

The Iowa Association Of FSA
County Office Employees

IASCOE NEWS



September 2006

IASCOE September 2006 Newsletter

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FROM THE DESK OF DERRYL MCLAREN, SED



The '06 Fiscal Year is coming to an end, and in retrospect it looks a lot like a sandwich. It began with FSA Tomorrow, and it is ending with a lot of questions about tomorrow. Stacked in between are tremendous accomplishments in GIS, REX, loan-making, streamlining, and “normal” program delivery. But you get the feeling something is wrong. You sense that your workplace is changing, but you don't know why. You feel like people are trying to fix things that aren't broke. What you are experiencing is the transition to Performance-Based Budgeting and all of its manifestations. Before people are willing to accept change, they first need to know, “Why?”

The State Committee and I sensed the urgency to get out there and communicate with you. What better audience than the County Committees, with their mix of new members and institutional knowledge. Maintaining lines of communication is such an important ingredient in the chemistry of any organization, and the eight statewide meetings were designed to answer your questions from the field.

For example, “Where are we with office consolidation?”. After FSA Tomorrow became yesterday's news, the issue was handed to the state SED's and STC's to handle. In light of diminished financial and human resources, each State was asked to analyze their delivery structure and make organizational modifications in order to maximize service to its producers. In other words, document your due diligence and submit The Plan for consolidation to Washington for approval. We are still deliberating, but we assume you consider our current structure to be efficient.

On the administrative side, performance-based budgeting, COE-replacement, full-service leases, 5-tier performance plans, and the termination of workload counts are all manifestations of a drive for efficiency and elimination of waste in government that is over a decade old. Workload is what we have always used to distribute employees and calculate State Ceilings, thereby staffing the service centers. The new system will calculate cost per unit (\$/unit) rather than time per unit (units/person). The new system, however, won't tell you how many employees you need in an office unless or until \$/unit Standards are developed to effectively convert \$ to units of time. As a manager, I will be clinging like a teddy bear to the “old” workload numbers for some time to come.

This new system of performance management has been described as a “cascading” effect, beginning at the top. In practice, however, it can be like a physics experiment, with people holding hands while they carry an electric current. The person on the end is the one that gets zapped. You could also envision it as a centrifuge, with particles on the outside requiring greater effort to hold-on. It is the “sling-shot” effect. One small move at the top can have major ripple effects. I will try to be cognizant of this and serve as an insulator by being more deliberate in my actions.

You have been deliberate, also, in your progress on GIS and REX. By next spring, these, too, will be accomplished, and we will look back upon them as “a job well done”. In the meantime, set some time aside for family and friends. Get out on Friday nights to cheer for your local team. Allow your senses to absorb the changing of the Seasons. Make this Fall a special one.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derryl McLaren". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

Dee-liberations

By Dee Ann Lehn

IASCOE President / CED Keokuk County

“We have met the enemy and he is us”

That was a quote used by one of the speakers on the National Convention and it hit me as quite a profound statement. What if NASCOE or to bring it to a local level, IASCOE, were its own worst enemy? What could we do to change that?

Do we view ourselves as our own worst enemy? I would guess not. But the bigger issue is not how we view ourselves but how others view us. Does our Administration and our Congress view us as a united front or weak and divided?



Our national officers and executives have made tremendous strides in establishing strong working relationships with our Administrator, Teresa Lasseter, and her staff. This becomes very evident when you attend a convention and see the openness of communications. Although, we as employees may not always get the answers we want to hear when asking our questions of the Administration, we at least feel free to ask the questions and that, my friends, is huge in itself.

The Secretary of Ag, Mike Johannes, addressed the group at the convention. This is only the second time a secretary of Ag has taken the time to attend a NASCOE function. This is a step in the right direction. As the new farm bill nears, we need to know the Secretary's thoughts and he needs to know ours.

The decision was made to hold another legislative conference after the first of next year due to the impending farm bill. This gives us the opportunity to show our strength as that united front to our senators and congressmen.

On the local level, we officers also feel we have established a good working relationship with our SED, his staff and with the other employee groups. We can always do more to strengthen those relationships and we intend to do just that.

As employees, you can strengthen our organization by simply participating. Become a member if you are not. It is so important that we have a strong membership so that we have a stronger voice when issues affecting us need to be heard. Become a director, attend the state convention, respond when asked for input, and volunteer to help with convention and projects.

Just a little food for thought—enjoy your meal!

Dee



Cover photo taken by Brian Beach – IASCOE Webmaster / PT Sac County

Convention Thoughts

First of all, let me thank all of the IASCOE membership for allowing me the privilege of serving as a delegate to this year's NASCOE National Convention in Cleveland, OH. This was my second experience in attending a National Convention and I continue to be amazed at the flurry of activity and discussion that takes place among the members. Ohio did a great job in hosting the convention. As a side note; Omaha, Nebraska, was selected for the site of the 2008 National Convention. Being so close, this will give all of you an excellent chance to attend a National Convention and witness what all takes place. My hope (and goal) is that we Iowans just overwhelm them with numbers in 2008. Start making your plans now!



This year's convention had a different atmosphere than last year's convention in South Dakota. I sensed a more positive tone. Unlike last year when our previous FSA Administrator did not make an appearance, our current Administrator, Ms. Lasseter, arrived on Thursday morning and stayed until Saturday morning. Folks, that says a lot to me. I am sure her schedule is extremely full and yet she made herself available to talk to the NASCOE members. During the question and answer panel discussions, the Deputy Administrators and Division Directors seemed to be more open with their comments. Much different than last year when talk of "FSA Tomorrow" was intentionally vague and ambiguous. I believe that once again a simple but hard lesson was learned. That being that the best way to make changes is to involve those individuals who are directly and indirectly impacted by such changes. In this case it includes farmers, community leaders, commodity groups, Congressional members, and of course FSA employees. Plans that are crafted strictly from the top (WDC) rarely have a chance for success.

And that brings me back once again to the subject of change. Yes the tone was more positive and "FSA Tomorrow" is gone, but the issues of budget, workload, staff ceilings, etc. are still with us. The main difference is that FSA State Offices have been delegated the responsibility for drafting a plan to address these issues. I have recently read some articles, which report that some states (ie: South Dakota / Alabama) are looking to close several county offices. I am very hopeful that this won't be true for Iowa. I am also very confident that our State Office will include IASCOE in discussions during the planning stages.

Changes will come. They always do. As an IASCOE / NASCOE member, you have the opportunity and responsibility to help shape these changes. It is not the time to rest easy, but rather be vigilant and active.

Steve Kennedy
IASCOE Vice-President
CED Jasper County



Bonnie Heinzman, NASCOE Vice President with Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns (left picture) and FSA Administrator, Teresa Lasseter (right picture) at the 47th Annual NASCOE Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, on August 10, 2006.

Greetings Iowans!

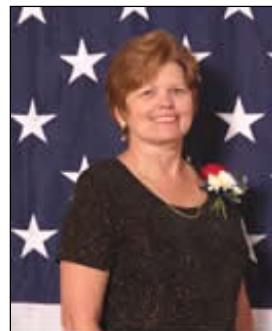
It was great to see many of you at the NASCOE Convention in Cleveland. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did! Being re-elected as NASCOE Vice President was very much appreciated. Dan and I have been working on setting goals that we would like to achieve during the next year, and we hope next year will bring many positives for NASCOE members. NASCOE is very fortunate to have several very active members from Iowa, but no matter what your particular level of participation may be, your membership and support of the association does not go unnoticed. To each of you I say, "THANK YOU!"

Congratulations to Brian Beach, national winner of the Best State Website competition! I've visited the website many times and read the newsletter as often as possible so I feel comfortable in saying Brian very much deserved the award!

To use the old cliché, my door is always open, and I hope to hear from you whenever you have concerns, suggestions, or comments.

*Bonnie Heinzman
NASCOE Vice President*

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION! IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

Dear NASCOE Members:

With recent employee adverse actions taken in the Midwest Area I have received some concerns about where members can turn when assistance is needed. This concern is probably greatest in Program Technicians as workload demands increase and staffing levels continue to go down. The stress levels and demands are tremendous! NASCOE has been very involved in adverse action issues with the goal of making sure every opportunity for a fair and thorough hearing is held in each case. NASCOE has worked hard for improved adverse action appeal rights that are similar to those available to Federal employees. We have been operating under these improved provisions as part of a memorandum but soon this will be issued as procedure and it is long overdue.

What should you do if you face an adverse action situation? Contacting your state association officer or director can help you clarify what rights you have and the options available to you. NASCOE can also provide one free hour of consultation time with one of the leading attorneys on government personnel issues in Washington, DC. The value of this one hour of service is \$200. Because of the cost to your organization, members must file a request with case background information (the form is below and on the national web site) to receive approval to participate in this option. Filling out this form also allows you to summarize your case and be better prepared for your consultation time. Our national Vice President, Bonnie Heinzman, is responsible for assisting members in receiving due process in adverse action cases and spends many hours discussing cases with the Deputy Administrator of Field Operations office. Concerning recent cases in our area, state associations and NASCOE spent much time and effort to make sure all options were pursued and employee requests for assistance were met.

Is our new procedure better than our old appeal process? I think so. Could our adverse action appeal process be improved? No doubt about it! I would still like to see a completely impartial final review on all cases but we aren't there yet. I promise you that NASCOE will continue to work for a better adverse action process for all county office employees. When procedure is issued, I would encourage all county office employees to review it carefully and have a good knowledge of your rights in these matters. Please contact me, your state association director or officer with questions or requests for assistance. My home email is m_vanhooose@yahoo.com. The email addresses for NASCOE national officers are also available at www.nascoe.org if you would prefer to direct a request for help in that manner. When you aren't sure where to turn to, turn to NASCOE!

Sincerely,

Mark VanHoose
Midwest Area Executive

Checklist For Requesting A 1-Hour Consultation With The NASCOE Attorney

- _____ 1. Are you a regular member of NASCOE with dues paid?
(You must be a member of NASCOE to be eligible for consideration.)
- _____ 2. Is your request for a consultation the result of an Agency
Employment related issue? (Only employment related issues of the
NASCOE member are eligible for consideration.)
- _____ 3. Have you filed all applicable appeals and/or grievances available to
you? Have you complied with all deadlines and timeframes in
reference to the employment issue?
- _____ 4. Have you prepared a narrative of the events in chronological order?
(This narrative is needed to review your request by both NASCOE and
the attorney Please include a phone number and time of day when you
would be available to discuss the issues.)
- _____ 5. Have you contacted your State President to discuss your request?
- _____ 6. Have you considered your expectation of the outcome of your
consultation with the attorney? What would you like to accomplish by
proceeding with this?

The process:

If you have answered yes to the questions listed above,

- 1. The State President will review the request and contact the Area Exec with a recommendation.
- 2. The Area Exec reviews the request, the narrative, and any other documentation. The Area Exec then refers the request to the NASCOE Vice President.
- 3. NASCOE Vice President will review all submitted information according to the guidelines and may contact you for clarification or additional information.
- 4. You will be notified of the decision on your request. If approved for consultation with the NASCOE Attorney someone from the attorney's office will contact you.

Any regular NASCOE member may request a one-hour consultation with the NASCOE Attorney by observing the steps listed above. However, this is not an entitlement, and is further limited to job-related issues as they pertain to the NASCOE member's employment with the Agency. All requests will be given full consideration.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE

Jon Williams - Midwest Area Alternate

A year ago at the 2005 NASCOE Convention I was chosen as the Midwest Area (MWA) Alternate Executive. I wasn't really sure what I was getting into other than as the alternate I would help out the Area Exec when he couldn't attend State Conventions and represent NASCOE. In theory, I would learn the responsibilities of an Area Exec and get a feel how NASCOE operates at the National level in the hope that I would be prepared to represent the Midwest Area on the NASCOE Executive Committee. The tradition has been that a person serves as an alternate for 2 years and then an exec for 2 years. This establishes a sense of continuity. Unfortunately, the Midwest has not had a person serve in either position for two years since Trice Smith did three or four years ago. Mark VanHoose of Ohio was elected to his first term as Exec last year as well.

As the Alternate, I don't attend the Executive board meetings other than the first organizational meeting of the year but I do get copies of the minutes and some other correspondence on important issues. Now that I've been elected to a second year, I will attend the pre-negotiation meeting in January. I did represent NASCOE at three State Conventions during the past year, including Iowa. This was a new experience for me since this was the first year NASCOE officers did not attend State Conventions, with only the Area Executive or Alternate representing NASCOE at State Conventions. Mark and I have a pretty good working relationship and he kept me up to date on NASCOE issues so I would be able to provide the members with current information.

I also sat in with the Executive Committee's business meeting before the NASCOE Convention this year. This meant I wasn't able to go on the Football Hall of Fame Tour like I had planned. When I told Mark I had paid for a tour he told me "The party's over big boy!" I know the NASCOE officers, Committee Chairs, and the Area Executives put in a lot of time, but this was the Football Hall of Fame and Reggie White was just enshrined. I guess it is one of the sacrifices a person gives up when they say they will serve at the area and National levels. Although it was a long meeting, I appreciated the opportunity to sit in and be a part of the meeting. It was interesting when Darlene had to leave the meeting and work with the advance security people for the Secretary of Agriculture's visit and Larry took minutes while she was gone.

The most important thing I have learned in my first year is that each Area Exec does his best to represent his area and sometimes there is a difference of opinion, which is to be expected. However they have one common goal and that is what is best for NASCOE members. Communication is very important to this board and NASCOE has done a great job developing things like the NASCOE web site and NASCOE Now to keep the membership updated and informed.

I am looking forward to my second year as the Midwest Area Alternate and getting more involved with the Executive Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this capacity and if you have any concerns for the Midwest Area or NASCOE leadership please let me know.

Jon Williams
Midwest Area Alternate Executive



Visit our website at www.iascoe.org

GREETINGS FROM SOUTHWEST IOWA

I always know it is newsletter time when Tammy starts sending lots of emails asking for articles!!

Fall is upon us and it can be a beautiful time of year. Harvest will be starting soon which means our workload in the office will be increasing with loans, LDP's (hope not), CRP payments, DCP payments, aerial compliance and whatever else comes along.

With that mentioned the Taylor County girls are always looking for a reason to go out and celebrate. When Dedra Buch, the CRP PT, achieved 20 years of service we decided we needed to go out for supper. We had a great time and if it is true that laughing is good for your health we should have added several years to our lives. I just figured up between the six of us in Taylor County we have 155 years of service. Gosh that might be another reason for us to go out to supper again!!!!



IASCOE has just completed the membership drive for this year and it looks like we are doing pretty well. There are just a few more counties that need to turn in their transmittals before we can figure the final percentage but right now it looks like membership may be up 2%-3%. I would like to thank everyone for showing their support through membership for 2006-07 and remember there is strength in numbers. There will be some trying times ahead with the states submitting their restructuring plans and a new farm bill in the very near future. IASCOE/NASCOE is our voice in Washington, so please feel free to contact any director with ideas or concerns and they will be passed on to the appropriate people.

Think I have rambled on long enough. There is always lots of work to be done in the office but also take time to enjoy the fall with your family and friends.

Sue Beemer

IASCOE Secretary/Treasurer - Taylor County PT



Joni Birkhofer presents a plaque to Brigit Leeney

On June 28, 2006, a small retirement party was held at the Ground Round in Iowa City for **Brigit Leeney**, Johnson County. She was presented with a plaque for her continued support of NASCOE. Brigit retired on June 30, 2006 with 20 years of ASCS/FSA service.

Congratulations and Good Luck to Brigit !!!

USDA SECRETARY MIKE JOHANNNS SPEAKS AT FSA EMPLOYEES' NATIONAL CONVENTION

By Michael Kaufman, FSA Public Affairs Specialist, Great Lakes Region



Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns joined Administrator Teresa Lasseter of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) as featured speakers at the National Association of FSA County Office Employees (NASCOE) convention.

The 47th annual event convened at the Renaissance Hotel in Cleveland, Ohio, from Aug. 9-12, 2006. Johanns and Lasseter spoke on Aug. 10 and drew a crowd of nearly 450 FSA employees from across the nation.

Secretary Johanns said that NASCOE's national convention afforded him the opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you in person to the employees of FSA. He also acknowledged the tremendous service to agricultural producers provided by FSA's program delivery system.

Johanns reported that he personally attended many of the 52 farm bill listening sessions held throughout rural America during a nine-month window in the past year. Those forums allowed him to hear agricultural producers voice their opinions about farm policies.

Johanns said he gleaned from many different sources that future farm policy needs to include growers of all types of crops. He informed listeners that a more diverse group of stakeholders would be included in upcoming farm bill discussions.

Secretary Johanns said also that he hopes Congress will write a new farm bill that supports successes like the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which has widespread acceptance by a majority of producers.

FSA Administrator Lasseter saluted the outstanding job FSA has done in the past and encouraged staffers to meet future challenges with continued enthusiasm and teamwork. She spoke directly to one concern expressed by FSA employees by updating them on individual state restructuring plans. She said that 16 states had submitted plans for realignment of FSA offices in their respective states.

Lasseter reminded all employees that while change is a challenge, it could have a positive impact, given the proper approach.

Ohio State Executive Director John Stevenson and State Committee Chairperson Dorothy Leslie were also guest speakers at the NASCOE Convention and echoed many of the sentiments voiced by Washington leaders. NASCOE President Dan Root presided over the FSA employees' national convention, which serves to foster camaraderie and the teamwork needed to meet future challenges.



Transcript of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns' remarks to the NASCOE National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio August 10, 2006

Sec. Mike Johanns: Thank you very much. Teresa, that's a nice introduction and a nice welcome, and I appreciate that immensely. Reference was made to all of those years in politics, and I have to tell you I had a feeling this morning if I was a smart politician it would be an appropriate time for me to say thank you, any questions? And then leave.

[Laughter.]

I really do appreciate that nice, warm welcome. It's great to be here with you, and we were together I think in March, right? Or some of us were. So it's good to see you again. Now looking out there my eyesight isn't as good as it used to be, but do I see some Nebraskans out there? Yes. Great. And I see one has -- get up here, sir. Stand up here so we can see that national championship.

[Laughter and applause.]

I don't get to the football games anymore. But I have to warn you all, if you're football fans, we kind of got our eye on the national championship this year, so --

[Laughter.]

But it is good to be here. Reference was made to the fact that I was mayor of Lincoln. I was. I served two terms as mayor. And of course that was a very interesting job. I did a lot of interesting things.

I'll tell you a story. I was in my first term and things seemed to be going, you know, pretty well, and so it was getting to a point of a time for re-election. And I had announced I'd be interested in serving another term as mayor. So all of a sudden, you know, no one was ready to run against me. And I kept saying to my wife Stephanie, some people file at the last minute. You'll get a rush of people to the courthouse to file. But it came down to the last weekend, the filing deadline was on that following Friday, and it was the last weekend. There was a big story in the Sunday Journal Star that no one had filed to run against me for mayor. And so I thought, boy with that kind of attention and publicity there will be a flood of people filing.

Well, each day went by, you know, and nobody filed. Tuesday nobody filed, and I kept saying to Steph, somebody's going to file. I mean that's obvious.

Well Wednesday came by and Thursday and by Friday nobody had filed. Each hour is ticking by and we're kind of staying in touch with the election commissioner, and lo and behold 5:00 came and the office closed, and nobody filed to run against me. So I went home that night, maybe a tad bit more full of myself than I should have been --

[Laughter.]

And I said to Steph, isn't it something, no one filed against me? I must be doing a pretty good job! And she said, You know I've been thinking about this all week, Mike, and the conclusion I've come to is that no one wants your job.

[Laughter.]

And catastrophically true.

Continued...

Visit www.iascoe.org for more NASCOE National Convention information

General Session Minutes - Committee Meeting Minutes, etc.

Well, it's good to be here. I arrived with a great speech today. In fact, I reviewed it on the airplane. I had a meeting with some of your leadership before I came in here, and we talked about a number of issues very informally. And I got to thinking, maybe the best way of doing this today, ladies and gentlemen, is to hopefully not irritate my speech-writer too much but I'm going to set aside the prepared speech and just talk to you about a few issues that I think are on your mind and really important, and then if there's enough time, Teresa, I'd be happy to take a few questions, just kind of again in a very informal way.

Well let me start out if I might today and tell you how much I appreciate your work. You know if it were just a single message that I was allowed to give today it would be to stop by and say thank you. I do appreciate what you're doing.

[Applause.]

I think you have a great job, but I think you also have a hard job. I think you have a great job because you get to work with some really fine people across this country, you know, our farmers and ranchers. I said in a recent interview Mike Johanns didn't grow up and aspire to be Secretary of Agriculture. I didn't even grow up aspiring to be governor of anything. I thought if I ever got in the same room with the governor that would be a pretty big deal.

I grew up thinking I wanted to be a farmer. You know, my mentors were farmers. My roots were farmers. The people that I paid attention to were farmers. In many ways it's still true today and I guess it's served me very well.

So in many ways I think you have a great job working with these folks. But I also think you have a hard job. Our programs are complex. It just never ceases to amaze me how complicated they can be. The challenges are great. You know we talked about staff levels before we came in here, and the hardest thing to do these days whether you're in local government or state government or federal government is to go in and get some additional staffing. Seems they're always willing to find money for a good program or something like that, but then when you go in and say that's a great program but we're going to need some money to administer it, and then they see that money get cut out of the request it can be frustrating. I appreciate that.

So I want you to know how much I appreciate what you do out there, service that you provide. Like I said, if that was the only message, that would have justified my trip here today just to tell you how much we appreciate you.

The other thing though that is weighing on everybody's mind these days is the Farm Bill. We went out a year or so ago and we did these Farm Bill Forums. When we were out there, a lot of folks said to us, That seems to us awful early, talking about Farm Bill that's not going to come up for awhile.

Well, you know as we thought about it, it's going to take us some period of time to get the forums done because we wanted to do that on a nationwide basis. It was going to take some time for us to assemble and analyze the information we secured from the forums.

So we went out there last year about this time, actually started before this period of time, and we did something that I think maybe it's never been done before. I don't know that we set out to do
continued...



From Left to Right: Trice Smith, Legislative Committee Co-Chair (IA) , Mark VanHoose, MWA Executive and Ohio President, Secretary Mike Johanns, Dan Root, NASCOE President (MN) and Mike Mayfield, Legislative Committee Co-Chair (TN).

a 50-state Farm Bill Forum, but we did. In fact, we did 48 out of 50 states. The only two that we did not get to were Louisiana and Mississippi, not because we didn't want to; it's just that as we were preparing for these forums it was right around the time we were ready to go into the states they got hit by hurricanes. So they had other, bigger things on their plate. So we weren't able to get to those two.

But we did 52 forums in 48 states.

Our forums were completely unique. You know, there's all kinds of ways to do a forum. You can get in touch with your local corn growers president and say, we'd like you to show up and offer some testimony, or the Farm Bureau president, or whatever. And that's great. They have a lot to offer and they represent good people. But we thought the best way of approaching this was to just simply say to farmers and ranchers and stakeholders, we're going to be in this location on this day at this hour, and the microphone is going to be yours. I'll say a few words to get started, but then I'm going to sit back and I'm going to take notes, and for three hours I want to hear from you.

And you don't have to pre-sign-up. You don't have to have your testimony cleared by anybody. We just want you to get up in front of the microphone and tell us what's on your mind. What's going well with the Farm Bill, what's not going well, what do you want from farm policy in the future?

It was the most remarkable thing. We had people that drove hours and waited in line to get to the microphones so they could have a few minutes with us and talk to us about farm policy and their hopes and dreams for the future of farm policy. It was great. I did 21 of these across the country. Out of the 52 I did 21 one of them, and I loved every single minute of it. It was just an outstanding experience.

Now as we headed out there, many said, well you know Mike's going to go out there and listen to farmers say we like the current farm bill and why don't you just reauthorize that, everything's good? And you'll hear that all across the country.

Well, I have to tell you, that wasn't the case. Now were there some areas? Yes. We did a Farm Bill Forum in Lubbock, Texas, and we heard from folks in Lubbock, and in that area, we like this Farm Bill, we'd like to see it extended, in fact we'd like it if you didn't change anything in the Farm Bill.

But I have to tell you, that was not the norm. We heard a lot of interesting things. Let me if I might offer a few themes to you and see if this rings a bell with you who are out there every day listening to our farmers and ranchers.

One of the things that we heard is that it is very, very difficult for young people to get involved in agriculture. I think that's always been the case. You know I think one of the reasons why I didn't end up on the farm is I'm kind of debt-adverse if you know what I'm saying. To get into farming even back then and especially now, you've got to be willing to strap on some debt.

And you've got to be willing to be able to live with that, ride with that, because even if you've got a father or uncle or somebody in farming or your parents are in farming, your mom and your dad, there's a point at which you need to square up with them, if you know what I'm saying, because they're getting at an age where they don't want to farm. They probably would like to secure some of the equity out of the operation. So even in those circumstances, it's going to be a debt situation.

Second thing we heard, and it was a pretty consistent theme across the country, was that as farms have become larger and more efficient you have a group of farmers out there who are very large, and they tend to be so competitive that when that quarter section comes up for sale it is hard to compete against them because they're adding that quarter section into a very large operation, an operation where they already have the equipment, the grain storage, whatever it is. So maybe they pushed that price more aggressively than somebody who's smaller scale, and maybe that somebody is looking to bring their son or daughter into the farming operation and they are having a tough time doing that because they can't acquire the land in a way that pencils out for them. They don't have that size of operation.

And so they raised that issue with us.

continued...

We also, of course, did these all across the country. I did them in every region in the country, and we heard from some people who have not been a part of our Farm Bill. And that is our specialty crop people. Now, I'm the Secretary of Agriculture for the United States. Nowhere in my confirmation hearing did somebody say to me, Mike, I want you to be the Secretary of Agriculture for Corn or the Secretary of Agriculture for Cotton or the Secretary of Agriculture for Rice. They said to me, We want you to be the Secretary of Agriculture for the United States of America.

You know I met with farmers all across the country, and I met with people who grow specialty crops, for example, and I can tell you they remind me of farmers I grew up with. Now they're admittedly growing much different crops than what I grew up with. I grew up with corn and soybeans and dairy and that sort of thing. But they are truly engaged in agriculture, and they believe in what they're doing.

And the specialty crops today are equivalent in value to our program crops. You see they continue to grow throughout the years, and today I can tell you that when it comes to the value of our program crops and our specialty crops they are basically the same. In fact I think the specialty crops are actually a little bit bigger than our program crops.

Well, gosh, that got me to thinking, so I went back and kind of tore into the figures and said to our people at USDA, give me some information on who receives the payments in our Farm Bill. Ladies and gentlemen, 93 percent of the subsidies go to five crops-- corn, wheat, rice, cotton and soybeans. And 93 percent of the payments go to those crops. You can even slice and dice them finer if you want and you can see all the stories in the newspaper about how the payments still are going to the largest segment of agriculture.

And I thought, that is fascinating.

Now, let me share with you, our specialty crop people are not coming in and saying, you know, Mike, I want to be a program crop just like the rest. Nobody said that from the specialty crop area, not any forum I was in anyway. But what they did say is, we feel like we're making a valuable contribution in agriculture, and we have needs in the area of phytosanitary and sanitary enforcement. We have needs in terms of market promotion, we have needs in terms of research, and we would like to see an expansion of funding for those areas to try to assist us in what we do for agriculture.

And you know what? It's a valid point, a point worth making and a point worth listening to.

Now as we traveled around the country we also heard from many people who really extolled the virtues of our Rural Development programs. I thought that was interesting. In fact after I did a few of these forums it got to be kind of a consistent theme. Then I began to realize after I did all the forums on the schedule that I'd not yet received a single negative comment on the Rural Development programs. I thought, man, that's interesting. You'd think somewhere along the line we would have irritated somebody. But you know what? I went to 21 Farm Bill Forums, and I never had anything but positive comments about our Rural Development programs.

So I got to thinking about that, and why all of a sudden in Farm Bill Forums are we getting such strong support for money we put into our Rural Development programs. I got to looking and I found out something that was very interesting to me. Do you know that 90 percent of our farmers today receive off-farm income? Can you see it now from where you are at? It is the husband and wife or maybe or both working in town, or the wife is working in town or the husband is working in town. And they are supplementing their farming operation with their off-farm income.

Quite honestly that's what provides the health plan, the financing that supports the family is that off-farm income. And you begin to realize that you're not focused on rural economic development in building communities you're not serving farmers anymore because so many of them rely upon that off-farm income. I thought that was interesting.

And the conservation payments, again some disagreement, generally in cow-calf country. Some people in cow-calf country feel we're competing with what they need for grazing land and that the payments we make for the CRP program kind of bid up, if you will, the cost of grazing land for the

continued...

cow-calf operators. But other than that, we heard pretty unanimous support for our conservation programs from farmers, from ranchers, from stakeholders all across the country.

So we had three areas -- a lot of things were talked about, but three areas that really got to be interesting: subsidy payments quite controversial, conservation pretty unanimously supported, rural development unanimously supported.

Why am I sharing this with you? I truly do believe that as we are headed into 2007 you're going to see a list of stakeholders in terms of the next Farm Bill that is much more extensive, a much longer list, a much better-organized people than we have maybe ever seen before in the Farm Bill debate. There probably was a day where five program crops sat down with Congress and drafted the Farm Bill. But as I look at potential stakeholders out there, everything from conservation to environmentalists to people that are involved in crops that have never been subsidized in any form or fashion in a Farm Bill, people who are interested in trade and economic development -- I just found it an interesting debate.

I will tell you your crystal ball is really as good as mine. I can't tell you what the next Farm Bill is going to look like. I do know that in January we're going to have some very specific recommendations as to what we believe should be, from the standpoint of the next administration. That's where you can come in.

I was made aware of the fact by the leadership that you would like to have a voice in the next Farm Bill, and we welcome that.

[Applause.]

Why not? You are the ones out there on the front line seeing what's working, what's not working. You probably have some of the best ideas in terms of what farm policy should look like. We welcome your organization coming to us with your thoughts and recommendations as to what you would like to see in the next Farm Bill.

Now time is kind of the essence here, so I do caution you, we don't want to be left behind here. Once this train starts rolling out of the congressional station, if we're not on it, it's going to be hard to catch up with it because it's going to get a big head of steam very, very quickly.

So I would urge you to try to put that together so you could get it to us hopefully before the first of the year. Just simply again because I do think once that calendar turns over to 2007, and you get a new Congress sworn in in January, this thing is going to start to rock and roll pretty good. My best guess is that Congress will be marking up the Farm Bill probably in the April, May, June timeframe. And so all of a sudden there's going to be quite a bit of pressure on that to be ready to deal with that pace very, very quickly. So don't let that opportunity pass by.

I want to talk about one other topic today informally and offer a thought or two. Then I'll be happy to take questions. We had a conversation with the leadership about FSA Tomorrow. Let me tell you, I hesitate even to allow those words to come out of my mouth because I don't want to create an impression here **there's any life left to that. I think it was shot dead. Really, that finding an awkward horrible start,** a lot of people believed it was something that, quite honestly, it really wasn't. So Congress stepped in and said, if you're going to do anything relative to FSA offices, you're going to have to work through us and work at the local and state level. We said fine, and that's what's happening.

We hope you are engaged in that. It is worth it. I'll offer some general thoughts. As I said at the start of my comments and my expression of appreciation to you, one of the really hard things these days is to convince Congress to give money for administration. We for many years now have received less than what we have requested. It seems in all our special programs, whether disaster relief or whatever, if we request money to administer the program you can almost plan on being cut out. It's a pretty unusual situation where you get money for administering the programs. So we're out there trying to administer these programs without initial funding to do it. We're just expecting to try to figure out a way to do it, and in the past you've done great work.

continued...

I tell you that because I just think it's going to be very, very difficult to add money from an administrative standpoint. I wish I had a different message for you, but quite honestly I don't see this changing very much. It is budget related, it is deficit related, but it is the nature of government. As I pointed out, I've been at the local level-- I was county commissioner, I was on the city council, I was then mayor in the strong mayor form of government, and I was the governor of Nebraska during an economic time that really was as bad as we'd seen since the Great Depression. It was really a tough time.

And it just seems that under any circumstances government has a hard time adding administration in terms of what it does. It seems to be the nature of it. So we put a lot of pressure on you to deliver and try to do the very best job you can. What we're trying to do in terms of the offices I appreciate is difficult. But it's a better system today than it was a year ago, let me tell you that. It is a better system to try to work with folks at the local level, state level and get their ideas and recommendations than to have a top/down sort of process. That was the goal here in Congress, and I have to tell you I think they accomplished at least philosophically what they headed out to do, and that is to involve people at the local levels in the decision-making process.

But I've also acknowledged it isn't easy, staffing and changing offices, and all that is never easy.

Now I've been to many of your offices as you know, certainly not the majority but if we are in an area and I can stop in and say hi to people, we try to set aside that time. There are some offices out there that I look at their workload and quite honestly I can't figure out how they do it. I can't figure out how they are delivering that much out the front door with the staffing levels they have, with the computer system that dates back to the Dark Ages, and somehow they are managing to do it and then delivering the add-ons that come along like the disaster programs and in the South the tobacco buy-outs and whatever else it is.

I'll be candid with you, there's some offices that don't have that workload. I'm not saying that in any kind of critical way. I'm just saying it in a way that I think it's going to be incumbent upon us to try to figure out, us trying to figure out how we deal with this..

I will try to be as sensitive as I can and try to get as knowledgeable as I can in terms of what's happening out there, what we need to do and how we might do it better. I will also tell you I will do everything I can to be an advocate for what we need to get the job done. We have made requests, we have not successfully funded much of what we had requested. But as we were going through FSA Tomorrow we got a lot of criticisms for that, some justified I acknowledge. But one of the things I pointed out to the folks on the Hill, was look, we're asking employees to work with a computer system that quite honestly we're having a tough time even servicing because it's that old. And we've got to try to figure out how to deal with that and some of these issues.

I'll do everything I can to advocate for better resources.

Let me back up with saying what I started with here today and that is thanks. I do appreciate what you're doing out there. You are making a difference. I guess I've stayed in public service for most of my adult life, really all of my adult life, because I love serving people. I will also tell you that I've served people during some of the really worst of times and I've served them during the very best of times. It's been a heck of a 25 years for me. Some days I really wondered if there was any hope. When we were going through our budget challenges in Nebraska and it seemed like everybody was mad because the budget was being cut, I still really believed in what we were doing.

I believe in what you are doing. We can have great ideas in Washington, but we can have bad ideas in Washington. But somehow, some way you've got to administer those ideas. And I want you to know how much we appreciate your good work.

God bless you.

[Applause.]

A First-Timers Report Of The 2006 NASCOE National Convention

I recently had the privilege of attending my 1st NASCOE National Convention. The 47th Annual NASCOE Convention was held in Cleveland Ohio, August 9th thru the 12th 2006. It was also my honor to receive the 2006 NASCOE National Publicity Award for Best State Website for our Iowa website.

I didn't really know what to expect. Was the national convention mostly for business and committee meetings, or was it for fun? Turns out it was a lot of both. During the day, there were General Assemblies in the mornings and committee meetings in the afternoons. We had entertainment every night. One night, a DJ and karaoke. Live bands played two nights. And on one night, we boarded the Goodtime III excursion boat for dinner and dancing while cruising on Lake Erie. That night there was a 'Gilligan's Island' theme and many members were dressed as their favorite character from the TV show.



On Thursday morning, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns and FSA Administrator Teresa Lasseter spoke to the members. And on Friday, several WDC personnel held a question and answer session. Many important topics were discussed.



The banquet was held on Saturday night. After dinner, awards were presented, including our website award. I would like to thank NASCOE for the honor of receiving this award for our www.iascoe.org web site. IASCOE has always been a team effort and I am proud to do my part.

The Ohio NASCOE members did a fantastic job of organizing a great convention. Thank you for all your hard work.

It was great to meet people from all across the country with so much in common. There are a lot of really good people working hard for NASCOE. I recommend that all NASCOE members try to attend the National Conventions. Next year it is at Myrtle Beach SC and in 2008 in Omaha NE. This year was my first time at a national convention, but it won't be my last.

Brian Beach
IASCOE Web Master - PT Sac County Iowa

Rosie Kahl, Lyon County and Tammy Eibey, Delaware County received recognition for serving as MWA representatives on NASCOE Committees. Rosie served as MWA Awards Chairperson and Tammy served as MWA Legislative Committee Chairperson.



Scholarship Auction!

One of the annual evening events at the National Convention is the Scholarship Auction. Each State is asked to bring an item to be used in either the live auction or the silent auction. The event is run by Herb Sorley, the National Scholarship/Awards/Emblem Chairperson. This year was again a huge success.

Below is the out come of the Auction and other income from the convention that went toward the scholarship fund.

Auction	\$4,522.50
NASCOESTORE Commission received from year	\$1,700.16
JM Marketing Donation	<u>\$2,000.00</u>
Total Received:	\$8,222.66

Plus, the emblem table took in \$3,000.12 and NASCOE will receive some Commission from those sales as well.

Over all, per Herbs comment, the scholarship auction, emblem sales and donation from JM Marketing made this National Convention one of the best ever! Remember that through the emblem sales from thenascoestore.com we all gain and make it possible to do more for our scholarships! Keep up the good work and a BIG THANK YOU for all those who purchased items, donated items for the auction or have purchased items through www.thenascoestore.com.

Tammy Eibey - Delaware County
(Info from Tom Oasen, MWA Scholarship Chair and Herb Sorely, National Chair)

thenascoestore.com

You can now print your Gift Certificates for purchases at the Emblems NASCOE online store. This will save you shipping and handling charges and you will have a gift certificate instantly (or almost). The process includes going online and ordering the certificate in the denomination that you want, printing the certificate, and wait for a certificate number via email from thenascoestore.com. We will assign a number that you can insert on the certificate and the person receiving the certificate can order the products they wish and enter the certificate number provided.

Here is a copy of the certificate.
Gift Certificates are great for many occasions.



2006-2007
IASCOE DIRECTORS & ALTERNATES DIRECTORS

DISTRICT NUMBER	PROGRAM TECHNICIAN AND COUNTY	COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND COUNTY
1. Director Alternate	Glenda VonArb, Sioux Nancy Heideman, Clay	Jeff Davis, Plymouth Larry Lago, Dickinson
2. Director Alternate	Cindy Pistek, Hancock Jeanine Diekhuis, Hancock	Steve Abbas, Franklin John Bahnsen, Floyd
3. Director Alternate	Tammy Eibey, Delaware Karen McNeil, Winneshiek	Cindy Mensen, Clayton Kevin Keegan, Buchanan
4. Director Alternate	Judy Vos, Woodbury Debi Ostrander, Greene	John Landgraf, Sac Pat Warmbier, Harrison
5. Director Alternate	Chris Grieder, Polk Teresa Heck, Polk	Steve Kennedy, Jasper Bob Wegand, Grundy
6. Director Alternate	Joni Birkhofer, Muscatine Carma Reiss, Benton	Kathy White, Iowa Randy Madsen, Muscatine
7. Director Alternate	Sue Beemer, Taylor Cindy Bebout, Fremont	Dan Wells, Adair Julie Hall, East Pottawattamie
8. Director Alternate	Sharon Dunfee, Clark	Joyce Frost, Wayne Kelly Cain, Madison
9. Director Alternate	Judy Dameron, Louisa Dawn Stewart, Henry	Dee Ann Lehn, Keokuk John Bartenhagen, Louisa

Learner's Creed

I believe in myself and my ability to do my best at all times.
Because I am responsible for my life and for all of my actions:

I will listen,
I will see,
I will speak,
I will feel,
I will think,
I will reason,
I will read,
I will write.

I will do all these things with one purpose in mind:
To do my best and not to waste this day for this day will come no more.

Ernestine Mitchell

2006-07 IASCOE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee Chairs

Awards: Judy Vos – Woodbury County
Publicity: Tammy Eibey - Delaware County
Membership: Daniel Wells - Adair County
Benefits: Kathy White - Iowa County
Legislative: Cindy Mensen - Clayton County
Scholarship: Cindy Pistek - Hancock County
Programs: Judy Dameron - Louisa County

District Committee Members

District 1

Awards/Scholarship: Larry Lago, Dickinson
Publicity: Nancy Heideman, Clay
Membership: Tammy Pruin, Sioux
B & L: Steve Olson, Osceola

District 5

Awards/Scholarship: Twyla Brede, Dallas
Publicity: Kitty Benda, Marshall
Membership: Rodney Biensen, Story
B & L: Teresa Simonton, Poweshiek

District 2

Awards/Scholarship: Jeanine Diekhuis, Hancock
Publicity: Lisa Forburger, Kossuth
Membership: Vicki Pederson, Floyd
B & L: David Stromer, Kossuth

District 6

Awards/Scholarship: Angie Barnes, Muscatine
Publicity: Betty Williams, Muscatine
Membership: Carma Reiss, Benton
B & L: Randy Madsen, Muscatine/Scott

District 3

Awards/Scholarship: Lisa Taylor, Chickasaw
Publicity: Connie Straw, Howard
Membership: Sheri Rodman, Clayton
B & L: Karen McNeil, Winneshiek

District 7

Awards/Scholarship: Phyllis Reineke, Taylor
Publicity: Carole Dawson, Taylor
Membership: Jolene Fechter, Page
B & L: Cindy Bebout, Fremont

District 4

Awards/Scholarship: Denise Dugan, Woodbury
Publicity: Candy Hoyle, Greene
Membership: Deb Ostrander, Greene
B & L: Pat Warmbier, Harrison

District 8

Awards/Scholarship: Dave Wynn, Monroe
Publicity: Rhonda Cooper, Union
Membership: Sally Crall, Monroe
B & L: Linda Carson, Clarke

District 9

Awards/Scholarship: Carol Long, Mahaska
Publicity: Cara Proper, Henry
Membership: Cynde Briggs, Mahaska
B & L: John Bartenhagen, Louisa

RASCOE

Retired ASCS County Office Employees

WHAT IS RASCOE

In 1994, a group of retired ASCS Employees organized the National Association of Retired ASCS Employees.

THE PURPOSE

To promote the welfare of the association's members by alignment with other organizations and actively lobbying to maintain the integrity of retiree benefits.

MEMBERSHIP

An ASCS/FSA retiree becomes a member by paying association dues.

Any member of a state retiree organization which is affiliated with the national organization shall be a member of the national organization.

Any one wishing to show support for RASCOE may be an associate member by paying association dues.

RASCOE MEETINGS

The Annual Meeting is held in conjunction with the NASCOE Annual Convention.

RASCOE OBJECTIVES

- Seek legislation to abolish or amend the GPO & WEP Provisions of the Social Security Law to allow retirees to receive full benefits earned
- Continuation of the FEHBP as now available and obtain the right to pay FEHBP Premiums with pre-tax dollars.
- Continuation of Medicare substantially in the manner as now authorized.

BENEFITS

Cancer Plus Insurance | Long Term Care Insurance | "SPECS" Vision Plan | Heritage Choice Dental Plan (Available from: J.M. Marketing)

RASCOE

The National Association of Retired ASCS/FSA Office Employees

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

State from which you retired: _____

Name: _____

PO Box or Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

ENCLOSED

State Dues _____

National Dues _____

Total Enclosed _____

Mail To Lee O. Osborne
RASCOE Secretary-Treasurer
460 S 100 W
Nephi, UT 84648
Telephone (435) 623-0761

RASCOE REPORT - NASCOE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

RASCOE had a very successful meeting at the convention in Baltimore, Maryland. Officers elected at this meeting include:

Clara Ruth Saint, President
PO Box 262
St. Francisville, LA 70775
Email: crsaint@bellsouth.net

Paul Salisbury, Vice-President
602 East Avenue
Newark, NY 14513

Leo Osborne, Secretary-
Treasurer
460 S 100 W
Nephi, UT 84648

Committee Chairs are:

Benefits - Edith Hughes, Johnson, MS
Legislative - Clyde R. Payne, FL
Membership - Leo Holmstrom, MI
Publicity - Virginia Short, KT

The goal of RASCOE continues to be to promote the welfare of its members by working with other organizations to continue to actively lobby for the maintenance of retiree benefits.

Our membership chairman has set goals for the coming year to boost our membership. Although we have nearly 1,300 members, there are many states that have no members. We plan to reestablish a list of contacts in each state; contact members who do not renew their membership; and to assist states in organizing state associations.

How can NASCOE help RASCOE become a stronger organization?

Encourage state affiliates to have NASCOE members help with soliciting membership in RASCOE among retirees in their state. This could be as simple as including a notice of where to send RASCOE dues in their state newsletters.

Ask state NASCOE associations to assist RASCOE in getting a list of retirees from their respective state offices.

Make NASCOE members aware that they may become associate members of RASCOE by sending in \$10 to the RASCOE Secretary-Treasurer.

Continue to keep RASCOE informed of matters that are of concern and interest to both organizations. RASCOE pledges to reciprocate in this.

I thank the NASCOE leadership for giving me the opportunity to attend this organizational meeting. RASCOE members are always appreciative of what NASCOE does to protect all our benefits.

Clara Ruth Saint, RASCOE President

RASCOE NEWS

Dear NASCOE Members:

As a member of an organization such as NASCOE it is very important that you make every attempt to protect what past members have achieved from the organization's efforts over the years. It is very important that your organization recognize, work with, and support others that hold the same values.

Political Action Committees (PAC) are a very important aspect of American politics. They provide an avenue for the NASCOE organization to contribute to a candidate's election campaign who believes in the same principles and legislative goals and also recognizes the importance of FSA county office Employees as a major component in the delivery of Farm Programs.

The National Association of FSA County Office Employees Political Action Committee (PAC) was created in 2005 and voluntary contributions from NASCOE members are now being accepted. Your contributions to the NASCOE PAC will become a very important component in the future of NASCOE and possibly your future with the Farm Service Agency.

NASCOE leadership will approve all distributions made to candidates supportive of your goals and ideas. You can be assured that your donation will be used wisely, but contributions from members such as you are needed to adequately fund the NASCOE PAC.

Contributions to the PAC are totally voluntary and can only be made by NASCOE members with personal checks. Please no corporation checks. Your contribution may be in any amount and may be discontinued at any time. Federal Law requires that the PAC makes their best effort to obtain names, addresses, occupations, and employers of those who contribute more to the PAC. That is why we request that you complete the PAC Donation Form included with this letter.

The NASCOE PAC needs your support to make it a viable project. Please consider making a PAC contribution soon. Personal checks are accepted but the simplest and most preferred method to make your contribution is to complete a payroll allotment. Instructions to make this type of contribution are on the PAC site located at www.nascoe.org. As we said earlier only members of NASCOE are eligible to make contributions to the NASCOE PAC, therefore by receiving this letter your membership has been checked by your State NASCOE organization.

Please follow the instructions on the PAC site to make your contribution and become a part of the process to protect NASCOE's principles and values.

As an active member of NASCOE we hope that you will consider helping make the NASCOE PAC a success!

Sincerely,

Clara Ruth Saint
RASCOE President



NAFEC

National Association of Farmer Elected Committees



[NAFEC Website](#)

PRESIDENT

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1947 Furnace Rd.
Eden, MD 21822
Tel: 410-749-1022
Fax: 410-749-5470

1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Lenny Hensgens
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Crowley, LA 70526
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Fax: 337-788-0900

2ND VICE PRESIDENT

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Okawville, IL 62271
Tel: 618-243-5963

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Paul Clark
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Gilson, IL 61436
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Fax: 309-876-2514

WASHINGTON CONSULTANT

**Kimmitt, Senter, Coates &
Weinfurter**
1730 M St. NW Suite 911
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-331-4349
Fax: 202-331-7400

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Cole Sims
P.O. Box 471
Mer Rouge, LA 71261
Tel: 318-647-5005
Fax: 318-647-3889

NAFEC'S Mission

NAFEC was organized in 1965 and our mission has not changed from then to the present. "The primary purpose of our organization is, and will be, to promote and improve the farmer elected committee system for the local administration of farm programs. The coordinated effort will give us strength, and much more influence in Congress for the kind of farm legislation we feel we need."

NAFEC is dedicated to keeping the county committee system of program delivery intact. With all the different factions in Washington wanting to do away with the COC, it is becoming more difficult, but we will prevail. County Committees provide the spark and imagination as well as the judgment needed in locally adopting and running FSA farm programs. They have earned the confidence of their neighbors by doing a capable, vigorous and dedicated job. There have been numerous attempts to strip the committee of its authority, provided in statute, of supervision, selection of the CED's and virtually every aspect of their jurisdiction. NAFEC has lobbied to assure that the COC authority, written by Congress in the Code of Federal Regulations, is not diminished.

NAFEC has worked with Congress and the administration to provide a level playing field for county committees and the employees in the FSA offices. NAFEC has worked diligently this past year trying to keep the county offices open. If we foil at this, the county as well as the state will be the bog losers. Many employees will not have a job and the county committees will cease to exist. NAFEC has not always been successful in every attempt they have undertaken, however they have won the friendship of many within the Congress and the Administration through their continued efforts to promote the interests of the American farmers and ranchers. Our association has played a role in shaping several farm bills and expects to do the same in the future.

continued...

Membership is the key to making any association successful and NAFEC is no exception. NAFEC membership is vital to the future of both the Committee Association and the County Office Employees Association. NAFEC needs help to carry our messages. We urge all members of the County Committees, the advisors and county office employees to join NAFEC so we may continue to work for programs that will keep the American farmers and ranchers in business and help the entire county office system move forward. We dare not let down. Without members, the organization cannot carry our voice to policy makers. Membership dues are only \$35.00 per year for county committee members and \$20.00 for associate members. If NAFEC fails to survive, the county committee system may cease to exist also. Without the county committee doing the checks and balances, the Washington offices will make all the decisions for producers. NAFEC cannot let that happen.

Support NAFEC and encourage fellow COC members, office staff, and others to join us in our work to protect our industry, our community, and our life.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FARMER ELECTED COMMITTEE

Membership Application/Renewal Form

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

FAX NUMBER: _____

CELL PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Would you prefer to have the newsletter sent to electronically? Yes ___ No ___

Are you submitting an FSA-444 to your County FSA office for automatic dues withholding? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please remember to send your personal information to NAFEC or have your FSA office do so.

_____ Committee members - \$35

_____ FSA employee or Associate member - \$20

If paying by check, please make payable to **NAFEC**.

Mail to: Paul Clark
NAFEC Secretary-Treasurer
751 Knox Highway 12
Gilson, IL 61436

CapWiz

Have you ever said one of these statements?

“I sure wish I knew what Congress was up to and how it may affect my job.”

“Who are my congressional representatives?”

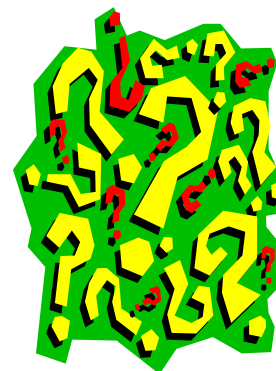
“Wonder how my congressional rep voted on a particular issue?”

“How do I get in touch with them? What should I say?”

“I am not informed as well as I need to be.”

“Is the media really telling us the true story?”

“What action can I take to make use of my IASCOE/NASCOE dues?”



Grab hold of some information
and stay informed by
signing up for CAPWIZ!!

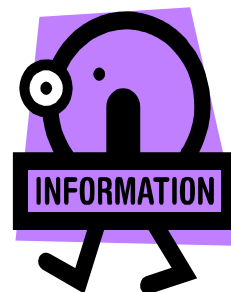
Information available on the CAPWIZ web-site includes:

- Action Alert system Get on an e-mail list (MUST BE to your HOME email address) and you will receive updates on hot issues.
- NASCOE composes letters on issues and you can use them or write your own to let your congressional reps know how you feel—email them from this Capwiz web-site!
- Information about all your congressional contacts that also shows how they voted on bills.
- Follows current legislation deemed important to NASCOE.
- You can also send messages to local and national media through Capwiz connections.

Easy steps to follow to get signed up for CAPWIZ Action Alerts:

1. Go home and get on your own computer
2. Access website: www.capwiz.com/nascoe
3. Click on Action e-list (toward the bottom of the page)
4. Load in your name, your **home** email address, etc
5. Hit the “Submit” button

(NOTE: your government email address will not update to Capwiz and cannot be used for this process.)



Another way to access the CAPWIZ information --

Go to: www.iascoe.org

Then click on NASCOE link at bottom of home page (www.nascoe.org)

*At NASCOE web-site, click on **CAPWIZ Registration***

Contact **Cindy Mensen**, (the newly “appointed” IASCOE Capwiz Coordinator) if you have any questions about the CAPWIZ process. Contact me by phone at work –Clayton County FSA--(563) 245-1713 or at home (563) 927-5455 or cell (563) 920-8979--or use my e-mail at home: mensenscat@n-connect.net.

-----IASCOE-----

Subscribe To The IASCOE Newsletter

To receive notification of new IASCOE Newsletters and web page updates,
go to our web site at iascoe.org and click on the subscription link.

CAPWIZ

Dear IASCOE Members,

2 years ago the NASCOE Officers and Area Executives brought before the general assembly at the National Convention a request. The request was to purchase a 3-year subscription to Capital Advantage or better known as CAP WIZ. This is used as another communication tool by NASOE for mostly legislative issues.

Since that time we have had 2016 NASCOE members complete the registration to be considered "subscribed", 471 are listed as "inactive" or "disabled" and 528 have been listed as "un-subscribed". So are you interested in how the MWA and Iowa in general stand up in these numbers? Here they are:

MWA has:		674 subscribed users and 121 "other"
State Break Down:	Iowa	170
	Illinois	94
	Minnesota	94
	Indiana	93
	Ohio	83
	Wisconsin	72
	Michigan	34
	Missouri	34

So the MWA has a little over 1/3 of the total National CAP WIZ Subscribed Users! WAY TO GO! This is great but we can do better. Here are some things to remember:

- * A home email address needs to be used (government addresses will be disabled)
- * Easy to sign up at www.nascoe.org and find CAP WIZ and click on icon.
- * Find Action E-list (close to Bottom) and load your home email address, name, mailing address and then hit the "submit" button.

"REMEMBER...I will disable any government address if used to register"

Do you want to know a little more about the numbers from the last year? From August 1, 2005 to July 31, 2006 the CAP WIZ/NASCOE sent out 33,259 messages and alerts to members. When the "FSA Tomorrow" issue came about, we hit the Hill with 5911 letters to our Congressional Offices. This was one of our biggest undertakings and it came from only one alert to members through CAP WIZ! Iowa sent the following number of letters to our State Congressional Representatives:

Senators:	Grassley	189	Representatives:	King	48
	Harkin	187		Latham	46
				Leach	34
				Boswell	27
				Nussle	21

The highest hit offices nationally were those of our own Senator Charles Grassley and Tom Harkin. Based on the amount of letters sent, NASCOE got the attention of Congress and the process was stopped.

continued...

If you have said any of these comments:

“I sure wish I knew what Congress was up to and how it affects my job”

“Who are my Congressional Representatives?”

“I wonder how my Representative voted on a particular issue?”

“How do I contact my representative? What do I say?”

“I don't feel as informed as I should be”

“What action can I take to make my IASCOE/NASCOE membership dues count?”

Just remember you can grab hold of some of the information and stay informed through CAP WIZ. Here is what the site includes:

- Action E-Alert System- You get on an email list by registering with a home email address and then you receive updates on Hot legislative and NASCOE issues.
- NASCOE composes a letter or you can compose your own and then send to your Congressional offices through the CAP WIZ email system.
- Shows information about Congressional Representatives plus their votes
- Follows status and votes on particular bills that are of particular importance to NASCOE
- You can also send information to local and state media through the CAP WIZ connections.

At the 2006 National Convention the MWA voted to recommend the continuation of CAP WIZ as another legislative tool to be available to members. During the Legislative and Area meetings I encouraged all Areas and States to set up a CAP WIZ coordinator to help me as issues arise and we need to act on an issue quickly. I have been informed of Coordinators in Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Cindy Mensen from Clayton County is your Iowa State Coordinator. I will be in contact with all coordinators several times in the year.

As we enter into the early stages of a New Farm Bill, I encourage all of you to be proactive and not reactive! I encourage all to sign up for CAP WIZ and have your voice be heard. If you have any questions about CAP WIZ or your registration address, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,
Tammy Eibey, Iowa
CAP WIZ Administrator & MWA Legislative Chairperson

CAP WIZ Action E-List Registration

Please enter your contact information to sign up for our mailing list.

(* indicates required field)

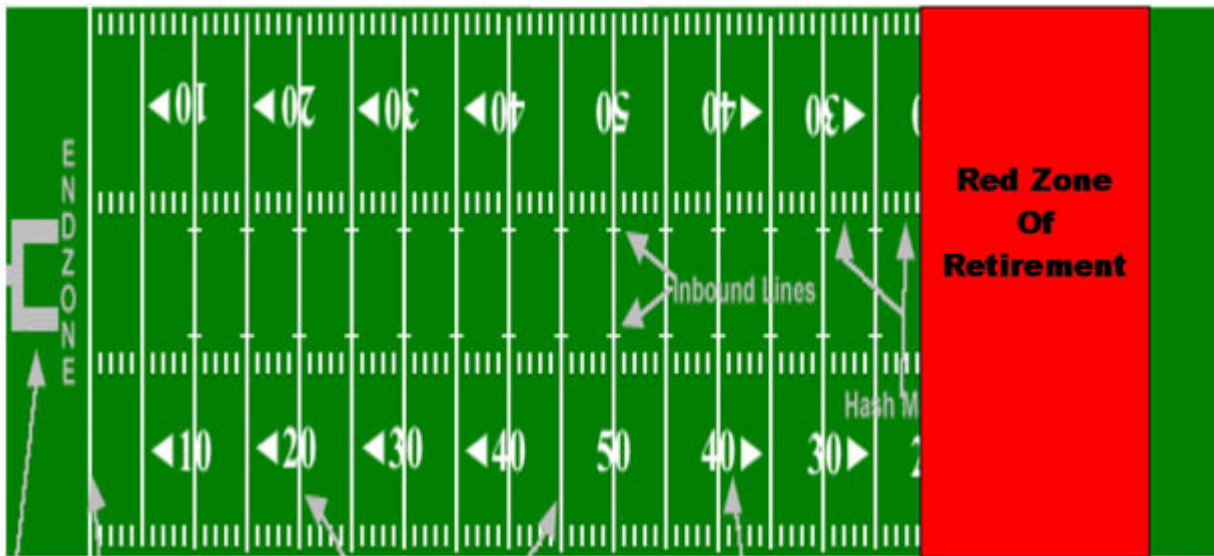
First Name *		Last Name *	
Email Address *			
PO Box or Street Address *			
City *			
State *		Zip *	Zip+4
Phone		Fax	

Signature

Date

Send to: Tammy Eibey MWA Legislative Chairperson
1597 220th Street
Manchester, Iowa 52057

Are You In The RED ZONE Of RETIREMENT?



What Are My Retirement Planning Options?

There are a variety of retirement planning options that can meet your needs. Your employer funds some; you fund some. Bear in mind that in most cases, withdrawals made before age 59^{1/2} are subject to a 10 percent penalty, and withdrawals usually must begin by April 1 of the year after you turn age 70^{1/2}. Income taxes are also due upon withdrawal in most cases.

A **defined benefit pension (FERS or CSRS)** normally provides a specific monthly benefit from the time you retire until you die. This monthly benefit is usually a percentage of your final salary multiplied by the number of years you've been with the company. Defined benefit pensions are usually funded completely by your employer.

Your employer funds a **profit-sharing plan (Thrift Savings Plan)**; employee contributions are usually optional. Upon your retirement, you will normally receive your benefit as a lump sum. The company's contributions — and thus your retirement benefit — may depend on the company's profits. If a profit-sharing plan is set up as a 401(k) plan, employee contributions may be tax deductible.

There are a few others that may pertain to you and all of these contribute to your retirement in a different yet valuable way. Such as: SEP, Roth IRA, Individual IRA, TSA, Simple IRA, 457 plan and others.

We are here to help you decipher all of your retirement needs. Give Ed or Joshua at EJ Brown & Associates a call! Or visit our new website. We have a new website and we are looking for any constructive criticism about our site. Please go to www.ejbrownandassociates.com and check it out and let me know what you think!

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119 rd St. NE Suite 333
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
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SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF FSA COUNTY OFFICE EMPLOYEES
1837 NORTH FRASER STREET - GEORGETOWN, S.C. 29440
PHONE 843.546.7616 FAX 843.546.2243
August 23, 2006

Dear State Presidents:

As most of you are aware, the 2007 NASCOE National Convention will be held at the Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina from August 5th thru August 12th. The membership here in South Carolina is very excited about hosting our 48th annual national convention and we are confident the perfect place to entertain our guests has been selected. This will be the first NASCOE national convention to be held directly on the ocean. The Kingston Plantation has five oceanfront hotels that deliver breathtaking and unforgettable views of sunrise over the Atlantic.

For those delegates who did not receive a packet from our display in Cleveland, I want to send this friendly reminder that room reservations will be accepted by the Kingston Plantation beginning September 1, 2006. The toll free number to reservations is 1-800-876-0010. Kingston also offers their guests a very detailed website of the property located at www.kingstonplantation.com. Reservations cannot be made online so prepare to call the toll free number when your plans have been finalized.

A flood of inquiries from all over the nation expressing interest in coming to Myrtle Beach have been received since our visit to Cleveland. I strongly encourage anyone who has even an inkling they will be attending the national convention in 2007 to go ahead and prepare to make your reservations early. Unlike other venues across the nation, reservations for this beautiful 147 acre resort are made by Kingston guests well over a year in advance. Although we have a substantial number of rooms blocked for the event, our peak room nights on Wednesday and Thursday night still only secures NASCOE 185 total rooms for each night.

In the event our room block is met early, we do have affordable alternatives that will allow our NASCOE members and guests the option of staying in a spacious, ocean view unit for basically the same block rate. These type units which only include the two and three BR Condo in the Brighton and the three BR Plantation Villa are available on a first come first serve basis with any Kingston client. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT ONLY A FEW ROOMS HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR THE ENTIRE WEEK. THOSE GUESTS WISHING TO STAY THE ENTIRE WEEK MAY NEED TO CONTACT ME SINCE THE BEST AVAILABLE RATE ON MANY OF OUR RESERVED UNITS ARE WELL OVER \$100 PER NIGHT MORE THAN THE RATE NASCOE HAS SECURED.

South Carolina is promoting this convention as a family event. I can tell you in all sincerity you will not have the opportunity to visit Myrtle Beach at the affordability being offered to our national convention attendees. The events being planned by our national convention committee coupled with the atmosphere and entertainment opportunities Myrtle Beach provides makes this convention the one you just don't want to miss. I am asking each State President to make sure all FSA employees in their respective state receive a copy of this letter. If you have any questions feel free to contact me. Remember, NOTHING COULD BE FINER, SOUTH CAROLINA – 2007.

Sincerely,
Kyle W. Daniel
Convention Chairman

NASCOE 2007 NATIONAL CONVENTION

KINGSTON PLANTATION
MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA

Dates: August 5, 2007 - August 11, 2007

Location: KINGSTON PLANTATION – A HILTON AND EMBASSY
SUITES RESORT MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA
www.kingstonplantation.com 1-800-876-0010

- Make a **SPLASH** in the 50,000 square foot water complex
- Five hotels, condos, villas, lodges, and townhouses all included on this 147 acre property. Rooms equipped with stove and frig.
- Tennis Center, Sport & Health Club all on site featuring racquetball, nine outdoor lighted tennis courts, indoor lap pool, and aerobics gym.
- Unlimited Championship Golf Courses. Myrtle Beach has without a doubt the finest collection of golf courses in America
- **KIDS** - Adventure Cruises, Banana Boat Rides, Water Parks, Build a Bear Workshop, NASCAR Speed Park, Ripley's Aquarium
- Live Music Shows including: **THE CAROLINA OPRY, ALABAMA THEATRE AND DOLLY PARTON'S DIXIE STAMPEDE**
- Shop Til' You Drop featuring the **COASTAL GRAND MALL, BROADWAY AT THE BEACH, AND 2 TANGER OUTLETS**
- Over 1500 of the finest restaurants on the east coast specializing in Calabash style seafood
- Deep Sea Fishing Charters leaving daily
- Tons of activities planned nightly during convention week with live entertainment, fun for the kids, and a taste of fine lowcountry foods.
- Dinner and casino cruises at sunset on the Atlantic Ocean
- Explore Brookgreen Gardens, a 9,000 acre National Historic Landmark which includes sculptured gardens and lowcountry history
- Visit Georgetown - **AN ALL AMERICAN CITY** The 3rd oldest city In South Carolina. See the house where George Washington stayed.
- **AND I ALMOST FORGOT, MILES AND MILES OF BEAUTIFUL, SANDY BEACHES!!**

\$25 CHANCE



SOUTH CAROLINA FUNDRAISER

***** GRAND PRIZE *****

**2007 HARLEY DAVIDSON
"FATBOY" BLACK PEARL
BRAND SPANKING NEW**

**ELECTRONIC SEQUENTIAL PORT FUEL
INJECTION—TWIN CAM 88 ENGINE**

DRY WEIGHT 683 pounds

50 MPG HWY/44 MPG CITY

Bike supplied by Doug's Harley-Davidson

**2007 NASCOE NATIONAL
CONVENTION**

AUGUST 5 - AUGUST 11, 2007

**KINGSTON PLANTATION
MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA**

WWW.KINGSTONPLANTATION.COM

Toll Free Reservations# 1.800.876.0010



**PLUS 4 CHANCES TO WIN
\$500 CASH AND 5 CHANCES
TO WIN \$250 CASH**

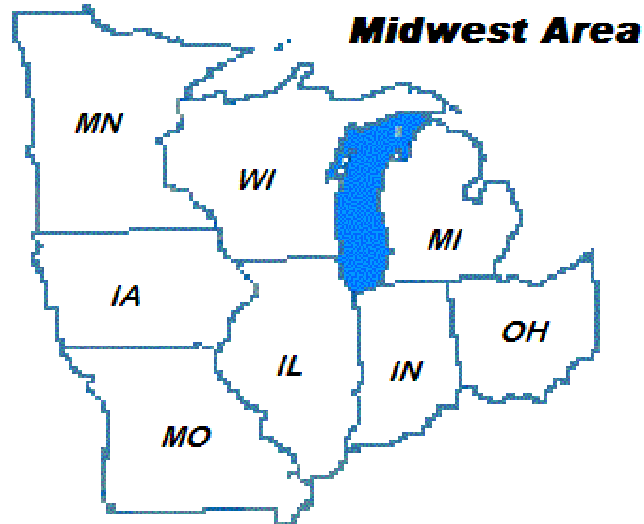
\$25 CHANCE

CONTACT: JIM BEDELL, FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

843.479.2441 (Office#)

843.921.3504 (Cell #)

Mark VanHoose,
MW Area Executive
&
John Williams,
Alt. Area Executive



MIDWEST AREA STATE CONVENTIONS 2007

- March 23-24** **Illinois/Missouri Joint Convention**
Holiday Inn Collinsville
1000 Eastport Plaza Drive
I-55/I-70 at IL 157 (exit 11)
Collinsville, IL 62234-6103
618-345-2800 or 800-551-5133
www.hicollinsville.com
Room Rates: Single/Double \$70
- March 30** **Indiana Conventions - Central Indiana Area**
(Directors meeting the afternoon of March 29)
- March 30-31** **Iowa Convention**
Stoney Creek Inn
5291 Stoney Creek CT
Johnston, IA 50131
Phone: 800-659-2220
- May 4-5** **Midwest Area Rally**
Frankenmouth, MI (Northeast of Flint and not too far from the Saginaw Airport)
- July 20** **Minnesota** (tentative date, location undecided)

Wisconsin Whispers for Moms

Today I just want to talk to moms. Moms everywhere, but especially military moms. Even if your child is not overseas, there is a certain pride that you carry in your heart for your very special soldier. It's something that cannot be described, but yet, every mom knows what I mean.

I was and still am so proud of all of my children. I have been so blessed to have 9 healthy children. I truly thank God for the gift of my children. Okay, I didn't really count on having quite so many, but I guess God knew I could handle it. There were some days, however... anyway, they are the most precious part of my life.

About 3 years ago, my son, Ken, finally let me know he had joined the Army. I was angry, upset, frustrated, scared and proud all in one second. He went to Fort Sill, OK, for basic and believe me, I don't think there could have been any parent more proud of their child than I was when he walked across the stage and saluted his commander as a soldier. It was interesting for me to go to his boot camp graduation with my parents because my father was stationed at Fort Sill in the Korean War and we even found his old barracks. It was worth the long trip there and back from Wisconsin.

He stayed in Fort Sill and called me one day to tell me he was to be deployed to Iraq. Even though I knew in my mind that he would have to go, the tears started up anyway. I pretended not to cry, but that's hard to disguise. During this time, my twin sons, Bobby and Kevin, also joined the Army. My heart hit my feet when they shared this bit of news with me. How in the world would I manage with 3 sons in the Army? My head was spinning.

As it turned out, Kenny received a medical discharge 3 weeks prior to deployment due to an old ankle injury. Ok, mom was a happy camper even though my soldier was not.

My twins were stationed in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Yep, mom drove there for their boot camp graduation and just about cried when I saw my boys. They were in good physical shape when they went to the Army, but they were thin, pale and obviously sleep deprived, but they were smiling and standing tall when they graduated. I also stood tall (well, for those that know me, tall is just under 5'2") but I stood tall that day. I was so very, very proud of them. They finally ended up at Fort Hood, TX and I received the "dreaded call" from them last fall that they were to be deployed. I cried again even though I knew they would be going. They couldn't come home together on leave so mom went down in November and again in December to see the boys off. It was hard when Bobby left in November, but it was much more difficult when Kevin left in December. With both of them gone, there was a huge hole in my heart and my life.

When I returned home in December, I felt like I was just in a fog. I THOUGHT I was handling their deployment well, but in reality, I was not. I couldn't concentrate at work, I couldn't think about much of anything and if I even saw a picture of a soldier, I would cry. On the outside, I kept up a good front, but I was a mess on the inside, that's for sure.

So I started the website and began my quest for others to honor our soldiers and respect the sacrifice they are making for all of us. It has been my therapy and I want other moms to know that we are all in this together. If you are in that "fog", please know that you are not alone and I want to help in any way I can. The first thing you can do is just send me an email and let me know how you are feeling. The next thing you can do is go to the website: www.usdamilitaryfamilies.org and find ALL types of support, help, and information. The best thing you can do is get involved. Become part of the High School Challenge, collect old cell phones for calling cards for the military, organize some type of event that will pay tribute to our military, DO ANYTHING but be sure to do SOMETHING!!!! It's a way to honor your children and it is also therapy for YOU.

I love getting emails, prayer requests, pictures and updates on your soldiers, so be sure to drop me a line and get involved SOMEHOW.

Take care and God Bless all the military moms, their soldiers and their families.

Military Mom
Deb Esselman - WI

The Battle Still Rages

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn
Keokuk County CED - IASCOE President

We all picture our soldiers on the dessert sands in places like Iraq and Afghanistan when we here news about the war. But another battle rages on the home front for many of those soldiers who have returned home: ***Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).***

More than one in three soldiers who have served in Iraq has sought help for mental health problems. Those returning from Iraq consistently reported more psychic distress than those returning from Afghanistan and other conflicts. Why is this you may ask? These particular veterans are far more likely to have witnessed comrades getting wounded or killed and to have experienced actual combat. Up to 85% of the people serving have witnessed or been a part of a traumatic event such as engaging the enemy, killing people and themselves being involved in Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and mortar Attacks.

More than half of all soldiers and Marines returning from Iraq say they “felt in great danger of being killed. You see, there is no front line in Iraq yet there is no safe zone for these soldiers. Soldiers patrolling streets are at high risk of becoming involved in a conflict but soldiers on bases are targets of mortar and artillery attacks and everyone in a convoy is a target.

Veterans who develop PTSD may suffer from flashbacks, nightmare and intrusive thoughts that disrupt work and home life. Some may develop insomnia, memory loss, clinical depression and anxiety among other afflictions.

***The point is: don't forget those who have returned home
- many of them are still at war.***

I have to admit this isn't something I spent much time thinking about until my brother finally admitted to having problems just the other day. He arrived home 9 months ago from Iraq and thought all the anxiety would pass, but it hasn't and now he is seeking professional help and his family's support. He is taking leave from his job as a deputy sheriff as he cannot function in that capacity right now. In fact, this morning Mom called at 6:00 a.m. and said: “Your brother was here at 4:30 a.m. on the lawn mower ready to start mowing- there is definitely something wrong”. (This coming from a woman who is out in her gardens between 4:00 and 4:30 every morning with a light strapped to her head pulling weeds.) I went over to my brother's last evening to see what I could do to help and offered him a job mowing my lawn. He replied, “Sure, I'll be over at 4:00 tomorrow morning!” At least, we all are still laughing - it's a start.



SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE MIKE JOHANNNS VISITS SIOUX COUNTY!

Secretary Johannns spent the day on August 8 touring areas of Sioux County as a guest of Farm Foundation in collaboration with USDA's Rural Development and NRCS.

While in the county, he toured an ethanol plant at Sioux Center where he held a press event. Area officials visited with him about the issues and challenges of conservation and economic development in rural America. He also visited Sioux Pharm, Inc. in Sioux Center. He toured the countryside looking at waste storage structures and conservation practices, eventually finding himself in Orange City to tour the new Orange City Area Health System.

Since our office is "just around the corner" from the new hospital, Secretary Johannns and his crew made an unscheduled stop to visit us. He took time to stop at everyone's desk, shake hands with us and thank us for our hard work and service to our producers.

What a day!!



Ag Secretary Johannns poses for a picture with the Sioux County FSA and NRCS employees.

Agriculture: Reasons to Celebrate

Below are some interesting facts about agriculture today. These points just scratch the surface of the advancements being made in agriculture on a daily basis.

General statistics:

- Today's average farm is 417 acres compared to 147 acres in 1900.
- Today's farmer feeds about 129 people in the United States and abroad. In 1960 that number was 25.8.
- 42 percent of U.S. total land area is farmland.
- U.S. Farmers account for 42.7 percent of the world's soybean production and 34.4 percent of the world's corn production.
- Almost 90 percent of U.S. farms are operated by individuals or family corporations.
- More than 15 percent of the U.S. population is employed in farm or farm-related jobs.
- U.S. consumers spend roughly 9 percent of their income on food compared with 11 percent in the United Kingdom, 17 percent in Japan, 27 percent in South Africa and 53 percent in India.
- Farmers and ranchers provide food and habitat for 75 percent of the nation's wildlife.

Production Improvements:

- U.S. Farmers and ranchers produce meat that is lower in fat and cholesterol. The result is beef cuts that have 27 percent less fat than in 1985.
- Biotechnology has resulted in better tasting fruits and vegetables that stay fresh longer and are naturally resistant to insects.
- Plant breeding has resulted in crops better able to handle the environmental affects of drought and disease and insect infestations resulting in higher yields at harvest and lower costs to the consumer.

Technology/Equipment Advancements:

- Today's combines can harvest 900 bushels of corn per hour. In the 1930s a farmer could harvest (by hand) about 100 bushels of corn in a nine-hour day.
- Precision farming using satellite maps and computer models enables farmers to use less production inputs to produce a higher quality, higher yielding crop.
- Technology products like John Deere's GreenStar AutoTrac satellite guidance system improve farming efficiency, reduce operator fatigue and help keep the cost of food down for U.S. consumers.
- Farmers use computers and satellites daily to improve the efficiency of their production operations and track production processes on general and special crops.

New Uses:

- Ethanol accounts for the largest industrial use of any commodity crop.
- Resins from corn and soybeans are used in production of, for example, John Deere equipment panels.
- Some crops are being bred specifically for use in pharmaceutical production.
- Soybeans are used in the five major markets currently dependent on petroleum products including: plastics, coatings and ink, adhesives, lubricants and solvents.
- Corn also is used in place of certain petroleum-based products in industrial applications.

If Cows Sold Like Cars

The farmer would price his unit as follows:

Basic Cow:	\$ 499.95
Shipping And Handling:	\$ 35.75
Extra Stomachs:	\$ 79.25
Two Tone Exterior:	\$ 142.10
Produce Storage Compartment:	\$ 126.50
Heavy Duty Straw Chopper:	\$ 189.60
Four Spigot/High Output Drain System:	\$ 149.20
Automatic Fly Swatter:	\$ 88.50
Genuine Cowhide Upholstery:	\$ 179.90
Deluxe Dual Horns:	\$ 59.25
Automatic Fertilizer Attachment:	\$ 339.40
4 X 4 Traction Drive Assembly:	\$ 884.16
Pre-Delivery Wash And Comb:	\$ <u>69.80</u>
<u>FARMERS SUGGESTED LIST PRICE:</u>	\$ 2843.36
Additional Dealer Adjustments:	\$ <u>300.00</u>
TOTAL LIST PRICE (Including Options):	\$ 3143.36

A farmer walked into an attorney's office wanting to file for a divorce.

The attorney asked, "May I help you?"

The farmer said, "Yea, I want to get one of the, dayvorces."

The attorney said, "Well do you have any grounds?"

The farmer said, "Yea, I got about 140 acres."

The attorney said, "No, you don't understand, do you have a case?"

The farmer said, "No, I don't have a Case, but I have a John Deere."

The attorney said, "No, you don't understand, I mean do you have a grudge?"

The farmer said, "Yea, I got a grudge, that's where I park my John Deere."

The attorney said, "No sir, I mean do you have a suit?"

The farmer said, "Yes, sir, I got a suit, I wear it to church on Sundays."

The exasperated attorney said, "Well, sir, does your wife beat you up or anything?"

The farmer said, "No sir, we both get up about 4:30."

Finally, the attorney said, "Okay, let me put it this way: why do you want a divorce?"

"Well, I can never have a meaningful conversation with her."



Land of 10,000 Lakes

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn
CED, Keokuk County
IASCOE President

I vent up nordt to attend the MNASCOE state convention held July 20th and 21st in Owatonna, Minnesota. (Did you notice my Minnesotan accent?) This was the first combined convention of MNASCOE and MACS and both organizations did a great job of pulling together and putting on a good convention.

Presidents from both associations, Mark Drewitz (MACS) and Kevin Beekman (MNASCOE) shared the duties of opening remarks, introducing guests and orchestrating the question and answer session. I have to say it was a fine example of teamwork and an impressive effort to pull the agency together as one.

Guest speakers included the SED, the State AO, a member of the State Committee, MWA director Mark Van Hoose, and our Administrator, Teresa Lasseter. Thursday evening, a retirement seminar was presented by State Office personnel, followed by a presentation from a local financial advisor. The casual atmosphere of the evening made it easy to chat and make new friends and renew friendships with the old ones. I actually ran into the first CED I ever worked for. He had transferred from Jefferson County, Iowa to Rice County in Minnesota more than a few years ago and is now retired. Although I did meet several new people, I was disappointed never to run into the infamous Ole and Sven!

In addition to the business meeting, an auction was also held Friday morning and I came home with a bottle of fine red wine produced locally by the "Wine-ing Farmer" (pretty funny huh!). I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the "nordt" country and certainly encourage all of you to attend conventions in our neighboring states if the opportunity arises.

Will you enjoy the experience?

"Yah sure, you betcha!"



Wright County USDA Service Center moved into our beautiful new building May 30, 2006. We were honored by the Clarion Chamber with a ribbon cutting during our open house August 30, 2006. We had a steady stream of customers and friends through out the afternoon. The weather was beautiful, therefore we all had an enjoyable afternoon. Agencies occupying the building are Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources and Conservation Service, Information Technology and Iowa DNR.

Bonnie H. Leist
Wright County Executive Director



After one year, this is a testimony that appears on a website for Gastric Bypass at Mercy Hospital.



Jeff Davis - After

Jeff Davis, Laparoscopic Gastric Bypass surgery patient of Dr. William Rizk (May 2005)

“The difference in me is unbelievable. I’ve learned every day that my body talks to me. When I weighed over 400 pounds, my body was screaming at me most of the time. I had a lot of health problems.

“It used to kill me to walk the five blocks to the football field to watch a game – so I would drive. Now, after losing 165 pounds, I walk five miles or so a day during the week. Whenever I have walked up to people who haven’t seen me for awhile, I’ve found they have to take a second look.



Jeff Davis - Before

“I look at life differently now. It is great to be a changed person!”

Jeff Davis is the CED of Plymouth County Iowa

My Encounter with “Lance”

In February, my nephew called to challenge me to ride a couple of days on the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (more fondly known as RAGBRAI). I initially thought he was joking since it had been a just a few years since we had participated on the ride. Well, let's try 15 years! But here I was sending in our application to be a part of the 10,000 plus bicyclists to make the trip from Newton to Marengo on Thursday (75 miles) and Friday from Marengo to Coralville (50 miles).

I had promised myself that I would diligently train for the ride. Occasionally I rode my stationary bike, but with work, a home remodeling project, and other family activities, time got away from me. As the event quickly approached, I knew that even if I wasn't in the best of shape, my bicycle had to be. A trip to Marty's (Iowa Bike and Fitness in Pella) would be necessary. As I lifted my old friend from the hangers in the garage, I was sure that I heard it say "Steve, where have you been? How many years? And oh, it looks like you have put on a few pounds."

News quickly spread through the community that Lance Armstrong, seven time Tour De France winner and considered by many to be the world's greatest athlete, was joining RAGBRAI to promote his "Livestrong" campaign against cancer. Not only would he be speaking on Wednesday night, but he would be riding the route on Thursday!

Wednesday arrived with a hoard of riders representing all 50 states and 15 foreign countries. Newton did itself proud and showed everyone a good time. Many of the riders commented that Newton was the best town they had ever stayed in while on RAGBRAI. It was estimated that up to 30,000 gathered in the town square to hear Lance speak. As a cancer survivor himself, he passionately spoke of the need to find a cure.

Thursday, 5:30 AM: The alarm went off and as I rolled out of bed, my mind was still questioning whether this was such a good idea. Following a good breakfast and some last minute tweaking of our bicycles, we were ready to roll by 6:45 AM. I gave my wife a hug and a kiss and told her I loved her while secretly hoping it wouldn't be the last time we saw each other on earth.

As we headed out of town, the good folks of Newton were there to greet the bikers with a goodbye and wishes for a safe trip. The first few miles gave an indication of the day to come with several long hills. I was feeling pretty good as we entered the first stop of Reasnor. After all, I thought, I had beaten Lance Armstrong! Of course Lance hadn't begun to ride yet, but why quibble over such details.

It was on to Sully! As the morning sun began to rise, the temperatures seemed to increase along with the number and steepness of the hills. Despite this, I began to look around and realize what a beautiful county I live in. Cow- calf pairs quietly grazed the hillside as we passed by. At the 18 mile mark we rolled into Sully and I was still feeling great. Again; no sign of Lance so I guess we beat him to Sully. Well, OK, he hadn't left Newton yet.

Venturing on toward Montezuma, the hills seemed only to be getting longer. My daughter observantly noted that Iowa does have hills; something that you seem to notice more from the vantage of a bicycle seat rather than a 99 Nissan Altima. Heading into to Montezuma around noon, we decided to grab a bite to eat and rest awhile. Still, no sign of Lance.

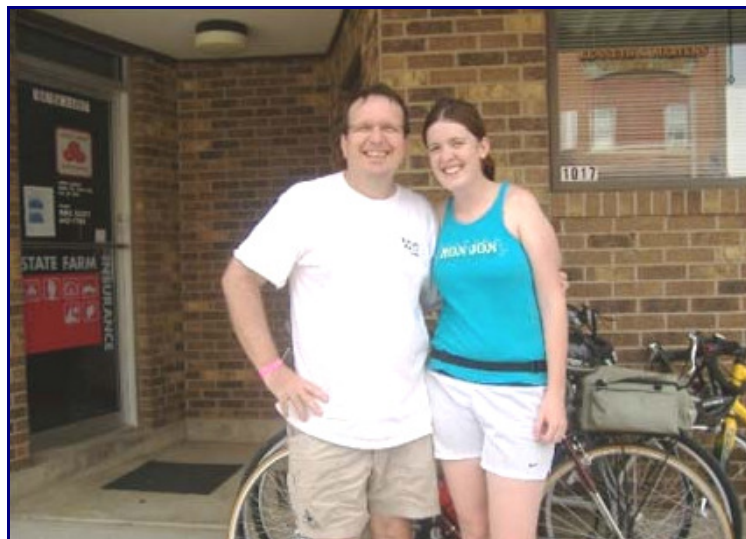
We heard rumors that he was somewhere between Reasnor and Sully. He was still behind us. Never mind that he left Newton at 10 AM; a mere 3 hours and 15 minutes after we did.

It was time to move on to the next town. Having been Acting CED for Poweshiek County last year, I felt somewhat familiar with my surroundings. However, I didn't seem to remember the hills and they were beginning to take their toll. Approximately 5 miles south of Brooklyn, my daughter and I struggled up a particularly long and steep hill. I had to shift down to my lowest "granny" gear. I had never walked my bike up a hill, and I was determined I wouldn't start now. We finally reached the top where stationed was a strategically placed "fruit smoothie" stand. I told my daughter that we deserved a smoothie after a hill like that and so we stopped. I was enjoying my just reward with a long sip from my strawberry-peach smoothie, when suddenly I heard someone shout "You the man, Lance". As I looked up, I saw a blur of yellow jerseys go up that hill we had just struggled on. He and his team went up the hill at about the speed we go down them. Within all of about 2 seconds, Lance was gone. My daughter turned to me and jokingly remarked "Should we try to catch him?"

Still in amazement, we mounted our bicycles while still talking about our "encounter" with THE Lance Armstrong. As Brooklyn came into sight I thought to myself, "Well, Lance, you finally caught up with us".

Submitted by
Steve Kennedy, CED Jasper County

Special Note: Steve did make it to Marengo on Thursday and to Coralville on Friday. He is already making plans for next year's ride.



Pictured are Steve Kennedy, CED Jasper County and his daughter, Nicole, after the long ride on RAGBRAI from Newton to Marengo. You don't look that tired Steve or was Nicole holding you up?



EMPTY NEST SYNDROME

Submitted by Tammy Eibey, Delaware County

Empty-nest syndrome is a term commonly used for a psychological or emotional condition that can affect a woman around the time that one or more of her children leave home. It can also occur when a child gets married, because matrimony is a clear signal that Mom is no longer needed in the same way she once was. Most often it occurs at the time of year (autumn) when vast numbers of teenagers have just left home for college or university.

I recently found myself in this category as I just had 2 of my 4 children leave home...Even though I am not a true empty nester... having the 2 boys gone leaving me with the 2 girls, I have a heavy heart. I have been close to tears since I left them at their fraternity at Iowa State several days ago. My oldest, Dan will be 21 in September and is a junior and Keith is 18 and a freshman. I felt like I was just here myself as a student. Did I really want them to act like I did at College? Oh Boy! I'm not ready for this stage of my life!

I decided it was time to investigate my feelings since my husband feels I have gone over the edge this time and has stopped talking to me about it...He should be worried...We outnumber him now and you know what 3 women and estrogen might do to a guy! Audrey, who is 15, just doesn't want me to embarrass her or melt down in front of her friends. So here is some things I found out...I guess I might be part crazy but for a good reason...Good thing menopause isn't hitting too or I'd be in big trouble...I'm saving that for when Baby Allison leaves me (she is only 10).... So good luck to all you other Mom's with a bit of the empty nest feelings too...I know how you feel and I really do empathize with you...SMILE! Read on and know we aren't alone!

But what is empty-nest syndrome?

Well, it's not a term you'll find in many medical textbooks, but it has become a useful phrase for identifying and encapsulating the feelings of sadness and loss that many women experience when their children no longer live with them, or need day-to-day care.

Normal reactions

It is quite normal for a mother to feel some sadness at this time. It is quite normal to cry now and again - and it is even normal to go into the absent child's bedroom and sit there for a bit in an attempt to feel closer to him or her.

In fact, we know of one very successful, busy and confident woman - an agony aunt in fact - who confessed to going into her son's bedroom to sniff his T-shirt shortly after he left to go to university for the first time.

So don't be ashamed of your feelings - they are natural.

More troubling reactions

If, on the other hand, you are feeling that your useful life has ended, or if you are crying excessively, or if you're so sad that you don't want to mix with friends or go to work, then you should seek professional help - especially if these severe symptoms go on for longer than a week.

In this kind of situation, what seems to happen is that the child's departure unleashes seriously depressed feelings - and these very definitely need treating.

So if you know that your sadness is overwhelming you, do go and discuss your feelings with your Doctor as soon as possible. You may need antidepressants and you almost certainly could use some counseling to get your feelings into perspective.

Continued...

Commonly when a woman is at the stage in life where her kids are leaving, she may also be going through other major changes - like dealing with the menopause, or trying to cope with increasingly dependent elderly parents. So this is a difficult time - and it's no disgrace if you need help of various kinds to get through it.

If your menopausal symptoms are badly affecting you - and they seem worse because of your kids leaving home - don't ignore them. Your Doctor should be able to help.

Practical tips to get you over empty-nest syndrome

When your child leaves home, you'll obviously want to keep in touch with him or her. But don't try and do this excessively. Be sensitive to the fact that your son or daughter is trying to take a big, significant step in life - which isn't actually much to do with you.

Your offspring will need your support, but will not want to feel swamped. And the more you cling or show that you're upset, the less likelihood there is of him or her contacting you.

So, ration your calls to no more than two a week. Also, some of the time try writing, or using email instead of phoning. You'll be able to put your feelings succinctly without getting too emotional. This form of communication will probably suit your child better, too. After all, it's much easier for a young person to say: 'Hi, Mom. I really, really miss you,' in an email - rather than on the phone where other students might be listening.

If your child is having a miserable time at university or college, do resist the impulse to be pleased about this! And don't suggest that he or she gives up and comes home. Plenty of teenagers are very miserable and lonely for a couple of weeks, but they deal with it. And that is a great accomplishment. So be supportive, but don't sort everything for them - and certainly don't try to bring them back home.

Meanwhile, you need some help and support for your feelings. Lean on your friends - maybe some of them are going through the same thing, or have gone through it. And be very kind to yourself. Think of treats for yourself: you could have a long lie in a scented bath for example - in fact you may come to see that although you've lost a teenager, you've gained a bathroom!

Then you can do some practical things to help you feel better:

- Buy some credit for your son's or daughter's mobile phone.
- Try to agree on a time once a week when you can both chat to each other on the phone.
- Email some funny snippets of what's happening at home.

Your self-esteem

Once you feel you're dealing with the practicalities of your child's departure - and your immediate feelings about it - it's a good idea to reappraise your own self-esteem.

Perhaps for too long now you have tended to identify yourself as 'a Mom' rather than as a very special and unique person in your own right.

If this is true, it's time to make some changes.

Remember that the chances are you've still got half of your life left to live - so get back in touch with who you are, build up your confidence and start planning to really make something of your new-found freedom.

Poppy Seed Bread

1 yellow cake mix
4 eggs
2 small pkg lemon instant pudding
1/2 c. oil
1/4 c. poppy seeds
1 c. hot water.

Mix together and put in loaf pans. Will make 2. Bake at 350 for 40 minutes.

Zucchini Cake

2 c. sugar
2 c. flour
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp salt
2 tsp soda
1 c. coconut
2 cup grated raw zucchini
1 c. chopped nuts
1 1/2 salad oil (sorry)
3 eggs
2 T. vanilla
1 small can crushed pineapple with juice



Mix together well, sugar, flour, cinnamon, salt, soda, coconut, zucchini, and nuts. Stir in all at once salad oil, eggs, vanilla, and pineapple. Mix well. Pour in 9 X 13 inch pan and bake at 350 for 35 to 40 minutes.

Best Banana Bread

1 3/4 c. flour
1/4 tsp salt
1 tsp baking soda
1 1/2 sticks margarine
1 1/2 c. sugar
2 eggs
1/4 c. buttermilk
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 to 1 c. nuts
1 c. well mashed overripe bananas

Glaze:

1 c. confectioners sugar
2 to 3 tablespoons lemon juice

Preheat oven to 350. Grease and flour 2 (8 1/2 by 4) 1/2 inch loaf pans. Combine flour, salt, and baking soda. Cream together margarine and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add flour mixture and buttermilk. Beat batter 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in vanilla, nuts and bananas. Spoon into loaf pans. Bake about 50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool before adding glaze.

The secret to good banana bread is using ripe bananas, almost too ripe to handle!!!!

I want a bite!!!!

Lisa Forburger
PT - Kossuth County FSA



DISTRICT 4 RECIPES FOR FALL

Soup Mix To Can Or Freeze

- 8 quarts tomatoes - cut up
- 2 quarts diced or sliced carrots
- 1 bunch celery - cut up
- 6 onions - diced
- 2 heads cabbage - chopped
- 1 tsp pepper 1/2-cup canning salt
- 5 quarts water (I usually omit)

Cook together 1 hour. Pack in jars and process in pressure cooker 15 minutes at 10# of pressure.

Add soup mix to browned meats, potatoes etc. - simmer & serve.

Yield 7-8 quarts. Try to keep measurements accurate.

Pat Meisel - Shelby County FSA

Pumpkin Cookies

- 2 eggs
- 2 c. light brown sugar
- 1 c. vegetable oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 (15 oz) can pumpkin
- 3 c. flour
- 1 T. pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt

Filling/cream cheese frosting

- 1 stick margarine
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 lb. powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Beat the eggs, brown sugar, oil and vanilla extract in a mixing bowl until smooth. Stir in the pumpkin. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, pumpkin spice, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

Add the dry ingredients to the egg mixture a half a cup at a time, blending each time until smooth.

Drop a heaping tablespoon of batter onto an ungreased cookie sheet, using a moist finger or the back of a spoon to slightly flatten each mound. Bake the cookies for 12 minutes, then transfer them to a wire rack to cool completely.

Meanwhile, make the frosting. Beat together the margarine, cream cheese and vanilla. Slowly mix in the powdered sugar.

To assemble cookies, turn half of the cookies bottom side up and spread a generous amount of cream cheese frosting on each one. Top them with the remaining cookies (turned right side up).

Makes 10 to 12 Pumpkin Cookies

Brigit Thompson - Calhoun County FSA

Pumpkin Dessert

1 large can pumpkin
sugar and spices according to the can
4 eggs
1 1/2 c evaporated milk
Mix and put in 9x13 inch pan

Topping

1 pkg butter pecan cake mix
1/4-cup butter (oleo) melted

Mix butter and cake mix. Put on top of pumpkin. Bake at 350 for 1 hour or until inserted toothpick comes out clean. Serve warm with whipped cream.

Cindi Ohl - Crawford County FSA

This is a good old standby - Not all Pumpkin pies contain all of the spices and this recipe gives a wonderful flavor and makes your house smell better than potpourri!!

Pumpkin Pie (large recipe for 4 pies)

2 cups sugar
8 teaspoons cornstarch
1/2-cup brown sugar
Mix well together

2 teaspoons salt 6 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon nutmeg 1-teaspoon cloves
2 teaspoons ginger scant teaspoon allspice
Add to above and mix well

8 beaten eggs
1 large can pumpkin
4 cups milk
Stir into mixture. Mix well, and pour into 4 pie shells.

Bake at 450 for 15 minutes, then turn down to 350 for 40 minutes.

Brenda Albright - Audubon County FSA

Turkey Casserole

2 1/2 cup turkey, cooled and cut up
4 1/2 cup fresh bread crumbs
1/4 tsp. poultry seasonings
1/4 tsp. baking powder
3/4 cup chopped celery
1 medium onion chopped
1/2-cup oleo
3/4-cup milk
1 egg beaten
1 can cream of mushroom soup

Combine turkey, breadcrumbs, poultry seasoning and baking powder. Set aside. Sauté onion and celery in oleo.

Add milk, egg and soup. Mix all ingredients well and put in a casserole dish. Bake at 350 for 40 minutes or until brown.

Diane Ostrander - Greene County FSA

Apple Goody

5 cups sliced apples
1 cup sugar
1 t. flour
½ tsp cinnamon
Mix together and add ½ cup water

Topping

¾ cup oatmeal
¾ cup flour
¾ cup brown sugar
⅓ cup melted oleo
¼ tsp baking soda
¼ tsp baking powder
Bake at 350 30-40 minutes

Diane Ostrander - Greene County FSA

Jalapeno Poppers

1 8 oz pkg cream cheese, softened
1 package taco seasoning
24 jalapeno peppers
12 slices of bacon

Wash and seed the jalapeno peppers (wear rubber gloves). Mix the taco seasoning into the cream cheese. Stuff the peppers with the cream cheese mixture. Cut the 12 slices of bacon in half and wrap each jalapeno pepper. Secure with toothpick. Broil in oven (I use the second rack from the top) around 10-15 minutes or until bacon is brown. Yummy! The sweet and hot go good together. If you are not a hot pepper person, try doing this with nonhot jalapeno peppers (fool-you jalapeno peppers).

Pat Warmbier - Harrison County FSA

Slow Cooker Sweet Potato Casserole

2 (29 oz) can sweet potatoes, drained and mashed
⅓ c butter, melted
2 t. sugar
2 t. brown sugar
1 t. orange juice
2 eggs, beaten
½ c. milk

Topping:
⅓ c. chopped pecans
⅓ c. brown sugar
2 t. flour
2 t. butter, melted

Lightly grease a slow cooker. In a large bowl, blend sweet potatoes, butter, sugar, and brown sugar. Beat in orange juice, eggs and milk. Transfer this mixture to the prepared slow cooker. In a small bowl, combine topping ingredients: pecans, brown sugar, flour and melted butter. Spread the mixture over the sweet potatoes. Cover slow cooker and cook on high for 3 hours or 4, til it is all heated through.

Nutrition facts (per serving)

Calories (kcal) 408	Carbohydrates 66.1g
Protein 6.3g	Cals from Carbohydrates 63%
Cals from Protein 6%	Fiber 4.2g
Total Fat 14.1g	Cholesterol 78mg
Cals from Fat 30%	Sodium 133mg

Candy Hoyle - Greene County FSA

Country Apple Dumplings

- 2 large Granny Smith apples, peeled and cored
- 2 (10 ounce) cans refrigerated crescent roll dough
- 1 c butter
- 1 ½ c sugar
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 (12 fluid ounce) can or bottle of Mountain Dew

Preheat the oven to 350. Grease a 9x13 baking dish. Cut each apple into 8 (or 6 for bigger dumplings) and set aside. Separate the crescent roll dough into triangles. Roll each apple wedge on the crescent roll dough starting at the smallest end. Pinch to seal and place in the baking dish.

Melt butter in a small saucepan and stir in sugar and cinnamon. Pour over the apple dumplings. Pour mountain dew over the dumplings. Bake for 35-40 minutes in the preheated oven, or until golden brown.

Nutrition Facts (per serving)	
Calories (kcal) 334	Carbohydrates 38.6g
Protein 2.7g	Cals from Carbohydrates 45%
Cals from Protein 3%	Fiber 0.6g
Total Fat 19g	Cholesterol 31mg
Cals from Fat 50%	Sodium 397mg

Candy Hoyle - Greene County FSA

Farm Wife Recipe

- 2 heaping cups of understanding
- 1 c. of love and compassion
- 1 c. of caring and sharing
- 1 level cup of common sense and wisdom
- 1 tsp. spunk
- 1/8 tsp. temper

Mix ingredients together and combine with happiness
Toss in good health
Serve with a sense of humor
Top with a small prayer
Recipe makes one generous loving farm wife.
Recipe will serve her family, friends and community.



Submitted by: Deb Ostrander, Greene County

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.

YOU GREW UP IN THE RURAL MIDWEST IF...

You know what knee-high by the Fourth of July means.

You know it is traditional for the bride and groom to go bar hopping between the wedding and the reception dance.

You know the difference between "green" and "red" farm machinery, and would fight with your friends on the playground over which was better!

You buy Christmas presents at Farm Supply.

You spent more on beer & liquor than you did on food at your wedding.

You hear someone use the word "oof-dah" and you don't break into uncontrollable laughter.

You or someone you know was a "Dairy Princess" at the county fair (or county fair queen or beef/pork queen/princess as well).

You know that "combine" is a noun.

You let your older siblings talk you into putting your tongue on a steel post in the middle of winter.

You think Lutheran and Catholic are THE major religions.

You know that "creek" rhymes with "pick".

Football schedules, hunting season and harvest are all taken into consideration before wedding dates are set.

A Friday night date is getting a six-pack and taking your girlfriend shinning for deer.

There was at least one kid in your class who had to help milk cows in the morning... phew!

You have driven your car on the lake.

Every wedding dance you have ever been to has the hokey pokey and the chicken dance.

Your definition of a small town is one that only has one bar.

The local gas station sells live bait.

At least twice a year some part of your home doubles as a meat processing plant.

You think that the start of deer season is a national holiday.

Pop is the only name for soda.

You actually understand these jokes.

Some bad one-liners...

1. A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.
2. A will is a dead giveaway.
3. Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.
4. A backward poet writes inverse.
5. In a democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism, it's your Count that votes.
6. A chicken crossing the road: poultry in motion.
7. If you don't pay your exorcist you may be repossessed.
8. With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.
9. Show me a piano falling down a mineshaft and I'll show you A-flat miner.
10. When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
11. The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine was fully recovered.
12. A grenade fell onto a kitchen floor in France resulting in Linoleum Blownapart.
13. You are stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
14. Local Area Network in Australia: The LAN down under.
15. He broke into song because he couldn't find the key.
16. A calendar's days are numbered.
17. A lot of money is tainted: 'Taint yours, and 'taint mine.
18. A boiled egg is hard to beat.
19. He had a photographic memory, which was never developed.
20. A plateau is a high form of flattery.
21. The short fortuneteller who escaped from prison: a small medium at large.
22. Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.
23. When you've seen one shopping center you've seen a mall.
24. If you jump off a Paris bridge, you are in Seine.
25. When she saw her first strands of gray hair, she thought she'd dye.
26. Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.
27. Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.
28. Acupuncture: a jab well done.
29. Marathon runners with bad shoes suffer the agony of de feet.



THE PERILS OF POLLY P.T.

PART NINETEEN

*Written By Roseanne Woerner, COT Wapello County
Created by Dee Lehn, CED Keokuk County*

Visit our website at
www.iascoe.org for the
entire story of
"The Perils of Polly PT"

It is the hottest day on record so far this summer, somewhere in the vicinity of ninety-eight degrees. I am out on a country road with Tessa Starr. The road is deserted, rutted, and dusty. It leads to nowhere. A baby cow hops the remnants of a barbwire fence and heads toward us. Another baby cow follows suite and now the pair is approaching us at a pretty fast clip. Tessa doesn't freak out yet, but she's close. No nerves of steel on this girl, I can see that already, and we have yet to encounter the bull.

We are supposed to be spot-checking REX contracts. Obviously, this plan wasn't my brainchild because I am wearing Gaucho pants and strappy sandals. The cutest sandals in the world, I might add. They are black and they have these little diamond insets...not diamond really...they just look like diamonds and they are clustered in the cutest design...but back to my story.

"I can't believe we're on a Dead End road," Tessa says.

"Not to be smart," I tell her...even though I really am trying to be smart...in a sneaky way though...she is my boss after all. "But that's usually what a Dead End sign means. You know, like the one we saw three miles back."

She holds a sheaf of papers in the air. "Map Quest says this road goes through."

I try to keep the exasperation out of my voice here, but it's a test. I am so hot I can't stand it. A baby cow is nudging my leg. My shoes are killing my feet and I can't take them off, lest they be pierced with gravel and whatever else. We can't sit in her car and run the air conditioner. Guess who neglected to check the gas gauge before we left town. Did I mention the flat tire as well?

"Tessa," I say. "You cannot do spot checks in the country with Map Quest. You need a county map or a plat book. You should also take an aerial photo of the farm along, so that you can recognize your surroundings a bit better."

"But Map Quest takes you right to the spot," she whines.

"And Map Quest is wrong ten percent of the time. I guess it was our turn to get lucky."

"I have my cell phone," she says. "I'm calling somebody."

"Who are you going to call and what are you going to say?"

"I'll say I'm out on (she refers to her Map Quest map) Thorn Road and I need someone to come and pick me up."

continued...

“Tessa,” I’m using my exasperated breath now when I say her name, which isn’t a good sign. “We already figured out that Thorn Road is over there somewhere, on the other side of the highway. We don’t know where we are. We don’t know what road we took to get here. So how can we give anyone directions? What are we going to say, Come and get us? We’re at the end of some dead end road, near some cows in a pasture and a cluster of trees?”

“And what would you have us do?” she asks.

“I think we need to unload your trunk and fix the flat tire.”

“Why do we need to unload my trunk for that?”

“Because that’s where you keep your spare.”

She throws her head back and laughs. “You are a silly goose,” she tells me, a term I once heard in a 1950’s movie.

By now the calf is nudging me forward. I fight to maintain my balance as I say, “It’s the only sensible thing to do. Why is it funny?”

Her eyes are winced into tiny slits. Tears are streaming down her cheeks. She is red-faced due to the fact that she barely drawn a breath between her guffaws. “Joke’s on you,” she says. “There is no spare.”

TO BE CONTINUED...

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A Chance Meeting with “Lance”



RAGBRAI riders Chris Grieder, (PT, Polk County) and her friend, Jen, pose with “Lance” at the Jasper County FSA office in Newton.