Plan Now to Attend Convention in MN

By Karolyn Zurn

Minnesota Agri-Women are very excited to be hosting the American Agri-Women Convention November 16th-18th in Bloomington, MN. We chose the Embassy Suites not only for its location but for its comfortable oversized guest rooms, free breakfast and an evening happy hour social.

We are putting together tours that showcase Minnesota’s great agriculture educational facilities, facilities that encompass many sectors of ag, and the optional Sunday tour dives into US/Minnesota history and returns on a route that is listed on America’s most beautiful scenic road ways.

The speakers, panelists and round table presenters will cover many subjects ranging from trade, dairy, farm to fork, food security. We also are offering sessions on mentoring, advocating for agriculture and farm safety.

All those that attend are sure to return home knowing the hospitality of Minnesota.

American Agri-Women members meeting with the EPA at Fly-In.

AAW Members Meet with New Administration Officials at 2017 AAW Fly-In

By Ruth Jensen, Fly-In Chair

Great weather, a new Administration, and an itinerary filled with meetings, receptions and special events that kept the enthusiasm of all, the 2017 American Agri-Women Fly-In did not disappoint even the most senior of members and guests.

A very special American Agri-Women Wreath Laying Ceremony was performed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Ceremony. It was led by AAW President Doris Mold, Vice President Heather Hampton-Knodle, Government Affairs Director Karolyn Zurn, and AAW 2017 Fly-In Chair Ruth Jensen.

Following the ceremony, members stopped at the Arlington Cemetery Women in the Military Memorial before heading out for an afternoon tour of the National Portrait Gallery (where USDA was founded) and then visited some of the nation’s monuments and memorials. The nuts and bolts orientation brought us up to date on some of the keys issues we planned to focus on while in Washington, namely Ag Labor, Infrastructure, Endangered Species Act, Clean Power, Taxation, WOTUS, Forestry, and E-Verify. For the first time in AAW history we included the 2018 Farm Bill in our presentation. Throughout the week, the 2018 Farm...
Dear AAW members,

Spring flashed by and summer is upon us. In between all of our work and rushing around with summer activities — country and state fairs, family reunions, and more — I hope that you also have time for some quiet enjoyment of all that the season brings and some time for reflection.

Reflecting on our recent Washington D.C. Fly-In, we were reminded of the staggering sacrifice that others have made so that we may enjoy freedom as we looked upon the thousands upon thousands of white markers at Arlington National Cemetery. AAW had the incredibly humbling honor to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It was a moving experience to provide a tribute to those who gave us their all so that we might be free. During Fly-In AAW members met with elected officials and government agency staff to deliver AAW positions in support of agriculture and rural America along with our first round of recommendations in relation to the upcoming Farm Bill.

Thank you to all who invested their time, energy and resources to come and participate in Fly-In. A special thanks to all who made Fly-In 2017 happen - our Fly-In Committee, our Presidents Council, White Paper contributors/authors, the AAW Farm Bill Task Force, AAW Governmental Affairs committees, AAW Mid-Year participants, our sponsors and Loudoun County Economic Development (LCED). The folks at LCED made Fly-In even more special as they provided our AgDay365 tour on Wednesday and they were responsible for AAW’s AgDay365 to be represented at the National Lamb Jam event in DC.

Our AgDay365 campaign is going strong as we have been doing outreach every day since National Convention in November - great job everyone! Affiliates are rolling out events and activities. From North to South and East to West we have seen efforts of all types to highlight the importance of agriculture to the consuming audience - ag awareness events, conference presentations, festival appearances, pollinator events, banquets in the field, radio and TV appearances and more. Thanks to all who have planned and hosted events and activities. We look forward to many more in the coming months. A big thank you to the AgDay365 committee who has been making sure we keep things going. They will be rolling out a special contest and some new activities as we move through summer into the fall. They also want to hear about what is special in your state/commodity/affiliate so make sure you keep them posted so that we may highlight your efforts.

Our Leadership Committee team has put considerable effort in developing a leadership development process for AAW members. The Committee will be piloting the program this summer and fall and it will move into a full-fledged process of ongoing leadership development for the organization - the Waves of Change Process will be coming to you soon. This is an exciting time for the organization as we launch a new purposeful leadership development process to build capacity in our members at all levels.

I also wanted to recognize your officer
team and the many AAW committees that have been hard at work on many fronts to continue to improve our organization, our advocacy, our communications, our education, our networking and more. We hope that you take the time to learn more of these activities by keeping up with the organization through this newsletter, the member communiques, our website, Facebook and Twitter. If you have a gift or talent that you would like to share in moving the organization forward please let us know.

Since my last President’s letter, I have represented AAW at a special Farm Bill/Ag Policy meeting convened by American Farm Bureau for the major agricultural organizations. I presented at the Women's Agricultural Leadership Conference and the Farmer Veteran Coalition--Empowering Women Veterans: Business, Agriculture and Well Being Conference. I am also serving on two USDA panels, which have met, in the past month - the panel on Improving Data Collection and Reporting about Agriculture with Increasingly Complex Farm Structures and the panel on Reporting Demographics on 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture. My service on the panels has just reinforced my understanding of the critical need for farmers and ranchers to serve on these panels/committees to ensure that our voice and experience is not lost.

We appreciate the support from outside the organization that helps to enhance our member’s experiences and allows us to grow as an organization. The Fundraising committee has been working hard on developing new relationships and enhancing existing ones with organizations that share our vision. Please watch for updates as we move forward in developing these relationships.

Thank you to everyone who has been working to make AAW and agriculture better. Serving on committees, helping with events, gathering and distilling information, writing, advocating and more - we would not be where we are without the help of many volunteers. Your dedication and service is appreciated. I especially want to thank you for all you are doing to remind people that AgDay365 - Ag Day is Every Day.

As summer is fleeting, “Shining Our Lights on Agriculture” AAW National Convention will be here before we know it. I am looking forward to seeing you in Bloomington, MN, November 16-18.

In the mean time, here’s hoping that you get plenty of the fruits of summer and have time to enjoy it with family and friends.

Doris Mold
was discussed during most meetings.

The 24th Annual AAW Symposium topic was National Security and the Role of Agriculture. The dynamic panel, some who traveled from out of the area to participate, drew many questions on issues from rural infrastructure to much needed broadband and emergency services. In our ever increasing technology, it is imperative that America’s rural communities not be left out of the planning and development of communication technology and security measures.

The new administration at EPA arranged for a roundtable discussion with leaders from a wide range of departments within the agency. This was an important meeting as it allowed for discussions on the Clean Water Act, waste management, pesticide regulations and encouraging the agency to
add farmers to their Agricultural Advisory Council. The EPA office of communications even recorded interviews with several of our members: youtu.be/mWPI1mZbA3g

Our visit with the trade representative at the Vietnam Embassy was very interesting. We discussed agricultural trade policy, economy, and cultural exchanges. As you can imagine, we all shared a note about unique ag products from our respective states. That was fun! Various agencies within USDA met with us, providing fruitful dialogue, as we were able to impart details of the Farm Bill that were of particular interest. Agencies that participated included APHIS, FSIS, NASS, and FSA.

And while we were all disappointed that Secretary Sonny Perdue was inadvertently called to serve as a surrogate speaker and was not able to be with us as he had planned, I happened to be in the foyer with Kim Bremmer from Wisconsin when we witnessed him dashing down the stairs to go to his engagement. He was kind to stop and take a quick selfie with us as we thanked him for his support.

One of our highlights was meeting with the Special Assistant to the President on Agriculture, Trade and Food Assistance, Ray Starling. He was kind, gracious, humble and answered all of our questions.

While in DC we also met with members of Congress, held “Open Mic” lunch events with industry leaders such as Lynn Jacquez, Esq.; and Craig Regelbrugge, who gave us updates on labor issues and health care reform and its impact on agriculture, as well as Jess Peterson, Western Skies Strategies on Cattle and Livestock and House Economic Council, to name a few.

We hosted our Congressional reception, which attracted quite a large crowd. This is always a popular event. It is also where the American Agri-Women “Champion of Agriculture” award is presented to a member of the Senate and of the House. This year the awards went to Congressman Rodney Davis, Illinois and Senator Joni Ernst, Iowa.

In wrapping up the 2017 AAW Fly-In, I want to take a moment to thank the entire Fly-In planning team for their outstanding contributions throughout the year and during the event. Everyone brought their unique talents to the table to insure a successful Fly-In. Bravo!
AAW Members Talk with EPA About Their Environmental Stewardship

By Jane Marshall, VP of Communications

At the American Agri-Women D.C. Fly-In last month, AAW had an exciting opportunity. Shortly before the visit with the EPA, AAW was asked if they had anyone who would “step aside and answer a few questions with our videographer. We are recording a short documentary film on how farmers and agribusiness leaders are some of the best stewards of the environment. They can just speak to what the environment means to them.”

This request was read to those in attendance on the way to the EPA and nine members volunteered without hesitation. The volunteers were: Krystal Doolittle, Iowa; Kimmi Lewis, Colo.; Kim Bremmer, Wis.; Heather Hampton+Knodle, Ill.; Pam Selz-Pralle, Wis.; Pam Sweeten, Calif.; Helle Ruddenklau, Ore.; Stacy Whittener, Texas; and Natalina Sents, Iowa. Thanks to all of these women for sharing their story of agriculture and the environment.

“We were sustainability minded before it was cool.”

Pam, Dairy Farmer, Wisconsin

“Farmers are America’s front line environmentalists,” said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. “Families and businesses involved in agriculture love the land, and rely on clean air, water and soil to produce crops and raise livestock. That’s why it’s important to give groups like American Agri-Women a platform to share their stories and environmental successes.”

During the meeting with the EPA, these ladies took time away from the meeting to talk on camera. The EPA then put together a video with snippets from several of the ladies. They also created graphics with some ladies’ photos and information from their interviews.

The video and graphics have been shared on Social Media by both the EPA and AAW. The video can be found here:youtu.be/hUuBXpP-m6E

Nominees Sought for AAW Executive Committee

By Kathy Rhoads, Nominating Chair

With such an undertaking to move our organization forward and gain more recognition in the agriculture arena the past few years, I would hope this synergy is discovering more inner passions to nominate YOU for a position in AAW leadership. In this year of nominations, a Vice President, Vice President of Communications, and Treasurer, along with directors for the AAW Foundation and for the next year’s Nominating Committee, shall be elected at convention.

Along with elected positions, there are many opportunities to be involved with committee appointments. For further information, as well as an application, you can reach me at krhoads1@frontier.com or 740/404-5699. The website americanagriwomen.org includes forms, but some are in the process of being revised, so feel free to contact me. Look forward to sharing conversations with many of you.

There is a deadline date of September 1 for submission, giving the committee time to review and interview. Since it will take time to complete the application and gather references, try to act soon.

Upcoming AAW Meetings

AAW Convention 2017, November 16-18, 2017, Bloomington, MN.
AAW Mid-Year 2018, March 22-24, 2018, location to be determined.
AAW Fly-In 2018, TENTATIVELY June 3-6, 2018 (dates will not be firm until January 2018).
AAW Convention 2018, November 15-18, 2018, Springfield, IL.
AAW Mid-Year 2019, March 21-23, 2019, location to be determined.
American Agri-Women awarded two Champion of Agriculture Awards at Fly-In. “We are honored to recognize two true Champions of Agriculture in Senator Joni Ernst and Representative Rodney Davis. Their concern and dedication to agriculture and rural America is evident in both their words and actions,” explained AAW President Doris Mold.

Iowa’s Senator Joni Ernst supports agriculture through her work on the Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

In early February, Senator Ernst met with Sonny Perdue, who was at the time the nominee for Secretary of Agriculture, and discussed with him the agriculture economy and the challenges farmers and ranchers across the nation are facing. She also spoke of the importance of renewable fuels and strong trade agreements with other countries; both of which are very important to Iowa’s economy.

Senator Ernst’s passion for agriculture is rooted deep in her Iowa heritage and life experiences. Being raised on a family farm in Iowa, she grew up walking soybeans and cornfields, and feeding hogs.

“As Senator, Joni Ernst has worked on behalf of agriculture by supporting and initiating pro-ag legislation. Her commitment to families in farming, ranching, and agribusiness has proven her to be a true advocate for rural America, and she continues to show a willingness to face the challenges that lie ahead for the industry,” said Krystal Doolittle, Iowa Agri-Women member.

“Championing Iowa’s farmers is a priority of mine. I will continue to work to cut burdensome regulations, and lead efforts that promote our agriculture economy and rural communities. I am grateful for this honor as we work to assist the men and women who help feed and fuel our nation and world,” said Senator Ernst.

Congressman Rodney Davis from Illinois won this award because of his ability to solve problems and to build solutions that benefit farmers, the agricultural sector and rural America.

Congressman Davis serves on House Agriculture Committee. He sponsored a provision in 2014 Farm Bill for a USDA representative to serve in advisory capacity on all EPA proposals. Davis is a leader on crop insurance – preserving it as a risk management tool and providing options for coverage. He is an advocate for investing in transportation and infrastructure as well as for U.S. energy independence using both renewable fuel sources and those that are mined and refined here.

Congressman Davis is a proponent of free but fair trade.

Heather Hampton+Knodle of Illinois said, “Congressman Davis has been effective at representing his district and at representing agriculture. Both Agriculture Committee Chairmen with whom he has served have commended him for his leadership and ability to bring about consensus on tough issues like crop insurance and research.”

“I’m honored to receive the American Agri-Women (AAW) Champion of Agriculture Award,” said Davis. “One of my greatest privileges is being an advocate for farmers and agriculture in Congress. U.S. agriculture drives our economy and is instrumental in feeding the world. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to craft the next Farm Bill and ensure our agriculture remains an economic leader.”
Loudoun County, Virginia, LOVES Agriculture

By Heather Hampton-Knodle, First VP

Following Fly-In, AAW members had the chance to participate in a sampling of agribusinesses in the greater D.C. region hosted by Loudoun County, Virginia’s Economic Development office and Farm Credit of the Virginias.

The day started with a scenic bus ride past familiar sites like Arlington National Cemetery and Dulles Airport to reach Faith Like a Mustard Seed Farm near Leesburg, Virginia. Members toured the rustic barn that has been converted into an event center and viewed the restaurant that is open for limited hours on the weekend. The owners work hard to grow their own inputs and to source locally-grown food and drinks featured on their menus. They have adapted from their original plans of a full-time restaurant fueled by everything from their farm by limiting hours and focusing on hosting events. AAW members learned Faith Like a Mustard Seed was in the running to be the site of a “dinner in the field” (actually their pasture near a pond) for international winners of the video game, “Hay Day.”

From Faith Like a Mustard Seed, members boarded the bus to visit Vanish brewery. The brewery is situated in a former equestrian center. The marketing approach is very open with a pet-friendly outdoor area and family-friendly yard games intended for people to plan on ‘hanging out’ with family and friends at Vanish on their weekends and evenings. The craft beers range from pale ales to stouts. Regionally-grown hops can be processed in a building on the same property. It’s a cooperative venture called Luckett’s Mills and Hopworks. Members learned about the time-sensitive nature of beginning the processing within minutes of cutting the hops from their vines. They also learned about the steps required to create pellets used by many brewers.

A short bus ride took members to Brossman’s Farm Stand. More than just a farm stand with a wide range of vegetables and fruits, Brossman’s offers a plant-a-row program behind the stand for subsickers who don’t have space on their own property. In addition to greenhouses, orchards of various fruit trees and growing Christmas trees, Brossman’s offers raised beds for limited hours on the weekend. The owners work hard to grow their own inputs and to source locally-grown food and drinks featured on their menus. They have adapted from their original plans of a full-time restaurant fueled by everything from their farm by limiting hours and focusing on hosting events. AAW members learned Faith Like a Mustard Seed was in the running to be the site of a “dinner in the field” (actually their pasture near a pond) for international winners of the video game, “Hay Day.”

The last stop on the post-Fly-In tour featured an inspiring visit with Doug Fabbioli and his team at Fabbioli Cellars. Doug is a true believer in the power of agri-tourism to build and to sustain rural economies. Members began with a walking tour of the vineyards and the hops grown on site. They viewed the oak barrels used for aging the wines and then experienced a flight of wines paired with flavorful tidbits. Members loved the brisket and sugared bacon and other regional flavors served up for lunch.

Located next door to the farm stand, is Roots 657. Members enjoyed the chance to visit with celebrity Chef Rich Rosendale and his partner in the restaurant. When he’s not filming HGTV segments, Chef Rosendale is teaching gourmet cooking classes around the country. He shared plans to build a demonstration kitchen in the outdoor patio area to build up local gourmet cooking opportunities. Members loved the brisket and sugared bacon and other regional flavors served up for lunch.

AgDay365 Update: Announcing ‘Gen Z Speaks Ag’ Contest

The “AgDay365: Ag Day is Every Day” campaign is going strong. Thank you for all the great posts, photos and events to share the message that agriculture is part of every day for everyone.

As part of the campaign, AAW was pleased to host an advocacy event in Washington, D.C., on National Ag Day for students from FFA, 4-H and Agriculture Future of America. To build on that energy and encourage young people to continue raising their voices for agriculture, AAW announces its “Gen Z Speaks Ag” advocacy contest.

Young advocates, those between 15 and 23, can enter the contest. The entrants can have an agriculture background or have an interest in related topics, such as food safety, food preparation, sustainability, etc. The contest runs through Oct. 1 and includes four contest options: photo, video, special event or pollinator education. Prizes range from $100-500. Go to http://americanagriwomen.org/gen-z-speaks-ag/ for more information and the submission forms and official guidelines. Please share!

Donate to AAW via Amazon Smile

Go to smile.amazon.com, select AAW Foundation as your charity, and anytime you make a purchase, Amazon Smile provides a small percentage of your purchase to us. It does not cost you anything, but helps our Foundation grow!
A
fter almost a year of planning, the official launch of the AAW Leadership Development Process (LDP) is set for October 22-24th at Cedar Creek, TX, near Austin.

The LDP includes a two-day retreat, four webinars, assigned readings, attendance at AAW events throughout the year, and the use of an accountability partner to achieve goals — all delivered or facilitated by AAW members and friends of agriculture.

Committee Co-chairs Kristine Ranger, Michigan, and Pamela Sweeten, California, have planned a full agenda for the first retreat, which begins at 5:00 PM on Tuesday October 24th and ends at noon on Thursday, October 26th.

Participants can expect short, interactive vignettes and group discussion; “deep dives” into critical content; and strategic endeavors to practice and apply the principles of teamwork.

The AAW LDP was designed with very specific goals in mind. The focus is on developing personal leadership skills that can be applied to team leadership roles that will guide members in developing high performing teams at all levels in the organization. Specifically, the AAW LDP goals are as follows:

Members will serve by LEADING teams on the local, state and national level to accomplish strategic goals of AAW, the annual Rallying Cry (determined by sitting President), and goals of the agriculture industry. Practice at the local level prepares members for increasingly more influential roles at the state and national level.

Members will DEVELOP, practice and learn personal leadership skills at the local, state and national level to fulfill their leadership roles and advance within the organization and the industry.

Members will MANAGE action items and learn best practices to ensure that AAW serves its purpose and moves forward with a shared vision that is communicated and achieved at the local, state and national level. All members know who must do what to succeed.

“We want this to be an ongoing process of learning and development,” said Ranger. “We anticipate that webinar topics could change annually, depending on what is needed in the organization,” but currently they include organizational health, branding, inspirational leadership, facilitating change, and member recruitment and development.

Upon completion of the year-long LDP, members are expected to have an action plan for pursuing increasingly more complex leadership roles at the local, state and national level. Program participants will be expected to 1) attend a summer or fall regional retreat, which will rotate around the country, 2) participate in all webinars (live or recorded), 3) attend the pre-convention leadership seminar and the AAW National Convention, and 4) attend and participate in the AAW mid-year meeting.

Interested members can apply for the LDP, participants by downloading an application form from www.americanaagriwomen.org/education.

Waves of Change: Your Leadership Development Process

AAW Foundation

Offers Mini Grants

The AAW Foundation is offering mini grants for the third year. Each applicant can apply for up to $500. The Foundation will give out no more than a total of $1500. The grants will require 50% cash match, but the Foundation’s money must be at least 10% of the project. Any of AAW’s affiliated organizations or their chapters can apply. This must be for an educational or membership activity. Grant applications are due by October 15, 2017. The mini grants will be awarded at the Annual Convention in Minnesota. The application can be found at http://americanagriwomen.org/content/uploads/2016/03/Microsoft-Word-AAW-foundation-mini-grant-application.doc.pdf. If you have any questions please contact Jane Marshall at citizenjane@me.com or 937.336.1456.
Remembering Jeanne Mertz

American Agri-Women mourns the passing of Jeanne Mertz on January 13, 2017, at her farm home east of Manhattan, Kansas.

Jeanne met Harold D. Mertz while attending Kansas State University. They married June 18, 1950, and operated River Creek Farms.

Jeanne was a strong advocate for agriculture throughout her life. She and Harold were named Master Farmer/Master Homemaker in 1987 by Kansas State Research and Extension. Jeanne served as President of Kansas Agri-Women, and as the 6th President of AAW from 1986-1987. She received the esteemed LEAVEN Award in 1982.

Jeanne was an idea person who valued the importance of service—a trait she instilled within her children and one that was recognized by others. She was an excellent writer and editor. Her organizational skills were evidenced by the numerous projects she planned and executed within her community and in the agricultural industry.

One of her projects was a sign project—an idea she proposed in the late 70s. The Grocery Sack Sign continues to be a prominent fixture along Kansas highways. In 2015, Jeanne received the Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award from the Kansas State Grange for her initiation of the Kansas Agri-Women Grocery Sack Signs to promote farm commodities and produce.

Jeanne's legacy is her family as it was first and foremost in her life. She had walls of family pictures throughout the home and dedicated many years to creating notebooks of family photographs and writing her memoirs. Jeanne's words of advice to her grandchildren best exemplify her tenacity: Be your own person and stand up for what you believe; set some goals and do your best to accomplish them; and finally, don't be afraid to try—not everything that is worthwhile comes easy.

She is survived by her five children, eleven grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, seven great grandchildren and five step-great grandchildren. Jeanne was a lifelong member of the Presbyterian church. She held strongly to her faith in God.

Longtime Friend of Agriculture Dies

Former U.S. District 15 Congressman Eligio “Kika” de la Garza died Monday, March 13, 2017. The former Democratic U.S. Representative from Mission, Texas, served from 1965 to 1997 in Congress. He left high school at 17 to serve in the Navy for two years, continued his education at Edinburg Junior College and the Army Artillery College in Oklahoma. After the service, he attended law school at St. Mary’s in San Antonio, Texas and soon after was elected to the Texas House of Representatives.

Many would say his most distinguishable work came as Chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture from 1981 to 1995. De la Garza’s favorite story regarding the importance of agriculture came from a visit to the USS Cincinnati. He asked the captain how long the nuclear submarine could stay submerged. “I can stay underwater for as long as I have food for my crew,” the captain said. That showed de la Garza that it is the farmers and ranchers of America who are in control of the security of the country.

Kika served under seven U.S. presidents but it was also his work on NAFTA that earned him prominence, especially with his work alongside President Bill Clinton.

Texas Agri-Women founder, Gen Long, established a good working relationship with Kika. She said he always had an open door for Agri-Women, both Texas and national.

For more information on his obituary, go to The Monitor, McAllen, Texas, newspaper, www.themonitor.com.

Parts excerpted from The Monitor, March 14, 2017.
Canadian Friend Lammens Will be Missed by AAW

By Marcie Williams, Past President

A
erican Agri-Women has lost a wonderful partner, mentor and member from across our border. Brenda Prudentia Lammens passed away on February 11, 2017.

Brenda first attended an AAW meeting in 2007 in St. Paul, MN, as a panelist on trade with fellow Canadian, Susan Fitzgerald. They then attended the next meeting in San Antonio where AAW once again had a trade panel consisting of members from Canada, Mexico and the U.S.

Brenda was an avid leader and pioneer when it came to women in agriculture. She was a strong supporter of other women, encouraging them to follow in her and others’ footsteps. This was the reason she was chosen to represent Canada at AAW meetings. She attended the Syngenta Leadership At It’s Best (LAIB) program in 2009 to further our relationship between our two countries. She promoted a meeting in Canada in 2010 to encourage a Canadian affiliate of AAW and in 2013 she hosted a day in Canada during our AAW Annual Meeting.

Along with Susan Fitzgerald and Denise Zaborowski, Brenda was awarded the Vision Award by past president Chris Wilson, for their “vision” of agri-women in Ontario. Her mentorship and leadership was a vital part of Canadian agriculture where she served on many boards and advisory committees, recently receiving the 2017 Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association (AFVGA) Industry Award of Merit.

She will sadly be missed but cherished and remembered for her bouncy personality and contagious laugh by AAW members and Canadian agricultural leaders alike. Her smile was a ray of sunshine on both sides of the border.

Caterpillar Launches New Email Series for AAW Members

O
eur sponsor Caterpillar is kicking off a new email series, helping you learn about new options and best practices to get the most out of your farm machinery. The first installment on equipment trends was sent in early June.

Watch your inbox each month for upcoming emails — and click the links for additional information. If you’re not receiving the Caterpillar emails, please contact community@americanagri-women.org.

Be sure to check the AAW website (americanagriwomen.org/membership/special-projects) for last year’s email series, including downloadable “Toolbox Talks” on important safety issues. Download and share with your family, friends, employees and co-workers.

We appreciate Caterpillar’s support!
First AAW Farm Bill Task Force Convenes

By Heather Hampton+Knodle, First VP

In response to questions from media and peer groups regarding AAW’s stance on the 2018 Farm Bill, the organization convened its first ever Farm Bill Task Force. The Task Force consisted of members from around the U.S. who have been involved as policy committee chairs or AAW Action Agents. The scope of the task force was framed around the 2014 Farm Bill Titles 2 through 12. AAW leadership honored the tradition of not taking a position on commodity policies in Title 1.

Committee members began by sharing background information about various aspects of the existing Farm Bill, offering input based on their food and agricultural experiences, cross-checking input with AAW Position Statements approved at the 2017 Mid-Year, and reviewing more than 36 sources of opinion from varied interest groups with a stake in the Farm Bill. Committee Chair Heather Hampton+Knodle, condensed the input from committee members into a White Paper format for review and editing by the committee.

Committee members participated in numerous conference calls throughout May and June. The initial 2018 Farm Bill White Paper was submitted to the full AAW Board of Directors for approval at the end of May. It was shared at Fly-In along with other White Papers that can be found online at www.americanagriwomen.org.

Following Fly-In, the Farm Bill Task Force continued to meet by conference call and to share information gathered from Fly-In visits with Members of Congress and Farm Bill staff. They have submitted a revised version, included in The Voice, to the AAW Board of Directors for approval to be shared with members of Congress during the August recess.

Thank you to the AAW 2018 Farm Bill Task Force Members:
- Kristin Anderson, Texas
- Carol Chandler, California
- Jacquie Compston, Nevada
- Kathy Goodyke, Minnesota
- Heather Hampton+Knodle, Illinois, Chair
- Ruth Jensen, California
- Lesley Schmidt, Kansas
- Jenny Stelmach, Kentucky
- Rose Tryon, California
- Stacy Whitener, Texas
- Karolyn Zurn, Minnesota

Mahindra North America & AAW Mahindra Pride Scholarships

Mahindra Pride Daughters of Agriculture Scholarships were created to honor all women who play an important role in agriculture — on farms and in agri-business. Mahindra’s Rise philosophy centers around the core belief that we will use our resources to drive positive change in communities across the world through alternative thinking, accepting no limits and driving positive change. These scholarships support the next generation of young women in their pursuit of a post-secondary education in an agriculture-related field and position them to be the industry leaders of tomorrow.

These five scholarships are available to any farm, ranch or agribusiness woman or her daughter to pursue accredited courses in agriculture leadership, communications, rural sociology, medicine, or any other courses directly related to agriculture.

All five scholarships are for $1,000. Applications must be postmarked by August 31, 2017.

The application can be found on the AAW website at americanagriwomen.org/content/uploads/pdf/AAWMahindraPrideApp2017.pdf
The first weekend in February, your AAW Executive Committee met in person to discuss operational issues and priorities for the coming year. Although the Executive Committee holds monthly conference calls that run from 1-3.5 hours and are in constant contact through email and texting (ex. President Doris Mold averages more than 1,000 incoming AAW emails each week), the in-person interactions provide a needed opportunity to step back from the daily demands and work on the big picture.

The Executive Committee began retreats during the tenure of Karen Yost as President of American Agri-Women. Usually, they are hosted by an officer. This year we owe our gratitude to AAW member Stacy Whitener and Pecan Groves company for hosting us at one of their groves at Cedar Creek, Texas – just outside of Austin. It was wonderful to learn about the pecan industry and growing process as we took our one break during the retreat. Thank you to our on-site hostess, Rubi Jaimes and youngest son Diego!

Each year, the agenda varies. This time we focused on delivering results in the various projects and roles we each play. We are blessed with many active committee chairmen and committee members who are working on projects throughout the year in order to help AAW fulfill its mission. As an Executive Committee, we are responsible for “staffing” the various committees to provide them with needed resources or timely decisions and to make sure we stay true to our objectives. Examples of projects we discussed include leadership, AgDay365, Veteran Beginning Women Farmers, Farm Mom of the Year, Action Agents, Fly-In, Mid-Year, convention planning assistance, Ag Literacy related efforts, membership recruitment, retention and data management and much more.

We also made decisions on key operational items like the process for financial record keeping and a timeline with officers taking key roles in drafting duties of the organization’s assistant to prepare for contract renegotiation. The collective discussion led to a series of recommendations related to each officer’s duties and pre-requisite skills to include in the Policy and Procedure Manual for the AAW Board of Directors to review, discuss and approve a final version.

One additional step we are adding to our Executive Committee calendar is to have a program of work planning session ahead of budget planning, beginning in 2017 as we prepare for 2018. Our fiscal year starts October 1 – more than one month ahead of the annual meeting in November.
**Hotel Information:** We will be meeting at the Embassy Suites Bloomington, 2800 American Blvd W, Bloomington, MN 55431, (952) 884-4811. The official agenda starts November 15-19, 2017. You can check-in beginning Wednesday, November 15, 2017 and check-out Saturday, November 19, 2017. Please note these rates may be available three days before and after depending on hotel availability. Check in time is 4:00 PM and check out time is noon. The room rate is $139.00 for a king and $149.00 for a double per night. Please note this room rate does not include MN sales tax, currently at 14.275%. Wireless internet in guest rooms is complimentary. Please call 952-884-4811 or 1-800-Embassy. Ask for Group: American Agri-Women or Group Code: AAW. Credit card information is needed at time of reservation. Individual cancellation policy is 72 hours prior to date of arrival to avoid extra charges. Please call 800-EMBASSY and reference your confirmation number. Please obtain a cancellation number when cancelling a reservation. The deadline date to make reservation is Wednesday, October 25, 2017. Reservation requests received after the deadline date will be subject to availability and prevailing rate of the hotel.

**Ground Transportation:** The Embassy Suites Bloomington, 2800 American Blvd W, Bloomington, MN 55431, (952) 884-4811, offers complimentary transportation to and from the Minneapolis – St. Paul Airport. Please call them upon picking up your bags at baggage claim.

**Dress Code:** International standard business attire for meetings, receptions and banquet. For example, tailored dresses; skirts, slacks with a blouse and jacket; and comfortable shoes. Business casual for the Thursday tour.

**To Register:** Go online to www.americanagriwomen.org to submit the form or mail completed registration and payment to: AAW, 142 Oak Circle, Colchester VT 05446. For additional information, please contact Lisa Campion, Executive Assistant at 586-530-1771 or aaw@americanagriwomen.org.

**Please note:** Photographs of attendees may be taken at this event. These may appear in AAW publications and in online communications. By registering for this conference, you authorize AAW the right to use any photographs taken of you for AAW communication.

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**AAW National Convention**

‘Shining Our Lights on Agriculture’

**November 17-19, 2017**

Embassy Suites Bloomington, 2800 American Blvd W, Bloomington, MN 55431 • (952) 884-4811

Name __________________________________________

Address __________________________________________

City ___________________________ State _____ Zip_____

Phone ____________ Email _________________________

Affiliate ________________________________________

Are you a voting member of AAW? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you a first time attendee? ☐ Yes ☐ No

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

Special needs? ________________________________

Spouse/guest/child’s name(s): ______________________

Spouse/guest/child’s phone number(s): ____________

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Total enclosed $ ______
AAW 2017 Convention Schedule

‘Shining Our Lights on Agriculture’ • November 17-19, 2017 • Bloomington, MN

Wednesday, November 15, 2017
3–6 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting
6–8 p.m. Registration
8–10 p.m. Hospitality Suite Open

Thursday, November 16, 2017
Breakfast on your own–complimentary by hotel, 6-9 a.m.
7–8:30 a.m. Registration Open
8–9:30 a.m. Foundation Meeting
8:30–9:30 a.m. First Time Attendee Gathering
9–10 a.m. Affiliate Presidents Caucus
10–11 a.m. Joint Executive Committee and Foundation Meeting
11–12 p.m. Standing Committee Meetings (Finance, Membership and Education)
12:15 p.m. Board Buses (boxed lunches)
12:45–5:30 p.m. Tours - See the flourishing agriculture of Minnesota without leaving the city.
6–8 p.m. Mill City Museum
9–11 pm Hospitality Suite Open

Friday, November 17, 2017
Breakfast on your own–complimentary by hotel, 6-9 a.m.
7:30 a.m. Registration
7:30 a.m. Silent Auction Opens
8:30 a.m.–4 p.m. Spouse/Guest Tour leaves
8–10 a.m. Board of Directors Meeting
10–10:30 a.m. Break
10:30–11:15 a.m. Opening Ceremonies: Welcome, Flag Ceremony, National Anthem, Affiliate Flag Ceremony
Welcome to Minnesota: Sheryl Meshke, Co-CEO Associated Milk Producers Inc.
11:15 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Round Table Mini-sessions
12:30–1:45 p.m. Networking Lunch: Defending Your Lunch, with Dr. Amy Kircher, Director, Food Protection and Defense Institute and Dr. Jennifer van de Ligt, Associate Director, Food Protection and Defense Institute
1:45–2:45 p.m. Panel Discussion: Innovation from Farm to Fork
2:45–3 p.m. Break
3–4 p.m. Breakout Sessions: sessions related to leadership, marketing, advocating and more
4:15–5:45 p.m. Town Hall
6–7 p.m. Syngenta Reception for Leadership At Its Best graduates
5:30–7:30 p.m. Complimentary Hotel Reception, Atrium
Dinner on Your Own
7:30–11 pm Hospitality Room Open

Saturday, November 18, 2017
Breakfast on your own–complimentary by hotel, 7-10:30 a.m.
8 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Trade Show Open
8:15 a.m.–12 p.m. AAW Business Meeting
10–11 a.m. Break–help yourself as you have time, meeting continues
12–1 p.m. Lunch and Illinois 2018 Convention Invite
1–1:45 p.m. AAW Business Meeting or Moving Forward: How To’s, Take Home Ideas
1:45–2:30 p.m. “Wolves and Government Reform in Times of Chaos,” talk by Jim Beers, Retired Federal Wildlife Biologist
2:30–3 p.m. Break, Silent Auction Closes
2:45–5 p.m. Pick Up and Pay for Silent Auction Items
3–4 p.m. U.S. /Canada Trade & Agriculture Panel
2:45–5 p.m. Pick Up and Pay for Silent Auction Items
4–4:30 p.m. Foundation Meeting (Elections)
6–7 p.m. President’s Reception
7–9 p.m. President’s Banquet
9–11 p.m. Hospitality Suite Opens

Sunday, November 19
Breakfast on your own–complimentary by hotel, 7-10:30 a.m.
8:10–8:40 a.m. Worship Service
Optional Sunday tour leaves after the worship service
Kansas Agri-Women Challenges You to FeedaBee

As part of the AgDay365 and Bayer Bee Care Feed a Bee projects, Kansas Agri-Women (KAW) has kicked off its “FeedaBee Across Kansas” campaign — and challenges affiliates to do the same in their own states. Members are planting pollinator gardens and sharing the garden’s progress on social media as a way to educate consumers —using the #feedabee and #agday365 hashtags. By adding a bee emoji to the post, Bayer will plant more flowers. Join in with #FeedaBee!