The 2021 AAW Annual Convention is now a page in our history book. Phoenix, Arizona, was a great place to hold our meeting, especially in the era of a global pandemic. The convention planning team began work in June 2021 and took off running. Squeezing what is usually a 4-day event into two days was a considerable challenge, and some events we usually include had to be scrubbed. But we had a great turn out of members, and we were able to offer a Leadership Training Workshop successfully; update AAW Policy and Procedures Manual; conduct the formal meeting; elect officers, Foundation Board members, and nominating committee; hold a traditional Town Hall event; hear from excellent speakers, enjoy a lovely reception hosted by Syngenta and BASF. The grand finale was the Installation of Officers and Awards Banquet, which by the way, was elegant, had fantastic slide shows, and topped off with a delicious meal. We even held a lovely church service Sunday morning. The hospitality Suite was kept hopping each night and the complimentary morning breakfasts were a huge hit. Congratulations to Veritas Award recipient William Perry Pendley; Sara Wyant, President’s Journalism Award; Governor Kristi Noem, Champion of Agriculture Award and Leaven Award recipient Janelle Reid (photo left). The following members were honored with the 2021 President’s Award: Ruth Jensen, Marcie Williams, Kathy Reavis, Chris Wilson, Deb Whalen. Ardath DeWall, Sandy Greiner, Anna Morrison, Mitzi Perdue, Diana Washburn, Jacquie Compston, Kim Bremmer, Lori Bammerlin, Kathy Goodyke, Laura Hart, Rose Tryon, and Heather Hampton. Thank you to all who came and participated!

The Embassy Suites by Hilton staff were present and attentive throughout the entire convention, providing hands-on service from the beginning of the day to the very end. During the planning period, the Director of Sales, Begga Akers, went above and beyond to accommodate our requests. Bravo to their excellence in service!

Bouquets of heartfelt thank you to the Convention Team: Marcie Williams, Deb Whalen, Jacquie Compston, Kathy Reavis, Sandy Greiner, Diann Washburn, Ardath DeWall, Anna Morrison, Chris Wilson, Kim Bremmer, Mitzi Perdue, Karolyn Zurn, and Ruth Jensen. And to Carol Forristall for volunteering to assist Sandy at the registration desk.

Continued on page 2.
This convention would not have been possible without the team’s 100% total dedication of time, energy, experience, financial resources, donations of supplies and so much more. The hours of emails and conference calls were too many to note. Sincere thanks to you all. Photo highlights of the convention can be found on the AAW website at: https://americanagriwomen.org/national-convention/

Left to right: Betty Doke with Protect the Harvest, Caitlin Vincent with API, Mitzi Perdue.

THANK YOU TO OUR AFFILIATES!

- CA Women for Agriculture
- CA Women in Timber
- Ceres Fraternity Inc
- Colorado Agri-Women
- Florida Agri-Women
- Foremost Farms USA
- Fur Commission USA
- Idaho Women in Timber
- Illinois Agri-Women
- Kansas Agri-Women
- Kentucky Agri-Women
- Maine Agri-Women
- Minnesota Agri-Women
- Montana Agri-Women
- Nevada Agri-Women
- New Mexico Wool Growers Inc
- Ohio Agri-Women
- Oregon Women in Ag
- Oregon Women in Timber
- Sigma Alpha Sorority
- Texas Agri-Women
- United Agribusiness League
- West Virginia Agri-Women
- Western Nebraska Agri-Women
- Wisconsin Women for Agriculture
- Women of the Kansas Ag Aviation Association
- Women’s Mining Coalition
- Wyoming Agri-Women
President’s Report


Your officer team met on the last day of the Convention to plan our year. We started our discussion with a review of the American Agri-Women (AAW) Mission and Objectives. Our core purpose boils down to three key actions: UNITE women in agriculture; COMMUNICATE issues to each other and those outside of agriculture; and PROMOTE our policy positions, industry, and products to a variety of audiences.

We are committed to developing opportunities that include regular networking opportunities for our affiliate leaders; communicating our options for member engagement and positions across a variety of media; and doubling down on our efforts to influence policy at the federal level while launching a leadership program to serve our members and prospective new members – regardless of the season in their lives.

We have a few other ideas we are working on, but I need to save more for later. This is quite a bit to get rolling in the near future.

In the meantime, we hope to see you IN PERSON:

Mid-Year 2022 – March 24-26 in Salt Lake City, Utah, at the South Jordan Embassy Suites

FlyIn 2022 – June 5-8 in Washington D.C.
Convention 2022 – November 2-7 in Bozeman, MT (for those with limited travel time, most of the membership meetings will be concentrated on Nov. 4-5).

You can find registration information at our website: www.americanagriwomen.org. Our volunteer Twitterbug and webmaster Ruth Jensen has made several uploads, including my December e-letter and a short video interview on American Agri-Women (AAW) that Farmgate Media recorded for distribution. We have much to be thankful for, including YOU - talented, skilled, and accomplished woman - that gives this organization a strong foundation and so much potential! Let’s keep driving forward and planting good things where we go, together.

Sincerely,

Heather Hampton+Knodle

Donate to AAW via Amazon Smile
Go to smile.amazon.com select “AAW Foundation” as your charity, and anytime you make a purchase, Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible Amazon Smile purchase.
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President
Affiliate: Illinois Agri-Women
president@americanagriwomen.org

**Jacquie Compston**
Vice President, Education
Affiliate: Nevada Agri-Women
education@americanagriwomen.org

**Rose Tyron-Vancott**
First VP, Resolutions, & Vital Issues
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firstvp@americanagriwomen.org

**Kim Bremmer**
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**Kathy Goodyke**
Treasurer
Affiliate: Minnesota Agri-Women
treasurer@americanagriwomen.org

**Karolyn Zurn** - Past President | Affiliate: Minnisota Agri-Women
pastpresident@americanagriwomen.org

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## About Our Officers

Heather Hampton+Knodle is a farmer, past communications consultant and association manager. She and her family grow corn, soybeans and wheat and manage a small herd of black Angus cattle. Knodle is dedicated to developing rural economies through incentivizing investments in telecommunications, innovative workforce development, and enabling entrepreneurship. She was the founding chairman of the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation, the Central Illinois Economic Development Authority, and the Montgomery CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) program.

Rose Tryon Vancott is a 5th generation farmer who grew up on a beef, dairy, and potato ranch in Northern California. Rose and her family are actively involved in the operation of her family farm in Del Norte County, Cali. Vancott is a retired district attorney investigator specializing in child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence investigations.

Kathy Goodyke has worked as a bookkeeper and tax preparer and worked in community, public and hospital nursing until her retirement in 2007. Goodyke then took an active role on the family farm in production and equipment maintenance until her retirement from those duties in 2016. The family farm raises corn, soybeans, edible beans, and wheat. Since then, she has been involved with various roles at the local senior center including financial chairperson, secretary and grant writer.

Laura Hart and her family raise corn, cotton, wheat, and sorghum. Hart handles all the bookkeeping for the farm as well as other duties. Their farm, Pioneer Farms, was recognized by the Texas Department of Agriculture
Family Land Heritage program, which honors families who have owned and operated a continuous agricultural operation for 100 years or more in 2011. Hart is a vocal advocate of agriculture and has been honored at 4-H and FFA banquets for her parent leadership. She is a past president of the Hart Buyers Club, Hart Athletic Booster Club, and a Hart Independent School District school board member.

Jacquie Compston is a fifth generation native Nevadan whose roots run deep in the history of ranching. She received a Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Education and taught at Smith Valley Schools and Western Nevada College. Compston’s family owned and operated a large family ranching and farming operation in Western Nevada that included, registered and commercial cowherds, a commercial feedlot, and production of, seed garlic, small grains, and alfalfa.

Kim Bremmer started Ag Inspirations in 2015 and has been advocating for farmers as a professional speaker, traveling across the country as well as internationally. She is passionate about protecting the use of science, technology and innovation in how we grow and raise food. Bremmer is also the executive director of Venture Dairy Cooperative, a new third-party milk verification co-op, where she advocates on policy to help protect farmers and promote the future of dairy in Wisconsin. She serves on the executive advisory council for the American Dairy Coalition, is the president of Wisconsin Women for Agriculture, and is a regular contributor on Rural Route Radio.

Karolyn Zurn and her family raise corn, soybeans, sugar beets and wheat. Zurn has served on many agriculture boards including Minnesota Ag in the Classroom, Northern Corps Institute Council, Minnesota Soybean Growers, and Becker County Corn and Soybean Growers. Zurn was most recently was appointed to the Minnesota State FSA Board.

Officers held a planning session in mid-November to set priorities for the coming year.

“Our officer team is dedicated to advancing our mission to unite women in ag, communicate among ourselves to develop better leaders and accurate messages, and to promote policies that make sense for the production of food, fiber and renewable fuels and for our consumers”, says Heather Hampton+Knodle.
American Agri-Women Honor William “Perry” Pendley with Veritas Award

Pendley has held senior positions in land management and is now a respected national commentator and author on policies that affect western states.

American Agri-Women awarded its prestigious Veritas Award to William “Perry” Pendley at its 2021 national convention held recently in Phoenix, Ariz. The Veritas Award is bestowed upon individuals who have been public witness to the “pursuit of truth.”

Pendley was born and raised in Cheyenne, Wyoming. From July 2019 to January 20, 2021, he was deputy director, policy and programs, Bureau of Land Management of the Department of the Interior, under then President Donald Trump. He was responsible for its 10,000 employees who managed 245 million acres of federal land, mainly in the West and Alaska.

Before joining the Trump administration, he led Mountain States Legal Foundation for nearly 30 years. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in economics and political science from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., was a Captain in the United States Marine Corps and received his law degree from the University of Wyoming, College of Law.

He was an attorney to Wyoming U.S. Senator Clifford P. Hansen and the U.S. House of Representatives Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. During the Reagan administration, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy and Minerals of the U.S. Department of the Interior. He authored President Reagan’s National Minerals Policy, initiated the Exclusive Economic Zone proclamation, and ensured an honorable memorial for Vietnam War veterans. Admitted to Colorado, the District of Columbia, Virginia, and Wyoming, he often appears on radio and television as an expert and has authored hundreds of op-ed articles. Pendley has published five books about the West, most notably, “Sagebrush Rebel: Reagan’s Battle with Environmental Extremists and Why It Matters Today.”

William “Perry” Pendley (right) accepted the Veritas Award from Kathy Reavis (left), chair of American Agri-Women’s Veritas Committee, at the organization’s recent national convention in Phoenix, Ariz.
Janell Reid receives American Agri-Women LEAVEN Award

American Agri-Women (AAW) presented the LEAVEN Award, its highest honor for members, to Janell Reid of Colorado Agri-Women at its 2021 National Convention held recently in Phoenix, Arizona.

Though raised around agriculture and active in 4-H, Janell’s involvement intensified when she married her husband John and joined the family ranch in eastern Colorado. The family operation, Reid Cattle Company, has raised commercial and registered cattle, including seed stock bulls for commercial cattle producers, for four generations on Colorado’s eastern plains.

Janell is a founding member of Colorado Agri-Women and has served as past President of the American Agri-Women Foundation board, AAW nominating committee member, and the AAW beef commodity group. In addition to her involvement with CAW and AAW, Janell played an instrumental role in forming and serving as a board member for Colorado Independent Cattle Growers Association, remaining involved today as Membership Coordinator. Janell is involved in numerous local and regional agriculture groups, including local FFA advisory committees, countless 4-H leader roles, the Lincoln County (Colorado) 4-H Foundation, and numerous political party roles and campaigns.

Janell is a tireless advocate for private property rights, maintaining an independent and thriving beef industry, and preserving Western heritage. Janell, a quiet but persuasive leader, believes that the best way to build an organization is working at the ground level. Her efforts have strengthened countless leaders and teams in AAW and beyond.

AAW presents the LEAVEN AWARD to those persons who, to an extraordinary degree, have acted as “leaven,” a truly feminine concept since “lady” means giver of bread. “Leaven” (yeast) is a small element that can interact and influence everything around it. It permeates and raises the elements it’s mixed with. Leaven multiplies its effectiveness for good.
AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN
2022 Mid-Year

Save the date
Embassy Suites by Hilton – South Jordan
10333 South Jordan Gateway
South Jordan, Utah, 84095
Meeting Dates are March 23 – 26, 2022
Group Rate: $149.00 + Tax
Single $159 Double – Tax
For reservations, please call 801-617-4040
Or go directly to the link below:
American Agri Womens Mid Year March 23rd-26th

The deadline for this rate is February 15, 2022

For Information: 775-721-3381

Thank you Sponsors!
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- AgPR/AgNewsCenter
- American Petroleum Institute
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- Bayer Crop Science
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- University of Minnesota Ext.-Women in Ag Network
- Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety & Health Center
- Versatile
- Western Growers Association
- Western Skies Strategies
- Women in Ag Network
- Zurn Farm
National Ag Day

March 22, 2022

The Agriculture Council of America (ACA) will host National Agriculture Day on March 22, 2022. This will mark the 49th anniversary of National Ag Day which is celebrated in classrooms and communities across the country. The theme for National Ag Day 2022 is “Growing a Climate for Tomorrow.”

On March 22, 2022, the ACA will host a virtual Ag Day event and events in Washington, DC. Additionally, the ACA will bring approximately college students to Washington “virtually” to deliver the message of Ag Day to the Hill. A core leadership team of college students will attend events in DC. Another exciting feature of Ag Day 2022 is the Celebration of Modern Agriculture on the Mall, March 21-22.

These events honor National Agriculture Day and mark a nationwide effort to tell the true story of American agriculture and remind citizens that agriculture is a part of all of us. Many agricultural associations, corporations, students and government organizations involved in agriculture are expected to participate.

National Ag Day is organized by the Agriculture Council of America. The ACA is a nonprofit organization composed of leaders in the agricultural, food and fiber community, dedicating its efforts to increasing the public’s awareness of agriculture’s role in modern society.

The National Ag Day program encourages every American to:
· Understand how food and fiber products are produced
· Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products
· Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy
· Acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food and fiber industry

In addition to the events on March 22, the Agriculture Council of America (ACA) is hosting an essay contest. The theme for this year is American Agriculture: Growing a Climate for Tomorrow.

This essay contest is divided into two categories of competition: written essay and video essay. Both are national competitions. Both winners will receive $1,000.

The contest is open to students currently enrolled in grades 9 through 12. Contestants must be a U.S. citizen and attending school in the U.S. Contestants must meet all requirements to compete. The deadline for submitting entries in the essay contest is January 31, 2022.

The complete list of rules and regulations for this contest may be found online: https://www.agday.org/essay-contest
American Agri-Women (AAW) Foundation elected its officers at the 2021 national convention in Phoenix, Ariz. The foundation’s purpose is to receive and administer funds for promoting and developing educational and leadership programs and opportunities relevant to agriculture.

Our overall objective of this organization shall be educational.

Linda Schiffer of Wyoming; is the new president. Ardath DeWall of Illinois; is vice president. Arlene Kovash of Oregon; is the secretary. Chris Wilson of Kansas; is treasurer. The new members elected to serve to the AAW Foundation Board are Anna Morrison of Arizona, Arlene Kovash, and Chris Wilson. These ladies will have a term of three years.

Continuing on the AAW Foundation Board are Maggie Howley of Montana, Leslie Schmidt of Kansas, and Lauren Schwab-Eyre of Ohio.

Legacy Kids was the brainchild of Trenna Grabowsk. Her idea was for the AAW Foundation to launch a program to provide a vehicle for AAW members to share their enthusiasm and support agriculture and AAW with young people while encouraging the ultimate entry of second and third-generation individuals into American Agri-Women. Legacy Kids Memberships are available for American Agri-Women members to purchase gifts for children/young people from birth through age eighteen.

How to Become a Legacy Kid
Legacy Kids memberships are available for American Agri-Women members to purchase gifts for young people from birth through age 18.

Benefits:
· Certificate and welcome from the AAW president
· Christmas cards each year, showcasing images from the Foundation’s “Beauty of Agriculture” collection
· Student membership fee paid by the Foundation for their first year of membership after turning 18.

Give a Legacy Kids Membership Today
You can find the membership application at https://americanagriwomen.org/legacy-kids.
Send completed application to: American Agri-Women Foundation
c/o Chris Wilson
2103 Zeandale Rd
Manhattan, KS 66502
or email completed application to: foundation@americanagriwomen.org
American Agri-Women

Champion of Agriculture

Award Nomination Form

The American Agri-Women (AAW) “Champion of Agriculture” award was initiated in 2010 to recognize members of Congress who have displayed exemplary courage in presenting and supporting legislation that promotes American agriculture, rural American lifestyles and the United States Constitution. This is a bi-partisan award with efforts made to include both houses and both parties, if possible. Since 2010, there have been two awards given each year: one to a House member and one to a Senate member – both Republicans and Democrats have received the award.

The Champion of Agriculture Awards are awarded during AAW Fly-In in Washington DC in June of each year. To nominate a Senator or Representative for the award, please provide a letter of nomination stating the name of the member, their state, why the member is deserving of the award, stating explicit examples where possible. In addition to the letter, nominations may include up to three additional pages of supporting material.

Submit nominations by April 1. Email your nomination to president@americanagriwomen.org.

Past recipients can be found at https://americanagriwomen.org/640-1/

American Agri-Women Gail McPherson Fly-In Scholarship

This scholarship was named to honor Gail McPherson of Pennsylvania. Gail was a founding mother of AAW and a past president of the American Agri-Women Foundation. She was proficient in parliamentary procedure, and she was chair of the bylaws committee and author of many pertinent resolutions. Gail was instrumental in the creation of the first AAW Legislative Fly-In.

This $500 scholarship is available to any AAW member to attend the annual AAW Fly-In held in June in Washington, DC. The applicant may be of any age but cannot have attended a past Fly-In. Only one applicant per affiliate will be accepted. Up to three scholarships can be awarded at the discretion of the committee. Applications are due by May 1. You can find the application at https://americanagriwomen.org/scholarships.

Send completed application to:

American Agri-Women Foundation
c/o Chris Wilson
2103 Zeandale Rd Manhattan, KS 66502

or email completed application to:

foundation@americanagriwomen.org
The American Agri-Women Foundation aims to receive and administer funds for promoting and developing educational programs and opportunities relevant to agriculture. The overall objective of the foundation shall be educational.

UPCOMING FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS AND DEADLINES

Daughters of American Agriculture
- Jean Ibendahl Scholarship (for ages 18-23)
- Sister Thomas More Bertels Scholarship (for ages 24+)

Daughters of American Agriculture Scholarship Applications opened on January 1 and have a deadline of March 1. This academic scholarship is to honor the memory of Jean Ibendahl (scholarship for ages 18-23) and Sister Thomas More Bertels (scholarship for ages 24+). These courageous and adventurous women played an essential role in serving and leading, and we must encourage the present generation to continue their agricultural pursuits. These two $1000 scholarships are available to any farm, ranch, or agri-business woman to pursue accredited courses in agriculture leadership, communications, rural sociology, medicine, or other college-level studies directly related to agriculture. American Agri-Women members and affiliates maintain the scholarships. You can find the application at https://americanagriwomen.org/scholarships.

Send completed application to:

American Agri-Women Foundation
P.O. 103 Baileyville, IL 61007

or email completed application to:
foundation@americanagriwomen.org

Have a membership question? Need to update any of your information?

*$Membership is due September 30 of each year*
Understanding "All Natural" on a Food Label

By: Food Labeling Issue Lead, Donnell Scott of Kansas

Food products on the market shelves include "All Natural" or "Natural" on the package labeling. FDA (Food and Drug Administration) has not defined these terms. An FDA policy statement on labeling products as "natural" is found in the 1993 Federal Register, Volume 58, page 2407, January 6, 1993.

Suppose a product includes "natural" on the package label. In that case, the product contains "nothing artificial or synthetic (including all color additives regardless of source) has been included in, or has been added to, a food that would not normally be expected to be in the food."

Basically, per FDA's policy, no ingredients shall be artificial nor synthetically made. All color additives are considered "artificial color," so any color additive would not meet the policy for "natural."

USDA also has labeling guidance on the voluntary labeling "natural." USDA had established a Policy Memorandum 055 (Memo 055) dated November 22, 1982, in which the policy for labeling meat and poultry products "natural" was based. This memo was rescinded August 2005, and the policy can now be found in the USDA Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book under "Natural Claims". The "USDA policy is that the meat and poultry products do not contain any artificial flavor or flavoring, coloring ingredient, chemical preservative, or any other artificial or synthetic ingredient. Furthermore, the product and its ingredients are not more than minimally processed. "Minimally processed" may include: those traditional processes used to make food edible or to preserve it or to make it safe for human consumption, which includes smoking, freezing, roasting, drying, and fermenting. Or physical processes that do not fundamentally alter the raw product and only separate a whole, intact food into component parts, including grinding meat, separating eggs, and pressing fruits to produce juices. Relatively stringent processes, such as solvent extraction, acid hydrolysis, and chemical bleaching would be considered more than minimal processing. However, the presence of an ingredient that has been more than minimally processed would not necessarily preclude the product from being promoted as "natural." USDA would look at these items on a case-by-case basis to determine if the product could be considered "natural."

All products claiming to be natural or a natural food should be accompanied by a brief statement which explains what is meant by the term natural. i.e., the product is a natural food because it contains no artificial ingredients and is only minimally processed. This statement should appear directly beneath or beside all-natural claims. If elsewhere on the principal display panel, an asterisk should be used to tie the explanation to the claim.

One consideration: what is the consumers' perception. Just by their common name, consumers may construe some ingredients as artificial ingredients. Citric Acid is an excellent example as I understand it may be from a natural source or synthetically made. However, L-Cysteine can be perceived as "artificial " from a natural source." Another consideration is enriched flour. The vitamin and mineral enrichments added to the flour are synthetically made. Therefore, the vitamins and minerals added would not meet the policy for "natural." An unenriched flour would meet the policy for natural.

Labeling food products, "All Natural" or "Natural" is not clearly defined. USDA does approach the subject with additional information. However, consumers may not be sure if they can believe the "All Natural" claims on products are truthful.
American Agri-Women
Spotlights

Affiliate: Florida Agri-Women

Florida Agri-Women prides itself in educating each other and policy makers on issues affecting Florida agriculture. As part of this effort, we arrange for an agricultural tour each year and include an opportunity for dialogue.

Fun Facts:

• Year Affiliated: 2004

• Longest Member of the Organization: Debbie Brady

To contact the organization, email Ruth Jensen at msjensen@comcast.net

Member Profile: Kelby Riley

My name is Kelby Riley, and I live in Abernathy, TX, with my husband, Carson Riley. We work on our family farm and have just recently started our own cattle operation, “No Clue Cattle Co.” I grew up on a cotton farm in the small community of Cotton Center, where I learned the value of hard work from an early age. Throughout my time in school, I was involved in both 4-H and FFA, and I credit those organizations for helping light the way for my future and creating a true passion for agriculture.

I graduated from West Texas A&M University with an Agricultural Media and Communications Degree and immediately went to work pursuing what I love the most, working in the Ag industry. With Syngenta Crop Protection, I have the privilege of working with farmers, retailers, and crop consultants every day, helping make plans and important decisions on their farms to keep up with an ever-changing industry.

I represent the Texas Agri-Women Panhandle Chapter as Vice President. Our chapter is in its second year, and I could not be prouder of the women that represent this organization; the time and commitment they put in is inspiring. Because of our commitment to our panhandle communities, our chapter will give over $10,000 in FFA and 4-H club grants in 2022. What an honor to be part of something bigger than ourselves. God is good, always.
Finding Your Voice

Kim Bremmer

I grew up on a dairy farm in northern Wisconsin and loved working with farmers as a dairy nutritionist for 15 years. After volunteering for a group called Common Ground (findourcommonground.com), I got to see firsthand how large the gap really is between farmers and the average consumer, who we know is approximately five generations removed from the farm. I wanted more than anything to help bridge that gap, so I started Ag Inspirations LLC in 2015...where I have been traveling and speaking about agriculture to both non-ag and ag audiences alike. My mission is to inspire farmers to speak up, connect people to where their food comes from, and represent the great success of American agriculture today. Although I miss being on farms every day and working with farmers, I continue to be driven by my passion of advocating for truth, accurately representing agriculture, defending farmers and protecting their use of science and technology in how we grow and raise food. I believe that everyone who touches agriculture in a professional capacity has a role and responsibility to speak up.

So what are the top three things that I’ve learned along the way about “finding your voice” and advocating for agriculture?

1. Don’t be afraid to speak up because you’re worried about saying the wrong thing!

I guarantee you that you know more than you give yourself credit for. There’s nothing wrong with saying things like, “That’s a great question or point, but I don’t know the answer to that. I will get back to you.” Let your mistakes be some of your best friends - they are the basis for learning, progress and improvements. Robert H. Schuller once said, “It’s better to do something imperfectly than to do nothing flawlessly.” Remember, people trust farmers the most, so anytime you can connect the farmer voice to an everyday consumer...you are succeeding.

2. There are no rules - so be creative!

I WISH there was a manual or checklist to follow when advocating for agriculture, but there really isn’t. In fact, I spend time studying our adversaries and the tactics they use effectively to see if there is anything we can learn from them. What’s the #1 thing they do better than us? Constant repetition until people hear the message enough times that it becomes the “truth.” The opportunities to share our voices are endless, yet the logistics and various platforms can seem overwhelming. But guess what? You make the rules. You get to decide what works for you and what doesn’t. Don’t like to write? Then don’t do it. Have social media fatigue? Then don’t do it - take a break. But you can offer to work with a local classroom, talk with a local community or professional group, host a farm tour, visit with your local unit of government, and make sure they know you are a resource for them, etc. Virtual options for communicating have never been more accepted. Don’t ever underestimate the power of one conversation, wherever it happens, because our communication always has a ripple effect. Reach one person and you are succeeding.

3. Don’t compare yourself to others!

Just like no two farms are the same, no two voices are either. All our experiences are unique, so the story that we have to share is as well. This gives us a clear advantage in communication because the voice of agriculture is authentic. There is no need to focus on doing something just like someone else does it. Canned messaging is what comes from our adversaries. Commit in 2022 to doing one thing to amplify the voice of agriculture, however “big” or “small” it may seem to you at the time. Show yourself some grace and use your voice in one way that works for you, and you are succeeding.

So no matter what method you choose to reach people, your passion is contagious. Don’t let our great agricultural story be told by others...because if not you, then who?
VOICE ELECTRONIC ONLY OPTION
Reading the electronic version of the VOICE but still getting a paper copy?

Help AAW cut costs on printing & postage by sending an email: communications@americanagriwomen.org

In the subject line “Opt-Out of the paper VOICE”

You will be removed from the paper copy mailing list & only receive the electronic version.

-Thank you!

“Agriculture is a fundamental source of national prosperity.” - J. J. Mapes