As most of you were aware Farm Aid 2019 events were held in and near East Troy Wisconsin Sept 19-21st. As plans came together for AAM’s Youth Ag Project, I believe all of us were getting slightly excited! The project reached out to just over a handful of FFA Chapters, a couple 4H districts and a couple random counties in Kansas and Texas that had reached out to AAM inquiring about the trip. Applicants worked through a simple 3-page document of demographic, short essay questions and references. Selected were two amazing students. Della Hettenbach of the Jolly JayHawkers 4-H club of Dickinson County Ks and Derek Scharmann of the Poteet FFA Chapter of South Texas. These two did a remarkable job of representing their organizations on a National level. In the spotlight and under question they made AAM, Farm Aid and their organizations proud! This was a program directed by AAM with the help of a Farm Aid grant with the purpose of further educating our youth on Ag policies, current state of affairs across our nation, and most importantly to form lifetime connections. As a first time Farm Aid goer myself, even I was taken by how impactful the trip was; and our students were in awe of issues going on in other areas that they were not aware of. Farm Aid builds power in not only family farmers but all people through educating, charities and resources for marketing, financing and suicide prevention to name a few. The power in their Pre-Farm Aid business meetings was so informing and enlightening that you walked away with a clear voice to advocate and a clear plan on how to do it. Della, Derek and I presided at our own round tables with anywhere from 6-8 people. There were 20 tables total with representatives of family farms or farm advocates from across not only the US but US Territories as well. And even though there were differences in backgrounds and demographics, and even though we could empathize but not identify at times it was still a clear consensus at the end of the day that change is needed. Family farms, family fisherman and Native peoples of the Nation need protected. What do these people have in common? The core value to be a steward of the land, to be sustainable, have food sovereignty and to regenerate our deteriorating land, water and air. It was interesting to learn more about America’s situations from shrinking Native lands, to big Fish Farms causing harm in Alaska’s home waters, pipe lines having minimal accountability to the slow long term damaging effects of their presence, to my favorite; U.S. corporate Ag companies swallowing whole family farms in not only ours but outlying countries. This was my big eye opener, A Wisconsin Dairy Farmer who a year and a half ago almost lost his farm. He became involved with Dairy Together and has now developed an advocate’s voice. "How can we be mad at Mexico citizens for wanting to leave their country when it’s our corporate America putting their family farms out of business", was one statement he made. As well our beef industry continues to suffer from issues like lack of Country of Origin Labeling on meats which was removed from policy in 2015 due to corporate pressure (large scale meat packers). So much of our failed Ag policy has a trickle effect that can be seen amongst immigration issues, education issues and so on. If attending the business meetings by Farm Aid were not enough to inspire, then attendees were able to tour some 12 farms across Wisconsin. Of course, it was impossible to attend them all, we did our best to choose! We visited with and seen firsthand what WI family farms are dealing with. The diversity was overwhelming at times; collaboration wasn’t hard and many of us were biting at the bit to mingle and participate in on going panels. We met hemp, beef, diversified crop, dairy, urban vegetable growers, and fisherman farmers. There were many farm advocate organizations like AAM, state Farmers Unions, Dairy Together, and Nat’l Family Farm Coalition to name a few. And this year Farm Aid was excited to announce health advocate, American Psychological Association, had reached out and wanted to become involved with family farmers. There were legal organizations and lawyers present as well. It was very much a mixed array of people all determined to connect the dots in going “Forward From Here”. To end out a very serious and compelling two-day pre event agenda, was the Farm Aid Concert itself. Held at the spectacularly beautiful Alpine Valley Music Theatre in East Troy WI. It had to be well over 20 acres filled with homegrown vendors, educational tents filled with booths, displays and of course the band stage itself was impressive. The concert entertained

continued on page 2
This Spring and Summer have been different! First, difficulty getting crops in, and then either too much or too little rain. Here in Michigan, some places got .5 inches and some got 2 inches. Was that way all summer. Enough rain altogether to make a crop, but nothing great. Harvest will tell. Corn is drying back and beans are starting to lose leaves. Be interesting to see what Mother Nature has in store for harvest. Hasn’t been the best year here, but we are better off than some parts of the country.

We have had a lot of fun at The Pond this summer. Lots of camping and great food. And I didn’t have to cook! We enjoyed a visit from David, Joan, and Colten on their way home from Farm Aid. We had a wonderful time visiting. Good to see them.

Christine Miller

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David: I read the story in the AAM Reporter about Mona Lee Brock’s passing. There should be a monument to Mona representing her unbelievable commitment to saving and assisting farmers as well as the fighting spirit and the bond of the people of that era. Maybe the farm didn’t survive, but the people sure as hell did. I will leave it up to folks more in touch than I what that monument should be, but I would be happy to donate $500, and challenge others to do the same. God bless Mona and her family.

Jim Zeeb, Greenville, IL

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

MICHIGAN NEWS

This Spring and Summer have been different! First, difficulty getting crops in, and then either too much or too little rain. Here in Michigan, some places got .5 inches and some got 2 inches. Was that way all summer. Enough rain altogether to make a crop, but nothing great. Harvest will tell. Corn is drying back and beans are starting to lose leaves. Be interesting to see what Mother Nature has in store for harvest. Hasn’t been the best year here, but we are better off than some parts of the country.

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Christine Miller

Tractorcade to Farm Aid 2019
David and Colten Senter
L-R: 4-H Member Della Hettenbach, FFA Member Derek Schamann, and Crystal Carson

Keith Goldman and David Senter talk about old times.

AAM Flag displayed at Farm Aid's panel discussion on Tractorcades

Crystal Carson, AAM Executive Vice President

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR
Illinois, Governor Pritzker, Taxes, Capone, & Marijuana
(Or Business as Usual in the Prairie State)

I love my family and my farm, and my home here in Bond County located in Southwest Illinois. I like the seasons with hot, humid summers, excellent for growing corn, breaking into cool nights of Autumn, early morning fog, followed by warm, dry days ideal for harvest activity. We are only 40 minutes from a major metropolitan area, and I am 7 minutes from a small town of 7000 souls. We're not perfect here, but we're not done yet, either. Predominant crops are corn and soybeans with some soft red winter wheat still being grown. We are fortunate to have thriving entrepreneurs among us who through hard work and vision have thriving, vertically integrated dairies marketing artisan cheese, ice cream, flavored milk, and we also are called home by several successful wineries vinting an interesting array of wines and offering very trendy restaurant facilities complementing their wine making. It’s beautiful here, and I have been proud to be one small spoke in the wheel of this significant agricultural community for decades.

Yet I am contemplating leaving Illinois because I cannot afford the taxes being heaped on residents. Increased gas tax doubling to 38 cents per gallon, increased taxes on tobacco amounting to $1 per pack on cigarettes, increased license fees for passenger vehicles up $50 per vehicle, a new 6% tax on daily and hourly parking and a 9% tax on monthly parking in a parking garage, a new tax on electric vehicles of $248 annually up from $35 every two years, property taxes up 400% on farm land in seven years with more increases scheduled, increased Illinois income tax on farms and businesses, and estate tax decoupled from the federal formula with only a $3 million exemption on an estate which amounts to a credit only for a small line of equipment and a 250 acre farm. Our state has legalized marijuana which is forecast to produce a billion dollars in new tax revenue, yet all this may not be enough to fix our deficits and repair our crumbling infrastructure.

Illinoisans work hard and make good money and you wonder where the tax revenues go. It is probably no coincidence that four out of Illinois’ last seven governors have gone to jail. One might say that although our infrastructure is crumbling, businesses are leaving the state in droves, our schools need help, yet nevertheless, we have the best politicians money can buy. After all, you think Al Capone lived in Chicago because he liked the wind off Lake Michigan?

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S/W Kansas Report

A lot of western Kansas has received above normal rainfall as compared to past years. In the Southwest, wheat planting has started and some dry-land corn is being picked. No doubt high moisture corn harvest is only days away. Dry-land corn which was mostly unheard of a few years ago is now becoming very popular while the staple of wheat and milo dry-land farming is steadily disappearing thanks to new and more drouth tolerant varieties becoming more adaptable and popular. Yes, changes to cropping practices are visible and evident as more corn acres appear to be replaced by soybeans and even cotton. Even milo under irrigation has been seeing a little comeback it seems. In addition, silage crops and corn acres under irrigation are being green chopped and taken to area feed lots. No doubt the reason for many of these changes to crop rotation is lower water tables, higher input costs and market prices.

Yes, we can raise about anything out here providing we have the moisture. This year has been one of the few I remember when we still had green across the countryside in late August. Yep we are still mowing the farmstead and here it is nearly the middle of September. A lot of those rains were confined to sometimes small areas as it seemed to rain here one day and the next in another area. BUT when it was all said and done most everyone received some beneficial moisture which allowed irrigation systems to be shut down for a few days each month, which is unusual for this part of the southwest, especially in July and August.

Many acres of CRP is being swathed and baled this year. Over a bale to the acre is not uncommon and in some cases nearly two BPA have been reported. Now some may laugh about that yield, but out here in the wild west in some years there has not been enough straw to keep the wildlife hidden. SO, yes it has been a good crop production year for many in this little old S/W corner of Kansas. Lets just hope it stay’s that way from here forth.

Hope to see y’all in Lubbock come January.

Jim Rice

Illinois -continued from page 3

I dropped out of college, despite having an academic scholarship in 1969. I had a passion to farm and felt college could wait, and I immediately stretched a bunch of woven wire and started raising hogs. By the Grace of God, I was a very good young hog producer, and made some money. Things being what they were in “The Summer of Love,” 1969, a friend stopped by one night with a little pack of marijuana. I had gotten married and my wife and I had a place of our own. Despite warnings from my young wife, my friend and I rolled up the marijuana and smoked it. Holy smokes, indeed! Unlike Bill Clinton, we inhaled. For what seemed like hours, everything my buddy and I said was incredibly funny, and we could just not stop laughing. Well, we both thought that episode a little undesirable, as did my lovely wife, who pointed out we were sure to be condemned by family and neighbors so we never spoke of it, nor smoked it again. However, after that experience so many years ago, I think I understand why Illinois legalized marijuana at the same time of all these new tax increases. No doubt Governor Pritzker and the Illinois legislators are hoping we all inhale…..deeply! God Bless the Prairie State, Jim Zeeb, Greenville, IL

Nathaniel Rateliff with Della and Derek

Bruce and Christine Miller along with David Senter

David Senter, Della Hettenbach, Derek Scharmann and Crystal Carson in front of the stage just before Farm Aid 2019 Kickoff.
I have enjoyed being the AAM recording secretary this year, I have had the opportunity to be reacquainted and meet a few AAM members for the first time. I have been going through the database of newsletter recipients and members and would like to get everything updated. Please take a minute to update your information, as many do not have an email address or phone number; Businesses, radio stations, newspapers, please provide the appropriate contact person or department. The updated information can be emailed to me at AAM.sect19@gmail.com or mailed to Jacqueline Reed, 8501 County Road 22, Wheeler, TX 79096.

AAM provided some good memories for me as a young girl. My dad drove a tractor to DC, so I was able to be in DC two or three times. I remember going to Nashville, TN to the national convention in the early 80’s, there were hundreds, if not thousands of people in attendance. The AAM convention is coming up in January in Lubbock, Texas. I’d like to personally invite you to attend. Friday, we have a field day, past years have been very enjoyable and educational ending with a chuck wagon dinner. Saturday starts with the business meetings, followed by a fun fill auction of AAM memorabilia, and other items donated.

We are always looking for a good story. The Southwest Collection Archive within the Special Collections Library at Texas Tech University has and is digitizing the history of AAM. There is a lot of information already uploaded onto the site, we are hoping to have a time slot designated at the convention for anyone that want to have their stories recorded will have that opportunity. If you are not able to attend or prefer, please write or have someone write your story down and send it to any of us. We will be glad to pass it along to the appropriate person. The web address is: https://southwestcollection.wordpress.com/tag/american-agriculture-movement/

Another good resource for AAM history is the Bayer Museum of Agriculture, AAM Heritage Exhibit. https://agriculturehistory.org/exhibits-and-map/alton-brazell-exhibit-hall/, this link is a tease of the information provided in this exhibit. This is well worth a trip to Lubbock, Texas. For a more enjoyable experience, come see the exhibit with AAM friends. Plan your trip now to attend the AAM Convention which will include a visit to the Bayer Museum of Agriculture January 10th & 11th, 2020. Convention and rooms will be at the MGM Elegente in Lubbock, TX.
I want to welcome AAM's new members as we work together to change agriculture policies to benefit family farmers. As I traveled across the country, Joan and I had a chance to meet many new people and see friends that we haven't seen in a long time. August 1st, Joan and I drove across country from Maryland to Kansas and Nebraska. In every state there were fields not planted, soybeans from 3 inches high up to knee high. Some corn fields were not tasseled while others had a few tassels and some fully tasseled. Later in August we traveled to Indiana where we found fields not planted due to excessive rain, Kentucky late planted crops and some fields not planted, Tennessee we saw some good crops but some appeared late planted, Alabama the further south we went the drought conditions worsen and Florida's, Panhandle is in a terrible drought with lost and damaged crops. The farmers in southern Alabama, Georgia and the Florida Panhandle lost most all their crops last year to Hurricane Michael and now are suffering a drought which has spread to all the southeastern states. In August, AAM held a meeting in Manhattan, Kansas, I want to thank Crystal Carson, AAM's Executive Vice President for setting up the meeting. AAM also held a meeting in Greenwood, Florida where we had a great turnout and signed up several new AAM Members. I want to thank Zeke Williams and Tom Curl for setting up the meeting.

September 21st Farm Aid was held at Alpine Valley in East Troy, Wisconsin. This was the 34th year for Farm Aid and AAM has participated in all of them. I along with several, AAM officers and members, attended the 3-day event. The meetings were very good and allowed AAM to put forward our messages and network with other coalition groups. I was honored to be asked by Farm Aid to present the Spirit of Farm Aid award for Mona Lee Brock to her family. Mona Lee's son Ronnie and his family were on hand to accept the award.

I am very proud that through AAM's Youth Project, Della Hettenbach of the Jayhawkers 4-H Club in North Central Kansas and Derek Scharmann of the Poteet, Texas FFA were selected to represent their organizations at Farm Aid. I want to thank Crystal Carson, for designing the project and accompanying Della and Derek. I know you will be impressed by Della and Derek who will be attending AAM annual meeting in January and will have a firsthand report of their trip. Also, while at Farm Aid, I received an invitation to drive a tractor to Farm Aid along with Wisconsin farmers. I have to say, I loved it, this is the first Tractorcade I've participated in for 14 years, where I drove a tractor during Farm Aid's 20th anniversary in Chicago. My grandson Colten and I took the original AAM Flag that flew on the lead tractor into Washington, DC in 1979 and had it flying proudly from our tractor. As I told the farmers and press, I drove this tractor for all the farmers that have lost to suicide, I drove this tractor for all the farmers who have been forced out of business, I drove this tractor for all the family farmers struggling to hang on to their farms, I drove this tractor for all the young people that want a future in agriculture. You are not alone, AAM and other organizations will continue the fight as we work to change agriculture policies.

Family farmers are struggling to deal with a Trade War, low prices, unnecessary Waivers to Big Oil and weather extremes. Estimates are that up to 20 million acres were not planted due to floods and excess rain, millions more acres were planted late while in the Southeast, producers have been dealing with extreme drought. As one farmer told me, even if I make a crop, my net worth will be less next year than it is today. Farmers spoke out at meetings and repeatedly said that they did not want more government checks, what they need is competitive markets and a fair price for their production, that said, farmers say they need the Trade Adjustment Payments to help cover the cost of production so they can stay in business. Talk is cheap, on trade it seems for over a year news stories have been saying we almost have a deal which to me means they are just buying time, come on, for many there will not be a next year. Well time's up, some of the markets that took years to develop will never come back because other producers in the world have increased production and have taken those markets. USDA should have used the $26 Billion to raise Loan Rates which would have raised the price floor for commodities so producers would have a fairer price from the marketplace not taxpayers. The US should not allow any agriculture product into the US at less that the cost of production which would stop the dumping of world surpluses here. All agriculture imports should be labeled as to the Country of Origin. Consumers have the right to know where their food comes from.

When you look at the world and how they treat family farmers there is a huge difference. Where people have been hungry and starved, they value their farmers and in countries where there's abundance they take food producers for granted. For instance, a candidate for the EU agriculture commissioner says his key goal is to support small and family farms unlike USDA Secretary Perdue who recently said, “In America the big get bigger and the small go out of business”. That reminds me of a conversation Keith Goldman, and I had during our recent visit about a meeting with Bill Lesher who at the time was Chief Economist at USDA during President Reagans term. Bill told Keith that they expected 350,000 family farmers to go out of business when the price floor was removed from commodities, but not to worry, that would be good, and these farmers will get other better jobs. Policy by design, no thought about local towns and lost businesses, the impact on schools, churches and the local tax base. They miscalculated, losses grew, and it took Congress with emergency legislation to stabilize Rural America. Following passage of the 1985 Farm Bill which removed the Non-Recourse Loan and...
Recently President Trump announced a second round of trade mitigation payments bringing the 2-year total to $28 billion. In response to that announcement we have been asked, “Could we have spent that money better with a different farm program?”

Before we answer that question, let’s look at the general situation in agriculture since 2012 and crop agriculture followed by an examination of soybean prices and exports which are subject to retaliatory tariffs by China.

Net farm income hit a peak in calendar 2013 as the result of a drought that resulted in a yield-shortened 2012 corn crop. In 2013 net farm income was $123.7 billion which included $11.0 billion in direct government payments. By 2016, farm income had fallen to $62.0 billion, including $13.0 billion in direct government payments.

In 2017 net farm income rose to $77.7 billion and $84.0 billion in 2018 with government payments of $11.5 billion and $13.7 billion respectively. The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) August 30, 2019 forecast for 2019 net farm income is $88.0 billion which includes $19.5 billion in direct government payments. The increase in government payments is $1.8 billion more than the increase in net farm income.

In the USDA’s spreadsheet on US farm sector income, it is not clear where or if the trade mitigation payments have been included for 2018 and 2019. The income numbers do not include federal crop insurance subsidies.

In part, soybean prices have suffered from the same decline in prices as other crops reflected in the decline in net farm income since 2012. Between 2012 and 2017, the season average corn price declined by 48.8 percent while the decline in the price of soybeans was 64.8 percent. This differential is attributable to the stabilization in the amount of corn needed for ethanol production while soybean exports increased by 60.7 percent.

Based on the USDA 2019 forecast, soybean prices will be 59.0 percent of their 2012 level and corn shows a modest increase to 52.3 percent. While soybeans have been subject to the general price malaise experienced by other crops, much of the decline over the last 2 years can be attributed to the trade dispute.

Did this price decline have to happen? No number 1. If the President had been more judicious in his handling of outstanding trade issues with China, US soybean exports to China likely would have continued to increase. As it now stands, there is a distinct probability that the US may never regain the level of China’s soybean imports that it enjoyed in recent years. As we have seen with other policy-based trade disruptions, once alternate agricultural trading relationships have been established, they are not likely to change very quickly.

No number 2. If Congress had implemented a supply management program as the core of the 2018 Farm Bill, crop prices in general would be higher than they are today. In addition, a disruption in soybean exports to China would have resulted in some soybeans being forfeited to the CCC and isolated from the market sustaining soybean prices.

In addition, the price of this program would have cost the taxpayers significantly less. Over the four-year period of the 2018 Farm Bill the proposed supply management program of the Agricultural Policy Analysis Center and the Texas Farmers Union was projected to cost $25.6 billion and probably a little more because the modeling completed in 2017 did not include a trade dispute with China.

For 2018 and the 2019 USDA forecast, the 2-year direct government payments are slated to cost $33.1 billion while the trade payments are projected to be $28 billion for a total of $61.1 billion.

Even with $61.1 billion in government expenditures in addition to crop insurance subsidies, most farmers are not recovering the full cost for the crops they are producing while some are having to file for bankruptcy.

Although some want to tar supply management programs as the failed programs of the past, it can be argued they are certainly more cost effective than the current palette of programs.  

by Harwood Schaffer, University of Tennessee

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AAM President’s Report
Continued from page 6

replaced it with the Marketing Loan, Richard Lyng, Secretary of Agriculture between 1986 and 1989 told Corky Jones and me in his office, the agriculture policy was designed to provide an abundant supply of food for the cheapest price possible regardless of where it was produced in the world. This conversation was about Japan maintaining a Parity price for meat and rice for their family farmers. Corky Jones was with me as he was the AAM President, Corky said, maybe we need a Secretary of Agriculture from Japan, as you can guess the meeting was over.
2020 AAM Pre-Registration Form
January 10 – 12
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Membership Application

Name: __________________________

Street Address: __________________________

City: __________________________ State: ______ Zip: _______+_____

Email: __________________________

Number of Memberships @ $100 _______ Total $ _______

(AAM stands for food producer and commodity PARITY. Parity is a term that denotes a fair commodity price adjusted for inflation to the commodity prices brought in 1910-1914 when producer-middlemen-consumer had a balanced income. Today, 15 commodities average less than 50 percent of PARITY. Meanwhile costs of trucks, implements, tractors, fuel, fertilizer and help rose many times. AAM still demands a parity price increase for commodities.)