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PRESS



Arkansas Farm Bureau President Randy Veach of Manila gave a keynote address Dec. 1 to more than 1,100 members and leaders at ArFB's 82nd Annual Convention in Hot Springs. Veach spoke about the conference theme, Our Common Ground, encouraging those in attendance to work toward common ground as Americans, and as farmers and ranchers. For more highlights from this year's convention, see the special insert inside.

KEITH SUTTON photo

In Farm Bureau

ArFB elects officers, board

Randy Veach, Rich Hillman and Joe Christian will continue as president, vice president and secretary-treasurer respectively, of Arkansas Farm Bureau following their re-election Dec. 2. Delegates also re-elected seven board members during the final day of the organization's 82nd annual convention at the Hot Springs Convention Center.

Veach, of Manila, begins a ninth term as president. He is Arkansas Farm Bureau's 10th president since its creation in 1935. Veach and his wife, Thelma, farm in and around the community of Lost Cane near Manila. He is a third-generation farmer.

"My heart continues to be with the farmers and ranchers of Arkansas. I'm deeply committed to agriculture and understand the great responsibility we have in advocating and strengthening the interests of agriculture," Veach said. "We're looking at some very difficult obstacles for our farmers and ranchers. One is profitability. So we have to continue

monitoring what we can do for trade, government regulations and providing a safety net for all of agriculture."

Hillman hails from Carlisle and will begin his ninth term as vice president. He is a sixth-generation farmer. His main crops are rice, soybeans and wheat. He and his wife, Tina, have two grown children, Collin and Caroline.

"I'm always humbled by the support and trust that's been placed in me. I look

forward to serving with President Veach, the state board and all the membership of Arkansas Farm Bureau," Hillman said.

The voting delegates re-elected seven board members to new two-year terms. They are Terry Dabbs, Stuttgart; Tom Jones, Pottsville; Caleb Plyler, Hope; Rusty Smith, Des Arc; Leo Sutterfield, Mountain View; Dan Wright, Waldron and Joe Christian, Jonesboro. Board action later resulted in the election of Christian,

Jason Henson (second from right), who raises swine on C&H Farm in Mount Judea, received this year's **Stanley E. Reed Leadership Award** Nov. 30 at the state convention. The award was presented by (left to right) ArFB Vice President Rich Hillman, President Randy Veach and Charlene Reed, wife of the late FB leader and award namesake.



KEITH SUTTON photo

a rice and soybean farmer, as secretary-

treasurer.

Voting delegates also addressed a wide range of federal and state policy issues, including positions on revising the process the federal government uses to impose new burdensome regulations; proposals on the future of farm programs and the 2018 farm bill; revision of rules governing risk management and federal crop insurance coverage; legislation that gives the State Plant Board authority to regulate seed traits; encourage the state legislature to provide high-speed broadband to rural areas; improving transportation infrastructure for agricultural products; and urging higher education institutions to incorporate more agriculture and technical training.

Stone is top Farm Bureau county

Stone County is the state's top county Farm Bureau organization. ArFB President Randy Veach and Vice President Rich Hillman presented the President's Award Dec. 1 to county president Leo Sutterfield at the organization's 82nd annual convention at the Hot Springs Convention Center.

Counties competing for the President's Award must earn a Gold Star in each of 10 categories and be a top scorer in their respective membership category. The 10 Gold Star categories are membership acquisition, organization, public relations, commodity services, governmental affairs,



KEITH SUTTON photo

Dustin Jones (left) of Harrison took first place in the 2016 YF&R Discussion Meet at ArFB's annual convention. State YF&R Committee co-chair Trent Dabbs recognized Jones in the trade show. The prize was \$7,000 toward the purchase of a Polaris all-terrain vehicle or side-by-side courtesy of Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Co. and \$2,500 from Farm Bureau Bank.



KEITH SUTTON photo

Leanna Britton (second from left), a teacher in Lincoln County, was recognized Dec. 1 as the state's Outstanding Ag Educator for her efforts in teaching young people about agriculture and leadership, and encouraging their involvement in FFA. Britton's program at Star City High School includes almost 100 students in ag education and FFA.

women's activities, Young Farmers & Ranchers activities, member services, safety and youth.

The other finalists for the President's Award were Cross, Jackson, Clark and White counties.

The Membership Retention Award went to Lawrence County. The award goes to the county with the highest membership retention percentage in the state. Lawrence County had a retention rate of 95.43 percent.

Smedley joins ArFB staff

Jason Smedley has been hired as

assistant director of public affairs and government relations at Arkansas Farm Bureau, where he will focus on local affairs and rural development. He previously served as regional economic and community development officer with the Delta Regional Authority, where he was responsible for activities in Arkansas, northwest Mississippi and western Tennessee.



Smedley

Smedley brings more than 10 years of experience in public service, having worked in community development, governance and community support for U.S. senators Blanche Lincoln and Mark Pryor. He also worked on staff with Gov. Mike

Beebe as special assistant for agency and legislative affairs and served as director of public engagement for the Central Arkansas Transit Authority.

"Jason's experiences in state and federal government will help deliver on Farm Bureau's commitment to be the voice of Arkansas agriculture," said Stanley Hill, ArFB's vice president of public affairs and government relations. "Jason has excelled in his roles with the military, in support of elected officials and with his extensive educational experiences. We look forward to that same level of support and success

GREGG PATTERSON photo



Washington Co. FB's Women's Committee has won its ninth consecutive Outstanding County Women's Program award. Chairwoman Mary Smith (center) accepted the award from ArFB State Women's Committee chairwoman Peggy Miller (left) and committee vice chair Donna Bemis at the ArFB convention in Hot Springs.

KEITH SUTTON photo



Josh and Melissa Cureton of Cash won this year's Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement award. They grow soybeans and rice on 4,400 acres, and Melissa is a school teacher. They have three children: Gracye, Cole and Mattyx. The runners-up in the competition were Jeremy and Tracie Kitchens of Lewisville and Jamey and Sara Allen of Prattville.

as he leads our rural development and interaction with local agencies.”

Insurance employees in new roles

The Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company of Arkansas, Inc. has announced expanded roles for three long-time employees.

John Bonner has been named vice president of underwriting, Dina Bates was promoted to vice president of products and education, and Kevin McKenzie was elevated to vice president of claims. Between them, the three have 85 years experience with Farm Bureau Insurance.

Bonner joined Farm Bureau in 1985 and has held several positions in the claims department, including senior adjuster, district claims manager and vice president claims. In his new role, he will manage the underwriting department, coordinate the organization's reinsurance program and manage the legislative affairs of the insurance companies.

Bates has been with Farm Bureau since 1990, working in various positions in claims, underwriting, information services and product research and development. In her new role, she will manage the products and education department and work on implementation of customer data systems and guiding the corporate education area. Additionally, she will manage the development of rate, rule and form filings with the state insurance commissioner.

McKenzie will lead Farm Bureau's claims staff, which includes field staff focused on taking care of customer's



On Dec. 8 in North Little Rock, the Morgan Family of Clarksville — Mark, Shay and their daughter Kate — were named the **2016 Arkansas Farm Family of the Year**. The Morgans raise peaches and nectarines at Peach Pickin' Paradise in Johnson County. They also raise beef cattle and grow hay. Congratulations from everyone at Farm Bureau!

KEITH SUTTON photo

insurance claims. He started work with Farm Bureau in 1988 as a claims adjuster in Lonoke County. In 1995, he was promoted to physical damage supervisor in the state office, and he was named district claims manager in 2005.

“We're pleased to expand the responsibilities for three long-tenured employees,” said David Moore, executive vice president and general manager of the insurance company. “Not only are these three outstanding representatives of our companies, but they are all outstanding family and community leaders. This team will help our companies continue to deliver the hallmark customer service our members have come to expect from Farm Bureau Insurance.”

In Arkansas

State forestland grows

The Arkansas Forestry Commission surveys the state's forests annually as part of the Forest Inventory & Analysis Program of the U.S. Forest Service. Information for the survey comes from satellite imagery and certified foresters collecting measurements from over 5,000 research plots. Among the findings in 2015:

- Arkansas' forests cover 19 million acres or 56 percent of the state. During the 1950s and 1960s, Arkansas lost almost 20 percent of its forestland. Since 1978, forestland has increased by more than 1 million acres.
- The southwest, Ozark and Ouachita

regions of the state contain 88 percent of Arkansas' forestland. The most heavily forested county is Dallas.

- Arkansas encompasses more national forest lands than any other state in the South — 2.5 million acres in the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest and the Ouachita National Forest.

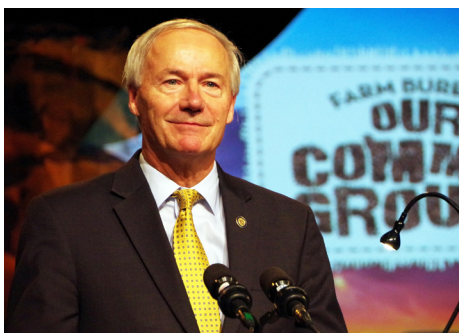
Elsewhere

USDA reports on advances

On Nov. 22, the U.S. Department of Agriculture released results of investments in scientific research, including 222 new inventions, 94 patents awarded and 125 new patent applications filed in 2015. The USDA Annual Report on Technology Transfer includes new agriculture-related discoveries, inventions and processes made by USDA researchers, universities and small businesses with the potential for commercial application.

Among the advances discussed in the report are computer chips made from wood fiber, mosquito-resistant uniforms for U.S. military personnel, an on-line climate and weather tool to better manage farm pests and plant diseases, cost-effective solar-powered irrigation pumps for remote communities, bacteria-repellent cooking pan surfaces, robotic apple pickers, affordable tornado-safe rooms and virus-based fire ant control.

The full report, as well as a look at previous USDA research and discoveries, is available at www.ars.usda.gov.



KEITH SUTTON photo

Gov. Asa Hutchinson addressed more than 1,100 Arkansas Farm Bureau members and leaders at the Nov. 30 opening session of ArFB's 82nd Annual Convention in Hot Springs, stressing the importance of agriculture to the state's economy and outlining his administration's efforts in support of Arkansas farmers and ranchers.

In the Market

As of December 8, 2016

Brazilian crop estimates

Conab, Brazil's government supply agency, estimates the country's 2016-17 soybean crop at a record 102.45 MMT, a gain of 7 percent from the year prior. It also expects a 7-percent year-over-year rise in the nation's summer corn crop to 27.7 MMT. Meanwhile, a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) ag attaché in Brazil maintained its 2016-17 soybean production forecast of 101 MMT, citing an increase in acreage and yield from year-ago. This crop estimate is 1 MMT below USDA's official peg. The attaché expects Brazil to export 57 MMT of soybeans this marketing year thanks to strong demand from China.

Forward sales of Brazilian soybeans lag behind the norm. Brazilian farmers have forward-sold 28 percent of their 2016-17 soybean crop as of Dec. 2, according to Safras & Mercado, a crop analyst in the country. This is well behind last year when farmers had forward-sold 46 percent of their crop and the five-year average for farmers to be 34 percent sold at this point.

Bean crop below year-ago

USDA's ag attaché in Argentina reports that heavy rains abated and growing conditions improved in mid-November, allowing producers to reactivate their soybean planting efforts. Therefore, the post maintained its production estimate of 55 MMT for 2016-17, which is 2 MMT below USDA's official crop peg and 1.8 MMT below the post's estimate for 2015-16. Traders expect USDA to trim its 2016-17 crop peg for the country slightly Dec. 9 to 56.62 MMT.

China's imports and exports

China's imports grew 6.7 percent in November compared to a year ago, marking the highest figure since September 2014 and easily

topping expectations last month for a 1.3-percent rise. Strong commodity buying, especially of iron ore, coal and soybeans, was behind the surge. Imports of all three are on pace to set a record this year. Last month, the country brought in 7.84 MMT of soybeans, up 2.61 MMT from October. Exports climbed 0.1 percent from year-ago, whereas the market had expected a 5-percent drop. That left the country with a \$44.61 billion trade surplus in November, according to the General Administration of Customs. This was below expectations for a surplus of \$46.3 billion and October's \$49.06 billion surplus.

Global food prices lower

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Food Price Index dipped 0.4 points in November from the month prior to 171.3 points. This tick lower was an anomaly, as food prices have steadily risen since the start of the year. A plunge in sugar prices more than offset a strong rebound in vegetable oils prices, resulting in the slight decline, according to FAO. The organization also raised its 2016 global wheat production forecast by 2.6 MMT to 749 MMT, which is up 14 MMT from 2015. "This latest revision mostly reflects improved yield prospects for the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kazakhstan," FAO said.

Odds of La Nina smaller

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology has lowered the risk of La Nina from 50 percent in July to "inactive," noting an easing of associated climate indicators. This system is associated with flooding and tropical cyclones along the country's east coast. The bureau does acknowledge that "La Nina-like conditions" brought record rainfall to the country's east coast from May to September, which helped wheat farmers.

JBS to hold IPO in U.S.

Brazil's JBS SA, the world's largest beef processor, plans to launch shares

of JBS Foods International B.V. in the U.S. the first half of 2017. The company did not give details about how many shares it would offer and at what price, though it said it would hold a call with investors and analysts Dec. 8. The initial public offering is part of a broader effort to reorganize the company. Under the plan, the unit based in the Netherlands would be in charge of managing the company's international operations, while the parent company, JBS SA, would maintain control of beef operations in Brazil.

U.S., Chinese talks falter

U.S. and Chinese trade officials were unable to resolve their disagreements over the Obama administration's allegations that Beijing provided more than \$100 billion in "illegal" government subsidies for producing rice, wheat and corn. The U.S. now plans to ask the World Trade Organization (WTO) to initiate an investigation into the matter at a Dec. 16 meeting of the WTO's dispute settlement body. The U.S. will argue that China violated the terms of its 2001 accession agreement to the WTO and provided trade-distorting domestic support in excess of its WTO commitments, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said. If the U.S. succeeds, the dispute could force China to reduce its agricultural subsidies or face retaliatory trade tariffs worth tens of billions of dollars.

Cotton futures hiked

The week ending Nov. 29, speculators hiked their bullish position in cotton futures to the highest level on record (public record-keeping began in 2006.). Speculators extended their long position by 744 lots to 101,392 lots, according to Commodity Futures Trade Commission data.

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The 82nd ANNUAL ArFB CONVENTION

Arkansas Farm Bureau's 82nd Annual Convention took place Nov. 30-Dec. 2 at the Hot Springs Convention Center. More than 1,100 members from throughout the state showed up to attend educational conferences, hear from noted speakers and determine Farm Bureau positions on issues important to agriculture and rural Arkansas. The conference theme was "Our Common Ground."

photos by **KEITH SUTTON** and **GREGG PATTERSON**



Randy Frazier, a nationally recognized motivational speaker from Wye Mountain, led sessions on leadership development and skills for county presidents and vice presidents.



This group of conference attendees from Clay County Farm Bureau posed for a photo between sessions. **At top right**, Lindsey Triplett, a student at Arkansas Tech University, sang the national anthem to start the first general session on Wednesday. **At right**, Terry Walker, director of the State Plant Board, spoke about new seed and herbicide regulations in Arkansas during a special crops workshop.



Taylor McNeel, who grew up in Vilonia, reflected on her experiences serving as 2015-16 National FFA president. McNeel is studying ag business at Southern Arkansas University.



Kevin Smith (second from right) and his wife Jacquie of Decatur were recognized as this year's YF&R Excellence in Agriculture award winners.

General Ron Chastain, who will soon retire, was recognized for his service to Arkansas farmers during his tenure as agricultural liaison for Sen. John Boozman



Arkansas native Barrett Baber, who finished third in the ninth season of NBC's The Voice, performed for Farm Bureau members Thursday evening.



82nd ANNUAL ArFB CONVENTION



During the Dec. 2 business session, Randy Veach (right) of Manila and Rich Hillman (left) of Carlisle were re-elected as president and vice president, respectively of Arkansas Farm Bureau. Board action later resulted in the election of Joe Christian of Jonesboro as secretary/treasurer.



Above, winners in the Sew With Cotton contest were Mary Altenbaumer of Ashdown (right) who won the Adult Sweepstakes and Mikayla West of Searcy who won the Youth Sweepstakes.



At left, Farm Bureau's Harry Willems and Pope Co. FB board member Don Guess were among the volunteers who packed 15,000 meals for state food banks during the Pack Shack event.

At bottom left, ArFB hosted its first convention trade show featuring numerous vendors that will help meet the needs of members.