317-4079 or karbows8@msu.edu.

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Pesticide Stewardship Brochures



NACAA has partnered with Syngenta on eight general pesticide stewardship brochures and two flyers to assist with pesticide educational efforts. These brochures are not specific to any geography, target site, pest, product, or company. These brochures are available to NACAA members FREE of charge for your use in programming efforts. Enter the number of copies you are interested in next the specific brochure/flyer and submit to the address listed below. Your supply will be sent at no charge.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ___1) 50 Ways to Treat Your Pesticide - English edition | ___8) For Pesticide Mixers, Loaders, |
| ___2) 50 Ways to Treat Your Pesticide - Spanish edition | and Applicators - Some Things to Know About Personal |
| ___3) 50 Ways to Treat Your Pesticide - Aerial Applicator edition | Protective Equipment BEFORE You Handle a Pesticide |
| ___4) 50 Ways to Treat Your Pesticide - Pest Management | (English, 2 pages, 8 th gr. reading level) |
| Professional edition - <i>(for commercial, licensed or certified applicators</i> | ___9) For Pesticide Mixers, Loaders, and Applicators - Some |
| <i>and technicians under their supervision, for treating in and around</i> | Things to Know About Personal Protective Equipment |
| <i>structures)</i> | BEFORE You Handle a Pesticide (Spanish, 2-pages, 8 th gr. |
| ___5) The Value of Buffers for Pesticide Stewardship and Much More | reading level) |
| ___6) Insect Pollinators and Pesticide Product Stewardship | ___10) An Ounce of Prevention! Integrated Pest Management |
| ___7) Dress for Success! Some Things to Know About Personal | (IPM) for Schools and Child Care Facilities – <i>(discussing all</i> |
| Protective Equipment BEFORE You Handle a Pesticide | <i>aspects of IPM, including safe pesticide use)</i> |

Available Formats:

Quantities of the actual brochures that will be “well-used” can be ordered free of charge from carol.somody@syngenta.com by emailing this order form or a short note. No PO boxes, please! A copy of this form is also available at: <http://www.nacaa.com/countyagent/PesticideStewardship.php>

PDF versions of the brochures can be viewed or downloaded from the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship (PES) website at <http://pesticidestewardship.org/Pages/Resources.aspx> or from any of the partner websites. Any organization is also welcome to post these brochures on their own website.

Word versions of the brochures can be requested by any organization desiring to modify or extract content. E-mail carol.somody@syngenta.com to discuss logo swaps with or without content changes. Artwork and photos can be used if conditions of use are met. PowerPoint presentations to go with the brochures are also available upon request.

Pesticide educators are also welcome to use or adapt any content that appears directly on the PES website – it is not copyrighted. Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of pesticide safety and stewardship education!

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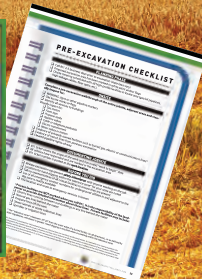
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