

A red and blue tractor is shown from a rear-quarter perspective, parked in a grassy field. The background features a dramatic sunset sky with orange, yellow, and blue hues. The tractor's large, treaded rear tire is prominent in the foreground.

LET'S GET  
**GROWING**



85<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION

**FARM  
BUREAU**  
ARKANSAS

# Featured **SPEAKERS**



**Asa Hutchinson**  
Governor



**Scott VanderWal**  
Vice President, AFBF



**Randy Veach**  
President, ArFB



**Delaney Howell**  
Market to Market



**Taylor Mason**  
Humorist



**85<sup>TH</sup> ARKANSAS FARM BUREAU ANNUAL CONVENTION  
STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER**

- 4** President's Report
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- 12** Speaker Bios
- 15** Trade Show
- 16** Workshops
- 20** Awards
- 22** Annual Report

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### *Arkansas Farm Bureau, Let's Get Growing.*

There is so much to that simple declaration. We must grow our membership. We must grow our involvement in the community. We must grow the ideas and actions that will steer this organization into the future in a meaningful way. And, of course, we need to grow the animals and crops that provide food, fiber and shelter for much of this world.

As we head into the 85th state convention of the Arkansas Farm Bureau, I owe each of you a debt of gratitude and a hearty thank you. To have been your president for the past 11 years has been a great



**Randy Veach**  
President, ArFB

honor. The trust and respect that you have placed in me during that time has truly been overwhelming. During my 20 years on the state board of directors I have done my best to represent you with a servant's heart and an attentive eye on the things that matter most to our members. My priorities of faith, family and Farm Bureau are shared by so many of you.

Without question, the most meaningful part of serving as leader of the state's largest agricultural advocacy organization has been the opportunity to represent the values and beliefs of our membership. Farm Bureau has been a powerful grassroots force within our state for the past 85 years and our nation over the last 100 years. It is my hope that you strengthen your commitment to Farm Bureau, to help make this organization as relevant tomorrow as it has been since its founding in 1935. We are well positioned to continue to serve a meaningful role in the lives of Arkansas' farmers and ranchers if you continue to be engaged, educated and empowered through our grassroots process.

The voice of agriculture is a whisper without everyone standing together, united and resolute. Thelma and I will continue to stand with our farmers and ranchers.

To serve as the president of Arkansas Farm Bureau has been an honor and a privilege that has overwhelmed me, with appreciation, gratitude and love. It has meant more to me, Thelma and our family than you will ever know.

In closing, I defer to scripture. From Jeremiah 29:11, *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

Thank you, Farm Bureau members, for your unbroken faith, for your willingness to stand with us, and for your support of Arkansas' largest industry, agriculture.

**Arkansas Farm Bureau. Let's Get Growing!!**

# WEDNESDAY December 4

9:30 a.m.	<b>Registration Opens</b>	Convention Center (Osage)
11:30 a.m.	<b>Trade Show Opens</b>	Governors Hall I & II
11:45 a.m.	<b>Trade Show Special Presentations</b>	Greenway Tech Talk: Creating a Precision Ag Action Plan
1:00 p.m.	<b>General Session</b>	Marriott Grand Ballroom
	Farm Bureau Intro Video	
	Welcome   <i>Rich Hillman, ArFB Vice President</i>	
	Invocation   <i>Donna Bemis, Chair, State Women's Leadership Committee</i>	
	Presentation of Colors   <i>Little Rock Air Force Base Color Guard</i>	
	Pledge of Allegiance   <i>Adam Cloninger, State Chair, YF&amp;R Committee</i>	
	National Anthem   <i>Lexi Grace Urquhart</i>	
	Gubernatorial Address   <i>Gov. Asa Hutchinson</i>	
	President's Address   <i>Randy Veach, ArFB President</i>	
	Memorial Service	
	Stanley E. Reed Leadership Award	
	Market to Market   <i>Delaney Howell</i>	
3:30 p.m.	<b>Awards Presentation in Trade Show</b>	Governors Hall I & II
	Cooperative Extension Service Award	
	Ag Education Award	
	Membership Retention Award	
	Gold Star Plaque Presentation	
	Area Excellence Awards	
	President's Award	

- 4:45 p.m.                      **Resolution Committee Open Hearing**      Fulton
- 5:45 p.m.                      **Celebrating A Legacy of Service**      Governors Hall III & IV  
**Honoring Randy & Thelma Veach**
- 6:00 p.m.                      **Trade Show Closes**
- 6:30 p.m.                      **Dinner service begins**



**CELEBRATING A**  
**LEGACY** of **SERVICE**

Wednesday, December 4 • 6-8 p.m. • Governor's Hall III & IV



*All proceeds benefit the ArFB Foundation.*

# THURSDAY December 5

8:00 a.m. **Registration** Convention Center (Osage)

8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

## Special Conferences

Uncertain and Volatile: Izard

Farming Dependent on Trade

*Scott VanderWal, AFBF Vice President*

*Veronica Nigh, AFBF Economist*

Feral Hogs

*Luke Lewis, AGFC*

Caraway

Engaging Your Leadership

*VIP<sup>2</sup> Panel*

Pope

8:15 a.m.

## Trade Show Opens

Governors Hall I & II

10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

## Special Conferences

Women's Leadership Committee: Izard

A New Approach

*Chuck Tucker, ArFB Senior Vice President/*

*Organization & Administration;*

*Amanda Williams, ArFB Director of*

*Women's Leadership/Farm Bureau Foundation*

Livestock – Animal Disease Traceability Caraway

*Alex K. Turner, DVM Assistant Director,*

*National Animal Disease Traceability &*

*Veterinary Accreditation Center, USDA APHIS;*

*Randolph Chick, DVM, Arkansas Livestock*

*and Poultry Commission*



Crops – How to Survive Chronic Surpluses    Fulton  
*Todd Hultman, DTN/Progressive  
 Farmer Lead Analyst*

Engaging Your Leadership                      Pope  
*VIP<sup>2</sup> Panel*

12:00 p.m.

**Women's Leadership Luncheon**            Governors Hall IV  
*Lorenda Overman, AFB Women's Regional Representative*

2:00 p.m.

**General Session**                                  Marriott Grand Ballroom  
 Welcome | *ArFB President Randy Veach*  
 American Farm Bureau Update | *AFBF Vice President Scott VanderWal*  
 Comedian | *Taylor Mason*

3:00 p.m.

**Registration Closes**                              Convention Center (Osage)

5:00 p.m.

**Caucus of Voting Delegates**

District 1	Caraway I
District 2	Caraway II
District 3	Caraway III
District 4	Miller
District 5	Izard
District 6	Pope
District 7	Fulton

5:30 p.m.

**Trade Show Closes**

# Caucus of **VOTING DELEGATES**

## **District 1 Caraway I**

Craighead  
Crittenden  
Cross  
Lee  
Mississippi  
Phillips  
Poinsett  
St. Francis

## **District 2 Caraway II**

Clay  
Greene  
Independence  
Jackson  
Lawrence  
Monroe  
Prairie  
Randolph  
Sharp  
White  
Woodruff

## **District 3 Caraway III**

Baxter  
Benton  
Boone  
Carroll  
Fulton  
Izard  
Madison  
Marion  
Newton  
Searcy  
Stone  
Washington

## **District 4 Miller**

Crawford  
Howard  
Little River  
Miller  
Montgomery  
North Logan  
Pike  
Polk  
Scott  
Sebastian  
Sevier  
South Logan

## **District 5 Izard**

Cleburne  
Conway  
Faulkner  
Franklin  
Garland  
Hot Spring  
Johnson  
Perry  
Pope  
Van Buren  
Yell

## **District 6 Pope**

Arkansas  
Cleveland  
Desha  
Drew  
Jefferson  
Lincoln  
Lonoke  
Pulaski  
Saline

## **District 7 Fulton**

Ashley  
Bradley  
Calhoun  
Chicot  
Clark  
Columbia  
Dallas  
Grant  
Hempstead  
Lafayette  
Nevada  
Ouachita  
Union

7:00 a.m.

**Breakfast for Voting Delegates**

Governors Hall III

8:00 a.m.

**Business Session**

Marriott Grand Ballroom

Report of Credential Committee

Report of Rules Committee

Introduction of Parliamentarian

Caucus Reports

Election of Board Members

Election of Voting Delegates to AFBF Convention

Business Report

Report of Nominating Committee

Election of President and Vice President

Discussion and Action on Resolutions

Adjourn

## SPEAKER BIOS



### **Asa Hutchinson, Governor**

Asa Hutchinson is the 46th governor of Arkansas and was re-elected to a second term in 2018. He has won recognition for the state as a leader in computer science education, cutting taxes by \$150 million and signing into law legislation that exempts the retirement pay of veterans from state income tax.

Gov. Hutchinson was raised on a farm in Gravette in Benton County and earlier this year co-hosted a roundtable discussion with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue that included many of the state's agricultural leaders at the Arkansas Agriculture Department.

Gov. Hutchinson understands the needs of Arkansas agriculture. He has made several trips to the White House to meet with the president and remind him about the importance of agriculture to the state's economy, as well as the impact tariffs from trading partners are having on Arkansas farmers and ranchers. Gov. Hutchinson has also made numerous trips abroad to promote Arkansas agriculture to potential export markets.

He and his wife Susan have been married 46 years and have four children and six grandchildren.



### **Scott VanderWal, Vice President, AFBF**

AFBF Vice President Scott VanderWal is a third-generation corn and soybean farmer and cattle feeder from Volga, South Dakota. He farms with his father, brothers and other members of his family. In addition to cattle feeding and crop production, the family also has a custom harvesting operation.

VanderWal was elected AFBF vice president in January 2016 and soon after was selected to represent AFBF on the U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance board of directors. VanderWal continues to serve as president of the South Dakota Farm Bureau, a position he's held since June 2004. He previously served as SDFB vice president (elected in 2001) and as a member of the SDFB board.

VanderWal and his wife, Michelle, have two granddaughters and one grandson. Scott served on their local school board for 9 years, and they are both active in their church where Scott serves as treasurer and elder.



### **Randy Veach, President, ArFB**

Randy Veach is in his 11th term as Arkansas Farm Bureau president. He previously served five years as the organization's vice president and has been on the state board of directors since December 1999.

Veach serves as a member of the American Farm Bureau board of directors, where he serves as chairman of the Audit Committee and a member of the International Trade Committee. He is also president and chairman of the board of the Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company, having been re-elected in February 2019, the first Arkansan to hold the office. He is a board member of the Southern Farm Bureau Casualty Insurance Company, and American Ag Insurance Corp. He is also on the Farm Bureau Bank board, where he serves as a member of the bank's Executive Committee.

In 2012, Veach received the Honorary American FFA Degree for lifetime service to youth and agriculture education, and has additionally received the Honorary State FFA Degree. In 2014, he was recognized as the Bursworth Foundation's Legends Honoree. Before joining the Arkansas Farm Bureau state board, Veach held several positions in Mississippi County Farm Bureau, including president and vice president. He also served on the county's Soybean, State Affairs and National Legislative Affairs committees. Randy and his family were chosen as the 1998 Mississippi County Farm Family of the Year.

Veach has been involved with agricultural trade missions to Ireland, Mexico, China, Cuba, Panama, South Korea, Japan, Belgium, Switzerland and Denmark.

This year, Veach was re-appointed to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Trade Advisory Committee for Tobacco, Cotton and Peanuts. He is a member of the Arkansas World Trade Center board of advisors.

A deacon at Little River Baptist Church, Veach is a trustee of B.M.A. Theological Seminary in Texas, and was past board director of Baptist Hospital in Mississippi County. He also served 10 years on the Manila School Board.

## SPEAKER BIOS



### **Delaney Howell, *Market to Market***

Delaney Howell is the host of Iowa Public Television's Market to Market television program.

She is the founder of AgCulture Media LLC, which specializes in video production for technologically savvy agricultural companies and co-launched a daily agriculture news podcast, Ag News Daily. She is also a freelance reporter for "This Week in Agribusiness," and Your Ag Network, and is a member of various organizations including the Iowa Cattleman's Association and the National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB) organization.

Howell grew up on a family farm in southeast Iowa. Today, her father and oldest brother run a finish feedlot cattle operation, farm corn and soybeans, and her mom has a hobby chicken farm. Delaney holds a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Sciences and minors in Broadcasting and International Studies from Northwest Missouri State University and a master's degree in Agricultural Communications through Texas Tech University. With a passion for agriculture, she has traveled the world, now totaling 20 countries.



### **Taylor Mason, *Humorist***

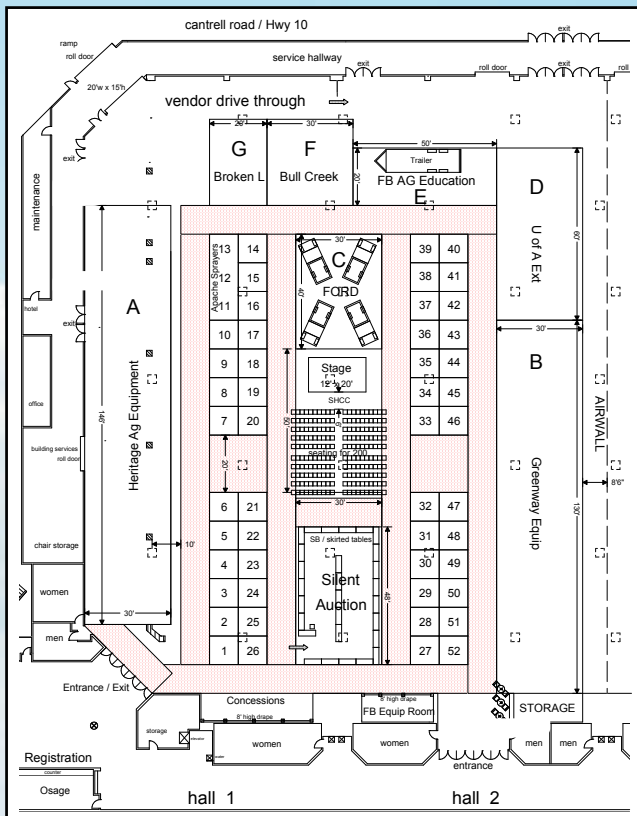
Taylor Mason's quick wit, flawless delivery, and polished material make him a hit with audiences of all ages. He is a ventriloquist, musician and stand-up comedian.

He's carved out a career in comedy and entertainment that has taken him around the world and into living rooms across the United States for the past 25 years. He's appeared on television programs, YouTube videos, played Carnegie Hall and has written a book.

Having graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in agriculture, followed by a master's degree from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, Taylor has never held a "real" job. His experience as a comedy writer and performer has taken him from The Second City Theater in Chicago to headlining gigs at every major comedy club across the country. He's performed for corporations like Microsoft and Walmart and he is doing a show for teens and children on a Disney cruise ship.

It is impossible to put Taylor's work into one category. His act transcends demographics and niches. It is a throwback, yet contemporary. He stays out of the bedroom and out of the bathroom and concentrates on jokes and punch lines.

- |         |                                      |         |                     |    |                            |
|---------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------------------|----|----------------------------|
| 1       | Conservis                            | 45      | Biozyme             | 51 | Livestock Nutrition Center |
| 2       | Helms Ag Service                     | 46      | CK Water Filtration | 52 | FB Store                   |
| 3       | JA Farms                             | 47 & 32 | River Bend Molding  | 53 | U of A Extension           |
| 4       | U of A Monticello                    | 48      | USA Rice            | 54 | U of A Extension           |
| 5       | Plyler & Son                         | 49      | U of A PB           | 55 | U of A Extension           |
| 6       | U of A                               | 50      | AR Cattlemens Assoc | 56 | U of A Extension           |
| 7 & 20  | Beef Counsel                         |         |                     |    |                            |
| 8       | Premium Select Sires                 |         |                     |    |                            |
| 9       | Today's Power                        |         |                     |    |                            |
| 10      | Treble Hitch                         |         |                     |    |                            |
| 11      | Apache Sprayer                       |         |                     |    |                            |
| 12      | Apache Sprayer                       |         |                     |    |                            |
| 13      | Apache Sprayer                       |         |                     |    |                            |
| 14      | Big D Ranch                          |         |                     |    |                            |
| 15      | AR Feral Hog                         |         |                     |    |                            |
| 16      | MO Walnut                            |         |                     |    |                            |
| 17      | 811 One Call                         |         |                     |    |                            |
| 18      | Savings Plus                         |         |                     |    |                            |
| 19      | Southern FB Casualty                 |         |                     |    |                            |
| 20 & 7  | Beef Counsel                         |         |                     |    |                            |
| 21      | AR Geriatric Education Collaborative |         |                     |    |                            |
| 22      | Promac                               |         |                     |    |                            |
| 23      | Women In Ag                          |         |                     |    |                            |
| 24      | Delta Plastics                       |         |                     |    |                            |
| 25      | YF&R                                 |         |                     |    |                            |
| 26      | FB Foundation                        |         |                     |    |                            |
| 27      | Ozark Nuts                           |         |                     |    |                            |
| 28      | Big Iron                             |         |                     |    |                            |
| 29      | Delta Star Energy                    |         |                     |    |                            |
| 30      | Valley View                          |         |                     |    |                            |
| 31      | SAU Magnolia                         |         |                     |    |                            |
| 32 & 47 | River Bend Molding                   |         |                     |    |                            |
| 33      | Entergy Arkansas                     |         |                     |    |                            |
| 34      | Granger                              |         |                     |    |                            |
| 35      | Farm Bureau Bank                     |         |                     |    |                            |
| 36      | USDA NASS                            |         |                     |    |                            |
| 37      | AR FFA                               |         |                     |    |                            |
| 38      | Seal Solar                           |         |                     |    |                            |
| 39      | Seal Solar                           |         |                     |    |                            |
| 40      | Seal Solar                           |         |                     |    |                            |
| 41      | Seal Solar                           |         |                     |    |                            |
| 42      | AR DOT                               |         |                     |    |                            |
| 43      | Farm Credit                          |         |                     |    |                            |
| 44      | AR Ag Dept                           |         |                     |    |                            |



## THURSDAY Workshops - 8 a.m.

### UNCERTAIN AND VOLATILE: FARMING DEPENDENT ON TRADE

lizard

**Board Chair: Terry Dabbs**

**Staff: Matt King**

**Speakers: Scott VanderWal**, *AFBF Vice President*; **Veronica Nigh**, *AFBF Economist*

Arkansas Farmers and Ranchers depend on the global markets to purchase roughly 40% of the products they produce. With the current trade war and lack of movement in Congress on USMCA, the future of agriculture exports remains uncertain. This lack of certainty has increased the price volatility, making it hard for many farms to cash flow. Veronica Nigh, AFBF Economist, will discuss the status of current trade negotiations, as well as their potential impact on products produced in Arkansas. This will be followed by a charge from AFBF Vice President Scott VanderWal for Farm Bureau members to take to our Members of Congress and others about the importance of opening foreign ag markets.

### FERAL HOGS

Caraway

**Board Chair: Caleb Plyler**

**Staff: John Bailey**

**Feral Hog Task Force Panel: Mike Sullivan**, *Ark. NRCS State Conservationist*;

**Robert Byrd**, *Director, Ark. APHIS Wildlife Services*; **Bruce Holland**, *Director, Ark. Natural Resources Comm.*;

**Wes Ward**, *Director, Ark. Dept. of Agriculture*; **Chris Colclasure**, *AGFC Deputy Director*

A roundtable discussion on the state of feral hog eradication in Arkansas and the direction state and federal agencies are going. Agencies will discuss programs that are available to landowners as well as programs being implemented on public lands. This will be followed with a questions and answer session to voice your concerns.



## **ENGAGING YOUR LEADERSHIP**

Pope

***Board Chair: Dan Wright***

***Staff: Justin Reynolds***

***Speakers: VIP<sup>2</sup> Panel (Tanner Hubbard, Alex Diaz, Lawrence Hicks, Deb Sadler)***

Attracting and retaining leaders is difficult in any volunteer organization, especially one representing a changing population. Join VIP<sup>2</sup> panelists Tanner Hubbard, Alex Diaz, Lawrence Hicks, and Deb Sadler to learn ways to work through the challenges, while celebrating the successes, of engaging members in a volunteer organization.

## THURSDAY Workshops - 10 a.m.

### ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY

Caraway

**Board Chair:** Tom Jones

**Staff:** Travis Justice and Bruce Tencleve

**Speaker:** Alex K. Turner, *DVM Assistant Director, National Animal Disease Traceability & Veterinary Accreditation Center, USDA APHIS*; **Randolph Chick**, *DVM, Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission*

Animal disease traceability is important to ensuring a rapid response when animal disease events take place. Although animal disease traceability does not prevent disease, an efficient and accurate traceability system reduces the number of animals and response time involved in a disease investigation, which, in turn, reduces the economic impact on owners and affected communities.

### HOW TO SURVIVE CHRONIC SURPLUSES

Fulton

**Board Chair:** Rusty Smith

**Staff:** Brandy Carroll

**Speaker:** Todd Hultman, *DNT Sr. Analyst*

Todd Hultman, Sr. Analyst with DTN, will discuss how to survive chronic surpluses and how to get higher prices in a bearish market. While his focus is obviously on world market actions, Todd also is a student of the human side of those markets. Todd is widely read on how social function and human psychology drive decision making.

## **ENGAGING YOUR LEADERSHIP**

Pope

**Board Chair:** Jeremy Miller

**Staff:** Jennifer Craig

**Speakers:** VIP<sup>2</sup> Panel (Tanner Hubbard, Alex Diaz, Lawrence Hicks, Deb Sadler)

Attracting and retaining leaders is difficult in any volunteer organization, especially one representing a changing population. Join VIP<sup>2</sup> panelists Tanner Hubbard, Alex Diaz, Lawrence Hicks, and Deb Sadler to learn ways to work through the challenges, while celebrating the successes, of engaging members in a volunteer organization.

## **WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE: A NEW APPROACH**

Izard

**Board Chair:** Donna Bemis

**Staff:** Amanda Williams

**Speakers:** Chuck Tucker, *ArFB Senior Vice President/Organization & Administration;*

**Amanda Williams,** *ArFB Director of Women's Leadership/Farm Bureau Foundation*

An in-depth look at the Gold Star form. We have revised the questions and the awarding process.

## AWARDS



### YF&R ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Mark Morgan and his wife Shay earned the YF&R Achievement Award. The couple owns Peach Pickin Paradise, a 3,500-tree orchard specializing in “u-pick” and ag tourism. They also have a cow-calf operation and are involved in the family turkey-raising business. Award candidates are judged on their leadership abilities and involvement in Farm Bureau and their local community.

The Morgans won \$35,000 courtesy of Southern Farm Bureau Casualty Co., and a trip to Austin, Texas in January to represent Arkansas at the American Farm Bureau convention. The Achievement Award recognizes young farmers and ranchers who have excelled in their farming/ranching operations and exhibited outstanding leadership abilities. The Morgans have two children, Kate and Luke.



## **YF&R EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE AWARD**

Matt and Terrie Shekels won the YF&R Excellence in Ag Award. Their Boone County cattle operation consists of a herd of 50 purebred Angus cattle and 20 registered black Angus. They also have an artificial insemination/embryo transfer business. Matt is an animal science and ag business professor at the College of the Ozarks. Terrie is a registered nurse. They have three boys, Andrew, Caleb and Aaron.

The Shekels received \$11,000 for winning, courtesy of Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. and PCI Publishing Co. They will also represent Arkansas on a trip to the American Farm Bureau convention in Austin, Texas in January.

# 2019 **ANNUAL REPORT**



# Let's KEEP Growing

The year 2019 was a challenging one on many fronts. From freezes and floods to trade wars and low commodity prices, it was difficult for almost everyone involved in Arkansas agriculture. But still we grew.

We grew because nothing stops farmers and ranchers from continuing their work of providing the food, fiber and shelter for the world. We grew because Arkansas Farm Bureau continued our stated mission of advocating for the interests of agriculture and for each and every farmer and rancher in our state and we shared the stories of their challenges with the world, through video, print publications and social media. We shared their stories with the public and at the state legislature and in Washington, D.C.

We grew because it's what we do. It's what everyone in Arkansas agriculture does. It's who we are.

This year's convention theme – “Let's Get Growing” – is a call to action and a call to turn the trials of this year into the feed, fertilizer and fuel necessary for cultivating a brighter, better future for Arkansas agriculture.

Like our farmers and ranchers, Arkansas Farm Bureau must “get growing” as well. We must continue to spread information about the value and importance of agriculture and provide products and services that improve the quality of life for our members. In fact, we must work harder than ever to accomplish our goals, as we face a world with increasingly complicated business challenges, extreme weather, international trade troubles, deep political divisions and “information overload.”

For Arkansas Farm Bureau, growth begins at the local level – through policy development, youth and leadership development, new training opportunities, member outreach and more. This year was no exception.

During this year's legislative session, district directors and staff worked to engage our county leaders and



**Warren Carter**  
Executive Vice President, ArFB

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

encourage personal contacts to legislators. These contacts strengthened our policy implementation efforts, as legislators sought feedback from local Farm Bureau leaders to confirm that what they were hearing at the Capitol matched their needs and desires. This strong grassroots approach led to another successful General Assembly for Arkansas Farm Bureau, as we successfully ensured that eight of our 10 legislative priorities were signed into law. We also helped pass plenty of other good legislation, including bills related to rural broadband expansion, creation of a licensure for veterinarian technicians and technologists, additional funding for the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, grain grading certification standards, heavy weight permit expansion, farm-to-school programs, an expanded feral hog eradication program, and civil immunity for stolen farm equipment.

On top of our legislative work, we took advantage of technology to help move our advocacy efforts into the digital age and make the work more effective and efficient for 2020. First, we partnered with Phone2Action to launch a new text-message and email system for urgent calls-to-action. The system allows members to quickly send messages to their government representatives and other officials about important agriculture policy issues on a moment's notice. We also approved the development of a mobile, web-based Elections Directory that will allow users to quickly access information about political candidates in their areas.

We also continued to "prepare the ground" for the future through training and support of our youth, from grade-school and high-school students to college students and up-and-coming industry leaders. In addition to our ongoing support for programs like 4H, FFA and Medical Applications of Science for Health (M\*A\*S\*H), county leaders distributed more than 100,000 pieces of Ag in the Classroom support and resource materials in classrooms around the state. Mobile educational displays were used at more than 400 programs in schools across the state and more than 40 fairs and festivals and we also completed work on the new AgTech Training Lab, a mobile educational tool that features realistic simulations of what it's like to operate farm equipment. This will be a critical piece of our 2020 education plans.

In addition, ArFB hosted the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference for more than 500 teachers, volunteer educators and guests. ArFB participated in two teacher workshops during the event, conducting training for 300 K-12 teachers.

This year marked the first full year of our new Public Relations department structure, with three senior members of the PR team serving as "field communicators," dedicated to getting out in the field to visit farms and ranches and working hand-in-hand with our district directors to gather stories from their regions to share with a broad audience. This process is working, as we have seen an increase of almost 10 percent in both our Facebook



and Twitter following and jump of almost 30 percent in our Instagram following. Meanwhile, our website visits have increased and more people are viewing our content on mobile devices than ever before. Our videos on Arkansas farmers and ranchers and agricultural issues have been viewed hundreds of thousands of times this year and we launched a regular, weekly podcast that has been a tremendous success.

The Arkansas Farm Bureau Foundation continues to allow us to expand our outreach and education efforts. By funding local Farm Bureau projects like reading barns, farm days and ag-in-the-classroom activities, Foundation funding allows members to design and implement local programs while raising Arkansas Farm Bureau's profile statewide. This year, the Foundation served as a way for Arkansas Farm Bureau to help those negatively impacted by the Arkansas River flooding. This year's largest donation – \$50,000 – went to the American Red Cross for relief efforts after flooding affected thousands of Arkansans.

The Organization and Member Programs department was critical to our efforts to grow stronger relationships and communication with our counties. We continued to develop and grow our Gold Star program to fit our ever-changing needs and to appropriately recognize and reward counties for their efforts to attract new members and advocate for agriculture.

We also worked to provide our counties with the tools they need to grow our membership numbers, we continued to explore new opportunities to strengthen our ValuePlus and SavingsPlus programs, which provide easily accessible money-saving value to our member families. Relying on the guidance of our New Products and Services Committee and state board members, our staff evaluated current efforts and identified new and promising programs available to the organization.

Finally, in the third year of our new financial incentives program for counties, we invested almost \$200,000 in programs. This stands as a prime example of just how committed we are to growing for the future. These investments to paid off in part with our strong advocacy effort during the upcoming legislative session and a better understanding and appreciation of agriculture and agricultural practices by the public and our elected leaders.

Our financial position remains strong and we will continue to make the investments necessary to keep growing in 2020 and beyond.

As I emphasize every year, we will continue to stand up for agriculture and the right to farm in Arkansas. We are fortunate to have such a strong grassroots network to help drive us forward into 2020 and beyond. Without them and without the hard work of our staff and the Arkansas Farm Bureau Board, we would not be able to keep growing and working to ensure the success of our state's largest industry for years to come.

*The various divisions of the Arkansas Farm Bureau had a strong year of engagement, advocacy initiatives and positive change, seeding the ground for future growth for the organization.*

*Our experienced and dedicated staff worked to tell the agriculture story and to prepare youth and young adults to lead Arkansas agriculture into the future. In addition, they won key policy victories that will help our members and provide a chance for all Arkansas farmers and ranchers to grow and prosper for years to come.*

## COMMODITY AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Arkansas Farm Bureau is a general farm organization that brings together farmers from across our state for a common cause. However, there is no such thing as a “general farmer.” Thus, the Commodity and Regulatory Affairs department serves our members by creating a forum for producers of rice, beef cattle, cotton, poultry, forestry, aquaculture, specialty crops, soybeans, swine, dairy, equine, and wheat and feed grains to come together with their fellow producers to identify and discuss issues important to their specific commodity and to advise the board of directors on policy development and implementation.

From providing incubators to elementary teachers so they can demonstrate the life cycle to hosting cooking contests for students using Arkansas products, the division supports the mission of the county Farm Bureaus to educate local communities about the contributions of agriculture. In recent years, the case of C&H Hog Farm showed how important this mission can be, as the farm’s owners faced an onslaught of opposition from environmental groups. Their private property rights and their right to farm were under attack, so CRA engaged our membership to support the owners and operators of C&H, attending public meetings, helping prepare permit applications, and providing technical expertise whenever needed. The team stood by them until the fight ended in 2019, when the family owners



decided to accept a buyout offer from the state and wind down operations.

Commodity and Regulatory Affairs staff members provide market information and economic analysis for members and the general public through Farm Bureau publications and media outlets across the state. The department provides futures market prices daily by text message and on the website. Market analysis and commentary is also provided on the website and in the *Farm Bureau Press* and *The Feed* e-letter.

CRA is also ArFB's liaison with the regulatory agencies impacting our members. Staff regularly attend meetings of several state agencies. Using Farm Bureau policy as our guide, staff regularly prepare comments on a wide-variety of rules and regulations that will impact our members. In 2019, those issues ranged from pesticide issues to the imposition of a permanent moratorium on permits in the Buffalo River Watershed proposed by the Division of Environmental Quality.



**Other notable CRA accomplishments and efforts in 2019 included:**

- CRA continued to provide administration for six commodity checkoff boards. This proven public-private partnership keeps overhead costs low, ensuring maximum investment of funds into the research, promotion and market development programs for which the checkoffs were created.
- In 2019, CRA worked closely with state agencies and the General Assembly to develop statutory language to allow the newly formed Arkansas Agriculture Department to issue all animal agriculture permits. Efforts to transfer permitting authority continue.
- ArFB and USA Rice worked closely to collect yield data for alternative methods of irrigation on rice and to provide that data to USDA/Risk Management Agency to support new crop insurance coverage for rice producers, which should come to fruition soon.
- John McMinn was hired as director of Commodity Activities and Economics and is responsible for economic analysis and commodity-specific programs and activities for aquaculture, forestry and specialty crops.
- Travis Justice, Director of Commodity and Regulatory Affairs and Chief Economist, celebrated 45 years of service to ArFB in 2019.

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

With advocacy a part of our core mission, Arkansas Farm Bureau Public Affairs & Government worked hard during this year's General Assembly session to effectively advocate for farmers and ranchers and pass legislation connected to priority issues determined through our grassroots policy development process.

Simply put, 2019 was a very good year for agriculture at the state capitol. ArFB had 10 legislative priorities for 2019 and successfully pushed through bills related to eight of those. ArFB advocacy efforts and successes during the General Assembly included:

- Funding for the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture;
- Advocating for our policy in regard to the proposed government reorganization;
- Supporting the transfer of regulatory authority of agriculture non-point source pollution to the Arkansas Department of Natural Resources;
- Reorganizing the membership of the Livestock & Poultry Commission with more industry and farmer representation;
- Support for a highway maintenance program;
- Establishing new food labeling laws/regulations;
- Strengthening the Right-to-Farm law;
- Expanding the state's "lemon law" to include motorized farm equipment;
- Preserving the structure and purpose of the commodity promotion and research programs;
- Protection of agriculture sales tax exemptions.

### ***Other key advocacy efforts and successes this year included:***

- To help build our team for the future, Jessica Clowser Burkham moved from the Commodity and Regulatory Affairs team to the Public Affairs & Government Relations team, bringing her knowledge and experience in agriculture policy and issues at the federal level to the role of Director of Policy Development



and Legislative Research.

- A Farmers Day at the Capitol event held in March, at which 95 leaders visited with state senators and representatives to talk about issues affecting farmers and agriculture.
- A Farm Policy Summit in April, attended by nearly 100 members. Speakers included the USDA's Greg Ibach; USTR Chief Agricultural Negotiator Ambassador Gregg Doud; Charles Maguire with the EPA; Scott Bennett, Director, Arkansas Department of Transportation; James McKinnie with the Corps of Engineers; Lt. Gov. Tim Griffin; three state legislators and several other industry experts. The event also featured discussions with the state's Congressional delegation.
- For ArFB's 71st Officers and Leaders Conference, the planning committee developed an agenda focused on the theme, Cultivating Connections. Sessions included Developing an Effective Marketing Strategy, Expanding Broadband Access in Your County and Managing Farm Stress. More than 500 leaders attended. One popular session (presented twice and attended by 165 leaders) was Implementing Local Programs That Engage Leaders. Veteran ArFB staff members discussed the role of their departments and things they could do at a county level.
- ArFB was supportive of legislation passed related to broadband expansion within the state, creation of a licensure for veterinarian technicians and technologists, grain grading certification standards, heavy weight permit expansion, farm-to-school program, expanded feral hog program, and civil immunity for stolen farm equipment.
- All four congressmen and one U.S. senator participated in farm tours organized by ArFB. The Arkansas House and Senate Agriculture committees have also been on farm tours reviewing innovative farming practices, research and regulatory issues.



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- ArFB also hosted Commodity Futures Trading Commissioner Dan Berkovitz for a visit designed to provide a better understanding of how futures products are used by farmers and industry, as well as to see the industry in action.
- ArFB led several Washington D.C. fly-ins in this year. The 11 members of the state YF&R Committee traveled to Washington and were briefed by AFBF staff on the 2018 Farm Bill, trade and tax reform. The group received training on hill visits from AFBF, met with the U.S. Grains Council and the Agriculture Retailers Association. It also hosted a lunch for Arkansas' congressional delegation. This was followed by meetings with Sen. John Boozman, at the Mexican Embassy and USDA. In March, 35 of our county leaders traveled to the nation's capital for briefings at AFBF, at USDA and with members of the state's congressional delegation.
- ArFB continued to have excellent participation in major conferences and county policy development meetings. The state Officers & Leaders conference had 537 attendees; the annual state convention had almost 1,000 attendees; and we were represented by 174 attendees at the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention in New Orleans. In 2019 at the local level, the State Resolutions Committee reviewed 286 policy resolutions from 65 counties. Eighty four members from 67 counties made up the State Resolutions Committee. These policy recommendations will be examined by 293 voting delegates at the business session of the annual convention.



## ORGANIZATION AND MEMBER PROGRAMS

When it comes to adding value to our membership, the underlying goal is included in the ArFB mission statement: "Providing products and services which improve the quality of life for our members." Specifically, with the guidance of the New Products and Services committee, state board members and staff, we continually evaluate current programs and any possible new programs to make sure they fulfill the mission statement. Part of this

directive is to offer opportunities, information and training related to leadership, health and health care, careers in agriculture and more.

The mission statement also highlights the importance of disseminating information about the value and importance of agriculture, which is why education initiatives and outreach are a key part of the Organization and Member Programs department's efforts.

In short, ArFB looks for quality programs that will provide real value to the membership and enhance our member's experience. Our goal is to find quality programs that have everyday value or exclusive savings and benefit four members in multiple areas such as vehicle and equipment purchases, travel, banking services, a SavingsPlus app or entertainment. We strive to offer our members and perspective members the opportunity to use member benefits as often as possible and support them in their efforts to learn about, promote or take on new roles in agriculture.

***This year, the OMP team accomplished the following:***

- Amanda Williams, who has served for the past two years as Education & Foundation Coordinator, was named Director of the Women's Leadership Program & Farm Bureau Foundation. In her expanded role, Williams is primarily responsible for planning and budgeting for the state Women's Leadership Committee and working with county Women's Leadership committees to assist with various activities. She will also develop and implement training activities to educate members and grow participation, which we believe will be key in 2020. Williams will maintain her responsibility for coordinating the daily activities of the Arkansas Farm Bureau Foundation, which remains critical to our efforts to support and advocate for Arkansas agriculture.
- ArFB held its second Ag Youth Leadership Seminar this past summer. Twenty students entering the 11th and 12th grades had the opportunity to participate in this three-day seminar designed to provide an in-depth look at agricultural college degrees and careers.
- ARFB hosted the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference for more than 500 teachers, volunteer educators and guests.



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- The Lifeline Health Screening Program is a service that screens individuals for issues associated with heart attacks and stroke. This benefit has been taken advantage of by 1,189 members and saved them a total of \$5,780 this year. When added together, ArFB members have saved in excess of \$2 million in healthcare costs.
- The two-week ArFB-sponsored Medical Applications of Science for Health (M\*A\*S\*H) program reached 550 high school students (a record) who attended one of 35 camps at hospitals across the state. M\*A\*S\*H camps provide youth the opportunity to experience medical professions and focuses on involving rural students interested in a medical career with a hands-on learning environment.
- ArFB established a Women's Communications Boot Camp in 2019 and 12 women participated in the inaugural event.
- ArFB's YF&R Conference provided workshops on a variety of issues facing agriculture and almost 200 attended, including Collegiate Farm Bureau students from seven colleges.
- The March Women's Conference attracted 135 women from around the state. In addition, the state Women's Committee continued its partnership with the Thea Foundation, which promotes education excellence through use of the arts in schools. Through a matching fund, county women's committees purchased art supplies for use by local students. In February, a cost-share program on food donations led to \$15,500 in food being donated to local pantries and school weekend food for underprivileged students from 47 county women's committees.
- The SavingsPlus program features more than 20 companies offering discounts to Farm Bureau members. Through the Choice Hotels





discount program, some 10,982 members have saved more than \$64,000 the past year, and the John Deere Tier-3 discount program has doubled its participation over the past 12 months. In the past year, the SavingsPlus discount program has resulted in more than \$2 million in savings for our members.

- ArFB continued its three rewards programs for county Farm Bureau Member Service Representatives (MSRs) and county organizations. The first is a direct reward program for the county that pays the county MSR for membership retention with cash prizes given for the member renewals in their county. The cash prizes range up to \$350 per MSR. The second contest was to reward the MSR who is the first in their membership category to reach 70%, 80%, or 90% of membership quota. The third contest is a \$2,000 cash award for each county making membership quota. This award is passed on to the MSR in 85% of the counties. ArFB spent almost \$250,000 in membership retention and renewal incentives to county MSRs and Farm Bureaus this year.
- The ArFB Foundation donated \$55,000 to flood relief and awarded more than \$20,000 in grants. Grants have been awarded to county Women's and YF&R committees for projects such as creating "Traveling Book Barns" that will house agriculture related books and will be available for schools in the county. Funding has also been awarded to county Farm Bureaus to assist with annual events that provide Arkansas agriculture education to elementary age students in the county.
- More than 100,000 pieces of Ag in the Classroom support and resource materials were distributed in classrooms around the state. Mobile educational displays were used at more than 400 programs in schools across the state and more than 40 fairs and festivals and work was completed on the new AgTech Training Lab, a mobile educational tool that features realistic simulations of what it's like to operate farm equipment.



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## PUBLIC RELATIONS

The ArFB Public Relations department continued its focus on organizing and changing to meet the ever-growing demand for new content to feed our various media outlets – two magazines, a website and blog, multiple social media platforms and a quarterly RFD-TV show.

Three senior members of the PR team completed their first full year serving as “field communicators,” dedicated to getting out in the field to visit farms and ranches and working hand-in-hand with district directors to gather stories from their regions. Ashley Wallace moved into the role of Social Media Specialist, bringing her unique skills with graphic design and photography, and former intern Matthew Magdefrau joined the team full time as a visual production specialist, helping the Production Hub team and shooting and editing video.

Visits to ARFB.com increased once again in 2019 by around 7% and unique sessions on the site have increased as well. In line with the department’s goal of making the site more mobile-user friendly, our mobile traffic has increased by almost 10%, finally surpassing desktop users. In addition, ArFB social media efforts have succeeded in doubling social traffic to our website since last year, moving the needle from below 10% in 2018 to almost 20% in 2019.

ArFB’s social media audience also continued to grow in 2019. Each of our primary social media accounts – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – saw a steady rise in followers. The official ArFB Facebook page now has more than 26,000 followers (growing 7.45%), Twitter has more than 5,000 followers (growing close to 10%), and Instagram has 2,409 followers (growing some 27%).

Magazine distribution now stands at close to 190,000 for *Front Porch* and just under 50,000 for *Arkansas Agriculture*. *The Feed* e-letter has 2,280 subscribers, and the average open rate is between 20 and 30 percent, which far exceeds industry average. The department also launched a new, weekly podcast featuring multiple industry and expert interviews on timely topics in agriculture. ArFB videos featuring Arkansas farmers and ranchers, ArFB experts and other officials have been viewed hundreds of thousands of times across platforms – ARFB.com, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.





**WE WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS  
OUR APPRECIATION TO THE  
2019 CONVENTION COSPONSORS:**

Southern Farm Bureau Casualty Insurance Company

Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company

Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company of Arkansas, Inc.





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