CREATE YOUR FUTURE, LEAD THE FIELD
NOVEMBER 15-18, 2018 • SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

By Heather Hampton Knodle

The 2018 AAW Convention is the perfect venue to refresh your spirit and capture new insights as well as adopt tools you can use in your daily agriculture walk. This year’s event features a robust lineup of speakers on timely topics as well as fun and informative tours.

Thursday’s pre-tour packs in a visit to an equine costume supplier for major films, lunch with a global leader in agronomy, and a tour of the world class Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. Various leadership committees meet in the early evening – Foundation Board, joint Executive Committee and Foundation/AAW Board – while members who are not on those boards can enjoy the hospitality suite before the screening of the revolutionary movie, “Food Evolution,” at 8 p.m.

One of the film’s guest stars will join us for supper as we view the film that Ken Turan with the Los Angeles Times described as, “Calm, careful, potentially iconoclastic documentary on a hot-button topic. Persuasive rather than polemical, it’s the unusual issue film that deals in counterintuitive reason rather than barely controlled hysteria.”

Friday begins with general session speakers who are leaders in their fields with a welcome by leading wheat breeder and Dean of the University of Illinois College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Kim Kidwell. We dive right into policy with a firsthand account of how the simple act of plowing a pre-existing wheat field became a landmark federal case on water and property rights from John Duarte, President of the largest permanent crops nursery in the United States. Global leader in livestock genomics and biotechnology, Dr. Alison Van Eenennaam, will empower each attendee with information and thought-provoking discussion.
PRESIDENT’S REPORT

It is hard to believe that by the time you receive this issue of the Voice, fall will be beginning! 2018 is definitely flying by!

American Agri-Women's depth of knowledge and historical perspective has proven increasing valuable this year. Government reforms by the Trump Administration are taking place at a more rapid pace than at any time in recent memory. Agricultural labor and immigration, disaster relief, trade agreements, natural resources policy changes, and a host of industry regulatory reforms are occurring. Our priority to provide input on these changes in policy have highlighted AAW's ability to be efficient in our execution of our advocacy mission. I believe that we can all be proud of what we have accomplished together.

Your national leadership team could not have completed their required organizational tasks without the support and efforts of so many of our volunteers. Your passion for our industry guided AAW's ever changing and comprehensive policy positions. The great success of our Fly-In aided in forging working relationships with new agency leadership in Washington DC. We must continue to be diligent.

Farm Stress/Suicide Platform Progress

Some terrific volunteers have brought together their experience to develop a national strategy for implementation of the Farm Stress initiative.

Farmers, and their families contend with pressures from a variety of origins including, but not limited to economic conditions, weather, health of animals and crops, political and policy decisions, as well as financial and agricultural markets. Thus, stress, resilience, and mental health challenges are emerging as one of the most important occupational and public health issues in agricultural communities. As stated in the last issue of the Voice the rural communities of our country are awaiting support through the Farm Bill to provide assistance with farmer stress and suicides. One of the overlying reasons this assistance is desperately needed is the fact mental health professionals are almost non-existent in our small communities. Even if the Farm Bill passed this year, it could take almost two years for programs to be selected, implemented, and functioning. This is where the community leaders of American Agri-Women can step forward and assist in filling this gap. Together we can make a measurable impact in our hometowns, and hopefully save some lives.

The goals of our strategic plan have been to build a Farmer Stress solution which provides availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability. To do this we are striving to bring together many like-minded agricultural organizations, partners, and resources.

Our initial step will be to divide all our affiliates throughout the United States into six regions. We believe that a regional approach would best utilize local available resources as well as provide some synergy with group support in regards to mental health pressures which could be tied to a specific crops and/or regulations which are geographic specific. The next step would then be to secure one or two volunteers in each region to act in the roll of a Regional Director. It will be the role of the Regional Director to assist in organization of “Mental Health First Aid Classes.” The Farm Stress Ad Hoc Committee is in the process of identifying qualified facilitators and materials for these classes.

The Mental Health First Aid concept is simple. The program helps lay people assist someone experiencing a mental health crisis. Participants will learn risk factors and warning signs for mental health, strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to turn for help. The Regional Director would assist in securing a meeting location, perhaps providing refreshments, and getting the news out in the local community that a facilitation on Farmer Stress will be occurring.

American Agri-Women will be partnering with others in our industry who support us in this cause to develop a list of available resources. The Regional Director can also assist with the distribution of these resources by providing outreach and education to the affiliates in their region.

The Ad Hoc Committee is also looking at various other options, such as; Online Virtual “Support Groups,” webinars on urgent matter such as “Surviving the downturn in the dairy industry,” and the use of Tele-Medicine as a resource for treatment for farmers.
and their families in remote locations or in a crisis situation.

We are also in the process of obtaining sponsorships to assist with materials, and facilitators. To that end, we are looking at rolling out a survey during convention to help obtain a better understanding of how stress effects spouses and children in our communities. We will also provide additional information on our implementation strategy at Convention. If you have an interest in being a Regional Director, working on this Ad Hoc Committee, or have general input please contact me at president@americanagriwomen.org

Syngenta Training

The new and improved “Leadership at its Best” training program will continue in February of 2019. American Agri-Women has limited availability for attendance. If you have not attended this training in the past and have interest in this one, please let me know by the end of October. Preference will be given for members who serve the organization through leadership as Affiliate Presidents, Government Issues Chairs, Coordinators, and leads before opening up to general membership.

AAW 2018 Convention

I know the 2018 Convention Committee has been working hard all year long to deliver an amazing meeting for all of us in Springfield, Illinois. I look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Lombardo
background about genetic engineering and her experiences speaking to industry leaders on the topic.

Following lunch, we will all benefit from CEO Emeritus of the U.S. Meat Export Federation, Philip Seng, an experienced practitioner in negotiating trade deals for U.S. meats in more than 100 countries, with special expertise in Asian markets.

The afternoon is packed with breakout sessions that can be found by clicking on the Convention logo at www.illinoisagriwomen.org website. Topics include resources to alleviate farmer stress, learning about the global beef sustainability initiative, understanding what makes “news,” getting the facts to speak out effectively, inland waterways locks and dams update, commodity marketing tools, evaluating farm policy and financial risk, farmers feeding the world, being your best self, team building activities for volunteers, and building rural communities through entrepreneurship.

AAW will have committee meetings for standing committees at the close of the afternoon session. Syngenta Leadership at Its Best alumni are welcome to a one-hour reception on the 30th floor overlooking the city. Everyone has supper on their own. And some brave souls might opt to go on the “Haunted Springfield Tour” for kicks!

While Convention attendees are engaged in making and renewing friendships and gaining knowledge and tips, if they have a spouse and/or other guests, they could be on a tour of Precision Seeding headquarters in Morton, Illinois; Sinn Turkey Farm at Tremont and Caterpillar’s museum near their bulldozer works at Peoria (lunch included!) Saturday kicks off the AAW annual business meeting of the membership. Lunch will feature an invitation to the 2019 Convention and once-in-a-lifetime chance to hear from Julie Borlaug of Inari Agriculture and granddaughter of the Nobel Prize and Congressional Medal of Honor winner, Dr. Norman E. Borlaug.

Shorter breakout sessions are featured Saturday afternoon – and paid guests are welcome for lunch and the breakouts - with topics that lend themselves to working in teams like the “True Colors” analysis that would be great to participate in for family and any businesses and volunteer teams. As well as practical topics like financial planning, making a bill into law, tax preparation v. 2018, understanding and using conflict to achieve shared results, and personal style.

Everyone has a bit of free time to visit sites in downtown Springfield or rest before having their photos taken with Honest Abe himself ahead of the Saturday evening banquet. Dr. Nash Naam will share his inspiring story of why the United States of America was the place he wanted to establish his medical practice.

Sunday morning features an optional, non-denominational worship service led by Sabra Dyas of Main Street Ministries. Then the optional post-tour departs. Details on the Historic Rte. 66, Lock and Dam on the Mississippi, Modern Creamery with rum and beer tasting, inside the cleanest coal-fired power plant in the world, supper on the farm with craft beers and regional wines event are found at the same website. We look forward to hosting you and your family and friends this November! You can register on-line at www.illinoisagriwomen.org.
FALL MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE

By Karolyn Zurn, First Vice President

Get Ready! Get Set! For the Fall Membership Challenge. The Membership Committee is already looking to gain additional members for 2019. October is traditionally Membership Month so that will be our 30 days of concentration. These would be NEW MEMBERS. We will be sending out the guidelines in the Communique which you receive monthly. This will be based on your state and one individual from that state. The winning state of the challenge will receive a $500 gift card and the individual will win $100. Remember this is AAW Memberships, not just your state. Dues will be collected in December from each state; new membership list will be collected by November 10th.

The Membership Committee has updated many membership materials that have been sent to state presidents and should help you to meet your goals and create events.

Get Ready!
Start lining up potential new members from July 1 through October 1.

Get Set!
Set your sights to sign up those members and collect Membership Fees.

Go!
October 1 through October 30
The Finish Line! Collect your Winnings at the 2018 AAW Convention held in Springfield Illinois, November 15-17. Congratulations, you’ve earned it!!
Annette Sweeney grew up on her family farm in Iowa with her parents and one sister. Her father was very encouraging to the girls. He included them in all aspects of the farm business. Annette attended Concordia University and taught school in Peoria, IL. Her life changed dramatically in 1981 when her father passed away. In 1983 she decided it was time to move home and join the family farm.

Growing up on the farm she had experienced about everything but planting. That first spring she took out the owner’s manual for the planter, sitting on the 4020 that is still in use today, and with the help of assistants, the spring crop was planted. She enlisted the help of professionals that she knew her entire life with the business. Venturing outside the area where her family had done business, visits didn’t always go the way one would think. Annette went to buy a new field cultivator and another occasion a combine and the sales people asked her when her husband was coming in. She had men refuse to do business with her because they were uncomfortable talking about cattle and crop production. She had been around this business her whole life and it was difficult to understand that mentality, because her Dad was inclusive with everything. But, being young and a woman entering farming in the 1980s many times it could be grueling.

Annette and David were married in the mid-80s and they live on the same farm where Annette grew up. Dave’s passion for heritage and love of the farm makes them a great team. Throughout their married life they have branched out to keep the heritage. They were executive directors of the Iowa Angus Association, created a home publishing business, and Dave still assists a purebred cattle sale company.

Annette decided to take her passion for rural Iowa to the State House back in 2009. She served from 2009 until 2013. Following her time in the Iowa House she found AAW. Sandy Greiner, past president of Iowa and American Agri-Women and Mona Bond with Iowa Agri-Women and American Agri-Women, encouraged Annette to become involved with these established Agri groups. This was the beginning of what would be a life-long relationship with AAW. When asked what was the best attribute of AAW she said networking and robust conversations.

During the past few years she has had many opportunities in the ag sector. A trade mission to China and South Korea was educational. Attending the World Ag Expo in California, she got to connect with AAW ladies! She has also traveled to Brazil for crop production tours with Iowa Corn, just to name a few. AAW connections lead her to be able to be on RFD TV interviewing presidential candidates!

In 2017 she was appointed as a State Director for Rural Development.
Annette and David are both on the farm full time running a pure-bred cow calf operation. They have two sons. The oldest one is a structural engineer and would like to start easing back into the farm. The youngest one farms on his own in Iowa, running an aquaculture operation.

Currently serving in the Iowa State Senate since April, Annette draws on her AAW connections about pending legislation. She feels fortunate to have numerous colleges around the nation willing to discuss concerns relative to agriculture and potential promotion opportunities. AAW has been a mainstay for Annette and she is so appreciative of all the encouragement she has received.
From a very young age I have always enjoyed politics and have been very active on a state and national level. While in middle school, one of my favorite memories was being able to ask questions of my state Senator about agricultural issues surrounding the Maine potato industry. Asking intense in depth questions about the industry was not expected from an eighth grader.

When I heard about the American Agri-Women Legislative Fly-In, I knew that was something I wanted to attend. This event united my two great passions: agriculture and politics. Growing up on a potato farm in Northern Maine, I have a special connection to agriculture. It truly was a fantastic experience to be able to spread awareness for agriculture, not only in the State of Maine, but also on a National level. After our meetings with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and several other agencies I do feel like this administration understands exactly how important the farming communities are across the country. The Administration also fully understands how important trade with other countries is with the agriculture industry. It was reassuring to see that they understand farming is so important to our country. I don’t feel the industry has seen this in a number of years, and finally that is changing. As Ronald Reagan said it best when discussing the Farm Bill of 1985, “We’re nothing without farmers. They’re the backbone of this country. And everything we do to help them helps our country and its future.” Farming is so important to this country and it is imperative that our lawmakers understand.

While in D.C. I was able to connect with women from all over the country who share the same passion for agriculture as I do. We share the same concerns, struggles, and rewards. It gives me encouragement to know that there is a sisterhood of other women out there who are so dedicated to the industry and can be used as resources.

**LEGISLATIVE FLY-IN**

By Alyson McGillicuddy

On Thursday, August 16, 2018, a U.S. District Court in South Carolina overturned the Trump administration’s recent attempt to delay the Waters of the U.S. rule, saying that the Trump administration had failed to offer the public a proper opportunity to comment.

The 2015 rule is now officially on the books in 26 states — but not in the other 24 states where federal court injunctions are still in place.

AAW president, Jeanette Lombardo echoed Zippy Duval, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation’s call on the administration “to take immediate steps to limit the impact of this dangerous court decision.”

The Justice Department is reviewing the decision and both sides expect an appeal. But the fate of the delay rule could ultimately become moot, if a federal district court judge in Texas, grants a nationwide injunction request pending from three states.

**AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN EXPRESS CONCERNS OVER WOTUS**

By Karen Yost

As discussed at our recent AAW Fly-In visit with EPA Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler, the Trump administration is working to repeal WOTUS. The EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers are expected to propose a replacement rule.

AAW members need to continue to let EPA know where we stand on WOTUS and ask them to work closely with the Administration “to take immediate steps to limit the impact of this dangerous court decision.”

Here is where you can e-mail EPA with a brief comment: [https://www.epa.gov/wotus-rule/forms/contact-us-about-waters-united-states-rulemaking](https://www.epa.gov/wotus-rule/forms/contact-us-about-waters-united-states-rulemaking)

ALLIE POOLE – HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

Allie Poole of Central City, Kentucky, is the 2018 winner of the Daughters of American Agriculture Scholarship, High School Graduate (18-23 years old).

She is currently accepted and enrolled at Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine, Auburn, Alabama.

Ms. Poole has completed a minor degree in Chemistry and the Honors program with an exceptional grade point average. Many of the laboratory sessions in Animal Science courses require the ability to work as an individual or in a group effort to accomplish required tasks. Allie developed an honors research project evaluating the potential value of thermal imaging in relationship to predicting when birth would occur in horses.

In consideration of dedication to the development of her professional choice, Allie has developed an extensive background of related work experience. In addition to all the various animal handling opportunities within the college coursework, she has gained significant experience working at multiple veterinary clinics and the equine center at Berry College as well as international experience in Thailand with domestic animals and elephants. Being involved in numerous clubs and organizations, often in leadership roles, Allie is more than willing in sharing and helping others achieve their goals. She is clearly dedicated to her professional calling.

TERA KOEBEL – CONTINUING EDUCATION

Tera Koebel Baker, Three Oaks, Michigan, is the 2018 winner of the Continuing Education (over 24 years old) American Agri-Women Daughters of American Agriculture Scholarship this year.

She is requesting scholarship funds for communications, technology, economics and rural sociology at Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Michigan.

We received some very positive remarks about Tera’s work and academics. Tera served as one of the advisors to the Michigan Junior Holstein Association Board of Directors, and was a member of the 2018 National Holstein Convention Planning Committee. It was through her sole vision and excitement for the future of the dairy industry that an educational career program, “Cows 2 Careers,” was implemented at the National Holstein Convention this year. She rallied significant corporate support, quickly making this the highest funded portion of the entire convention and inspired many universities to send delegates for student recruitment. She is known on the committee as a visionary individual with the skills to execute a plan.

While exhibiting dairy cattle has been an important part of Tera’s life, she has been involved in many other things. Most students can usually list a number of activities on their resume, but what separated Tera was that she was an active participant. She provided input and leadership in every club and event she was involved with. And even found time to complete a study trip to the Netherlands. Tera completed all of these activities while managing outstanding academic progress, excellent grades and graduated near the top of her class in 3 years!
ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT IN TRANSITION

By Karolyn Zurn, First Vice President

Throughout the year our committee members are attending various meetings whether physically or by way of conference calls on various issues that AAW believes are important to U.S. agriculture.

Our Government Issues Chair, Karen Yost has followed the Endangered Species Act in transition as the new administration makes changes which seem to be better for agriculture.

AAW Policies are thoroughly combed through at our Mid-Year Conference. Policy is a huge part of what we are as and organization. Actually for many of us it is our passion. The AAW Policy Book is like the bible of vital issues. You can find the statements on the Endangered Species Act in our policy book under the Natural Resources section.

America’s security and economic solvency depend upon our military and domestic food and energy supply and must therefore take precedence over the regulations of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

AAW Policy # 198. AAW supports the value of human life, safety and welfare above any other species whether endangered, threatened, or not listed.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries Seek Public Input on Proposed Reforms to Improve & Modernize Implementation of the Endangered Species Act

Department of Interior: In an effort to be more consistent, less confusing and to bring additional clarity and consistency to the implementation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries proposed revisions to certain regulations in the Endangered Species Act on July 25th. Improvements have been proposed “to produce the best conservation results for the species while reducing the regulatory burden on the American people,” according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Principal Deputy Director, Greg Sheehan.

Included in the proposed changes are procedures for 1.) Listing species, 2.) Recovery of species, 3.) Designating critical habitat and 4.) Defining separate measures for endangered and threatened species.

The agencies are clarifying that decisions to delist a species are made using the same standard as decisions to list species. In both cases, that standard is whether a species meets the established ESA definition of an endangered species or threatened species.

The agencies propose to revise the procedures for designating critical habitat by reinstating the requirement that they will first evaluate areas currently occupied by the species before considering unoccupied areas. Second, the agencies propose to clarify when they may determine unoccupied areas are essential to the conservation of the species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is separately proposing to rescind its blanket rule under section 4(d) of the ESA, which automatically conveyed the same protections for threatened species as for endangered species unless otherwise specified. (The proposed changes would impact only future listings or downlistings and would not apply to those species already listed as threatened.)

The ESA defines a threatened species as one that is likely to become in danger of extinction within the “foreseeable future.” The agencies are proposing an interpretation of “foreseeable future” to make it clear that it extends only as far as they can reasonably determine that both the future threats and the species’ responses to those threats are probable.

“ZOMBIE WOTUS” THREATENS FARMERS AND RANCHERS

By Karen Yost

Recently, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association Chief Environmental Counsel Scott Yager issued the following statement in response to the South Carolina District Court injunction of the Waters of the United States Applicability Date Rule:

“The ruling underscores the urgent need to finalize the repeal of the 2015 Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule. The South Carolina court has effectively brought WOTUS back from the dead in 26 states, creating a zombie version of the 2015 rule that threatens the rights of farmers and ranchers across the country. NCBA will continue to fight in the courts and in Congress to kill the 2015 WOTUS rule once and for all.”

Background

The Federal District Court in South Carolina granted a motion from environmental groups that brings the 2015 WOTUS rule into effect in 26 states. Previously the EPA’s WOTUS Applicability Date Rule prevented the 2015 WOTUS rule from going to effect until February 6, 2020. The remaining 24 states are protected by other federal court injunctions against the 2015 Rule (one in North Dakota that covers 13 states, and one in Georgia that covers 11 states).
BOOKMARK SERIES LAUNCHES: WOMEN HEROES OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

By Lynn Woolf

American Agri-Women’s new educational initiative, the “Women Heroes of Science & Technology” project, showcases the contributions of women scientists and technologists who are improving agriculture — with the hopes of inspiring young people to pursue careers in these important areas.

The project is launching with a bookmark series and nearly 10 bookmarks are complete or under development. The bookmarks highlight agricultural STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) careers and, in particular, women in these fields.

The educational materials will have a primary focus for students in middle school and above. However, the information will also have a wider appeal to reach students of varying ages.

“The project helps showcase women as role models and how they are helping farmers and ranchers produce more food, fiber and fuel using sustainable methods,” says Jean Goslin, AAW Vice President of Education.

The bookmarks highlight the women’s educational path, how they are improving the world through their work, as well as a message to young scientists and technologists. In addition to the collectable bookmarks, the launch program will also include expanded profiles that will be posted on AAW’s website.

If you would like to recommend a women scientist or technologist to be profiled, please contact Jean Goslin at education@americanagriwomen.org.

AAW OFFICER NOMINATION DEADLINE EXTENDED

American Agri-Women will be holding elections for the following offices at the 2018 convention, Vice President of Education and Secretary. Members will also elect 3 members to the AAW Foundation. If you have a passion for serving AAW and would like to be considered for one of these positions please submit your application to Janell Reid, nominations committee chairman, jjreid@coairnet.com.

Applications and qualifications may be found in the member’s only page on the AAW website and should be submitted as soon as possible. It is vital AAW be represented by women with passion and the desire to serve. Please consider applying for these important positions. If you have questions or need help with the application process please contact Janell Reid at the email above or call her at 719-892-0043.
Immediately after graduating from Iowa State University with a degree in Agricultural Business, Natalina pitched, planned, and partnered with Beck’s Hybrids on a year-long, 50 state road trip, honoring farmers through blogs and photography in all 50 states. After completing the “Why I Farm Road trip” and returning to the Midwest, she finished a number of freelance projects, and began speaking about her traveling experiences around the country.

In October 2017, Natalina joined the Successful Farming staff as the Digital Content Editor of Agriculture.com. In that role, she coordinates the back end of the website, sends a daily newsletter, and manages the brand’s social media accounts. While new machinery is her area of focus, Natalina enjoys writing about a variety of news and information in a way that serves farmers. Those responsibilities allow her to travel several times a month. Outside her full-time job, she still speaks at conferences around the country and does consulting work on the side. As a hobby, Natalina works in the restaurant industry, and enjoys learning about other perspectives of food and agriculture through that lens.

**AAW FOUNDATION PHOTO CONTEST**

Get your cameras ready!
The deadline for the AAW Foundation Photo Contest (for the AAW note cards) is quickly approaching.

Make sure your pictures include some type of agriculture. Photos may include animals, machinery, or landscapes. Please no people. You may submit up to three entries no later than **October 10, 2018**.

Email photos to: aawfoundation@gmail.com
NOMINATIONS FOR FOUNDATION BOARD
By Janell Reid, Nominations Committee Chairman

KIMBERLY SCHMUHL
Kimberly Schmuhl is running for her second term on the AAW Foundation. She lives in Michigan. Her goal is to work with others for a common goal. She is the AAW Fruit and Vegetable Chair and has served as President and Vice President of the Michigan Agri-Women. She is also active on the Berrien County Farm Bureau and the Youth Fair. She is also active in her church choir, yacht club and Heritage Museum. Kimberley raises several fruit and vegetable crops and has her own flower business.

MERLYNN VERSTUYFT
Merlynn is running for her second term on the AAW Foundation. She hails from Texas. She is an active AAW member and wants to help support the AAW Foundation scholarship program and assist new affiliates in their growth. She has been active in the Texas Agri-Women, serving as treasurer and president. She is also active in the Uvalde County Coop and the Leona Valley Gin Coop. Merlynn has also served on the Knippi School Board as secretary and is active in her church. In AAW she has long served as the Leaven Award Chairman.

DEBORAH WHALEN
Deborah Whalen is running for her second term on the AAW Foundation. She is from Minnesota and has served as President of the Minnesota Agri-Women and is a member of the EPA committee. She is an active AAW member and wants to continue supporting the scholarship and mini-grant programs. She has a background in banking and auditing. She has also worked with radio and newspapers. Deborah has worked extensively with the Harvest of Knowledge in Minnesota. She has served on the Red Lake County Social Service board and is active in her church serving as a trustee. She has also been a CYO leader and a 4-H volunteer.

NOMINATIONS FOR VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATION
By Janell Reid, Nominations Committee Chairman

KRISTINE RANGER
Kristine Ranger, from Michigan is running for Vice-President of Education. She has been active in the Michigan Farmers Union as well as the National Farmers Union. She also is active in the Rock County Farm Bureau and serves on the SD FFA Board. She has been the AAW Leadership Chair for the past two years. She is also a 4-H leader, active in her church, maintains a chamber membership and serves as a County Fair Superintendent. Kristine is an Ag-Food Industry Facilitator for Knowledge Navigators.

LESLEY SCHMIDT
Lesley Schmidt, from Kansas is running for Vice President of Education. Lesley has a passion for agriculture and teaching others all about the ag industry. She is part of a fifth generation Kansas farm family. She works alongside her brothers and parents raising cattle and crops. Lesley also holds a fulltime job off the farm as a Civil Computer Aided Drafter and Designer. She has served in Kansas Agri-Women for seven years including being State President, is active in her church and serves in several track and field organizations. Lesley has also worked with Common Ground and has been active in the Wichita Young Professionals organization.

Lesley Schmidt, Vice President of Education Nominee
In July 2018, the California State Water Resources Control Board issued a final proposal that would require 40 percent unimpaired flows from February to June on the Tuolumne, Stanislaus and Merced Rivers. These rivers are tributaries for the San Joaquin River that feeds the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. This means 40 percent of these river's flows would go directly to the ocean for environmental purposes. Opponents of the state's plan say the 40 percent unimpaired flows will have a massive negative impact on the Valley's economy, agriculture and land values. Roughly nine million acres of farmland in California are irrigated. California grows more than 400 different commodities used to feed and clothe not only California but the nation's growing population.

It is important to have a perspective on how California uses water. It is often reported that farming accounts for 80 percent of the water use in California. That statistic ignores the use of water for environmental purposes. According to the non-partisan Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Water Policy Center, the average water use in California is roughly 50 percent environmental, 40 percent agricultural, and 10 percent urban. PPIC points out the percentage of water used by each of these sectors varies dramatically across regions and between wet and dry years.

**Agricultural Water Use**

According to PPIC, total agricultural water usage is declining at the same time as agricultural water use efficiency is increasing. The result is a 60 percent increase in farm production from 1980-2017, even though farm water use has declined by about 15 percent during the same period.

**Urban Water Use**

The San Francisco Bay area and South Coast regions account for most of the urban water usage in California. Per capita water use has declined from 232 gallons per day in 1995 to 178 gallons per day in 2010, because of urban water conservation efforts. Per capita water use declined to just 130 gallons per day during the most recent drought, due to statewide outdoor water conservation requirements.

**Environmental Water Use**

Environmental water use falls into four broad categories Rivers protected as "wild and scenic," Water required for habitat and ecosystem protection, Water for wetlands and wildlife preserves, and Water needed to maintain water quality. Environmental water use decreases substantially during droughts, as less water is naturally available in rivers and streams. Environmental water usage has increased over the past 30 years, as more water has been set aside for state and federal fishery and ecosystem protection efforts.

Environmental water use would increase further if the proposed “unimpaired flow” requirements are placed on the San Joaquin and Sacramento River systems. The Westlands Water District reported last month that pumping restrictions at the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta which are intended to protect smelt and salmon had resulted in 151,000-acre feet of water flowing to the Pacific Ocean in June. 151,000-acre feet of water is reportedly enough water to sustain nearly a half million households annually.

The California Water Resource board chairwoman Felicia Marcus, wrote an article for The Sacramento Bee defending the plan. Marcus said “Yes, leaving more water to flow into the Delta from both the San Joaquin and Sacramento watersheds will be challenging for water users, which is why the proposal sends more water but still less than what is optimal for fish and wildlife. Water users can adapt – by switching crops, becoming more efficient and storing more water in wet times. In contrast, species pushed to the brink of extinction have few options.”

Representative Jeff Denham, R-Turlock, said in a statement released Saturday. “After a decade and millions of our money spent on a study that they required, the board ignored the science-based proposal that would save our fish while preserving our water rights. We will not allow them to take our water and destroy our way of life.

“Simply put,” he wrote, “this proposal places a higher value on fish than people!”

A “Stop The State Water Grab!” rally is planned for August 20th, 2018 at noon on the North steps of the Sacramento Capital Building. State Assemblyman Adam Gray, D-Merced is organizing the rally.
Natalie Gilbert works side-by-side with her husband, Greg, to farm their 3,500 acres of owned, leased and contracted land. The couple primarily raises corn, supplemented with some soybeans. “Running the equipment is the fun part,” she says. “It’s the reward for all the hard work you do the rest of the year.” Beyond operations in the field, all of which Natalie and Greg handle themselves, that hard work includes deciding when to plant, what seed to buy, when to fertilize and when to sell, decisions that are primarily Natalie’s responsibility while Greg focuses more on maintaining their equipment. Over the eight years she’s been farming full-time, she’s grown used to the surprised looks she sees as she drives a combine down the road — a regular occurrence since their acreage is spread across a 70 mile radius of their home.

Natalie started farming in 2003 when she took over management of her grandfather’s acreage, despite the fact that her parents didn’t farm and so she didn’t grow up understanding all that farming entailed. “I’ve learned a lot through trial and error and experience,” she says. “I also began learning from other successful farmers.” Farm Credit has also helped, both with financing and education. “They understand farming operations and how they work, and the capital input the farmer needs,” she says. In 2009, Natalie and Greg started farming full time, working land they both own and rent, and also custom farming for other landowners, a diverse approach that help them be better farmers overall. “We’ve been the landowner and the tenant, and also the farmer who’s actually turning over the dirt,” Natalie says. “That gives us better insight and helps us be more in tune with what needs to happen.”

That’s one of the great things about farming: the opportunity to be in control of our own destiny and where our business is going in the future.

– Natalie Gilbert

FARM CREDIT “VOICES” SERIES: NATALIE GILBERT OF LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

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