

the

VOICE

of the American Agri-Woman



February/March 2007, Volume 34, Issue 2

We can do it together!

AAW presents LEAVEN Awards to four outstanding members



Gwen Mulkey

This year at AAW's annual convention in November the LEAVEN Award was given to four of American Agri-Women's most outstanding members:

Gwen Mulkey

of Oregon Women for Agriculture, Pat Leimbach of Ohio Agri-Women, Shirley Bartelt of Illinois Agri-Women, and Katie Edwards of Florida Agri-Women.

Gwen Mulkey was a city girl till she married her husband Gylan, who was logging at that time. The Mulkey family owned farmland and so Gylan purchased some property to carry on the farm, growing grass seed, wheat and meadowfoam. Gwen worked alongside her husband, driving tractor and harvest equipment. She also raised a small patch of strawberries and marketed them locally. They have three children.

Gwen was a founding member of OWA in 1969 and was one of OWA's beginning co-chairs for two years and a recycled county president several times. She was serving as OWA president at the time of her diagnosis in 2005.

From the beginning, because of the field burning issue, Gwen had been active in speaking out at the Oregon legislature. Her eagerness to do whatever it took to make the public aware of any issue has continued through the years. Even between chemotherapy sessions for her lung cancer, she tracked issues on her computer and alerted the rest of us on issues.

In 1986 Gwen suggested that

OWA have a barbecue as a fundraiser. Her family had a barbecue pit so she prevailed upon her husband to barbecue a pig, then organized the rest of the meal and the auction. That year OWA made \$4000 and each year since, the amount has increased so in 2006 1000 people attended and the group grossed over \$90,000.

Gwen's loyalty and dedication was to agriculture through AAW and OWA, but most of all to God, whom she served through her considerable work with several ministries at her church.

Gwen died of lung cancer at her home in Monmouth, Oregon, on January 18th, and will be greatly missed.

Pat Leimbach of Ohio Agri-Women grew up on a fruit farm in Ohio. She has been writing and speaking with homespun humor and unmistakable enthusiasm about everyday life in a small community. Besides authoring three books, she has appeared as a columnist in "Country Wife" magazine and the "Chronicle Telegram" newspaper.

Pat was invited to join the American Farm Foundation and has been inducted into the Ohio Ag Hall of Fame. She is a long time member of AAW and the best cheerleader for agriculture around.

Illinois Agri-Women's **Shirley Bartelt** began farming in the early 1980s with her father. When she married a fellow farmer that she had met at a county meeting, they began their joint effort to "survive the 80s." She has commented that they were not well informed and did not react appropriately to the Farm Bill of 1985. As a result, she felt it was vital that she become better informed and more

involved in the political process.

In 2006, Shirley is one of the few females who is a true farmer. She is a shining example of a modern professional farm woman. She is active in farm organizations and a working, contributing partner of her family's farm. She is a sharp business woman that has set up and kept the family books in a professional manner.

Shirley is not a joiner by nature; however, she began attending commodity marketing meetings sponsored by IAW and became hooked. After she became a member, she served as treasurer and president. She has been responsible for several members joining IAW and AAW.

Our last winner is a regular "ball of fire." **Katie Edwards** is the founder of Florida Agri-Women, its first president, is executive director of the Dade County Farm Bureau in Homestead, and a "voice for truth" for Miami-Dade County Growers, whom she represents as a lobbyist on all agriculture issues.

She was also the first woman from Florida elected to the national board of directors, serving as secretary

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President's Column



By Yvonne Erickson
AAW President

Spring is on our minds as we look forward to nature's renewing cycle. The eternal optimists, as I like to call people in ag industries, are busy planning for the next "best season." The best laid plans by our food and fiber producers will eventually reach the processors and then the consumers.

Celebrate National Ag Day on March 21 and National Ag Week March 19-24. We purposely don't schedule our meetings around this time as so many of you are telling the agricultural story to our consumers. School visits have become a major force of our efforts. It is especially critical to get research-based information to our teachers as well as to the students. Rural areas as well as the urban areas need to hear our agricultural stories. Also, remember that National Ag Week is about celebrating YOUR work . . . so treat yourself to something special as well.

Please consider attending the AAW Mid-Year Meeting this year. An article provides more details. This is the meeting that sets the positions or stances we choose to use for agricultural issues. If you have ideas or concerns, please contact the issues chairs or overall chair Karen Yost at start@americanagriwomen.org or 406-248-3631. The positions are on the website under updated positions. Our 'hot issues' for this past year have been: guest farm worker reform, Endangered Species Act reform, advancing renewable energy sources including US oil and gas exploration, and opposing eminent domain used for economic development and additional tax revenue purposes.

The Strategic Planning Committee met in early January to look to the future for AAW. We

looked at the "who" (who are our current and future members we intend to serve) and the "what" (what should we be doing for members now and beyond discussing positive and negative forces or trends). These forces should be kept in mind in formulating proposals as to how, who, when and probable costs of attempting to implement the 'whats' and specific goals that will be recommended, discussed, and then approved by the membership. We were reminded that planning is a perpetual process versus a periodic event. We look forward to discussion and membership direction with the plan during the Mid-Year meeting.

Remember to keep sharing your positive stories about our industry. It could be something planned, like an Ag in the Classroom presentation, or completely spontaneous, such as a comment in the grocery store or social event. Hope isn't the only thing that springs eternal . . . your devotion to sharing your life's work is one as well.

Yvonne

NEXT DEADLINE IS 4/15/07

Getting a report in to the AAW Voice is a great way to advertise your organization! Please send your articles to the editor at akovash@earthlink.net. If you aren't on this list and haven't sent an article in 2006, please feel free to send it now!

Affiliates:

- Missouri Cattle Women
- Texas Sheep & Goat Raisers Aux.
- American Hereford Women
- Washington State Dairy Women
- Michigan Peach Sponsors
- Idaho Women in Timber
- Kansas Agri-Women
- Washington Women for Agriculture
- California Women in Timber

Committees

- All Education Committees
- All Commodities Committees

Country Store, LEAVEN & Veritas Committees

- **Anyone who hasn't sent a report yet!**

American Agri-Women Executive Committee

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Articles and suggestions are always welcomed by the editor:

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Mid-Year Schedule & Registration

2007 AAW Mid-Year Meeting Agenda

Friday, March 30

- 8-11 a.m. Resource Center Board Meeting
11:15-12 Joint AAW Executive Committee/
Resource Center Board Meeting
Noon Lunch (included in registration)
1-3 p.m. Board of Directors Business Meeting (everyone invited)
Strategic Action Response Team (StART) reports
3-3:30 p.m. Break – Resource Center Silent Auction starts
3:30-5:30 StART committees break out to work on position
statements (all members encouraged to attend)
5:30-7:30 Affiliate Presidents' Meeting and Dinner (Dutch treat)
Evening Dinner on your own

Saturday, March 31

- 8:30-12 Strategic Plan Direction (all members)
Noon Lunch (included in registration)
1:15-3 p.m. Reconvene Business Meeting
2007 Minnesota Convention
Approve strategic plan direction
Review 2007 Policy Position revisions
3:30-5:30 p.m. Continue Policy Position review
Evening Open

Sunday, April 1

- 8:30 –9 a.m. Devotional Service
9-11 a.m. Business Meeting – Adopt 2007 Position Statements
11-1 Executive Meeting – or start quickly after meeting
adjourns

AAW MID-YEAR MEETING REGISTRATION

- _____ \$75 registration fee for full meeting
_____ Yes, lunch for Friday noon
_____ No, lunch for Friday noon
_____ \$50 registration fee Saturday only
_____ \$35 collegiate only full registration
_____ \$10 collegiate partial registration Saturday

Name _____

Affiliate _____

Address/City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

Mail to Kathy Rhoads, American Agri-Women, 26669 Kingston Pike, Circleville, OH 43113, e-mail treasurer@americanagriwomen.org and call 740-474-2028, ext. 6 for credit card registration information. Register online at <http://www.americanagriwomen.org>

Registration deadline is March 15, 2007. Late registration: add \$10.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION FOR MID-YEAR BY MARCH 8

This year we will be at the Embassy Suites Kansas City - International Airport, 7640 NW Tiffany Springs Parkway, Kansas City.

Rate of \$109 for a single or double room plus tax (totalling nearly \$128) and includes an evening Manager's Reception and a daily cooked-to-order breakfast.

Make reservations by March 8 by calling 1-800-362-2779 and asking for the American Agri-Women rate. All reservations must be cancelled 24 hours prior to arrival to avoid a fee.

SILENT AUCTION A TRADITION OF AAW MEETINGS

At the Mid-Year meeting AAW sponsors a silent auction to benefit the Resource Center. We accept items to auction from both affiliates and individuals, so if you have an item you would like to donate, please bring it to the meeting.

A CELEBRATION OF AGRICULTURE

National Ag Day is March 21, 2007 and National Ag Week is March 18-24, 2007. The 2007 National Ag Day materials are now available.

Because of your role in American agriculture, you know just how important our industry is to the world. Agriculture is responsible for providing food, fiber and shelter; the very essentials of life. But too few people recognize this vital contribution. That's what National Ag Day is all about, reminding Americans of the role of agriculture in their daily lives. Widespread national awareness efforts are planned to call attention to Ag Day 2007, but we need your help to bring this message to all of our communities!

To order Ag Day Materials, visit www.agday.org or Ag Day, 11020 King Street, Suite 205, Overland Park, KS 66210, Phone 913-491-6502.

And send photos of your ag day activities to the Voice!

AgJOBS legislation introduced

By Carol Chandler, Chair, Agriculture Labor

The Agricultural Jobs, Opportunity, Benefits, and Security Act (AgJOBS) was introduced in both houses of Congress on January 10 after seven years of hard work by advocates of a stable and reliable source of legal immigrant labor for the agriculture industry. The legislation would ease shortages of farm labor by allowing illegal immigrants to continue working in the U.S. agricultural sector while they gradually obtain full legal status.

Bipartisan support is evidenced by the sponsors of the bill in the Senate: Sens. Diane Feinstein (D-CA), Larry Craig (R-ID), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Mel Martinez (R-FL), and Barbara Boxer (D-CA). House sponsors are Reps. Howard Berman (D-CA) and Chris Cannon (R-UT).

Here are the major components of AgJOBS:

- H-2A guest worker program would be overhauled, making it easier for U.S. growers to bring in foreign workers.
- Undocumented workers could earn legal status if they show they have worked in U.S. agriculture for at least 150 days during the past two years.
- Workers would first get “blue cards”, giving them temporary legal residency. No more than 1.5 million cards would be given out over five years, at which time the program sunsets.
- Ag workers with blue cards could travel in and outside of the U.S. Their spouses and children could get blue cards, too, giving them the same travel freedom.
- To get green cards, blue card holders would have to work at least another three years in U.S. agriculture.
- Before applying for green cards, farmworkers would have to pay

a \$500 fine, show they have paid their taxes, and that they haven’t been convicted of any serious crime.

The legislation has been changed a bit from last year’s bill which gives advocates hope that it may have the support to allow passage in both houses of Congress. Supporters hope for a vote before Congress recesses in August, before the presidential politics really go into full swing.

Sources: Naples, Florida News and www.feinstein.senate.gov.

Kempthorne looking at ESA regulatory changes

From Arlene Kovash, ESA Chair

Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne said that the Bush administration is committed to making changes in the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and is actively considering regulatory changes.

Agency officials said they are still going through the 30,000 comments submitted through Interior’s “cooperative conservation” listening sessions held across the country last summer, to use those comments to make any potential regulatory changes.

Even without a wholesale rewrite of the law in Congress, changes to regulations could be significant.

These changes could include using better science which is more transparent and peer reviewed, streamlining the consultation process, and coordinating more fully between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fish Service. They could also ask for a more thorough economic analysis for critical habitat, clarify listing criteria, coordinate better with the states, define ambiguous terms, and demand public notice of lawsuits.

“They could actually make some pretty radical changes,” said

John Kostyack, an attorney with the National Wildlife Federation.

The 24 public meetings the administration is using to shape its response heard from landowners, environmentalists and others.

They testified on how to implement President Bush’s executive order, which called for Interior to “implement laws relating to the environment and natural resources in a manner that promotes cooperative conservation, with an emphasis on appropriate inclusion of local participation in federal decision making.”

And this breaking news: Sen. Crapo readies new ESA bill

Sen. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) plans to introduce legislation at the end of February that would give tax incentives to landowners for helping endangered species. [So could be done by the time you get this.]

Crapo and Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.) have been working on different variations of landowner incentives bills over the past year. The most recent version would provide tax credits for landowners who enhance habitat for endangered species and allow tax deductions for landowners who implement species recovery plans.

That bill had the chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee as cosponsors and won the praise of groups that have often been on opposite ends of the debate.

The new legislation would focus on tax incentives under the Finance Committee and may be slightly different from previous versions, Crapo said. He said it will have “broad bipartisan” support.

The bill would avoid changing the underlying law and keep the issue within the Finance Committee and might be the best chance for any work on ESA issues this year on Capitol Hill. Any legislation would need to move early, since the drive to deal with the ESA would likely die next fall during the political heat of presidential campaigns.

Livestock Committee has questions

By Wanda Kinney, Chair

First of all, I still cling to the fact that the COOL program was written into and passed in the 2002 farm bill, why aren't we getting the benefit of it? Somehow the emphasis of labeling all incoming beef into the USA has gotten swept under the rug and abandoned. Why are we making laws and not following them!

Two bills, S 3519 introduced by Senators Hatch R-UT Conrad D-ND, and Hohl D-WI and the companion bill by Rep. Blunt R-MO, and Rep. Pomeroy D-ND in the House known as the interstate meat inspection bill, will allow the interstate sales of state-inspected meat.

Currently, state-inspected packing plants are prohibited from selling meat across state lines. This means that imported beef inspected by foreign governments can be sold anywhere in the US more easily than state inspected beef. These bills change the current structure by allowing interstate sales of state inspected meat and poultry products. This gives smaller packing plants an incentive to expand, creating more competition for live cattle.

H.R. 503 which bans the slaughter of horses, has created many hard feelings of horse-raising stockmen. This is a very important issue. The groups behind this push to ban horse slaughter are deeply anti-livestock. They are working to ban horse slaughter, because horses evoke such deep emotions in so many people. Every year, tens of thousands of horses are abandoned and neglected. Blanket legislation like this that is based on emotion rather than fact actually poses a much greater risk of increasing the number of abandoned horses.

A mandatory national identification program controlled by a federal database is certainly not information that the government needs to have control of. Government mandates such as

this tend to be burdensome and very costly directed at the producer. Again, why mandate this legislation when we can't even get Country of Origin Labeling implemented which was in the "passed" farm bill?

We, US beef producers feel that there is consumer demand internationally for our beef products and we know that our products are safe. We must continue to push for markets to reopen to US beef, as well as work to open new markets and tear down trade barriers.

AAW blog site info

The blog site for AAW is a way to get information quickly to members. This tool is just getting started and hasn't been used much yet.

To post to this group, send email to AAW-Discussion-Group@googlegroups.com. You can visit this group at <http://groups.google.com/group/AAW-Discussion-Group?hl=en>.

LEAVEN Award winners, continued from page 1.

Katie also received the President's Award for her leadership and commitment to American Agri-Women.

"Katie is a remarkable woman whose positive attitude, organizational ability and hard work keep the importance of agriculture in the public eye," said Past President Carol Marx of Oregon who presented her award.

LEAVEN is an acronym for "Loyalty, Enthusiasm, Anticipatory, Valiant, Effectiveness, and Nurturing" and these four amazing women exhibits these qualities in many ways.

Fun Facts from the Ag Day web site

IT'S THE BEES KNEES

- A hive of **bees** flies over 55,000 miles to bring you one pound of honey. A honey bee can fly 15 miles per hour.
- **Honey bees** must tap two million flowers to make one pound of honey. Each worker honey bee makes 1/12th teaspoon of honey in its lifetime.
- **Honey bees** visit 50-100 flowers during one honey collecting trip.
- **Bees** have been producing honey from flowering plants for at least 10 million years! And maybe even as long as 20 million years!
- Flowers and other blossoming plants have nectaries that produce sugary nectar.
- **Worker bees** suck up the nectar and water and store it in a special honey stomach. When the stomach is full the bee returns to the hive and puts the nectar in an empty honeycomb. Natural chemicals from the bee's head glands and the evaporation of the water from the nectar change the nectar into honey.
- In one day a **honey bee** can fly 12 miles and pollinate up to 10,000 flowers.
- **Honey bee** workers must visit 2 million flowers to make one pound of honey.



Fresh produce industry shaken by illnesses caused by e. coli in spinach

By Mary Ann Graff, President, California Women for Agriculture

The fresh produce industry and its world-wide consumers were shaken by the unprecedented notification on September 14, 2006 by the Food and Drug Agency (FDA) advising consumers not to eat fresh spinach because of reported illness incidents due to E. coli O157:H7. Never before has an entire produce category been subjected to such an all encompassing food safety health advisory.

For more than 10 years the local agricultural industry has voluntarily followed Good Agricultural Practices (GAP's). However, this incident showed us all that our practices must be continually reviewed and updated. The California produce industry is currently working with regulators on new food safety regulations and procedures that will help improve the metrics and accountability within the food chain to further improve food safety. While these new regulations and procedures are an important first step, the industry must also extensively research the causes of food safety outbreaks so we can all have an understanding of how our growing practices must evolve in the coming years and decades to better assure the safety of our food supply.

It is critical that the entire food industry and regulators work together on a reasoned and scientifically-based assessment of produce food safety that truly encompasses all aspects of the food chain from farm to the consumer. Equally as important is that the food safety that begins on the farm must extend to all links in the supply chain. Retailers, food service, and regulators must all be held accountable and responsible for improved food safety protocols and regulations.

Clearly long term research into food safety issues like routes of infection, sources of contamination, viability of E.coli O157:H7 in the environment and many other scientific questions need immediate funding and strong support. This new research will involve a long term commitment

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and be an expensive process, but the industry is already working with researchers to develop realistic new answers.

Developing these new GAPs is an important first step, but much more work will need to follow in the coming years so that we can better understand the cause of all food safety concerns. The most important part of being a grower, handler or processor is providing safe and healthy food to our customers.

Our California agricultural industry is taking great steps to make sure your food is safe. We are working together to ensure food from California continues to be the safest food in the world. Thank you for supporting California agriculture.

Animal terrorist act passed

From Teresa Platt, Fur Commission USA

On November 13, the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (S.3880) sailed through the House of Representatives, after passing the Senate unanimously on Sept. 30.

An unprecedented coalition of more than 170 organizations has sent a strong message that America rejects eco-terrorists. The AETA will provide better tools to law enforcement to help catch them, and stiffer penalties for those convicted. It will protect fishermen, ranchers, retailers, researchers, farms, animal owners and caretakers, hunters and anglers, processing plants, property owners and anyone who does business with a company that finds itself in the sights of eco-terrorists. And putting more eco-terrorists in jail will help others too, from miners and loggers to recreationists.

For full information on the AETA, including lists of co-sponsors and supporters, visit Fur Commission USA's website at www.furcommission.com/resource/pressSFbills.htm

America's Heartland looking for women

America's Heartland is looking for stories about women that are the primary operators of ag enterprises. They are also looking for stories of unique family-owned agricultural businesses – so please send President Yvonne Erickson your ideas. Her contact information is on page 2.

They are planning an entire show on women, including our 2006 convention segment. We need some AAW members for the remaining segments of the show.

Florida Women active in AAW

As reported at the AAW Convention

Florida Agri-Women maintained a membership of 67 members statewide in its third year.

FAW was proud to have several members take part in activities hosted by AAW. FAW Founder, Katie Edwards just finished serving as AAW Secretary. She has represented FAW well on the national level, attending the 2005 AAW Fly-In in Washington DC. Katie also participated in the 2006 Syngenta Leadership Program and has served Chairwoman for 2006 Annual Meeting.

Other members active on the national level were FAW President Melissa Joiner and Secretary Jenn Helms who both also attended the 2005 AAW Annual Meeting in Monterey, California.

The Newsletter Committee was chaired this year by Sharon Spann and FAW started a Scholarship/Community Service committee. Led by Mrs. Dianne Spann, FAW was able to award two \$500 scholarships to women pursuing degrees in agriculture- one on the collegiate level and one on the high school level. Additionally FAW contributed to several agricultural organizations throughout the year as community service activities.

Sigma Alpha Sorority looking forward

By Jamie Foster, National President

During the last year, Sigma Alpha National Sorority has made many strides towards a strong future. The National Sorority has set goals for all pillars of the sorority (scholarship, leadership, philanthropy, and sisterhood) and is developing a long-term strategic plan to ensure these goals are reached. Our mission is to help our membership become leaders so that universities, communities, and companies are filled with women whom are competent to excel in the field of agriculture.

This was our second year to host Joint Leadership Seminars with Alpha Gamma Rho. The joining of our resources has helped to provide our members with excellent leadership training. This cooperative venture benefits both the women of Sigma Alpha and the men of Alpha Gamma Rho.

The Consortium for Collegiate Agriculture Organizations is a new venture that Sigma Alpha was involved in from the inception. This is a group of agriculture organizations for collegiate students that has joined together to increase visibility and resource sharing among all of our membership. The first convention was in Moline, IL, August 23 to 25, 2006, and was attended by Sigma Alpha Ex Officio, Stacie Buhr, whom was elected president of the CAC.

Currently we have 51 collegiate and 31 alumni chapters across the United States. New Chapters were Chartered at the University of Idaho, the University of Wisconsin – River Falls, Auburn University, and the University of Tennessee – Martin. Collegiate member numbers are 1,196 sisters, and total membership reached a landmark of over 6,000 in the database. You may reach us through our web-site at www.sigmalphalpha.org, or contact any of the officers listed in the directory.

ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE REPORT

By Eleanor Kiner, 2006 Animal Welfare Chair

The threat of animal activism continues to be in the news headlines. Well-funded national groups like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) who provides funding to the Animal Liberation Front (ALF); the Humane Society of the US (HSUS) and the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine; to name only a few, receive much attention and publicity with their faulty so-called facts and misguided thinking in their publicized propaganda.

In contrast, there are a multitude of organizations, universities, private businesses and government agencies that continue to base sound information on research, to promote its need, and to educate the public about the care and use of animals in our today's society. However, they do not receive the same amount of publicity as the animal activists do with their agendas.

One example of an organization that promotes animal welfare is the National Association for Biomedical Research (NABR). Founded in 1979, NABR is a non-profit that recognizes vital role of humane animal use in biomedical research, higher education and product safety testing. It provides the unified voice for the scientific community on legislative and regulatory matters affecting laboratory animal research. NABR's membership is comprised of over 300 public and private universities, medical and veterinary schools, teaching hospitals, voluntary health agencies, professional societies, pharmaceutical companies and other animal research-related firms.

The NABR Animal Law Section Web site attempts to bring together some of the most useful, informative aspect of the emerging field of animal law which includes guardian laws, pet trusts, pet custody disputes, veterinary malpractice, loss of companionship and infliction of emotional distress.

Also, it explores the impact on biomedical research since many animal rights activists and animal rights lawyers believe research on animals should be prohibited. It also provides up-to-date federal laws, policies, regulations and current congress issues.

Another example of a reliable source of information is the Foundation for Biomedical Research (FBR). As a sister organization of NABR, this foundation is the leading voice of scientific reason and medical progress in order to confront the increasing threats of activism, illegal incidents, celebrity activism, and quotes from Animal Extremists.

The Animal Agriculture Alliance is another organization that positively communicates reliable, science-based information on key agricultural topics ranging from animal welfare to biotechnology to environmental impacts. This Alliance provides a united voice for those involved in the animal agriculture and food industries as well as to a broad-based audience of consumers and media.

The above organizations also keep their members and the public informed of the most current issues through their many press releases, newsletters, links and web sites.

Presently, many animal rights issues are being addressed in state and national legislative sessions:

- Animal terrorism
- Animal care
- Animal use in research
- Horse slaughter
- Laws for identifying animals/pets as to having the same status as humans.

On November 13, the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (S.3880) passed by wide margins in the House of Representatives, after passing the Senate unanimously on Sept. 30, and was signed by President Bush.

News About Agriculture

Animal agriculture site provides great talking points on ag facts and myths

The soybean checkoff sponsors www.animalag.org, which is a complete source of state-specific data that offers valuable facts for addressing key animal agriculture issues.

Search www.animalag.org to find a variety of case studies, the truth about common myths and other useful tools. Learn how to build awareness and support of animal agriculture and the benefits it provides communities.

The soybean checkoff recognizes the direct impact animal agriculture has on economic growth. Livestock and poultry producers generate tax revenue, create jobs and consume local products.

As the number one domestic soybean meal customer, animal agriculture supports local economies by building more demand for soybeans and more profit opportunities for soybean farmers.

Here is an example from the web site:

ANIMAL AG MYTHS

MYTH: Farm animals are routinely raised on “factory farms,” confined in “crowded, unventilated cages and sheds.”

FACT: Animals are generally kept in barns and similar housing, with the exception of beef cattle, to protect the health and welfare of the animal. Housing protects animals from predators, disease, and bad weather or extreme climate. Housing also makes breeding and birth less stressful, protects young animals and makes it easier for farmers to care for both healthy and sick animals. Modern housing is well ventilated, warm, well-lighted, clean and scientifically designed for the specific needs of the animal, such as the regular availability of fresh water and a nutritionally balanced diet. For instance, a hog barn wouldn't be used for cows, any more than an adult would sleep in a child's crib. Housing is designed to allow the farmer to provide the best animal care.

MYTH: A vegetarian diet is healthier than a diet that includes meat, milk and eggs.

FACT: Both the federal government and the American Heart Association contend that a diet containing meat, milk and eggs follows their dietary guidelines. Health benefits can be derived by non-vegetarians who follow a prudent diet that

is low in fat, sodium, sugar and alcohol. Just as there are non-vegetarian diets that are unhealthy, so are there poorly planned vegetarian diets. The key to a healthy diet is moderation.

MYTH: Farm animals in “confinement” are prone to disease, forcing farmers to routinely use antibiotics, hormones and drugs to keep them alive. This jeopardizes animal and human health.

FACT: Animal scientists, veterinarians and on-farm experience show animals kept in housing are no more likely to get sick than animals kept in the open. In fact, they're generally healthier because they are protected. However, farm animals do sometimes get sick. To prevent illness and to ensure that an animal remains healthy all of its life, farmers will take preventive measures, including the use of animal health products. These products are generally given to the animal in a scientifically formulated feed best suited to the animal's needs. This is the simplest way to ensure each animal gets the care it needs. All animal health products are approved and regulated by the FDA.

MYTH: By eating less meat, Americans would improve the environ-

ment and free land and resources for the production of food crops rather than animal products that could be used to feed the hungry overseas.

FACT: The optimal use of natural resources involves use of both animals and plants to produce the nutrients that humans require. For example, about half the land area of the United States is strictly grazing land – not suitable for crop production. That land would be of no use as a food resource if it were not for ruminant (four-stomach), grazing livestock. The United States has more than enough cropland to grow both feed grains and food crops.

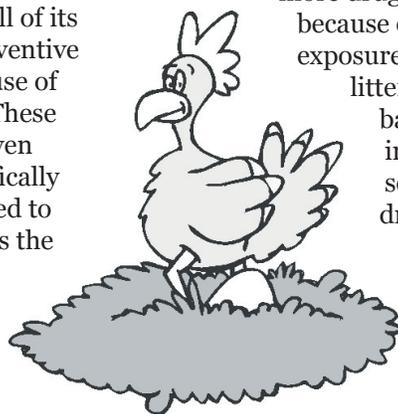
MYTH: Egg producers put hormones in the hen feed.

FACT: Growth hormones are never fed to pullets being grown for egg-laying or during the egg-laying period. The hens have a high-quality, nutritionally balanced diet. The feed is meticulously formulated with the proper nutrients to produce quality eggs and is perfectly balanced with ingredients made up mostly of corn, soybean meal, vitamins and minerals.

MYTH: Cage-free and free-range hens are healthier and require little or no drugs or medicines.

FACT: Cage-free and free-range hens require continuous medicated feed for some diseases and often require more drugs than caged hens because of their constant exposure and contact with litter and waste on barn floors. Hens in cage systems seldom require drugs and only receive medicines or drugs for therapeutic reasons. In fact, hens kept in cage-free, organic or free-

range systems have higher rates of mortality than those kept in cage production systems.



The origin and vision of the 25x'25 Alliance

Taken from Senate Ag Committee Testimony of Read Smith, Co-Chair of the 25 x '25 Alliance

On January 10th, 2007, 25x'25 Co-Chair Read Smith, a farmer in the state of Washington, testified on behalf of 25x'25 before the Senate Agriculture Committee. Read's presence on the first panel of witnesses before the Agriculture Committee's first meeting of the new Congress, which Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) chose as a platform to discuss renewable energy and the role agriculture will play in its development, emphasizes the growing importance and high regard our nation's decision-makers are placing on the 25x'25 vision.

[American Agri-Women is one of the nearly 400 alliance organizations who are committed to the goal.]

The Challenge and Need for New Energy Solutions

As you well know, our nation and the world are searching for new energy solutions. Oil reserves are limited and are located in politically volatile parts of the world; population growth and economic growth, especially in India and China, will place more demands on limited energy supplies. At the same time, our nation is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign oil, directly compromising national security.

The cost of oil has skyrocketed over the past three years, and the price of natural gas has fluctuated wildly, creating major economic challenges for the nation and for agriculture. Beyond these concerns, the burning of fossil fuels is harming air quality and resulting in the release of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

Americans are confronting one of their biggest challenges in decades. We cannot continue on the path of what some have called "yesterday forever." As energy demands increase, both here and abroad, we will need to come up with additional energy supplies – ones that are sustainable. Instead of importing oil from the Middle East, we can produce more energy here at home, using America's agriculture and forestry lands.

Origins of 25x'25

With these challenges – and opportunities – as a backdrop, a group

of highly respected agriculture leaders came together two and one-half years ago at the invitation of the Energy Future Coalition to explore agriculture and forestry's role in helping the nation meet its energy needs going forward. We named ourselves the Ag Energy Work Group and focused on the economic, national security and environmental benefits of renewable forms of energy produced by America's farmers, ranchers and forestry land owners.

During the summer and fall of 2004, we explored three key questions:

- 1) What role can the farm and forestry sectors play in producing energy?
- 2) How big a contribution can we make?
- 3) What has to happen for our vision to come to life – in other words, what will it take?

In searching for the answers, we talked to hundreds of producers and interviewed dozens of national agricultural organizations. The responses led us to conclude that there was not just an emerging opportunity to participate in renewable energy production, but an historic opportunity to enhance our national security and redefine the core functions of agriculture.

The 25x'25 Vision

We became convinced that America's farms, ranches and forests could become suppliers for a new generation of clean, alternative fuels and energy feedstocks. At the same time, we would contribute to a cleaner environment and enhanced rural economic development.

As a result, we adopted a simple, but bold goal: 25 x'25. By the year 2025, America's farms, ranches and forests will provide 25 percent of the total energy consumed in the United States from renewable sources, while continuing to produce safe, abundant and affordable supplies of food, feed, and fiber.

This goal will be met by producing bio-based fuels for transportation, harnessing wind energy, capturing and converting sunlight into energy, converting agricultural wastes and

by-products into energy sources, and growing biomass for energy production.

Our vision is a food, feed, fiber and fuel vision. With emerging technologies and appropriate policies, agriculture can produce multiple commodities. In 2005, we tested this vision with leaders representing all aspects of production agriculture and forestry.

Their response was overwhelmingly positive. By the end of the year, we had secured endorsements from nearly 80 national and regional entities. In March 2006, we held a national summit here in Washington, where we formally announced our renewable energy vision and goal and launched a drive to recruit environmental, conservation, business, labor, and other interests to join with us in endorsing and promoting this vision as a national goal.

I am pleased to report that, as of today, nearly 400 organizations have committed to the goal of 25x'25. They are joined by 22 current and former governors, 4 state legislatures, 30 current and former Senators, and 94 current and former Representatives – all of whom have signed on in bipartisan support of a 25x'25 energy future.

The 25x'25 vision has been endorsed by the "Big 3" U.S. automobile manufacturers, Deere & Company, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, and the National Wildlife Federation. In addition, most of the major commodity organizations and most of the major renewable energy trade associations, such as the American Wind Energy Association, have endorsed 25x'25. We also include among our ranks the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Renewable Fuels Association, the National Biodiesel Board and the Biotechnology Industry Organization. These organizations, along with hundreds of others, agreed to join the 25x'25 Alliance because they believe in the vision and want to work collaboratively to bring the goal of 25x'25 to life.

Next month, the benefits of a 25x'25 future and how we reach that goal.

Ranch property condemned via Internet

Public meeting posted only on state agency's website

By Cookson Beecher & printed by permission of Capital Press, Salem, Oregon

Imagine this.

You're home, and everything seems right with the world.

Then, much to your surprise, you're served with papers informing you that a state agency is using eminent domain to take your property. A price is offered. In so many words, you're told, "We're going to take your property and there's nothing you can do about it."

But this can't be, you say. I was never even notified that my property was under consideration. I never had a chance to offer any input.

Oh, but yes, you did, an agency bureaucrat tells you. We posted a public meeting notice about a project that involves your property on our website. And even though we didn't specifically mention your name, your address or the property's parcel number, the website notice was adequate.

As farfetched as this scenario may sound, it's exactly what happened to Pierce County beef raisers Ken and Barbara Miller, both 68.

In their case, Sound Transit wanted a piece of property in Tacoma for a park-and-ride lot. During the public meeting that had been posted on its website, Sound Transit decided to take the Millers' property.

In a state of utter disbelief, the Millers hired attorneys and started out on a three-year legal nightmare, which so far has cost them \$200,000 in attorney fees.

Much to their dismay, last year the state's Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, ruled that Sound Transit had given the couple adequate notice.

"While precedent on this subject is sparse," Justice Mary Fairhurst wrote for the majority, "posting on a public website is at least as likely to provide the community with notice as the specifically approved notice given to a newspaper." Miller said that until this happened to them, her husband had never used the Internet.

According to a Pew Internet & America Life Project survey conducted in 2006, only 42 percent of American homes have broadband connections.

The Millers live and run cows

on 30 acres about a mile from the targeted property. At one time, they had a lumber remanufacturing mill on the targeted site and produced finished lumber for customers across the nation and even in Australia. They've owned the site for 30 years.

Zoned heavy industrial, the nearly 1 1/4-acre parcel has all the necessary improvements—including almost 500 feet of street access and 300 feet of rail frontage—for a lumber-related or other industrial-type business. It also has a house, which can be used as an office, on it.

"There's no other land in the area we can replace it with," Barbara Miller said.

Originally, Sound Transit had offered the couple \$500,000 for the piece, far less than it had offered for another similar piece. After the state Supreme Court decision, it lowered its offer to \$240,000.

When the Millers asked the court to reconsider the case, the court denied their request. Their only hope now is a jury compensation trial in May, which will decide on a fair price for the property. The Millers hope that the price will be high enough for them to be able to pay their legal bills and have some left over.

"This has consumed our lives," Barbara Miller said. "We both have health problems now. We haven't slept well for three years. We had no idea this could happen to us. But now we know it can happen to anyone. They're getting away with it because our Supreme Court is allowing it to happen."

The Millers aren't the only ones dismayed by this turn of events. The outcry has made its way to the top of the state's political ladder. Gov. Chris Gregoire and State Attorney General Rob McKenna have reacted by crafting joint-request legislation.

Under it, a local government considering the acquisition of properties by eminent domain will need to:

- Send a certified letter (costing \$4.64) to the property owner of record on the county tax rolls notify-

ing him of the open public meeting called to decide the issue.

- Publish a short newspaper legal notice.

In a press release, McKenna said it's not asking too much to require that a certified letter be sent.

"We shouldn't expect people to click through hundreds of Web pages every week to make sure their property isn't being considered for condemnation," he said.

House Majority Leader Lynn Kessler, D-Hoquiam, who will be one of the bill's sponsors, said "it's frightening" to think that what happened to the Millers could happen to anyone.

"Every story I've heard about in similar situations is a nightmare," she said.

Cookson Beecher is based in Sedro-Woolley, Wash. Her e-mail address is cbeecher@capitalpress.com.

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More Senate ESA legislation introduced

Two Senate Republicans have introduced legislation expanding the states' role in listing and managing endangered species.

Sens. Craig Thomas (Wyo.) and Larry Craig (Idaho) are sponsoring the measure that would make it more difficult for groups to petition the government to protect a species and give the Interior Department or states more power to decide whether to list species.

"I believe the Endangered Species Act's intention of protecting species is good, but I believe those good intentions have gone off track," Thomas said in a statement. "The ESA has serious deficiencies in meeting its goal of recovering species, not to mention putting Wyoming's ranchers, energy producers and foresters at risk of becoming endangered species themselves."

The bill is unlikely to go anywhere in the committee with ESA jurisdiction -- Environment and Public Works. The panel's chairwoman, Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), has said she is not interested in taking up ESA legislation this year.

Western Republicans will probably introduce several ESA bills this year to protest the law, even though their bills are unlikely to move in a Democratic-led Congress, a House GOP aide who has worked on ESA issues said.

In addition to allowing states to weigh in more on species listing and recovery, Thomas and Craig's bill would require that the Fish and Wildlife Service delist a species when it meets its recovery goals.

The bill comes as Wyoming and the federal government are at odds over how to protect the gray wolf. FWS has rejected the state's management plan, and state officials have sued the service. Staff for Thomas said the bill would give Wyoming more latitude in species management.

But environmentalists point to Wyoming's wolf management as an example of why species need federal oversight. Wyoming wants to manage

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most wolves as predators and allow livestock owners to kill them.

The bill would require FWS to publish recovery plans when a species is listed. The current law recommends recovery plans, but it usually takes years after a listing for FWS to complete the plans.

The proposal would require petitioners to do more work before

asking the government to protect a species. Listing petitions would have to include an analysis of the species' status, population trends and threats.

Thomas said the bill would redirect federal efforts more toward delisting and recovery. FWS has listed more than 1,300 species as threatened or endangered and delisted.



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TIME TO REGISTER FOR MID-YEAR, MARCH 30-APRIL 1



The Strategic Planning Committee (above) met in January to look to the future for AAW. We looked at the “who” (who are our current and future members) and the “what” (what should we be doing for members now and beyond, discussing positive and negative forces or trends).

Front Row: Marcie Williams, Ohio Women for Agriculture; Chuck Rumbarger-facilitator, Yvonne Erickson, AAW president, Minnesota Agri-Women; and Dana Peterson, Kansas Agri-Women.

Back row: Heather Hampton+Knodle, Illinois Agri-Women; Mary Ann Graff, California Women for Agriculture; Trenna Grabowski, Illinois Agri-Women; Alice Dettwyler, Oregon Women for Agriculture; Sue McCrum, Maine Agri-Women; Shannon Dunaway, Florida Agri-Women; Sarah Tesmer, Minnesota Agri-Women; Ina Fluid, Idaho Women in Timber; Chris Wilson, Kansas Agri-Women; and Karen Yost, Montana Agri-Women.

12 The VOICE of the American Agri-Woman

American Agri-Women **Calendar of Events**

March 18-24, 2007
National Ag Week

March 30-April 1, 2007
AAW Mid-Year, Kansas City

June 10-13, 2007
AAW Fly-In & Symposium
Washington, D.C.

November 8-10, 2007
Annual Convention
St. Paul, MN

AAW Web site

www.americanagriwomen.org

AAW Phone & Fax Numbers

Phone: 218-495-2867

Fax: 218-495-2659

American Agri-Women is a national coalition of women's farm, ranch, and agri-business organizations and individuals formed in 1974. We, as women's agricultural organizations and individuals, unite together to communicate with one another and with other consumers to promote agriculture for the benefit of the American people and the world.

To contact AAW about our positions go to our web site at www.americanagriwomen.org.