



WASHINGTON **FB**News

THE VOICE OF AGRICULTURE IN WASHINGTON

AFBF Delegates Approve Flexible, Fiscally Sound Farm Policy

Voting delegates at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 93rd Annual Meeting stated that national farm policy should be rewritten this year to establish a program that protects farmers from catastrophic revenue losses by using a flexible combination of fiscally responsible tools.

In approving the organization's farm policy for 2012, the farmers and ranchers endorsed a multi-pronged policy proposal, including a provision for catastrophic revenue loss protection that works with a flexible range of crop insurance products, as well as amending the current farm bill's marketing loan provisions to better reflect market values.

The adopted policy calls for a farm bill that "provides strong and effective safety net and risk management programs that do not guarantee a profit and minimizes the potential for farm programs affecting production decisions."

"Our delegates approved a program to help farmers manage the many different types and levels of risk they face today, in particular catastrophic revenue losses that can threaten the viability of a farm or ranch," said AFBF President Bob Stallman. "That is consistent with what we believe is the core mission



Washington Farm Bureau voting (and alternate) delegates pose for a photo after floor action stopped for Regional Caucus Meetings on Wednesday Jan. 11, 2012. From left to right: WFB President, Mike LaPlant; WFB 2nd Vice President Steve Cooper; WFB 1st Vice President Aaron Golladay; and WFB board member from Chelan-Douglas County, Harry Malloy. The number of voting delegates allowed for each state Farm Bureau is based upon each state's total membership.

of the federal farm program."

Stallman was re-elected as AFBF president for a seventh two-year term. He is a cattle and rice producer from Columbus, Texas. In addition, Barry Bushue was re-elected to a third two-year term as AFBF vice president. Bushue produces berries and nursery plants in Boring, Ore.,

and also serves as Oregon Farm Bureau president.

The delegates defeated a proposal to retain the current farm bill's direct payments. In addition, by almost a two-to-one margin, the delegates defeated an amendment that would

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Washington Farm Bureau's D.C. Days Scheduled for March 5-7

Washington Farm Bureau members will meet the state's Congressional delegation and staff to discuss federal issues affecting agriculture as part of WFB's D.C. Days trip to the nation's capital, March 5-7. Agency or embassy visits are still being planned, and time will be allowed for tour opportunities.

Participants should arrive in Washington, D.C. on Sunday, March 4. The program will begin Monday morning with a group orientation and policy briefing at American Farm Bureau Federation headquarters. The program will end on Wednesday afternoon.

The Holiday Inn Capitol will be hosting the sleeping rooms/guests accommodations from March 4-8, 2012. Our group rates are valid for booking from January 27, 2012 through February 6, 2012. Call 1-800-HOLIDAY (465-4329) and request the group code (W2F).

For more information or to RSVP for D.C. Days 2012, contact John Stuhlmiller at (800) 331-3276 or js-stuhlmiller@wsfb.com.

Agriculture Safety Day

This year's Agriculture Safety Day will be held February 22 at the Wenatchee Convention Center. The day-long event is co-sponsored by the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) and the Governor's Industrial Safety and Health Advisory Board. Featuring programs in English and Spanish, Agriculture Safety Day is designed to promote workplace safety for an industry that remains among the most hazardous in the state.

Those attending Agriculture Safety Day can participate in workshops on language barriers, forklift safety training, sleep deprivation and fatigue, ATV safety, electrical hazards, the top five injuries and associated hazards in agriculture and more.

The workshop, "Worker Protection Standard (WPS) Pesticide Train

the Trainer/How to Set up WPS Training," will be provided in English and Spanish. Those attending will earn a Washington State Department of Agriculture recertification credit. A workshop just for workers, "Pesticide Worker Training with Certification" will be offered in Spanish only. Those attending will earn a WPS Training Card. This year's exhibit hall will offer educational booths and product displays while product demonstrations will be held outside.

Registration is \$60 person or \$50 for groups of five or more. The student rate is \$25. To register, visit www.regonline.com/wagovconf-asd. For more information, contact Conference Manager Teri Neely at 360-902-5446.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

As someone who has been active in Farm Bureau for many years, I have always been familiar with our grassroots way of doing things. Now, as the organization's president, I have a different vantage point, but I still have the same opinion of our system. I am impressed.

I am impressed with how we all made a difference in preserving ag lands through our efforts on the Voluntary Stewardship Program. I am impressed with all the hard work that you—our volunteer leaders—did to make the VSP a success.

When county commissioners claimed the issue was too confusing, or that this voluntary program would somehow hurt agriculture, you—our volunteer leaders—came forward without hesitation to have the difficult conversations.

You sent letters to county commissioners, urging them to hold hearings about opting in to the VSP. You had face-to-face meetings. You had heated discussions and sometimes even arguments. You presented materials. You sent letters. You made calls. When the deadline for counties

to opt in to the VSP was looming (January 22, 2012), you pushed forward. You stood up to be heard and did not back down.

All 25 county Farm Bureaus engaged on this issue. Volunteer leaders in each county led those efforts.

The outcome is better than many predicted: 28 counties have opted in to the Voluntary Stewardship Program. Initial estimates predicted only 15 or so counties being likely to participate.

In a few counties, we went from having property rights advocates vehemently oppose our position in favor of the VSP, to having them become our most vocal supporters. This change of heart was due to the convincing persuasion of you—our grassroots activists.

Thank you for your time, support and dedication. I appreciate your engagement in this process and your efforts. I look forward to seeing what we can do in the future when even bigger fights come our way.



Mike LaPlant
President, Washington Farm Bureau

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Labor Conference to be held in Ellensburg Feb. 16

The Washington Farm Labor Association (WAFLA) is offering a day-long conference on February 16, dedicated to the labor and employment needs of Washington's farm and seasonal employers. Scheduled to take place in Ellensburg on the Central Washington University campus, this conference is a must for business owners, HR managers and supervisors. With 15 presentations and breakout sessions you cannot afford to miss the educational and training opportunities packed into this one day!

Highlights include:

I-9 Audits, No-Match, Immigration Reform
– all the latest information.

Labor Shortage
– How will you get workers this summer?

Healthcare Law
– It is right around the corner and could impact you.

Forced Unionization
– A farmer relates his experience with the union.

And Much More – Federal and state agencies and top legal and accounting professionals.

Visit <http://wafla.org/trainingandevents> for more information and to register. Registration fee is \$75 per WAFLA member and includes the reception on Feb. 15 and the conference on Feb. 16. Parking, materials, and lunch on Feb. 16 are also included with each registration.



Legislators Jump to Early Conclusions on Health Care

As a fascinating 2012 regular session unfolds, health care issues again top the list of measures being considered. The Legislature seems set on ignoring the orderly process established just last session in order to predetermine how our state insurance system would operate under provisions of the Affordable Healthcare Act (also known as Obamacare).

Both the Senate and House health care committees have taken up measures related to the Health Care Exchange made necessary through the Affordable Healthcare Act. The problem is that a recently constituted Exchange Board, which includes past WFB President Steve Appel, has much work to do in defining the Exchange first.

As you will recall (or maybe not because of all the changes coming down in health care) an Exchange is a proposed government clearing house where individuals and small groups can come to select health care plans. Those plans would be somewhat identical in features to make comparison easy and the Exchanges would check each person and group to see if they qualified for government subsidy.

HB 2319, sponsored by Rep. Cody (D-Vashon Island), and Senate companion, SB 6319, sponsored by Sen. Keiser (D-Seattle), would ensure that insurance providers must offer the comparable insurance products "within" the exchange as they would "outside the exchange." This would preclude a host of insurance products and would hinder competition and choice in the marketplace, creating even more uncertainty and risk to Washington's residents in the search for affordable healthcare.

The program created by passage of the bills as constructed could hinder the ability of Association Health Plans like WFB Healthcare and disrupt our ability to provide quality products to our members. We are early in the process, but we will continue to watch these bills and a host of other measures that could harm an already tenuous health insurance market at the very time that we need certainty and predictability to foster more options and drive down prices.

We strongly encourage the Legislature to let the Exchange Board do its job and make recommendations before we rush to judgment.

Healthcare CORNER

Appel Appointed to Statewide Health Exchange Board

Governor Chris Gregoire appointed nine Washingtonians to serve as the first governing board of the state's Health Benefit Exchange in December. Washington Farm Bureau's immediate past President, Steve Appel, a wheat and barley grower from Dusty, Washington has been appointed to serving on the oversight committee. Other appointees include:

- **Bill Baldwin**, Partner, The Partners Group
- **Don Conant**, General Manager at Valley Nut and Bolt in Olympia and Assistant Professor in the School of Business at St. Martin's University;
- **Doug Conrad**, Professor of Health Services at the University of Washington School of Public Health;
- **Melanie Curtice**, partner in the employee benefits section at the law firm of Stoel Rives LLP;
- **Dr. Ben Danielson**, Medical Director at the Odessa Brown Children's Clinic;
- **Phil Dyer**, Senior Vice President at Kibble & Prentice/USI

and former state legislator; and

- **Teresa Mosqueda**, Legislative and Policy Director for the Washington State Labor Council and Chair of the Healthy Washington Coalition.

As chair, the governor appointed Margaret Stanley, retired Executive Director of the Puget Sound Health Alliance, and former Senior Vice President at Regence BlueShield and head of public employee benefits programs in both Washington and California.

Members were chosen from nominees put forward by each of the legislative caucuses last fall. Initial members of the board will serve staggered terms, not to exceed four years. The Board is expected to assume governing authority over the Exchange on March 12, 2012.

Authorized by the Legislature in the 2011 regular session, the statewide Exchange is expected to provide a new health insurance marketplace that will be available to individuals and small businesses beginning in January 2014.

AFBF Delegates

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have allowed a patchwork of support through multiple programs for different commodities and regions.

"Delegate action against the patchwork approach recognized that it is impossible to ensure equity between diverse programs for various commodities," Stallman said. "Without that assurance, one program would inevitably provide more government protection than the next program and we would inadvertently be encouraging producers to take their signals from government programs rather than the marketplace.

One of the big advantages of the new AFBF farm policy position is that it offers a much simpler approach to farm program design than other farm policy proposals, according to Stallman.

The AFBF farm policy also encourages farmers to manage their farms using available risk management tools. According to Stallman, farmers should be allowed and encouraged to make individual management decisions to purchase crop insurance coverage that suits their farms and individual levels of risk.

Another positive aspect of the Farm Bureau farm policy proposal is that it can be applied to specialty crops.

"Our new farm policy position also includes the possibility of providing a farm bill risk management program

for producers of fruits and vegetables," Stallman said. "This is just one positive aspect of the proposal that we believe not only will broaden its utility to all farmers but will also appeal to an American public that is more interested in the wholesomeness, safety and variety of our domestic food supply."

In a related discussion on dairy policy, delegates voted to move away from the current dairy price support and Milk Income Loss Contract programs and toward a program that bases risk protection on milk prices minus feed costs. This takes production costs into consideration, as well as recognizes the dairy industry's regional differences, according to Stallman.

On renewable fuels, the delegates reaffirmed support for the federal Renewable Fuels Standard by defeating an amendment to strike that support.

"The RFS remains critical to the viability of ethanol as an alternative to imported petroleum fuel," explained Stallman, "and the delegates felt that continuing to support production and use of domestic renewable fuels was a national security issue."

The delegates opposed the Labor Department's proposed expansion of the list of jobs deemed too hazardous for minors.

"The proposal has raised serious concerns in farm country about our ability to teach our children how to

farm and instill a good work ethic," Stallman said. "There is a great deal of concern about federal regulatory overreach, but few issues have piqued farm families more than this. It goes to the very heart of how agriculture works, with farmers and ranchers, who were taught by their parents how to do farm work safely and responsibly, training the next generation to follow in their own footsteps."

Delegates approved a change in AFBF policy supporting "a new agriculture visa that is portable and that also deals with ag sectors that need year round workers." AFBF has established a working group composed of state Farm Bureau staff to study the new language and further discuss how portability could be implemented in such a visa. Associate Director of Public Policy, Scott Dilley, will represent Washington Farm Bureau on the committee.

The delegates also supported a moratorium on new regulations on small businesses and agriculture.

At the AFBF annual meeting, 369 voting delegates representing every state and agricultural commodity deliberated on policies affecting farmers' and ranchers' productivity and profitability. The policies approved at the annual meeting will guide the nation's largest general farm organization in its legislative and regulatory efforts throughout 2012.

Ties to the Land

Succession planning for landowners

INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

February 4, 2012

**Olympic National Forest HQ
1835 Black Lake Blvd.
SW Olympia**

Feb. 25, 2012

**Hegewald Center
710 SW Rock
Creek Dr.
Stevenson**

*Leave a legacy
for the next generation
of family landowners.*

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

TTL Training Dates:

Feb. 25 - Stevenson

Mar. 10 - Longview

Apr. 7 - Vancouver

May 19 - Mt. Vernon or Asotin

May 26 - Mt. Vernon or Asotin

Dec. 8 - Ellensburg

Dec. 15 - Ellensburg

Leadership

Congratulations and thank you to those who represented WFB at the 2012 AFBF Annual Meeting

WFB YF&R Achievement Award Winner: Keith and Laura Middleton

Keith and Laura Middleton operate Middleton Six Sons Farms, LLC, a 2,000 acre irrigated farm along with Keith's parents. Three years ago they started selling from their small produce stand fresh asparagus, direct to the public and some local restaurants. They primarily grow asparagus, alfalfa, field corn and sweet corn. They have four children that range in age from 5 to 11 years old. Keith and Laura were chosen as WFB's YF&R Achievement Award winners and went on to compete in the AFBF competition in Hawaii last month.

Congratulations on your achievement, Keith & Laura!



WFB YF&R Discussion Meet Winner: Jennifer Rathbun



Jennifer Rathbun, along with her husband Greg and three children Abby, Tell and Taggart own and operate an Angus seed stock and diversified farming operation in Moses Lake. She enjoys ranch life, skiing, traveling and watching her kids play sports. As the WFB YF&R Discussion Meet Winner, Jennifer received airfare, hotel and registration paid to attend the American Farm Bureau Federation convention in Honolulu, Hawaii January 8-11, 2012, where she represented WFB in the national contest. She also received \$250 from Washington Farm Bureau.

Congratulations on your achievement, Jennifer!



**Woman's Leadership Committee:
Vicki Malloy**

New Loan Program Available for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

Last month, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) introduced a new loan program -- The Land Contract Guarantee Program -- which benefits beginning farmers, minorities, and women by giving them a new tool to obtain farm real estate.

Purchasing farm land is one of the biggest obstacles facing beginning farmers and minority customers and this provides them with a new option, explained FSA Farm Loan Chief Melissa Cummins. The guarantee provides an incentive to sell to individuals in these groups as it reduces the financial risk to the seller due to buyer default on contract

payments. Under the new program, two options will be available: the first option guarantees up to three installments, while the second option provides a guarantee on the unpaid principal of the contract.

Guarantees can be used for financing the purchase of a farm with a purchase price up to \$500,000 on a new land contract. Unlike the current guarantee loans offered by FSA, this program will not have the 1.5 percent guarantee fee. However, the buyer and seller must provide for the services of either an escrow or servicing agent. The maximum interest rate may not exceed the FSA direct



farm ownership rate plus 3 percent. The buyer is required to pay a minimum down payment of 5 percent of the purchase price, plan to operate the farm, and be able to project the ability to make the land contract payments.

The beginning farmer land contract program initially was established in nine states through the 2002 farm bill. The 2008 farm bill expanded it nationwide and made it permanent. USDA's Farm Service Agency issued the final rule for the program last December.

Additional information, including a complete list of eligibility criteria and application materials, may be obtained through the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov or at local U.S. Department of Agriculture FSA offices.

in Action

Leadership Opportunities Abound for Young Farmers and Ranchers

The YF&R Leadership Conference and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Conference will be held Feb. 17-20 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This conference offers Farm Bureau's young farmers and ranchers an opportunity to increase their knowledge about leadership development skills, agricultural issues and network with other young farmers and ranchers. This year's

conference theme is *Your Voice. Our Future*. The conference will feature workshops and meetings specifically designed for beginning farmers and ranchers. However, those workshops will be open to all attendees.

As in recent years, a large contingency from Washington state will be attending this conference, including the WFB YF&R Collegiate Discussion Meet Winners.

WFB YF&R Collegiate Discussion Meet Winner: Michelle Earnst

Michelle Earnst is the 21-year-old daughter of Keith and Marisa Earnst of Mount Vernon, Washington. She is a junior at Washington State University majoring in Animal Science – Production Management. Michelle hopes to work in ranch management with cow-calf operations or possibly rodeo stock. At home, Michelle is a leader in the Valley Green Acres horse 4H club and works for Hedlin Family Farms in LaConner. As the winner of WFB's YF&R Collegiate Discussion Meet (held at the WFB Annual Meeting in November) Michelle receives her airfare, hotel and registration paid to attend the 2012 AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference. She was also awarded a Farm Bureau embroidered jacket.



WFB YF&R Collegiate Discussion Meet Winner: Brady Irwin

As the second place winner in the WFB YF&R Collegiate Discussion Meet, Brady Irwin will also compete in the national competition held at the 2012 national Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference. Brady was born and raised on a small cow calf operation in Enumclaw, Washington. He graduated with honors from Enumclaw High School in 2008. He is currently a senior at Washington State University, working on a BS in Ag Food Systems Business Economics. As the second place winner of WFB's Collegiate Discussion Meet Brady receives his airfare, hotel and registration paid to attend the 2012 national Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference. He was also awarded a Farm Bureau embroidered jacket.



Congratulations again to these Young Farmers and Ranchers. We wish you well in the competition!

If you are interested in competing in the YF&R Contests, or know someone who is, please contact Kristen Hinton, WFB YF&R program coordinator, at (360) 561-0387 or khinton@wsfb.com, for more information about the YF&R program.

What is Start2Farm?

The Start2Farm site and program are a project of the National Agricultural Library in partnership with the American Farm Bureau Federation. Start2Farm is funded through a USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), Beginning Farming and Ranching Development Program grant and was developed to assist people new to farming or ranching and those who have less than 10 years experience.

What is the purpose of Start2Farm?

Start2Farm has two primary directives. The first is to develop a Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse for new and beginning farmers. This clearinghouse database is available through Start2Farm.gov and features information and resources for training and assistance programs available throughout the country, including those produced through the NIFA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. The Start2Farm clearinghouse will serve as a one-stop reference for anyone looking for programs and resources to start farming and to be successful in their first years as a farmer or rancher.

The second is to organize a national Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Conference. The conference provides an opportunity for farmers to meet and learn from experts and to network with other farmers from around the country. The first Beginning Farmer and Rancher Conference was held in Orlando, Florida in conjunction with the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Conference.

What will I find on Start2Farm.gov?

Start2Farm includes programs and resources from federal and state agencies, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations including grassroots organizations.

Four types of services are available at Start2Farm:

- 1. Training** – includes programs and resources that teach any aspect of being a successful farmer or rancher.
- 2. Financing** – includes loan programs, development accounts, grants and other programs to help farmers and ranchers finance their enterprise. Please note: There are generally not any grants to start a farm or ranch and no new direct funding programs associated with the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program that the Start2Farm clearinghouse is a part of. Start2Farm is not a lender.
- 3. Technical Assistance** – includes identified programs in your location to assist with topics such as business planning, land transfer, licensing and regulations, alternative energy technologies, and farming techniques, among others.
- 4. Networking** – this includes information on programs and organizations that provide farmers and ranchers with opportunities to exchange ideas and find farmer-to-farmer support.
- 5. Visit Start2Farm.gov today** to see the resources available. And, be sure to bookmark the page and share it with others.



Harvest-Altering GPS and Wireless Apps: Can you Afford to Ignore the Future?

Will tomorrow's crop irrigation be precision-controlled by weather sensors, GPS and wireless technology? How can weather-related crop losses be reduced or prevented using such a system? The answers are beginning to emerge from several companies working to create intelligent irrigation management that automatically monitors and reports soil moisture, air temperature and wind conditions to the grower.

These new systems will be capable of controlling irrigation timing and quantity, and adjusting to changing weather. Also, variable flow devices utilizing electronic variable speed technology will save energy, minimize wear, prevent over-watering and most important... reduce costs. Additionally, the new systems will archive critical data, so prior incidents can be examined in case of a power or communication problem.

Central irrigation controls are nothing new, but with wireless connections relaying weather data from pinpoint sensor locations in the field; the home office can use real-time information to make profit-enhancing decisions. This "machine-to-machine" monitoring capability can be a vital contributor to a successful crop. The need for freeze protection, for example, is vital.

One universal characteristic of productive growers is that they are all aware of the potential for frost damage. For some crops it is desirable to have cold temperatures (e.g. cold nighttime temperatures enhance wine grape quality). The trick is to find locations that have a good mi-



Ken Gilger, National Account Manager for Verizon Wireless

croclimate for high-quality production without losing yield to damaging temperatures. If subzero temperatures are intermittent and infrequent, then using an active protection method to avoid damage during frost events – while enjoying the beneficial effects of cold temperatures – is a good economic strategy. However, to determine cost effectiveness, the cost of protection and potential losses must be balanced against enhanced revenues from a high quality product. (Natural Resources Management and Environment Department – “Frost Protection; Fundamentals, Practice, and Economics, Chapter 6)

The temperature variance in one orchard can be several degrees, potentially catastrophic. It can mean the difference between a high, profitable yield and disaster. Protection

may include fans to prevent inversion frost, and spraying water continuously to protect new plant shoots. In the past, a central control system was not practical throughout large parcels of land. But now, the cellular modem comes into play.

So what are the hard numbers in return on investment (ROI) for this technology? Consider that many cities predict a 30 percent reduction in future water supplies. Often, the biggest water user is keeping the grass green in their parks. A pro football franchise justified computerized central control by automating the lighting systems in the parking lot... directing fans toward the exits.

There are, of course, intangibles within the ROI calculation: the crop that was properly coated by water prior to a freeze and produced higher yields, or the field that was cooled by the evaporation of irrigation water that was turned on prior to a heat wave. By reducing the number of individual workers in the field, irrigation can be accomplished via cellular modem with endless pre-determinations for valve controls. There can be more than one temperature sensor or flow sensor per site, as well as power sensors, pump sensors: anything that requires a switch to turn on or off can be controlled wirelessly.

Internet-enabled devices work well in an urban setting, but typically barns and out buildings are not equipped with fiber optic technology. This is where the cellular modem enabling a machine-to-machine connection is the answer. Cellular

modems can be placed anywhere in an orchard or field where there is a signal and power. Generating a signal is not an issue because external high gain antennas can be placed virtually anywhere, and solar power is a viable option since cellular modems use little energy. Solid state devices are extremely energy-efficient so a controller with a small solar panel can easily handle the power requirements.

Machine to machine technology brings “big city” communication capabilities literally to the farm, with the sophistication of the irrigation control system now becoming an administrative tool. Large companies like Microsoft and Nike irrigate their campuses with a central control system. Both have switched to cellular modems and radio because their in-ground wiring was destroyed and too expensive to replace. Cellular modems are in use in many capacities: they authorize debit card payments, control traffic signals, tell the soda pop machine that supply is low, Red Box notifies customers via the internet if a desired movie becomes available. Even local restaurants use cell phone technology to send coupons and specials to patrons. But back to the original point, machine to machine technology has on-the-farm applications that can help you deliver more predictable crops.

To learn how wireless irrigation can be implemented in your business, contact Ken Dilger, National Account Manager for Verizon Wireless at ken.dilger@verizonwireless.com.

Pesticide Drift Emerges as Priority Issue

Once again bills addressing issues already covered by existing laws and regulations are before the Legislature. Second Substitute House Bill 2413 “Protecting workers and other community members from pesticide drift” is one such bill. Although not as bad as the original bill, 2SHB 2413 poses significant problems for growers. Farm Bureau is strongly opposed to this bill.

While earlier versions of the bill required no-spray buffer areas for pesticide application “near” houses, schools, child-care facilities, and people who are outdoors, newer versions of the bill remove these restrictions. Instead, the latest focus is on providing notification to adjacent property owners or lessees.

The main problem with the bill is the underlying presumption that we have an uncontrollable, system-

ic problem with pesticide application, when in fact the data shows we do not. Likewise, the proposed legislation implies that we do not have existing regulations and laws governing pesticide use and application. We do. A regulatory structure which includes oversight from three agencies (the Departments of Agriculture, Labor & Industries and Health) already exists.

Under the latest version, any person applying any pesticide on a farm by aircraft or air-blast sprayer must provide written notice to neighbors at least 24 hours in advance of the application, but no sooner than 48 hours. If the weather changes, the applicator must contact his neighbors and give them updated information about when the application will take place. The notice expires after five days.

The notice must be provided in person, if possible. If not, it can be posted on buildings nearby or possibly “by other means.” It must be translated if the recipient does not know English. It must include the date and time of the application, contact information for the owner and applicator, the names and ingredients of the pesticide, the poison control telephone number, label information related to drift, and the restricted-entry interval.

Employers who have employees within ¼ mile of the field to be sprayed must give copies of the notice to their employees in a language they can understand. And, employers must make sure that their employees stay ¼ mile away from the field while it is being sprayed. This essentially mandates a ¼ mile buffer from one person's land to another

and allows for one person to have control over the ag operations of his neighbors.

The administrative burden on growers to notify dozens of adjoining property owners is mind-boggling and required each time something may be applied. The burden on adjoining employers is also substantial and potentially costly. Since organic growers apply pesticides more often, they may be hardest hit.

This kind of legislation would harm agriculture and forestry -- the traditional foundation for our ailing rural economy. Please continue to tell your legislators that 2SHB 2413 goes too far.

Tracking Retail Food Prices

Retail food prices at the supermarket declined slightly during the fourth quarter of 2011, according to the latest American Farm Bureau Federation Marketbasket Survey issued January 4, 2012.

The informal survey shows the total cost of 16 food items that can be used to prepare one or more meals was \$49.23, down \$3.89 or about 7 percent compared to the third quarter of 2011. Of the 16 items surveyed, 14 decreased and two increased in average price compared to the prior quarter. The overall basket of foods was up about 5 percent compared to one year ago.

"Since about the last quarter of 2010, we have seen consistently higher prices quarter-to-quarter on a broad range of marketbasket items," said AFBF Senior Economist John Anderson. "With this survey, that trend appears to have reversed. While the marketbasket price was still higher year-over-year, the pull-back from recent highs on most of the items in the basket suggests that food price inflation is slowing down substantially."

Meat and dairy products accounted for about half of the quarter-to-quarter retail price decrease. Sliced deli ham decreased 74 cents to \$4.69 per pound, shredded cheddar decreased 38 cents to \$4.32 per pound, bacon decreased 36 cents to \$4.05 per pound, sirloin tip roast dropped 13 cents to \$4.15 per pound, ground chuck dropped 10 cents to \$3.17 per pound, boneless chicken breasts decreased 9 cents to \$3.24 per pound and eggs dropped 6 cents to \$1.72 for one dozen.

Other items that decreased in price compared to the third quarter were Russet potatoes, down 68 cents to \$2.75 for a 5-pound bag; Red Delicious apples, down 43 cents to \$1.40 per pound; flour, down 34 cents to \$2.38 for a 5-pound bag; vegetable oil, down 25 cents to \$2.96 for a 32-ounce bottle; bagged salad, down 25 cents to \$2.48 for a 1-pound bag; orange juice, down 11 cents to \$3.17 for a half-gallon; and toasted oat cereal, down 10 cents to \$3.07 for a 9-ounce box.

Items that increased in price compared to the third quarter were: whole milk, up 10 cents to \$3.76 per gallon; and bread, up 4 cents to \$1.92 for a 20-ounce loaf.

"With consumer confidence still a little shaky closing out the year, it appears that retailers are holding the line on food prices as much as possible," Anderson explained. "Stabilizing energy prices this past quarter also may have helped take some of the pressure off of processor and retailer margins."

Several items showing a decrease in retail price from quarter-to-quarter also showed year-to-year decreases. Compared to one year ago, bagged salad decreased 8 percent; bacon decreased 6 percent, and sliced deli ham and apples each declined 3 percent.

The year-to-year direction of the Marketbasket Survey tracks with the federal government's Consumer Price Index (<http://www.bls.gov/cpi/>) report for food at home. As retail grocery prices have increased gradually over time, the share of the average food dollar that America's farm and ranch families receive has dropped.

"In the mid-1970s, farmers received about one-third of consumer retail food expenditures for food eaten at home and away from home, on average. Since then, that figure has decreased steadily and is now about 16 percent, according to the Agriculture Department's revised Food Dollar Series," Anderson said. USDA's new Food Dollar

Series may be found online at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FoodDollar/app/>.

Using the "food at home and away from home" percentage across-the-board, the farmer's share of this quarter's \$49.23 marketbasket would be \$7.88.

AFBF, the nation's largest general farm organization, has been conducting the informal quarterly Marketbasket Survey of retail food price trends since 1989. The mix of foods in the marketbasket was updated during the first quarter of 2008.

According to USDA, Americans spend just under 10 percent of their disposable annual income on food, the lowest average of any country in the world. A total of 53 shoppers in 18 states participated in the latest survey, conducted at the end of October/early November.



Tracking Milk and Egg Trends



For the fourth quarter of 2011, shoppers reported the average price for a half-gallon of regular whole milk was \$2.37, down 9 cents from the prior quarter. The average price for one gallon of regular whole milk was \$3.76, up 10 cents. Comparing per-quart prices, the retail price for whole milk sold in gallon containers was about 25 percent lower compared to half-gallon containers, a typical volume discount long employed by retailers.

The average price for a half-gallon of rBST-free milk was \$3.34, down 6 cents from the last quarter, about 40 percent higher than the reported retail price for a half-gallon of regular milk (\$2.37).

The average price for a half-gallon of organic milk was \$3.91, up 20 cents compared to the prior quarter, about 51 percent higher than the reported retail price for a half-gallon of regular milk (\$2.37).

Compared to a year ago (fourth quarter of 2010), the retail price for regular milk in gallon containers was up about 11 percent, while regular milk in half-gallon containers rose 19 percent. The average retail price for rBST-free milk increased 12 percent compared to the prior year, while organic milk was up 9 percent.

For the fourth quarter of 2011, the average price for one dozen regular eggs was \$1.72, down 6 cents compared to the prior quarter. The average price for a dozen "cage-free" eggs was \$2.97, down 13 cents compared to the prior quarter but 75 percent higher than regular eggs. Compared to a year ago (fourth quarter of 2010), regular eggs increased 8 percent while "cage-free" eggs decreased 2 percent.

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Thank You for a Happy Holiday Season

The resolution below, recognizing the contributions of our nursery and greenhouse members, was brought forth by Ms. Wisten Aldrich and adopted during the 2011 Annual Meeting of the Washington Farm Bureau in November.

Be it resolved that...

Whereas the holiday is vast upon us as it is a season and holiday of greens. Whereas trees decorate our homes as they are a symbol of our faith.

Whereas they provide jobs and energy let be it resolved that the 2011 WFB Delegation expressed their appreciation for the greens growers and a successful harvest season.

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