Be Part of AAW’s First International Support Effort

AAW is partnering with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to join the United States Agency for International Development’s Farmer-to-Farmer program. The program will link AAW members with farmers in East African countries, so they can offer training and technical assistance. The partnership marks AAW’s first international support effort.

This is a great opportunity to share modern agriculture techniques to East African farmers as well as an opportunity for us to gain a broader understanding of agriculture in developing countries. Interested parties can apply to the database on the CRS website at: www.farmertofarmer.crs.org. All questions can be directed to: farmertofarmer@crs.org.

More background about the program

The program, which was authorized in 1985, is funded by the United States Agency for International Development and has been implemented in more than 80 countries since its inception. This particular program will take place over the next five years and will offer aid in Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. Other partners in the Farmer-to-Farmer program include the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Food Resource Bank, National Association of Agricultural Educators and the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

CRS received a grant from the Agency for International Development for the program to identify the communities in Africa and their needs. CRS is in the process of identifying farmers in these East Africa Regions to assess their needs. They then will match these needs with more than 300 U.S. volunteers that will conduct 500 volunteer assignments over a five-year period. CRS will assume orientation and manage the logistics for those who are selected. Those who are in the program will volunteer their time of approximately two to three weeks, depending upon the project. The volunteers will have expenses covered.

Volunteers are now being sought for an assignment in Ethiopia in March. Please contact pastpresident@americanagriwomen.org for more details.

See You at Our Mid-Year Meeting!

The Farm Bill finally has passed, but our work advocating for agriculture is never-ending. There are many issues being discussed in Washington, D.C., that directly impact our operations, our families and the security and reliability of our food, fuel and fiber.

Please join us at the 2014 Mid-Year meeting (April 3-6, Minneapolis, Minn.) and help draft the position statements that we will deliver to Washington at our annual Fly-In (June 8-11). See Page 3 for the agenda and registration form in this newsletter for more details.

AAW members also will have a unique educational opportunity to help develop the skills and knowledge to better relate to consumers and across the food supply. The Center for Food Integrity is bringing its trust-building “Engage” training as part of our Mid-Year agenda. The Engage training will help us communicate more effectively with consumers using the power of shared values. Their peer-reviewed and published research shows that using values is 3-5 times more powerful in developing trust than simply demonstrating skills.

The cornerstone of Engage is to equip participants with the tools to effectively communicate using shared values in “critical conversations”—those day-to-day conversations that present valuable opportunities to effectively connect and ultimately build trust. Don’t miss out! Register today.
Once again, Greetings from snowy Maine!

I am sitting near a window as the promised prediction of 10-18 inches of snow has started. We have been warned it may contain a quarter of an inch of ice as the Nor’easter hits our Maine coast. The fire is crackling in the wood stove and I am praying it will keep us warm if we have a power outage with ice laden trees lying on wires. The WEATHER has been a number one topic of conversation this winter. The bitter cold and abundance of snow has reminded us of winters, decades ago. But with all this snow and cold, California is still suffering due to droughts. I joined the California Women in Agriculture in their day of prayer for rain. I was reminded how this grassroots organization does not have to be concerned with political correctness in order for AAW members to cry out and pray together to the heavens for moisture. I can’t even imagine the struggles farmers and all those supporting agriculture are going through. Let’s continue to hold them in our thoughts and prayers.

We have a Farm Bill. Finally, after a three year struggle it has been passed and signed! Is everyone happy? I am sure that is not the case. None the less, supporters of the bill said it was successful. Lawmakers had to address concerns of those in agriculture, anti-hunger advocates and those who want change in the international food aid program. Then add the watchdog groups who want to cut government spending. It would have been hard to please everyone. As Sen. Debbie Stabenow stated, “This is NOT your father’s farm bill.” She also noted that crop insurance had been well supported by farmers.

By now AAW members have heard that we have contracted Andrea Ball with Agri/Washington to follow through with administrative assistant duties. I would like to give Andrea and her staff a BIG WELCOME. She is also a member of AAW. We will introduce her at one of our AAW meetings soon. I know you will be glad to know that they have a Washington, DC address and are well respected in the agricultural world. There are many things happening in our American Agri-Women organization in the next few months. Our mid-year meeting is being held in Minneapolis, Minn., April 3-6, 2014. The’”Leadership At Its Best Program” offered by Syngenta will follow our mid-year meeting in Minn. starting the evening of April 6. Our AAW Fly In will take place June 8-11. We will be staying at the Holiday Inn at the Capitol this year. Karen Yost and others are working on the symposium and plans for our Fly I. Check out our AAW webpage for more information.

Let’s not forget the “FARMER to FARMER” program. If you are interested in participating in this program and have the time and skills that are available for agricultural related projects in Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya, Africa, please let us know. AAW is a partner of this program. We just want your time. Expenses will be covered.

SPRING!!! Don’t you like the sound of that? Even though that darn groundhog saw his shadow, I am hoping that the extra 6 weeks of winter that is predicted was added onto the FRONT of this winter’s early beginning! The daylight is starting earlier and days appear longer. The seed catalogs are filling the mailboxes. Surely, spring must be right around the corner. I pray that spring showers fall gently on your fields and sunshine warms your face.

Until next time,   Sue McCrum
**Mid-Year Agenda**

**April 3-6, 2014**

**Hyatt Place, Minneapolis, MN**

**THURSDAY, April 3, 2014**

8:30 a.m. Executive Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m. (tentative) U.S. Govt. Affairs and Vital Issues (previously known as START) with Karolyn Zurn, Chair

10:00 a.m.-Noon Combined Executive Committee and Govt. Affairs and Vital Issues committee

Noon-1 p.m. Lunch

1 p.m. Govt. Affairs and Vital Issues Cmte.

1-3:30 p.m. Executive Cmte. Meeting

2-3:30 p.m. Resource Board Meeting

3:30-4:30 p.m. Combined EC and Resource Meeting

5:30-6:30 p.m. Welcome Reception-Hyatt Place Hotel, Appetizers – Cash Bar

Speaker: Kristin Weeks Duncanson, MN Agri-Growth & Duncanson Growers

6:30 p.m. Dinner on Your Own

**FRIDAY, April 4, 2014**

6-7:30 a.m. Breakfast in the Hotel Lobby

7:30 a.m. Welcome, Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer, Announcements and bring silent auction items

8 a.m.-12:00 p.m. ENGAGE Training presented by the Center for Food Integrity.

12:45 p.m. Silent Auction Bids Close

1 p.m. TBD

5:00 p.m. Dinner on your own

**SATURDAY, April 5, 2014**

7:30 a.m. Breakfast in the Lobby

8:30 a.m. Continue AAW positions work

10 -10:15 a.m. Break/ Bid on Silent Auction

10:15 a.m.-noon AAW positions continue

Noon Lunch

12:45 p.m. Silent Auction Bids Close

1 p.m. TBD/Pay for Auction Items

5:00 p.m. Dinner On Your Own or TBD

**Sunday, April 6, 2014**

8-9a.m. Breakfast in the Lobby

9-9:30 a.m. Worship Service-All Members are welcome to attend

9:30 a.m. Good Bye and Safe Travels!

**SYNGENTA Leadership at its Best attendees will be moving to another Hotel.**

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**AAW Mid-Year Meeting**

**April 3-6, 2014, Minneapolis, MN**

**Registration**

Name _________________________________________________

Affiliate __________________________________________________

Address ________________________________________________

City ________________________ State ___________ Zip ________

Phone ________________________ Fax ______________________

Email __________________________________________________

Date of Arrival ___________________________________________

Roommate needed? ______________________________________

**Fees**

- Full Registration (breakfast, breaks, & lunch on Fri. and Sat.) ...... $175
- Full Non-Member Registration ....................................................... $200
- Partial Registration (Friday or Saturday only) ........................... $100
- Collegiate Full Registration ....................................................... $100
- Partial Collegiate Registration (Friday or Saturday only) ............ $75

Total $ ___________

**To Register**

- Mail completed registration and payment to:
  American Agri-Women
  Mid-Year Registration
  1701 K Street, NW, Ste 650
  Washington, DC 20006
- Email andrea@americanagriwomen.org
- Register online at www.americanagriwomen.org

**Hotel Information**

Hyatt Place, Minneapolis Airport South

7800 International Drive Bloomington, Mn 55425

Phone: 952 854 0700

Deadline is March 14, 2014

Rooms are $94.00 + tax

Ask for American Agri-Women block

**Silent Auction Benefits Scholarships**

As you plan your trip to the Mid-Year meeting, don’t forget about bringing an item for the Silent Auction. The Resource Center holds the auction to raise funds for scholarships for Fly-In, convention and for students.

Any and all goodies and gifts make great items for the auction — including items that show off your state, commodity or your talents! Keep in mind that winners will have to carry or ship their items home, so don’t make the item too big or bulky.

The Silent Auction opens at 10 a.m. on Friday and ends Saturday after lunch. Check in your items on Friday after breakfast.

Questions?
Contact Jane Marshall
937-336-1456
president@ohioagriwomen.com
Ohio continues to make plans for the 2014 convention. We are working with the AAW Executive Committee on the daily schedule. We are still looking into a pre-tour to Amish country, which is about 4 hours away from the convention site. As soon as we get that firmed up we will let you know.

We are planning a post tour on Sunday, Nov. 9 to go to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force. It is a huge facility with lots to look at.

Our convention tours will be on Friday afternoon. One of these tours is set up. We will be visiting Stockslager’s Greenhouse and Garden Center to see their poinsettias that should be in bloom.

Stockslager’s is the Miami Valley’s largest grower of top quality bedding plants, perennials, fall mums, and poinsettias. They are a wholesale and retail operation with six acres of indoor growing area and another acre outdoors.

They service independent retailers and landscapers throughout Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. Their website can be found at www.stockslagers.com.

We also will visit Morning Sun Farm owned and operated by Dale and Evelyn Filbrun. They are an organic farm that direct markets to the consumer. They raise chicken, turkey, pork, beef and lamb. Various cuts are sold at the farm and at seven farmers markets. They also have eggs & fresh ground spelt & wheat flour.

If you have any question, please contact me or my co-chair Rachael Vonderhaar. My info: president@ohioagriwomen.com or 937-336-1456. Rachael’s info: vicepresident@ohioagriwomen.com or 937-603-1984.

Apply for Monsanto Fund Grants for Communities and Schools

The Monsanto Fund offers significant grants to improve your communities and schools. For instance, the Grow Communities grant is a $2,500 donation to a non-profit organization. The Grow Rural Education grant awards up to $25,000. In addition, students can apply for $1,500 scholarships.

Other grants are available for math and science education, arts programs, youth gardening programs and more. Go to this website for more information about deadlines and how to apply: www.monsantofund.org/grants/overview.
New Member Profile

Kristi Bishop

Meet Kristi Bishop of AAW’s new affiliate in Oklahoma. Kristi is a new member, but has a long-time affiliation with American Agri-Women.

What is your role in agriculture? I was raised on my family’s Hereford cow-calf operation in Montana and growing up was actively involved in the National Junior Hereford Association, FFA and 4-H. I moved to Stillwater to be part of Oklahoma State University’s (OSU) renowned Animal Science Program. While in college, OSU’s Collegiate CattleWomen and Meat Science Association kept me busy along with working at OSU’s Food and Agricultural Products Center. I completed my Masters of Agriculture with an emphasis on Industry Leadership at OSU while interning for a legislative lobbying firm. This internship exposed me to an entirely new side of the legislative process and really sparked my interest in rural policy!

Out of college I accepted a position fundraising and managing cattle sales for the Oklahoma Youth Expo (OYE) “The World’s Largest Junior Livestock Show,” while also maintaining a role within the lobbying firm. Currently I serve as a Recruitment Coordinator for OSU and although I am not currently directly involved in production agriculture I am able to remain involved with the industry on several levels both personally and professionally.

While working in a “non-ag” office was initially a transition, it has presented incredible opportunities for me to share with others the story of modern agriculture. My coworkers know that if I am out of the office I am likely at a cattle show!

Why did you join AAW? My mom’s (Vickie Bishop) involvement in AAW and Montana Agri-Women was something I always admired. Growing up I was in awe of the trips my mom made on behalf of the organizations. I thought it was so cool that she was flying to Washington, D.C. and as I got older I realized the impact she and other AAW members were having on members of Congress with whom they spoke about agriculture. Even at a young age I was able to recognize she was part of a dynamic set of ladies — and as a group I thought “these women have to be unstoppable!” While attending my first AAW annual convention in Niagara Falls it was so special to reconnect with, or meet, several of the women who were household names to me as a kid!

This past spring I was so excited to hear that Oklahoma would be host to Karen Yost in an effort to revitalize the state group that hadn’t been active for decades. I am happy to be serving as chairwoman for our organizing committee and look forward to working with a group of ladies who have expressed interest in promoting Oklahoma Agri-Women as a worthwhile organization for Okies to be involved in!

My attraction to AAW is the organization’s focus on the agricultural industry as a whole, rather than a specific commodity. I appreciate the recognition of common goals and struggles that agriculturalists face and the effort to provide leadership which is cognizant of the larger picture.

National Ag Day Set For March 25

National Ag Day is a day to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture. The celebration is coordinated by the Agriculture Council of America (ACA). Every year, producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless others across America join together to recognize the contributions of agriculture.

The theme for this year is “Agriculture: 365 Sunrises and 7 Billion Mouths to Feed.”

ACA provides excellent resources to help you advocate for agriculture, including news releases, interactive tools, logos, commercials, posters, teacher resources and more. Go to www.agday.org to download resources to share on National Ag Day — and throughout the year.

And, as you celebrate and advocate, please share on American Agri-Women’s Facebook page so we can all celebrate together.
We mourn the loss of Eunice Guell as we celebrate her life and tremendous contributions to our organization. Eunice died on January 4 at the age of 80 at her rural Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, home, with her family by her side. She served as lay chaplain for many years and was a long-time member of Wisconsin Women for Agriculture, along with many other contributions.

Her life of giving
Eunice was a graduate of Oshkosh High School and Oshkosh State Teachers College. She taught school in Winnebago County for two years. On January 29, 1955, she was united in marriage to Henry Guell at Waukau United Methodist Church, and the couple moved to the Guell-Crest farm homestead in September 1956. Together, Eunice and Henry raised six children with the adage “work hard, respect others and love God."

Eunice was an avid reader and writer. She edited three devotional books and wrote a biography, “The Ice Box and Other Stories.” She toured China, Japan and Hong Kong and shared those experiences with others upon her return.

Eunice was a very active volunteer. She was a 4-H leader for 14 years, a director for six years on the Agri-Business Council, secretary of the Golden Advantage Club, was a 40 year member of the Extension Homemakers where she served as county president and was a charter member of the Lomira FFA Alumni where she was president.

Eunice served as president, vice president and secretary for Wisconsin Women for Agriculture and received AAW’s LEAVEN award and was a two-time president’s award winner. She was honored by U.W. Madison CALS for outstanding contributions to agriculture. She received Extension’s Ardith Murphy Award for volunteerism and Homemakers Leadership award, and was named Woman of the Year by Business and Professional Women.

Memories from members
Lisa Condon, past president of Wisconsin Women for Agriculture and AAW Secretary shares this: “Eunice spoke passionately about the history and reason for the formation of Wisconsin Women for Agriculture at our annual convention this past September. Sister Thomas More Bertels held a special place in Eunice’s heart and she frequently mentioned the story behind Sister Thomas More Bertels’ “Call to Power,” which is printed in the American Agri-women’s Directory each year. Through my past presidency of Wisconsin Women for Agriculture, Eunice was always there to encourage, support and educate me to be a great leader. I enjoyed receiving her little notes in the mail gently reminding me of procedure for our upcoming events and letting me know the changes I was implementing for WWA were needed to move the organization forward.”

Nancy Kavazanjian, a fellow WWA member, shares this: “I got to know Eunice late in life and unfortunately, ran out of time to learn more about her early experiences, but it was obvious that Eunice held a deep and unwavering dedication to farming. For many years, Eunice attended the Wisconsin Teachers Convention and handed out materials on Wisconsin farm products, as a volunteer, with no encouragement from others. Even once she was confined to a wheel chair Eunice continued that work, talking about farmers and farming and helping bridge the gap between farm and urban audiences whenever she could.”

“It touched me deeply to hear about how Eunice spent a great deal of her own time and resources, as a young farm woman in the 1970s, building the Wisconsin Women for Agriculture and getting farm women recognized as equal partners in their operations. She truly is a person all Wisconsin farmers should remember and revere as a model and an inspiration to the cause.”

Always in our hearts: Eunice was a shining example of what we should strive to be as American Agri-Women — and as women. We will always keep her in our hearts. The family has asked that donations in her memory be given to her church, Trinity United Methodist Church, 300 Church Street, Lomira, WI 53048, or to the AAW Resource Board, Attn: Katie Yost, 221 Sugar Ave. Billings, MT 59101.

Eunice Guell is shown here with her husband Henry on her right, and Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture Ben Brancel.
Lesley Schmidt is second vice president of Kansas Agri-Women, affiliate newsletter editor and a member of AAW’s national membership committee. She also was selected to be part of two leadership programs, Kansas Agriculture Rural Leadership program and Young Professionals of Wichita Leadership Academy.

Here’s Lesley at work: “Yesterday I was calculating roadway elevations for a paving and incidental drainage project. I am a Computer-Aided Drafter and Designer (CADD) for a full-service engineering and land-planning firm in the largest city in Kansas, Wichita. I use designs and calculations from civil engineers and landscape architects and convert these into plans needed for construction of either cemeteries, landscapes, parking lots, roadways or utilities.

On my days off, I am out in Southwest Kansas getting my boots dirty at the family farm where we raise a variety of crops and continue a cow/calf operation which has been in our family for five generations.”

Lesley is committed to sharing the good news about Kansas Agri-Women and AAW with college students. She has developed an excellent PowerPoint presentation highlighting background, initiatives and more.

Write Lesley at this address if you’d like a copy of the presentation to adapt for your own affiliate: kansasagriwomen@gmail.com.

Update from the Women’s Mining Coalition

American Agri-Women members Jacquie Compston and Linda Swiercinsky attended the Women’s Mining Coalition (WMC) booth at the recent Northwest Mining Association (NWMA) convention in Reno. The WMC is an affiliate of AAW.

Lynne Volpi, WMC Coordinator, was joined by several other WMC members during the exhibition, all of whom spoke with numerous women who stopped by the booth to find out about WMC and its mission. Lynne also attended a technical session which focused on legislative updates, where she learned that the agenda in Washington D.C. will basically remain the same in 2014 as it has been throughout the current administration.

NWMA’s Matthew Ellsworth related that there will probably be less actual legislation in 2014 and more administrative rules. He focused on the fact that Congress needs to hear specific examples of permitting delays and hurdles to domestic production; these examples need to come directly from the mining industry. In other words, the industry needs to effectively do what WMC has been doing for over 21 years: advocate for a robust domestic mining industry.

FDA Launches Advisory Committee Nominations

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently launched the advisory committee membership nomination portal, an online, interactive system that allows interested individuals to submit nominations for membership to any of the agency’s 33 advisory committees. The portal will enable nominees to submit their application for membership on an advisory committee from the FDA’s website, creating a paperless, streamlined process that will enable the agency to accept, evaluate, and ultimately nominate qualified individuals for membership in a timely fashion.

The system will securely store all applicant information and enable the FDA to develop metrics for assessing the entire applicant pool to identify qualified candidates to fill specific vacancies on advisory committees. Currently, applications must either be emailed or mailed to the agency. Nominations for scientific members and consumer and industry representatives may be submitted by professional societies, industry and consumer groups, and other interested persons and organizations. Potential candidates are asked to provide detailed information concerning such matters as financial holdings, employment, and research grants and/or contracts in order to permit evaluation of possible sources of conflict of interest. Advisory committees provide the FDA with independent, expert advice on a range of complex scientific, technical, and policy issues. The FDA seeks to include the views of women and men, members of all racial and ethnic groups, and individuals with and without disabilities on its advisory committees and, therefore, encourages nominations of appropriately qualified candidates from these groups.

For more information and to apply:

FDA Advisory Committees: Applying for Membership http://www.fda.gov/AdvisoryCommittees/AboutAdvisoryCommittees/CommitteeMembership/ApplyingforMembership/default.htm
GMOs: Fact and Fiction

By Bryan J. Gentsch, PhD. He manages the Texas Seed Trade Association along with his wife, Denise Gentsch. Denise is the Ag Research/Bio-Technology Chair and member of Texas Agri-Women.

Perhaps the most important thing to realize about GMOs (genetically modified organisms) technology is that nothing achieved through GMO technologies represents anything that could not otherwise be done through traditional plant breeding techniques in use for 150 years. GMO technology provides methods to achieve the expression of desirable characteristics more quickly, efficiently, and with less expense than traditional methods — that is all.

People have been working to improve the characteristics of plants and animals for longer than recorded history. The first animal herders bred the biggest and strongest members of their herds and Central Americans began improving corn over 10,000 years ago by saving seed from plants with desirable characteristics such as higher grain yields, faster maturity, larger seeds, or better milling properties. People have been actively altering and improving plant and animal genetics using cross-breeding techniques since Gregor Mendel discovered the mechanisms of heredity, in the mid-19th century.

GMOs are Safe

GMOs are safe. There is no debate among crop scientists, agronomists, biochemists, plant biologists, and other professionals about the safety of GMOs. You can find disagreement, but there are no active debates in the scientific community driven by data. All GMO introductions must be approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration after lengthy scientific review.

There is no hard reproducible data indicating GMOs are more dangerous, or potentially dangerous, than traditionally bred plant products. There are thousands of studies substantiating the safety of GMOs. Nothing whatsoever can be scientifically proven safe. Science can only test hypothesis and prove something does not observable harm. It works this way for everything including GMOs. Plenty of time and effort has been spent attempting to determine harm caused by GMOs and nothing of scientific validity has ever been published in an accredited, peer-reviewed, scientific journal that demonstrates a danger from GMOs.

Benefits of GMOs

GMOs are directly responsible for decreasing the rates and frequency of pesticide applications particularly herbicides and insecticides. Traditional plant breeding has always been the most effective way to control plant diseases and GMO technologies have made that job easier.

Many varieties of corn and cotton now carry a gene coding for a protein from Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) a naturally occurring soil bacteria that was inserted using GMO (transgenic) technology. This bacteria protein effectively prevents caterpillars and certain other pests from feeding on the crop. This same Bt protein is routinely used, and permitted, as an insecticide spray on USDA-certified organic crops.

Contrary to popular belief GMOs do not primarily benefit “big agribusiness.” Big agribusiness sells fertilizer, crop protection products, and other conventional crop input products which to a large extent are needed in lower amounts on GMO crops. Most sectors of “big agribusiness” have less to sell on GMO crop acres.

Research is progressing on transferring nitrogen fixation capabilities from crops like soybeans to crops like corn and cotton. When successful this GMO trait will eliminate the need for nitrogen fertilizer on these crops. Nitrogen fertilizers are frequently implicated for their potential to runoff and contaminate surface waters. (Nitrogen is the basic building block of all proteins. The air in our atmosphere is 78% nitrogen. Soybeans “fix” atmospheric nitrogen from the air circulating in the root zone of the plants via a symbiotic relationship with certain soil bacteria that colonize soybean roots in “nodules”. Therefore soybeans, a very high protein-containing crop, require no nitrogen fertilizer. By contrast, corn requires as much as 1.5 pounds of added nitrogen per bushel of grain yield desired meaning an acre of corn can receive over 200 pounds of added nitrogen fertilizer per season. Additionally, nitrogen fertilizer is one of the highest cost input items farmers must finance every year, and is frequently implicated in surface water contamination should excessive field runoff occur.)

The first round of GMO crop introductions primarily benefitted farmers making pest control easier and more effective. This contributed heavily to the abundance of U.S. crop harvests in recent years. We enjoy higher corn yields than at any time in our history and it is produced on fewer acres than were planted to corn in 1940.

GMO Advancements Underway

Current GMO work is more centered on consumer benefits particularly human health. Golden rice is a great example. Golden rice contains elevated levels of vitamin A which is greatly lacking in the diets of many people in developing nations — particularly children. Vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of blindness responsible for between a quarter of a million and half a million cases of childhood blindness annually mostly in Southeast and Southern Asia. Golden rice contains elevated levels of beta-carotene via genes from corn and a common bacteria giving it a golden color. A single bowl of golden rice con-

cont’d on page 9.
GMOs cont’d from page 8.

Golden rice is owned by the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines and benefits no agribusiness. Just over a month ago activists and demonstrators destroyed a field of golden rice in the Philippines to protest the use, or potential use, of GMOs even to prevent childhood blindness. The field destroyed was to be used for seed increase as golden rice has been researched for over a decade.

Sound and reproducible science should influence our public policies not unproven fears of well-tested technologies.

More Resources

Here are some good, balanced, background in the recent press.

GMO papaya saving the Hawaiian papaya industry from a virus, http://gmoanswers.com/explore?carouselid=0&slideindex=4

Very good article by a former GMO activist. Article discusses pros and cons and is very well-balanced, http://randomrationality.com/2013/03/18/qa-the-lowdown-on-gmos-with-kevin-folta/


American Agri-Women Scholarships Available

Gail McPherson Scholarship for AAW Fly-In is available to any AAW member to attend the annual AAW Fly-In, June 8-11 in Washington, D.C. The applicant may be any age, but may not have attended a past Fly-In. This year the scholarship is for $500, and we will award up to three scholarships at the discretion of the committee. Applications are due April 15th.

The Trenna Grabowski Legacy Kids Fly-In Scholarship is an award for two kids 8-18 years of age, which will pay for the registration fee for the AAW June 8-11 Washington D.C. Fly-In. Eligibility requirement is to be a Legacy Kid member of AAW. Legacy Kids Memberships are available for American Agri-Women members to purchase as gifts to children/young people from birth through age 18.

It was Trenna’s idea through the AAW Resource Center to launch a program to provide a vehicle for AAW members to share their enthusiasm and support agriculture and AAW with young people, while encouraging the ultimate entry of 2 and 3 generation individuals into American Agri-Women.

We are asking applicants to write a story including: 1. What you hope to learn from the Fly-In to Washington D.C.; 2. What I would like to see in Washington D.C.; 3. What is your current background relating to agriculture. Submit your story by April 15th.

Daughters of American Agriculture Scholarships for further education provides two $1,000 scholarships to a farm, ranch and agribusiness woman or her daughter in two categories: the Jean Ibendahl Scholarship for high school graduates age 18 – 23 and the Sister Thomas More Bertels Scholarship for women age 24 years old or older.

These two scholarships are available to women pursuing a degree or credits in ag leadership, communications, rural sociology, medicine or any other courses directly related to agriculture. Applications for each are due June 1st. Applicants must include three letters of recommendation.

Helen Whitmore Memorial Scholarship is for any AAW member to attend the annual AAW Convention held November 6-8, 2014. The applicants may be any age, but cannot have attended a previous convention. This year the scholarship is for $500, and we will award up to three scholarships at the discretion of the committee. Applications are due by August 15th.

MAKE SURE TO INCLUDE ALL PARTS OF THE APPLICATION WHEN YOU SUBMIT IT. NOT INCLUDING ALL PORTIONS WILL DISQUALIFY YOUR APPLICATION. ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM:

Ardath DeWall
11841 N. Mt Vernon Rd.,
Shannon, IL 61078
Tel. 815-864-2561
Email: shannondoah@frontiernet.net

A Verse From Mildred ~

“You'll feel me there when a quiet breeze touches your cheek,
When buds open and apples hang red.
I'll be there when it's time to plant the garden or go Christmas shopping.
I'll be there when the women gather for a meeting or its convention time.
It was a great life--full of laughter. I'm sure the next one will be too.
Sorry, but I gotta go--.”

Mildred V Schultz, Michigan
Agri-Women and AAW member
8-6-1918  ~ 1-6-2014
Ironically, those not (. . .)

(Sheila presented at the 2013 national convention. Here is a condensed version of her presentation.)

By Sheila Marshman, President, New York Agri-Women

spoke about the moral economy and the

our amazing industry, my counter parts

While I spoke about the economics of

in mind.

the 'kids' (meaning the next generation)

sumer, the environment, the cows, and

oped nations. I assured the audience that

consumers spend less than 10% of their

minded the audience that here in the US,

quality, low cost food product. I even re

the US and global consumer with a high

I discussed that our farm families are

doing this all in the name of providing

importance to do well. The opportuni-
ties are endless, set goals, reach goals

and set them again, dream and you can

make your dreams a reality, be passion-

ate about what you want to do and are

doing, and accept the ups and downs in

life. Give back and also to take the time
to have fun in life.

All the comments caused a light to go on, ah—it is the qualities of a farmer that are lost in society, it is not agriculture that is lost. So, I researched qualities of a farmer. And here is what I found – Of the 16 identified personality traits, farmers possess 5, all telling of the true depth of those involved in agriculture.

A capacity for hard work and persever-

ance

Conscientious personality style; Auton-

omy, capacity to make decisionsVigilant

personality style; Great capacity to cope

with adversity; Serious personality style;

Comfort with solitude meaning fully

self-contained; Solitary personality style;

Comfort with a small circle of friends,

with little need for company; Sensitive

personality and based on 16 years of

marriage to a farmer, I decided to add

one of my own...Selective listening (I

am have been told my husband is not a

statistical outlier)

My mind then turned to how do we in-

stil the values, entrepreneurial mindset,
decision making ability, appreciation for

nature, and the risk taking adversity of

farmers into society? Through further

research I found the answer – planting a

garden.

Community gardens build individuals,
social groups, an appreciation for the

natural environment and an understand-
ing of how food is grown. Community
gardens present a promising method of

enhancing the well-being and resilience

of individuals, communities, and the

natural environment. It appears that in

order to bring our society back to the

roots of what we in agriculture believe in

cont’d on page 11.
California precipitation is currently less than 26 percent of average and 25 percent less than the driest year on record (1923-24). Anticipating another dry year, farmers reduced their requests for water by 75 percent in December 2013 for pre-irrigation purposes. Broccoli and iceberg lettuce that should have been harvested in January and early February were almost nonexistent in parts of California’s San Joaquin Valley. Other crops, including bell peppers, cantaloupe, sweet corn, watermelon and processing tomatoes are all likely to see fewer acres, with what little water farmers have at their disposal going to meet the needs of permanent crops, such as almonds, walnuts, pistachios, wine and table grapes.

Currently, it is estimated that about 500,000 acres will be idled this year due to water supply shortages. That translates into crop losses of roughly $1.7 billion and an economic impact through ripple effects of more than $5 billion. Ripple effects are calculated from lost activity in transportation, processing, wholesale, retail, ports and other jobs from the farm to the fork.

Many farmers throughout the state are seeing water supply cuts from 10 percent up to a complete loss of water. Others face added costs to pump groundwater to keep critical permanent crops alive. Unemployment will be up in communities that depend largely on farming for their economic support. We can expect to see unemployment levels reach about 40 percent or so, similar to the impacts in previous water-short years, such as 2009. This year as many as 15,000 farm jobs could be lost, based on data from previous dry years.

Of the 12 major reservoirs in California, only two have sufficient supplies to meet their full demands through the year and those reservoirs are primarily for urban needs. The remaining 10 reservoirs account for 20.5 million acre-feet in storage capacity and are, on average, 35.7 percent full. The lowest is just 19 percent of capacity and with no significant storm systems on the horizon it is unlikely that water supplies will recover to a normal level this year. As recently as 2011 these same reservoirs were at about 80 percent of capacity with year-to-date levels running at 101 percent to 134 percent of the 15-year average. In less than three years California’s water system has been drained to the point where it is now a crisis.

Help in the form of federal drought assistance came recently in an announcement from President Obama. With $100 million in livestock-disaster aid, $60 million to support food banks and $13 million toward programs such as conservation and assistance for rural communities that are at risk of running out of drinking water. Farmers, while appreciative of the assistance, say it doesn’t solve the bigger issues of insufficient storage and an aging conveyance system that put water deliveries at odds with new environmental policies designed to protect fish, such as the Delta smelt and Chinook salmon.

United States Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer also recently introduced legislation that orders federal agencies to exercise the maximum flexibility under the law to pump water from the Delta to water users in Central and Southern California. The proposed legislation doesn’t roll back any environmental regulations or limit the federal Endangered Species Act. It simply says that where agencies have discretion to pump water, they should use their discretion to pump as much as allowable under the law. It instructs the federal Commerce and Interior departments to work with California water officials to maximize water deliveries without harming endangered fish.

The Senate bill comes on the heels of a more strongly worded bill from congressional representatives that puts more restrictions on environmental water use and gives deference to farmers during the current drought emergency.

If the Senate bill passes, both bills will then be addressed in a conference committee to work out differences with the intent on finding a workable compromise.

The full impacts of California’s drought have yet to be felt, including any impacts it may have on retail food costs. California provides almost half of the United States’ fresh fruits and vegetables. Additionally, more than $18 billion in farm products are exported to dozens of countries. That means that a drought in California at the scale underway this year is a drought that will be felt around the world.

Lost Without Each Other

and the qualities that farmers possess we must engage the consumer in the roots.

There are other initiatives taking place here in NY state that bring the consumer and farmer together. This past summer New York’s animal agricultural coalition hosted a birthing center at the NY State Fair. It was a trifecta for a perfect dairy public relations event. Link for video http://www.nyanimalag.org/30-calves-12-days/

With the help of a seemingly innocent panel at a nonagricultural liberal arts college, community gardens, and the NY Animal Agricultural Coalition, many of us have come to realize that society is not lost and agriculture is not lost, but we are lost without each other.
Women’s Ag Leadership Conference in Minnesota Celebrates 16 Years  
Agriculture 2014: Lean In  
Wednesday, April 2, 2014  
(Day Prior to Mid-Year)  
At the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum  
3675 Arboretum Drive, Chaska, Minnesota

Do you know how to lean in and lead? Learn more from great speakers, 12+ breakout sessions, 12+ mini sessions and a variety of networking opportunities.

Registration cost for Agri-Women members  
$30 by March 26/ $40 after March 26  
$15 and $20 for students

Register online at www.womensagleadership.org

Minnesota Agri-Women members will assist those AAW members requiring assistance in their ground transportation needs to get to the conference location.

8 -8:40 a.m. Registration, Networking  
8:45 a.m. Welcome  
Karolyn Zurn, President, Minnesota Agri-Women. MC – Caitlin Keck, Communications Coordinator- Global Forages, Pioneer

9 a.m. General Session –Lean In keynote panel presentation and discussion on women “leaning in” and leading in agriculture  
Kaye Compart, Producer and member of AgStar Board of Directors  
Amy Gales, Executive VP for Regional Agri Business - CoBank  
Sue McCrum, American Agri-Women President  
Heidie Sloot, State FFA Sentinel

9:40 Roundtable discussion on “Lean In”

10 a.m. Report back by tables

10:10 a.m. Wrap up discussion  
10:10-10:25 Break  
10:30-11:15 Lean In mini-sessions  
11:20-12:10 Breakout Session I  
12:15-1:10 Lunch  
Remarks - Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture Dave Frederickson  
11th Annual Agricultural Mentoring Awards recipients of this award honoring outstanding mentors in agriculture will be recognized during lunch

1:15-1:30 Speed Networking  
1:40-2:30 p.m. Breakout Session II  
2:35-2:50 p.m. Break and Networking  
2:55-3:45 p.m. Breakout Session III  
3:50 p.m. Depart- Thank you for joining us!
American Agri-Women presents its second annual Leadership Academy, a free webinar series designed to supplement and sustain our live leadership development events.

**CLASS 1 | MARCH 14TH**

**BUILDING SOCIAL**
CAITLIN KECK, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR - GLOBAL FORAGES, PIONEER

Does your organization want to reach out to a larger audience on a limited budget? Social media channels provide excellent opportunities to connect with more people for less. Let’s discuss how you can establish an effective presence in social media.

**CLASS 2 | APRIL 11TH**

**GETTING WORK DONE THROUGH OTHERS: COACHING AND FEEDBACK PRINCIPLES**
VALERIE VELDE, AREA CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER - PURINA ANIMAL NUTRITION LLC

We will evaluate what motivates each of us and then how to recognize these motivational factors in others to create an environment of action. We will explore how to provide effective feedback in order to stay on track.

**CLASS 3 | JUNE 13TH**

**CULTIVATING VOLUNTEERS’ TALENTS**
CHERYL DAY, FEEDSTUFFS LIVESTOCK EDITOR

Volunteers are valuable to an organization. Valuing their time and talent is essential to retaining them in your organization. Matching an individual’s talent with volunteer roles in an organization can be beneficial to both volunteer and the organization.

**CLASS 4 | AUGUST 8TH**

**ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AGRICULTURAL LEADERS**
SARAH DORNINK, EXEC DIR - MINNESOTA AGRICULTURE EDUCATION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Join us to discuss our next generation of agricultural leaders. We will cover topics for both students at the secondary and post-secondary level, including discussion on mentor programs and offering effective internship opportunities.

**CLASS 5 | OCTOBER 10TH**

**MANAGING THE SOCIAL CLUSTER**
MARIE (BOWERS) STAGG, FARMER AND VICE PRESIDENT OF AGCHAT FOUNDATION

We will discuss tools, tips and tricks on managing different social media platforms while maintaining authenticity. We will also focus on the meanies in the social media world and how to handle them.

**CLASS 6 | DECEMBER 12TH**

**TAILS FROM THE FIELD – HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE AG ADVOCATE**
DORIS MOLD, PRESIDENT – SUNRISE AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATES, LLC

Gain insight on the views of consumers and some positive ways to advocate for agriculture. Discover some inside information on those working against agriculture and some effective ways to neutralize their work.

Registration information available at http://www.americanagriwomen.org/leadership-development-2
Affiliate Best Practices:  
Texas takes on billboard project

The Best Practices series highlights ideas from affiliates that we can learn from and adapt for our own communities as we carry out the AAW mission to be a force for truth.

Here’s how motivation and commitment turned an idea into a public relations success — 45 highway billboards soon to proclaim the goodness of Texas agriculture.

Melody Speer of Texas Agri-Woman says the idea germinated after hearing ag advocates Troy and Stacy Hadrick speak at the 2012 annual convention in Colorado and seeing the success of similar projects in California and Kansas.

“I learned that you can make your heard voice even if you don’t have a lot of funds,” Melody says. So, Melody and Merlynn Verstuyft went to work and started researching and calling — and asking for support. They approached the Lamar billboard company and asked if they would allow Texas Agri-Women to use billboards not currently in use. After some discussions and persuasions, Lamar said yes — allowing them to place messages on 45 billboards across Texas in parts of Oklahoma and Arkansas. They just needed to come up with the cost of producing the vinyl sign that’s placed on the billboard, at $650 per billboard.

Melody and Merlynn went to work again and approached the Texas Dept. of Agriculture. They went back and forth for nearly 6 months before they asked for a meeting. The meeting helped convince the Texas Dept. of Agriculture about the importance of the project — and they pledged $5,000 toward the project as well as are lending graphic design support. They are continuing their fundraising efforts, asking farmers, bankers and other ag supporters for donations.

They hope to start placing billboards in the next month or so. The first billboards will promote the Texas commodities of corn, cotton, beef, wheat and produce/specialty crops. The Texas Agri-Women logo will also be featured on the billboards.

“Farmers and ranchers do a good job raising food and fiber, but we don’t do enough to toot our own horns. We can do something,” says Melody.

Do you have a Best Practices you would like to share? Send in your ideas to communications@americanagriwomen.org.

Monsanto is looking for the next “Farm Mom of the Year”

Nomination Deadline: March 31

Do you know an amazing farm mom? You know… the one who does it all! She takes care of her family, while working every aspect of the farm, volunteering in her community, and even advocating on behalf of the industry she loves. If so, then Monsanto wants to hear from you as nominations for the America’s Farmers Mom of the Year contest are now open.

Nominations for the contest, which is in its fifth year, will be open through March 31, 2014. It’s a shorter nomination window than in years past, so be sure to submit your nominations before the deadline. Whether it’s your own mom, sister, aunt, daughter, friend or community member, anyone can nominate their favorite farm mom for a chance to win up to $10,000!

“Last year we received nominations from 48 different states – all featuring wonderful stories of active and empowered women who make a positive impact on their families, farms and communities,” said Jessica Simmons, corporate marketing director for Monsanto. “We know there are still so many great stories out there to share and more women to recognize, so we want to hear from you.”

To nominate a favorite farm mom, visit AmericasFarmers.com during the nomination period and submit a brief essay online (or by mail) that explains how the nominated farm mom contributes to her family, farm, community and agriculture. Each nomination will be judged based on published criteria by a panel of judges from American Agri-Women, and Monsanto will select five regional winners based on the judging. Each regional winning mom will receive a $5,000 cash prize. Profiles of the regional winners will then be posted to AmericasFarmers.com, where the public can vote for one national winner. Announced just prior to Mother’s Day, the national winning mom will receive an additional $5,000 cash prize above and beyond her regional prize.

“We carefully review every nomination and enjoy reading the phenomenal stories of farm moms who give selflessly to better the world they live in,” says Kris Zilliox, Vice President of Education for American Agri-Women. “We are glad to be part of a program that recognizes the important role women play in agriculture and are looking forward to what the 2014 nominations will bring.”

For more information on the program or for complete eligibility requirements and official contest rules visit AmericasFarmers.com. Interested parties may also send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to America’s Farmers Mom of the Year, Attn: Sue Dillon, 349 Marshall Ave., Ste. 200, St. Louis, MO 63119.
Movers and Shakers in Illinois  Meet Howard Buffett  By Heather Hampton+Knodle

Howard Buffett recently hosted Illinois Agri-Women leadership for a discussion about global food security and conservation practices in Decatur. His personal philosophy adheres closely to, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for life.” This approach guides the foundation’s work to help small holders in becoming more self-sufficient.

We discussed his private foundation’s work in developing countries in Africa as well as its work to match farmers’ donations of grain sales to benefit local food pantries in Illinois and across the United States. Mr. Buffett researches a number of tillage and water management practices on his farmland in central Illinois, Arizona, Nebraska and South Africa to determine best practices for soil conservation and yields in the varied conditions.

His foundation is involved in many projects to encourage political stability and infrastructure development in African countries. He described his foundation’s role in building a hydroelectric dam in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, Mr. Buffett cited many cultural norms that destabilize family and community interactions and may consequently limit any locally-led, sustainable economic development practices in many African nations.

Mr. Buffett is the son of Warren Buffett and has worked with many celebrities to promote issues related to food security, agricultural production, natural resource and specie conservation, and farm labor. His most recent book is, “40 Chances: Finding Hope in a Hungry World.”

$200 Challenge Award  Expand AAW’s network with new affiliates

An anonymous supporter of American Agri-Women believes so much in our mission that she is putting forth a $200 Challenge Award to help AAW grow. The challenge: Promote AAW within your state or your personal network and recruit a new affiliate (five or more members). The reward: A $200 check as a personal gift and thank you for your commitment to the future of AAW.

The challenge runs through Dec. 31, 2014. The goal is 10 new affiliates by the end of the year. Can we do this? Yes, we can do it together!

The originator of the $200 Challenge Award recommends that one way to recruit new affiliates is to write an article on the benefits of AAW membership and submit a personalized version of it to a magazine directed to whichever agricultural organization fits with your crop. For example, if you are a wool producer, find a sheep industry publication and submit the personalize story.

An article template is available on the AAW website, under the “Join Now” tab or by contacting communications@americanagriwomen.org.

AAW joins in effort with American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity

AAW has joined the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity to not enact new rules that could negatively affect the coal-based industry and many families, businesses and manufacturers. The issue was brought forward by an AAW affiliate, the Women’s Mining Coalition. AAW’s action is supported by this position statement: #205, 206 & 207; AAW supports coal development inclusive of new development in refineries. (shortened)

If you have any questions, please contact Karolyn Zurn, chair of AAW’s government affairs and vital issues committee, colzurn@yahoo.com.

The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE) is an organization that is funded by America’s coal-based electric utilities, freight railroads, coal producers, barge and trucking companies and manufacturers that supply the coal-based electricity industry. Please visit us at www.cleancoalusa.org for additional information.
Dear AAW Members,

As AAW members we have all been “Called to Power” to advocate for agriculture in a positive way. An important way to grow this power is to expand it through the recruitment of more members. This is something that we can all take part in by inviting family, friends, neighbors, colleagues…anyone really, with an interest in supporting agriculture. The membership drive committee has done an outstanding job of developing tools and incentives to help us all in our quest for new members please check out the website for more details at http://americanagriwomen.org/join-now.

I challenge every AAW member to recruit at least one new member and then follow-up that recruitment by encouraging that new member and all members to be actively engaged on any level of the organization. Through the recruitment and activation of more members our power and influence will grow and our ability to effectively advocate for agriculture will be enhanced.

We can do it together!

Doris Mold
First Vice President
of Resolutions and Vital Issues

The membership campaign kicks off on Ag Day, March 25, and runs through May 31. Go to the American Agri-Women website (http://americanagriwomen.org/join-now) to download membership recruiting tools including a customizable affiliate news release; affiliate newsletter paragraph; “Rosie” image and more. This year’s membership campaign will include three incentives:

1. Free second-year memberships for three new members, courtesy of AAW

2. $200 award to the affiliate that signs up the most members; courtesy of AAW

3. A special incentive from a supporter who believes in our mission: a $200 “challenge award.” Any supporter of AAW who is able to recruit a new affiliate of five or more members will receive a $200 check as a personal gift to her, as thanks for her efforts.

Questions? Contact Lynn Woolf, communications@americanagriwomen.org.