AAM’s President’s Report

I want to welcome new members to AAM, and we want you to know how much we value your ideas and help as we continue to fight for family farmers and ranchers. I recently attended AAM meetings in Greenwood, Florida and Headland, Alabama where I had a chance to meet new people and renew old friendships. I heard, firsthand, about the issue’s farmers are facing in the Southeast. From losing all their crops 6 months ago to Hurricane Michael and now facing a deepening drought, these farmers have not received any help to recover and rebuild buildings, homes and clear debris. I want to thank Tom Curl, former AAM President of Illinois and Zeke Williams for organizing the Greenwood, Florida meeting, Zeke is the grandson of Fred Williams, past Florida AAM President. I also want to thank Ronnie Davis who set up a great meeting in Headland, Alabama. It was clear that everyone attending understood that farmers need to stand together and speak up and hold policy makers accountable for their actions and the failed agriculture policies we have.

Finally, this week, the House passed the Disaster Bill that will provide help to these farmers as well as to the flood victims across the country. The weather disaster continues to expand with flooding from the Dakota’s to Oklahoma, Arkansas and across the corn belt. Thousands of farmers are now faced with filing for non-planting because their fields are covered with flood waters. When the water recedes, many do not know what they will find such as debris, sand and how much topsoil was washed away. Those that still are trying to plant face the crop insurance planting deadline’s where each day your insurance coverage is reduced by 1%.

The Trade War continues, and the long-term impacts on markets are unknown. Producers are collateral damage in this effort with the loss of markets and lower prices. USDA is once again working to carry out another Trade Assistance program to try to help offset the damage to producers from the expanding Trade War. While farmers will take the help because they need it, most do not want a check, they want a market and a fair price for their production. AAM has urged USDA to raise Loan Rates to the cost of production and reestablish the Farmer Owned Reserve. At the APAC, my friends Harwood Schaffer and Daryll Ray in their Policy Pennings Column 978 says “As long as our farm programs rely on payments, we will have creative accountants and lawyers who will find the best ways to restructure an operation to maximize income which includes government payments.

But that assumes that payments are the only way to write agricultural policy. A supply management program with a loan rate at 95 percent of the cost of production for corn and at the historic ratio to corn for other crops would eliminate that problem because government payments would no longer be the organizing principle of commodity programs. The money that farmers receive would come from the marketplace. Any surplus crops that are forfeited to the Commodity Credit Corporation in payment of the 9-month marketing loans would most likely come from areas with lower crop prices and higher basis costs and will affect only a small slice of all crop farmers.

And when the time comes to institute an acreage reduction program to balance out supply and demand, a bid process can be instituted where the bids are based on the environmental benefits the farmer will provide on that land. Thus, the payments are paid for services rendered to society in the form of making improvements to the environment.

At that point the criteria are air, land, and water focused and who can provide the greatest benefits environmentally, so society gets the best bang for the buck.

These programs are also less expensive than current programs because we are not making payments on every bushel, bale, and hundredweight of production. With supply management we only pay for the production that is isolated from the market and the storage costs for that production, and in the end most of those costs are recouped when the commodity is sold during a short-production year. In terms of environmental benefits and food security, society gets something for the money it pays.

Until we move away from payment-based farm programs, we will always have the problem that a few get the bulk of the payments.” I think they are right on with their analysis.

I want to express thanks to EPA for finally approving year-round use of E-15 fuel. We need to be using all the surplus grain we can to produce renewable fuels and biodiesel. We have bio-diesel plants closed, that should be running full time where the production could be used by the military and US government.

Agribusiness consolidation is continuing with the combination of Dow and Dupont. The new company, Corteva now joins Bayer-Monsanto and Syngenta-ChemChina to provide seed and chemicals to farmers. These three companies now have a stranglehold on farmers because there is less and less competition in the

All fam photo: L-R: Donna Riffel, Gavin Carson, Ryan Riffel, Gus Carson, Mike Carson, Irie Carson, Lawson Carson, Joey Carson, Crystal Carson

continued on page 4
KANSAS NEWS

A wet spring in southwest Kansas and the further east you go the wetter it gets. Took a little trip to Wichita May 28th. Along that 200 miles, I did not see one tractor running, but there were lots of places one could have used a canoe.

Coming back three days later we were nearly home before we noticed any action in the fields and that was only about three fields. Sprinklers ran only a few days this spring on some irrigated wheat and along came more rain and they have been off ever since. There is a good wheat crop as we approach harvest. Dryland looks like irrigated. Some fields have some pretty bad lodging due to recent heavy rains. I have heard reports of lodged wheat being swathed and baled for hay. I did see one circle that was cut for hay on our way to Garden City today. Not sure if it was green chopped or bailed but have noticed the silage trucks are very busy. Harvest will be late as some usually start cutting around the 10th-15th of June. Not this year however as wheat is still pretty green in most fields while just a few have started to turn a bit gold. Corn that has been planted and is up, but it is yellow and would like a few days of sunshine. Not sure how many were finished planting but I am guessing certainly not everyone when the rains came and continued for days on end. Looking at the weather map, rain is predicted for almost every day this week, will it happen, I don’t know but it sure is thundering and lightning like crazy as I write this little article. Well, all that thunder and lightning just turned to rain!!! Don’t take much to have standing water these days. Yikes, I think I better go find my canoe!!!

Jim Rice Kansas

MICHIGAN NEWS

Planting in Michigan is way behind. Although we haven’t had bad storms or floods like some states, Michigan had 5 days in May without rain.

Bruce talked to our renter who farms about 6000 acres. He said he planted all night June 1 til it hailed; and if it had been May, he would not have planted because it was still plenty wet.

He said the Farm Program about makes farmers plant beans because preventative planting payment is not enough. Cut-off date is June 5 for planting corn. He is going to keep planting until the 10th. He will not get some corn planted. The farm Bruce grew up on probably will not get planted.

He thinks ½ of corn in Michigan will be preventative planting.

Bruce is glad to be retired!

Shannon Stemaly, our youngest grandchild graduated from Homer High School on June 1. She is class Salutatorian, President of the Homer FFA, and the Calhoun County 4-H Poultry Club. She is off to Michigan State this fall to study environmental biology/zoology. We are very proud of her.

Christine Miller

UPDATE

Springtime is surely flying by and with all the extreme weather it feels like we are delayed in our farm tasks already. However slow progress on the farm may be, its apparent that the American Agriculture Movement Inc., and its members, are doing their research, creating a voice for farmers and remaining active and progressive. I was recently tasked with aiding in developing an Ag youth project. Our goal in developing projects is to educate, recognize and reward our youth. We are currently under consideration for a Farmer Leadership Fund Grant through Farm Aid! This grant would cover the costs for AAM to chaperone 2 youth this fall to attend the 34th Farm Aid event. These youth will go through a selection process and at this time will more than likely come from SW Texas and NC Kansas as members of the FFA organization. They will report their experiences of Farm Aid speakers, business meetings, local farm tours, the marketplace and the concert via social media! They will also prepare presentations over their experiences that will in turn be heard at their respective organization as well as at the 2020 AAM convention. I have had the pleasure of multiple correspondences with Alicia Harvie, Farm Aid's Advocacy & Farmer Services Director, concerning the application process and we have high hopes. This is the link for last year's Farm Aid Agenda with a listing of speakers. https://www.farmaid.org/festival/farm-aid-2018-events/I am certain the 2019 event will, no doubt, be an amazing experience. We are also working on developing lesson plans that can be shared with organizations like FFA and 4-H that include AAM history, contacts and resources as well as lesson plans over dissecting the farm bill, lobbying and a few other plans that will educate and help youth advocate their industry. Not only will this provide additional historical information in a readily usable form to our educators but also open the door for additional communications and memberships. Look out for future newsletter updates on this project and prayers we all stay dry, cool and safe out there! On a side note I would like to take a minute to share a little about who I am and just where I came from. I am the wife of a Dairyman's son who farms and works full time as an electrical service person, the mom of 5 ornery kids, and the daughter of a 4th gen. farmer who also owns his own propane company. I taught Agriculture Education and was an FFA advisor for 4 years and I virtually never left 4-H; I am a county and club continued on page 4
Mona Lee Brock, Farmers’ ‘Angel’ on the Line, Dies at 87

Mona Lee Brock in 2004. She knew farming and knew what it was like to lose a farm, and used that empathy to counsel numerous desperate farmers facing foreclosure.
Credit Paul Natkin/WireImage
By Katharine Q. Seelye  New York Times
April 4, 2019

Mona Lee Brock had farming in her bones. “Farming you don’t learn from books,” she once said. “It’s not taught to you by a professor in a college. It’s taught by sitting in your father’s lap on a tractor. Or between your mother and father in a field. It’s from birth up, and it’s a part of you.”

And so when the farm crisis of the 1980s swept across the nation’s fields and plains, when bankruptcies and foreclosures soared and crop prices fell, and when many farmers, who saw no way out, took their own lives, Mrs. Brock was moved to act. She assigned herself the job of ad hoc emergency counselor to farmers. As someone who had grown up on farms and had lost her own family farm, she was sympathetic to their plight. She took thousands of calls around the clock, talking despondent farmers down from the ledge and devising strategies to try to save their farms.

Sometimes, while she tried to coax a farmer into staying alive for his family’s sake, she would hear the cylinder of a revolver turning, or shells being slipped into a shotgun. Sometimes she heard a gunshot. Rushing to the scene, she was often the first to find the body.

But she also talked many into not giving up, averting perhaps hundreds of suicides.

Word of her work spread, and it coincided with the beginning of Farm Aid, in 1985, the first year of the annual concerts that continue to raise money for farmers. Willie Nelson, the country singer and driving force behind Farm Aid, called Mrs. Brock “the angel on the other end of the line.”

Mrs. Brock died at 87 on March 19 at her home in Durant, Okla. Her son, Ron Brock, said she had had congestive heart failure.

Mona Lee Bruster was born on Jan. 1, 1932, to Floyd and Ada Bell (Robinson) Bruster on their wheat and bean farm in Madill, Okla., not far from the Texas border. According to family lore, one ancestor was a passenger on the Mayflower, whose descendants eventually settled in Oklahoma when it was still Indian Territory.

Mona grew up in Madill with her eight siblings. She graduated from Kingston High School, received her bachelor’s degree in education in 1964 at Southeastern State College, now Southeastern Oklahoma State University, and her master’s in education at the University of Oklahoma in 1967. She went on to teach school and serve as a school principal and a family guidance counselor.

Willie Nelson greeted Mrs. Brock onstage at a Farm Aid 30th-anniversary concert in Chicago in 2015. He was one of her earliest supporters in her effort to provide help to farmers in crisis. He called her the “angel on the other end of the line.”

Her future husband, F. M. Brock, lived on a farm nearby and gave her a ride home one day on his tractor. They married in 1947 and went on to farm together in Lincoln County, Okla.

By the early 1980s, several factors had led to the farm crisis. Mrs. Brock said it started with the federal policy that lowered the prices farmers received for their crops in order to make American grain more competitive worldwide. Falling prices for commodities along with the rising costs of production made it hard for farmers to stay afloat.

Meanwhile, interest rates on loans were soaring and land values were plummeting, forcing thousands of farmers into foreclosure. The nation was losing more than 2,000 family farms every week.

In 1985, the Brocks lost their farm too, although they eventually recovered it. And a few months later, her husband died of a heart attack.

Around that time, Mrs. Brock, who knew most people in Lincoln County from her work in the public schools, invited many of them over to her farm one night so that they could talk about how to survive. Farmers soon began calling her at home when they were in trouble, starting her on her accidental career of counseling them.

At the time, farmers were killing themselves at alarming rates — 100 deaths in less than two years in Oklahoma alone. Support resources like hotlines were rare in rural America, David Senter, the historian for Farm Aid and president of the American Agriculture Movement, said in a telephone interview.

Her son said the suicide calls to his mother seemed constant, and often chaotic.

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President’s Report - continued from page 1

marketplace. AAM supports legislation to put a moratorium on agribusiness mergers as well as stopping large purchases of us farm ground by foreign entities.

I want to announce that, as President, I have appointed Crystal Carson as Executive Vice President of AAM. I’m excited that Crystal accepted this job as she is bringing new ideas and is developing AAM’s FFA/4-H youth program. AAM is dedicated to supporting our youth as they will be the next generation of family farmers. Crystal’s family is a 4th generation AAM where her granddad Leon Riffel and her dad Ryan participated in the tractorcade and her grandmother Donna ran the county AAM office. Crystal is part of the Leadership team that believes ‘AAM is Alive & Well’. I want to thank Arthur Chaney, John Willis, Jacqueline Reed, Christine Miller, Crystal Carson and Jim Rice for all their work and help. When you get a chance, say ‘thank you’ to them.

In this newsletter you will find a summary of AAM’s Farm Policies which is important for producers to see, so share if you can. AAM has a new brochure that is available if you would like to have them to pass out and included is a pre-registration form for the convention and an order form for AAM caps and jackets. We are also looking to have AAM t-shirts and polo shirts available in the future. Don’t forget to checkout AAM Facebook page, American Agriculture Movement Inc. the number of those following the page continues to grow and now counts in the thousands.

David Senter
aaminpresident@gmail.com

UPDATE - continued from page 2

leader to date. My husband and I take pride in our quality cow/calf herd and the top rate hay we put up every year. In addition to our farm, I work in part with my Dad’s farming operation as well as his propane company; which is the only company in Kansas to also do agricultural flaming! When asked how in the heck I ever got into the LP business and driving a bobtail I always respond, “Well I didn’t really wake up one morning and say when I grow up I want to be a propane driver and smell like rotten eggs!” However, I am at my most content working outside and doing physical labor and to top that I get to work alongside my Dad in a family run business! Taking pride in what you do and why you are doing it go a long way towards quality and longevity. I am looking forward to serving as AAM’s Executive Vice President and as well helping to pave a path for our ag youth through this organization!

Crystal Carson
## AAM Jacket or Cap Order Form

### Order for & Shipping Address

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<th>CITY, STATE ZIP:</th>
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<td>CAP – SUMMER</td>
<td>ADULT ONLY</td>
<td>ONE-SIZE FITS MOST</td>
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### Donation

- Preferred Purpose or Fund: 

### Special Shipping Instructions

- Pre Paid

*Special shipping charges, priority, overnight, etc will be extra on all purchases.

**Mail form and payment to:**

**Jim Rice**
2111 Violet Lane
Liberal, KS 67901
AAM.INC@YAHOO.COM

Caps & Jackets will be available or can be ordered at the convention in Lubbock January 2020.
2020 AAM Pre-Registration Form  
January 10 – 12  
MCM Elegante’ Hotel & Suites  
801 Avenue Q - Lubbock, Texas  
806-763-1200

| Name | 
| Mailing Address | 
| Email Address | 
| Contact Number | 
| Additional Attendees Name(s) |

Please indicate number attending each event

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<td>Saturday Parity Lunch</td>
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<td>Saturday Evening Taco Bar &amp; Auction</td>
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<td>Sustaining Membership*</td>
<td>Preferred Purpose or Fund -&gt;</td>
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**Total**

(Payment is not expected until arrival. If you prefer to pre-pay by check, mail payment to: John Willis 437 Preston Drive Brownsville, TN 38012)

*1yr memberships paid at this time will NOT reset your normal membership renewal months

All hotel arrangements are made directly with the hotel. The rate $91 for a double queen or king guest room. For our planning purposes, please indicate your planned arrival and departure date.

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<th>Departing</th>
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Please complete and return to Jacqueline Reed, 8501 County Road 22, Wheeler, TX 79096 OR email to aamsect.19@gmail.com. Payment can be made by check or credit card when you arrive in Lubbock. If you are pre-paying, please indicate so on check. See you in Lubbock!!
American Agriculture Movement, Inc.  
Statement of Farm Policy

The American Agriculture Movement (AAM), was founded in 1977 with a goal of economic Parity for family farmers and ranchers. Growing out of an authentic, spontaneous, grassroots movement following the catastrophic crash of farm gate prices in the mid-1970s, organized peaceful protests across the country to bring attention to the plight of America's family farmers and ranchers. The USDA at that time estimated there were 1,500,000 active participants. The culmination of these actions was a National Tractorcade to Washington, DC in the winter of 1979 where 10's of thousands of farmers on their tractors drove into Washington, DC and set up camp on the National Mall. AAM continues to work toward that same goal of economic Parity for family farmers and ranchers as we deal with, yet another farm crisis brought on by failed farm policies. Continuing our endeavor to bring about a more equitable farm economy and do so in a more fiscally responsible manner, AAM’s recommends that Farm Policy focus on several key elements:

1. Re-establishment of the non-recourse loan program to provide a floor price at the cost of production for the major, strategic commodities and relieve the burden of tens of billions of dollars in subsidies from the shoulders of America’s taxpayers.

2. Re-establishment of a U.S. reserve of the basic storable commodities; a significant portion of that reserve should be a Farmer Owned Reserve (FOR) for:
   • Domestic Food Security;
   • Domestic Energy security;
   • International Famine Relief
   • Producers do not want more subsidies, they want a fair price from the marketplace.

3. Continuation of the Energy Title of the farm bill to assist the nation in truly achieving American energy independence and to provide additional, local marketing opportunities for America’s farmers including:
   • Continued development and use of renewable fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel;
   • Expansion of the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP);
   • Incentives for producing fossil-free Biofuels and advanced Biofuels;
   • Incentives to use biomass for cogeneration as well as industrial heat and power

4. Continuation of the On-Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.

5. County of Origin Labeling for all imported agriculture products

6. Do not allow any imported agriculture product to enter the U.S. at less than the cost of production.

7. Expand the cap on acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

8. Establish Permanent Disaster Programs for all agriculture crops.

9. AAM supports cottonseed being on the list of oil seed crops.

10. Continue foreign food aid programs such as Food for Peace and have U.S. produced commodities shipped to areas of need on US flagged vessels.

11. Funding for Rural Healthcare including Mental Healthcare facilities.

12. Providing funding for Rural Broadband.

Phone: 202-256-1406 Fax: 301-485-8060  AAMIncPresident@gmail.com

“The Farmer”
By Mrs. Herbert Willis written in 1975
(John Willis’ grandmother)
It takes courage to be a farmer,
You toil, you sweat, you plant and sow.
Not knowing what the outcome
Will be, you know.
It’s always too wet or
Else too dry.
But they just have to take a chance
And hope they’ll get by.
When they come home
They are too tired to eat
They just want to sit down
And prop up their feet.
They’ve got their notes at the bank
And their hired hands to pay
Even if they are ill
They’ve got to make another day
At night when they try to sleep
They hear every sound
For their minds are centered
On that tractor that’s broken down.
Every piece of machinery they buy
Is high and their commodities low
Surely they are destined
To let farming go.
And years go by and
They get so slow
They realize they are at
The end of their row.
Maybe God made farmers
To test their faith.
For there is no one that
Can take their place.
But, Ford says, “Let’s send billions to
Foreign Lands.”
So they can come over here.
And in our place take their stand.
Surely St. Peter will say
In the end.
Just open the door, step back
And let the farmers in.

So God made a Farmer
“It was just wild beyond description,” Mr. Brock said. “Farmers were going in and shooting the lenders and turning the guns on themselves. We were eating supper one night and Mom was on the phone with a farmer, and we all heard the gunshot over the phone.”

She deployed her sons in what she called her ministry. “She made us memorize all 77 counties” in Oklahoma, Mr. Brock said, “so when a farmer called in who was suicidal, we knew where they were and who to contact to get help.” His mother kept the caller on the phone while others drove to the home.

She would reassure the callers that they were not failures and that they had not mismanaged their farms.

“They have been told that they have borrowed too much and have overextended,” she told the newspaper The Oklahoman in 1988. “This breaks their ego. This breaks their confidence and their spirit.”

She would tell them not to give up, that laws could protect them and that she would work with them and stand by them.

“When Willie Nelson heard about her, he called her up and talked to her for at least three hours,” Mr. Brock said. “We were in shock that he called. And then, it seemed like the next day, he sent a check for $5,000 or $6,000 of his own personal money, and a week later he sent her some more, and he kept talking to her. And then Farm Aid came about.”

When the Oklahoma Conference of Churches wanted to set up a suicide intervention hotline, it contacted Mrs. Brock, who moved her counseling operation from her home to Oklahoma City and established a statewide hotline there. She took informal notes on her calls, and those notes have since become one of the most extensive catalogs of farm suicides in the country.

At the same time, people in other states were doing similar work, and they evolved into a grass-roots network of so-called farm advocates. A 2015 Farm Aid documentary about the advocates, called “Homeplace Under Fire,” featured Mrs. Brock.

“She led the way in terms of how to counsel people,” Carolyn Mugar, the executive director of Farm Aid, said in an interview. “People could relate to her and unburden themselves. She was on the same level as they were. She was very calming. She was a farmer.”

In addition to her son, Mrs. Brock is survived by a sister, Barbara Robertson, two granddaughters & four great-grandchildren. Her son Gary Don died in 2003.

Asked what kept his mother going, Mr. Brock said, “The Bible and the Constitution.” A Baptist, she often prayed with her callers. And, he said, she cautioned those who were suicidal to think about their families and what it would be like for their children “if they sat down at the supper table and there would be an empty chair.” Her overarching goal, said Mr. Senter, the Farm Aid historian, was “to make sure the family survived, even if the farm didn’t.”

### 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.)