2014 convention to prepare us to embark on the agricultural year ahead

By Lauren Schwab, Ohio Agri-Women PR Chair

Donnell Scott of Manhattan, Kansas, is the nominee for AAW Vice President of Education. She is a grain, beef and sheep producer. Donnell is a member of the Riley County Livestock Association, Kansas Farm Bureau, Blue Valley Pork Producers and the State 4-H Horse Action Team. She currently serves as Kansas Agri-Women Treasurer and the State 4-H Horse Action Team vice-president. She has served as the Riley County Livestock Association president from 2006-2011 and is a 4-H leader in her club and county. Donnell has attended AAW conventions since 2010.

Donnell currently works for AIB International in Manhattan, Kansas, in the food labeling department. She also works on their farm where they have an 80 head cow/calf operation and a 15 head ewe flock as well as growing, wheat, soybeans, milo and corn.

Oregon Women for Agriculture member Arlene Kovash of Monmouth, Oregon, is the nominee for Friend of Agriculture and Ohio State Representative, Tim Derickson, will welcome everyone to Ohio for an exciting convention.

“Never before has it been so challenging, yet rewarding, to be an American woman in agriculture,” says Lindsay Bowman Sankey, who will tell us of her blogging experiences. Lindsay began writing her blog, Jean’s Boots Are Made For Talking, www.jeansboots.blogspot.com, in 2010 as a way to share the humor of her single life on the farm with the rest of the world. Now, Lindsay continues to blog as she and her Kansas-raised husband, Cody, navigate married life in Indiana and raise purebred Angus, Shorthorn and Hereford cattle.

“With great privilege comes great responsibility, and it is part of our duty to tell our agriculture story. Blogging is one very effective way to open your farm gate to the rest of the world,” says Sankey. Join Lindsay as she presents a workshop on blogging. Learn why sharing your story matters, blogging platforms, the key to making content great and blogging tips for success.

Kristin Reese, local farm mom, blogger, and relator, invites you to share your experience and knowledge about agriculture on social media to create common ground with consumers. Kristin connects with consumers on her blog, www. localfarmmom.com, and is excited to be a part of the CommonGround™ Ohio program because she is passionate about sharing the facts about today’s agriculture with consumers she meets through real estate and Local Flavor Foods. Join Kristin for hands-on social media training to learn how to connect with an online audience and create common ground between women who care about the food on their families’ plates.

Businesswoman Heather Dulle invites you to join her as she discusses the “In’s and Out’s of Social Security” with a special emphasis on women. As Regional Vice President of Protective Life, Dulle knows social security can be a challenging decision one has to make and would like to take this time to educate women on the social security strategies. “As a woman in business myself, I am so looking forward to being able to provide this information to our audience,” says Dulle. Join Heather for a special webinar to discuss Social Security.

Kristin Reese

Donnell Scott

Arlene Kovash

Continued on page 4.
Dear AAW Members,

Convention, Elections, Harvest!

How do you prioritize these three topics? As president of AAW, I encourage all of you to make an effort to attend this year’s American Agri-Women convention hosted by Ohio Agri-Women, November 6-8, 2014. Those are the dates for the convention itself, but plans are underway for a pre-convention tour of the Amish community prior to our AAW convention and a post-convention tour on November 8 with a visit to the U.S. Air Force National Museum.

If this is your first opportunity to attend or your 40th, you will never regret your decision to attend and help launch AAW’s year-long 40th year celebration of American Agri-Women’s existence. Meet some of our founding members and hear what we have accomplished by working together to tell the true stories of agriculture throughout the years.

We would also love to hear from you as to how we can help you tell your story through media contacts, talking with our representatives during our Fly-In in Washington, D.C. or helping you become comfortable educating those in your hometown. I hope to see you there!

Elections!!! Whatever you do, make sure you know the issues that will affect you and make sure you vote in the elections this fall. What a privilege it is to be able to do this. We all have the opportunity to cast the vote that may mean everything to you or your business. Know who is running for office and what they support. Help educate them as to what issues in agriculture will affect you. Let them know how their stand on issues will decide how you will vote.

Water issues are BIG this year. Do they understand the “navigational water” interpretation of the Clean Water Act. Ask someone from California involved with agriculture how regulating underground wells will affect them. EPA regulations? Share your thoughts on food labeling and GMOs. These are just a few issues that candidates should know where you stand. Remember that we are the ones affected by the votes cast in our state and national capitols. Cast your vote in person or by absentee ballot!

Harvest! I love the fall season here in Maine. I am privileged to witness God’s hand at the ever changing colors of our fall foliage. Red, yellow and orange leaves are a brilliant background as we harvest our crops of potatoes, broccoli and grains. The crisp evening air, the cool mornings and warmth of the sun on our backs as we bring in the crops is energizing.

In northern Maine, students still help bring in the crops. What an opportunity to learn a great work ethic and earn good money for a good day’s work! Not only that, these young workers are learning about the agricultural history of our area and what contributes to the economy of the community they live in.

Harvest is crucial for us. The crops are marketed, stored and prayed over. Some of our potatoes are stored for 12 months. Technology has allowed this. But it is the hard work of many family members and loyal workers that allow us to continue year to year.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this letter, Convention, Elections and Harvest!!! Mark your calendars for this year’s AAW convention. Don’t forget to VOTE! May you all have a SAFE and successful harvest.

See you in OHIO in November!

Sue McCrum
# 2014 AAW Convention

## Draft Agenda (subject to change)

### Sunday, November 2nd
- **Varied Arrival Times**
- Arrive for pre-tour to Amish Country

### Monday, November 3rd
- **8:00 am**
  - Pre-Tours Depart Hueston Woods
- **9:00 am**
  - Pre-Tours Depart from Dayton Best Western Plus Hotel

### Tuesday, November 4th
- **Pre-Tours**

### Wednesday, November 5th
- **3:00 pm – 8:00 pm**
  - Registration Opens
- **6:00 pm**
  - Pre-Tours arrive Hueston Woods
- **6:00 pm**
  - Dinner On Your Own
- **7:30 pm – 11:00 pm**
  - Hospitality Suite Open

### Thursday, November 6th
- **7:30 am – 7:30 pm**
  - Registration Open
- **7:30 am – 8:30 am**
  - Breakfast
- **8:30 am – 8:45 am**
  - 40th anniversary opening
- **8:45 am – 9:45 am**
  - Speaker
- **9:45 am**
  - Guest Tour Departs
  - Tour to include: Sod Farm, Lunch, and Erosion Control Blanket Manufacturer
- **9:45 am – 10:45 am**
  - Speaker on Investments
  - Heather Dulle, Regional Vice President, Protective Life
- **10:45 am – 11:30 am**
  - Gov’t Affairs and Vital Issues Mtgs.
- **10:45 am – 11:30 am**
  - Finance, Membership, & Ed Com. Mtgs
- **11:30 am – 12:30 pm**
  - Speaker: Lori Firsdon, Forte Organizers
- **12:30 pm – 1:45 pm**
  - Lunch
- **2:00 pm**
  - Silent Auction Opens
- **2:00 pm – 2:45 pm**
  - Speaker Choices One & Two: TBA
- **2:45 pm – 3:30 pm**
  - Speaker Choice One: Farmer to Farmer
  - Lisa Campion
  - Speaker Choice Two: TBA
- **3:30 pm – 4:00pm**
  - Mentors & First Timers Orientation
- **4:00 pm – 5:30 pm**
  - Town Hall
- **5:00 pm – 6:30 pm**
  - AAW Foundation Board Meeting
- **5:30pm-6:30 pm**
  - Introduction of Executive Com. Nominees
- **6:30 pm**
  - Dinner On Your Own (transportation begins at this time)
  - Hueston Woods Lodge restaurant open from 5:30-8:00 pm
- **6:30 pm – 7:30 pm**
  - Joint AAW EC and Foundation Board Meeting
- **7:00 pm – 8:30 pm**
  - Affiliate President’s Caucus
- **8:30 pm – 9:30pm**
  - BYOB (Bring Your Own Blog)
  - Lindsey Bowman
- **7:30 pm – 11:00 pm**
  - Hospitality Suite Open

### Friday, November 7th – Daily Attire: Red White and Blue Day
- **8:00 am – 10:30 am**
  - Registration Open
- **7:30 am – 8:30 am**
  - Breakfast

### Saturday, November 8th – Daily Attire: represent your home state
- **8:00 am – 5:30 pm**
  - Trade Show Open
- **7:30 am – 8:30 am**
  - Breakfast
- **8:00 am – 9:30 am**
  - Speaker: Larry Gearhardt, Asst Professor and Field Specialist in Taxation at The Ohio State University
- **9:15-9:30**
  - Break
- **9:30 am – 10:15 am**
  - AAW Convention Opening Ceremonies w/ flags
- **10:30 am**
  - Welcome to Ohio Speaker—State Representative Tim Derickson,
  - Flag Ceremony and National Anthem
  - Pick up Boxed Lunches, Pictures at the Bridge, Depart for Tours
  - Tour One: Filbrun’s Organic Farm, Stockslagers, and Ethanol Plant
  - Tour Two: Miller Coors, Hamilton City Water, and Rumpke Sanitary Landfill
  - Tour Three: Jungle Jim’s, Vonderhaar’s Market & Catering, and Benson Street Shopping Area
- **6:00 pm**
  - Arrive for reception at Barn and Bunk
- **6:30 pm – 8:30 pm**
  - Dinner, Auction and Entertainment
- **8:30 pm**
  - Buses depart Barn and Bunk
- **9:00 pm – 11:00 pm**
  - Hospitality Suite Open

### Sunday, November 8th
- **8:30 am – 9:00 am**
  - Worship Service
- **9:45 am**
  - Depart for Post-Convention Tour to Air Force Museum
forward to help educate my fellow women in business,” says Dulle, “I have been so excited to teach the Agri-Women about spousal benefits, when to take social security, divorce benefits and widow benefits.”

**Lori Firsdon**

of Forte Organizers will help you

“Master the Mess: Organize Your Office.” Turn your office space into a productive oasis instead of a stressful, clutter-strewn mess. You’ll learn to reclaim your space and utilize your newly functional office. You’ll learn strategies to keep your office organized and well-tuned. Firsdon will teach you how to rescue your desktop and workspace from unnecessary clutter, organize your office play-by-play and the five key questions to ask when deciding what to keep.

**Corinne Alexander**, Associate Professor for the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University, will discuss the 2015 Agricultural Outlook. According to Alexander, American agriculture is on track for record production. “Farmers and agribusiness managers need to be thinking about what to plant in 2015. Looking forward to the next 5 years, farmers will need to decide which safety net best fits their operation.” says Alexander.

Upon diving into the agricultural outlook, join **Larry Gearhardt**, Field Specialist on Taxation and Assistant Professor at The Ohio State University, to ask, “Should I buy That New Tractor?” According to Gearhardt, the future of taxes in the United States has never been so uncertain.

“Agriculture is the foundation upon which the rest of the economy is built. Global influences determine our productivity and profit. Fewer people, especially legislators, understand the need for sound farm policy. I feel privileged to be a part of this industry and help, in some small way, to educate and inform those who are working the farm,” says **Gearhardt**.

As Agri-Women, we unite to advance agriculture in our country. Join fellow woman in agriculture, **Julie Borlaug**, Assistant Director of Partnerships for the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and granddaughter of the late Dr. Norman E. Borlaug. Since the passing of her grandfather, Julie has worked to continue his legacy through developing agricultural partnerships between public, private and philanthropic groups to further the Borlaug legacy and expand upon his mission to feed the world’s hungry.

Ohio Agri-Women prepares you to unite, educate and be an advocate for agriculture during the 2014 AAW Convention at Hueston Woods Lodge!

**Speakers, continued from page 1.**

Nominees, continued from page 1.

for AAW Secretary. She is a cattle, hay and oats producer. She is a member of the Benton County Farm Bureau where she has served 12 years as secretary. She is a member of the Polk County Women for Ag where she has served eight years as president and is currently vice president. Arlene served three years as president of Oregon Women for Ag. She has served as VP of Communications and has been a long time editor of The Voice, the AAW newsletter. She has attended all AAW meetings and fly-ins since 1996, with the exception of three.

Arlene is a columnist for her local paper. She is a member of the Pedee Church, where she was the church treasurer for 20 years and the church secretary for a year. She is an experienced computer user and has attended the Syngenta Leadership at its Best Conference.

Arlene also teaches quilting at two local quilt shops and has written two cookbooks.

**The AAW Resource Center/Foundation has three nominees.**

Katie Yost from Montana Agri-Women is nominated for her second term. She is currently serving as Treasurer for the Resource Center/Foundation and Secretary of Montana Agri-Women. She has been attending AAW Conventions since 2007.

Rose Tryon VanCott of California Women for Agriculture is also nominated for her second term on Resource Center/Foundation and Secretary of Montana Agri-Women. She has attended the Syngenta Leadership at its Best Program.

Janell Reid is nominated for her first term on Resource Center/Foundation. She is a beef producer and is president of Colorado Agri-Women. She is a member of the Colorado Independent Cattle Growers, Lincoln County Cattle Women, Colorado Cattle Women, and CKL Stock Growers Association. She is very active in her church and community.

Julie with her grandfather Norman Borlaug

Julie with her grandmother Dorothy Ponsart

Julie with her father, Norman Borlaug，Jr.
2014 AAW Convention Registration  
November 6-8, 2014,  
Hueston Woods State Park Lodge,  
College Corner, Ohio  

To make Reservations, please call 513-664-3500

Name: ___________________________  Affiliate: ___________________________

Address: ___________________________  City/State/Zip ___________________________

Cell Phone: ___________________________  Email: ___________________________

Voting Member of AAW? ____Yes ____ No  Are you a first time attendee? ____Yes ____ No

Spouse/Guest: ___________________________  Phone: ___________________________

REGISTRATION:  

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Tours (See Tour Descriptions on next page)  

Monday, 11/3- Wednesday 11/5: Amish Country bus Tour @ $100/person (hotel and meals on own)  

Thursday 11/6: Spouse/Guest Tour –  
       Green Prairie Sod Farm, Hall Farms Straw Blanket Manufacturer  

Friday Tours 11/7: Choose a first, second and third choice tour:  

Tour 1: Morning Sun Farm, Stockslager’s Greenhouse & Andersons Ethanol Plant  

OR Tour 2: Rumpke Landfill, Hamilton City Water and Miller Coors Brewery  
*Date of Birth___________*Social Security #: ________________  
(*We must have this information for security clearance at the water plant)  

OR Tour 3: Jungle Jims International Market, Von derhaar’s Market and Catering  

SUNDAY: Post-Convention Tour $25/person  
       National Museum of the United States Air Force -Meals on your own  

TOTAL $ _____________  

How will you be traveling to the 2014 AAW Convention? ** Check one:  

__ Car   That is all we need to know.  If this changes please let us know ASAP by calling or texting Beth Fornshell at 937-533-7009  

__ Plane (must fly into Dayton International Airport to use the complementary shuttle)  
       Arrival Airline__________________  Flight # into Dayton_______ Arrival time_______ Date_______  
       Departure Airline________________ Flight # out of Dayton_____ Departure Time_______ Date_______  

(**We must have this information for complementary shuttle to and from the Dayton Airport)  

Do you want us to find you a roommate? Yes No  

Special Needs or Requests _____________________________ ___________________________________  

Make checks payable to OAW and mail registration form to Rachael Vonderhaar, Convention Treasurer, 4636 St Rt 725 West., Camden, Ohio 45311  

SHUTTLE INFORMATION: Complementary Shuttle provided by the Hueston Woods Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.  

Please fill out requested travel information on the registration fully so we can schedule the shuttles in an effective manner.
AAW convention tours information

Pre Convention Amish Tour November 3-5:
Capture the essence of Amish living and tour Ohio’s Amish Country with OAW. Our pre-convention tour will include touring the Amish area, attending a local livestock auction and flea market, Amish restaurants, and awesome shopping opportunities!


Please contact the Best Western Plus in Dayton, Ohio for November 2nd accommodations at 937-832-2222. The AAW rate is $65.99. This Best Western has a complimentary Shuttle from the Dayton Airport. Please contact the Comfort Suites in Berlin, Ohio at (330) 893-7400 to make your hotel reservations for November 3rd & 4th. Room charges are $79.99 per night. Please let hotel personnel know that you are with the AAW group. Those attending will be given the itinerary but we will leave by 8:30 am Monday, November 3.

Spouse and Guest Tour Thursday, November 6:
We will start off the day at Green Prairie Sod Farms. They are a multi-generation family farm near Hueston Woods. They have supplied more than 10 million square feet of sod to golf courses, landscapers, builders and developers. We will then tour Hall Farms, a supplier of erosion control products. They are a premium manufacturer of straw blankets and straw wattles. Lunch will be provided.

Tour One Friday, November 7:
We will tour Morning Sun Farm owned and operated by Dale and Evelyn Filbrun. They are an organic farm that direct markets to consumer at the farm and at seven Farmer’s Markets. We will also go to Stocklager’s Greenhouse and Garden Center, the area’s largest grower of top quality bedding plants, fall mums and poinsettias.

We will conclude our tour by going to Anderson’s Ethanol plant. This, the largest ethanol facility in Ohio, opened in 2008. They need 40 million bushels of corn to produce 350,000 tons of DDGs and 110 million gallons of ethanol each year.

Tour Two Friday, November 7:
We will tour Miller Coors Brewery that opened in 1991. It is a 1,100-acre facility that provides jobs for 560 employees and brews 11 million barrels of beer a year. From there we will travel to the Hamilton Municipal Water department. This is the water system that is used at Miller Coors. After this we will tour Rumpke Landfill. Rumpke is a family owned and operated business that purchased this site in 1950. Rumpke owns more than 800 acres at the site much of which is used as a buffer area.

Tour Three Friday, November 7:
We will tour Jungle Jim’s International Market. It is more than a grocery store; it’s a destination. With more than 200,000 square feet of shopping space in each of their stores, there are over 150,000 products from which to choose. From there we are going to go to Vonderhaar’s Catering. Don Vonderhaar Sr. bought the small market in which he worked in 1969. Their business started with approximately 1100 square feet and today has grown to over 14,000 square feet and a catering business.

Post Convention Air Force Museum Tour, Sunday, November 9:
The National Museum of the U.S. Air Force is the destination of our 2014 post-convention tour. The National Museum of the United States Air Force collects, researches, conserves, interprets and presents the Air Force’s history, heritage and traditions, as well as today’s mission to fly, fight and win . . . in Air, Space and Cyberspace to a global audience through engaging exhibits, educational outreach, special programs, and the stewardship of the national historic collection. More information can be found at: http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/

Bring your silent auction items to convention
As you plan your trip to the 2014 convention, don’t forget about bringing an item for the Silent Auction. Over the years, our silent auctions have raised thousands of dollars to support AAW’s many programs.

Any and all goodies and gifts make great items for the auction — including items that show off your state, commodity or your talents!

Resolution marking American Agri-Women’s 40th anniversary
The following resolution will be presented at the 2014 annual convention in Ohio:

Whereas, the first coalition meeting for the organization that became American Agri-Women was held in 1974 and the first chartering meeting was held in 1975, now, therefore, be it resolved that the 2014 annual convention in Ohio will begin the 40th anniversary celebration for American Agri-Women, with the culmination of this impressive milestone at the 2015 convention in Maine.
Eleanor Zimmerlein of LaMoille, Illinois, was honored at this year’s Illinois State Fair by her fellow Illinois Agri-Women. She was nominated as the fourth inductee into the Illinois Agri-Women Hall of Fame for her tireless efforts in promoting agriculture. Eleanor was presented with the LEAVEN award in 1996, AAW’s highest honor for members.

Illinois Agri-Women member Shirley Bartelt wrote this for her nomination:

“Eleanor Zimmerlein is listed in the dictionary under ‘relentless advocate for agriculture.’ It was not until the passing of her husband that Eleanor devoted her time to fight for farmers. It all started with a simple letter to the editor at the Chicago Tribune, which they published. After that one simple act, Eleanor has devoted her time to fighting for agriculture.

“She fights for what she believes through organizational membership including Illinois Agri-Women, Lee County and Illinois Farm Bureau, CFAR, Soil & Water Conservation District State Advisory Group, Illinois Association of Drainage Ditches, the Upper Mississippi Illinois and Missouri River Association, District Legislative Ag Advisory committee, Conservation Congress and the Lee County board.

“She has held many organizational leadership positions including president and legislative chair of Illinois Agri-Women, Natural Resources advisor and Land Use chair of American Agri-Women, Lee County Farm Bureau Board of Directors and Governmental and Local Affairs Committee, Activator District trustee, and Grassroots Issue Teams and Action Teams.

“And always remember: We CAN Do It Together!

Eleanor is a role model for many, and should be a role model for many more. She doesn’t volunteer and do the work that she does because she wants recognition, but that is exactly why she deserves to be honored.

“Eleanor is currently a retired farmer. However, she is still actively involved with the farming operation with her son, Howard. She has three children, Howard Zimmerlein (Lois), Bernice (Kendall) Keutzer and Rita (Norman) May. She is a graduate of Mendota High School and Illinois Valley Community College.”

More about the Illinois Agri-Women Hall of Fame

The Illinois Agri-Women Hall of Fame award was created at the request of then Director of Illinois Agriculture, Tom Jennings. Director Jennings asked IAW to initiate a process to surface nominees for the Hall of Fame. Eleanor joins several other distinguished women including Jean Ibendahl, Joyce Watson, and Trenna Grabowski.

In addition to being recognized at the annual Ag Day luncheon at the Illinois State Fair, photographs of the award winners are kept in the Department of Agriculture’s main administrative building in Springfield.
Western Nebraska Agri-Women promote home-grown roots

By Kay Grote, Gering Citizen

The lawn in front of the livestock barn at the Scotts Bluff County Fairgrounds was hopping with activities recently as women dressed in green T-shirts assisted children with tractor driving, roping, sorting beans and animal anatomy.

Members of Western Nebraska Agri-Women took the opportunity to teach children and their parents ag facts while promoting their organization and advocating on behalf of the region’s farmers and ranchers.

“We just want to get the word and the truth out about agriculture,” said member Elaine Pile. The local affiliate of American Agri-Women was chartered in Scottsbluff in May 2012. With 12 active members, the group meets monthly to discuss agriculture topics and develop ways to educate and communicate about agriculture to others within the community. The group’s objectives include using their knowledge to provide the agriculture industry with strong public relations outlets, to help influence policy and legislation that is of concern to the local agricultural industry, to serve as a communication link-up for farm and ranch women and organizations interested in the well being of the industry, and to promote educational programs to advance the interest and welfare of agriculture.

The group also hosted a candidates’ forum on Saturday during the fair. Local candidates spoke about current legislation and their views related to agriculture issues.

Members of Western Nebraska Agri-Women hosted farm and ranch activities at the Scotts Bluff County Fair last week as a way to introduce the public to agriculture. Pictured from left are Janeene Brown with daughter Mattie, Becca Tompkins with daughter Dyllen, Elaine Pile, Marsha Rogers, and Jessica Johnson along with some little visitors in the front. Photo by Kay Grote, Gering Citizen.

Pork Checkoff seeks nominees for board

The Pork Checkoff’s board of directors is now accepting nominations to fill five three-year terms that will begin July 2015. Nominees may be submitted by state pork producer associations, farm organizations or anyone who pays the Pork Checkoff, including pig farmers and pork importers.

The application deadline is Nov. 1, 2014, with interviews for each candidate to be held in Des Moines Dec. 11-12, 2014. Please direct application requests and questions to the National Pork Board by mail to 1776 NW 114th St., Clive, Iowa 50325. Or contact Teresa Wadsworth at (515) 223-2612 or at TWadsworth@pork.org.
Minnesota and North Dakota Agri-Women’s Harvest of Knowledge Conference committee have finalized the program for their 32nd annual conference to be held October 24, 2014, in Grand Forks, ND, at the Ramada Inn.

Leading the conference are Troy and Stacy Hadrick, Advocates for Agriculture from South Dakota. They find that by telling their own story they are not only educating people about agriculture they are also combatting the negativity toward agriculture and they will encourage us to do the same.

We will be having lunch with “the lost Italian” – Tony Nasello of Sarello’s Restaurant & Wine Lounge, Moorhead. Tony will be presenting the Grape Report – tips on pairing of the local North Dakota and Minnesota wines. You can see Tony as a guest on the North Dakota Today Show and listen to his radio show, Live with the lost Italian.

Our panel this year is GMOs – Start to Finish. Our panel members include Rob Proulx, Lecturer from UMC; Val Wagner, farmer, mother, and Ag blogger of Monango, North Dakota; and Rachel Tessier, dietician from Altru – Grand Forks. We will learn of the technology approval process, the farmer – mother prospective and the nutritional values between GMO and non-GMO food.

Polk County Sheriff, Barb Erdman, will speak to us on being safe and things we can do to avoid dangerous situations and how to protect and defend ourselves in the event we find ourselves in one. Her presentation is titled Self-defense 101.

The busy holidays do not have to stress us out and Jill Carlson, Crookston, Minnesota psychologist, will be “De-stressing the Holidays” for us so we can fully enjoy ourselves and the holidays.

For information, contact Donna Ulseth, 218-926-5651, or Karen Landman, 701-326-4523, or on facebook at Agri-Women’s Harvest of Knowledge Conference.

The conference is sponsored in part by a grant from the Small Grains Institute and contributions from many area businesses and grower associations.
Affiliate Best Practices:

Touring agriculture in California

Ruth Jensen of California Women for Agriculture serves as Food Safety Chair and on AAW’s Media and Promotions Committee. She works for Santa Barbara County’s Agriculture Commissioner’s office. Ruth shares information regarding how she advocates for agriculture by arranging tours. 

“I love to arrange for educational tours. As part of my work here at the Ag Commissioner’s office and with the constant theme of awareness, education and outreach, I search out tour opportunities and include policymakers, agricultural leaders, community executives and media in the invites. This past October, I invited about a dozen executives to a “meet & greet” luncheon. It was such a hit that we now meet every month in different venues around the county. This allows different invitees the opportunity to participate without them having to drive long distances. The luncheons are kept to about 12-15 people so that relationships can grow and we can share hot topics with trust and ease.”

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

Ruth Jensen (front row, third person from the left) arranged for area leaders and executives to tour the farm and dairy operations at a federal penitentiary. With 3,400 inmates and a very small budget, the penitentiary feeds their population as well as several other federal prisons in California. Inmates earn the privilege of working on the prison farm.

Register online for the convention by visiting the AAW website and clicking on the meetings button.
FDA Deputy Commissioner comments on key provisions of proposed FSMA rules

By Ruth Jensen, Food Safety Director

Often times we are asked to participate in a “Call to Action” effort on a piece of legislation or regulation that will affect us in some way. I recall not too long ago the effort to stop the Department of Labor from imposing a regulation prohibiting youth from working on farm equipment. Many organizations such as American Agri-Women, Farm Bureau and others across the nation lifted their voices, pens and finger tips in communicating their views and made a difference.

Such has happened again with the regulatory language being proposed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s proposed regulations for the 2010 Food Safety Modernization Act that was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama on January 4, 2011. After three years of writing language for proposed rules, receiving comments, holding workshops and other forms of communications, FDA has determined that they need to go back to the drawing board. FDA Deputy Commissioner for Foods and Veterinary Medicine, Michael Taylor recently penned the following message that clearly illustrates the importance of letting your voices be heard when policy is being designed:

“FDA appreciates and takes very seriously the extensive input we have received from produce farmers and others in the agricultural sector on the proposed FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) rules on produce safety and preventive controls for human food, which we published in January 2013. We have made every effort to solicit input on the proposed rules, not only through the standard rulemaking process, but also by participating in more than 150 meetings and by travelling to numerous farms of varying types and sizes from Maine to California. To ensure broad input and facilitate constructive dialogue with the produce community, FDA has extended the comment periods on the proposed rules three times.

Based on our discussions with farmers, the research community and other input we have received, we have learned a great deal, and our thinking has evolved. Everyone shares the goal of ensuring produce safety, but, as we said at the beginning of the process, the new safety standards must be flexible enough to accommodate reasonably the great diversity of the produce sector, and they must be practical to implement.

“To achieve this goal, we believe that significant changes will be needed in key provisions of the two proposed rules affecting small and large farmers. These provisions include water quality standards and testing, standards for using raw manure and compost, certain provisions affecting mixed-use facilities, and procedures for withdrawing the qualified exemption for certain farms. We have heard the concern that these provisions, as proposed, would not fully achieve our goal of implementing the law in a way that improves public health protections while minimizing undue burden on farmers and other food producers.

“Because the changes to the key provisions would be significant, FDA plans to propose revised rule language and seek comment on it, allowing the public the opportunity to provide input on our new thinking. There may be other revisions to the proposed rules; the scope of the revised proposals, on which we will seek further comment, will be determined after we complete our initial review of written comments. We believe that this additional step to seek further input on revised sections of the proposed rules that need significant adjustment is critical to fulfilling our continuing commitment to getting these rules right.

Our plan is to publish revised proposed rule language by early summer 2014. We will accept additional comments only on those sections of the proposed rules that have been revised. FDA remains under a court order regarding the timelines for finalizing these rules. FDA recognizes that completing these rules is essential to protecting the public health and is committed to completing them as quickly as possible.

“It is gratifying to FDA that in our meetings around the country, we have received broad support for moving forward in implementing FSMA in a timely manner in light of its important food safety and public confidence goals. Thanks to all of you who have worked with us. We will continue this collaborative approach as we move down the pathway to final rules and to full implementation of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act in the years to come.”

PLEASE NOTE:

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration are in the regulatory process where the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is concerned. The comment period deadline will be revised for the rewrite of regulatory language. At this time, we are waiting until the NEW PROPOSED REGULATIONS are released. However, FDA is taking comments for other pieces of the Regulations. You can see which by going to this link:

http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm261689.htm

Ohio Agri-Women member travels to Japan

Lauren Schwab of Ohio Agri-Women traveled with the International Collegiate Agricultural Leadership (I-CAL) program to Japan May 21 to May 30. I-CAL is a joint program of the National FFA Organization and the U.S. Grains Council (USGC), and was made possible through support from The Grains Foundation. Schwab was among 12 agricultural students and National FFA Alumni from across the country selected to participate. While in Japan, program participants increased their understanding of global agriculture and witnessed the role U.S. agriculture plays in the global economy.

Schwab works as the farrowing house manager for Schwab Family Farm, an 850 sow farrow-to-wean operation in Somerville, Ohio. She is a freelance journalist and blogs about life on the farm. She graduated from Miami University with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Women’s Studies and Master of Science in Family Studies. Her experience in Japan allowed her to learn more about international trade and Japan’s demand for safe quality food.

As the number one importer of U.S. pork, Japan plays a major influence on her career as a pork producer.

Schwab learned Japan has much opportunity for growth in agricultural technology and continued trade partnership with the United States. “Today we realize that agriculture is more than just the farm. Agriculture influences every profession and we all need to work together to ensure agriculture as a profession, industry and way of life continues to prosper.

Experiencing international agriculture aids in my plan to help ensure this continuance by helping give American farmers a voice,” says Schwab. Visit Schwab’s blog at www.farmgirlwithcurls.com.

Soy checkoff is looking for leaders

The 70 U.S. soybean farmer-volunteers who serve on the national soy checkoff and the many others who serve on their state checkoff boards are just like every soybean farmer — they invest one half of 1 percent of the net market price of the soybeans they sell each year in research and promotion programs that help their industry thrive. Half of those dollars go to their own states’ checkoff programs, the other half funds programs to grow and promote the industry on a global level.

Now, the United Soybean Board and the 31 state boards are taking a renewed focus alongside USDA to engage more women farmers in the soy checkoff family. There are many ways to get involved – either a little or a lot – as a board member or in other checkoff activities.

If you are interested in learning more about how to get involved with your state soybean board, call Ginger Merritt at 314-236-6906 or toll-free at 888-235-4332. You can also contact your state directly.

Will we visit your state in 2016?

Are you interested in hosting the 2016 convention? Think about it and talk with your fellow affiliate members, then contact President Sue McCrum at president@americanagriwomen.org for information about the application process.
Five Ways to Improve Our Organizations

By Nancy Kavazanjian

United States farmers are a diverse group, and that’s what makes our country a world leader in agricultural exports. But a lack of diversity within our farm organizations — especially when it comes to women in leadership roles — is drawing concern from regulators of these checkoff organizations.

As the latest census data show, an estimated 30 percent of U.S. farmers are women, yet the majority of our farm organizations don’t show that much diversity.

So where are our women farmers? My experience tells me they’re busy. For starters, they are raising children and caring for other family members. And when they’re not feeding calves, driving tractors, balancing farm books, running households and handling other farm tasks, the great majority of farm women today work off-farm jobs to provide their families steady income and medical benefits. In fact, the latest census data also show that only 12 percent of women identify themselves as the primary operators and the majority of those are small farms, with off-farm incomes.

Several national organizations, such as the United Soybean Board on which I serve, are working to raise awareness of the issue and encouraging all groups to approach the issue more intentionally. Meanwhile, there are also steps all farmers can take to encourage more participation by women, members of minority groups and younger people. Here are five ideas for starters:

1. **Get involved in your commodity organizations.** Farm organizations start at the grassroots level and work up, but even now, we have few young farmers, women or minorities serving at county and state levels. Don’t wait to be asked and don’t downplay your abilities and accomplishments. Most of these organizations have leadership training programs for on-the-job learning.

2. **Find a mentor.** Mentors can help you adjust, find your way and become a productive member of the team more easily. As an added benefit, it also can help focus and develop leadership skills in those doing the mentoring so don’t be afraid to ask. If the organization doesn’t have a formal mentoring program, offer to start one!

3. **Build a Support System.** Look for like-minded individuals within the organization and develop informal, on-going communication. If necessary, go outside for people you can share your concerns with and bounce ideas off.

4. **Unleash your full power.** Don’t let other board members or staff lock you into old fashioned stereotypes. Just because you’re a woman doesn’t mean you should be the group’s secretary — unless of course that’s the natural progress to the top. Don’t be afraid to stretch and volunteer for a variety of experiences.

5. **Join the conversation, but make sure it stays civil.** You may have to work at being heard, so make sure to add your voice. Don’t ever think your opinions are less valuable than any others and never be afraid to speak up when you hear offensive remarks, even when presented as jokes. Sexist, ethnic or other off-colored jokes should never be tolerated.

Diversity of perspectives and opinions is important for the long-term success of not just our farm organizations, but of the entire country’s vast and constantly evolving agricultural industry. That’s why it’s more important than ever to step up, volunteer to serve and make your voice heard. With your help we can lead the change to make our farm organizations a place where everyone feels appreciated and encouraged to participate.

As recently departed author and former U.S. poet laureate Maya Angelou noted, “In diversity there is beauty and there is strength.”

For information on getting involved in your state soy checkoff board, contact Ginger Merritt at ginger.merritt@osbornbarr.com, or by calling 314-236-6906.

Nancy Kavazanjian is a Wisconsin crop farmer from Beaver Dam, a director on the United Soybean Board, vice chair of the U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance and a member of the Wisconsin Women in Agriculture. Contact her via email to Nkavy55@gmail.com. She is shown here with her daughter Danielle.
**Lisa Campion Travels to Uganda for Farmer-to-Farmer Program**

American Agri-Women member Lisa Campion recently traveled to Uganda for 21 days as part of the Farmer-to-Farmer Program. American Agri-Women has partnered with Catholic Relief Services, who administers the USAID Farmer to Farmer Program in East Africa, as its first international grant program. The Farmer-to-Farmer (FTF) program promotes economic growth, food security, and agricultural development in East Africa.

Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the five-year program matches the technical assistance of U.S. farmers, agribusinesses, cooperatives, and universities to help farmers in developing countries improve agricultural productivity, access new markets, and increase their incomes.

Lisa is past president of Sigma Alpha Sorority and is an attorney with Martin & Associates in Barre, Vermont. She shares this about her time in Uganda, “Every day for 11 days, I worked with the Barr Orphans, Widowers and Widows (BOWW) Cooperative Society to build their capacity in leadership and management training. Over the 11 days, I trained almost 500 people, of which 350 were women. I learned that, in order to make a difference in someone’s life, you need to try to experience it for yourself, determine potential solutions, and then work with them to give them the tools they need to succeed.”

If you are interested in volunteering, please apply at [http://farmertofarmer.crs.org/](http://farmertofarmer.crs.org/) as soon as possible. Once you apply, your application will be reviewed and then you will be placed in a database of volunteers. Lisa recommends using an AAW reference and listing AAW on your application. If a scope of work is developed and you meet the qualifications, Catholic Relief Services will contact you to determine if you are interested. Check online at [http://farmertofarmer.crs.org/](http://farmertofarmer.crs.org/) for new scope of work descriptions that are posted as they are developed. Current assignments are also listed on the AAW website.
Genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) are the result of 35 years of science and have over 20 years of commercial success. Even European farmers and scientists agree they’re perfectly safe, leaving only urban organic activists on both sides of the Atlantic standing in the way of this vital agricultural technology.

Contrary to all the negative propaganda, GMOs are not all about pesticides and higher yields. Golden Rice is just one of a handful of new GMO crops that could help millions in the Third World by preventing blindness and death due to Vitamin-A deficiency. But it remains in regulatory limbo thanks to tax-funded lobbying by organic activists based on the claim it will contaminate organic rice, which is patently absurd.

But rather than confront this disinformation, people like Republican Rep. Mike Pompeo are planning to give organic activists a national, voluntary GMO labelling system that will include an even stricter regulatory apparatus for new GMO crops and a threshold level for GMO content. Activists have been demanding a law like this for quite some time, seeking to confirm their claim that there is something wrong with GMOs, and very nearly got everything they wanted when Democrat Sen. Barbara Boxer proposed a similar bill last year but failed to get it passed.

Everyone knows how the City of New York tried limiting the size of soft drink its citizens could be trusted with, and that the courts struck it down. American law makers should not make it their business to “babysit” citizens.

Food labeling, just like food safety, should never be directed by whim or popular vote.

And yet, we’re about to see a threshold-limit put on GMO ingredients across North America, with not a shred of evidence of any consequence resulting from growing or consuming GMOs. And you can rest assured that organic farmers won’t hesitate to sue their neighbors when organic crops are found to have GMO content above that level, whatever it is determined to be. Is this America? Or Europe? Why do we need this GMO labelling law?

Food labeling, just like food safety, should never be directed by whim or popular vote. Labels are either mandatory and driven by science, like warning labels on cigarettes, or they’re driven by the free market, like the term “hybrid” on a gas/electric car. New laws are not required in either case.

But, Vermont just passed the first “clean” GMO labeling bill in America, and Oregon became home to the sixth county in America to ban GMOs. And so Pompeo seeks to saddle us with more law. Rather than respond directly to threats like these from organic activists at the local level, he’s being egged on by nearly every farm and food organization in the land to risk abandoning America’s leadership role in agriculture with a rejigged version of Boxer’s failed GMO labelling bill.

So get ready to negotiate with people who claim GMO farmers are poisoning our children and the environment, and who believe there are too many people on the planet, without any evidence for either claim.

Mischa Popoff is a former organic farmer and USDA-contract organic inspector and is the author of Is it Organic? Popoff spoke at the 2014 AAW Symposium at Fly-In.

Register online for the convention by visiting the AAW website and clicking on the meetings button.
Capture the country for AAW photo contest

Here are three reasons you should enter AAW’s 2014 Photo Contest.
1. Show off our beautiful country.
2. Show off your photographic talents.
3. Raise money for AAW’s Resource Center

The winning photos will be made into greeting cards, with the proceeds from the card sales going to AAW’s Resource Center. The Resource Center funds many AAW projects.

The deadline is October 10, with a maximum of three entries per person. Please send your photos to Lori Bammerlin, ag06grad@yahoo.com, with the subject line “AAW photo contest.”

Below is one of last year’s winning photos. It was taken by Darcy Kirk, Oregon Women for Agriculture.