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## Colorado Agri-Women Are "Mile High"

By Linda Swiercinsky  
 Vice President, Communications

Colorado Agri-Women members are a "mile high" with enthusiasm after organizing a new state affiliate in Denver, January 22.

Fifteen Colorado women met with three national officers of American Agri-Women and agreed, as one participant put it, that "women have to be involved." Whether it is working in the farm office, outside with livestock and equipment, in an agribusiness career, or on a college campus, these women agreed that women must speak out because agriculture is under siege.

Danell Kalcevic of Bennett was elected president at the founding meeting. She and her husband, Kent, represent the 4th generation of a farm family in eastern Colorado that raises wheat, millet, alfalfa, sunflowers and cattle.

Danell learned about AAW when she attended the Syngenta Leadership At Its Best conference last spring representing the National Association of Wheat Growers. At the time, President Wilson called her "a little dynamo."

Janell Reid of Ordway is vice president of Colorado Agri-Women. Her husband, John, was president of the Colorado Independent Cattle Growers Association last year and her background is in the



**Pictured (L-R) standing: Karen Yost, 1st vice president, AAW; Chris Wilson, president, AAW; Debbie Lawton, Lorie Helzer, Kimmi Lewis, Kim Houston, Heide Katherens, Julie Jacobson; front row (L-R): Janell Reid, vice president; Danell Kalcevic, president; Becky Ravenkamp, secretary**

cattle business. Although married to a rancher for 37 years, Janell grew up in the Denver suburbs and understands the urban consumer's point of view.

Becky Ravenkamp of Hugo is the first secretary. She and her husband, Scott, are part of a family operation that is based exclusively on dry land farming, raising wheat, corn, millet and sunflowers. She teaches special education and had to

reschedule a school conference in order to attend.

Treasurer is Korry Lewis, a senior at West Texas A&M. Korry will graduate in the spring and plans to return to her family's ranch near LaJunta. In order to join, women may send a check for \$40 made payable to Colorado AgriWomen and mail it to Korry Lewis, 43200 Highway 109, Kim, CO 81049.

## Saddle Up for Busy Ride at Mid-Year

Two nationally known speakers will headline AAW's busy Mid-Year meeting in Denver, April 8-11.

**GB Oliver III**, executive vice president of The Paragon Foundation Inc., will address issues of private property and rural customs, cultures and lifestyles.

GB is the former president of Western Bank of Alamogordo (NM) with more than 25 years in the banking industry. He has been a member of the Board of Directors of The Paragon Foundation since its inception in 1996. In 2002, he joined the staff of The Paragon Foundation as its executive director and in October 2004

was appointed executive vice president. GB was raised by a pioneer New Mexico ranching family and is intimately aware of the federal land issues and government control which threatens not only the livestock industry, but also the stability and economic viability of all rural communities nationwide.

**Mid-Year Speakers** *continued on page 3*

## President's Report ▶▶



**Chris Wilson**  
AAW President

On our farm, our lambs have arrived and we are in calving season, with dairy goat kids expected next month.

We are looking forward to planting season. We are all busy with the day to day of our farms, ranches and agribusinesses, yet AAW members have known from the beginning that being advocates for our industry is also vital to the future of our operations.

The stakes have never been higher in the challenges to our industry, and the opportunities have never been greater. The attacks on agriculture are seemingly non-stop, with a barrage of information from the CBS Evening News to movies and documentaries such as Food, Inc. The messages to the public from these media portray an agriculture that is not made up of family farms, but of U.S. food being produced in a factory, where workers and animals are abused by "big agribusiness." Nothing could be further from the truth, as 96% of all U.S. farms are still family farms, and family farms produce 82% of our food. Non-family corporations make up the balance, but are a far cry from the food factories portrayed in the media.

This really hit home for me when a friend whose children are in the same 4-H club as mine saw Food, Inc. and was very troubled by its messages and portrayal of agriculture. She wondered if it is all true. Another friend whose husband works for our state department of agriculture saw it and also wondered. The negative images are reaching

our friends and family members. There are great opportunities to tell the true story of agriculture in our local communities.

We do have a great story to tell in agriculture, and it's easy to forget that it's an important story many have not heard. My friend Chris told me recently that her 20-year-old step-daughter had moved in with her family and that she consumed no dairy products "because of where they came from." So Chris' son arranged for his stepsister to visit a local dairy so she could see where milk comes from for herself. Now Chris is going to bring her to our farm to see the chickens, because she thought eggs came from the cows.

AAW's vision is on target for what is needed: We are a force for truth, a reasoned, non-partisan voice for agriculture to the public. We can't compete with the funding of HSUS at \$100 million annually, but we can compete on the basis of the truth. And the truth needs to be told, one person at a time, locally as well as at state and national levels. AAW is working to give you the tools to respond. A response to Food, Inc. is available on the AAW web site <http://americanagriwomen.org>. Also on the web site you will find farm policy facts you can use to dispel myths and inaccurate information.

At Mid-Year Meeting in Denver, we will develop our 2010 policy positions and prepare for conveying our positions to Congress. We will have speakers and resources focusing on the need for ag advocacy and how we can respond – both the what to say and how to say it most effectively. Those resources will then be posted on the AAW web site. I hope to see many of you in Denver.

Chris

## AAW Youth Program to be Unveiled at Mid-Year

The AAW Youth Committee will meet for the first time on Saturday morning during Mid-Year. All collegiate and younger youth are invited to attend! The program for the youth will feature a workshop with BEEFmagazine.com editor Amanda Nolz and a meeting of youth attendees to discuss possible projects.

Youth director Joanna Wilson said, "There are so many young women interested in AAW, as evidenced by the great response we've had exhibiting at the National FFA Convention. There's a need for AAW to reach out to younger potential members, encourage them and see how we can help them. For instance, there's such an interest in and need for scholarships, how can we help develop support for additional AAW scholarships? When we meet at Mid-Year, we will discuss any ideas youth have for how AAW can reach out to and serve the next generation of AAW members.

## American Agri-Women Executive Committee

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*The Voice* is published in January, March, May, July and October by American Agri-Women as a service to members. Deadline is the 15th of the month before each issue is published. Articles and suggestions are always welcomed by:

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**Mid-Year Speakers** *cont. from page 1*

He urges people to read the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. "It is empowering," he says. "Those two documents are the demarcation line between hope and hopelessness."

**Amanda Nolz** will speak at the general session on Saturday morning followed by a workshop just for collegians and youth. When BEEF magazine decided to initiate BEEF daily, an online roundup of beef industry news and commentary, Amanda was the logical choice to serve as its editor. Her BEEF daily blog and tweets@AmandaNolz and @BEEF magazine are followed by many Agri-Women.

Amanda is a fifth-generation rancher from Mitchell, SD. She grew up on a purebred Limousin cattle operation, graduated with a degree in agriculture journalism from South Dakota State University, produced her own blog, and participated weekly on the Trent Loos radio program, "Faces of Ag," in addition to regular freelancing for beef industry publications. She's served internships with USDA's Ag Marketing Service in Washington, D. C. and the NCBA in Denver, CO.

On BEEF Daily, Amanda provides timely industry news each morning Monday through Thursday, to which readers can comment. Her blog chronicles her experiences and adventures as a young agriculture professional.

In addition to these outstanding speakers, the Mid-Year meeting will be full of useful information and formulating policy positions. All StART committee chairs/points of contact are encouraged to attend or to provide suggested policy positions to their StART coordinator.



**GB Oliver**  
Executive Vice President  
The Paragon Foundation



**Amanda Nolz**  
Editor, BEEF Daily

**Agri-Women Leadership Institute**

AAW Leadership Chair Kris Zilliox and President Chris Wilson are working on plans for a new AAW leadership program, the Agri-Women Leadership Institute (or "ALI," pronounced with a long I sound). Participants who enroll in ALI will have the opportunity to participate in leadership training at Mid-Year Meeting and Convention. In between, there will be video conference sessions with graduation coming during Convention. The first session will be held Saturday morning during Mid-Year Meeting.

**Reservations for Mid-Year**

If you have not done so already, make room reservations at the Doubletree in Denver by calling 1-800-236-1592 and asking for the AAW room block. If the \$89 room rate is no longer in effect, contact AAW treasurer Carolyn Kleiber or president Chris Wilson and they can connect you with a roommate.

Realizing that many AAW members cannot commit themselves in advance at this time of the year, we hope there will be a few last minute arrivals. The more minds... the merrier!

**Mid-Year Meeting Agenda**  
**AAW—A Force for Truth**

*All meetings are open to all attendees*

**Thursday, April 8**

- 3:00 pm StART meeting for coordinators and chairs
- 3:00 pm Standing and special committees meet: Education, Membership, Finance
- 5:00-6:00 pm Reception for new affiliates
- 6:00 pm Dinner (on your own)

**Friday, April 9**

- 7:30 am Registration Opens
- 8:00-11:00 am Agri-Women Leadership Institute (ALI). Presenter Ron Wilson, Director, Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, Kansas State University
- 8:00-11:00 am StART committees work on updating positions
- 8:00-10:00 am Resource Center Board Meeting
- 10:30-11:15 am Joint AAW Executive Committee/Resource Center Board Meeting
- 11:30 am Working Lunch (included with registration) Speaker GB Oliver, "Property Rights Under Siege"
- 1:30-4:15 pm Board of Directors Business Meeting convenes (all attendees included) StART and Affiliate Reports
- 4:15-4:30 pm Break
- Resource Center Silent Auction Begins
- 4:30-5:30 pm StART committees break out to continue work on position statements (all members are encouraged to participate)
- 6:00 pm Networking dinners
- 7:30 pm Viewing and discussion of movie Food, Inc.



By Marcie Williams

Ag Connect Expo wasn't your ordinary farm machinery show. This was a show of the elite that offered not only a trade show, but also high quality educational sessions. AAW was proud to be a part of this first event. There weren't droves of people wandering aimlessly around asking, "What is that?" Those in attendance knew what they were looking for and had an agenda in mind. It was completely different from my expectations. English wasn't necessarily the norm when walking through the exhibits. Booths were from Brazil, Canada, Japan, China, Argentina, England as well as your more prominent industries from USA.

Attendees knew what they wanted and were looking for information to make their final purchasing decision. Companies were there to make sure other companies knew about them and what they had to offer.

AAW was a unique exhibit and had a fantastic space, right inside the opening doorway. We were hard to miss. Past President Sandy Greiner, Florida Agri-Women Debbie Brady and Theresa Smith, Chris Wilson and Doris Mold assisted at the booth. The percentage of women attending was much lower than that of other farm shows but those who were there were interested in learning about American Agri-Women. New members joined and many others promised to return home to their states and look into their state affiliates. Many of our visitors were from Canada and were so excited to learn of the first Women in Agri-Business Symposium to be held in Guelph, Ontario this October.

Our reception was the best event of the entire show, at least according to those attending. Florida Agri-Women arrived with wine and our gift basket of cheese, wine and candy. The crowd was huge awaiting the drawing and just as excited to win one of our cookbooks as the large gift basket. Our "wine tasting" was a huge success and cookies were quickly devoured.

My most memorable moment was of a lady coming up to me who couldn't speak a word of English. She could read enough to recognize "agri-women" and she wanted me to know she was one too. Through lots of hand signs and a booklet she had I discovered she and her husband raised "pigs" and grew corn. She



**AAW booth at the Expo (L-R) Doris Mold, MN, and Debbie Brady, FL, visit with an expo visitor.**

had stopped by the booth the day before and Sandy Greiner and I tried to speak with her as she wanted to purchase one of our cookbooks. We tried to explain they were not for sale and she left disappointed. When she returned to try and speak with me again I presented her with a cookbook as a gift. She was tearful with gratitude and tried so hard to communicate. Her son appeared and translated that she was equivalent to a president of her women's agricultural society in her country. Farm women are alike no matter what country they are from.

Educational sessions included tours, sessions within the trade show and breakout sessions. Three AAW members presented workshops in the Family Business Management section. Doris Mold's session was on "Balancing Your Budget" which focused on the importance of budgeting and monitoring cash flows for both farm and household. Chris's topic "Planning for Your Future" focused on planning for smooth transitions for the farming operation. Chris says, "This is personally a difficult topic for me because of how difficult the transition was in my own family." Chris has compiled a workbook for families to help them communicate goals and develop plans for successful transitions. This workbook is available at the AAW web site under risk management tools.

American Equipment Manufacturers are to be commended on a very successful event. Their move to Atlanta, Georgia for 2011 will offer new and different opportunities with the hope of incorporating more organizational and company meetings to make it an ever more diversified and unique event. AAW has been asked to host a national conference on risk management for women in agriculture at the 2011 Expo, following requests from attendees for more sessions for women.

## AAW Web Site <http://americanagriwomen.org>

The AAW web site is full of great resources for your farm, ranch, agribusiness and agriculture advocacy. Explore the Risk Management section for great links to help minimize risk in your operation; network with other women in agriculture; and get answers to your questions on a variety of agricultural topics at the Ask an Expert page. There are AAW news and ag news, committee information pages, affiliate web sites, scholarship

information, links to members' web sites, sponsors and membership benefits and discounts, plus resources for consumers and legislative information. If you are looking for educational resources, go to the For Students and Educators page, then Links to Educational Resources, to find hundreds of great sources. All in all, there's a lot of depth at the AAW web site—thanks to all the committee chairs and officers who regularly add to and maintain the site.

Special thanks to Abby Dechant, our web site coordinator, who is always happy to answer questions. If you have difficulty accessing the "Members Only" section, contact Abby through her email address: [abby.dechant@gmail.com](mailto:abby.dechant@gmail.com) and she will walk you through it. The generic user name is AAW Member and password is Missouri2010. Abby is the one to contact for your personal user name.



Young people often mimic what they know, according to Illinois Agri-Women president Penny Lauritzen. “If their parents are in banking, the kids tend to go toward banking, or kids from a farm family are interested in farming, or kids with parents in the medical field may be drawn to medical careers. But there are so many unique opportunities out there and sometimes kids are not exposed to them when they are growing up on a farm.”

Lauritzen and others in IAW hope to change all that when they offer young high school and college women the chance to learn from the masters – women established in their fields of agriculture. The event will be held Friday, April 16, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at the Interstate Center in Bloomington

Is she a scientist in a laboratory developing the next seed innovation? Is she helping to design a high-tech combine? Or is she a public relations expert explaining to consumers why their food is safe? As opposed to a Career Fair where students present their resumes, this new event allows students to listen and ask questions of women who might be their role models in the years ahead.

There will be six fields to explore:

- ▶ Agribusiness, communications, journalism
- ▶ Engineering, mechanics, technology
- ▶ Crop sciences
- ▶ Animal sciences
- ▶ Horticulture, forestry
- ▶ Specialty agriculture services

Students must choose three of the six fields and then decide which of the women presenters they wish to visit in small groups. The conference will be divided into three 1½ hour sessions.

“We hope to have 15-20 professional women for the young women to visit during each session”, added Lauritzen, a certified financial planner. Space will be available for those interested in setting up a display.

“This is an opportunity for women to invest in the future of agriculture by giving some of their time back to the next generation,” Lauritzen said. “It also will be an opportunity for them to promote their company and inform young ladies about the possibilities out there.”

The cost to attend is \$5 per student, which includes lunch. Deadline for registration is April 1. For more information or to register for the event, visit [www.womenchangingthefaceofagriculture.com](http://www.womenchangingthefaceofagriculture.com).

Mid-Year Agenda *continued from page 3*

**Saturday, April 10**

- 8:00-9:00 am Meeting continues
- 9:00-10:45 am General Session  
Agriculture Under Siege  
“Why and How We Need to Be a Force For Truth for Agriculture,”  
Jacque Matsen, Director, Issues Management, NCBA; “Using Social Media to be a Force for Truth for Agriculture,”  
Amanda Nolz
- 11:00 am-Noon Continued workshop for collegiate and youth members
- 10:45-11:00 am Break
- 11:00 am-Noon Meeting continues
- Noon Lunch (included with registration)
- 1:15 pm Resource Center Silent Auction Ends
- 1:15-3:00 pm Reconvene Business Meeting – action on Policy Positions
- 3:00-3:15 pm Break
- 3:15-5:00 pm Continue Policy Positions – Adopt 2010 Position Statements
- Evening Networking Dinners (on your own)

**Sunday, April 11**

- 8:30-9:00 am Devotional Service
- 9:00 am-1:00 pm Optional Tour  
US Air Force Academy  
Equestrian Center,  
Colorado Springs

**Join Us At Fly-In**

**By Janet McPherson, Fly-In Coordinator**  
American Agri-Women members can plan to attend the AAW Fly-In in the nation’s capitol. The 2010 Fly-In dates are June 13-16, and the hotel is the L’Enfant Plaza. It’s not too early to make hotel reservations! Do so by calling 202-484-1000 and asking for the American Agri-Women block. L’Enfant Plaza Hotel is at the opposite end of the same metro stop as the hotel we’ve stayed at the past few years, but has shopping in metro level. [www.lenfantplazahotel.com](http://www.lenfantplazahotel.com).

Online registration for the Fly-In will be available beginning in mid April at the AAW web site: [americanagriwomen.org](http://americanagriwomen.org). The registration fee will be \$125. Questions? Contact Janet by email at [janet.mcpherson@frontierfarmcredit.com](mailto:janet.mcpherson@frontierfarmcredit.com)



Reelected at IAW’s annual meeting are (L-R) Ruth Hambleton, Woodlawn, vice president; Penny Lauritzen, Lanark, president; Mary Meinhart, Montrose, secretary; Shirley Bartelt, Polo, treasurer.

## Affiliate News ► Country Girl Formulates Plan for New York Affiliate

By Linda Swiercinsky, Vice President, Communications



**Cari Rincker**

Cari Rincker is a young woman with a plan. She wants to organize women in New York to speak out for agriculture.

Admitting that most people don't think of New York as a

powerful agricultural state, she has learned to love living there and feels it's important to establish a connection between the farmer and city people. She hopes to have "meet ups" in places like Syracuse, Albany, and Buffalo before a June 16 reception in New York City at the apartment of former AAW president Mitzi Perdue.

How she took what she calls "a peculiar path" from Shelby County, Illinois, where her family raised Simmental cattle, to New York City is an interesting story. It started out at Lakeland Community College where the state FFA beef winner and exhibitor of Illinois State Fair champions was on the livestock judging team and took the top prize in oral reasons at the National Western Stock Show. Receiving another academic scholarship, she joined the judging team at Texas A&M and placed first at Houston. She was named to two All American Livestock Judging teams.

Up to this point, Cari thought she would find a career in animal science. But she served Congressman Kevin Brady (R-TX) as a summer intern in Washington and found that most of the people working

there were lawyers. She decided to enter the field of environmental law, received her degree from Pace University in Westchester, NY, and passed the bar in NY, NJ, and CT. Since there were no law firms with emphasis on agricultural law in New York, Cari headed west to Cheyenne where she worked with Karen Budd-Falen and learned the ropes. She missed friends in New York and returned to start her own practice.

Currently she is a director on the NY Simmental Assn. board and PR chairman for NCBA's Young Producers Council. If you happen to be sitting on New York soil as you are reading this—or know someone in the state who might help Cari—she can sure use a hand. Contact Cari at [newyorkagriwomen@gmail.com](mailto:newyorkagriwomen@gmail.com) or call 212-427-2049.

## Affiliate News ► These Boots Are Made For Walkin'!

By Celeste Settrini, President  
California Women for Agriculture

2010 started off in impressive fashion as we celebrated our annual statewide meeting in San Juan Bautista. The weekend event began on Friday and ended Sunday afternoon with stops at DeBrito Chocolate Factory, Earthbound Farm Organics, and the Old Mission San Juan Bautista.

Highlight of the Saturday program was a style show featuring fashions from area businesses modeled by CWA members.

Special programs included Friday evening at Leal Winery with a presentation by newly-installed president of the CA Farm Bureau, Paul Wegner, and the "Diamonds and Dirt Gala" Saturday night with lots of crystal chandeliers, twinkle lights, candles

and a giant cupcake tower complementing a BBQ dinner, silent and live auctions plus nationally acclaimed speaker Trent Loos.

March will bring Capitol Ag Day in Sacramento and a statewide combined meeting with CA CattleWomen at the beautiful Harris Ranch in Coalinga. A joint meeting like this is something new for CWA but I think it will be a great opportunity for like-minded organizations to come together and share common interests as well as hammering out solutions.

April's focus will be on Ag Day LA, a premier opportunity for urban to connect with rural. In May we will host our Legislative meetings and reception.

In September we will hold our annual fundraiser in conjunction with the Fresno State Ag One group. Once again we will partake in a huge Farmer's Market where guests are able to purchase fruits, vegetables, and homemade goodies from CWA members.

Finally, November will be a time to go south and spend the weekend in southern CA. Sprinkled throughout the year we will be encouraging CWA members to attend AAW Mid-Year, Fly-In and Convention. As CWA president I hope to build a closer relationship with our sisters in AAW. I know that there are struggles we will always face in agriculture; however, when we work together we have a stronger voice.



Pictured above (L-R) are Joan Webster, Celeste Settrini, Amy Wolfe, and Karri Hammerstrom. In February CWA had a booth at the World Ag Expo in Tulare where more than 100,000 people came from around the world! A big "thank you" to the Central Valley chapter for planning and organizing such a wonderful display.

# StART Chairs Hit “Hot Button” Issues

Some of the Strategic Action Response Team (StART) committee chairs have shared what the “hot button” issues are in their areas, hoping AAW members will reflect on issues of importance to each of you before our busy Mid-Year meeting .

Whether or not you are coming to Denver, April 8-11, you can contribute. The names, email addresses, and other contact information for these committee chairs are provided here so that you can give them your input.

## Ag Jobs

Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits, and Security (AgJOBS) Act has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) as S 1038 and in the House by Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA) and Rep. Adam Putnam (R-FL) as HR 2414. AgJOBS has two parts. The first section gives experienced farm workers the right to apply for legal status in this country, if they pay a fine, prove that they are current on their taxes, and have a clean criminal record. The second section reforms the cumbersome H-2A visa program by streamlining the labor certification process and instituting protections for the workers.

## BIOFUELS (Business & Economics)

Susan Kruger  
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**Hot Button Issue:** Climate Change/Cap and Trade Legislation—Federal

Unfortunately, the House has already passed cap and trade and will not drop it without a fight. Prospects for a comprehensive U.S. climate bill are at an all time low. With two new Republican governors and Republican Senator Brown from Massachusetts, the climate legislation will have to be modified in the Senate. Senators Boxer (D-CA), Graham (R-SC), and Kerry (D-MA) are working on a bill that would attract bipartisan support by replacing cap and trade with softer emission caps and adding incentives for nuclear power and offshore drilling.

The jobs bill, financial industry regulation, and a health care bill are all above climate on the majority party’s list of priorities. Another compromise on climate would be to pass a stand alone clean energy bill. The energy bill would include a federal Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and provisions for smart-grid infrastructure, but not a cap and trade system. A version of the bill, the American Clean Energy Leadership Act of 2009 (S 1462), was passed by the Senate Energy Committee 6/17/09.

The House’s Jobs for Main Street (HR 2847) includes \$2 billion for the Department of Energy (DOE) Loan Guarantee program, which would provide \$20 billion in loans to clean tech companies. This program has been criticized for only facilitating one loan since it was established in 2005.

I expect to see cap and trade get passed over for now. All the emphasis will be on the jobs bill and moving the majority of funding into green and infrastructure businesses.

## Other Legislation Federal & State

Electricity Industry is with new state and international policy concerning feed-in tariff. One state with a large source of electricity and superior transmission grid would charge another state a feed-in tariff for the electricity produced and shipped to another state. These feed-in tariff funds are supposed to be used to expand wind and solar power. Countries also are doing this. The concern is that the advanced and high population states are making tariff money off of their minor counterparts.

## Last Year (Carryover) Issues Federal & State

Status of the ethanol blending issue. Where is President Obama really at on this issue? Now I hear he is for it.

If anyone has anything else to add, especially issues from your state, please let me know so I can research them further prior to Mid-Year.

## Looking for a Good Blog?

Check out “A Glorious Life of an Idaho Farmwife” and read Gayle Anderson’s thoughts on Organic vs. Conventional Farming.

## Legal Concerns

Attorney Karen Budd-Falen (who spoke to AAW at our Boise, Idaho convention in 1991) has been investigating the cost to the taxpayer for environmental groups like the Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, and others to sue the government. Lawsuits are filed in Endangered Species Act cases, Clean Water Act cases, and other statutes that allow a plaintiff to recover attorney fees. Budd-Falen points out that ranchers and other citizens are being forced to spend millions of dollars of their own money to intervene or participate in these lawsuits to protect their way of life when they have no chance of the same attorney fee recovery if they prevail. “In fact, they are paying for both sides of the case”, she states, for the defense of their ranch and for the attorney fees for environmental groups to sue the government hoping to get the ranchers off the land. Up until now there was no central data base for tracking the payment of these fees but, as of March 2nd, HR 4717 was introduced by two congresswomen, Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) and Stephanie Herseth-Sandlin (D-SD). The “Open EAJA Act of 2010” would require the U.S. Attorney General to compile and make publicly available, certain data relating to the Equal Access to Justice Act. AAW members should contact their congressional delegations, urging them to sign on as co-sponsors.

For more information go to [www.westernlegacyalliance.org](http://www.westernlegacyalliance.org).

## RISK MANAGEMENT (Business & Economics)

Penny Lauritzen  
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**Hot Button Issue:** Crop Insurance

On December 4, 2009 a draft Standard Reinsurance Agreement (SRA) was released by USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) following discussions with the insurance industry. The federal crop insurance program is a permanently authorized program that is governed by the Federal Crop Insurance Act and does not

**Hot Button Issues** *continued on page 8*

**Hot Button Issues** *continued from page 7*

require periodic reauthorization. There is a provision that does require “renegotiation of standard reinsurance agreement”. The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and approved insurance providers may confer during negotiations.

A report on the Standard Reinsurance Agreement by the Congressional Research Service states: “Risk sharing between USDA and the private companies and A&O (administrative and operating expenses) reimbursements to the companies are spelled out in a Standard Reinsurance Agreement (SRA), which plays a large role in determining program costs.”

Keith Collins (USDA) and President Obama both have made budget proposals that would include substantial cuts to the crop insurance program. Congress rejected proposed budgetary cuts last February. Major agricultural organizations have gone on record to oppose implementation of an SRA that would undermine the important gains made in crop insurance since the passage of the Agriculture Risk Protection Act (ARPA) of 2000. They primarily are concerned that the reference price for major staple crops is capped at artificially low levels that bear no relevance to today’s prices. They also are concerned that this will negatively affect delivery of the crop insurance program and potentially affect access to adequate coverage... the safety net for farm families.

The National Crop Insurance Services, Inc. (NCIS) has submitted a response detailing its concerns and a counter draft proposal. NCIS claims the new proposal from RMA substantially reduces A&O and widens an existing deficiency in A&O reimbursement compared to actual costs. NCIS also questions RMA’s legal authority to make any reductions. The proposal from RMA does not include incentives to increase service in underserved states.

*Last Year’s Policy*

Statement remains accurate and relevant. Comments and additional input are welcome.

Applications for America’s Farmers Mom of the Year are being accepted at [www.AmericasFarmers.com](http://www.AmericasFarmers.com) until April 9. Five regional winners will be named with each winning a \$5,000 cash prize.

**NATIVE POLLINATORS (Commodities)**

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**Hot Button Issue:** EPA Pollinator Protection Team

EPA has formed a pollinator protection team to expand the agency’s inquiry into the possible causes of declines in pollinators with a focus on honey bees. They will address potential risks that pesticides may contribute. This needs to be monitored.

*Carry-Over From Last Year*

The 2008 Farm Bill added pollinators and their habitat as a conservation priority. The Native Pollinators in Agriculture Alliance is being developed to educate growers on the role that native pollinators play in enhancing pollination services and profitability and advocate for programs and resources to establish habitat and increase populations of native and managed pollinators. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), state conservation agencies and local conservation districts have resources for growers.

**Asian Carp Are Not Endangered!**

Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox sued the state of Illinois in December and petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court in January to force closing of locks outside of downtown Chicago and the Calumet-Sag Channel in order to prevent Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes. If the locks were closed, barges could no longer move through the waterways from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi.

Nobody argues that this fish is a huge problem. He weighs up to 100 pounds and eats much of the food on which other fish depend.

This invasive species was introduced from China in the 1970s and soon escaped Mississippi catfish ponds and government fish hatcheries, devastating local ecosystems and fisheries on their steady swim up the Mississippi River. Aquatic researchers at Southern Illinois University are studying the movement and habits of bighead and silver carp in

hopes of finding the secret to eradicating them. (Electric nets have not proven foolproof in holding them back.)

Meanwhile the carp are so abundant and prolific that they are interrupting the spawning beds and furthering the decline of native fish. So the controversy continues... possibly destroy the Great Lakes \$7 billion commercial and recreational fishing industry or lose the ability to ship grain, coal, building and other raw materials. *Stay tuned!*

**LAND USE/PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS (Natural Resources)**

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**Hot Button Issues**

A Montana landowner was threatened with court action by the county because he no longer will allow the public to cross his land in order to get to a “scenic view.”

A group of central Montana landowners filed to intervene in lawsuits over the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) plan for the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. At risk are 93 grazing permits on 363,000 acres of federal land within the monument and 39,000 acres of state land inside its boundaries.

Colorado ranchers are organizing “Citizens Against Railroads” in an effort to stop coal trains from crossing their land and dividing their acreage. (Similar to Texas Trans Highway Corridor)

A “Right to Float” bill has been introduced by a Gunnison rancher, which would allow rafters to come upon private property without notice and in spite of no trespassing laws. In Colorado, rivers that flow through private property belong to the public, but problems arise when certain portions of the river become impossible to navigate and rafters have to carry the raft over neighboring private land. Advocates for property owners contend there is no right to float through private property without their permission. One member of the House noted that ranchers often use barbed wire along rivers to keep cattle “from wandering,” posing a hazard to

**Hot Button Issues** *continued on page 9*

**Hot Button Issues** *continued from page 8*

rafters and a magnet for a lawsuit. Another member (from Boulder) said, "It would effectively shut down rivers and give landowners control over the river...they cannot put a tollbooth up."

A similar problem exists in Utah, where "Public Access to Private Stream Beds" is being proposed by Rep. Lorie Fowlke. This would clarify and support the Utah Supreme Court's ruling that recreational use is more beneficial than private property rights. Under Utah's constitution, legislating the laws of the state is the responsibility of the elected representatives of the people. State senators and representatives answer directly to the people. Supreme Court justices do not.

*Colorado HB 1197—Limiting Conservation Easement Tax Credits* This bill would limit the tax credits for conservation easements. In Colorado, all the conservation easements were audited by the IRS and many were declared fraudulent documents. The IRS is calling them in, stating that the appraisals were done wrong or the tax credits weren't sold within the time limit. You have to realize that Colorado tripled their tax credits to promote these conservation easements. So, this bill would help in deterring people from using them and questioning what they are all about. You lose control of your land when you grant a conservation easement. You gain a partner that can change; land trusts can sell these to other land trusts or quit and then have to find a buyer. You're never sure who your holder of the easement will be. They are a lawyer's dream but a private property owner's nightmare. This bill is a start in slowing down the government's push for more conservation easements/wildlands.

*Kansas HB 2487: The Department of Defense is trying to establish Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Zones* These are areas around military bases in which conservation easements would be applied to control growth/use of the land around the bases. They are proposing these in Colorado around the Pinon Canyon site also. The planning maps already have them in place and the money is there. The partnership between The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Department of Defense dated 12-24-2000 secures their part in these buffer zones. TNC or one of their partners would own these conservation easements.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has blocked the natural flow of water through the Green Wildlife Area of Lee County in northern Illinois by placing plywood over two 36" drainage tubes, creating more wetlands in the park. According to the Illinois Drainage Statute, no landowner can block the natural flow of water. The IDNR's action has reduced drastically the drainage on surrounding farmland besides flooding roads and causing road damage. However, IDNR denies their actions caused any harm and refuses to remove the plywood during planting season. Their comment was, "We have so many more waterfowl here now because of the increased wetlands." The Green Wildlife Area receives federal funding, which could throw a lawsuit to the federal courts. There is no federal law on drainage. Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Association of Drainage Ditches, and Illinois Agri-Women all oppose IDNR on this issue.

*Carryover from Last Year: Texas Trans Highway Corridor*

Governor Rick Perry wanted to award a contract to a Spanish firm to build an interstate highway from Mexico to Canada taking private property with few places to cross over for landowners. AAW members need to be updated at Mid-Year.

**TIMBER (Natural Resources)**

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**Hot Button Issues:**

The Biomass subsidy program in the 2008 Farm Bill is having unintended consequences on the lumber industry. The Biomass Crop Assistance Program creates incentives for sawmills and timber companies to sell scrap wood for conversion into biofuel. This creates economic hardships on the composite by-products (roofing, sub-floors, furniture) and the construction industries.

Timber harvest is still depressed and mills are still closing. Idaho's Forestry statistics, compiled by the University of Idaho's College of Natural Resources, are typical of all the western states since they are made up of 60%+ federal public lands.

- Lumber prices down 43% since 2005

- 82% of surveyed facilities all reported a decrease in sales and more than an 80% reduction in employment
- 2009's timber harvest was the lowest since World War II

C. J. Hadley & RANGE magazine have released a new book titled *GRIT: Fighting for Western Land, Life & Liberty*. Three of the contributing authors are timber leaders Jim Hurst, Jim Peterson and Bruce Vincent. The book is \$28 and may be ordered from Range, P.O. Box 639, Carson City, NV 89072. Or, if you wish to use a credit card, call 1-800-RANGE4U.

**Update on California Running Dry (Water restrictions due to the smelt)**

Recently Judge Wanger has made two important rulings affecting California's water supply. In early February he issued a favorable ruling which allowed the pumps to operate at full capacity. Unfortunately, the finding of six "endangered" smelt at the pumps triggered a smelt action in mid February, decreasing the pumps, and warning that if they found an additional six smelt, further restrictions would be imposed.

Precipitation and snow pack currently are at about 125% of normal, but around 80,000 acre feet of unused water is flowing into the San Francisco Bay every day and escaping into the ocean. Sen. Dianne Feinstein pleased farmers and angered environmentalists, salmon fishermen, and some Congressional Democrats from California when she attempted to override two "biological opinions" crafted by Fish & Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service. Discussions with Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Michael Connor have been on-going. They will be analyzing March 1st hydrologic conditions and hope to announce a new allocation by March 15 so that farmers can make critical planting decisions, obtain financing, create jobs, and put farm workers back to work. The Westlands Water District in the San Joaquin Valley again thanked Sen. Feinstein and Representatives Dennis Cardoza and Jim Costa, who have tried to bring reason to the water crisis.

Hot Button Issues *continued from page 9*

## **WATER** **(Natural Resources)**

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### **Hot Button Issue: Clean Water Restoration Act (CWRA)**

Senator Russell Feingold (WI) reintroduced S 787, amending the CWRA by changing the definition of “navigable waters” and further defines it to mean the “waters of the United States.” This minor word change would drastically expand the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) jurisdiction to virtually all wet areas in the U.S. with great consequences to agriculture and would create a bureaucratic problem to administer.

Eliminating navigable from the statute and replacing it with previously proposed definitions will expand significantly the reach of the CWA by premising its jurisdiction on the “legislative power of Congress under the Constitution.” In reality, such a premise would serve only to broaden the jurisdiction of the CWA in a fashion even more ambiguous than current regulations. If proposals such as this were to become law, the only way to answer whether “water” is subject to CWA’s jurisdiction would be thoroughly costly and time consuming litigation.

Inevitably, such litigation would involve not just the scope of the CWA but the scope of Congress’ Constitutional authority because that is the only limit such proposals clearly acknowledge (but do not define). Please click on the S 787 link in the reference information section to see the actual language changes to the removal

More than 30 environmental organizations have formed America’s Great Waters Coalition, aimed at restoring and protecting nine of the largest water ecosystems in the U.S. The nine “in jeopardy” are: Chesapeake Bay; Coastal Louisiana; The Everglades; The Great Lakes; Gulf of Maine; Long Island Sound; Mississippi River; Puget Sound; San Francisco/Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

of “navigable” and the definition of “water of the U.S.”

S 787 currently is passed out of committee and held on the Senate floor. Voting has been stalled by larger legislative issues like health care.

AAW has opposed this bill in the past. Same bill, different bill number.

## **FOOD SAFETY** **(Public Understanding & Awareness)**

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### **Hot Button Issues:**

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) has introduced legislation, S 2819 Processed Food Safety Act of 2009, that would amend three key federal food safety laws to prohibit the sale of any food that has not been certified to be pathogen free.

The Feinstein bill seeks to amend the Poultry Products Inspection Act, the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Federal Food, Drug & Cosmetic Act, according to a statement from her office. The Processed Food Safety Act requires everyone in the food chain to take responsibility for keeping food free of harmful pathogens. Specifically, the bill:

- Amends the Poultry Products Inspection Act, the Meat Inspection Act and the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to prohibit the sale of any processed poultry, meat and FDA-regulated food that has not either undergone a pathogen reduction treatment, or been certified to contain no verifiable traces of pathogens.
- Requires that labels on ground beef, or any other ground meat product, specifically name every cut of meat that is contained in the product, and
- Does away with loopholes in current laws that allow for producers to add coloring, synthetic flavorings and spices to their products without informing the consumer.

Her proposal comes as the Senate is poised to debate S 510 FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, a major food safety

bill authored by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) which reforms many of FDA’s authorities. That bill has been advanced from the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pension committee and is awaiting floor action. Amendments such as the Feinstein proposal could be offered and voted up or down during the floor debate.

*HR 759 the Food and Drug Administration Globalization Act of 2009* was introduced in late January 2009 in the House Energy & Commerce Oversight and Investigations subcommittee by Rep. John Dingell (D-MI). This bill seeks to provide FDA with adequate funding and authority to ensure the safety of the US food, drug, medical device and cosmetics industries. The bill also proposes that Congress establish an annual fee, in addition to the fee paid by food facilities as part of their annual bioterrorism registration. An earlier version of the bill proposed a \$2,000 annual fee. This bill currently sits in the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

*S 429 Ending Agricultural Threats: Safeguarding America’s Food for Everyone (EAT SAFE) Act of 2009* by Pat Casey (D-PA) is being considered by the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. This bill proposes to ensure the safety of imported food products for the citizens of the United States, and for other purposes.

*HR 1549/S 619 The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act* This bill would ban farmers from using antibiotics in animals unless they are sick. While this proposal has been around since 1999, the sponsor, Rep. Louise Slaughter, has said she wants to visit this issue in 2010. That’s now! This bill is sitting in the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Hearings have been held but there has been no action since July 2009, except in recent television news stories.

There is an excellent article on the Feedstuffs Foodlink web site titled, “Antibiotics in Ag Debate Gains Momentum.” I highly recommend taking the time to review this site. In addition, Iowa State University’s Dr. H. Scott Hurd, DVM, PhD, has responded to the CBS Evening News segments on antibiotics aired Feb. 9-10. Go to: [vetmed.iastate.edu/research/labs/food-risk-modeling-and-policy-lab](http://vetmed.iastate.edu/research/labs/food-risk-modeling-and-policy-lab).

## Affiliate News ► New Mexico Cowbelles

By Karen Kelling, President

New Mexico CowBelles (NMCB) has nearly 800 members, but the numbers are falling—probably at the same rate the number of farms and ranches fall in the state. According to cattlenetwork.com, New Mexico lost 100 farms between 2008 and 2009. To add to the gloom and doom, cattle numbers are the lowest in five decades. The dollar is worth half of what it was when the Beef Checkoff was enacted. The average age of ranchers is sixty and sixty percent of farms and ranches are owned by elderly women. Wait a minute! My grandkids think I'm an elderly woman. What's wrong with that?

Never in history have women been more important to the survival of American agriculture—and NMCB have armed ourselves for the fight. We have encouraged our members to get their New Mexico Beef Quality Assurance (NMBQA) certificates and to hang NMBQA signs on their gates to show the Humane Society of the United States and People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) that we use modern, scientific, humane animal husbandry and we have large-animal vets to back us up. We have encouraged our members to take the Masters of Beef Advocacy (MBA) course from National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), which has lessons on beef production, animal care, beef safety, nutrition, environmental stewardship and the Beef Checkoff. The purpose of the MBA program is to train us to tell our story accurately because if we don't, someone

### Only in Illinois!

The Illinois House of Representatives Environmental Health Committee has scheduled a hearing on February 23 to give an audience to a professor from the University of California, Berkeley, who wishes to share his opinion about atrazine. Dr. Tyrone Hayes frequently has given speeches on how he believes atrazine causes homosexuality, chemical castration, feminization, and various cancers. His work has been disputed and discounted by numerous credible scientific panels and organizations, including the United States EPA.



Natalie, future New Mexico CowBelle, with her calf.

else will tell it inaccurately. To add to our arsenal, one of the presentations at this year's NMCB District Workshop Tour will teach us about the NCBA's Environmental Stewardship Award sponsored by Dow AgroSciences and the NRCS. All of this information will help us do a little introspection and make us aware of changes that might improve our operations as well as our public image.

NMCB are made up of twenty-one locals. We have three statewide meetings each year, two in conjunction with New Mexico Cattle Growers and a day of education inviting Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas CattleWomen called the 5-States Roundup. Our officers go on a week-long District Workshop Tour each spring to educate and energize our membership. Each fall we supply the woman power for the Beef Council Booth at the New Mexico State Fair—our most effective outreach. We are an affiliate of and active in American National CattleWomen (ANCW). Several of our members worked at the 2009 National Beef Cook-Off in Sonoma, California. New Mexico will host the ANCW Region VI meeting in 2011, sharing speakers with the Women in Agriculture Leadership Conference.

We are trying to attract more young members. Unfortunately, fewer and fewer young women are involved in production agriculture because the barriers to entry are so steep, but they bring us a world of expertise and insight from their careers in

the allied industries. Although they do not all raise cattle, several of our members have degrees in agriculture, including one with a PhD in Animal Science. Anyone who wants to promote beef is our kind of girl! With ANCW and the Animal Agriculture Alliance, NMCB will be participating in both College Aggies Online and the Adopt-A-Teacher program. This year we sent a contestant to the National Beef Ambassador Contest in Arkansas.

Younger members bring new technology to those of us in the "average age of ranchers" category. On the other hand, we do not discount our older members, because they are the ones who were taught that it is their duty to volunteer their time and talent to improve their communities—in our case, our agricultural community. We are all working together to preserve New Mexico agriculture for our young aggies like my granddaughter, Natalie, a fifth generation rancher and future New Mexico CowBelle.

### Master of Ag Advocacy

Whether it's that 30 seconds in an elevator, questions from a friend, a call from a news reporter, or meeting with our Congressman, we want to be prepared to be the best advocates we can be for our industry. AAW will host a series of webinars this year to arm us with knowledge. To participate and earn your "Masters in Ag Advocacy," email [agadvocacy@americanagriwomen.org](mailto:agadvocacy@americanagriwomen.org).

## Important Dates

### MARCH

- 27 Michigan Agri-Women Annual Meeting, MSU Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center, Benton Harbor, MI. Contact Kimberly L. Schmuhl at [kschmuhl@pointowoods.com](mailto:kschmuhl@pointowoods.com)

### APRIL

- 7 Minnesota Women's Agricultural Leadership Conference, Agriculture 2010: New Perspectives, University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chaska, MN. Contact Doris Mold at [doris@sunriseag.net](mailto:doris@sunriseag.net)
- 8-11 AAW Mid-Year, Denver
- 17 Oregon Women for Agriculture 23rd Annual Fundraiser. Contact Chris McDowell, [cmcdowell@pickseed.com](mailto:cmcdowell@pickseed.com)

### JUNE

- 13-16 AAW FLY-IN, Washington D.C.
- 16 New York Agri-Women Reception, New York City, contact Ruth Jensen, [msjensen@comcast.net](mailto:msjensen@comcast.net).

### NOVEMBER

- 11-14 AAW Convention, St. Louis, MO
- 14 One day Post Tour, St. Louis area
- 14-16 Optional tour to Branson, MO

## Affiliate News ▶ Florida Agri-Women

By Debbie Brady, President

Florida Agri-Women (FAW) were pleased to honor Ann Holt of West Palm Beach County, Florida, as the Founders Award recipient at the FAW Annual Meeting. Ms. Holt is co-owner of Twin H Farms and Sun Corn. She has spent her entire career promoting the Florida Sweet Corn Industry at such events as the Produce Marketing Association



Florida Agri-Women Ann Holt and Lynn Cacella

Annual Meeting, Delray Affair, South Florida Fair, Tallahassee Sweet Corn Fiesta and every other opportunity she can find.

FAW participated in the first Ag Connect Expo in Orlando January 12-15, which boasted an attendance of over 7,500 guests. Representatives from American Agri-Women

(AAW) and FAW hosted a reception at the AAW booth, complete with wine tasting from Schnebly Redland's Winery in Homestead. A gift basket, generously donated by Norman Brothers Produce in Miami, was raffled at the event.

Katie A. Edwards, one of our founding members and twice past-president of FAW, announced her bid for state representative, District 119, in October 2009. During her presidency, FAW hosted the AAW Annual Meeting in Miami in November 2006 where she received the coveted Leaven Award and President's Award. She also served as secretary of AAW from 2004 to 2006.



American Agri-Women  
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If you would like to receive *The Voice* via email instead of by mail, email your request to Carolyn Kleiber at [Carolyn@agpowerinc.net](mailto:Carolyn@agpowerinc.net)