Putting the Pieces Together
Building Blocks of Livestock Development

Grassroots Support

The Tools

The Next Gen

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The Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska

WE SUPPORT AGRICULTURE

Thriving Communities
Thank you for taking the time to find out more about what has been happening at AFAN and WSA in 2017. The year saw both organizations hiring new executive directors and working to advance a mission of livestock development, ag and food processing recruitment and pro agriculture policies across the state. AFAN and WSA have been working diligently to put the right pieces together to build success in 2017 and beyond.

In 2017 AFAN and WSA have been dedicated to building our expertise, developing resources and cultivating relationships. For livestock development, we have been focused on creating a model for livestock expansion in Nebraska. We enhanced our programming and created toolkits to assist livestock producers. We made connections with communities and counties and partnered with them to bring resources and events that they desired directly to them. We set a course forward to not only capitalize on existing momentum in our industries, but strategies to create new opportunities for livestock, ag and food processing for Nebraska communities.

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce myself, Kristen Hassebrook, the new Executive Director for AFAN and WSA. I am a native Nebraskan who grew up on a diversified farm in northeast Nebraska. I did not have the opportunity to return home right out of college and that has been a lasting influence on why I am passionate about working every day to ensure that anyone who wants to raise livestock, work in agriculture or return to our rural communities has the opportunity to do so.

It is an exciting time for AFAN and WSA. Join us and support our efforts. Your positive words, connections in your field, and financial support are essential to moving our work forward. I hope you will never hesitate to call, email or stop by the office if you need assistance for anything. I can be reached at kristenh@a-fan.org or 402-440-7371.
There have been many changes at AFAN this year. One of these is updating and creating new videos AFAN can use to recruit and support livestock development. Thanks to funding by the Nebraska Soybean Board, AFAN was able to contract with Bryce Doeschot, owner of BCD Productions, to film four livestock videos and two community videos.

From those videos, Bryce will create radio spots that we will be running in late 2017 and early 2018. These videos and radio spots discuss the benefits of livestock to a community, to the family farm and how livestock producers use technology. AFAN would like to thank Thiele Dairy (Clearwater, NE), Jason and Karah Perdue (York, NE), the Segner family (Friend, NE) and the Ruskamp Family (Dodge, NE) for allowing us to feature their farms and tell their stories. We would also like to thank the communities of Broken Bow and Fremont for allowing us to show the beneficial partnerships that arise between community leaders and livestock producers.

Bryce said there are many memories that Nebraska parents might have with their children. “The day the child was born, for example, or attending their first Husker game together, high school graduation, or the day that the child comes home and announces that they would like to be part of the family’s farming operation.” He said that for many farm families in Nebraska, this announcement is bittersweet. “They are excited for the opportunity but unsure how to make farming financially viable,” he said.

Animal agriculture often is the answer. In this new video and radio project, AFAN is sharing the stories of farm families who are able to grow because of livestock development.

At the completion of the project, AFAN will have four new livestock development success stories to host on the website and social media sites, along with the four livestock-specific videos. Two videos featuring communities that have welcomed livestock development are also being created.

The videos feature families who were able to:
- Bring the next generation back to the operation
- Add additional income to the operation
- Allow for a spouse to stay home with the children while still maintaining the livestock

Based on content from the video, a radio campaign will be launched to target areas of the state where livestock development opportunities exist to encourage more animal agriculture and build support in communities.

The project is graciously funded by Nebraska soybean farmers and their checkoff, in support of their number one customer, animal agriculture.
One of the gems of AFAN’s business portfolio is the one-on-one assistance we offer to livestock producers. Much of this is often focused around a producer’s local county zoning hearing. AFAN staff is available to work with producers through the process to understand how the local zoning process works in their county, what paperwork is required and what will be expected from them. AFAN staff is able to help conduct research and create personalized talking points for producers, as well as to help them communicate with neighbors and tap in to local grassroots support systems. This service is provided at no cost to producers and often AFAN staff will attend local hearings right alongside the producer and their family.

Throughout 2017, AFAN has been growing this area of work as well. Have questions about what type of livestock species fits with your family lifestyle and existing operation? AFAN has resources to help you understand what different species require and how it will impact what you currently do. Similarly, are you curious about where to look for financing or economic incentives to help minimize costs? AFAN can direct you and provide resources on different types of financing mechanisms. Do you have questions about how contract feeding works, or where to properly site livestock facilities? What about Nebraska state and federal regulations and permitting? Or just a general recommended timeline for how to get started? In 2017, AFAN focused on building these types of resource pieces and building our network of experts that we connect with interested producers. Check out the new AFAN website for access to them and other tools to help you be successful growing livestock in Nebraska. AFAN will continue to grow these resource tools in 2018. Have a suggestion or a question you want answered? Contact AFAN staff and we can get to work finding out what you want to know.
AG EMPLOYMENT LAW: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Realizing that livestock development does not end at the open house, AFAN was approached and agreed to partner on some continuing education opportunities for livestock producers in Nebraska. AFAN and Nebraska Poultry Industries hosted two Employment Law seminars that were open to all livestock producers no matter their species. The seminar was led by Mark Fahleson, Partner at Rembolt Ludtke Law Firm in Lincoln, Nebraska. Across both seminars more than 50 producers received four hours of employment law training focused on agriculture employers in Nebraska. Each participant was also able to take home a copy of the entire presentation and forms they could use at their operation.

Feedback was immensely positive with calls for more continuing education opportunities in 2018. AFAN will continue to look for opportunities to partner with our founding members—Nebraska commodity organizations—to host seminars and trainings of interest for producers of all types in Nebraska in the coming year. Topics of interest requested include DOT regs, OSHA, immigration, and basic financial recordkeeping.

LUNCH & LEARNS: BUILDING AN UNDERSTANDING OF CONTRACT FEEDING

The AFAN “Lunch & Leams” looked a bit different this year. In partnership with local co-ops, Central Valley Ag (CVA) and Farmers Cooperative of Dorchester, AFAN and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture moderated panel discussions about contract feeding at several locations in eastern Nebraska. Panelists included integrators from the pork and poultry industries, farmer partners, lenders, Farm Services Agency and county zoning representatives.

The panel format covered topics that varied from integrator-farmer partnerships, what lenders look for when talking to an interested producer and what the county timelines for permitting a new barn are.

“Integrated livestock production is also an opportunity for younger farm family members to stay on the farm as it will generate another income stream,” said Robert Turek with the CVA. “Increased livestock production is good for our communities as it will increase the tax base and reduce the property tax burden for individuals. It will also improve grain prices benefiting our grain producing members near our feed processing facilities. This is truly a win-win-win proposition,” said Turek.

Over the course of six Lunch & Learns, nearly 150 attendees heard about opportunities that contract feeding can provide.

2017 Lunch & Learns are not over yet. AFAN is looking forward to working with Ag United for South Dakota to co-host Lunch & Learns in Yankton and Vermillion in December.
Throughout 2017, AFAN dug deeply to focus on building resources and tools livestock producers could utilize to locate, modernize or expand their operations. Out of this effort came the Producer Empowerment Workshop, a half-day small group seminar for new or existing livestock producers. Attendees are led by a trained facilitator through AFAN’s Community Conversations Toolkit and Know Before You Build Toolkit.

AFAN’s Community Conversations Toolkit focuses on empowering producers with strategies and tools to tell their stories of livestock development. It offers resources and best practices for communicating with neighbors, media and interested stakeholders. The toolkit provides resources on positive livestock industry messaging and the value of row crop agriculture to Nebraska’s rural communities. The toolkit also provides producers with take-home materials they can use as they move through the process of locating, modernizing or expanding their operation.
AFAN’s Know Before You Build Toolkit provides producers with a basic understanding of their local county zoning permit process and how to prepare and work with the county to obtain the necessary permits. It also focuses on training producers how to effectively communicate in a county zoning permit hearing. This toolkit also offers producers an opportunity to be trained on how to communicate information on nutrient management and how they operate the facility to individuals who may be unfamiliar with livestock production. It again offers take-home materials producers can use to assist them in communicating this information and finding success in permitting.

Before departing, producers are also provided with an opportunity to engage in a candid tabletop discussion with local officials and producers who have recently navigated these issues.

This is the first of many focused pieces AFAN will be building as part of our desire to “put the pieces together” for a model of livestock expansion in Nebraska. Funding for this seminar and development of the resource materials was provided by Nebraska Poultry Industries and Nebraska Soybean Board as part of their recognition of the interconnected relationship and value stream for Nebraska soybean and livestock producers.
This year AFAN was excited to collaborate with the Coalition to Support Iowa’s Farmers (CSIF), the Nebraska Cattlemen Association and the Iowa Cattlemen Association for the Midwest Cow-Calf Symposium in Omaha on March 21-22. This partnership resulted in nearly 300 attendees and about 30 vendors coming together to hear about beef expansion opportunities utilizing barns.

Over the course of two days, participants learned about calving under roof and heard from speakers discussing everything from design, economics, feeding and veterinary care to dry lot options. At the end of each day, a panel of producers discussed the reasons they decided to put up a building and how they manage their cows under this type of setting. Drone footage and pictures of their barns gave attendees a clear look at the different barn layouts. The panel then answered questions from the audience.

Presenters for the Cow-Calf Symposium included Dr. Morgan Hayes with the University of Kentucky; Moe Russell with Russell Consulting Group; Dr. Sara Barber, Veterinary Medical Center; Bruce Eberle, Rabo AgriFinance; Kelly Jones, Cactus Feeders; and Karla Jenkins from the UNL Panhandle Research and Extension Center. Major sponsors of the symposium were Central Confinement Service and Accu-Steel.

“These types of barns are a newer technology and with the decreasing availability of pasture land in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa, we wanted to make sure our farmers knew that there were some options out there for ways to expand their cow herds.” Emily Skillett, Livestock Development Coordinator.

Couldn’t make it to the symposium this year? Materials from the 2017 Cow-Calf Symposium are available on the AFAN website.
Building Understanding Between Consumers and Farmers

More than 400 people enjoyed a free breakfast and great conversation Saturday, October 14 at a Consumer Appreciation Tailgate Party in Lincoln.

The event, called the “Game Zone Nebraska Farmers and Ranchers Tailgate Party,” took place at the Super Saver on 27th and Pine Lake Road. AFAN worked with its partners and other Nebraska agriculture organizations to put on this event that showed appreciation to the consumers who enjoy the food from Nebraska farmers and ranchers. Consumers were able to visit with farmers and ranchers from across the state, including producers of beef, pork, poultry, dairy, corn, soy, wheat, sorghum, grapes and hops.

In addition, Governor Pete Ricketts stopped by the event to proclaim October as Pork Month in Nebraska. He was joined by Nebraska pig farmers Terry O’Neel, President of the National Pork Board, and Leslie McCuiston, who had recently been named America’s Pig Farmer of the YearSM.

The tailgate party proved to be an excellent way to bring Nebraska’s food producers and food consumers together for an enjoyable breakfast and great conversation. Thanks to our sponsors and everyone who tailgated with us for making this a successful event.

Building Ag Awareness Through “Pure Nebraska”

In 2017, AFAN continued to partner with KOLN-TV’s daily program, “Pure Nebraska,” that highlights the state’s agriculture industry. The program also features a guest from AFAN every Monday. The 3-to-4-minute segments provide AFAN Partners the opportunity to reach 10,000 Nebraska consumers each week.

This unique program reaches both urban consumers and those from rural communities who often have ties to the agricultural industry. AFAN partners have used the interview segments to promote open houses and seminars, to discuss issues of importance to consumers, and even to demonstrate recipes.

Each AFAN segment begins with an introduction explaining that AFAN has connected the station with the guest and identifies them as members of AFAN.

In addition to reaching more than 10,000 Nebraskans on television, each interview is recorded and utilized on social media and on AFAN’s website. The AFAN segment, which has been a regular feature of “Pure Nebraska” since March of 2015, is hosted by the station’s popular anchors, Jon and Taryn Vanderford.
2017 was a rebuilding year for We Support Agriculture (WSA). Bringing on a new executive director in the middle of the Nebraska legislative session required WSA to be extremely focused. WSA supported one bill, LB518, which established the Rural Workforce Housing Investment Act. As enacted, the bill segments existing housing trust fund dollars into a separate fund to support projects in communities in counties with less than 100,000 in population. Access to labor and housing are two of the highest rated concerns for attracting talent to rural Nebraska. This legislation will assist Nebraska’s outstate counties to meet this critical need.

In the interim, WSA has been monitoring and participating in legislative studies, meeting with candidates for the 2018 election cycle, and developing an “Ag 101” session for Nebraska State Senators and a separate session for their staffs. This Ag 101 will be hosted by WSA along with fellow agricultural organizations as an informational session for Nebraska legislators and staff to meet farmers and ranchers, find out about the value and economic impact that agriculture brings to the state and allow them to ask questions one-on-one. Throughout the interim WSA has also been working with Lincoln Premium Poultry to host community coffees where company representatives and WSA come into local communities impacted by livestock expansion efforts to answer questions and put a face to a name. These coffee events have been very successful and helped build grassroots support for the Lincoln Premium Poultry project in eastern Nebraska.
WHY WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT NEBRASKA AGRICULTURE

Kristen Hassebrook, Executive Director
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“I am a native Nebraskan who grew up on a diversified farm in northeast Nebraska. I did not have the opportunity to return home right out of college and that has been a lasting influence on why I am passionate about working every day to ensure that anyone who wants to raise livestock, work in agriculture or return to our rural communities has the opportunity to do so.”

Emily Skillett, Livestock Development Coordinator
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“There is a quote by Robbie Robertson that states, “you don’t stumble upon your heritage, it’s there just waiting to be explored and shared.” I feel like that epitomizes my love for agriculture. I am the fourth generation from our small diversified farm in eastern Nebraska. Nothing is more exciting than to be able to work with families to look at the different opportunities to bring back the next generation while continuing to support the older generations that are still on the farm. What a great way to help others continue to embrace their heritage!”

Lori Anderson, Office Manager
Phone: 402-421-4472 Email: loria@a-fan.org

“Although I have not personally worked in agriculture before, I have family who made their living in this field and they have my utmost respect for their hard work and dedication. I am proud of all of Nebraska’s farmers and ranchers and their contributions to our state, and am excited to work at AFAN in support of the ideals and programs they foster.”

Becomeafan.org
AFAN is currently re-building the Becomeafan.org website. The new website is mobile friendly, and will include a partner section, where resources for presentations and meetings are available for members to download. Check out our new look.
Nebraska Agriculture Affiliated Organizations

Next Annual Meeting: November 19, 2018