

The Iowa Association Of FSA
County Office Employees

IASCOE NEWS

March 2004

2004 IASCOE/IACS/IASE CONVENTION

APRIL 2 & 3, 2004

Starlite Village in Fort Dodge, Iowa

Highway 169 North

Phone: 515-573-7177 or 1-800-903-0009

(Mention IASCOE/IACS/IASE when registering)

Room Rate: \$69.00 plus tax (up to 4 people per room)

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER!

Marilyn Adams

Founder of Farm Safety Just 4 Kids

Will speak at the General Session on Saturday Morning

Friday April 2nd

IASCOE Past President's/Retiree's Luncheon - 12:00 Noon

Registration - 1:00 to 5:00

IACS Meeting - 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

IASE Meeting - 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

IASCOE Committee Meetings - 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Hospitality Room - 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Talent Show - 8:00 p.m.

Dance - 9:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Saturday April 3rd

Registration - 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Breakfast Buffet Banquet - 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

Awards and Scholarships - 8:30 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.

IASCOE/IACS/IASE General Session - 9:30a.m. to 12:30p.m.

Mr. Douglas Frago, Deputy Administrator For Field Operations, has been invited to speak on Saturday, April 3rd during the General Session.

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged! It will save you time and money!!

Pre-register for all of the above activities for \$20.00.

The registration at the door will be \$25.00.

**GET INFORMATION FIRST HAND!
JOIN THE FUN!!!
CALL NOW FOR RESERVATIONS!**

Each county is asked to bring an item to be used for a door prize or silent auction.

**It is your convention- Let's make it a good one!
Please try to attend and see old friends and make new ones!**



~~ 6th ANNUAL TALENT SHOW ~~

Bring your talents to the
2004 IASCOE/IACS/IASE Convention!

WHEN: Friday, April 2, 2004 8:00 p.m.

WHAT: Any TALENT!?! Sing, Dance, Lip Sync,
Comedy Routine, Magic show or Skit.

WHO: Any group or individual wanted.
(set up by county, district or individual)

Anything is possible!

Please notify Tammy Eibey in Delaware County by March 26th so a schedule can be prepared! Good Luck.

Show us your talents Iowa FSA

**2004 IASCOE/IACS/IASE CONVENTION
PRE-REGISTRATION FORM**

NAME _____

COUNTY _____ POSITION _____

Pre-registration & Breakfast Banquet: \$20.00 _____

Registration at Door and Breakfast Banquet \$25.00 _____

Registration Only \$15.00 _____

***Registration includes: Meeting Room rental, Hospitality room and DJ for dance.

TOTAL: \$ _____

Please check one of the Following:

- IASCOE Member _____
- IASE Member _____
- IACS Member _____
- IASCOE Associate Member _____
- Out of State Guest _____
- Other _____

Mail completed form and payment to

Connie Safley
1252 230th Street
Linden, Iowa 50146

**All pre-registration forms should be received by March 26, 2004
PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO IASCOE**

This Pre-Registration Form may be printed from our web site at iascoe.org

FROM THE DESK OF DERRYL MCLAREN, SED

March is upon us, and with it comes the changing of the Seasons. The sweet smell of freshly turned soil in the Spring carries the promise of another crop and the anticipation of a bountiful year. Soybeans are roughly twice the loan rate, and corn is hovering around the \$3 mark (additional reasons for optimism). With the exception of a few farmers, the 2nd yearly enrollment in the new Farm Bill has been completed, and we have only a CRP sign-up as workload outside the normal course of events. Hopefully you have had the opportunity to do some spring-cleaning of your own in the office, and you have completed unfinished business that played second fiddle during the past year.

Speaking of last year, 2003 can officially be placed in the archives of FSA history. By the way, we are still receiving accolades from the Secretary, Congressional people, farm groups, and the general public for your extraordinary performance in implementing the Farm Bill. Well done! In 2004, we need to focus on GIS and E-gov. There is no greater urgency in my mind than certification of CLUs and the conversion to digital. We can afford neither the loss of efficiency nor the dual maintenance of the old analog mapping system with the new digital desktop. GIS will be (is) the new platform for connectivity with our producers.

As a society, we expect our access to information to be instantaneous. The producers we serve will continue to anticipate more from us in connectivity and interaction. FSA will soon be releasing a new Customer Report, which farmers can access electronically. This report will give them volumes of file information, including payment records, maps, and planted acreage. In the months to come, our internal operating systems will become Web-based.

We will be accomplishing this transformation in an atmosphere of more stringent budgets. We are over 5 months into the fiscal year, and only now is the budget for '04 becoming clear. In Iowa, we will operate with 17 fewer non-federal positions and a loss of 5 federal positions. Gone are the supplemental funds from the Farm Bill, resulting in a reduction to 75 temporary staff positions. The non-federal ceiling for Iowa is identical to fiscal '99 and is derived through a formula of '02, '03, and estimated '04 workloads divided by 3 and multiplied by an 85% distribution factor. Oddly, by coincidence, this percentage is equal to the factor used in computing direct farm payments. There will be 212 non-federal jobs lost in '04 in order to reduce the workforce to the static statutory limit of 9284. Federal positions were derived by roughly a 2% reduction across every state's '03 ceiling. To insure performance, every single back-fill and new position will require approval of Washington, and the reductions result from attrition.

I regard this situation to be manageable. Fortunately, we moved swiftly in reducing TOs in order to allow flexibility through the remainder of the year. Assistance will be available for counties as they acquire their GIS database. The non-salary budget, however, will necessitate the cooperation of all employees to reduce travel, training, utilities, etc., to conform to the reduced allocations. I regard this, too, as manageable with inconsequential adjustments.

I am optimistic as we enter the Spring of 2004. The economy is strengthening, land prices are robust, interest rates remain low, the drought has subsided, and the fundamentals of the grain markets are sound. All of these factors reduce the likelihood of LDPs this Fall. That would be good news for all of us!

Looking forward to visiting and meeting with everyone at the 2004 IACOE/IASE/IACS Convention in Ft. Dodge, Iowa in April.



IASCOE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Tom Lane - IASCOE President & CED Of Henry/Lee County

March 2004



Greetings Membership!!

The annual convention is rapidly approaching and I would like to take a moment to personally invite you to attend this year's convention. It is being held on April 2nd & 3rd at the Starlite Best Western in Ft Dodge, Iowa.

Association Committee business will be conducted on Friday with a hospitality room and a dance that evening.

On Saturday, our keynote speaker will be Marilyn Adams, founder of Farm Safety 4 Just Kids. Additionally, there will be a ceremony to honor FSA employees and family members who are serving in the Armed Forces. Please submit the names of these persons so they may be recognized for the sacrifice they have made to defend our country.

Take a look at the convention information in this newsletter and make plans to attend. Don't forget to buy your raffle tickets!!

The 2004 budget is presenting challenges for Agency. Funding for temporary help was reduced 50% from the 2003 budget allocation. In 2003, we had carryover money from 2002 plus farm bill and disaster bill money to help us fund temporary help. The 2004 funding level does not consider any of the money from outside the actual 2003 budget. Additionally, the 2004 budget leaves the Agency in a funding situation where we are approximately 200 FTE's overstuffed nationwide. Administrator Little has announced that there will be no furloughs or RIF's for 2004. We will address this shortfall through savings in travel and other areas in the budget. FY 2004 will be a tough fiscal year. The President's proposed budget for FY 2005 has been announced and it will continue to present challenges for the Agency.

NASCOE has a mini-legislative conference scheduled for March 7 – 10. Key Senators and Representatives have been identified and will be contacted with information concerning the increased workload the agency faces, the reduction in staff available to complete that work, and the dire need to increase funding. Iowa is sending two excellent representatives to work on presenting the case. I am hopeful they will get the message out. Mike Houston, CED from Cherokee County and Steve Abbas, CED from Franklin County, will be representing Iowa during the mini legislative conference.

The first day of Spring is just around the corner! The grass will be greening up; baby animals will be appearing and the wonder of Mother Nature will present itself. Take time to get out and enjoy the nice weather with your family and friends. As more is asked of you, it becomes increasingly important to rid yourself of stress. Remember that it is ok to take a break once in a while!

Have a safe & enjoyable spring and I will see you in Ft Dodge!

Tom

ALAN'S THOUGHTS

By Alan Donaldson - IASOCE Vice President

CED Sioux County FSA



NEVER GIVE IN!

“Great moments are born from great opportunity. This is your time!” - Herb Brooks.

If you are like me you probably had no idea who Herb Brooks was. Just a couple of weeks ago Linda and I went to the movie “Miracle”. For those of you who haven’t seen the movie, it’s the story about the 1980 US Olympic Hockey Team who defeated the seemingly unbeatable Russian Team in the Olympics and went on to win the Gold Medal. Brooks was a coach who was driven to get the most and best from his players. When he recruited the team, he wasn’t looking for the best individual players, but rather the best combination of players who would come together to make a winning team. Although we knew the outcome of the movie even before we saw it, the way the individuals came together to play was really inspirational.

Recently I’ve been reading some of Winston Churchill’s quotes. He was a great leader who lived during some of the most trying times of the 20th century. One of his many talents was his ability to encourage citizens of Great Britain during the dark days of the Blitz. As Churchill said of the fighter pilots who fought off the German bombers during the battle of Britain. “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

I know that if you are like me, sometimes you get discouraged. You look at all that you accomplished in the last year and think that maybe things are looking up. A new project or program comes up. You find out that funding is going to be tight from here on out, or rules change and it affects the way you are able to do your job. You sometimes worry about your future.

NASCOE knows about your concerns. The NASCOE leadership has scheduled a “mini” Legislative Conference for the week of March 7. The reason it is called a “mini” conference is because instead of trying to contact all of the Congressmen and Senators, NASCOE is concentrating on some of the key legislators who are most connected with the FSA budget. We are fortunate to have two very capable representatives from IASCOE who will be going to Washington D.C. to contact our legislators. They are Mike Houston and Steve Abbas. I urge you to support their efforts as they go to Washington on their own time to find support for you and our agency.

I’d also like to encourage you to attend the IASCOE convention, which will be held in Ft. Dodge on April 2 and 3. It’s a time to find out what’s going on in the agency, air your concerns, and socialize with co-workers from across the state.

In uncertain times, in times of change, or in times of stress I encourage you to take another Churchill quote to heart, “Never give in - never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in.”

*Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day.
Teach that person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks.*

JANUARY 2004 IASCOE DIRECTORS MINUTES
STARLITE VILLAGE
Best Western
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
January 23, 2004

Officers Present: President, Tom Lane; Vice President, Alan Donaldson; Secretary-Treasurer, Sue Beemer.

Directors Present: Rosie Kahl, Vicki Heeren, Steve Kennedy, Joni Birkhofer, Dan Wells, Terry Pauling, Connie Safley, Sandy Johnson, Ron Mauser, John Bahnsen, Shari Bush and Tammy Eibey.

Alternate Directors Present: Steve Luke.

President Tom Lane called the meeting to order at 7:40 P.M.

SECRETARY AND TREASURER REPORT

The directors reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting. Rosie moved and Ron seconded the minutes be approved as written. Motion carried by all Directors. The directors reviewed the Treasurer's Itemized Categories Report for 7/1/03 through 1/21/04. Terry moved and Ron seconded the report be accepted.

OLD BUSINESS

Web site: The Web-site has been updated with the current newsletter. It is very evident that Tammy has put a lot of work into the newsletter. She really appreciates the articles that have been submitted to her. The directors felt it would be nice if counties would submit an article when they have a new employee. Hopefully someone in each county will take on the responsibility to print the newsletter and make it available for everyone to read.

Out of State Conventions: John Landgraf attended the Ohio Convention but was unable to attend the directors meeting so we did not receive a report.

Labor-Management Meeting: President Tom Lane and Vice President Alan Donaldson met with the State Committee and Daryl McLaren on January 13, 2004. Alan gave the following report to the directors. Some of the items discussed were as follows:

Budget – Daryl has been appointed to the national committee to set up the budget. The full time staff should remain the same with no rifts, buyouts, or furloughs. Temporary Office personnel will be reduced or eliminated. The exceptions may be offices working on GIS. It has been determined it will take much longer than the 90 day implementation.

Background of IASCOE - Tom gave the State Committee a handout explaining the general background of IASCOE/NASCOE. IASCOE has representation for CED's and PT's. We also work with IACS and IASE. Our membership numbers increased slightly this year making us 86% for the year. PT re-classification will be put at rest for a while but brought up again in the future. The State Committee wanted to know the justification of PT increases.

NEW BUSINESS

Election Results: The ballots were opened and counted by the directors. The results are as follows:

District 1: Program Technician Director – Rosie Kahl, Lyon County
District 1: Alternate Program Technician Director – Nancy Heideman, Clay Co.
District 1: County Executive Director – Alan Donaldson, Sioux County
District 1: Alternate County Executive Director – Larry Lago, Dickinson Co.

District 2: Program Technician Director – Robin Rode, Kossuth County
District 2: Alternate Program Technician Director – Vicki Heeren, Franklin Co.
District 2: County Executive Director – Julie Hall, Kossuth County
District 2: Alternate County Executive Director – John Bahnsen, Floyd County

District 3: Program Technician Director – Tammy Eibey, Delaware County
District 3: Alternate Program Technician Director – Karen McNeil, Winneshiek
District 3: County Executive Director – Cindy Mensen, Clayton County
District 3: Alternate County Executive Director – Kevin Keegan, Buchanan Co.

District 5: Program Technician Director – Connie Safley, Dallas County
District 5: Alternate Program Technician Director – Twyla Brede, Dallas County
District 5: County Executive Director – Steve Kennedy, Jasper County
District 5: Alternate County Executive Director – Bob Wegand, Grundy County

District 7: Program Technician Director – Sue Beemer, Taylor County
District 7: Alternate Program Technician Director – Cindy Bebout, Fremont Co.
District 7: County Executive Director – Dan Wells, Adair County
District 7: Alternate County Executive Director – Bill Bartenhagen, Cass/Adams

Steve moved the election results be accepted and the ballots be destroyed. The motion carried by all Directors.

Audit of Treasurer's Book: President Tom Lane and Vice-President Alan Donaldson reviewed the treasurer's book for the IASCOE 2003-2004 year. Everything was found in order and signed to that effect by the above.

Mini-Legislative Conference: Iowa will be sending two delegates to the Mini Legislative Conference in Washington D. C. March 7th through the 10th. They will have scheduled appointments to meet with key contacts but can meet with as many congressionals as time will permit. Alan will contact Mike Houston and Bob Wegand to see if they would consent to be Iowa's delegates. Tom Lane will be our alternate.

Mileage Reimbursement Rate: Tom brought up the possibility of increasing the mileage rate for Director Meetings, Out-Of-State Conventions, National Convention and The Midwest Area Rally. After considerable discussion the Directors decided to amend the policy established in 1981 to the following:

Directors will be reimbursed at ½ of the government mileage rate, rounding down to the whole cent. This policy will take effect in April 2004. Dan moved and Ron seconded the above policy be accepted. Motion carried by all directors.

IASCOE 2004 Convention: The 2003-2004 convention will be in Fort Dodge at the Starlite Village on April 2 & 3, 2004. Room rate is \$69.95 plus tax a night. Committees are as follows: Agenda - Tom Lane; Registration - Steve Kennedy and Connie Safley; Speaker – Marilyn Adams for Farm Safety 4 Just Kids; Brunch - Tom Lane; Entertainment/Talent Show - John Landgraf; Past President/Retiree’s Lunch - John Landgraf; Hospitality (food, drinks) - John Bahnsen; DoorPrizes/Raffle - Joni Birkhofer, Rich Kleppe and Terry Pauling; Hospitality Bags – Fort Dodge Convention and Visitors Bureau; Publicity Flyer – Tammy Eibey; Year Book/Annual Report – Sue Beemer.

Greg, representing the Starlite Village, met with us to go over the details of the convention. We discussed the rooms needed for filling the hospitality bags, directors’ meetings, committee meetings, the general assembly, the talent show and dance, hospitality room, brunch, registration table and area for silent auction and door prizes. The hotel will need to know the number of attendees for the Past President/Retirees Lunch by Monday, March 30th. The breakfast buffet will be Saturday morning from 7:30a.m. - 8:30a.m. followed by the awards presentations. Room 187 will be the hospitality room Friday night. The directors will also have their meeting there Thursday night and Friday morning. The registration will be located in the lobby and the hotel will provide tables for the silent auction and door prizes. Each county needs to bring an item for either the silent auction or door prize. The registration fee will be \$20 for pre-registration or \$25 if you register at the convention site. The directors determined to reimburse committee members for the full room rate for Friday night. Committee members must attach the hotel invoice to their expense sheet. All directors need to bring items for the hospitality room.

Dean Vinchattle has been booked as the DJ for the dance Friday night. His fee will be \$550.00

Marilyn Adams will be one of the speakers at the General Assembly. As mentioned before, she represents Farm Safety 4 Just Kids. Tom will see about getting a safety display for the convention. Ron made a motion to donate \$500.00 to Farm Safety 4 Just Kids in appreciation of Marilyn speaking. Connie seconded with all directors voting in favor. Tom has sent letters to Doug Frago and James Little asking them to speak at the General Assembly but has not heard back at this time.

IASCOE 2005 Convention: The 2005 Convention will be in Marshalltown at the Holiday Inn on April 1 & 2, 2005. Room rate is \$55.00/person or \$62.00 for two people.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Benefits and Legislative: Steve and Terry gave an update to the Board. Disney is no longer participating. J&M Marketing has added Roadside Assistance as a new benefit.

Awards: Connie reminded everyone to get the Distinguished Service Awards to her by February 1st. This will also be listed in the newsletter again. Sick Leave Awards need to be given to Connie as soon as possible. She received a good response for the sick leave but she needs to sort through them because only members are eligible receive the award. Terry represented IASCOE and presented a certificate for Jim Morris of Madison County. Sheri will get a retirement certificate to Dianne Pokorny of Tama County.

Scholarships: Vicki has sent out twelve scholarship applications but has only received three back. She will sent out reminders the last week of January. As scholarships are based on membership, the directors decided on four in the amount of \$300.00 each.

Membership: Iowa has 85.7% membership. Dan will do the 100% county membership certificates for the convention.

Publicity: Tammy would like to have the articles for the next newsletter by February 23rd so the newsletter can be out by the 1st week of March. Some ideas for the newsletter were articles and pictures about new employees or new office buildings.

OTHER ITEMS

The next IASCOE meeting will be held in April at the Starlite Village in Fort Dodge.

Sandra moved and John seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. President Lane adjourned the meeting at 10:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

Sue Beemer
IASCOE Secretary

Quit Complaining! We could have it a lot worse!

Pictures of the Labrador Highway in Newfoundland

Submitted by Robin Rode - PT Kossuth County



Gardening Rule: When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.

Legislative Update

Submitted By Terry Pauling - IASCOE Legislative Co-Chair
CED Warren County Iowa

NASCOE 2004 CAPITOL HILL CONFERENCE

NASCOE leaders from around the country will meet with key policymakers during the week of March 8 to discuss important issues for our Association. Priority topics include recent staffing reductions in specific states, homeland security, animal identification policy, permanent staffing and FSA's role with regard to federal crop insurance.

NASCOE will also host a meeting with agricultural industry leaders to discuss the above agenda items.

House Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee Sets Agenda -

The House Subcommittee on Agricultural Appropriations has outlined its agenda for early 2004. The schedule to date includes the following hearings of interest to NASCOE:

- February 25 – Secretary Veneman
- February 26 – Natural Resources and Environment
- March 3 – Inspector General
- March 4 – Marketing and Regulatory Programs
- March 17 – Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
- March 18 – Food Safety and Inspection Service

The Homeland Security Subcommittee has scheduled a hearing with the Office of Domestic Preparedness for March 18. The issues discussed at this hearing will also be of value to NASCOE members. Members of these Subcommittees will be briefed prior to the hearings on NASCOE's concerns.

Tobacco Buyout Update -

Several key tobacco state congressmen continue to meet with the House leadership to discuss the possibility of a tobacco buyout. The issue has become a focal point for the special election in Kentucky to replace former Congressman and now Governor Ernie Fletcher. There are many issues still remaining as roadblocks to this issue in 2004.

NASCOE Mini Legislative Conference -

Mike Houston, CED Cherokee County and Steve Abbas, CED Franklin County, will represent IASCOE at this year's NASCOE mini-conference in Washington D.C. We look forward to hearing about the success of their and NASCOE's efforts. The Conference is scheduled March 7th to the 11th. Iowa will be well represented.

For additional information, check the NASCOE Legislative web page from time to time to review the position papers on staffing, federal crop insurance, animal identification, and homeland security. Key in www.nascoe.org and click on the Legislative Tab at the top of the page. Position papers are listed at the bottom of the page.

Benefits -

Disney tickets are no longer available through NASCOE. Other amusement parks, such as Six Flags, do offer discount tickets. Key in www.nascoe.org and click on the Benefits Tab at the top of the page for additional information on all benefits offered to NASCOE members.

NASCOE Leaders Assemble Staff Reduction Data -

Recent proposed staffing cuts in certain states have caused grave concern amongst NASCOE leaders. Data is being prepared for congressional supporters to review and engage with the Administration on the proposed cuts. This debate will be an important focus of farm state policymakers with state staffing reductions.

The next four pages are the final drafts of the position papers that will be used at the Mini Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. March 7th to the 11th.



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Homeland Security and the Farm Service Agency

The purpose of the defense program in USDA is to maintain a state of readiness for carrying out food and agricultural programs under wartime or disaster conditions. “Potentially serious livestock and crop diseases are always a natural threat to our agricultural infrastructure. Throw in the potential for diseases that could affect animals and humans, and the picture becomes much more complex. Recent notable examples include the emergence of West Nile virus in the United States, and new outbreaks of avian influenza in California, and the Shenandoah Valley and the BSE animal in Washington state.

In administering defense programs, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) has developed a close working relationship with representatives of state and local governments. The formation of State Agricultural Response Teams (SART) is beginning to integrate the responsibilities of local, state, and federal agencies to avoid duplication of work. The mission of the SART is to develop and implement procedures and train participants to facilitate a environmentally sound, safe and efficient response to agricultural emergencies or disasters on the local, county, and state levels.

The Farm Service Agency could assist in administering the recent executive order released on February 3, 2004 involving the departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services and Homeland Security, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency, in the response to potentially calamitous agricultural terrorism:

- Current regulations to address agricultural incidents (DR1800-1) direct the agencies of USDA to collect and evaluate damage caused by natural disasters affecting the agriculture community. FSA leads this task at the local level by chairing the County Emergency Board (CEB). The CEB is responsible for evaluating and reporting information to the Secretary of USDA through the State Emergency Board (SEB). The CEB also analyzes disaster information at the request of state governors when seeking disaster declarations. Through the leadership of FSA, the data collected provides state and federal offices with the required information to assess and provide appropriate relief programs to aide farmers and ranchers in their recovery efforts.
- With the development of the FSA's common land unit layer through Geographic Information System (GIS), the Agency would be able to assist with the tracking of bio-terrorism as well as agro-terrorism. GIS will give the Agency the ability to locate fertilizer plants, airfields, grain storage facilities, and other potential targets in a readily available database allowing preemptive control information of any directed attack.
- There is a Farm Service Agency office in practically every county/parish in the United States with a working data base of all landowners, farmers, and ranchers.
- The Farm Service Agency has a system, trusted by local farmers, to administer federal farm programs.
- The high standards in which FSA administers other programs and the ability to educate farmers through newsletter, producer meetings and news releases make FSA the common sense alternative for implementation of all homeland security programs directed at agriculture.

NASCOE stands firm with America's farmers and ranchers who undoubtedly will be called upon to implement additional safety measures to aid consumer confidence which is necessary to protect an already fragile rural economy.

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OPPORTUNITIES IN CROP INSURANCE REFORM

FSA has made great strides in meeting the Reorganization Act of 1994. The USDA Service Center concept has been further enhanced through the Common Computing Environment (CCE) and the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) Technologies.

The Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000 (ARPA) was enacted into law largely as a result of report, GAO/RCED-99-266, completed on September 22, 1999. This law creates a new relationship between the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The law directed that “the Secretary shall develop and implement a coordinated plan for the Corporation and the Farm Service Agency to reconcile all relevant information received by the Corporation or the Farm Service Agency from a producer who obtains crop insurance under this title. Beginning with the 2001 crop year, the Secretary shall require that the Corporation and the Farm Service Agency reconcile such producer-derived information on at least an annual basis in order to identify and address any discrepancies.” USDA’s 2001 Compliance Report to congress noted program costs had been reduced an estimated \$94 million by preventing payments on potential fraudulent claims. Further, the indemnities of producers on the spot check list reduced substantially for 2001 to 2002 from over \$210 million to just over \$100 million.

These laws have changed FSA and RMA roles and responsibilities. Further opportunities and efficiencies can be achieved by the following:

- Determine to use a common GIS database with a crop identification layer, which integrates information ***all*** USDA Agencies can utilize and share, reducing the current duplication. This will lessen the reporting burden on our common customer.
- Information sharing, such as a common acreage report, affords an upfront reconciliation of data required by ARPA, instead of completing an after-the-fact reconciliation, which is an unnecessary drain of resources on both Agencies.
- One common acreage report through GIS allows Agencies to fulfill their responsibilities using existing resources and in a more efficient manner by sharing information through one integrated system.
- FSA already is required to collect and maintain data useful to other Agencies and entities. Through the CCE and GIS initiatives, more and more data, that is kept and maintained by FSA, is in a sharable format.
- This initiative allows Agencies to meet goals of the President’s Management Agenda, improves customer service and results in better Performance Based budgeting.

For this concept to be further expanded, the Geographic Information System (GIS) and geospatial information will have to be available across Agency lines as one integrated system. This system will provide all Agencies common access to consistent data and geospatial business processes among Service Center locations and Service Center agencies.

Extensive documentation is available supporting the concept of GIS improving Service Center operations by elimination of duplicate sets of information and business processes, and providing easy online access to geospatial information. GIS enables developments of reengineered business processes that improve customer service and reduce agency costs.

NASCOE supports the continued enhancement of this concept and encourages additional resources to make FSA an integral part of the continued evolution of crop insurance reform. We welcome the opportunity, and would endorse any endeavor, to share this database with stakeholder Agencies and look forward in assisting in, the maintenance or creation of geospatial information for the use by all agencies



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FISCAL YEAR 2005 Appropriations

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 greatly increased the scope of those eligible for price support payments, conservation funding, and farm program payments. These increases indicate farm programs are helping more people, especially those small and mid sized producers in rural areas. While NASCOE welcomes these increases in producer program opportunities, the reality is USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is not adequately staffed according to the workload reports FSA provided Congress. This lack of adequate staffing is most dramatically realized in the Programs, non-Federal County Office employees administer.

Congress requested and received workload reports for the past 3 years and projected workload for fiscal year 2004. These reports show Programs administered by the non-Federal County Office employees indicate a need of an average of 10,792 permanent staff years or show them **understaffed** by an average of **1508** permanent staff years.

The projected Workload report for FY 2004 shows a need of **9961** permanent staff years while **FSA only** requested **9284** permanent staff years.

With FSA setting the current staffing ceiling at 9284 permanent staff years an **additional 677 permanent** staff years are needed to fully administer recurring programs based on 2004 projections. There should be **little if any change for FY 2005**.

In January 2003, GAO made the following conclusions: **"Concerns also continue about the adequacy of staffing at the service centers to meet farmers' needs, as directed in the 2002 Farm Bill.**

The 2002 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 established the Commission on the Application of Payment Limitations for Agriculture. The Commission is also in agreement that FSA is substantially understaffed, as they wrote in their report, **"FSA county office staff have considerable workloads, and more resources could augment current efforts to train staff on payment limits and monitor compliance."**

The increase in permanent staffing does not include unmeasured, recurring work or workload the Department considers intermittent. The workload report FSA provided Congress shows FSA failed to request an adequate number of temporary staff years to cover the shortfall created by the lack of permanent staffing.

FSA's Information Technology (IT) investment is considerable and NASCOE supports the use of IT for the highest level of efficiency possible. NASCOE finds that for efficiencies to be gained and programs to be fully utilized GIS, GPS and software upgrades must be funded. This is even more evident considering the same basic computer/software system is being used that FSA started with in 1983.

To date, only 2000 customers across the Department have been issued eGov credentials. According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, the average age of American agricultural producers is above 55 years old. Program procedures are complex and producers trust the current delivery system that serves them well. Acceptance of eGov by this hard working generation of producers will come slowly.

NASCOE asks Congress to enact legislation that will adequately fund the Farm Service Agency's, non-Federal County Office workforce. Further, we ask Congress to require the Farm Service Agency to base staffing requests on the workload analysis that is done on a yearly basis by all County Offices and is currently used to factor staffing reductions based on the current levels of understaffing.



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ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION PLAN - A NASCOE PERSPECTIVE

The United States Animal Identification Plan Version 4.1 executive summary states, “Protecting American animal agriculture by safeguarding animal health is vital to the wellbeing of all U. S. citizens.” It goes on to say, “Essential to achieving this goal is an efficient and effective animal identification program.” The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has been successfully involved with agricultural producers of the United States for many years and as such FSA and its employees have close ties to the local producers. Working in concert with APHIS and private companies, FSA will ensure a private-state-federal partnership is realized. This alliance will create an efficient, secure, inexpensive animal identification program by drawing from the following strengths:

- **Location.** FSA has accessible locations in nearly every county and parish in the U.S.
- **Implementing programs.** FSA has had success in implementing livestock programs in times of disaster and/or economic instability. FSA has proven time and again it can implement programs of National scope quickly and accurately, which will be critical for national security, public confidence and restoration of foreign trade.
- **Cost factor.** FSA already has the capability to provide this service with little additional cost, other alternatives could involve considerable start up costs. In addition a new agency or field offices would not need to be established to deal with animal identification at the local level.
- **GIS/GPS capabilities.** Each FSA office is now in the process of completing GIS Common Land Unit (CLU) layers of all land in the county. In the very near future we will have the capability to take our current database of livestock producers and put them on a CLU layer and reference every livestock operation in the nation. Each Premise ID can be assigned a point, area and producer information that will remain until that operation is changed or moved. This layer can be attributed with the type of operation and number of livestock.
- **Keeping an accurate database.** FSA has about 90 to 95% of all producers already in their database. We have developed a national secure internet based database that allows us to verify producer's records instantly. Once an animal has been identified and linked to a producer's ID, it can be attached to the Premise ID and a permanent record of the animal's birthplace would be readily available.
- **Quick response capabilities.** An example of FSA's quick response capabilities could be; when an animal shows up at a slaughter plant to be identified, the ID would be read and immediately searched for on a system very similar to SCIMS which is the database that FSA already has implemented. The system would provide a link between the ID tag and a Premise ID. Within, a matter of minutes the county office could be contacted and the farm pinpointed. If a quarantine of a specified area is required, we have the capability to draw any size radius around that farm and ID all other livestock operations within the quarantine area immediately. Producers can then be notified immediately and APHIS, state and local authorities can get about their work without delay.
- **Privacy assurances.** The House is considering H. R. 3787 which amends the : Animal Health Protection Act requiring the establishment of an electronic nationwide livestock identification system, to prevent the unauthorized release of information collected under the system, to promote an objective review of Department of Agriculture responses to livestock disease outbreaks, and for other purposes. Included in the bill are the following provisions: (f) Release of Animal Identification Numbering Information-(1) Freedom of Information Act- Information obtained through the livestock identification system is exempt from disclosure under Section 552 of Title 5, United States Code. (A) may not be released;(B) shall not be considered information in the public domain; and(C) shall be considered commercial information that is privileged and confidential.

In conclusion, an animal identification plan is inevitable. The only question is how the government can provide the most cost effective, secure, and reliable method of supplying timely information. A “database” tied to a “Premises ID” will certainly be the foundation of any system. FSA already has that database and the local presence to make implementation and administration as convenient and efficient as possible for producers, private industry and partner state and federal agencies. As always, NASCOE/FSA stands ready to serve U.S. livestock producers, and if called upon will work with anyone as a willing partner on this important security and safety endeavor.



IASCOE Membership Committee News

Dan Wells, State Chairperson, CED Adair County

March 2004

It's that time of year again to be thinking about making plans to attend our annual associations' convention. I'm looking forward to seeing old friends again and maybe do a little relaxing. All of us have been rather busy these last few months and this could be a time to renew friendships and maybe start new ones.

The 2003 IASCOE Membership drive turned out to be a great success. Our IASCOE membership is up this year to 85.7%. Thanks to all of you and the hard work of your membership committee.

I would like to introduce you to the Membership Committee:

- District 1 is represented by Ron Reuvers from O'Brien County
- District 2 is represented by Vicki Pederson from Floyd County
- District 3 is represented by Sheri Rodman from Clayton County
- District 4 is represented by Judy Vos from Woodbury County
- District 5 is represented by Rod Biensen from Story County
- District 6 is represented by Carma Reiss from Benton County
- District 7 is represented by Jolene Fechter from Page County
- District 8 is represented by Sally Crall from Monroe County
- District 9 is represented by Lisa Taylor from Davis County

Our continued goal is to have as many members as possible in Iowa. Each member of this committee would be more than willing to answer any questions you may have concerning membership and the benefits associated with being a member. I also am available to all of you. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Don't forget we will be starting a new membership drive in May 2004. Be sure to get your dues in early for our "Early Bird" specials. Our winners last year were:

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

See you in Fort Dodge.
Dan Wells

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.

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.

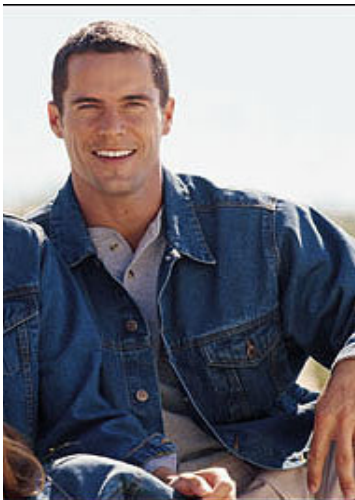
Denise Dugan
NASCOE National Emblems/Program Chairperson

REMINDER: There continues to be a liquidation sale of the NASCOE jackets and the windshirts. There are several ladies windshirts available but a limited supply on the men’s shirts. DENIM is still on sale through March 31st!!!! These are AWESOME!!!!



Look at the Great
USDA Logo!

DENIM JACKET INFORMATION!



Men’s 14-oz 100% cotton denim Jacket. This is the all time favorite denim jacket for any occasion. It has antique silver metal buttons, two front pockets with buttons and two side-welt pockets, and adjustable waistband. Back yoke. Embroidered with the USDA-FSA logo in khaki thread. Price \$28.00



Ladies’ Denim Jacket. This jacket is very popular worn with jeans and slacks. Or, you can make a very professional looking outfit wearing this jacket with a skirt. The jacket has two front flap pockets, two side-welt pockets, antique silver metal buttons, back yoke, and is embroidered with the USDA-FSA logo in khaki thread. Price is \$28.00.

CONTESTANTS IN A BEAUTIFUL BABY CONTEST

Aren't they gorgeous? Here are 3 entries in the contest---can you guess who they are? Answers will follow elsewhere in this issue.

Hint: They recently attended a FSA District 2 manager's meeting!!! As you will agree we have lots of beauty here in Northeast Iowa. There will more in upcoming issues of the IASCOE News!

HERE IS A CUTIE FROM
ME TO YOUTIE!!

Hint: The number 2!!!



Another beauty and
so photogenic!!

Clue: NE!

Look at the pose!!! And the
smile--- was there ice skating
in the future for this one?

Clue--She still has the curls!!!



TRICK QUESTIONS?

Submitted By: Cindy Bebout
PT Fremont County



Look For The Answers Later In This Issue

1. How many animals of each species did Moses take with him to the Ark?
2. A farmer had 17 sheep. All but 9 died. How many live sheep were left?
3. Some months have 30 days, some months have 31 days. How many months have 28 days?
4. How much soil is there in a hole measuring one foot by one foot by one foot?
5. How many birth days does the average person have?
6. Who's bigger: Mr. Bigger, Mrs. Bigger or their baby?
7. There was an airplane crash, every single person died, but two people survived. How is this possible?
8. A man left home running. He ran a ways and then turned left, ran the same distance and turned left again, ran the same distance and turned left again. When he got home there were two masked men. Who were they?
9. If there are 6 apples and you take away 4, how many do you have?
10. There are 5 apples in a basket and five people in a room. How can you give an apple to each person in the room and yet leave one apple in the basket.
11. You are competing in a race and overtake the runner lying in second place. In which position are you now?
12. Take 1000. Add 40. Add another 1000. Add 30. 1000 again. Plus 20. Plus 1000. And plus 10. What is the total?
13. A clerk in the butcher shop is 5' 10" tall. What does he weigh?
14. How many outs are there in an inning?
15. How many times can you subtract the number 5 from 25?

Answers to the baby contestants:

Hint: the number 2. This Farm Loan Manager is one of 2 in her family and they have 2 sons—Greg and Wes. You may read about them in articles about Charles City sports—she is Julie Offerman.

Hint: NE. This CED is in the farthest Northeast Iowa county of Allamakee. She has still has this great smile! She is Karen Loeb.

Hint: She still has the curls! This Farm Loan Manager is located in the Nordic center of Iowa! She is Vicky Hinsenbrock.

Be sure and watch the next newsletter for more photos!

Happy Birthday Kathy Rahe!!

Kathy celebrated her birthday on February 24th with delivery of many flower arrangements! The rest of the staff was jealous. Oh to be young and a newlywed! Kathy is a PT in Delaware County.



Never Leave Your Desk For A Trip To Hawaii!

PT Jill Roberg returned from vacation to find her desk decorated! The office staff in Delaware County enjoyed having this ready for her return!

ANSWERS TO TRICK QUESTIONS

1. None. Noah was on the Ark, not Moses.
2. 9
3. 12. They all do.
4. None. How can you have anything in a hole?
5. One. You are only born once.
6. The baby. He's a "little" bigger.
7. The two people that survived were "married" not "single".
8. The umpire and catcher. It's a baseball field.
9. 4. You took 4.
10. Hand the basket with the apple in it to the fifth person.
11. Second place.
12. Correct answer is 4100. Most people get 5000.
13. Meat.
14. Six.
15. Once. The key here is subtract-not divide.

LARRY D. LAGO, CED FROM DICKINSON COUNTY REACHES NEW MILESTONE!

Submitted by the Dickinson County FSA Staff

Congratulations to CED Larry Lago who on January 31, 2004 reached an age plateau, which, if he had been of female gender, would have made him eligible to join the Red Hat Society, allowing him the privilege of wearing red hats and purple attire for social functions.

The Dickinson County Office Staff, in their desire to include the CED in the celebration of his birthday, allowed him to become an honorary member of the society sporting his red cap and purple necktie on this auspicious occasion. A fun day was enjoyed by most members of our society. Join us in wishing Larry a Happy Birthday with a bit of friendly ribbing.



Hi Everyone – Today as I sit here writing this and also taking time out to look out the window, it appears spring is just around the corner. Spring is probably my favorite season. I really look forward to the spring flowers poking up through the ground, the grass turning green, the trees budding out, the aroma of flowering trees and bushes and the baby calves with their tails in the air running and playing in the warm sunshine.

Spring also brings the IASCOE annual convention. This year it is at the Starlite Village in Fort Dodge on April 2nd and 3rd.

I really think everyone would benefit by attending the convention. There will be some very good speakers and you will also have a chance to visit with co-workers from all around the state. Mark your calendars now, send in your pre-registration forms and look forward to a great weekend in April.

Hope to see everyone at the convention and take time to enjoy the spring season with family and friends.

Sue Beemer
IASCOE Secretary/Treasurer
PT Taylor County FSA Office



Kossuth County Family Happenings

Here are a few things that have been happening on
the other side of the fence in Kossuth County

This past year has been a year of change in the Gaedtke household, with our oldest daughter graduating from High School and sending her off to college. What a challenge that was, leaving her there pleading with us not to make her stay. Our second daughter started a new job as a Certified Nurses Assistant at a local nursing home and we are also preparing for her first prom which is always an interesting experience. Then there's our youngest daughter who's 13 going on 21. I thought the older two girls were always on the go, but I think Abby is going to beat them both there. So you can guess that most of our time (me and my husband) is spent either running the girls to places or going to their events. They keep us busy, but I wouldn't change the times we spend with them or watching their events for any amount of free time!

Cindy Geadke - PT

The Rode house is always a busy household even if there are only 4 of us, myself (18 years of service with FSA), husband Kent (married 18 years), daughter Heidi (16), and son Devin (14). We live on a century family farm that is 24 miles north and east of Algona, near Titonka. We built our home 4 years ago and tore down the old house, which was 112 years old! That is an adventure that you only want to do once in a lifetime! We are the 4th Rode generation to live on this farm. Kent and I farm 1000 acres and our livestock consists of Baily, our golden retriever, 14 cats outside, and 2 ponds stocked with goldfish. We heat our ponds so our fish can survive the winter months. Kent works off the farm as a consulting Civil Engineer for Kuehl and Payer LTD, located in Algona, Storm Lake, and Sac City. At this point in our lives, we spend much of our time outside of work going to school activities. Both Heidi and Devon are very active in all sports. Kent and I are both active in our little community of Titonka (population 600) and are on various church and community committees. We also love to travel. We just returned from a trip to Cancun, Mexico, for 8 days of fun in the sun. Life is Good!

Robin Rode - PT

I don't really live for summer but life is a little different in the Forburger house the 15 weeks we have from Memorial Day through Labor Day. We try to spend Friday night through Monday afternoon at the lake where we have a seasonal spot and our camper stays there. That leaves Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday to do everything else which includes ball, golf, work, house-cleaning, laundry, paperwork, washing cars, babysitting jobs, aquacizes, and grocery shopping and then back we go for another weekend adventure. Good thing we have 3 days to rest, but I am not sure what days they are! Then the school bell rings and we have the 3 saddest children and parents that you have ever seen that are as brown as buttercups, blonde as Dolly Parton, that need to wear shoes and socks and clothes again. I wear my swimsuit under my dress for a couple of weeks to ease the pain. Then throw in sports and take out the playtime and you would think that the world is going to end. Dollar, our youngest, has a terrible time adjusting too, he goes back to the kennel all day and that puts him in depression. But you know what, we survive, and before long it is May again and we do it all over! We are creatures of habit, what fools are we, but boy do we have fun!

Lisa Forburger - PT

Continued on next page...

PROTECT YOURSELF!!!!

Submitted By Connie Straw - CED Howard County

The following info was gleaned from an email advising how to protect yourself from identity theft

The next time you order checks have only your initials (instead of first name) and last name put on them. If someone takes your check book they will not know if you sign your checks with just your initials or your first name but your bank will know how you sign your checks.

When you are writing checks to pay on your credit card accounts, DO NOT put the complete account number on the "For" line. Instead, just put the last four numbers. The credit card company knows the rest of the number and anyone who might be handling your check as it passes through all the check processing channels won't have access to it.

Never have your SS# printed on your checks. You can add it if it is necessary. But if you have it printed, anyone can get it.

Place the contents of your wallet on a photocopy machine, do both sides of each license, credit card, etc. You will know what you had in your wallet and all of the account numbers and phone numbers to call and cancel. Keep the photocopy in a safe place. Also carry a photocopy of your passport when you travel either here or abroad.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR WALLET IS STOLEN

We have been told we should cancel our credit cards immediately. But the key is having the toll free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call. Keep those where you can find them easily.

File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where it was stolen, this proves to credit providers you were diligent, and is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one).

But here's what is perhaps most important:

Call the three national credit-reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and Social Security number. Most people have never heard of doing this.

The numbers are:

Equifax: 1-800-525-6285;

Experian (formerly TRW): 1-888-397-3742;

Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289;

Social Security Administration (fraud line): 1-800-269-0271

If the thieves would try to apply for credit using your information they would not succeed, as there will be a theft alert on your account. The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit.

In The Beginning

Submitted by Tammy Eibey - FLO Delaware County

** I received this from my brother who always kids me about my dieting and struggle with my weight. What are big brothers for, right?*

In the beginning God covered the earth with broccoli and Cauliflower and spinach, green and yellow and red vegetables of all kinds, so Man and Woman would live long and healthy lives.

Then using God's bountiful gifts, Satan created Ben and Jerry's and Krispy Kreme. And Satan said, "You want hot fudge with that?" And Man said "Yes!" and Woman said, "I'll have another with sprinkles." And lo they gained 10 pounds.

And God created the healthful yogurt that Woman might keep the figure that Man found so fair. And Satan brought forth white flour from the wheat, and sugar from the cane, and combined them. And Woman went from size 2 to size 14.

So God said, "Try my fresh green garden salad. "And Satan presented crumbled Bleu Cheese dressing and garlic toast on the side. And Man and Woman unfastened their belts following the repast.

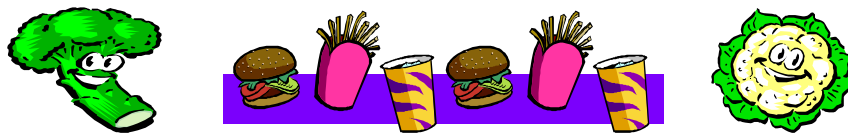
God then said, "I have sent you heart-healthy vegetables and olive oil in which to cook them." And Satan brought forth deep fried coconut shrimp, butter-dipped lobster chunks and chicken-fried steak so big it needed its own platter. And Man's cholesterol went through the roof.

God then brought forth running shoes so that his Children might lose those extra pounds. And Satan came forth with a cable TV with remote control so Man would not have to toil changing the channels. And man and woman laughed and cried before the flickering light and started wearing stretch jogging suits.

Then God brought forth the potato, naturally low in fat and brimming with potassium and good nutrition. Then Satan peeled off the healthful skin and sliced the starchy center into chips and deep-fried them in animal fats and added copious quantities of salt. And Man put on more pounds.

God then gave lean beef so that Man might consume fewer calories and still satisfy his appetite. And Satan created McDonald's and the 99-cent double cheeseburger. Then Lucifer said, "You want fries with that?" and Man replied, "Yes, and super-size em'. And Satan said, "It is good." And Man went into cardiac arrest.

And then God sighed and created quadruple-bypass surgery.
And finally Satan created HMOs.
Amen



*How is it one careless match can start a forest fire,
but it takes a whole box to start a campfire?*

HOW TO SIMULATE BEING A SAILOR

Submitted By John Landgraf - CED Sac County
As received from his nephew Lt. David Bringle onboard the USS Enterprise

Your home is a solid steel canister (painted gray inside and out) for six months at a time.

Run all the pipes and wires in your house exposed on the walls.

Repaint your entire house every month.

Renovate your bathroom with all showerheads to four and one-half feet off the deck.

Make sure you turn off the water while you soap down when you take a shower.

On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, turn water heater temperature up to 300 degrees. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, turn water heater off and on Saturdays and Sundays tell your family they used too much water during the week, so no showers will be allowed for the entire weekend.

Leave your lawn mower running in your living room 24 hours a day for proper noise level.

Once a month, disassemble all your major appliances and electric garden tools, inspect them and then reassemble them. Do this every week with your lawnmower.

Once a week blow compressed air up through your chimney, making sure the wind carries the soot across and onto your neighbor's house. Laugh at him when he curses you.

Raise the thresholds and lower the headers of your front and back doors, so that you either trip or bang your head every time you pass through them.

Raise your bed to within 6 inches of the ceiling, so you can't turn over without getting out and then getting back in.

Make your family qualify to operate each appliance in your house - dishwasher operator, blender technician, etc.

Have your neighbor come over each day at 5 am, blow a whistle so loud Helen Keller could hear it, and shout "Reveille, reveille, all hands heave out and trice up."

Empty all the garbage bins in your house and sweep the driveway three times a day, whether it needs it or not.

Have your neighbor collect all your mail for a month, read your magazines, and randomly lose every 5th item before delivering it to you. Watch no TV except for movies played in the middle of the night. Have your family vote on which movie to watch, and then show a different one.

When your children are in bed, run into their room with a megaphone shouting that your home is under attack and ordering them to their battle stations.

Post a menu on the kitchen door informing your family that they are having steak for dinner. Then make them wait in line for an hour. When they finally get to the kitchen, tell them you are out of steak, but they can have dried ham or hot dogs. Repeat daily until they ignore the menu and just ask for hot dogs.

Bake a cake. Prop up one side of the pan so the cake bakes unevenly. Spread icing real thick to level it off.

Continued on next page...

Every week or so, throw your cat or dog in the pool and shout, "Man overboard port side!" Rate your family members on how fast they respond.

Place a podium at the end of your driveway. Have your family stand watches at the podium, rotating at 4-hour intervals. This is best done when the weather is worst. January is a good time.

When there is a thunderstorm in your area, get a wobbly rocking chair, sit in it and rock as hard as you can until you become nauseous. Make sure to have a supply of stale crackers in your shirt pocket.

Invite at least 500 people you don't really like to come and live with you for about 6 months

Start your car and let it run for 4 hours before going anywhere, to ensure the engine is properly "lit off".

Walk around your car for 4 hours checking the tire pressure every 15 minutes.

Make coffee using eighteen scoops of budget priced coffee grounds per pot, and allow the pot to simmer for 5 hours before drinking.

Have the paperboy give you a haircut with sheep shears.

Sew the back pockets of your jeans on the front.

Lock yourself and your family in the house for six weeks. Tell them that at the end of the 6th week you are going to take them to Disney World for "liberty." At the end of the 6th week, inform them the trip to Disney World has been canceled because they need to get ready for an inspection, and it will be another week before they can leave the house.

For more Information concerning the aircraft carriers and Navy go to:

<http://www.navy.com/aircraftcarriers/classes>

IASCOE SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

**By Vicki Heeren - IASCOE Scholarship Chair
PT Franklin County FSA**



This year, the IASCOE Scholarship Program received 17 applications prior to the January 31st deadline. This is a great response to our State's program. It is wonderful to see how these young people are dedicated to their education. They also are very much involved with activities in their schools, churches and community.

IASCOE will award 4 scholarships this year. The winners will be announced at the Breakfast during the IASCOE Convention April 3rd. All 17 of the applicants have also been forwarded to the NASCOE Midwest Area Scholarship Competition. The winners for those awards will be notified at a later date and awarded at the Midwest Area Convention in Mankato Minnesota on April 23rd and 24th, 2004. Also, those winners compete for the NASCOE Scholarships. (WOW! One application for 2 scholarships!)

For future reference, all applications can be found at the NASCOE website, www.nascoe.org Look for the awards on the bottom of the home page. You can then print off checklists and applications. Completed forms would then need to be returned to the IASCOE Scholarship Chairperson by the state set deadline. Watch for more details on the 2005 scholarship award timeframes in future newsletters.

SIXTEEN THINGS THAT TOOK ME OVER 50 YEARS TO LEARN

By Dave Barry - Syndicated Columnist

1. Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.
2. If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be "meetings."
3. There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."
4. People who want to share their religious views with you almost never want you to share yours with them.
5. You should not confuse your career with your life.
6. Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
7. Never lick a steak knife.
8. The most destructive force in the universe is gossip
9. You will never find anybody who can give you a clear and compelling reason why we observe daylight savings time.
10. You should never say anything to a woman that even remotely suggests that you think she's pregnant unless you can see an actual baby emerging from her at that moment.
11. There comes a time when you should stop expecting other people to make a big deal about your birthday. That time is age eleven.
12. The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above average drivers.
13. A person who is nice to you, but rude to the waiter, is not a nice person.
(This is very important. Pay attention. It never fails.)
14. Your friends love you anyway.
15. Never be afraid to try something new. Remember that a lone amateur built the Ark. A large group of professionals built the Titanic.

Final thought for the day:

16. Men are like a fine wine. They start out as grapes, and it's up to women to stomp the crap out of them until they turn into something acceptable to have dinner with.



The Best Things In Life Are Free

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn
CED Keokuk County Iowa

While thumbing through the mail the other day, my fingers came upon the latest bill from the Veterinary Clinic. While pondering if I really wanted to open this particular piece of correspondence, my mind drifted back to when I first acquired the subject of this most recent expense.

Early in our marriage when my husband still felt a tinge of guilt when leaving for one of his many fishing trips, he made what he considered a grand gesture to appease me. He brought home a puppy. I had sent him to the store for milk and bread and along with the groceries; he brings home this small furry creature. Now, I know from time to time, one can pick up a free sample of something or other at the store but this was a first!

Apparently, some lady was giving away the last few males in a litter of whippets. A whippet looks a whole lot like a greyhound but is only about 1/3 of the size. Even as a puppy, Rufus was never puppy cute. He was all legs and long nose but it didn't take much time before he had won me over and I'm still suffering from a 7-year long case of puppy love.

We have soon discovered however, that although Rufus is loving, affectionate dog, he may not be the brightest hound on the block. Whippets are bred to run and Rufus has always loved to run. He is in absolute doggy heaven when in pursuit of some small critter. The problem lies in the fact, that he just doesn't know when to stop once he gets started and therefore, he has tangled with many a barb wired fence.

I'm looking over his medical records and am rather shocked to see how many visits he and I have made to the vet to get him patched up and put back together. The grand total of all his surgeries is a shock and a half in itself. I have a sneaking suspicion that I have paid for the recent remodeling of the vet clinic. The least they could have done was named a new wing after Rufus and me!

You know what really blows my mind. The vet clinic sees Rufus as such a valued customer, they now send him mail personally. Yesterday, they sent Rufus a reminder about being due for a rabies vaccination and asking if he had time to squeeze them into his busy schedule. So here we go again—Rufus gets the shot but I'm the one who will be whining when I write out another check!

This world has really gone to the dogs!



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THE PERILS OF POLLY P.T.

PART TEN

Written By Roseanne Woerner - PT From Wapello County

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Visit our website at
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for the entire story of
"The Perils of Polly PT"

Last summer, Stevie Corona, my boss and a man of many hobbies, added horseshoe pitching to his laundry list of passions. So, when he calls me in his office on Monday morning, it is no surprise to see him in his newly acquired, horseshoe-pitching stance. His legs bend at the knees and his body cants forward while one arm rises. He hushes me into silence as he pretends to ring some big, metal stake that only he can see.

After I clap and surmise the tally of his imaginary points, he is ready to get his workday started. "The D.D. will be here next week," he tells me. "Are you ready for your Quarterly Review?"

"I don't know," I say, as I inch toward the door. "I guess I am...maybe. What's he checking anyway?"

"That information would be in the handouts I gave you at the staff meeting last week, plus he wants to look at the food plot spot-checks that you did on CRP." He studies my face for a couple of seconds and then he says, "Tell me they're done."

"I could tell you that," I say. "But then, you'd be mostly responsible for my bold-faced lie."

He furrows his brow as he rubs his chin. "We need ten percent. How many more do you have to do?"

"I don't remember, I'd have to look..."

"Wind it up by Friday."

"Consider them finished."

I am hoping like crazy that he doesn't want see the list because too much time has passed and I can't remember exactly where I put the stupid thing. I scoot out of his office and he

trails me to his door. "I assume you know that Hank went south for a couple of week's, so it looks like you'll be spending some quality time in the field. Make sure you dress for the weather."

"Not a problem," I say.

Only...it is a problem, because, after a quick review of the register that I made last fall, it appears that I have barely started my food plot checks and, out of the blue, we are hit with four inches of snow.

About 9.9% of the plots are located next to a road, so they will be easy to check, but that one last farm is elusive. From my cursory review, it looks like every other plot that I can find is located in some land-locked field that is surrounded either by timber or a creek, certainly not places I want to venture in decent weather, let alone with so much snow on the ground.

AND then I remember that Harley Johnson has a brand new four-wheeler and I am immensely cheered. I walk to the window and check the thermometer. It's thirty-four degrees. The sun is out. The snow looks scrunchy. I think that it would be great fun to make a snowman today, or to go sledding down Mulberry Hill, but since I'm working... I don't know...gee whiz...it might not be a huge hardship to go four-wheeling across Harley's big, open field, and hey, as long as I am there, I can check his food plot too.

I dash to my phone and dial his number. I know it by heart because Harley gets checked quite a bit for one reason or another.

"Harley, I say. "How're you doing, guy?"

He doesn't answer right away. Most likely because I'm pretty direct and it's not my custom to schmooze him before I tell him what I want. "Well," he finally says. "I've been having this pain in my neck and I went to the doc today to see about it, but he said there wasn't anything wrong, so I made an appointment with a chiropractor that my cousin..."

"Okay," I tell him. "Okay, okay, okay. I was just wondering...did you get that ATV that you were talking about buying last week?"

"Uh...yeah."

"Great," I say. "I need to come out and check your food plot."

"Hum," he says. "I guess I should be around first thing in the morning."

"Not in the morning," I whine. "I already have appointments scheduled tomorrow. Can't you fit me in today? Please, please, pretty please?"

"Yeah," he says. "I could stick around here for awhile. Come on out."

I am giddy with excitement. "Sounds good," I say. I just needed to make sure that you had adequate transportation to get to the plot. I mean, from the map I have here, it appears to be way out in the middle of field #5."

"Yup," he says. "Big Buster will take us anywhere we want to go."

We make plans to meet at Harley's house at one-thirty and I am still chuckling as I hang up the phone.

Myra Watkins, who sits near the counter and just happens to be Harley's aunt, turns around in her seat and says, "You're going to

Harley's today?"

"I have to," I tell her. "I have to get my spotchecks done by Friday. So, first, I'm going to Dawson's, then I'm going to McCree's, then I'm going to Harley's. Everyone but Harley is a drive-by, but guess what? As luck would have it, Harley has a new four-wheeler we can take out to the field."

"Harley doesn't own a four-wheeler." Myra tells me.

"Yes, he does," I counter.

My insistence causes Myra to use her stern, adamant voice. "No, he doesn't."

"Yes, he does," I tell her again. "In fact, he said that he was buying it last week when he came in for his loan and I specifically asked him today if he got it and he said yes."

"I know that, Missy. And what I'm trying to tell you is that he didn't buy it for himself. He bought it for his dad."

"Now, that just doesn't make any sense. If he doesn't have one, why did he just tell me that he would take me out to the field on Big Buster?"

Myra throws her head back and laughs and laughs. When she finally settles herself, her face is red and her eyes are leaking tears. She makes these muttering sounds and then she chuckles again.

"Would you please tell me what's so funny?" I ask.

She giggles again and then she says, "The jokes on you, Polly. Big Buster is Harley's old, cantankerous mule."

To Be Continued

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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.