Leaders of American Agri-Women from throughout the country gathered in Washington, DC, the week of June 5 for the organization’s annual Washington, DC, Agricultural Issues Symposium and Fly-in. During the week, the group met with officials at the US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency, and with Members of Congress. See page 4 for issues discussed at the Fly-In.

Take action for immigration reform
By Carol Chandler, Agricultural Labor Committee

The United States Senate voted to pass the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006. This includes, intact, the AgJOBS amendment which would legalize farm workers in the U.S. The bill would provide for specific reforms to streamline agriculture’s H2A program, as well as address other aspects of the agriculture labor force to eventually provide the industry with the legal, stable work force that is so badly needed.

This bill must now be reconciled with the House version which was passed in December. That “enforcement only” bill is at odds with the Senate bill and must be reconciled in a House-Senate conference committee which will craft a bill acceptable to both houses of Congress. That bill would then be sent on to the President for his signature.

In a recent speech, President Bush stated, “America can be a lawful society and a welcoming society at the same time. We will fix the problem of illegal immigration, and we will deliver a system that is secure, orderly, and fair.”

The Senate’s vote was a key victory in the fight for immigration reform that has been waged by growers who employ farm workers for their perishable crops. Letters, trips to Washington, D.C., phone calls, and newspaper editorials have aided in the effort for reform including AgJOBS.

It is now vital that the conference committee reach an agreement on the final version of immigration reform with the inclusion of a guest worker component for agriculture. The AgJOBS amendment must be protected.

Now is the time to contact your Congressional representative to ensure comprehensive immigration reform!

AAW supports the 25 x ’25 Initiative
By Karen Yost, START Coordinator

Last year American Agri-Women signed on to sponsor the National 25 x ’25 Initiative, whose goal is to have twenty-five percent of the U.S. fuel supply to be domestic and renewable from wind, solar and biofuels by the year 2025.

Peter Gage, representative of the 25 x ’25 Initiative, explained the initiative to AAW members at the orientation meeting of the Fly-In in Washington, D.C. He presented current information regarding supporters and sponsors and defined the initiative’s purpose.

AAW attended both the 25x’25 2006 Summit and a national news conference held in D.C. on Wednesday, June 7th, which launched a national effort to have Congress support the 25 x ’25 Initiative. Fourteen U.S. Senators and thirteen U.S. Representatives agreed to sponsor this proposal at that time and praised the Initiative’s goals, recognizing the need for U.S. independence on fuel for national security purposes. The initiative unites both parties in a non-partisan effort to increase domestic fuel production through the U.S. agricultural and forestry industries.

As the movement grows state by state, many AAW affiliates have become involved as well.

The three main goals are to 1) build public support for the initiative, 2) create state level champions and 3) obtain endorsements from policy makers.

The 25 x ’25 steering committee members are available to help organize state alliances. For more information check the website at 25x25.org and comment to AAW energy chair Barb Overlie, donbar@myclearwave.net.
President’s Column

By Yvonne Erickson
AAW President

The celebrations of our nation’s birthday on the 4th of July included family gatherings, community parades, and colorful fireworks. These reminders of our blessings prompt us to be truly thankful for our freedoms.

We are free to move from place to place if and when we choose to do so.

We are free to select our choice of career paths—government and/or family status doesn’t make the final decision. We may have to “go the extra mile” but we have the opportunity to pursue.

We are free to dream about new ideas and concepts and then make it happen—from Dr. Norman Borlaug’s wheat to i-Pods, nanotechnology, and more yet to come.

We are free to vote in our country and make choices—and it works—as in no other country.

For all of these things plus the many more you can add, we thank our forefathers and foremothers for their wisdom in their design to uphold such freedoms. We also are grateful to our leaders, local to national, and the service people who protect these rights.

These thoughts enter my mind as I think of the 15 foreign exchanges we’ve hosted. I hope we showed them that while we do have freedoms there exists inherent responsibility. We cannot take our freedoms for granted when they require such care.

AAW’s recent Fly-In to Washington, D.C. brought the attendees closer to where some caretaking of our freedoms occurs.

As we visited the Hill, we reminded our senators and representatives of the issues and concerns of those whose freedoms involve growth, technology, and knowledge related to agriculture.

Our visits with the Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency provided us with current information and a basis for further interactions. The agencies want our input to better their decision-making regarding our interests.

We appreciated a visit with the Mexican Embassy as trade and immigration issues were discussed.

Being able to attend the annual Fly-In and Symposium is a membership benefit. The legislation co-chairs Chris Wilson and Janet McPherson receive high accolades for this successful event. The symposium “Food for Thought: Public Policy—Personal Responsibility” generated interest across a variety of guest attendees. We certainly received more visibility from this outstanding event planned by Ardath DeWall and Carol Marx.

And how can we AAW members exercise our own freedoms within our group? Submitting resolutions to the annual business meeting is just one way. Please note the procedure and the deadline date of August 25 explained further in the VOICE.

The Bill of Rights gives us the right to assemble as AAW members. These rights and privileges are ours as Americans. Let’s use them to make a difference.

Yvonne

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2 The VOICE of the American Agri-Woman
Letter to the Editor:

Some larger issues missed at Fly-In

While you are at the fly-in, I am at home and reviewing AAW positions. I realize this is a large nation and diverse in agriculture. I have been able to travel in 48 states and have seen that we go from lush growth to desert conditions, warm climates to freezing much of the time. How can one make decisions for all of agriculture?

Nevertheless I wish to add my two cents. Why not push for a universal health care system, while doing away with the large military expenditures that do nothing to make this world a better place?

We need to help the UN in all ways possible. The way I see that organization is something like how the U.S. works with states allowing them to make laws. The UN has been great for giving all a chance to discuss issues and great for helping have better health in the world. WHO is working at eliminating diseases (smallpox is no longer an issue, except for scare purposes). We must live in love and not in fear, which is the opposite of love. We need a world forum, not one country or large corporations trying to rule the world.

Again, eminent domain is an issue. Large conservancies seem to want to take charge of the land. It is wrong to let them do that in the name of open space. I wish we could be more vocal in education. Most people take food for granted and have no idea that it takes a lot of effort to get perfect-looking food to their supermarket at a very low price. Helping people make good choices at the store is a big issue. I suspect many obese people are that way because they do not prepare food and are eating too many carbohydrates.

I hope that farmers will be allowed to see the big picture and be a part of making the world a better place to be.

Sincerely,

Suzanne P. Lamborn
Nottingham, PA

Editor’s Note: while there are many issues out there that an individual farmer could work on, AAW’s bylaws state that we are “to communicate with one another and with other consumers to promote agriculture,” and so doesn’t usually get involved with issues such as health care, etc. We do need to continue focusing on educating about ag, though!

Resolutions due August 25

Did you know that you or your affiliate may present a resolution at American Agri-Women’s annual convention for consideration?

AAW’s bylaws state that “all resolutions to be considered at the annual meeting [November 10] . . .shall be sent to the Resolutions Committee at least 60 days before the annual meeting. . . Resolutions originating with individual members or affiliated organizations shall be signed by at least 10 members and be accompanied by supporting data and rationale. Emergency resolutions may be presented [at the convention] by a two-thirds vote of the delegates. Copies for each delegate must be provided by the presenter.”

This really means that if you have a resolution and want it in the Voice for all to consider, you need to get it to the committee by August 25, and sooner would be better!

Which means that if you need to take it to your affiliate meeting to vote on, now is the time to get it done.

Send your resolutions to Marcie Williams, Vice President of Resolutions and Vital Issues. Her fax is 740-893-4003, and e-mail is resolutions@americanagriwomen.org.

Nominate your fellow affiliate member for a LEAVEN award!

Is someone in your organization worthy of special recognition at the convention this year? AAW is looking for members who are exceptionally

LOYAL
ENTHUSIASTIC
ANTICIPATORY
ALIANT
EFFECTIVE, and
URTURING

Each state can nominate one member who embodies these characteristics. Just go to www.americanagriwomen.org and click on “Other News” to find the application. Deadline is August 1.

Contact Merlynn Verstuyft at verstuyft@xramp.net for more information.

A special moment at the Fly-In was seeing the Iwo Jima Memorial at sunset. It was so much larger than we expected, and very moving. Seeing our national monuments is a real benefit of attending this June AAW event.
2006 AAW Fly-In Report

Issue updates as learned at AAW Fly-In sessions

By Heather Hampton-Knodle, President, Illinois Agri-Women

Water Resources Development Act

The House passed a version in 2005, HR 2864, that included pre-construction engineering and design for new locks on the Mississippi and Illinois waterways. It also had significant “reform” measures for the Corps of Engineers that require increased study and review by outside sources, and several other measures. The Senate has not yet voted on the Act. IF California’s Senator Feingold completes drafting an amendment soon that they’ve talked about for months, the bill might get some floor time. Earlier this spring, more than 80 senators signed a letter requesting floor time for WRDA. But Senator Frist has yet to schedule the bill for a vote. The bill is critical because it authorizes the construction on the locks and dams. That authorization is necessary before funds can be appropriated to pursue pre-construction engineering and design through separate Energy and Water appropriation bills.

Immigration Reform

AAW supports a legal, guest worker program as part of any immigration package. The Senate and House each passed entirely different immigration bills, with completely different approaches and focuses. It appears that any discussion on immigration will wait until after the November election.

Renewable Fuels

Many of our Congressmen are supportive of an effort to have “25% of our nation’s energy from profitable, innovative, and clean renewable sources by 2025.” Look for more on the Biofuels Bill of 2006 in ag publications and general media in the near future.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The House passed a bill HR3824 to update the Endangered Species Act by more closely defining the scientific data needed to list a specie, including the habitat designation and information necessary to delist a specie from the threatened or endangered list. The bill had other measures that Senator O’Bama’s agricultural aide described as, “gutting the Endangered Species Act.” IF there is any movement on the Senate side, it will probably come in February or March 2007 and it will probably look much different than the House version.

Meanwhile, within the Department of Interior, the federal agency has identified a 5-point approach related to its administration of the Endangered Species Act:
1. review existing court decisions to make regs conform with rulings,
2. involve the states earlier on in making decisions, for example, where and how to introduce species (vs. past approach of announcing introduction, without state input), information and data related to species listing and de-listing,
3. insure that scientific data conforms with the Quality Data Act for specie and habitat determinations, and more tightly defining terms,
4. treat threatened species differently than endangered by looking at how the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has approached its marine listings, and
5. focus more on incentives to encourage stewardship of species. There are 17 parts to the ESA and only two — those related to penalties — have been emphasized since the introduction of the Act.

In our meeting with several staff representatives at the Department of Interior, we heard repeatedly the comment that, “In the absence of an economic force such as agriculture and other resource-based industries keeping the land open, there will be houses built on it.” So they viewed natural-resource based industries as a critical component of long-term habitat and specie preservation.

Farm Bill

Two viewpoints: There is talk of a two-year extension. There is interest in pursuing a 2007 Farm Bill in light of global pressures like WTO and internal pressures in different regions of the country that are dissatisfied with the current farm bill. Discussion to begin in earnest this summer and fall.

Pesticide Re-Registration and Other Pesticide Issues

We spent an entire morning in briefings with the USEPA Office of Pesticide Programs. Bits and pieces from that discussion:
- After starting a preliminary review
on methyl bromide in summer 2005, the EPA decided it will be considered in conjunction with the entire group of soil fumigants — probably this summer — for consideration of re-registration.

- As pesticides are re-registered, the agency is looking at them with regards to the Threatened and Endangered species list. The agency has to cross-reference more than 9,000 pesticides with more than 1200 endangered species for every possible use of the pesticide and every possible range of each species. They are trying to narrow the use restrictions as closely to the exact point, where species are known, not suspected, to exist. Groups of chemicals known to cause human or other specie effects are moved up in the line for review.

- Some chemical companies have submitted data on human tolerance studies that has brought criticism by environmental groups. EPA published a rule to set ethical and scientific guidelines for Human Studies that is available for review on the Federal Register.

Other Presentations and Experiences

- Mexican Embassy – focus on trade and immigration
- Agriculture Education Foundation – outstanding presentation on some curriculum that should be available in the coming months that has scientific sources cited that busts myths on several issues, including DDT
- Animal Industry Alliance – informative presentation on the motives, actions, and funding sources of animal rights activists
- AAW-sponsored reception for congressional staff and representatives in the House Ag Committee room
- AAW-sponsored Symposium on “Food for Thought: Nutrition – Public Policy – Personal Responsibility” The general common knowledge was summed up by a dairy industry representative, “U.S. citizens are a paradox of being undernourished and overfed.” The symposium presented a lot of different data and information related to different groups’ approaches to nutrition, and information on a growing perception of socioeconomic differences in nutrition and obesity, primarily along ethnic and urban characteristics. Several conclusions of this mode of thinking could have SEVERE implications for corn and soybean production and farm bill programs over time.

- Lunch sponsored by American Council of Life Insurers – one staff person visited with us about tax and budget policy. He formerly worked at the Dept. of Treasury.

Bottomline

The Fly-In continues to be an incredible opportunity to learn from program managers and elected officials first hand and to discuss issues and opportunities with fellow AAW members from around the country.

If you plan your travel schedule accordingly, there is also opportunity to see a few Washington sites and museums.

Please consider marking your calendar to participate in the Fly-In the second week of June in 2007. If you’re a first time attendee, the AAW Resource Center has scholarships available.

We did get a chance to do some sightseeing on Sunday evening. Linda Swiercinsky (IL), Liz VanLeeuwen (OR), Lafona Jensen (OR), and Colleen Richter (TX) saw Arlington Cemetery by bus—the only way!
American Agri-Women

2006 Annual Meeting and Convention
November 8-11, 2006
Sheraton Miami Mart Hotel, Miami, Florida

Wednesday, November 8, 2006
2:30-5 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting
Open to members of AAW’s Executive Committee
5-7 p.m. Registration Open
5:30-6:30 p.m. Executive Committee Dinner
Hotel Restaurant — members of the Executive Committee and their families are invited to a casual dinner. (no-host)
Evening Optional “Experience Miami” Night on the town — experience the sights and sounds of Miami, from award winning 5-star restaurants to a stroll in the historic Art Deco District.
7-9 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting, continued

Thursday, November 9, 2006
7-9 a.m. Registration and Silent Auction Opens
8-11:30 a.m. AAW Resource Center Board of Directors Breakfast Meeting
Open to the AAW Resource Center board of directors and any members interested in becoming more involved in the Resource Center’s activities.
11-11:30 a.m. Trade Show & Silent Auction Open
11:30-1 p.m. Board of Directors Lunch Meeting
Open to the AAW executive committee and affiliate presidents.
1-2:30 p.m. Standing Committee Planning Sessions
Membership
Education
Finance
1-2:30 p.m. START Coordinators and Chairpersons Meeting
2:30-3 p.m. Opportunity to Visit Trade Show & Silent Auction
3-3:45 p.m. Strategic Action Response Team (START) sessions. (START committee sessions are available on a first-come basis. Chairs must notify Katie Edwards of speaker and topic by September 1.)
4-4:45 p.m. START Sessions
5-5:45 p.m. START Sessions
6-6:30 p.m. Mentoring Meeting
Convention veterans will meet to find out who their first-time attendee “mentee” is.
6:30-7 p.m. First-Time Attendees Meeting
We invite first-time members to learn how to make the most of your convention experience.
6-7 p.m. Free Time
7-8:30 p.m. Taste of the Tropics Reception
Sway to the sounds of mariachi performers while you soak up the remainder of the Florida sun for the day. You’ll experience a “Fresh from Florida” taste of the tropics with a paella station and tropical buffet. For dessert, you’ll be treated to samples of gourmet tropical fruit ice cream from Gaby’s Farm in Homestead.
9-10 p.m. Town Hall Meeting
A convention tradition, members are invited to address the delegation about an issue facing their commodity. Members are encouraged to prepare ahead of time and limit remarks to 3 minutes. Strategic Action Response Team coordinators will brief members on issues.

Friday, November 10, 2006
7-8 a.m. Registration and Silent Auction Opens
7:30-9 a.m. Florida Cracker Breakfast and Opening Ceremonies
Michele Payn-Knoper will kick-off the convention with “Beyond the Shopping Cart,” which will arm you with the tools to champion your cause.
9:15-11:45 a.m. General Membership Meeting
Affiliate Presidents will give a brief update of their affiliate’s activities.
12-12:20 p.m. Pick Up Boxed Lunches and Board Buses
1:30 p.m. Tour Silver Vase Nursery
2:30 p.m. Tour F & E Farms
3:30 p.m. Tour Rokaviar
4:30 p.m.  Tour Schnebly Redlands Winery
5:30-6:15 p.m.  Cocktail Reception & Tour of R.F. Orchids
6:30-8:30 p.m.  Taste of Old Florida Dinner
               R.F. Orchids (Off-Site) Travel back to the days of cowboys, swamp Yankees and mosquitoes as you are entertained by Florida’s cowboy poet, Stephen Monrore. A Southern supper of swamp cabbage, Cracker cakes and Cowboy steak will be served in an unforgettable, candlelight setting.

**Saturday, November 11**

8-9:15 a.m.  Breakfast Bingo — A fresh way to start the morning!
8:00-9:15 a.m.  Affiliate President’s Breakfast
8:00-9:15 a.m.  Collegiate Member Breakfast
               A representative of AgCareers.Com will address portfolio development and much more to help you land that perfect job!
9:30-11:45 a.m.  AAW General Membership Meeting
               South Ballroom
12-1:30 p.m.  General Membership Luncheon
1:30-2 p.m.  Break, Silent Auction Closes

**Afternoon Sessions**

2-3:15 p.m.  “Marketing Your Affiliate” by Heather Schueppert of Evolution Marketing will engage members in this interactive presentation on ways to market organizations and increase membership.
3:30-4:45 p.m.  “Closing the Generation Gap” A fresh idea for a fresh outlook!
               Cynthia D’Amour of People Power Unlimited offers solutions on how to bring members of all ages and levels of involvement together to strengthen organizations.
5-6 p.m.  Pick Up and Pay for Silent Auction Items
6:30-7 p.m.  President’s Reception
7-9 p.m.  Dinner & Awards Banquet
               The LEAVEN and Veritas Awards will be presented to outstanding individuals
               New AAW officers will be installed.

**Sunday, November 12, 2006**

9-9:30 a.m.  Prayer Service — Poolside
               A non-denominational gathering for spiritual uplifting and praise for another successful convention.
9-10:30 a.m.  Executive Committee Meeting — Banyan
11:00 a.m.  Depart Buses for Optional Sunday Tour

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**SPOUSE TOURS**

**Thursday, November 9, 2006**
Richard Petty Driving Experience
Homestead/Miami Speedway
(Must register for and pay in full by August 31, 2006)

**Friday, November 10, 2006**
Joint Tours in Afternoon

**Saturday, November 11, 2006**
Tour of the Everglades Agricultural Area
Roth Farms (Sugar, Sod, Horticulture)
R.C. Hatton Farms (Vegetable Row Crops, Sugar)
Airboat Ride
Lunch at Hacienda Okeelanta

**Sunday, November 12, 2006**
Day of Fun in Key Largo
Boat Tour and Shark-Feeding Show at Capt. Slate’s Atlantic Dive Center
Sightseeing at Pennekamp State Park
Sunset Prayer Service on the Beach
Dinner at Sundowners’ Restaurant
Agriculture—Pulling Together!

Oregon Women for Agriculture pulled off its most successful “FUNdraser Auction ‘n’ Dinner” yet!

This year almost 1000 people attended the 20th annual OWA Auction ‘n’ Dinner on April 22, and they grossed almost $92,500, thanks to all who “pulled together” to chair and work on committees. Hors d’oeuvres, crab, and oysters were devoured, then a delicious dinner of barbecued lamb, pork, and beef and all the fixin’s disappeared as well, while supporters bid on over 600 items in the silent auction, and lots of wonderful trips, quilts, and other items in the oral auction.

The tractor theme, “Agriculture—Pulling Together,” using children’s drawings of tractors and primary colors, was so fun and the decorations so colorful, that the room looked especially inviting.

A new item in the oral auction this year was OWA’s 4’ x 8’ signs saying “Farming Keeps Oregon Green,” which people bid on to help buy so they can be put up around the state. These signs should be a big success in reminding non-farming friends about how important agriculture is.

As usual, many, many hours were put in by OWA members and friends, gathering donations, setting up, decorating, planning dinner, laying out items, cataloging, collecting money, writing thank you notes, and many other tasks.

Now that they’ve worked together, making new friends and getting reacquainted with old in the process, OWA will have the money they need to support Ag in the Classroom, Summer Ag Institute, and Ag Fest, as well as to buy more signs and work on their own projects to educate the public about our industry.

OWA now looks forward to their next auction and greatly appreciate Tricia Chastain from Marion/Clackamas County for volunteering to be next year’s chair.

Uvalde chapter, Texas Agri-Women, presented its annual $500 scholarship to Coltín Black, center, a recent graduate of Sabinal High School. Making the presentation is Eva Sanderlin, scholarship chairman. Pictured, left to right, are Laura Kirk, Sabinal high school counselor; and Charley and Terrie Black, Coltín’s parents; Coltín; Sanderlin; and Patricia Magee, president of Uvalde chapter, TAW. Black has been accepted at John Tarleton University, Stephenville, and plans to study to become an ag teacher.

The Uvalde Chapter held their annual Ag Fair on April 25. They had 425 fourth graders attend and their mission was to educate these youngsters and their teachers about agriculture. They had stations on Horse Training, Good Bugs\Bad Bugs, Grains, Vegetables, Bees, Farm Equipment & Farm Safety, Sheep Shearing, Soil & Water Conservation, Railroad Safety, Edwards Aquifer Authority, and Electric Safety. In addition to the stations they are having an essay contest on the students’ responses to the Ag Fair.

August/September Issue Deadline Is 8/15

Unknown to most AAW affiliates and committees, the Voice has a schedule of when your group is supposed to have a report in to the editor for printing. Here are the organizations which she would love to have a report from for the next issue. It’s a great way to show off your affiliate, so send your articles to Arlene Kovash at akovash@earthlink.net.

Affiliates:
- New Mexico Wool Growers Aux
- Oregon Women in Timber
- WI Women for Agriculture
- Women of Nat’s Ag Aviation Assn
- Kansas Cattlewomen
- Sigma Alpha Sorority
- North Dakota Cattle Women
- Penn’s Agri-Women
- Kansas Sheep Auxiliary
- Michigan Women for Ag
- Lake States Women in Timber

Committees:
- Ag Business: Legal Concerns, Estate/Taxes, Rural Health/Ins, Trade & Marketing, Rural Economic Development
- Nominating Committee, Veritas Committee, Resolutions
CONVENTION HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS
A block of rooms has been reserved under American Agri-Women at the Sheraton Miami-Mart Hotel. Reservations must be made prior to October 8, 2006. Call the hotel directly at (305) 261-3800 to book your room.

Room Rates:
$125 per night for single/double occupancy
$155 per night for Club Level Suite
$185 per night for Junior Suite
Room tax is 13% per night. Self-parking is $4.00 overnight, $3.00 daily

LOCAL LINKS:
Travelers’ Guide to Miami- www.visitmiami.com
Miami-Dade County Agriculture- www.dade-agriculture.org
Homestead Miami Speedway- www.homesteadmiamispeedway.com
Richard Petty Driving Experience- www.1800bepetty.com
Schnebly Redlands Winery- www.schneblywinery.com
R.F. Orchids- www.rforchids.com
Silver Vase Nursery- www.silvervase.com
Roth Farms- www.rothfarms.com
R.C. Hatton Farms- www.rchatton.com
Tropical Fruit Growers of South Florida- www.tropicalfruitgrowers.com

AND DON’T FORGET THE CONVENTION AUCTION!
Help raise funds for American Agri-Women by making a donation to the 2006 Convention silent auction. We are challenging each affiliate to contribute something representative of their state and its commodities. This is a creative way to showcase your affiliate and raise money for AAW!

AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN 31ST ANNUAL MEETING
Registration form also available at www.americanagriwomen.org

Registration Fees
The early registration fee for the 2006 convention is $250 and must be postmarked by August 31, 2006. After August 31, 2006, the registration fee is $300. Collegiate members’ registration fee is $200. Registration fee includes meals, breaks, sessions with speakers, Friday tours and all conference materials. Meal functions must be registered for in advance using the registration form below.

Cancellation Policy
Cancellations made in writing before September 10, 2006 will receive a full refund. No refund will be given to cancellations made after September 10.

Optional Tours
Registration and payment for the Richard Petty Driving Experience/Homestead-Miami Speedway Tour must be postmarked by August 31, 2006. Registration and payment for all other tours can be included with your registration.

Name: ____________________________________ Affiliate: ____________________
Guest: ____________________________________ Phone: ______________________
Address: _______________________________________________________________
E-Mail: ____________________________________ Voting member of AAW? ______

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Please check which events you plan to attend:

Thursday, Nov. 9
RC Board Breakfast
Board of Directors Lunch
Dinner

Friday, Nov. 10
Breakfast
Lunch
Dinner

Saturday, Nov. 11
Affiliate Presidents Breakfast
Breakfast
Collegiate Breakfast
Lunch
Dinner

Optional Tour Registration

Thursday, November 9, 2006
Richard Petty “Day at the Race Track” $425

Friday, November 10, 2006
“Discovering Diversity: Miami-Dade Ag” Included

Saturday, November 11, 2006
“Everglades Area Farm Tours” – spouse/guests only

Sunday, November 12, 2006
“A Day in Key Largo” $ 50

Total Enclosed

Payment – Make checks payable to AAW 2006 Convention and mail with registration form to: Debbie Brady, 1850 Old Dixie Highway, Homestead, FL 33033.

Inquiries – Contact Katie Edwards at (305) 246-5514 ext. 226 or secretary@americanagriwomen.org.
Farm chemicals: Medicine for crops
By Bob Hale, president of Hale Farms, Hermiston, Oregon, and co-president of American Onion. Originally published in Oregon Business Magazine

I am a farmer with lands in rural northeastern Oregon. However, because my wife, Kelly, is an investment broker working in downtown Portland, I have the unique opportunity to live in both rural and urban Oregon — Hermiston and Portland.

Our farms’ primary focus is vegetable production, including growing potatoes, onions, sweet corn, carrots, green peas, sugar snap peas, lima beans and peppers, producing nearly 500 million pounds per year on about 40,000 acres. We’ve managed to stay competitive in a rapidly changing industry by focusing on our customers. Farming is by nature inherently uncertain. Competitive challenges include consolidating buyers, the politics of water use and immigration, weather, plant disease, and currency exchange rates. Our typical customer is a restaurant chain, and we like to let them know that we control the process — from seed to sandwich.

While having dinner in Portland one recent evening, a friend’s wife made the statement that she only served organically grown vegetables to her children. Being the only farmer sitting at this urban dinner table, and for that matter probably the only farmer living in our Portland neighborhood, everyone looked at me for my reaction.

I asked why she only served organic vegetables. She replied that she worried about the safety of conventionally grown vegetables because of farm chemicals such as herbicides, fungicides and pesticides. Being the good friend that I am, I called her a hypocrite.

Naturally, she asked why I said that. I replied, “Because your husband is a doctor and, more specifically, an anesthesiologist, whose occupation is administering chemicals — medicine — to people.” I then asked her what she did when her children became ill. She said generally that her doctor husband “looked them over” and if necessary prescribed an appropriate medicine. I thought about it and asked the question: “If medicine is OK for people, isn’t medicine OK for plants, too?”

What most urban people don’t understand is the level of sophistication of our rural agricultural system. When our vegetables become ill, agronomists and scientists (plant doctors) “look them over” and prescribe an appropriate farm chemical (plant medicine). This entire process is very controlled and exhaustively regulated.

What are these processes? I’m glad you asked. Here’s a guide to the procedures we follow to grow healthy vegetables:

• We take aerial infrared photographs biweekly to identify problem spots in our fields.
• We take soil and plant tissue samples and send them to state-licensed laboratories, which in turn send us back detailed laboratory reports outlining things such as field location and the levels in the soil and plant tissue of various compounds including nitrogen, potassium, boron, zinc, sulfur, calcium, copper, iron, magnesium and other elements essential for the development of healthy plants.
• We water using state-of-the-art high-tech center-pivot irrigation systems that increase both irrigation efficiencies and water conservation. These are the circles you see from airplanes when flying over Eastern Oregon.
• We monitor soil moisture by placing neutron probes in each of our fields. These probes bounce neutron waves off soil particles to determine the exact amount of moisture in the field.
• Each week, our farms’ growers meet with outside consultant scientists and go over the aerial infrared photos, soil moisture reports, and detailed soil and plant tissue laboratory reports. Together, they come up with growing methodologies and implementation plans.
• If and when a problem in a field is discovered, we determine a course of action.
• We call a state-licensed crop adviser (agronomist) into action and, if necessary, this person prescribes a “plant medicine.”
• Any farm chemical we use comes labeled with the legal parameters of use for that specific chemical, issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the USDA.
• It specifies the crop, amount, growth stage, preharvest interval and weather conditions under which the product can be applied. There is a lengthy process, taking years and millions of dollars to complete — similar to the process of approving new medicines for people — to obtain EPA and USDA approval.
• The crop adviser who makes the written recommendation for the product must be licensed by the state. So must our farm employee who purchases the product and the company who makes it.

During dinner that evening it became clear to me that the concerns of my urban friends about farm chemicals were genuine. It was also clear to me that both rural and urban Oregonians want the same thing for their families: a safe, dependable and reasonably priced food supply.

At our farms, we follow the law, follow the regulations and are committed to growing and providing some of the safest and best vegetables in the world.

Rather than react defensively when the topic of organic produce comes up, rural Oregon agriculture must tell our story and let urban Oregonians know exactly how we grow their food — there’s nothing haphazard about the process.

From my perspective, the message is simple: If medicine is OK for people, then medicine is OK for plants, too.

AAW thanks Oregon Business Magazine, Oregonbusiness.com, and Bob Hale for allowing us to reprint this article.
Biobutanol to be introduced

Biobutanol, a new biofuel that can be made from a variety of crops including corn, wheat, sugar beets, sugar cane and sorghum, will be introduced to the marketplace through a joint venture of BP and DuPont. Pioneer Hi-Bred International, a subsidiary of DuPont, will play a role in the venture, which will develop, produce and market a next generation of biofuels with the goal of helping to meet the increasing global demand for renewable transport fuels.

BP and DuPont researchers have been working together since 2003 to develop advanced biofuels with properties that can help overcome the limitations of existing biofuels. Biobutanol is produced using a fermentation process very similar to that of ethanol.

The new biofuel is intended to complement and improve on ethanol, rather than compete with it, according to Pioneer’s CEO Dean Oestreicher, who described the new initiative as “good news for agriculture and for society as a whole.”

USDA releases data info on large farms

The Agriculture Department recently released information to the public from its database of information on farmers who receive farm program payments.

USDA released the information in response to a Freedom of Information Act request from the Environmental Working Group and three news organizations. The information released by USDA includes the names, addresses and business relationships of farmers receiving farm program or conservation payments. This so-called “entity file” is used on a routine basis by USDA and county committees to determine if farmers are eligible for program payments.

The massive file released last week by USDA does not include information on individual payments made to farmers who belong to cooperatives. That information, which is part of USDA’s “1614 file” mandated by the 2002 farm bill, will be released to the public in August, also in response to a FOIA request from EWG and the news organizations. Information on payments made to individuals since 2002 will be released.

Seven reasons farm family businesses fail

By Val Farmer, in Agri-Times Northwest, April 7, 2006

1. Failure to have systematic business communications.
2. Unresolved conflicts that add stress and tension to daily living.
3. Lack of clarity about goals and commitments, unclear roles.
4. Lack of incorporating the younger generation into significant management decision-making.
5. Intrusive and controlling management styles that cause hurt, resentment and anger.
6. The lack of inclusion of the in-laws in the long-term planning and decision-making.
7. Poor communications (anger, disrespect) and problem-solving skills.

Val Farmer is a clinical psychologist with MeritCare in Fargo. He specializes in rural mental health and family business consultation.

Note from Carol Marx: Did you notice, the first and last are COMMUNICATIONS? Now think of every organization and relationship you are in. Fits, doesn’t it.

EPA announces new ag strategy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced on May 8 a National Strategy for Agriculture which is designed to initiate a closer partnership with the agriculture community to address environmental issues.

EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson said in a statement that the agency “considers agriculture a producer of solutions to environmental problems. EPA intends to use communication, collaboration, and innovation to strengthen its relationship with the agricultural community. The goals of the new strategy include:

1. Increasing EPA employee awareness of how their actions affect agriculture and how farming benefits human health and the environment;
2. Working with all sectors of the agricultural industry (production, processing and distribution) in developing and demonstrating environmental protection solutions that express to the public the value of farmland environmental stewardship activities;
3. Coordinating research and technology development and real world application so the needs of agriculture and EPA can be more efficiently met; and,
4. Identifying existing environmental improvement measures for agriculture and developing new ones, where needed.

More information about the initiative is available on the EPA website at http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/agstrategy.html.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Dues may be paid through your commodity/state affiliate or mailed to: American Agri-Women, PO Box 111, Hillsboro, KS 67063.

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American Agri-Women
Calendar of Events
August 1    Leaven Award nominations due
August 25  Resolutions for consideration at annual meeting due
November 8-11, 2006
AAW Convention, Miami
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.

If you would like to receive the Voice via e-mail instead of by mail send your request to Carolyn Kleiber at Carolyn@agpowerinc.net

See AAW’s web site or look inside for the 2006 Convention registration form. Also note early deadline is August 31!

AAW StART Committee coordinator Karen Yost (right) is shown with Sara Wyant, steering committee member of the 25 x ’25 Initiative, at a press conference that took place on Capitol Hill during Fly-In, announcing concurrent Congressional resolutions calling for a new national renewable energy goal: 25 percent of the nation’s energy supply from renewable sources by 2025. Resolution sponsors—congressional leaders from both chambers and from both sides of the aisle—joined together in support for the 25 x ’25 goal. AAW joined the 25 x ’25 Initiative last year, which was started by a group of farmers then was quickly embraced by business, labor, conservation and religious groups.