

AAW President's Message August, 2022

Freedom in Action!

July in rural America. Does it get any better? One of our family traditions is to celebrate our Independence with fireworks, potluck and taking a break with neighbors. Enjoying the parades and festivities – including frog jumping, cardboard boat races, and



'cornholes' - in our rural communities reminds me of the pictures created by Norman Rockwell that illustrated the "four freedoms" cited by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to inspire his fellow countrymen as they went to fight in World War II: freedom of speech, freedom to worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

AAW exercised our freedom to speak at our AAW Fly-In in Washington, D.C. in early June. It was WONDERFUL to gather with fellow AAW members from around the country. As we said at orientation, it was our time to play a role in restoring 'representative' government following a few years of COVID limitations. Fly-In Chair Ruth Jensen defied the odds in planning the in-person event which included extensive meetings with key USEPA and USDA officials. The Symposium on Energy planned by our past presidents and led by Karolyn Zurn was excellent.

Our special conversation with experts in issues related to global food supplies and security issues planned by past president Mitzi Perdue was enlightening. And it was inspiring for our members to meet Congressman Doug LaMalfa, who was nominated as our 2022 Champion of Agriculture by members Rose Tryon-VanCott and Debbie Bacigalupi. A highlight for the entire event was the AAW Foundation sponsorship allowing us to have Agri-Pulse broadcaster Jeff Nalley moderate the Symposium. Jeff's presence added depth and breadth to everyone's experience and his interviews with AAW leaders continue to play on radio stations across the country and over the internet.

In the few short weeks since Fly-In, we have issued press releases (<https://americanagriwomen.org/media-center/news-releases/>) on energy policy, our Champion of Agriculture and the need for the U.S. Geological Survey to list uranium, potash and phosphorous as critical minerals as well as a shout out for House passage of the Ocean Reform Shipping Act which was part of our supply chain priorities we shared at Fly-In.

Our Issue Leads for Climate and Carbon - Meital Stavinsky and Energy – Deb Whalen assisted in developing our final comments to the Securities Exchange Commission in opposition to the agency's proposed changes on Climate Disclosures for public companies that could have severely negative trickle-down impacts on family farms.

Our Leadership Development Committee has put countless hours and days into developing a leadership program proposal. They presented to the Executive Committee and are making further additions to the concept syllabus that your AAW Board of Directors will review in July.

Our membership committee continues to work on process improvements for serving members and managing data. Meanwhile our VP of Education, Jacquie Compston, with assistance from Minnesota Agri-Women President Deb Whalen is representing AAW at the National Ag in the Classroom conference in upstate New York.

One more special opportunity for members will be coming soon, tentatively July 27th – Global Food and Energy Supply Conversation – delivered live in a zoom format so members can ask questions.

And there's more to come...like Convention in November. "The Mountains are calling" us all to Montana where we can renew friendships, hone our skills, dive deeper into policy and learn about regional agriculture. You can register now at <https://www.mtagriwomen.com/event-details/american-agri-women-convention-2022>.

These results have been accomplished while members are still leading their 'day jobs,' other service work, and well-rounded lives with family and/or friends. Like our family, in June alone, many had already had their 4-H and county fairs, state FFA Convention, Bible School and were well into summer sports. And a personal highlight, Wall Street Journal asked me to present the 'realities of farming' as part of a panel at the Global Food Forum June 27-28 in Chicago. (<https://www.globalfood.wsj.com/#speakers>)

All this activity in the context of current global events makes me appreciate our freedom more than ever. My hope for each of our AAW members, who are already incredible people, is that we can experience freedom from anything that might be holding us back – be it regulations and uncertainty in the marketplace or things closer to home like insecurity, pride or fear of failure. As we *each* evolve, we *all* become a stronger, more effective voice for agriculture together.



Thank you All
For ALL you do!

Sincerely,
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American Agri-Women*

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