PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Focused on Success
“Success is not logical. It belongs to the organization and leader who can focus on what they CAN control and forget about the rest.” Meredith Elliott Powell shared that tip with other attendees and me at the American Soybean Association Leadership Academy in early January. She and her team have researched companies that have been around for more than 200 years to determine what they have in common. She identified nine strategies. All of them support the notion of focusing on what one can control, and by doing so, one will not succumb to fear and indecision. Her message enhanced what has been a pretty good start to 2023.

AAW has several teams working in different areas to improve our operations and our experiences for members: Governing Documents, Nominating, Leadership, Membership, Education, Golden Anniversary, Mid-Year, and Fly-In. Each of these teams focuses on delivering results that benefit the larger organization.

Meanwhile, we continue to speak out on policy issues that impact our membership. Our Water Resources Chair is assisting with developing our response to the most recent version of the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule. In January, we joined many other agricultural organizations urging no cuts to crop insurance in a letter to House, Senate, and White House leaders. Our Farm Bill Task Force is reconvening to edit our work from last year and identify any gaps we need to fill in our final recommendations for the 2023 Farm Bill discussions.

Through partnering with CropLife America, AAW can encourage our members to participate in their program, "The Pesticide Discussion," at CropLife’s headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, from February 28-March 1. We are thrilled to have expanded leadership and speaking opportunities for our members through this collaboration. "The Pesticide Discussion" is a train-the-trainer event that goes beyond the basic messaging and in-class type presentations to provide public speaking and media training and software for content development, training, and scheduling additional volunteers.

I encourage you to join CropLife America’s communications team and guest speakers for an immersive and interactive summit designed to help train you in teaching others how to confidently and effectively talk about pesticides. In this training, you will learn valuable content, how to present it, and create an implementation plan to bring back what you learned to your organization. This training was designed comprehensively, and all information is vital for a fully—prepped trainer. The registration value of this program is close to $1000 – made available for FREE to American Agri-Women members who are interested. The travel costs are paid by individual participants (unless their affiliates would vote to pick up their costs).

Registration is limited to the first 50 people who sign up. Register at this link:https://www.thepesticidediscussion.org/2023trainthetrainer. Please get in touch with our AAW VP of Education, Jean Goslin, at dbrokenbar@msn.com, with any questions.

For those who may not be able to travel to training, we are finalizing a webinar, "Food Security = National Security," that will feature experts to discuss issues related to our food and agriculture security, including understanding solar and wind leases and their impacts on property rights, supply chain ownership, and land acquisition near critical infrastructure. Registration details will be announced soon.

We can not "control" much except our thoughts. But our thoughts control our actions which can influence so much of the world around us. When we focus on what is true, noble, right, admirable, and praiseworthy, we will be changed and see change for the better.

I look forward to seeing you – changing the world for the better - in person in 2023.

Heather Hampton-Knudt, President
The Mountains called, and the members of American Agri-Women answered! After the global pandemic forced Montana Agri-Women to postpone hosting the American Agri-Women convention in 2020, they were ready and excited to host the membership and guests in 2022. The Rocky Mountains in Bozeman, Mont., provided the backdrop for “The Mountains are Calling” 2022 American Agri-Women convention. For five days, November 2-6, attendees toured the local area landscape, listened to engaging speakers, and commenced AAW business.

The convention started with a “Meat & Greet” in memory of Bozeman native and agriculture enthusiast Mary Burkhart, with hearty appetizers and libations. At the same time, attendees could shop for jewelry from Montana vendors. One of which is not only an iconic Montana brand but also a cherished sponsor, Montana Silversmiths. The other was a sister trio, Montana Agri-Women themselves, Sisters Montana Jewelry.

A kick-off to the tour day included an opening speech from Dr. Gary Sides, sponsored by Zoetis. “The Myths about Beef” combated myths with facts and a sprinkling of approachable humor. After Dr. Sides concluded, attendees loaded the busses with their Pickle Barrel lunch (a Montana lunch staple) and set out for a Gallatin Valley tour.

Tours included a wide variety of stops that showcased Montana’s unique agricultural landscape and the heritage of the western way of life. Stops included: Three Forks Saddlery, where artisans make handmade saddles and western tack; Churchill Cattle Company, a premier Hereford breeder and home to record-breaking sale stock including bulls and heifers selling for over $150,000 each; Feddes Meat Market, an authentic farm to table operation where the Feddes family raises and harvests their cattle for area consumers; Montana Bison Fashion & Yarns, where the founder uses what would otherwise be discarded Bison hides and turns them into beautiful fashions and creative knit pieces; and Dry Hills Distillery, a fifth generation farm that chose to diversify their operation to include creating craft spirits made from their crops.

Friday and Saturday included:
- Our business meeting and an array of quality speakers featuring two panels focusing on “Telling our Ag Story” and “Natural Resources Relating to Ag,” respectively.
- Motivational speakers like the Cowboy Ninja, Lance Pekus, and Stuart Ellis-Myers, mental health enthusiasts, which were enjoyed by AAW members.

Members heard practical knowledge from Montana Representative Kerri Seekins-Crowe and Montana Lieutenant Governor Kristin Juras. Lieutenant Governor Juras is at the top of Montana’s political field and is a ranch-raised agriculture advocate. Members also had the opportunity to address the attendees as the convention included a town hall meeting directed by AAW Vice President Rose Tryon-VanCott, and AAW President Heather Hampton+Knodle presented her President Awards.

The evenings left plenty of fellowship opportunities, including the “Barn Square Sip & Paint” led by Montana Agri-Women member Jodie Drange in which she designed a mountain barn square specific to the convention. If the members were not full from the reception hosted by Syngenta, they could venture to the hospitality room that Maggie Howley lovingly and expertly crafted. It was not ordinary hospitality. One could find a meal with gourmet charcuterie, hearty soups, and delicious desserts.

Our convention concluded with the AAW banquet. The banquet allowed Montana Agri-Women to raise money for area flood relief and AAW to honor its Veritas Award recipient Forrest Lucas as his granddaughter Theresa Lucas McMahan humbly accepted the award. AAW also awarded Rose Tryon-VanCott the highest membership honor, the LEAVEN Award.

Following the Sunday church service, some members traveled to the historic Butte, Mont. post-tour. They toured the Copper King Mansion underground mine and ended the day at Fairmont Hot Springs, only to wake up to snow-covered roads to return to Bozeman.

Montana Agri-Women sends a “Big Sky” sized thank you to all the attendees that chose to brave the cold and spend those full days in November with us. All the planning would have been for naught without your presence. The convention’s success is due to you all and our amazing sponsors. With the generous support of Alltech, Northwest Farm Credit, Western Skies Strategies, and many other notable businesses, we were able to provide the quality experience we wished for American Agri-Women.

Meghan Foran
2022 Convention Chairman
2022 CONVENTION PHOTOS
American Agri-Women (AAW) recently elected its national officers at its 2022 convention in Bozeman, MT. AAW, a national coalition of farm, ranch, and agri-business women, is in its 48th year of advocating for agriculture.

Arlene Kovash of Oregon Women for Agriculture; is the new secretary. Jean Goslin of Kansas Agri-Women is VP of Education. These women will serve two-year terms.

Continuing on the national board for the second year of their two-year terms is Heather Hampton+Knodle, Illinois Agri-Women, who serves as president; Rose Tryon VanCott, California Women for Agriculture, first vice president; Laura Hart, Texas Agri-Women, vice president of communications; Kathy Goodyke, Minnesota Agri-Women, treasurer; and Karolyn Zurn, who will continue her role as past president.

The American Agri-Women executive committee includes (back row, left to right) Jean Goslin, Kathy Goodyke, Rose Tryon VanCott, and (front row, left to right) Laura Hart, Arlene Kovash, and Heather Hampton+Knodle. Not pictured, Karolyn Zurn.

**2023 AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- **Heather Hampton+Knodle, President**  
  aawpresident@americanagriwomen.org  
  Affiliate: Illinois Agri-Women

- **Rose Tryon Vancott, First VP, Resolution & Vital Issues**  
  firstvp@americanagriwomen.org  
  Affiliate: California Women for Agriculture

- **Laura Hart, Vice President, Communications**  
  communications@americanagriwomen.org  
  Affiliate: Texas Agri-Women

- **Jean Goslin, Vice President, Education**  
  education@americanagriwomen.org  
  Affiliate: Kansas Agri-Women

- **Arlene Kovash, Secretary**  
  secretary@americanagriwomen.org  
  Affiliate: Oregon Women for Agriculture

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

- **Karolyn Zurn, Past President**  
  pastpresident@americanagriwomen.org  
  Affiliate: Minnesota Agri-Women

We can do it together!
American Agri-Women honored Forrest Lucas with its prestigious Veritas Award at its 2022 national convention held recently in Bozeman, Montana. The Veritas Award is bestowed upon individuals who have been public witnesses to the "pursuit of truth."

Mr. Lucas’ lifelong association with agriculture and his passion for our American traditions led him to found Protect the Harvest in 2011. Protect the Harvest, under Forrest Lucas’ guidance, was created to defend and preserve American freedoms and to support farmers, ranchers, outdoor enthusiasts, and animal owners. Most Americans are unaware that there are special interest groups in America that have evolved into a wealthy and well-organized movement determined to change our way of life. These groups aim to control agriculture, land, and water use and eliminate human-animal interaction, hunting, and fishing. Their approach is to reach their goal incrementally via influencing public opinion with misinformation and writing, funding, and marketing legislation and regulations to suit their agenda. The result is an America that is less free and less prosperous, the elimination of animal ownership and human-animal interaction, the elimination of our ability to provide affordable food for our families, and the ability to enjoy traditional past times.

Lucas was born and raised in Ramsey, Indiana, and still calls the state of Indiana home. As the oldest of four, he comes from humble beginnings. Forrest worked on a Harrison County cattle farm in his teens to support his family. After graduating high school, he took several jobs, from working in a muffler factory to hauling loads in a dump truck. Forrest purchased his first semi-truck and began long-haul trucking only three years after high school. He bought more semi-trucks and a convenience store throughout the next decade. Forrest met his wife Charlotte in 1979, and the couple later had a son, Morgan, whom they raised along with their children from previous relationships.

With the need to keep his trucks going down the road, Forrest developed a fascination for mixing oils and additives to improve gas mileage and overall vehicle performance. This knowledge would lead to creating of several products and incorporation of Lucas Oil Products in 1989. Over the last 33 years, Lucas Oil has grown to offer over 100 products sold in the United States and abroad. In addition to founding Lucas Oil, Forrest has been able to pursue many other successful business ventures. Lucas’ most notable of these ventures is in the sporting world. Lucas Oil Stadium has been the home of the Indianapolis Colts of the National Football League for nearly a decade. The name is prominent in the racing world, with tracks located in California, Missouri, and Indianapolis.

Besides staying busy with his many business ventures and attending dozens of sporting events throughout the year, Forrest enjoys spending time with his family and taking care of his cattle ranch in Missouri.
American Agri-Women presented the LEAVEN Award, its highest honor for members, to Rose Tryon VanCott of California Women for Agriculture at its 2022 National Convention held recently in Bozeman, Montana.

Rose grew up on a beef, dairy, and potato farm. She is a fifth-generation farmer on her father’s side of the family and a third-generation Portuguese immigrant and farmer on her mother’s side. Rose and her husband, Michael VanCott, are actively involved in the operation of her family farm in Del Norte County, California.

Rose was the 25th state president of California Women for Agriculture. She has served in multiple capacities at both state and local levels of CWA. Rose has been an active member of American Agri Women since 2011. Rose served six years on the American Agri Women foundation board of directors. In addition, she has served as the AAW Natural Resources co-director for the past several years. Rose currently serves as the first vice president of the American Agri-Women organization.

On November 8th of 2018, Rose and her husband, Michael, lost their home in the devastating forest fire that destroyed the town of Paradise, California. They have rebuilt their home in Paradise. In November 2020, Rose was elected to the Paradise Town Council and currently represents the town council on the Butte County Air Quality Management District Governing Board.

Rose is a retired District Attorney investigator specializing in child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence investigations. She is also a full-charge bookkeeper specializing in agricultural accounting and has a unique background and work experience in farming and law enforcement.

Rose enjoys collaborating with people from diverse social and economic backgrounds and has been a longtime advocate for the health of rural communities.

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.

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**2023 MEETING DATES**

**MID-YEAR**
April 12-15  Nashville, TN

**FLY-IN**
June 4-7  Washington, DC

**CONVENTION**
November 2-5  Sacramento, CA
Jacqueline Compston receives American Agri-Women Erickson-McCrum Outstanding Agricultural Mentor Award

American Agri-Women (AAW) honored Jacqueline Compston of Minden, Nevada, with the Erickson-McCrum Outstanding Agricultural Mentor Award at its 2022 National Convention held recently in Bozeman, Montana. The mentoring award was developed to honor two outstanding mentors and AAW past presidents, Yvonne Erickson and Sue McCrum, in 2017.

This annual award recognizes those AAW members who go above and beyond to mentor others in agriculture. This award is not a leadership or advocacy award. Individuals are not being rewarded or recognized for positions they have held, initiatives they have worked on, or advocacy they have advanced unless it is precisely in the realm of mentoring. The award is to recognize people who have provided extraordinary mentoring. AAW members who go out of their way to truly mentor and coach people in agriculture positively. They are integral to developing leaders who take on demanding roles in our agricultural organizations, businesses, and communities. The award consists of a plaque to the recipient and a monetary donation toward AAW leadership or mentoring activities to honor each recipient.
HELEN WHITMORE MEMORIAL CONVENTION SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship honors Helen Whitmore, a well-respected rancher, and teacher from California. It was initiated in 1993 by a friend and AAW Past President, Mitzi Ayala Perdue. It was established to increase active involvement in AAW and to encourage members to influence their home affiliate members. Each recipient received $500 to help with their expenses to attend the AAW 2022 National Convention in Wyoming.

Kelby Riley, Texas Agri-Women

As a recipient of the Helen Whitmore Memorial Convention Scholarship, I was able to attend the American Agri-women Convention in Bozeman, Montana. My experience at the convention was an experience far beyond expectation and one I will not forget. Dr. Gary Sides quoted the following during his presentation, “there is no culture without agriculture,” which became a reoccurring thought for me throughout the convention and today. From each keynote speaker to the business meetings, the panel of women, to the field day tours, I felt an overwhelming feeling of my passion just boiling over. All the amazing, diverse women from all over the country are coming together to fight for the same thing, agriculture.

The experience of sitting through the business meeting gave me a better understanding of the inner workings and how we can professionally and respectfully conduct business while still achieving the mission was an outstanding experience. I can bring this insight back to our TAW Texas Panhandle Chapter and better implement procedures to make our chapter successful. Because we are a young chapter with younger members who lack experience, the convention allowed me to see first-hand what true leadership is. As a young person coming up in the industry, having role models and strong women to look up to is absolutely everything. Heather Hampton+Knodle is a remarkable leader who is making a positive difference among American Agri-Women with the rest of the outstanding officers and board members. Through their leadership, I am encouraged to become more involved beyond my chapter. I feel inspired and obligated to get more involved with my local representatives and committee members and engage with our senators. No one fights for you; we must fight for our cause and put in the work. After getting home from the convention, I challenged myself to become better educated regarding policy. How can I fight for something I don’t fully understand? I have committed to putting in the time and research to be a more educated advocate for myself and provide resources for my chapter.

Lastly, I would love to talk about the networking opportunities and true friendships the convention allowed me to have. I had the time of my life getting to know the other members and making connections that have gone far beyond the surface level. American Agri-Women provides a lot, but the biggest blessing from this organization is the friendship and genuine love I have been able to share and receive. I cannot wait to incorporate all I learned back in Montana into our TAW Texas Panhandle Chapter. It was a true honor and blessing to receive the Helen Whitmore scholarship and attend the 2022 National Convention. I want to say thank you again for this opportunity.

Keila Schilling, Texas Agri-Women

I was honored to receive the Helen Whitmore Memorial Convention Scholarship and have the opportunity to attend the American Agri-women National Convention in Bozeman, Montana. Having the opportunity to experience Montana and its agriculture firsthand while meeting like-minded women from across the country is something I will never forget.

I expanded my agricultural knowledge from business meetings to guest speakers to field visits. It challenged me to think differently about the industry I grew up in. The business meetings were an opportunity to learn best practices to help our young chapter continue to grow and thrive. The guest speakers presented such a range of information. Learning how to advocate for agriculture effectively even when we are not always boots on the ground was something I have taken to heart. I’m excited to continue working on how I can do this more effectively in my own life.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9
Keila Schilling, Texas Agri-Women, continued

The national-level leadership of this organization is amazing. Interacting with each officer, including Heather Hampton-Knodle, was beneficial in growing my skills as a member and gaining ideas for our Texas Panhandle Chapter. Each officer was open to questions and helpful in learning more about the National organization and how we, as a chapter, can continue to grow and be an active part of both Texas and American Agri-Women.

The convention also allowed me to network and meet ladies from across the country who I now have the pleasure of calling great friends. The diversity in background and location that each woman brought to the table was great to learn from. I was able to form some bonds with ladies that I know will last for years to come. I am beyond blessed and grateful to have had the opportunity to experience the convention and meet all the amazing women this organization has empowered.

Again, I am thankful to have been awarded this scholarship by the wonderful ladies on the committee. I look forward to many years of attending and growing with American Agri-Women.

Jamie Willard, New York Member at Large

I was 1 out of 4 women at a national level who received the American Agri-Women Helen Whitmore Memorial Convention Scholarship. This scholarship honored Helen Whitmore, a well-respected rancher and teacher from California. I am honored to receive this scholarship and proud to be a part of the AAW Family!

A big thanks to Jacquie Compston for encouraging me to apply and get involved. I learned about American Agri-Women when meeting her at the national convention for Ag in the Classroom. Linda Schiffer gave me great advice and guided me while I attended the convention for the first time. I built many great relationships and connections with other empowering women.

I am looking forward to participating in future events with AAW.

Like the Cowboy Ninja said - Always believe in yourself. It is such a blessing to know your roots and to be able to promote our industry.

Ashly Ann LemHouse, Oregon Women for Agriculture

"In order to make people understand agriculture, you need to include them in it." This was a quote from keynote speaker Emma Lou Slivka, FFA President of Winifred High School in Montana. To say I was enthralled and blown away by this Junior would be an understatement. All four speakers on the Urban Cowgirls Panel were incredibly smart, well-versed, and insightful women I could have listened to for hours. Every one of these panelists talked about how they “include” the public in their events, Instagram posts, and other activities in hopes that by allowing a glimpse into their lives, people outside of the agriculture realm can gain a better understanding of the industry and how vital it is to our world.

The urban cowgirl’s panel was just a small part of the four days I spent with amazing women from all over the US. We met the first evening in the Hotel Atrium for ladies’ night. With drinks in our hands and stories of our hearts, we gushed over Montana Silver jewelry while also discussing the seriousness of the latest flooding incidents. Every woman I encountered was friendly and eager to know where I was from and how I was involved in agriculture. Many of my fellow American Agri-Women members had been attending National Conventions for years. They said they looked forward to this all year—a chance to see old friends and meet the new ones coming in. From that first night, this would indeed be a memorable weekend.

The next day, with the beautiful white-capped Montana mountains around us, we loaded up on the tour buses and ventured out all over Gallatin County. Whether it was checking out a $200,000 Hereford heifer at the Churchill Cattle Company while munching on Mrs. Venhuizen’s delicious brownies, watching the careful tooling of a leatherscrafter at Three Forks Saddlery, or listening to Jennie Miller Montana, as she tells the story of how she acquires, tans and transforms bison hides into yarns and pelts, laughter and learning were the two consistencies throughout the day. We took in quite a bit of this area and were fortunate to have several Montana Agri-Women take the time to tell us about the local environment and geological features as we bused from stop to stop.

As a first-time convention attendee, I had no idea what to expect. I knew I would meet other women with the commonality of agriculture, but my week was so much more than this. The depth and drive of each of these women are very motivating, and it encouraged me to get more involved in not only my county chapter but also my state organization. I encourage all of my fellow American Agri-Women and affiliates to attend the national convention for the fun and friendship gained and the insight into our industry and its expanse. We are important, and we are making a difference!
American Agri-Women President Heather Hampton+Knodle and VP of Communications Laura Hart attended the American Soybean Association 2023 Soybean Leadership Academy at the Hyatt Regency in Jacksonville, Florida, January 11-13. The Soybean Leadership Academy provides tools and training designed to enhance state and national board leaders, staff effectiveness, and collaboration.

"Leading with Impact"
- The focus of this year’s program was impact -- what are the current impacts in the ever-evolving field of agriculture?
- How, as leaders, can you impact the success of your organization and your business?

Thursday and Friday included:

Welcome: Daryl Cates, ASA President

General Sessions: The Impact of Market Trends with John Anderson, Ph.D., Professor and Head, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, University of Arkansas, speaking on livestock. Nick Goeser, Ph.D., Principal, Carbon A List, carbon, and Donald Maier, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Practice-Supply Chain, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, speaking on crop inputs and supply chain. Matt Reardon, Senior Computational Scientist, Nutrien Ag Solutions, the impact of weather. Dimi Ghawi, Coach and Author, harnessing the power of an inclusive culture. Jonathan Shaver, Envision Partners, leadership-resilience impact, and a grower and CEO panel.

Breakout Sessions: Meredith Elliott Powell, award-winning speaker, and author, and Susan Radwan of Leading Edge Mentoring.

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American Agri-Women Legacy Sponsors

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We can do it together!
2023 AAW MID-YEAR MEETING IN NASHVILLE, TN.

We invite you all to the 2023 Mid-Year meeting in beautiful Nashville, TN. This year’s Mid-Year meeting will be from April 12th through the 15th at the Embassy Suites Hilton - Nashville Airport in Nashville.

Each year, American Agri women host a Mid-Year meeting to discuss current agricultural issues and policies and vote to create our 2023 Position Statements. These position statements are the basis for the AAW white papers we present to legislators at our June Fly-In in Washington, DC.

We have a tentative agenda and registration up on our AAW website. We plan to have two panels during our Mid-Year meeting this year. One panel will discuss how to have impactful discussions with our legislators. The second panel will discuss an underutilized advocating tool, writing articles and editorials for your local and national papers.

We hope to see you all in Nashville! For more information, go to americanagriwomen.org.

Rose Tryon VanCott, AAW 1st VP Resolutions & Vital Issues

Embassy Suites by Hilton – Nashville Airport
10 Century Boulevard
Nashville, TN 37214

Group Rate: $169.00 + Tax

For reservations, please call 855 605 0319

The deadline for this rate is March 13, 2023

Hotel is three miles from the Nashville International Airport – take advantage of the free 24-hour shuttle both ways. They offer a complimentary evening reception, and free made-to-order breakfast. Savor inspired dishes and regional favorites at the new TEN Bar & Grille located inside the hotel from 11am-11pm daily. Hotel is 5 miles from the Opry Mills Entertainment & Dining Mall. Here are just a few of the restaurants: Alabama Grille, Jillians, Rainforest Cafe, Gibson's.
2023 American Agri-Women Mid-Year Meeting

April 12 – 16, 2023
Embassy Suites by Hilton – Nashville Airport
10 Century Boulevard – Nashville, Tennessee 37214
Phone: 855-605-0319

Name: ___________________________ Phone: _______________________
Address: __________________________
Email: ___________________________ Affiliate: _______________________
Cell Phone# ______________________ Emergency Contact: ________________
Spouse/Guest name(s): ______________ Medical Dietary Restrictions: ____________
Are you a voting member of AAW? Yes ____ No ____ Are you a first-time attendee? Yes ____ No _____

We will have a complete list of members and guests attending this AAW Meeting upon your arrival. Please check this box if you DO NOT want your information listed.

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No refunds after March 10. Total: ____

Friday Evening Options (Not included in registration payment) Please mark your choice:

____ Downtown Nashville Tours

____ Grand Ole Opry – Ryman Auditorium – Lady A Concert
https://tickets.nashville.com/results-ticket?eventid=5107297&event=Lady+A

____ Dinner on your own

Register online at: www.americanagriwomen.org or mail form and check to
Kathy Goodyke 25204 210th St. SW, Crookston, MN 56716
Make checks to AAW - MEMO: Mid-Year

**Hotel Information:** We will be meeting at the Embassy Suites by Hilton – Nashville, Tennessee. Please call the hotel at 855-605-0319 and ask for Group Rate for America Agri-Women. The rate is $169.00 plus taxes per night for a single or double room. The cut-off date for this price is March 13, 2023. In addition, the Embassy Suites offers Made-to-order Breakfast Daily and a Complimentary Evening Beverage Reception, all included in your hotel pricing. The delights of Nashville and Opry Mills mall are within a 15-minute drive.

**Ground Transportation:** The Embassy Suites offers 24-hour free airport shuttle. Uber and Lyft are also available from the airport as well as taxi services.

**Dress Code:** Business Casual Attire for meetings.

For Additional Information: Rose Tryon 775-721-3381 or Ruth Jensen 805-264-4476
2023 American Agri-Women  
Tentative Agenda  
Mid-Year Meeting Apr 12th – 15th, 2023  
Embassy Suites – Nashville, Tennessee

**Thursday, April 13th, 2023**

11:30 pm – 4:00 pm  Registration open

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm  Executive Committee Meeting

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm  Foundation Board Meeting

3:45 pm – 4:00 pm  Break

4:00 pm – 5:30 pm  Joint Planning Session  
AAW Foundation  
AAW Exec. Committee

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm  Dinner on your own

**Friday, April 14th, 2023**

8:00 am – 9:30 am  Board of Directors Meeting

9:00 am  Silent Auction Begins

9:30 am – 9:45 am  Break

9:45 am – 10:00 am  President’s Welcome  
Heather Hampton+Knodle  
Mid-Year Orientation  
First VP Rose Tryon

10:00 am – 11:00 am  **Panel – How to make an impact when talking to legislators**

11:00 am – 12:00 pm  Natural Resources

11:00 am – 12:00 pm  Commodities & Education

11:00 am – 12:00 pm  Ag Business & Economics

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  Lunch

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm  Natural Resources

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm  Commodities & Education

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm  Ag Business & Economics

3:00 pm – 3:15 pm  Break

3:15 pm – 4:30 pm  **Panel – How to get your agricultural Op-Ed published**

3:15 pm  Silent Auction Ends

5:30 pm  Leave for a night out in Nashville

**Saturday, April 15th, 2023**

8:00 am – 9:00 am  Natural Resources

8:00 am – 9:00 am  Commodities & Education

8:00 am – 9:00 am  Ag Business & Economics

9:00 am – 9:15 am  Break

9:15 am – 12:00 pm  General Session and Fly-In orientation

Complimentary Breakfast  
Complimentary Evening Reception

**SILENT AUCTION:** Please remember to bring an item or items for the silent auction. All proceeds will benefit the AAW Foundation.
The Agriculture Council of America (ACA) will host National Agriculture Day on March 21, 2023. This will mark the 50th anniversary of National Ag Day, celebrated in classrooms and communities across the country. The theme for National Ag Day 2023 is “Growing a Climate for Tomorrow.”

On March 21, 2023, the ACA will host a virtual Ag Day event and events in Washington, DC. Additionally, the ACA will bring 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. Other Ag Day events in DC will be announced soon.

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.

The Agriculture Council of America organizes National Ag Day. 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 21, the ACA will feature the Ag Day Essay Contest again. The winning essay will be presented on National Ag Day. This essay contest is divided into two categories of competition: written essays and video essays. Both are national competitions. One winner from each category will be chosen, and both winners will receive $1,000.

The contest is open to students currently enrolled in grades 9 through 12. Contestants must be U.S. citizens and attend school in the U.S. Contestants must meet all requirements to compete. The deadline for submitting entries in the essay contest is February 13, 2023.

The complete list of rules and regulations for this contest may be found online: https://www.agday.org/essay-contest.
AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN FOUNDATION

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.

Other objectives include:

- To raise funds to support education about agriculture, agricultural education, and leadership development.
- To promote the leadership of American Agri-Women through scholarships, grants, projects, and training.
- To serve as a partner with American Agri-Women in the development of educational and leadership programs and materials.

We have nine members from across the United States. The terms are three years, and there is a two-term limit.

2023 Foundation Board

Jacquie Compston, President
Linda Schiffer, Vice President
Jenny Stelmach, Secretary
Chris Wilson, Treasurer
Anna Morrison
Lesley Schmidt
Maggie Howley
Linda Swiercinsky
Arlene Kovash, AAW Secretary, Liaison

American Agri-Women Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with an IRS ruling year of 1978, and donations are tax-deductible.

Donate to AAW via Amazon Smile

Go to smile.amazon.com and select "AAW Foundation" as your charity, and any time you make a purchase, Amazon donates 0.5% of your eligible Amazon Smile purchase.
AAW FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Daughters of American Agriculture Scholarship

• Jean Ibendahl Scholarship (for ages 18-23)
• Sister Thomas More Bertels Scholarship (for ages 24+)

The Daughters of American Agriculture Scholarship was created to honor the memory of those courageous and adventuresome pioneer women who played such an essential role in the founding of this nation and encourage the present generation to continue their education in agricultural pursuits. These two scholarships ($1,000 each) are available to any farm, ranch, or agribusiness woman or daughter to pursue accredited courses in agriculture leadership, communications, rural sociology, medicine, or other courses directly related to agriculture. Applications will be taken beginning January 1, 2023, and must be submitted on or before March 1, 2023.

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 Foundation. She was proficient in parliamentary procedure, chair of the bylaws committee, and author of many pertinent resolutions. Gail was instrumental in the creation of the first AAW Fly-In. Recipients agree to write an article for the Fall VOICE about their Fly-In experience. Each recipient will receive $500. All applications are due on or before May 1, 2023.

Legacy Kids Fly-In Scholarship

• Trenna Grabowski Legacy Kids Fly-In Scholarship – 2 kids between 8-18 years of age

The AAW foundation will award $200 towards expenses for the AAW Washington D.C. Fly-In. The eligibility requirement is to be a Legacy Kid member of AAW. Legacy Kids memberships are available for AAW members to purchase as gifts to children/young people from birth through age eighteen. Trenna’s idea through the AAW Foundation was 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 AAW. All applications are due on or before May 1, 2023.

ALL SCHOLARSHIPS CAN BE FOUND AT:
https://americanagriwomen.org/scholarships/

"We are a force for truth; a reasoned, non-partisan voice for the agricultural community to the public."
Legacy Kids was the brainchild of Trenna Grabowski. Her idea was for the AAW Foundation to launch a program to provide a vehicle for AAW members to share their enthusiasm and support of agriculture and AAW with young people while encouraging the ultimate entry of second and third-generation individuals into American Agri-Women.

How to Become a Legacy Kid

Legacy Kids Memberships are available for American Agri-Women members to purchase as gifts for children/young people from birth through eighteen.

Benefits:

Legacy Kids will receive a certificate and welcome letter from the AAW President and AAW Foundation President. Legacy Kids can apply for the AAW Legacy Kid Legislative Fly-In Scholarship. Student membership fee paid by the Foundation for their first year of membership after turning 18.

**LEGACY KIDS**

Lanston Berry  
Laney Elizabeth Baker  
Bree Desiree Bellanger  
Jace George Bellanger  
Esther Marie Craft  
Kalea Dale  
Brooklyn Paige DeWall  
Jackson Gilleland  
Grace Gilleland  
Cortlyn Gillett  
Emily Ann Glaze  
Madelyn Grace Glaze  
Elizabeth Jo Hart  
Jhett Foster Hart  
Kenton Joe Hart  
Kinley Madalyn Hart  
Charlie Janu  
Alexa Janu  
George Carter Kittelmann  
Alden Knodle  
Bond Knodle  
Fallon Knodle  
Louis Zurn Marshall  
McClain Marie Marshall  
Collin McCrum  
Catherine McCrum  
Abram McCrum  
Lane McCrum  
Ava Lauren Neff  
Cadence Peterson  
Shane Reid  
Chloe Michele Ruiz  
Nash Elliott Sanders  
Talley Kate Sanders  
Madison Speer  
McKenzie Speer  
John Matasovic Swiercinsky  
Emilee Grace Synatschk  
Bailee Lynn Synatschk  
Kylee Kate Synatschk  
Brantley Alton Synatschk  
Brooke Townsend  
Anicia Whited  
Ava Whited  
Will Whited  
Sarah Harris Hamilton Whyte  
Makena Rachel Yeagle  
Dominic Nash Zavala  
Carlee Zurn  
Riley Zurn  
Samuel Zurn  
William (Billy) Zima

Go to https://americanagriwomen.org/legacy-kids/ to enroll.
AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN

CHAMPION OF AGRICULTURE AWARD

The American Agri-Women “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. Since 2010, this bi-partisan award has been presented to one House member and one Senate member each year.

The Champion of Agriculture award is awarded each June during the AAW Legislative Fly-In in Washington, DC. To Nominate a Senator or Representative for the award, please provide a letter of nomination stating the member’s name, their state, and why the member deserves the award, supported by specific examples of their leadership in agriculture policy. Nomination letters may include up to three (3) additional pages of supporting material. Submit your nomination on or before April 1, 2023, to aawpresident@americanagriwomen.org.

PAST CHAMPION OF AGRICULTURE AWARD RECIPIENTS

2010 Senator James Inhofe, OK
Representative Colin Peterson, MN

2011 Senator Pat Roberts, KS
Representative, Dennis Cardoza, CA

2012 Senator Debbie Stabenow, MI
Representative Cynthia Lummis, WY

2013 Senator Susan Collins, ME
Senator John Thune, SD

2014 Senator Amy Klobucha, MN
Representative Frank Lucas, OK

2015 Senator John Hoeven, ND
Representative Mike Conaway, TX

2016 Senator Heidi Heitkamp, ND
Representative Greg Walden, OR

2017 Senator Joni Ernst, IA
Representative Rodney Davis, IL

2018 Representative James Comer, KY
Representative Steve Pearce, NM

2019 Representative David Rouzer, NC
Representative Cheri Bustos, IL
Chief Champion of Agriculture – President Donald J. Trump

2020 Senator Charles Grassley, IA
Representative Jodey C. Arrington, TX

2021 Governor Kristi Noem, SD

2022 Representative Doug LaMalfa, CA
What AAW member has been President of a commodity affiliate and National President of AAW? She has also been a member of the AAW Foundation, the First Vice-President of AAW, Vice President for Education, and Secretary of AAW. She represented AAW on the Agricultural Women’s Leadership Council and was AWLC Chair.

This member is Ardath DeWall, a long-time and devoted member of American Agri-Women. She grew up with an agricultural background and showed sheep in 4-H. When she married dairyman Verlo DeWall, she embraced life on a dairy farm and committed to working for the dairy industry. She has been part of AAW since our organization’s earliest days. Through her leadership, AMPI Women and successor affiliate Foremost Farms, which she represents on the AAW Board of Directors, have been affiliated with AAW since 1974!

Ardath received the AAW LEAVEN Award in 1985 and the President’s award in 1996, 1997, 2013, and 2021. She has served on the AAW Foundation Board of Directors for nine years (plus two as AAW VP Education and liaison). She has faithfully chaired the Scholarship Committee of the Foundation while she was the Foundation Board and continued in intervening years. Working with and helping young women continue their education has been a passion for her.

She has worked on many convention committees and is an amazing fundraiser. Through her work as Past AAW President, convention committee, and Fly-In Symposium leadership, she has raised significant money and made other contributions to AAW. Ardath has a way of fearlessly asking anyone for a contribution to AAW or asking someone to do something in such a pleasant and nice way that results in a “yes” response.

She is extremely organized, conscientious, and responsible, qualities which have greatly benefitted AAW through her many roles. She has been the Dairy chair for many years and actively worked on AAW policies regarding the dairy industry. She’s been a committee coordinator and also served on bylaws and nominating committees. She’s worked on many Washington, D.C. Fly-Ins, securing commitments for speakers, contributions, funding, and confirming many details.

As Affiliate Membership Chair, Ardath was a very successful recruiter of new affiliates. Her efforts resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of affiliate organizations in the late 1980s.

Ardath and her husband Verlo own Shannondoah Dairy, and Ardath has been involved in the dairy industry at all levels. She served on the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board and has been a longtime leader of Associated Milk Producers (AMPI) Women and Foremost Farms USA. She is the secretary of the Midwest Dairy Association Illinois Division and a member of the Midwest Dairy Association Board of Directors. Ardath was named the National Dairy Woman in 1984.

Laura Hart
“When I think of Ardath, I think of her as my mentor, learning from someone who wants me to grow.”
American Agri-Women
"Member Spotlight"

Wanda Kinney, Kansas Agri-Women

Wanda's journey with American Agri-Women began in the '70s with Pauline Farm Wives. Pauline is a small town between Topeka and Carbondale, where the Kinney family took their grain to the elevator. Pauline Farm Wives later joined with Kansas Agri-Women. She has held several offices during her time as a Kansas Agri-Women member serving as President, Past-President and is currently the Treasurer.

Wanda joined American Agri-Women under the inspiration of Past President Jean Mertz from Kansas. She continues to actively serve in various capacities, as needed, including attending Mid-year to participate in policy development, Fly-In to make the rounds at the U.S. Capitol to traveling to AAW Conventions around the country. Over the years, Wanda and her husband, Darrel, have attended numerous AAW national conventions, sometimes bringing their daughters. Three of the daughters are also active members. Needless to say, she remains actively involved and devoted. Wanda is the proud recipient of the 2011 American Agri-Women Leaven Award.

Wanda and Darrel raise cattle in Carbondale, Kansas, with their daughters and a son-in-law. There are rumors that Wanda is also known as the "Chicken Lady" at the local farmers market, where shoppers seek her out because they say her eggs taste the best! The Kinneys also grow soybeans, corn, and hay. Being 5th generation farmers and ranchers, one can say their three daughters are 6th generation farmers and ranchers.

Wanda enjoys advocating for agriculture and educating people on who grows their food. She is known throughout AAW for her beautiful quilts. She recently donated her 71st quilt to the American Agri-Women silent auction at the national convention. Wanda is so delightful that once you have the pleasure of meeting her, you won’t forget her welcoming smile and personality.

Donnell Scott
"Wanda brings her experience and positive attitude to our Kansas Agri-Women meetings and to American Agri-Women meetings. She is a joy to work with on any project."

Jean Goslin
"Wanda is a wonderful mentor for KAW and AAW. She is a driving force for our “1 farmer” signs. It is an honor to be able to call her a friend."

Rose Tryon-Vancott
"When I started my journey with AAW, the ladies from Kansas adopted me and took me under their wings. When my husband and I lost our home in 2018 during the devastating campfire that destroyed the town of Paradise, CA. Wanda Kinney made me the most beautiful quilt. At the 2019 convention in Tigard, Ore., Wanda and the KAW members presented me with the quilt. Still, today, it is one of my prized positions."
AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN
"MEMBER SPOTLIGHT"

Merlynn Verstuyft, Texas Agri-Women

Merlynn Verstuyft, a Texas belle from Knippa, has been a farm girl and member of Texas Agri-Women and American Agri-Women for more than 40 years. Merlynn has held numerous offices, including president at the state and local levels. Her lifetime agricultural background inspires her to help others see agriculture’s importance in our daily lives.

Over the years, Merlynn has served as a leader in American Agri-Women, participating in conventions, Mid-Year, and Fly-In, offering input on logistics, legislative affairs, and current events. When it comes to advocating for agriculture, she is well-informed about ag issues at the state level and willing to share her knowledge at the national level.

Merlynn takes the reins of responsibility for moving projects and issues forward as she has chaired many committees within the American Agri-Women organization. She takes her responsibilities seriously but always remembers that we accomplish so much by working together. Merlynn chaired the AAW LEAVEN committee and served on the AAW Foundation Board.

Merlynn has mentored hundreds of women in advocating for agriculture issues, offering her unique guidance, grace, and charm. Many of Merlynn’s family, friends, and colleagues have stated they are blessed by having her in their lives because she is caring, giving, kind, helpful, funny, intelligent, tough, hardworking, dedicated, honest, and wise. She makes a lasting impression with her first impression. Merlynn is a recipient of the 2001 AAW Leaven Award.

Quotes submitted by Melody Speer:

Kellie Kittelmann
“Merlynn wasn’t my official mentor, but I can’t remember a time in all my years with American Agri-Women that she hasn’t guided me in a positive direction.”

Jenny Stelmach
“Merlynn is a staple in AAW. She is always so friendly and personable. She welcomes new ladies and makes them feel good about being part of the organization.”

Kim Czuba
“Merlynn has been a great mentor to me throughout my time with AAW. Because of her, I came to volunteer for my first position within AAW.”

Melody Speer
“Merlynn is one of the backbones of AAW. She has been a member since the 1970s and held numerous offices in TAW, including president at both the state and local levels. She is the reason I became involved in Texas Agri-Women/AAW.”

Past President, Sue McCrum
“Once you meet “Merlyn of Texas,” you will never forget her. She embraces you with warmth, and you immediately feel like a member of her family! I can’t remember the first time we met because she acted like she had known me forever.”

Lauren Schwab Eyre
“Merlynn, you are a true friend; I wish time with you would never end. While we may not see each other often, we make the time together count. We laugh over margaritas, then lobby on the Hill. I learned you can never wear too much Texas bling or eat too much steak. Our love for agriculture will never fade, and I want to be just like you someday.”

Jane Marshall
“Merlynn is a lady more unique and memorable than her last name, with a personality bigger than her home state of Texas. She is always up for an adventure and has never met a stranger; she will always step up to help an organization or a person; she always has a smile on her face, and she loves bling!”
Elizabeth (Liz) VanLeeuwen, 97, passed away at home on her farm on Nov. 27, 2022. Liz, the granddaughter of Lake County pioneers, was born in Lakeview in November 1925, where she lived until attending Oregon State College. While in college, she met local farmer Geo. VanLeeuwen when she and several other co-eds came to weed his onion fields.

Shortly after she graduated in June 1947, she and Geo. were married. They had four children and eventually moved back to the VanLeeuwen home farm, west of Halsey, in 1956. In the early years on the farm, Liz taught adult education classes and substituted to help make ends meet.

Eventually, they put in several acres of strawberries and became the "local" strawberry patch. Many who grew up in Halsey and surrounding areas will remember picking strawberries for her.

In the 1960s, Liz was instrumental in starting the foreign student host program at OSU and was involved there for about 15 years. Her activities included hosting an annual picnic for students and host families on the VanLeeuwen farm, with attendance of as high as 150 students from 27 countries.

The field burning controversy and the state's attempts to forcibly take land from farmers along the Willamette River for the Greenway project in the late 1960s and early '70s eventually compelled her to run for office. She spent nine terms, from 1981 to 1999, as a state representative for then-District 37, representing rural parts of Linn County, including the cities of Lebanon and Sweet Home, where she championed natural resources, small businesses, and rural issues.

She never missed an opportunity to deal with constituent concerns, often helping those who found themselves crushed between the gears of government bureaucracy. She always considered herself a stateswoman, not a politician.

Concern for foster children and seeing deficiencies in the state agencies handling their care drove her to look for solutions, eventually helping to form Linn County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). She was also a founding member of Oregon Women for Agriculture and American Agri-Women.

In 1999 she was elected to the Linn County Soil and Water board, a position she held until her death. She was also serving on the board of the Linn County Farm Bureau at the time of her passing.

She was active in her church and felt her faith directly impacted her life. Over the years, she was taking on many church roles, including Sunday School teacher, AWANA volunteer, and Christmas pageant organizer.

She was also a 4-H alumnus and a 4-H club leader and teacher. Among her many awards and accolades over her lifetime were the 1983 Oregon Farm Bureau and Linn County Farm Bureau Farm Family of the Year awards and the 1997 Oregon Seed Council Seedsman of the Year. She was inducted into the OSU Ag Hall of Fame and the Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame.

She was effectively involved in numerous political, civic, and church efforts because of the support of many neighbors and friends. Liz was a firebrand, a catalyst, and a true Oregonian and will be greatly missed.

She was preceded in death by her husband, George (Geo). She is survived by her four children, five grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Her life and legacy will be celebrated at 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 22. In lieu of flowers, and her wishes were for donations to be sent to the Willamette Valley Campus of Adult and Teen Challenge, P.O. Box 108, Shedd, OR 97377.
Mary Ann Graff passed away at age 76 on Saturday, December 17, 2022, in Granite Bay, California, after a lengthy battle with lung cancer. She was surrounded by her husband of 57 years, Kenneth, and her two daughters, Kim Graff and Lisa McMasters. She is survived by her husband, daughters, sister Bonnie Arend, brother Donald Sharkey (Susan), brother Richard Sharkey (Shari), son-in-law Evan McMasters, and grandchildren Vincent McMasters, Michael McMasters, Sofia Piceno, and Andrew McMasters.

Mary Ann was born in Gregory, South Dakota, on November 6, 1946, the daughter of Vincent and Ruby Sharkey. She spent her early years in Tripp County, South Dakota. At age ten, her family moved to Mitchell, South Dakota. She graduated from Notre Dame High School in 1964. Mary Ann and Ken were married in November 1965. They had two daughters and moved to California in 1976.

Mary Ann was very involved in the community. While the girls were growing up, her time was filled with parenting, PTA, and community activities. Once the girls were in college, Mary Ann broadened her range of activities. She became actively involved in California Women for Agriculture, serving as president of the Santa Maria Chapter and then president of the Statewide organization. She went on to be involved in American Agri-Women, serving as the Foundation president from 2006-2008, and other groups also involved on behalf of the agriculture industry.

Mary Ann enjoyed domestic and overseas travel, the culinary arts, and a broad range of arts and crafts.

Mary Ann was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. Her family meant the world to her, and she meant the same to them. She will be dearly missed.

A celebration of life will be planned for the Spring of 2023.

In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests that memorial donations be made to California Women for Agriculture (CWA) at 1521 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, or to the Santa Maria CWA Chapter at P.O. Box 1898, Santa Maria, CA 93456. Condolences can be sent to 7570 Olive Glen Court, Granite Bay, California 95746.

AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

An individual may pay $500 in one lump sum for a lifetime membership to AAW. This may also be gifted or donated to a special member. Lifetime members enjoy all the rights and privileges of a full voting membership for their lives and join the elite group of AAW leadership for special recognition.

If you are interested, please mail your check to Kathy Goodyke, AAW Treasurer
25204 210th St. SW
Crookston, MN 56716

Make check payable to American Agri-Women - Memo: Name and Lifetime Membership.
Minnesota Agri-Women and Northarvest Bean Growers teamed up for National Bean Day on January 6 and National Oatmeal Month. They gave away five thermal bags with ingredients for 3. Each bag contained ingredients for Chocolate Peanut Butter Black Bean Energy Bites and White Bean Turkey Chili and a $20.00 gift card for grocery items.
THE PRIME TRUTH

The Prime Truth is that the family farm system must be preserved as the bulwark of the private enterprise system.

CALL TO POWER

History will be kinder to us if our capacity to effect change is implemented in the right way and for the right reasons. Our dedication to truth and our identification with the institutions that foster justice and goodwill provide our rod and staff in the struggle to put away untruth and injustice. When the responsibility for change falls to only a few, the resulting sense of powerlessness is dehumanizing. The feeling of helplessness institutes a plague of apathy and fosters the growth of philosophies that troubles us.

But who has not tasted the sweetness of success in effecting change and been inspired to try again and seek greater challenges? By its very nature, the capacity of one alone to effect change is limited; but the scope expands when the common cares of more than one give birth to unity of purpose. From the beginning of time, the power gained in these efforts is the force which has mobilized mankind.

The use of the power is not shameful, nor is it to be feared. When power is used to overcome injustice and untruth, we must assume that the Hand of God is still at work perfecting His creation.

As we move to build power, we affirm the following principles:

- The constant pursuit of truth must lie at the heart of our purpose and actions.
- The manner in which we seek truth must be thorough and without prejudice.
- As we search for truth, we recognize others’ equally valid searches and seek to remain open to their wisdom. We are never better than the means we use.
- We reject the use of violence in either action or words; however, one should not confuse vigorous expression of truth with violence.
- Rejecting the idea that it is necessary to foster hate, we are called to this responsibility in the spirit of goodwill.
- We affirm our responsibility for the generations yet unborn.

POWER IS A NEUTRAL CONCEPT, one that is neither good nor bad. Philosopher Bertrand Russell defined it as “the production of intended effects.” What effects do we intend? Can we produce these effects? If we can, we have power.

Unfortunately, too many people fear power, identifying it with Hitler, Stalin, the Red Brigade—those who have abused power; more unfortunately, too few people find fault with those who neglect or refuse to use power, which can also be an abuse. “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing” said Edmund Burke, British statesman of the American revolutionary period. Put another way: “Whatever happens, somebody plans it and the rest of us permit it. We are all responsible.”

We must want and use power; that is, we must produce the effects we intend. What do we intend? For the membership of American Agri-Women, that is no secret. Our intentions are voiced in our seven goals. We intend...

. . . to forge the true image of the farm entrepreneur;
. . . to foster collaboration with the system;
. . . to formulate fair market practices;
. . . to foster cooperation among producers;
. . . to fight oppressive forces;
. . . to form Chairers.

How many AAW affiliates and their chapters keep these goals in mind when planning policies and actions? What activities are conducted in each affiliate that can be categorized as an implementation of each goal? How many evaluate chapter performance regularly? How successful have we been in achieving each goal? HOW MUCH POWER DO WE ACTUALLY HAVE?

What difference does it make? A great deal of difference! The most important task facing farm entrepreneurs today is capturing a significant degree of influence over the policy-making function as it relates to food, feed, fiber, forest products and flora. If producers were perceived as having power, they would not be ignored when policy is being formulated.

Today, however, farm entrepreneurs are conspicuous by their absence in the arenas of power. That scenario must change. To date, producers have waited patiently for the scenario to change. It won’t, unless they themselves change it. “Patience without pressure is perceived as paralysis,” said Herb Cohen, the famous negotiator who addressed AAW in San Diego several years ago. The powerless cannot pressure. We have been CALLED TO POWER. What is your response?

Sister Thomas More Bertels, OSF, Wisconsin Women for Agriculture