Rhode Island Farm Bureau Newsletter

Women in Ag Conference a Huge Success!

Alpine Country Club in Cranston was the setting for the third bi-annual Women in Ag Conference. Over 160 attendees joined together to listen, learn and engage with other women farmers on issues facing agriculture today. The day began with a welcome address by Senator V. Susan Sosnowski of North Kingstown and Chair of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee. A farmer herself, Senator Sosnowski has long been a fierce advocate of agriculture in Rhode Island.

The Keynote Speaker was Sherry Saylor, Chair of the National Women's Leadership Committee of American Farm Bureau and a member of the AFBF Board of Directors. Some of the topics discussed were livestock management ,breeding and nutrition, GAP Food Safety and HACCP Plans, soil health, loans and grants available to farmers, and marketing your products.

Round table discussions were held at the end of the day which gave the attendees an opportunity to speak with presenters whose sessions they missed. RI Beekeepers, Cut Flower management, RI Sheep Cooperative, Southside Community Land Trust, Small Engine Repair, Chain Saw Safety, Poulin Grain and worm casting were just some of the organizations and subjects that were covered.

We want to thank the generous sponsors who made the conference possible: Rhode Island Farm Bureau, NRCS, FSA, Central Nurseries, Travis Family Farm, Rural Development, URI, Farm Credit East, Monsanto, Farm Family, DEM, Trader Joe's, NOFA, Pezza Farm, Rhody Ag, The Reynolds Barn, Rhody Fresh, Fruit Hill Apiaries, Mills Coffee.

The next Women in Ag Conference will be held in 2018. We hope to bring you another exciting conference filled with pertinent and up to the minute information.

Volume 1, Issue 2 March 2016

Special points of interest:

- Women in Ag Conference
- Revised Bylaws Approved
- New Membership Benefits
- Julie Anna Potts to visit
- Wetlands Update
- 2016 Annual Meeting

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Revised Bylaws Approved

A meeting of regular members was held on Monday evening, March 21 at the Rhode Island Farm Bureau Office to review and vote on the newly revised bylaws. Approximately thirty members were in attend-

ance and the bylaws were approved with one small exception. A committee of interested members was formed and will meet soon to determine what would constitute behavior unbecoming a board member which would

result in their expulsion from the board of directors. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the newly revised bylaws, please contact the office and we will make them available to you either via mail or e-mail.

New Membership Benefits Now Available

American Farm Bureau has recently announced a new membership benefit. AFBF has partnered with Aetna Dental to provide discount dental care to members and their families. In addition, Aetna provides a discount prescription drug card that can be utilized to obtain discounts on prescriptions. Please note that this is NOT health insurance and Aetna does not make payments directly to healthcare service providers. It is a discount program and you are obligated to pay for all healthcare services at the time of service. You will receive discounts for healthcare services from those providers who have contracted with the plan. Actual discounts vary based on geographical location and the services provided. This benefit is absolutely free for members. To avail your-

self of this service and obtain a membership card, log into:

www.dentallogin.com

Use the password: AETNAFBRXRI

You can check on the website to see if your provider is a participant in the program.



Julie Anna Potts to Visit Rhode Island

Julie Anna Potts, Executive Vice President of American Farm Bureau Federation, is coming to Providence on Monday, April 18 to address our Board of Directors and see the highlights of our great state of Rhode Island.

While she's here, we will be visiting with Governor Raimondo's Deputy Chief of Staff, Eric Beane and taking a tour of our State House. We will introduce Julie Anna to Ken Avars and Senator V. Susan Sosnowski, two of Farm

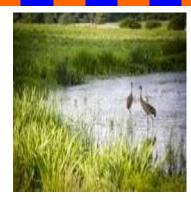


Bureau's most staunch agricultural advocates. We will be discussing the hurdles that confront farmers in Rhode Island. We hope to be able to give Ms. Potts a brief tour around the state a bit before the board meeting.

We are excited to have Julie Anna Potts visit Rhode Island and attend our Board Meeting.

Wetlands Bill Changes Still Unresolved

Changes to the Wetlands Bill have been proposed as a result of a request by builders and developers to have a streamlined process for permitting through DEM rather than having to deal with individual cities and towns. Consequently, the rule changes for wetlands, vernal pools and, most importantly, setbacks were drastically modified. Setbacks for standing water is proposed to be up to 200' from 50' and setbacks for running water doubled from 100' to 200'. Rhode Island Farm Bureau President Henry Wright and Executive Director Lyn Spinella have been meeting with DEM and Senator Sosnowski to have agricultural land exempted from these new guidelines.



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SAVE THE DATE: Thursday, November 17, 2016





The 63rd Rhode Island Farm Bureau Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 17. Once again, we will be meeting at the Alpine Country Club on Pippin Orchard Road in Cranston.

We hope everyone enjoyed the last meeting where we changed the food venue to a buffet. Attendees were very pleased with the choices offered so we are planning another buffet.

Zippy Duvall, the newly elected President of American Farm Bureau Federation, has indicated that he would like to come to our annual meeting, schedule permitting. Let's hope that happens.

Another Chance to Win a Commemorative Henry Rifle!

The Rhode Island Farm Bureau purchased two Commemorative American Farmer Henry Rifles when they became available. One of these stunning rifles was raffled off at last year's annual dinner meeting. We will once again be selling tickets for the second rifle which will be raffled off at the 2016 Annual Dinner Meeting at the Alpine Country Club.

Tickets are \$5 each or a book of 5 for \$20. Please call the office for tickets. 401-385-3339



Planning on Selling Development Rights? Let us Guide You.

Farmers are always looking for ways to succeed and stay viable. One of those avenues is the sale of development rights to the farm. While it may sound like a great idea, there are definitely some things that you should know before signing on the dotted line. Rhode Island Farm Bureau is planning to have a seminar on what to look for and how to design a contract that is best for you and the future of your farm.

We do not have a firm date for the seminar but notification will be sent out when the plans are finalized. Watch our Facebook page and our website for more information.

Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee Recruiting Interested Young Farmers Aged 18 to 35

YF&R is an amazing program focused on personal growth and leadership development in the areas of public speaking, media training, issue advocacy, business development, networking, service leadership and telling the story of agriculture. Farm Bureau's strength depends on its members' abilities to analyze agricultural issues and decide on solutions that best meet their needs.

The National YF&R Program offers programs and incentives for young farmers to advance their expertise and knowledge of agriculture through several programs:

 $\label{eq:chievement} \textbf{Award} \text{ highlights young FB members' efforts in production agriculture and leadership achievement.}$

The **Excellence in Agriculture Award** spotlights young FB members who are agricultural enthusiasts but have not earned a majority of their income from an owned production agriculture enterprise in the past three years.

There is also the **Partners in Agricultural Leadership (PAL) Program** which prepares its graduates to advocate for agriculture to the media, elected officials and consumers.

And, each year at the AFBF Annual Meeting, state finalists from around the country vie for the winning seat at the **Discussion Meet**. This meet is an activity designed to help active young farmer and rancher members build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems.

This group also engages in giving back to the community by hosting the **Harvest For All** program. The program activities including bringing awareness to the issue of hunger in local communities, it actively engages YF&R members and their communities in the fight to end hunger and it allows for partnership with other community leaders and organizations.

Not only does this program succeed in developing leaders, it also is an opportunity to educate others about the importance of agriculture. AFBF awards amazing prizes to the winners in each category: new Chevy Pickup Trucks, Case IH Tractors, Stihl tools and chainsaws as well as monetary prizes.

If you are in the required age group and are looking to share your experiences with other young farmers in Rhode Island, the next meeting of the RI YF&R Committee will be on Monday evening, April 25 at 6:30 p.m. at the RI Farm Bureau Office. Please join Chairman Josh Coulter and other YF&R members. Call the office at 401-385-3339 to let us know you will be coming. We want to make sure there is enough food for everyone. It's a great opportunity. Don't pass it up!



YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS

President Henry B. Wright III On the Move!

President Henry Wright was in Washington, D.C. in February for the American Farm Bureau Advocacy Conference. While there, President Wright met with a staffer from Senator Jack Reed's Office and a staffer from Senator Whitehouse's Office to discuss GMO labeling and milk for the summer school lunch program. It is Farm Bureau's position that if labeling is going to be required, then a nationwide standard should be set to accomplish that goal. Having 50 states determine their own labeling requirements would result in a marketing nightmare for producers in this country.

In March, President Wright was an invited guest to the first Board of Director's Meeting presided over by newly elected American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall. The meeting focused on the results of a survey done by Aimpoint. Brett Sciotto, President and CEO of Aimpoint, discussed his Membership Value Research Project results which was conducted to determine methods to make the Annual Convention more meaningful to the members.

American National/Farm Family Insurance held a meeting of their Advisory Board in April. President Wright flew down to Galveston, TX for that event. The group was given a tour of the facility in Texas and it was clear that American National/Farm Family is a strong company. New products that will be introduced to consumers in the very near future were discussed.



Rhode Island was the first state to reach membership quota in 2016. This is the second year in a row that Rhode Island has increased its membership and AFBF rewarded Rhode Island Farm Bureau.

Here is a photo of President Zippy Duvall and President Henry B. Wright III receiving his second Quota Jacket at the Advocacy Conference in Washington signifying that Rhode Island is on the move!



RHODE ISLAND FARM BUREAU PHOTO CONTEST

We are holding this contest to obtain usable and appropriate photos that accurately portray today's agriculture and safe practices of farmers and ranchers for future publications and promotions. All photos submitted must exemplify safe practices on the farm or ranch. Photos are being accepted in the following categories:

Technology > Farm Families > Farm Labor > Consumer Outreach

Photos will be judged by a Committee selected by President Wright. First Place will receive \$100, Second Place will receive \$50 and third Place will receive \$25.

All Photos become the property of Rhode Island Farm Bureau.

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Thank a farmer 3 times a day



Imagine If Trees Gave Off Wifi Signals, We Would Be Planting So Many Trees And We'd Probably Save The Planet Too.

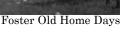
Too Bad They
Only Produce The
Oxygen We
Breathe.

It's Almost Time for the Fairs!! Plan ahead!













Swamp Yankee Days