New Executive Committee Candidates Announced

By Rachael Vonderhaar, AAW nominating committee chair

The nominating committee has recommended three candidates for the following positions on the executive committee: Heather Hampton-Knodle, first vice president of resolutions and vital issues; Jane Marshall, vice president of communications; and Denise Gentsch, treasurer.

Heather Hampton-Knodle of Fillmore, Ill., has been a member of American Agri-Women and Illinois Agri-Women since 1995. She has served as an elected officer in both organizations. She grew up raising Angus cattle and walking beans near Windsor, Ill.

She and her husband, Brian, married in 1996 and they raise corn, soybeans and soft red winter wheat. They are also in the business of raising their four children, ages 13, 10, 8 and 6. and some 4-H project goats, a miniature horse, a few Angus cattle and the hay to feed the livestock.

Heather’s professional background includes running her own business that specializes in marketing for small agribusiness firms and association management for several grassroots organizations. She was the founding

Drive Across America Heading to Convention

Our Drive Across America has now traveled more than 10,000 miles and is making its way back east to Portland, Maine, for the 2015 convention. The countryside has been nothing short of breathtaking as the Drive recently traveled through the farmland, prairies, mountain ranges, grasslands, deserts, vineyards and orchards of such states as Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, California, New Mexico, Arizona and Texas.

It’s been so good to meet with our members. How proud you are of your farms and states! Our drivers have appreciated all the hospitality as we’ve enjoyed your home-cooked meals and a good night’s rest in your homes.

Sue McCrum, our president, shared her memories of the Drive so far and what has meant the most to her:

“Consumers are well informed as...
Hello, friends!

Here I sit at an airport! No surprise there. I’m travelling west to meet up with our Drive Across America pickup. This has been an incredible four months! What a privilege it has been promoting agriculture as I begin the last leg of AAW’s Drive Across America.

We have reached the West Coast and have travelled south through California, headed for our destinations through the Southwest and, ultimately, back to Maine. I am often asked, “What has been the best part of the Drive?” I have seen some incredible beauty. Diverse crops. The Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Mountain tops, where the views are endless. Colorado, Wyoming and parts of Montana were celebrating the spring and summer rains. The “Ole’ Home on the Range” was green!

I have travelled through deserts and seen the devastation the heavy rains caused in Indiana and Illinois in June. I have even seen icicles in July hanging on guardrails in the mountains of Montana. I survived the 106-degree temps in Oregon.

I believe it is all about transparency. Crops have been grown and herds of animals have been raised by hard-working and concerned farmers and ranchers for generations. We have nothing to hide. We are proud of what we do. We need to move from just defending ourselves against all the misinformation that the media is “feeding” consumers and start being proactive and telling consumers what we are doing and why! The personal connection is so important. So blog away, share your pics, tell your personal ag stories. Consumers want to hear all about it! American Agri-Women can be the credible VOICE of agriculture!

As I look at ending AAW’s Drive Across America, I am looking at closing my chapter as AAW president at our AAW convention in Maine in November. I thank you for the confidence you have had in me. AAW has been very fortunate to have such a great executive committee. By working for the good of AAW, many things have been accomplished with the support of our AAW members. We are about to launch our new website! We have reached thousands, if not millions, with positive stories about U.S. agriculture. We have an administrative assistant! AAW certainly is continuing to be that VOICE for agriculture that was started nearly 41 years ago. That is something members have done by working together. Don’t ever let your voices be kept silent!

See you in Maine, November 5–8, 2015!

Sue McCrum, President
PO Box 630
Mars Hill, ME 04758
207-769-9317
president@americanagriwomen.org

Doris Mold, First Vice President, Resolutions and Vital Issues
PO Box 1075
Cumberland, WI 54829
612-414-7574
firstvp@americanagriwomen.org

Lynn Marcinkowski Woolf, Vice President, Communications
32919 W. 87th St. S., Milton, KS 67106
316-648-3717
communications@americanagriwomen.org

Donnell Scott, Vice President, Education
1940 Pleasant Valley Road
Manhattan, KS 66502
785-313-4454
education@americanagriwomen.org

Arlene Kovash, Secretary
11425 Pedee Creek Road
Monmouth, OR 97361
503-938-3512
secretary@americanagriwomen.org

Peggy Clark, Treasurer
2274 E. Lytle Five Pts. Road
Dayton, OH 45458
Phone: 937-885-5965
Fax: 937-885-5942
treasurer@americanagriwomen.org

Karen Yost, Past President
2343 S. Shiloh Road
Billings, MT 59106
406-860-8888
pastpresident@americanagriwomen.org

AAW Website: americanagriwomen.org
AAW General E-mail: aaw@americanagriwomen.org
Twitter: @women4ag
Facebook: American Agri-Women

The Voice is published quarterly by American Agri-Women as a service to members. Contact Lynn Marcinkowski Woolf, VP Communications (information above). Deadlines: November 15, March 15, May 15, July 15.
to who is producing their food. They appreciate the choices they have in different food markets and stores. They understand that farmers and ranchers work hard at what they do. They are also aware of the world’s growing population and are concerned as to how we can possibly feed all of them.

“They appreciate that we are volunteers, taking the time to reach out to them, the consumer, and introducing ourselves and telling them why we are doing the drive. There have been great conversations! It is about educating them that the majority of their food is grown on family-owned farms and ranches. It is telling them that we have the same concerns about what our families eat. It is just telling that story over and over again. It is putting a face and a family in front of the consumer. We are REAL people working hard to make sure your family doesn’t go to bed hungry at night. I haven’t tired of it yet!”

Be sure to follow along the Drive on Facebook. We will continue heading East, eventually traveling back up the coast for the 2015 convention. Join us for the celebration!

Our harvest dinner in the field reminded us of the reason we advocate for agriculture — to support hard-working men and women who feed the world. Thanks to Dona Coon, president of Oregon Women for Agriculture, for hosting the dinner.

Two States Working Together

By Karolyn Zum, Minnesota Agri-Women

Minnesota Agri-Women and North Dakota Agri-Women worked together to plan our Drive Across America event. We had a common goal, which was to put together an eye-catching event, and both states put effort into fundraising and planning.

The Friday night reception was held at our farm in Minnesota and was hosted by both states. We served a fried chicken dinner with lots of beverages, and volunteers from both states showed up to help. U.S. Representative Collin Peterson welcomed our visitors and briefly gave a Washington, D.C., update. Several influencers showed up, including area farmers, executive directors from American Crystal Sugar and North Dakota Soybean and chairs and past chairs from commodity groups.

After staying at the farm overnight, we traveled to the Red River Valley Fair held in West Fargo, N.D. We had tables of educational materials from several commodity groups and made soybean necklaces with young fairgoers. Many volunteers helped work the tables and displays. North Dakota Agri-Women was the Ag Education Barn host for the day. We were allowed to bring AAW’s Drive pickup into the fairgrounds to drum up more interest. The media coverage for both events was wonderful. We all gave multiple interviews before and during the fair event.

The next event hosted by both states is the “Harvest of Knowledge” conference, to be held in Grand Forks, N.D., on October 30. It would be wonderful to have some ladies from other states attend. Find us on Facebook, or contact Donna Ulseth for more information at 218-926-5651.
chairman of the Montgomery County Economic Development Corp., the Central Illinois Economic Development Authority, the Illinois Agricultural Resources Council and the Montgomery CEO program. She has served as an elected official to the Montgomery County Board and chairman of its Economic Development Committee since 2012. She’s also held leadership positions in other statewide agricultural and rural development organizations as well as the National Waterways Council. She volunteers as dinner-auction chairperson for their children’s school and serves as Starr Shooters 4-H club leader to 51 members.

Heather believes that her experience working with varied public and private sector agencies and organizations has given her perspective on what actions can strategically advance the mission and capacity of American Agri-Women. She hopes her skillsets and personality will complement the incredible officer team, including affiliate presidents, currently serving American Agri-Women.

“The things I love most about American Agri-Women: the incredibly diverse members; the opportunity to directly influence policy at the national level; the opportunity to learn about the things we love at our conventions and events; and our underlying capacity to shift attitudes about farming and rural economies,” Heather says.

Jane Marshall is a member of Ohio Agri-Women (OAW) where she served as immediate past president. She served as OAW President for 3 years and Secretary for 3 years before that. She lives in Preble County, near Eaton, Ohio. She and her husband, Thomas, have 5 children ages 14-25. Two are married and they have one granddaughter. Their family, along with Thomas’ brothers, operates a dairy and grain farm. She has a BS in Ag Engineering from The Ohio State University. Jane is a faithful member of Concord Church in Preble County. She is also a group leader in Bible Study Fellowship. Jane has been sewing since she was a child and has become an avid quilter.

Jane has always been very active in her community. She has served in numerous positions: Preble County Commissioner from 2005-2008; Preble County Fair Board from 1994-2000; Preble County Mental Health and Recovery Board 1997-2004; Preble County Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors since 2010; and the Preble County Continuum of Care (the local housing committee) since 2008, where she currently is chair. She has been a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for Juvenile Court since 2002. Jane served on the Preble County Farm Bureau Board for over 15 years, where she served as President for three years, as secretary for several years, state delegate several years and started a Lost Arts series of classes teaching cooking and sewing. She has also served on various county zoning and planning commissions.

Jane has been active in AAW since 2004 when she attended Syngenta Leadership at Its Best and the Quad Cities Convention that same year. She was hooked and was quick to make great friends. She was the VERITAS Committee Chair in 2009, elected to the AAW Foundation in 2010 where her term ends in 2016. She has been the Foundation President since 2013. She served on the Nominating Committee in 2012 and was Nominating Chair in 2013 and 2014. She was awarded the LEAVEN Award in 2014. Jane served as Co-Chair for the 2014 Ohio convention.

Jane concluded by saying, “We have so many opportunities ahead to continue educating consumers and policy makers and raising awareness of everything AAW does. I look forward to serving AAW and its members as VP of Communications.”

Denise Gentsch, a member of Texas Agri-Women (TAW) and American Agri-Women since 1996, has served as president of TAW and participated in various capacities of policy and association development at the state and national level. Her professional and personal interests encompass natural resources and the impact that public policy has on individual management of those resources.

She has had a legislative and regulatory consulting business since 1993 representing the agricultural chemical industry and continues to serve as a Syngenta liaison to AAW. In addition to her legislative and regulatory work in Texas, New Mexico and Washington D.C., Denise has participated in educational children’s activities at regional livestock shows and classrooms.

Denise works with her husband, Bryan, in their Austin public affairs firm, Association Strategies, representing clients with natural resource, agricultural, pest control and transportation interests. Since 2006, they have managed the Texas Seed Trade Association and Denise has served as legislative director representing member companies on local, state and federal issues such as anti-GMO legislation and regulations, seed certification and business taxes.

Denise, Bryan and their 9-year-old son, Tai, manage their Mills County ranch for whitetail deer, turkeys, a few quail and too many feral hogs. As a member of the Simms Creek Wildlife Management Association, they participate in the state’s voluntary wildlife management program to support and manage healthy whitetail deer herds, game bird populations and their habitats with other landowners in the Simms Creek watershed.
2015 American Agri-Women Convention: Join Us for Maine at Its Best

By Diane Hemphill, Maine Agri-Women

Come join us for a tour and lobster dinner at Pineland Farms to kick off our annual convention. There will be tours, shopping at the market, lobster shore/picnic dinner (or as close to the shore as we can get), and entertainment. Wear your red and white picnic togs and dress comfortably.

At Pineland, we will be touring the equestrian center, creamery and hydroponic greenhouse. You will have the opportunity to browse the market for an assortment of farm-fresh items and baked goods as well as Maine-made beer, wines and gifts.

The dinner/picnic will be red and white checkered themed with the options of lobster for an additional $20 or twin lobster (two delicious lobsters for yourself) for $30. For those who do not like lobster we have included steak or chicken on the menu as part of the registration.

You will be welcomed to our great state of Maine by our Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Walter Whitcomb. We will also be entertained by Maine humorist Gary Crocker, who last entertained us in 2002 in Bar Harbor. Gary Crocker is a Maine native and Chief UnRegistered Maine Guide who travels the world, making observations and remarks from his position of authority. He has entertained groups and organizations in such places as San Francisco, Dallas, Orlando, Boston, Chicago, Quebec, Paris and even Spearfish, South Dakota.

Throughout the convention, we’re proud to present a slate of speakers, including the following notable women.

Ann LePage is First Lady of Maine. Her husband Paul LePage was sworn into office as Maine’s 74th Governor on January 5, 2011. She and Governor LePage have been married since 1984 and raised their children in Maine.

Throughout her tenure as First Lady, LePage has been a passionate advocate for military service members, their families, and veterans. LePage was selected as the 2012 Joshua Chamberlain’s Chapter Person of the Year by the First Region Association of the United States Army. Among numerous veteran support organizations LePage lends her name to, she has participated in the Wreaths Across America annual convoy to Arlington National Cemetery in December each year since becoming Maine’s First Lady. She has traveled in tractor trailer trucks loaded with wreaths and made the trip in 2013 and 2014 on the back of a motorcycle to raise awareness of their mission.

LePage also works closely with Retired Army Staff Sergeant Travis Mills and the Travis Mills Foundation. Through ongoing fundraising efforts, the foundation is establishing a retreat to help combat wounded veterans and their families unite with the land, water, nature and each other to revitalize themselves and to encourage each other to keep moving forward.

Kathy Day, RN, is a patient safety activist/advocate. In 2009, Day’s father died because of preventable Hospital Acquired Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). As a retired RN and family member, she observed many gaps in his care and infection prevention. She authored a bill that resulted in the Maine law to screen all high risk patients for MRSA on hospital admission in June 2009. Day joined with the Consumers Union Safe Patient Project where she continues her work and networking to reduce hospital acquired infections (HAIs) and promote patient safety. She is now a member of the Maine Quality Counts Consumer Advisory Council, the Choosing Wisely in Maine leadership team, the Maine HAI council of the Maine Quality Forum, and a consumer representative with the Maine Health Data Organization to help develop a consumer friendly webpage on healthcare cost and quality.

Most recently, she had joined in statewide efforts to improve aging and works on the health and welfare of the aging subcommittee. She writes a blog “McCleary MRSA Prevention” and contributes to media articles on HAIs and patient safety. Last year, Day received the Rising Tide Award from the Maine Patient Safety Academy and a 20 in 20 award from the Maine Health Management Coalition, both in recognition for healthcare innovation and improvements in the state. This year, she also received the Maine Quality Counts Patient Partnership Award.

Karen Worcester is executive director of Wreaths Across America. With over 35 years of experience in the administrative stewardship of the various Worcester family enterprises, Worcester is well known as a passionate champion and spokesperson. As a co-founder of Wreaths Across America, Worcester tenaciously works on ways the organization can best remember the fallen, honor those who serve, and teach our children that our freedoms are purchased at a great cost.

Equally passionate about her family, Worcester is mother to six children and eight grandchildren. Her favorite hobby is participating in and competing in equestrian events and caring for a menagerie of animals on the family farm.
Convention Tour Descriptions

Thursday, Nov. 5: Pineland Farms

Pineland Farms is a privately owned working farm in New Gloucester, Maine, open to the public for exploration, recreation, and education. We will be visiting their equestrian center, creamery and hydroponic greenhouse. Members will have the opportunity to browse the market for an assortment of farm-fresh items and baked goods as well as Maine-made beer, wine and gifts. We will be having a Maine lobster dinner and entertainment that evening. The lobster dinner is an option for an additional fee of $20 for one or $30 for two. The other dinner options are chicken or steak, included in the registration fee.

Friday, Nov. 6, 8:30 a.m., Spouse and Family Tour: Potatoes, veggies, brewerries and cattle immunity

The tour will start at Green Thumb Farms in Fryeburg, Maine, a farming operation since 1965 working on over 2,200 acres. Owners Don and Brenda Thibodeau are quality potato growers, marketing several varieties of potatoes for supermarkets, food service distributors and processors. They also raise Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue blend turf, dry beans, oats and corn purposed for livestock. Don and his brother, Lee, have proudly launched Cold River Vodka made from Green Thumb Farm potatoes and have received several awards. They believe that Cold River Vodka represents the only family-owned ground-to-glass vodka operation in the world.

The next stop will be to Curran Company in Biddeford, Maine. Curran specializes in fresh-cut vegetables and vegetable blends from pre-cut salads to packaged stir-fry kits as well as a vast array of fresh vegetable blends and their Green Giant Fresh retail line. Much of Aroostook County broccoli is processed at their facility. Food safety is their top priority and they offer traceability from seed to warehouse. Over the past five years, Curran Company has become one of the top food providers in the Northeast and covers a region that stretches from Maine to Maryland.

We will then proceed to Allagash Brewing Company on the outskirts of Portland, Maine. Founder Rob Tod first designed a small 15-barrell brew house, gathered the finest array of authentic raw materials and began his quest toward the production of traditional Belgian style ales. Today, Allagash has six year-round beers in its portfolio, seven yearly releases and numerous one-offs and keg only releases. Allagash began as New England’s original Belgian-style brewery and has grown into one of the industry’s most distinguished and well-respected brands.

Also, Friday afternoon our members will be taking a tour of ImmuCell Corp. Immediate Immunity is what every dairy or beef calf needs as soon after birth as possible. ImmuCell’s flagship product is called First Defense and is the only USDA-approved product proven to reduce mortality and morbidity from diseases related to the cause of scours. Our hostess for this tour is one of our newest Maine Agri-Women members, Janet Gertz.

Sunday, Nov. 8, 8:30 a.m., Post-Convention Tour: Lighthouses, lobster processing, wine, L.L. Bean store, and seafood dinner.

First stop, Rockland, Maine, to tour Linda Bean’s processing facility. Linda Bean’s goal is to save Maine’s iconic industry by ending dependence on Canadian processing and to mass market Maine lobster. Besides wharves, she owns a warehouse, several trucks and a lobster pound where several thousand lobsters can be stored for months. The plan can process 20,000 pounds of lobster meat daily.

We will travel to Owls Head, Maine and visit Breakwater Vineyards, located on the coast of scenic Owls Head. The farm specializes in producing wine, bees, goats and chickens. We will tour the vineyard and sample wine and delicious cheeses made on site.

The tour will proceed to Freeport, Maine, where we will tour the flagship L.L. Bean Store. We will have a brief history of the store and time to look around and shop. L.L. Bean is a trusted source of quality apparel, outdoor equipment and expert advice for over 100 years. A satisfied customer is still their most important goal. Headquarters are in Freeport where the company has grown from a one-man operation to a global organization with annual sales of $1.61 billion.

Our tour will end with a delicious meal at Linda Bean’s Maine Kitchen and Topside Tavern. The restaurant serves the famous Linda Bean lobster roll as well as a wide selection of seafood and many Maine products.

Convention Information

Hotel Information: The DoubleTree by Hilton Portland Hotel is located at 363 Maine Mall Road in South Portland, Maine. The room rate is $105.00 with a "cut-off date" of October 26, 2015. To make reservations, please call 1-207-775-6161. Rooms are reserved under AAW booking code.

Shuttle Information: Complimentary 24-hour shuttle service is available from DoubleTree from Portland International Jetport. Their shuttle phone is available at the airport terminal.

Cancellations of Convention Registrations need to be made in writing and sent postmarked by October 15, 2015, for a full refund.
2015 AAW Convention Agenda (draft; subject to change)

November 5–8, 2015 • DoubleTree by Hilton, 363 Maine Mall Rd., South Portland, ME

Wednesday, November 4, 2015
2–11 p.m. Hospitality Room Opens, Guest Room 1

Thursday, November 5, 2015
7:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m. Registration Opens, West Foyer
8:30 a.m. AAW Executive Board, Whaleback
9–10:30 a.m. Foundation Board
10:30–11:30 a.m. Combined AAW/Foundation Board, Whaleback
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Committee Meetings with lunch, Whaleback
1:30–4:30 p.m. Buses leave for Pineland Tours, equestrian center, cheese making, hydroponics greenhouse
5:30 p.m. Welcome Dinner/Lobster Dinner
• Welcome to Maine by Commissioner of Agriculture, Forestry and Conservation, Mr. Walter Whitcomb
• Welcome/Introduction for first-time attendees
• Entertainment by Gary Crocker, Maine humorist
9 p.m. Return to DoubleTree
10–11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open, Guest Room 1

Friday, November 6, 2015
6 a.m. Registration Opens, West Foyer
6:30–7:45 a.m. Breakfast Buffet, Lighthouse Ballroom
6 a.m.–8 p.m. Silent Auction Opens, Winter Harbor
8–9:45 a.m. Opening Ceremonies, Lighthouse Ballroom
• Flag presentation/Ceremony
• Speaker: Ann LePage, First Lady of Maine
• Speaker: Karen Worcester of Wreaths Across America
8:30 a.m.–4 p.m. Spouse/guest tour leaves; box lunch
9:45–10:15 a.m. Break
10:15 a.m.–12 p.m. Speaker: Marge Kilkelly, Office of Senator Angus King
Speaker: John Rebar, Extension Service, “From Farm to Table”

Saturday, November 7, 2015
6:45–8:45 a.m. Breakfast Buffet, Lighthouse Ballroom
6:45–8:45 a.m. Executive Board and State Presidents meet
8 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Trade Show Open
7:30 a.m.–5 p.m. Registration Open
9 a.m. AAW Business Meeting, Lighthouse Ballroom
10:15–10:30 a.m. Break
10:30 a.m.–12 p.m. AAW Business Meeting continues
12–1 p.m. Lunch
1–3 p.m. AAW Business Meeting continues
2–2:15 p.m. Break, Silent Auction closes (pick up and pay for silent auction items, Winter Harbor)
3–4:30 p.m. Business Meeting continues if needed; AAW Foundation meet to elect officers
4:30–5:30 p.m. Lunch
6–7 p.m. Town Hall, Whaleback
7 p.m. President’s reception, Lighthouse Ballroom
Banquet, Lighthouse Ballroom
• Officer installation
• Special Event for 40th Celebration
• Entertainment by Ted and the Boys
9–11 p.m. Hospitality Room Open, Guest Room 1

Sunday, November 8, 2015
8–8:30 a.m. Worship Service
9 a.m. Depart for Post Convention Tour
AAW Convention Registration

November 5–8, 2015, South Portland, ME

DoubleTree by Hilton Portland Hotel, 363 Maine Mall Rd.

$105.00 room rate is available until October 26, 2015. To make hotel reservations, please call 1-207-775-6161. Use booking code: AAW.

Name ___________________________________________
Affiliate __________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
City ________________________State ______ Zip________
Phone ______________ Email _________________________

Voting member of AAW? □ Yes □ No       First-time attendee? □ Yes □ No

Spouse/Guest:____________________ Phone: _____________

Would you like us to find you a roommate? □ Yes □ No

Special needs or requests (dietary or other):  ___________________
______________________________________________

□ Early Registration (postmarked on or before Sept. 15, 2015): $250.00
□ Late Registration (postmarked after Sept. 15, 2015): $275.00
□ Child/Student: $175
School Name______________________ Grad. Date _______

□ Day Registration Only: $100.00
Which day? □ Thurs. □ Fri. □ Sat.

□ Additional fee for lobster on Thursday night if you so choose: $20.00 for a single lobster dinner or $30.00 for a twin lobster dinner
No lobster? Please indicate if you would prefer: □ steak □ chicken
(steak/chicken option included with the registration fee)

□ Post-Convention Tour on Sunday: $60.00

Total enclosed $ _______

Make checks payable to Maine Agri Women.

Mail registration form to Maine Agri Women, Attn: Kristi Bray, 2015 Convention, 744 Main St. Suite 14, Presque Isle, ME 04769. To register online, go to americanagriwomen.org to submit the form. If you have any questions, please call Diane Hemphill at 207-762-2761 or Kristi Bray at 207-551-7087. We will contact you by email upon receipt of your registration form. If you do not hear from us within two weeks, PLEASE contact us by phone or email to verify our receipt of your registration form and payment: kristibray.insurance@gmail.com.
OPINION: Why I Advocate for GMO Crops

By Mary Mertz, Kansas Agri-Women

Of all the names I have been called during my life, one stands out clearly from the rest: “You are a disgusting Monsanto troll.” This was shared with me on an Internet site where I was promoting and supporting genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The comment made me chuckle, though I’m sure the intent was to intimidate me from continuing to share my thoughts on the science of biotechnology.

Social media has its pros and cons. While it has allowed me to stay connected with my friends and family members in Chicago, where I was born and raised, it has also shown me how misinformed and gullible people can be when it comes to agriculture and food production. It saddens me that people are being bombarded by scare tactics and fear-mongering propaganda by entities pushing their own agenda to market food.

My fifth-generation farm family has chosen to grow GMO corn and soybeans for close to 20 years now. We know the truth about how this method has been a valuable tool for crop producers. GMOs have allowed us to use fewer chemicals. They have allowed us to till the ground less often, which keeps nutrients in the soil and carbon in the ground. These are positives for the environment that the general public just doesn’t hear. What seems to be occurring more and more these days is that people with absolutely no agriculture or science background are choosing to believe myths rather than believe those that actually farm or do the scientific research. After all, if Chipotle has decided to ban GMOs, well, they have to be bad, right?

The GMO issue has been on my heart for a while now. There are simply too many misconceptions and unsubstantiated claims made against them. It’s everywhere — from demands to label “GMO products,” as though the technology is an ingredient, to being blamed for every known illness in this day and age. The science of genetic engineering continues to take a beating when in fact it should be applauded. There has never been a detrimental health issue caused by GMOs.

I advocate for GMOs because I believe that this science has and will continue to provide solutions to future food challenges. Being told I’m a troll or that I am “poisoning the world” only makes me want to share the truth more adamantly, more publicly, and more intentionally.

This year the Kansas Department of Ag helped get a proclamation signed by the Governor recognizing the week of April 13, 2015, as Biotechnology Awareness Week. In helping to draft this document, I suggested a series of factual statements regarding the positives associated with genetic engineering. It felt good to write these out as declarative truths, e.g., “Whereas, there exists more than 2,000 research studies regarding the health and safety of genetically engineered crops” and, “Whereas, the FDA, USDA and EPA, as well as the American Medical Association, World Health Organization, National Academy of Sciences, and many other credible organizations and foundations, have found GE crops to be as safe and nutritious as traditionally bred crops.” As a farm wife and mom, I feel compelled to share these realities with consumers.

In conjunction with the release of the proclamation, we held an event in Kansas City titled “GMOs: Now We’re Talking,” which was sponsored by the Farm Food Connection (a coalition of Kansas agricultural industry groups). This event featured Chef D’Ablaing of Chaz on the Plaza and geneticist and mom Dr. Anastasia Bodnar. These individuals were part of a panel with an urban food blogger and my husband and I as farmer representatives. We had a great turnout and excellent questions. Hopefully, the ripple effect of what was learned that night will help in the effort to spread the truth regarding GMOs to other consumers.

There are many loud voices out there, making it difficult for those of us with real-life experience and knowledge to open up dialogue. Companies like Whole Foods and Chipotle, individuals like Food Babe, and groups like Moms Across America are constantly spreading misinformation and fear to their millions of followers regarding conventional farming practices.

This year, I joined a group of scientists, writers, and others to combat the growing fallacies that are broadcast through events like March Against Monsanto (MAM). We counter marched the MAM group in Chicago by wearing green shirts that said March Against Myths Against Modification or MAMyes. Our signs simply offered an opportunity to talk. One said “Ask me why I love GMOs.” Mine said “A farmer knows GMOs — Safe Sound Science.” We handed out fact info cards that talked about the benefits and the truths. Countering fallacies with accuracies was very rewarding. I hope more “agri-moms” will join me in participating next year.

Fortunately, more and more farm moms across America are finding ways to be heard. We all do what we can to promote agriculture — some of us blog, some of us host farm tours, while others volunteer their expertise on sites like AsktheFarmers.com. We need to support each other’s efforts. As AAW’s motto states, we need to join together to be a voice for truth. I will continue my advocacy for GMOs. I’m proud of what the farmers do here and across our nation and I love being part of a community that produces food, fuel, and fiber.

I have put together a PowerPoint presentation that I have shown to various civic groups interested in biotechnology, which I would be happy to share on request. Contact me at rcf@bobmary@gmail.com.
Farm Credit’s Support for American Agri-Women Goes Beyond the Financial

By Karen Macdonald, Farm Credit

American Agri-Women has been helping the growing number of women in agriculture — more than 969,000 women and 30 percent of all farmers according to the latest Ag Census — for the past 40 years, and in part thanks to the financial support of sponsor organizations like Farm Credit, one of the nation’s leading lenders and financial service providers to rural communities and agriculture. Farm Credit’s funding has been key to American Agri-Women’s Washington Fly-In, which this year took place in June.

“In my opinion, the greatest benefit is the network of women who are lifelong learners, and passionate about their industry,” says Janet Barrows, director of industry and legislative engagement with Frontier Farm Credit, another Farm Credit organization. “They seek to understand and engage in meaningful work to support consumer understanding and develop sound public policy positions.”

Barrows has been a member of American Agri-Women for more than 20 years, helping found a collegiate chapter and then serving as the first Chapter president of the organization at Kansas State University. Her involvement builds on her family’s long history with the organization: her grandmother was among the first members of Kansas Agri-Women, then known as “United Farm Wives,” which helped form the foundation of American Agri-Women. Her cousin, Jean Goslin, is currently the president of Kansas Agri-Women and one of her aunts was very involved through the years, becoming known in the 1980s as the “tax evangelist” in the Kansas statehouse, where she worked tirelessly to influence policies governing taxation on ag machinery and equipment.

“Agri-Women brings women together from different parts of the nation, with different crop or livestock interests, and different natural resource management issues,” Barrows adds. “Those differences create a rich platform for dialog and solution-building. When thoughtful, bright women come together to find solutions, we all win.”

“The greatest benefit is the network of women who are lifelong learners, and passionate about their industry.”

—Janet Barrows, Frontier Farm Credit
Juanita Reed-Boniface Receives 2015 Ag Advocate Award

By Lauren Schwab, Ohio Agri-Women

Congratulations to AAW member Juanita Reed-Boniface of Minnesota Agri-Women. She received the 2015 Ag Advocate award at the National Agriculture in the Classroom convention.

“I’ve always advocated for agriculture and learning all my life.” This statement by Juanita Reed-Boniface is supported by themes she wrote as an elementary student about living on a farm in the Sandhills of Nebraska. Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC) is fortunate Juanita relocated to Minnesota in 1963 and began working with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Juanita was immensely active in youth education with Extension until her retirement in 1992. Juanita, along with her husband Dick Boniface, were soon among the corps of volunteers who made classroom visits in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area teaching a lesson on sheep and wool to more than 2,000 youth.

Since 2002, they have expanded their Agriculture in the Classroom teaching to many other venues, cooperating with Minnesota Farm Bureau, Minnesota CattleWomen, Minnesota State Fair and the University of Minnesota. As a part of the Minnesota Farm Bureau Ag Pen Pal program, Juanita wrote letters to elementary classrooms in Minnesota. The letters used photos and narrative to describe ranch activities and answer student questions followed with classroom visits near the end of the school year.

“I am grounded in agriculture and education, kids are so eager to learn and know so little about what farmers do. It’s so rewarding to see their eyes sparkle when they learn,” says Juanita.

Juanita is a tireless advocate for agricultural literacy. She seeks opportunities to teach and train others in agricultural education. She takes pride in serving as a mentor to many educators who are seeking to strengthen agricultural literacy.

“Networking is important. I have learned from other agri-women. Each of us has our personal story. When you share your story you are authentic and build a relationship with the students. It’s a matter of getting out and doing it. I find the teachers are eager and learn as much as the kids. I always try to leave something for further study,” she says.

Juanita is viewed as a gracious professional when advocating for increased agricultural literacy and her contributions to agricultural education are valued. “I want to find more opportunities and be an advocate with policy groups to express how important agricultural literacy is to open more schools to ag in the classroom,” says Juanita.

Planting Our Future: 40th Anniversary Challenge

By Doris Mold, First Vice President

We are encouraging all affiliates to get involved with the celebration of our 40th year through a friendly competition. Affiliates are encouraged to help “plant our future” for AAW by developing a new program/activity or modifying an existing program/activity to incorporate the 40th anniversary of AAW. The anniversary must be recognized during the program/activity and the logo and/or theme must be used in promotional materials to be eligible for awards. Programs/activities should take place sometime between January 1 and October 1, 2015 (they may be continuing as long as they start before October).

Projects will be judged on impact, quality, creativity, ability to incorporate the 40th anniversary of AAW and raise awareness of AAW, among other things. Affiliates may enter in more than one category (see americanagriwomen.org for categories and more details). Participating affiliates will be recognized at the convention, in the Voice, online in our various social media outlets, and in our 40th anniversary booklet.

Program Categories:

- Advocacy
  - General Public/Consumers
  - Elected/Appointed Public Officials
- Education
  - Ag in the Classroom
  - Member Education
- Career Development
- Leadership Development
- Networking
- Philanthropy
- Best New Program
- Others Not Specified
News from the AAW Foundation: Scholarships, Photo Contest and Mini-Grants

By Jane Marshall, AAW Foundation President

Late summer and fall is about the busiest time of the year for the AAW Foundation. Our scholarship committee is working on evaluating the scholastic scholarships and the convention scholarships. Our hats are off to Ardath Dewall, chair of the scholarship committee. She has to be the most organized lady in the world to get all those scholarships out for evaluation. Thanks, Ardath!

The other thing that we are doing this time of year is our annual photo contest. These photos are taken by our AAW members with an agriculture theme. They need to be submitted to Lori Bammerlin, ag06grad@yahoo.com by October 1, 2015. The winners will be announced at the Maine Convention. We have cards made and this year we will have our second calendar. Both of these items will be for sale at the convention as a fund raiser for the Foundation. I want to thank Lori for doing a great job with the photo contest! Last year, she did an exceptional job putting together the calendar that we sold. She even put as many dates as she could find on it. Thank you, Lori!

We have a new thing keeping us busy this fall. The AAW Foundation will be awarding mini-grants. In our first year we are going to offer $1,500 that can be applied for in grants that are no more than $500 each. The grants will require 50% cash match. Any of AAW’s affiliated organizations or their chapters can apply. This must be for an educational or a membership activity.

Applications are due by October 15, 2015, to foundation@americanagriwomen.org. The application will be scored by the foundation and the award winners will be announced at the 2015 convention in Maine. The winners will have to submit a report outlining the specific details of their project outcomes including all qualitative and quantitative data available. This will be due 30 days after completion.

Please spread the word about these last two opportunities. Winners of both will be announced at the convention. The last thing that I want to do is invite you all to our Foundation meeting that we will be having at the Maine convention. We would love for you to learn about what we are doing. Just look at the Maine convention agenda to find the time. As always if you have any questions please contact Foundation president Jane Marshall at 937-336-1456 or citizenjane@me.com.

Travel the World with Farmer-to-Farmer

By Amy Harris Robinette, North Carolina Agri-Women and Farmer-to-Farmer coordinator

Do you dream of traveling the world but aren’t sure where to start? Do you have a passion for agriculture? Are you willing to share your knowledge and experiences with others? If so, the Farmer-to-Farmer program is for you!

There are still multiple opportunities with the Farmer-to-Farmer program this fall and beyond. As you may know, due to government instability in the past, Catholic Relief Services experienced problems obtaining visas to Ethiopia. However, the political climate has vastly improved and we now have multiple opportunities to make a difference there.

Please visit the CRS website (farmer-tofarmer.crs.org/assignment) to view these opportunities, and contact me at MicroSummitProcessors@gmail.com to learn more.

Please keep the following in mind:

• We welcome first time and returning volunteers equally.
• If you would like to volunteer in Ethiopia, you will need to mail your passport 10-14 days prior to departure to obtain your visa. If you travel often, this may be a consideration.

This is a great opportunity for AAW members to see the world and make a difference in the lives of these East African people.
New and Upcoming Webinars

New, Customized Approach to Farm Transition Planning

Ag Transition Partners, a group of educators and agricultural consultants, is launching a new, no-cost farm transition planning project that includes webinars, on-site or virtual coaching and action plan templates. The project’s multi-layer approach sets it apart from other planning processes, better helping farm families ensure the legacy of their operations. Links to all of the completed webinars will be posted on americanagriwomen.org.

American Agri-Women is supporting the project, along with Michigan and Minnesota Agri-Women and Wisconsin Women for Agriculture. This project is free for participating farm families and is made possible through a grant from North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

You can learn more details about the program by viewing the “Farm Transition: Planning for Success I - Getting Started” webinar. Access the link from the AAW home page: americanagriwomen.org.

This introductory webinar will outline the process and discuss the blended approach for coaching families. Each family will be coached by a member of the Ag Transition Partners and action plans will be developed using the University of Minnesota’s Ag Transitions online templates.

The second webinar session, Farm Transition: Planning for Success II: Mapping the Process, will be held on November 17. Registration details will be announced at a later date.

The third session, Farm Transition: Planning for Success III: Making it Happen, will be on a date to be announced.

For more information, contact Kristine Ranger, project manager, at kristine@knowledgenavigators.com or (517) 974-5697.

‘Planting Our Future’ Affiliate Best Practices

This new webinar series offers information and tips from successful AAW affiliate programs and elsewhere that you may use to grow your own affiliate. Noon CST/1 p.m. EST. Links to all completed webinars will be posted on americanagriwomen.org.

September 16: Women Changing the Face of Agriculture with Penny Lauritzen and Pat Yeagle, Illinois Agri-Women. Illinois Agri-Women organizes the Women Changing the Face of Agriculture conference as an investment in the future of agriculture. This outreach project gives all women the opportunity to explore different career paths offered in the agriculture sector. Our goal is to help attendees receive accurate information firsthand from actual women agriculture professionals. You will find out about how this pioneering program started and has evolved over its successful tenure.

October 21: Planting Our Future with Doris Mold, cofounder of the Women’s Agricultural Leadership Conference. Seventeen years of Women’s Agricultural Leadership — conference, mentoring and networking programs — and still growing! Find out about the genesis of this successful program and how it has expanded opportunities for women in Minnesota and beyond. The atmosphere at the conference is absolutely electric. Find out why, along with lessons that have been learned along the way.

AAW Leadership Academy

Presenting our third year of outstanding leadership webinars. Noon CST/1 p.m. EST on the second Friday of the month. Links to all completed webinars will be posted on americanagriwomen.org.

October 9: AAW Succession Planning with Doris Mold, president, Sunrise Agricultural Associates, LLC. If 70 percent of farmland will change hands in the next 20 years, what does that mean for the leadership of our ag organizations? We are encouraged to make succession plans for businesses, but who is working to ensure that our ag organizations have a plan for a secure and vibrant future? Are we sourcing emerging leaders or do we frantically search for someone when elections roll around? We will discuss all of this and more while putting participants on the path of succession planning for their organizations.

November 13: Team Building with Juanita Reed Boniface, owner, JRB and Associates and Boeckenhauer Cattle. Juanita has logged thousands of hours as an educator and has an impressive toolbox to share. In this team-building webinar, she will lead us through understanding and identification of basic principles of teamwork, and the characteristics of the ideal team.

Take an AAW Selfie

We want your selfies! Take a photo of yourself showing off what it means for you to be an American Agri-Woman. Driving a tractor, running the combine, keeping the finances, raising livestock, riding a horse, milking cows, cooking, gardening, teaching, caring for your family, volunteering, developing policy — whatever shows how you enjoy, improve or advocate for agriculture. We plan to show off all you amazing agri-women at a special slide show at convention, and we’d like to also use the photos on our new website. Please send to Lynn Woolf at communications@americanagriwomen.org.
Drive Across America Continues

A stop at the Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa, gave us great insight into the expeditions of Lewis and Clark. The settlers who were part of the great Western migration via the Oregon, Mormon and California trails passed through the area. The center signified our Drive Across America’s motto: Harvesting Our Past, Planting Our Future. For more on the Drive, see story on page 1.

Advertising Rates & Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad Sizes</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full page</td>
<td>7.5&quot;W x 10&quot;H</td>
<td>$850.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half page vertical</td>
<td>3.875&quot;W x 10&quot;H</td>
<td>$575.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half page horizontal</td>
<td>7.5&quot;W x 4.875&quot;H</td>
<td>$575.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter page</td>
<td>3.875&quot;W x 4.875&quot;H</td>
<td>$325.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business card</td>
<td>3.875&quot;W x 2.375&quot;H</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contract rates available. Ask about special sizes and display advertising. To advertise, contact Lisa Campion at (586) 530-1771 or aaw@americanagriwomen.org.

Ad Deadlines: Noon on the 15th of the previous month.
- November 15 for Winter Issue
- March 15 for Spring Issue
- May 15 for Summer Issue
- July 15 for Fall Issue

More News in the Voice Extra

Go to americanagriwomen.org for more stories, including:
- 40 members of women’s mining coalition travel to Washington, D.C.
- Complete text of ‘White Papers’ position statements
- Editorial on pollinators from president Sue McCrum
- Information on bees from Bayer