

The Iowa Association Of FSA
County Office Employees

IASCOE NEWS

December 2003

FROM THE DESK OF DERRYL McLAREN, SED

The Christmas Season is upon us, and we will soon bid farewell to the year 2003. My, how the scenery has changed from a year ago! What a stellar performance by all of you in 2003!! Not only did we excel in the Farm Bill sign-up, but we continued that dedication to the farming community through CRP, Disaster, LCP, and Farm Loan delivery.

I have encouraged you during the year to take time-off, devote time to your family and community, and nurture your personal needs. Fortunately, we have not been swamped with LDP's this year, so I hope some semblance of normalcy has returned to the county offices. No doubt you were exhausted mentally at some point in the year. When that tank runs empty, there is only one fuel to regenerate, and that is personal time surrounded by family and friends.

We know where we have been, but where are we going? The 2004 year will hold new challenges for us. GIS takes center stage in 2004. South Dakota and California will be digitizing about half of our counties, and we should see product from them by February or so. All of the State should be in play on GIS by the end of the year. The E-Gov initiatives will move forward, as well. Not to be left out, Farm Loans will be moving to a new Web-based platform.

There will be a lot of cheese (read the book) moved in 2004 through innovations in information technology. Our jobs are beholden to the services we provide to farmers and the agriculture community, and the way business deals with the public is changing, inevitable. As a society, we expect our access to information to be instantaneous. We also expect service 24/7 in connectivity and interaction. We need to embrace this change to be functional in today's world.

About the only constant we face is the budget, which will be tight this year. In addition, Washington will recalculate state staff ceilings after the Holidays. Consideration will be given to 2003 workload and anticipated 2004 workload, and this should bode well for Iowa. No one had a greater workload in 2003 than the Midwest! There is also good news! It appears that we should receive a 4.1% pay increase in 2004, but the Agency will have to find offsets for 2% of that, or \$16 million. The budget will be difficult, but FSA is better positioned than most agencies to deal with it.

As you gather with family this Season, you should feel great satisfaction for a job well done in 2003. As you give Thanks, share a collective prayer for our military forces scattered around the world in the fight against terrorism. I will pray, also, for the President in his quest to remove terrorism from our own shores. Freedom carries a high price, and the memory of 9/11 should give us all reason to be thankful for the liberties we cherish so dearly.

Thank you!

Sincerely,



Derryl J. McLaren
State Executive Director
Farm Service Agency



IASCOE President's Report

By Tom Lane, IASCOE President
CED Henry County
December 2003

Merry Christmas Everyone!!

The Christmas and New Year's holiday is fast approaching and it is during this time we reflect on the past year, at home and the office. It is important to look at all the good times and challenges we went through- enjoy the good times again, learn from the challenges and appreciating the personal strength we gained in the journey.

This past year had its share of good times and challenges. You delivered the CDP, DCP, FLP, GRP, LAP, MILC, and NAP programs. You certified every farm receiving program benefits and you coordinated a CRP sign-up that saw FSA having a larger role than ever before. You delivered more with less. All the while, you continued delivering outstanding service.

Changes are headed our way. The potential for office closures still exists; implementing GIS on the directed timeline seems very difficult to accomplish; the Conservation Security Program (CSP) is making its way out of the rule writing process and holds the potential to have every producer in the county participating, while continued budget and staffing worries peck away at us all.

NASCOE underwent a big change this year also. It was the splitting of the Secretary/Treasurer position. The change has its pros and cons; however, it will only strengthen NASCOE as we work through the process of separating duties. NASCOE continues to struggle with making the department understand how significantly the PT's job has changed and recognize that change with proper PT classifications. NASCOE has not given up on the process yet. Additionally, NASCOE is working to educate the budget people on the need for more staff at the field office level. It is a difficult task in these times.

I hope that you will spend time with your family and friends this holiday season. It is those persons who help make us who we are- as individuals- and it important that we let them know how much we appreciate all they have done for us. Also, enjoy some fellowship with your fellow staff members. Each of you- blending your strengths and limitations- make up the strong team of FSA County Office staffs. Without your steadfast dedication to the farmers of your county, the delivery of the farm bill would not have been possible.

Wishing you a happy holiday season,

Tom

Alan's Thoughts

By Alan Donaldson, CED Sioux County
IASCOE Vice President



Disappointments

What disappoints you? Some disappointments are hard to take and leave a bitter taste in your mouth for a long time while others are easier to take and deal with. Most people who know me know that I'm pretty much a perpetual optimist. I think that people, given the chance will do what's right and best for themselves, their friends, and their neighbors. It surprises, shocks, and yes disappoints me when things don't work out that way.

Sometimes I'm disappointed when something negative happens that I have no control over. A case in point is the Minnesota Vikings football team. I've been a Vikings fan since I was just a little kid. Even though they started off the season like gangbusters, I knew it was just a matter of time before things went the other way. Its kind of like the old riddle, "Why doesn't Iowa have a profession football team?" Answer: "Because then Minnesota would want one too." It's just a good year for me if they come out beating the Packers and the Bears in the same season. To paraphrase Garrison Keillor, "It's our lot in life living near Minnesota to suffer, since we must remember never to enjoy ourselves too much. We must remain humble."

This past weekend we watched the college football team that our youngest daughter cheers for, get beat in the last seconds of a NAIA quarterfinal game. That was a disappointment, especially after becoming a part of the fans who cheered on the dedicated players and coaches throughout an otherwise successful season. Although disappointed, there was nothing we could do to affect the outcome.

Just about a month ago an insurance company that I had to deal with disappointed me. I was disappointed because they didn't want to honor their obligations to reimburse my daughter for damages to her car. After some intense negotiations, they were able to significantly improve their settlement. Why couldn't they do it to start with? Although finally fairly satisfied with the outcome, she was disappointed with her initial treatment. In this case there was something that could be done to affect the final outcome. The disappointment just didn't have to be put up with and a satisfactory settlement could be made.

Recently I was able to visit with several FSA employees who are not IASCOE members. I asked them why they weren't members and what IASCOE could do in order to gain their membership. What I heard was how disappointed they were with our organization and how we should have been more responsive to their needs. Some of the items discussed were real problems, and now that we are aware of their concerns we can try to do something about them. Other problems have nothing to do with IASCOE and are probably related more to management policies or personality conflicts. Others indicate that they don't want to spend money on our organizations when it doesn't accomplish all that they desire personally.

We have spent time again and again explaining what our organization does and what we have accomplished. Sometimes I feel like I am playing the same note. When faced with the same criticisms over and over my question is who else is representing your interests? If it was not for our organization, where would we be when it comes to the employment benefits that we continue to enjoy?

Although we have over an 85% membership in Iowa, it disappoints me to know that 15% of our employees don't care enough for their co-workers to become members and contribute to the strength of the group. As far as affordability is concerned, with the payroll deduction program, it costs just \$3.85 for a CED and \$2.50 for most PT's per pay period to be members of the organization.

For those of you who are members, I thank you. For those who are not, consider joining to help yourself and your co-workers to maintain and strengthen your benefits.

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To receive new IASCOE Newsletters by email and to be notified of web page updates go to our web site at iascoe.org and click on the subscription link.



A MESSAGE TO OUR MEMBERS

December 2003

By Daniel Wells, CED Adair County
Membership Chairperson

The numbers are finally in!!! The 2003 IASCOE Membership drive turned out to be another success. Our IASCOE membership is up this year to 85.7%. Thanks to all of you and the hard work of your membership committee. Our continued goal is to have as many members as possible in Iowa. Hopefully each of the upcoming years we will see a continued growth in our membership.

For those of you who have recently retired, we would like to suggest that you become an associate member of IASCOE. Many of you have been receiving benefits through IASCOE and to continue those benefits should consider becoming an associate member. We have 39 associate members in 2003.

Each year your IASCOE directors draw five (5) members for the "Early Bird" special. Each IASCOE member whose dues are received before June 15th is eligible for a refund of \$50. This year the following IASCOE members were drawn:

Diane Danielson – Buena Vista County
Sharon Lovstad – Kossuth County
Terri Coats – Sac County
Diane Burke – Clinton County
David Kastengren – Wapello County

Congratulations to the winners!!! Remember next year to get your dues in early to be eligible. You have to play to win!!!

Thanks to those who choose to be members of IASCOE we are able to receive and maintain benefits that do not come automatically like many people think. All the benefits we receive as County Office employees are a direct result from the efforts of NASCOE/IASCOE. It is very important for us to maintain a strong membership to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves. As you are all aware, NASCOE continues to work to ensure the fair treatment of all our employees and to provide a work environment beneficial for all. This process would be virtually impossible without your continued support and a strong membership.

Five Tips For A Woman

1. It is important that a man helps you around the house and has a job.
2. It is important that a man makes you laugh.
3. It is important to find a man you can count on and doesn't lie to you.
4. It is important that a man loves you and spoils you.
5. It is important that these four men don't know each other.

2003 Ohio State Convention Summary

Submitted by John Landgraf
CED Sac County Iowa



IASCOE Directors and Members,

The following people addressed the Ohio State Convention in November:

John Stevenson - Agriculture Advisor for Senator Voinovich

Commented on the status of COOL - County Of Origin Labeling. Stated that the legislation had passed however felt that it had lost its original intent which he believed was for a National identification system and not local.

He addressed the issue of the national average age of County Office employees being 47 years old which will create a massive change in staff due to retirements within the next 10 years. (John served as the Ohio State SED the same time we had Bob Furleigh)

Doug Frago - Deputy Administrator of Field Operations (DAFO)

Discussed CO office consolidations where the plan has been reviewed at the Secretary level (not by the Secretary). This is the same plan as the 1995 Madigan plan that was considered by Espy. He concluded that no plan would be implemented in the near future as there is no major push toward office consolidations at this time.

Discussed the USDA's zero tolerance policy for workplace violence. Stated that they got several calls each week across the nation during the DCP sign-up concerning CED's, PT's and producers. Added that the Department has no policy to remedy or mediate these situations however solves the situation with immediate permanent separation.

Stated that there would be no across the board PT reclassification with current job descriptions, knowledge required etc. Suggested that the Association should strive to reclassify one step (one PT) at a time.

Talked about the notice that went out in October concerning removal of old CO (ASCS-CFSA) signs from CO property. Stated that the Department was upset that there were still old signs displayed in the field offices and the issue got more attention than it should have. (Doug and Kenny Nagel took a quick tour of just a few floors in the WDC - USDA building and found 80 old signs still displayed!)

Said that we just barely missed having to provide a "Receipt for Service" to each producer that we have contact with that would provide a producer/employee signed document describing in detail the contact in case of future legal action. (the idea probably came out of the consent decree) Doug said such a form would not have worked if the producer later stated that the FSA form didn't properly or accurately document his or her interaction with the CO - too much room for error and manipulation.

We have a \$289 million budget for salaries and operations of which 80% is salary. Project future cuts in GIS and IT funding and there is no budget for new permanent PT positions. Discussed providing some management training for lead PTs in shared management offices so that those lead PTs could operate more effectively when CED is not available.

NASCOE Vice President David Vidrine and Midwest Area Leg Chair Dan Root also addressed PT reclassification, program complexity and workload. They stated that although the request to have PTs reclassified to higher grades has been denied, NASCOE will continue to work on the issue. (Past reclassifications took several years of effort in negotiations)

HI MY IASCOE FRIENDS,

A little note to let you know that the National emblems on-line storefront is up and going. It is www.thenascoestore.com. CHECK IT OUT! You can go to “Let’s Shop”, then “Browse” to just take a look at the items available.

The items are very good quality, nice colors and reasonably priced. You may use a credit card on-line or use the mail service. You will receive your items in just a few days. The emblem “*USDA Farm Service Agency*” (on most items) is very neat and professional looking. There are some really nice items that could be used as gifts. I personally like the paperweight.

New items are added periodically and if you have suggestions or a special request let me know. We aim to please. Your support of NASCOE is appreciated.

Denise Dugan
PT Woodbury County FSA
NASCOE National Emblems/Program Chairperson



Delaware County Office Staff is shown enjoying a wide variety of the clothing items that are available at the NASCOE store. Left to Right: front row: Kimberly Snyder PT, Tammy Eibey, FLO, Kent Kluver CED, Shelia Smith FLM, Mike Ryan PT. Back Row: Pat Helmrichs PT, Linda Curtis PT, Jill Roberg PT, Jan Wickman PT, Kathy Rahe PT, Cathy Greif PT, Shirley Manternach PT.

Farm Service Agency Enters Partnership with Farm Safety 4 Just Kids

In July of 2002, FSA Administrator James Little signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Farm Safety 4 Just Kids (FS4JK). The purpose of this MOU is to support the joint efforts, create a partnership between FSA and FS4JK, and to motivate and empower employees, offices, individuals, farm families, etc. FSA is in an excellent position to help FS4JK reach individuals, farm families, children, agri-businesses and inform and educate them as to the importance of farm safety and protecting our youth and rural families from farm hazards, injuries, and fatalities.

FSA has established a FS4JK working committee with members from each District, the State Office and the State Committee. These FS4JK District Coordinators will share information throughout the District, help coordinate activities, projects, and local contacts. Since the first meeting of this group, many exciting activities have taken place and many more are in the works. FSA is helping establish or rebuild local FS4JK Chapters, District 8 held a Safety Poster Contest for children K through 5th grade and distributed FS4JK materials to over 15,000 kids, and others are working with various youth groups and giving local presentations. The District Coordinators will be in contact with all offices to talk about these activities and seek the input and support from all employees.

FS4JK recently received a grant from FSA Headquarters that will help local Iowa FSA offices promote the partnership and activities of FS4JK. Each District Coordinator will be receiving several different displays that can be used in the office, at meetings, presentations, etc. These displays will contain information on FS4JK and the FSA partnership, as well as interactive items for the children, decals, coloring books, and many other items. These displays should be available in January 2004.

Please contact any one of the FS4JK Coordinators if you have any suggestions or want to get more involved.



FSA & FS4JK Coordinators: (Not in seating order)

Rozanne King, State Committee Member, District 1: Lisa Forburger, Kossuth County,
District 2: Vicky Hinsbrock, Winneshiek County, District 3: Sue Badding, Monona County
District 4: Mary Oldenburger, Grundy County, District 5: Lynda Schnebbe, Iowa County
District 6: Christine Irvin, Page County, District 7: Sheryll Greenlee, Wayne County,
District 8: Cara Proper, Henry County, Robin Holcumbe and Bruce Cordes, FSA State Office
Mindy Williamson with FS4JK

Keokuk County Open House

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn
CED Keokuk County

Keokuk County hosted an open house on November 6, 2003. The office had recently received a facelift consisting of a new coat of paint and new modular furniture. This also served as an opportunity for members of the community to meet the new CED if they had not already done so. Approximately 70 people attend the event and partook in the fun and food.



PREGNANCY Q & A

Q: Should I have a baby after 35?

A: No, 35 children is enough.

Q: I'm two months pregnant now. When will my baby move?

A: With any luck, right after he finishes college.

Q: What is the most reliable method to determine a baby's sex?

A: Childbirth.

Q: My wife is five months pregnant and so moody that sometimes she's borderline irrational.

A: So what's your question?

Q: My childbirth instructor says it's not pain I'll feel during labor, but pressure. Is she right?

A: Yes, in the same way that a tornado might be called an air current.

Q: When is the best time to get an epidural?

A: Right after you find out you're pregnant.

Pat Helmrichs - Delaware County FSA



Pat Helmrichs started at the Delaware County FSA office in Manchester in August of 2002. She has been married to Johann Helmrichs for 31 years and they live in rural Manchester. She actively farmed with her husband for 20 years raising pork, crops and children before coming to FSA.

They have 3 grown children. Adam of Manchester, Colleen of St. Paul MN. and Leah of Winterspring FL. Pat is an avid gardener and loves anything outdoors. She also enjoys music and exploring family history. She is active with her local church as a teacher and board member.

Pat looks forward to trips to visit both her daughters as well as family, which is spread all over the U.S.

TOP TEN THINGS ONLY WOMEN UNDERSTAND

10. Cat's facial expressions.
 9. The need for the same style of shoes in different colors.
 8. Why bean sprouts aren't just weeds.
 7. Fat clothes.
 6. Taking a car trip without trying to beat your best time.
 5. The difference between beige, ecru, cream, off-white, and eggshell.
 4. Cutting your bangs to make them grow.
 3. Eyelash curlers.
 2. The inaccuracy of every bathroom scale ever made.
- AND, the Number One Thing Only Women Understand:
1. OTHER WOMEN

Mike Ryan – Delaware County FSA



My name is Mike Ryan and I am a 48 year old new employee at the Delaware County Service Center here in Manchester. On August 26th, 2002 two new Program Technician positions were added and I fortunately received one. Working as a Temp in this office and also part time with NRCS along with being an active farmer helped to prepare for this appointment. Presently, Compliance and the Wool backup are the programs that I am responsible for. I am looking forward to converting to Digital Imagery in our office.

In addition to farming, I have been active with the Manchester Fire Dept for 21 years, serving as Chief from 1993 through 1998. Other activities and hobbies include coaching sports teams for kids, hunting and fishing, along with bicycling with our family.

My family includes my wife Linda who operates a learning center out of our home. We have two daughters. The oldest, Deirdre, is attending Kirkwood in Cedar Rapids majoring in Journalism and Communications. Next, Katie is a senior at West Delaware and is presently deciding on a college to attend. Last but not least is Christopher who is a freshman and would rather be playing baseball or basketball than studying.

To date I have greatly enjoyed my job with the USDA. The people at this Service Center along with those from other offices that I have met have been a joy to work with.

Thank You,

Mike Ryan, PT
Delaware County

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

By: **Connie Safley**



It is time again to start thinking about recognizing someone that has made an outstanding contribution in areas of: NASCOE; FSA – Agriculture; or Community Service. This program encourages recognition of NASCOE members who make outstanding contributions in one of the three areas. Any member of the Association may make a nomination. Only members of the association who are in good standing, who are serving under a permanent appointment, or who have voluntarily retired during the current year are eligible to receive these awards. Nominations need to be mailed NO LATER than FEBRUARY 1st, 2004.

INFORMATION FOR EACH CATEGORY

SERVICE TO NASCOE: Years of NASCOE membership; committee activity; offices held; contributions to the organization; FSA background and any other pertinent information can also be included.

SERVICE TO FSA-AGRICULTURE: How long has nominee worked for FSA?; what program or special project have they worked with?; size of county and number of farmers ; any outstanding contribution to FSA and /or Agriculture?; has nominee received any special awards or promotions?; NASCOE background and any other pertinent information can also be included.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: What organization(s) has nominee worked with?; do they hold an office or any special committee assignment?; their church affiliation, family status, children, etc.; what has nominee done to improve the community he/she lives in?; any special recognition received; FSA and NASCOE background and any other pertinent information can also be included.

LENGTH OF NOMINATION

A nomination should be brief, factual, and specific! It cannot exceed two (2) double-spaced typewritten 8 1/2" X 11" pages, plus the cover sheet. The pages must not be reduced by photocopier or other means to enable more print on the two pages. No attachments, and conclusions not backed by facts should be avoided. Specific examples and details should be given to support the nomination.

SUBMITTING NOMINATION

Mail the original and five (5) copies of the nomination to Attention – Connie Safley, Dallas County FSA, P.O. Box 70, Adel, Iowa 50003 before February 1st 2004. If you need a cover sheet or more information contact Connie Safley at 515-993-4205 or you can go to NASCOE website (WWW.nascoe.org).

IASCOE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



IASCOE will again this year be offering scholarships to high school seniors, graduates, or full time college students, up to the Bachelor Degree level. (full time is a minimum of 12 credit hours) Eligibility requirements are a minimum of a "C" average (using the 4.0 system) in both junior and senior years of high school or as a college student. Also the applicant must be a legal dependent of an IASCOE member, a member's spouse, or even an IASCOE member themselves. The IASCOE member must be a county FSA employee with membership during the last five consecutive years or has been a member since becoming a permanent FSA county employee, including the current year.

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS OPPORTUNITY!! Part of your annual dues goes directly to the IASCOE scholarship fund. If you or someone you know is an active member and will have a college bound student or has a student currently in college, take advantage of the IASCOE scholarship program.

Two chances...one application. In addition to an Iowa scholarship award, all applicants are automatically eligible for the Midwest area NASCOE scholarship award(s).

Applications can be obtained by contacting Vicki Heeren, 2325 170th St, Hampton, IA 50441 or by calling 641-456-4972. The application can also be printed off the NASCOE website. Please note the checklist return date should be January 31st for the Iowa Scholarships. **So please return the completed applications to the address above by January 31st, 2004. DON'T PUT IT OFF, GET YOUR APPLICATION TODAY!**

All applications may be found at the NASCOE website. www.nascoe.org
Look for Awards on the bottom and print off checklists and applications. IASCOE scholarship applications are due January 31, 2004, not the NASCOE deadline date on the national form.

IASCOE SICK LEAVE AWARDS

Sick Leave Awards are given to permanent employees who are NASCOE members and have accumulated sick leave of 1000, 1500, 2000, and 2500 hours. The national level recognizes 3000 accumulated hours. Send the names of people with accumulated sick leave hours as of December 31, 2003 to;

Connie Safley,
1252 230th Street
Linden, Iowa 50146.

Thank you, if you have any questions let me know.

Connie Safley,
Dallas Co FSA Office



Cranberry Harvest - Culture Shock for a Midwesterner

Submitted by Lorrie Marquis, FSA New Jersey

Being raised and living most of my life in the Midwest, my perspective of American farming was limited to the seemingly endless fields of wheat, corn and beans. The sight of herds of cattle, hog lots and the ever-present fleets of tractor, combines and sprayers tending to thousands upon thousands acres of crops was common. Then, as a program technician specializing in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in Iowa, the paradigm was simply reinforced. How could farming in any other part of the country, or the world for that matter, be any different? Imagine my shock when I pulled up roots and moved to New Jersey.



Cranberries contained in the bog ready to be lifted by conveyor into dump trucks for cleaning.



George Adams of Indian Mills Cranberry Co. opens the chute to empty cleaned cranberries into a shipping crate.

The patchwork of fields are very beautiful, however they are on a smaller scale and very diverse. Not only will you find fields of wheat, corn, and beans intermingled with vegetables and nursery crops, New Jersey also supports many livestock operations such as dairy, turkey, and other poultry. You will also find alpacas, Ostrich, and llamas. The CRP program is also very creative due to the phenomenal use of land in The Garden State. Much of the farming industry in New Jersey is co-existent with the urban population.

The real kicker came when I had the opportunity recently to visit a cranberry farm during harvest. When I first viewed the flooded cranberry bogs, I thought I may have made a wrong turn - and ended up in Southeast Asia. The tiny bogs (the bogs I viewed ranged from seven to ten acres in size) were reminiscent of rice paddies one might expect to see in Korea or Vietnam. Surrounded on all sides by earth dykes, these bogs contain the vines that produce the bitter (or sweet, depending on one's personal taste) berries throughout the growing season. The bogs are fertilized and sprayed for weeds and insects just as any other conventional crop would be. However, in late October and early November, all semblance of the norm are cast aside as thousands of gallons of water are pumped into these bogs in preparation for harvest.



American Cranberry Company employees doing final inspections before shipping.



Wet harvester gently removing berries from vines in a flooded bog.

With the bogs sufficiently flooded, "wet harvesters" (machines that look like small tractors with a rotating beater head on the rear, and appear to move backwards so that the beater is in front) enter the bogs and begin the harvest. The harvesters lightly beat the vines. This knocks the ripe berries free, allowing them to float to the surface and transform the green bogs to a beautiful sea of red. The berries are contained within long, floating devices called "containment booms" (similar to those used to contain petroleum spills) and are guided to a removal point where a conveyor system removes them from the bog and into a truck. The harvested berries are transported to a cleaning, processing and packaging facility before they are made available to the consumer.

While the wet harvest is the norm today, some berries are still dry-harvested, a method that was the norm until the 1960s. Through the necessity of getting more berries harvested in less time, with less waste, the wet-harvest method was devised (along with the myriad of unique equipment) by the innovative minds of American farmers.

This was all a very pleasant, if not shocking, experience for a midwestern girl to absorb in one day. What I have noticed through my geographic diversity experience is that even with the vast difference of products and the innovative use of equipment, all farmers are dedicated to providing the safest, most abundant food supply in the world. As employees at FSA, we need to continue to support these efforts in every way we can.

Sharon Daniels of American Cranberry Co. displays a crate of her fresh picked cranberries.



Contribute To The Next IASCOE Newsletter

If you have any stories, photos, jokes, quotes, or information that you would like to include in the next IASCOE Newsletter, send them to Tammy Eibey at tammy.eibey@ia.usda.gov.

My Needle

Submitted By Lisa Forburger, P.T. Kossuth County FSA

I have a little needle that goes everywhere with me.
And what can be the use of it is more than two or three.
I can quilt a pretty pillow, or a comforter, or vest.
I can piece of lovely quilt top, which is what I like the best.
Some mornings, very early, before the sun is up,
My needle calls; I only pause to grab my coffee cup.
Then as the sunrise lights the sky and smart folks stay in bed,
I and my needle quilt until I'm dizzy in the head.
I take my needle every place; we're quite a common pair.
Whenever we appear I notice people tend to stare.
I don't know if they stare when they see patterns that impress,
Or it they stare because they see the rest of me's a mess.
For quilters don't sew buttons and they don't patch children's pants.
And they never make new clothes as you will notice at a glance.
And quilters never cut things with their favorite fabric shears,
Unless it should be muslin otherwise they fall to tears.
The one who has the most fabric most likely will be me,
So I can't use a scrap of it or I won't win you see.
I'll have to buy more fabric for this quilt I'm working on.
It really matters not that what I'm storing isn't gone.
I have a little needle that I'm chained to like a rock.
I know my husband full expects to stab through his sock.
I hope you will excuse me if I quit right here and run
I've found another pattern and my needle wants it done.

Author unknown

10 WAYS TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE "ESTROGEN ISSUES"

1. Everyone around you has an attitude problem.
2. You're adding chocolate chips to your cheese omelet
3. The dryer has shrunk every last pair of your jeans.
4. Your husband is suddenly agreeing to everything you say.
5. You're using your cellular phone to dial up every bumper sticker that says: "How's my driving? Call 1-800- "
6. Everyone's head looks like an invitation to batting practice.
7. Everyone seems to have just landed here from "outer space."
8. You can't believe they don't make a tampon bigger than Super Plus.
9. You're sure that everyone is scheming to drive you crazy.
10. The ibuprofen bottle is empty and you bought it yesterday.

The Woman's Prayer

Now I lay me
Down to sleep.
I pray the Lord
My shape to keep.
Please no wrinkles
Please no bags
And please lift my butt
Before it sags.
Please no age spots
Please no gray
And as for my belly,
Please take it away.
Please keep me healthy
Please keep me young,
And thank you Dear Lord
For all that you've done.





Advertising Archives

The good wife's guide

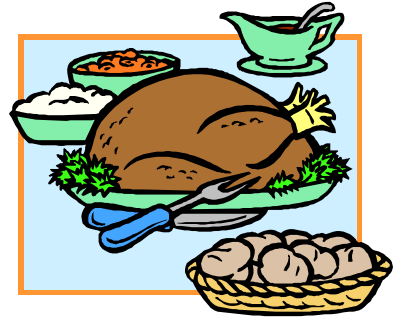
- Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal ready, on time for his return. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospect of a good meal (especially his favourite dish) is part of the warm welcome needed.
- Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh-looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people.
- Be a little gay and a little more interesting for him. His boring day may need a lift and one of your duties is to provide it.
- Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives.

- Gather up schoolbooks, toys, paper etc and then run a dustcloth over the tables.
- Over the cooler months of the year you should prepare and light a fire for him to unwind by. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too. After all, catering for his comfort will provide you with immense personal satisfaction.
- Prepare the children. Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small), comb their hair and, if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part. Minimise all noise. At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of the washer, dryer or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet.
- Be happy to see him.
- Greet him with a warm smile and show sincerity in your desire to please him.
- Listen to him. You may have a dozen important things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first - remember, his topics of conversation are more important than yours.
- Make the evening his. Never complain if he comes home late or goes out to dinner, or other places of entertainment without you. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure and his very real need to be at home and relax.
- Your goal: Try to make sure your home is a place of peace, order and tranquillity where your husband can renew himself in body and spirit.
- Don't greet him with complaints and problems.
- Don't complain if he's late home for dinner or even if he stays out all night. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through that day.
- Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or have him lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him.
- Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soothing and pleasant voice.
- Don't ask him questions about his actions or question his judgment or integrity. Remember, he is the master of the house and as such will always exercise his will with fairness and truthfulness. You have no right to question him.

A good wife always knows her place.

Thanksgiving - More than Just Turkey

By Steve Kenndey, CED Jasper County



As I write this, I am thinking of Thanksgiving and the blessings that this day brings. We will gather as a family, we will consume too much food, but most importantly, we will reflect on our bounty as citizens of this country and offer thanks.

One of my favorite stories comes from Deloris Klemm, a PT in our office who recently retired. In early 1990's, her son Tony spent a semester studying at the University of Ukraine through a program at ISU. From this experience, Deloris and her family have hosted several visitors from the country of Ukraine.

One such exchange consisted of a group of Ukrainian teenagers. After a long flight from their home country to Des Moines, the group was tired and hungry. The designated American host mother had made arrangements for the group to eat at a Chinese restaurant. Why this host mother assumed that Chinese food would be appealing to these Ukrainian students, heaven only knows. The Ukrainian's looked at their meal and mostly picked at the dishes.

Upon returning to the hotel, the host mother was aware that the group was still hungry and so she decided to order pizza. Of course every teenager loves pizza, right? Wrong! While some of the group ate the pizza, it was apparent that this was not what they were accustomed to eating. In fact one of the members, a fifteen year-old girl, became somewhat ill from the spicy food.

Upon observing the situation, another

American host mother in the group had seen enough and decided to take this girl to a nearby Dahl's grocery store where she could find some nice tame broth. If you have ever been in a Dahl's, you know that they have everything under the sun - 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. As the host mother and the Ukrainian girl entered the Dahl's store, the host mother noticed tears streaming down the girl's cheeks. What was the matter? Was the girl scared or perhaps she was more ill than originally thought.

No, the girl was crying because she was overwhelmed by all the abundance she saw before her. You see while anything the stomach can desire is available in a Dahl's store, in the Ukraine, her family had to wait one, two, sometimes three hours in line to obtain the bare essentials; and even then only to be greeted by nearly empty shelves.

Does that story touch you like it does me? The next time you enter the local Hy-Vee, Joe's Super Value, or even the Casey's convenience store, I challenge you to look around and consider our gifts. If you are like me, we must admit that we take too much for granted.

For what do I have to be thankful? I am thankful that I live in the United States of America - the greatest country in the world. I am thankful for farmers who readily accept the responsibility as well as the risk of farming so that my family and I never have to go hungry. And lastly I am thankful that I have a job where I can be involved in the great industry of agriculture, which helps feed the world.

My Paper Brigade

Submitted By Lisa Forburger, PT Kossuth County FSA

I think that anyone who receives a newspaper delivered to their door needs to take part in that delivery. This theory is kind of like that one if you drink in a bar, you should be a bartender. You would be surprised how much you can learn when your foot is in the other shoe.



I signed (forced) the kids to be substitute for the local weekly reminder. This paper is delivered to all houses in my town on Tuesday and Friday. The pay is great for them but I need a cattle prod to get them moving. Delivery is going much better now than in the beginning. “We” don’t do it that often but have a plan of attack when we get the phone call. You see that “their” paper route includes “we”.

My cousins deliver the daily paper and word gets out when you have delivered papers in my town. They needed a sub because they were going on a well deserved vacation but FOR A WHOLE WEEK!!!!!!! “Sure we can do that”, slipped out of my mouth. I knew that Richard could handle getting up early but there was no question to even mention it to Cedes. We had a total of 38 to deliver, piece of cake. Got the list from them with the final words “Papers must be delivered by 6:00 A.M.”

The first morning I woke and peeked out the door and found the papers on my picnic table. Perfect. I counted papers, this is a must, and they were all there. I loaded Richard’s bag, he does the north end of town where we live, and woke him. I grabbed the rest, loaded them on my carrier on my bike, grabbed my dog Dollar, grabbed my sweatshirt and off we go. I start thinking “short cuts”. We always need shortcuts to be effective. I will cut through this lawn to save time. Well, not really, the papers on my rack all fell off after a hit the second rut and the wind scattered a few of them a little but further than I needed. I put them

back together to make them more secure and off we go.

Now if you don’t have to leave your bicycle is another shortcut. So you need to slide into your house and have paper in hand to put it in the mailbox that hopefully is accessible for a paper carrier. Sometimes this ended up with the bicycle on top of me. At least no one was awake in this town besides me and my neighbor to witness this event, which I found hard to believe. It did not take me long to shed the sweatshirt, because I was wet with sweat from my hard work or maybe anxiety, not sure which.

Dollar is a trooper. He is running right with me, tongue hanging to the ground. I keep thinking, I am getting my exercise for the day, I am exercising the dog, and getting paid (Richard is) and all before 6:00 a.m., this is the ticket!!!! Then I hit a row of stone landscaping and the next stop my shorts get caught on my bike seat and I nearly de-pants myself. I have my list in my hand so I do not miss anyone. One house has 2 tiny, tiny, little dogs and they attack me with their tiny teeth in the back of the ankle. Dollar is hiding in the bushes at the neighbors.

I get to my last house and slide the paper into one of those metal paper jobs on the garage door and get my fingers caught in it. I do get them out but they now are hairless and my nail polish has been removed.

Then I discover there is one paper left. I look at Dollar and he shakes his head and heads for home. He knows that there is no way he is running clear across town for a paper that I forgot. He is tired, hungry and beyond the word thirsty. I quickly scan my list, and sure enough, it is way across town. So I hop back on my bike and quickly peddle there and head home. The sun is coming up and it is 5:30 a.m. When I get back in the house I find Richard laying on the couch sound asleep with his empty bag next to him. Coffee is ready and life is good!

THE PERILS OF POLLY P.T.

PART NINE

Written By Roseanne Woerner, PT From Wapello County

Created by Dee Lehn, CED Keokuk County

Visit our
website at
www.iascoe.org
for the first eight
parts of "The
Perils of Polly PT"

We're getting new furniture in a couple of weeks and Gracie Luptkis is wandering around the office with a yardstick clutched in her hand, measuring every inch of available space. In fact, she's up at the counter right now, computing the distance between the typewriter table and where she thinks the copier should be placed, as Herbie Johnson strolls in.

Herbie reminds me of Roger Miller, a popular crooner from my mother's era. Mom always had a Roger Miller record playing on our old Hi-Fi, which is the reason I'm an authority on many of his songs. If she could see Herbie, she would swoon at first sight because he not only bears a striking resemblance to the singer, he possesses a similar deep, sultry voice.

He shakes a piece of paper at me as I approach the counter. No...let me rephrase that...the paper makes a giant swoop through the air as I approach the counter. (Herbie doesn't move fast enough to shake anything) "What can I do for you today, Herbie?" I ask.

"My crop report is all wrong," he says. "And my insurance company won't pay my claim until it's fixed."

Herbie has a share lease with a landlord who has CRP and I have an idea that we might have carried the landlord's CRP percentage through the remainder of the certification. We have made this error a time or two in past years...okay, okay...it's probably our most common mistake during certification and even though we make every effort to review our work, we still have to make corrections from time to time.

Gracie moves to the wall at the end of the counter and attempts to remove the bulletin board we use to post our county prices. I

would like to tell her that she could pick a more opportune time to start rearranging stuff, however, the scent of her perfume seems to nicely mask the smell of Herbie's clothing, which is a cross between stale stogies and dirty, wet goats.

He hands me his certification and while I carefully peruse each entry, Gracie decides to start pounding nails. "Herbie," I say finally. "I can't find an error here."

(pound, pound, pound) "Why does your insurance company say that this is wrong?"

Herbie doesn't speak at first. He's pretty distracted by Gracie, who is now using her yardstick as a level for the two nails that she just drove into the wall. "Uh," he says, "They claim there's a problem with the shares."

While his eyes are glued on Gracie, he does a quick side shuffle with his feet. This sort of foot maneuver is a definite red flag, and Gracie takes note of it at once. She turns our way for a couple of seconds so that she can hear our conversation. Being the payment limitation clerk, she's pretty keen on documenting changes in farming operations as soon as they occur.

"This certification says that you have a fifty percent interest in this ground. Isn't that right?" I ask.

Herbie's eyes dart from me to Gracie, who now has the hammer poised mid-air. He must find the hammer a bit intimidating because a thin, sheen of perspiration covers his lip. "Uh," he says. "How do you want me to answer that?"

"Correctly," I say.

“Well, Mike, that’s my boy you know, he helps me some.”

“Are you inferring that Mike had a share of this crop?”

“No,” Herbie says and I breathe an immediate sigh of relief, until he adds, “I just give him my share of the crop and I keep the government check. It works out good that way.”

My intestines knot up. I imagine that they resemble some cute little balloon animal. In fact, I think my innards are forming a toy poodle that escapes from my tummy as a gut-wrenching groan. It’s never good to make a noise of distress, while at the counter, so I take a pause.

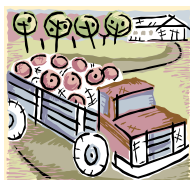
Herbie’s eyes are speaking volumes to me right now. They say, I came here because I

have a problem and I trust you to help me fix it. I am an honest person and I don’t feel as though I’ve done anything wrong.

And me, I’m thinking in terms of Misrepresentation of Shares, penalties, fines, and loss of stature at the coffee shop...all the things that make my job just so darn pleasant.

I shove the certification aside. “Herbie,” I say finally. “Have you ever thought about being a singer? You could go on the road and make lots of money, and then you turn your whole farming operation over to Mike, we won’t have to bother with any of these pesky rules and forms. Here let me teach you the words and then we’ll go practice on my mom. Sing along with me now, Herbie...*I’m a man of means, by no means, king of the road...*”

The End



Jim Morris in the Madison County FSA office found this list in a farm magazine a couple years ago. We posted it up front on our markets board and we received so many requests for a copy that now we just keep a stack of copies so our producers can help themselves.

TOP 10 REASONS FARM TRUCKS ARE NEVER STOLEN

10. They have a range of about 20 miles before they overheat, break down or run out of gas.
9. Only the owner knows how to operate the door to get in or out.
8. It is difficult to drive fast with all the fence tools, grease rags, ropes, chains, syringes, buckets, boots and loose papers in the cab.
7. It takes too long to start and the smoke coming up through the rusted-out floorboard clouds your vision.
6. The Border Collie on the toolbox looks mean.
5. They're too easy to spot. The description might go something like this: The driver's side door is red, the passenger side door is green, the right front fender is yellow, etc.
4. The large round bale in the back makes it hard to see if you're being chased. You could use the mirrors if they weren't cracked and covered with duct tape.
3. Top speed is only about 45 MPH.
2. Who wants a truck that needs a year's worth of maintenance, \$3,000 in bodywork, taillights and a windshield?

AND THE NUMBER 1 REASON WHY FARM TRUCKS ARE NEVER STOLEN...

1. It is hard to commit a crime with everyone waving at you!!

