



Volume 17, Issue 4

FARM GRAM

A publication of the Marion County Farm Bureau

*Promoting, Protecting & Advancing
Farm Interests in Marion County*

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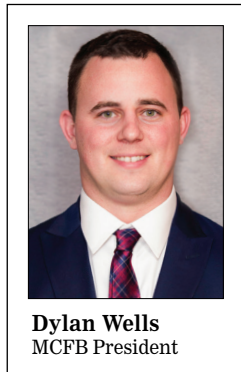
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Dylan Wells
MCFB President

Hello Marion County Farm Bureau Members

By: Dylan Wells, MCFB President

My name is Dylan Wells, of Woodburn, Oregon, and I'd like to take time to introduce myself as your new board president. By the time you read this I will have been in office for over a month.

I have enjoyed serving you thus far, most recently at the Oregon Farm Bureau annual meeting in Pendleton. I'm feeling energized and am ready to serve you and support our members over the next year. I will be traveling to the National Farm Bureau Convention in early January and look forward to meeting many great members from across the country.

My parents' farm started out as a strawberry and sugarbeet seed operation which evolved into seedlings for Christmas trees and reforestation that then branched into grafted ornamentals and an online gift tree company. I was a tester of strawberry ripeness, creator of many forts in the seedling tree totes and driver of numerous tractors in the maze of grafted ornamentals, but my main farming experience comes from the pumpkin fields.

The look on people's faces when I respond to their, "What do you do for a living?" question is priceless. I am a pumpkin farmer who doesn't grow many pumpkins and I sell them all online. From the mid 1990s up until two years ago our small family operation grew approximately 200 acres of fresh market crops, primarily pumpkins, winter squash, pickling cucumbers and dill. On the top of the list of stresses looming over us were rising minimum wage, mandated healthcare and paid sick time – all increasing costs for which we didn't have a revenue stream to handle. In December 2015 our family made a decision to adapt; we scaled down to a four-person operation, three of us family. My family doesn't fear change, and I believe there will be a lot of change for all of us coming up. Together, we will jump in and make informed decisions to handle any challenges. The Marion County Farm Bureau encompasses many different sub-categories; the strength of our organization comes from leading together to move the industry forward as a whole.

My passion for volunteering focuses on bringing agriculture to kids and those not currently connected to a farm. Now into my second year as chair of the Marion County Fair board, I have helped bring the Marion County Farm Bureau into a bigger presence at the fair through building a STEAM program during the fair. This year it included a trivia hunt around the fairgrounds with 15 agriculture-related tidbits. We had many families complete the questions and it was fulfilling to hear the kids talk about the new knowledge to their parents. Many times the parents are also learning. To bring family and agriculture together on a local level has been very satisfying.

John Zielinski convinced me to join the board about two years ago. I greatly appreciate his encouragement, and have met many wonderful people and learned quite a bit. Our Marion county board is very diverse and full of knowledge in so many different areas of agriculture.

The strength of this board lies in the depths of the knowledge of our combined members – their individual backgrounds, experiences and opinions. With your support, it is my honor to lead this board as we navigate the challenges and triumphs over the next term.

AFBF Hosts 2018 Conference in Nashville, Tennessee

The 99th consecutive American Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Convention & IDEAg Trade Show will be hosted January 5-10, 2018, in Nashville, Tennessee. The program includes educational workshops designed to expand leadership skills, business acumen, impactful policy discussions and more. Powerful keynote speakers are scheduled for the general sessions and the IDEAg Trade Show provides opportunities to network with other farmers, shop featured products, learn about innovative technologies and enjoy TED-style talks on the Cultivation Center stage.

Iconic entertainer Reba McEntire—no stranger to agriculture—will join AFBF President Zippy Duvall during the Closing General Session on Monday, January 8, 2018, for a Q&A Keynote touching on her rural roots, family, career, and, of course, country music.

Registration for the Conference is open. Visit the AFBF website at www.fb.org/events/afbf-annual-convention for more information about the Conference.

One person can make a big difference!



John Zielinski

It is with sincere appreciation that we recognize **John Zielinski's** six years of service as president on the Marion County Farm Bureau board. John, who was recently elected to the 2017-2018 OFB board of directors, has truly made a contribution – not only to our board activities, but also to the farmers who conduct their life's work in Marion County.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to **Brenda Frketich** who has actively served on the MCFB board of directors for the last eight years, most recently as vice president. Brenda, who cherishes the organization and what it stands for, has temporarily stepped down from the board but will continue to show her support whenever possible.



Brenda Frketich

It is difficult to believe that 67 years have passed since Articles of Incorporation were signed to create the Marion County Farm Bureau. A group of like-minded individuals connected over their shared love of farming, just as we continue to do today. Together, our group has accomplished much—from the implementation of regular member outreach gatherings, which bring important issues to the forefront, to the creation of the annual MCFB ag tour showcasing successful local farmers.

We could not have done this without volunteers who step forward to protect, promote and strengthen our local and state agriculture community.

Thank you, John and Brenda. Your commitment has made a significant difference in our lives.

Nate Newsom

Bear Branch Farms, Stayton, OR

In 2001, just a few months before the terrorist attacks on 9/11, Nate Newsom married his wife, Janis, and immediately enlisted in the Air Force. During his time in the military, Nate served as a journeyman Precision Measurement Equipment Laboratory technician and as a member of the Luke Air Force Base Honor Guard.

After being honorably discharged from the Air Force in 2005, Nate decided to continue serving in his community, this time as a deputy sheriff with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

With nearly 10 years of dedicated service under his belt, the Newsoms decided it was time to pursue their dream of developing a small family farm. Trading the arid Southern California desert for the fertile soils of Oregon's Willamette Valley, they established Bear Branch Farms in 2015 in the foothills of the Cascade Mountain range.

"My wife and I have always had a passion for gardening, cooking and supplying our family and friends with fresh foods," said Nate, who became a father of nine last week with the birth of his son, Finnley. "This passion encouraged us to start Bear Branch Farms in October of 2015."

Nate continued serving as a police officer in Oregon, but resigned after one year to work full time on the farm. In a matter of six months, the Newsoms developed their farm from the 'ground up,' and by the Summer 2016 season were already serving about 50 families in their new community with a weekly box of fruits and vegetables.

Earlier this year, Nate applied to the Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund and was awarded his request to receive a new Polaris Ranger thanks to generous support from Prairie Grove Farms.

"This Polaris is a total game changer and enabled us to more than double our customer base and production with less work," said Nate, who cultivates about two-acres of his 17-acre property. "Additionally, it serves as a transportation vehicle while patrolling our camp sites, feeding animals and maintenance around the farm. Thank you!"

Now, finishing their second season, Bear Branch Farms is a certified-organic operation producing more than 80 types/varieties of veggies, fruits and herbs which they sell through their CSA and at local farmers' markets under the Homegrown By Heroes label. In 2017, they served approximately 90 families, accepted SNAP/WIC benefits and grew for a local food pantry.

"We started our farm with the goal of supplying our local area with fresh, tasty, healthy food no matter their income level. We are excited about expanding and offering healthy, local, pesticide-free foods to more families each year."

Article reprinted with permission. More information available in the original article at www.farmvetco.org/stories/nate-newsom/.

These past four years have taught Ryan Thompson more than a classroom alone could provide. Marion-Polk Food Share's Youth Farm has given Ryan the tools to go from student to mentor since his first day in 2013.

The inception of the Youth Farm at that time meant recruiting student workers. As a freshman in high school, Ryan's interest was in habitat restoration.

"Jared [Hibbard-Swanson, Youth Farm Manager] needed kids and they reached out to my group," Ryan said. "It's not all that different from removing blackberries."

He decided to join the program given his interest in ecology and the fact that his sister and a few friends also chose to participate.

"The farm is a different kind of ecology," Ryan said. "It's more fun because you're growing food for people."

His first year at the farm was not limited to the summer months as he continued working during the fall and winter. Given that 2013 produced the wettest September on record, conditions were hardly ideal.

"I remember how he'd be the only one to show up in rain gear – it was bright construction zone orange- I could always see him in the field," Hibbard-Swanson laughed.

Oregon School for the Deaf was home to the original two-acre farm site which moved to the campus of Chemeketa Community College in 2016 and tripled in size.

"As I've grown, the farm has grown," Ryan said. "It's a very different feel now," Ryan said. "I've volunteered with some of the kids here and it's a cool process to see how they've changed. I'm one of those kids, too."

While still in high school, Ryan remained connected to the program by helping out on Saturdays. Now that he is in college, he decided to return as an intern.

"School is quite focused on lab and I'd rather be outside," Ryan said. "It's awesome to be back."

Focus of the program is not centered on just growing food, but on building leadership skills in the students and giving them a greater understanding of food systems and economics.

"It's a unique extension of the education system and a different model of farming, non-profit," Ryan said. "We grow the

food for people and understand that it's run by the Food Share so most of it is donated."

Ryan now leads workshops at the farm and speaks in front of peer groups and adults.

"They [current youth farmers] look up to him," Hibbard-Swanson said.

The students have also toured the Food Share warehouse to build their understanding of its connection with the farm.

"My grandparents, for example, are regular visitors to food pantries. I remember telling them once about squash that was freshly delivered," Ryan said. "Spreading the knowledge is important."

Ryan currently attends Reed College in Portland and is majoring in ecology and environmental studies. His future plans combine his college education with his Youth Farm experience.

"I'd like to be a farmer," Ryan said.

"Perhaps I'll have a co-op with educational centers; I just want to be working with people."



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Read the article at: www.marionpolkfoodshare.org/support-helps-develop-students-hunger-fighting-leaders/

Discover. Engage. Explore.



Visit your Oregon State Capitol

Free and open to the public 8 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays, excluding holidays. [Learn more at oregoncapitol.com](http://oregoncapitol.com).

Tour your Capitol and Parks (Free)

No guided tours in the month of December. Self-guided building tours from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

January 2-31, 2018: Weekday building tours start at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. in the Capitol Rotunda. Self-guided building tours from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

State Capitol State Park self-guided walking tour from dawn to dusk.

Upcoming events sponsored by the Oregon State Capitol Foundation

Feb. 17, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Oregon's 159 th Birthday Party
March 17, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Cherry Blossom Day
April 28, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Asian and Pacific Islander Day



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CAPITOL FOUNDATION
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*Wishing you a
happy, healthy,
and prosperous
New Year!*

MCFB Board Meetings

*Information subject to change.
Contact staff to confirm details.*

Jan. 10, 2018, 6:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
1284 Court St NE, Salem, OR

Feb. 14, 2018, 6:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
1284 Court St NE, Salem, OR

Other Events

Jan. 5-10, 2018

American Farm Bureau
Convention & Expo
Nashville, TN

Jan. 26, 2018

7:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Dunn Carney Ag Summit
Salem, OR

Feb. 17, 2018

Oregon's 159th Birthday Party
at the Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR



The Marion County Fair was recently recognized with two Oregon Fairs Association Awards.

Top to bottom: MCFB president Dylan Wells accepts an award from Marion County Commissioner Kevin Cameron and Kim Grewe-Powell of Oregon State Fair and Expo Center.

Marion County Fair Receives Two Awards from Oregon Fairs Association

Oregon Fairs Association solicits nominations for several different award categories specific to the recent past fair year. We are excited to announce Marion County Fair received two out of the five award categories submitted on behalf of the fair including Outstanding Fair Website and Outstanding Youth Project.

The Outstanding Youth Project award recognized the Marion County STEAM program learning experiences which helped connect rural and urban youth through science, technology, engineering, art and agriculture, and mathematics.

Marion County Farm Bureau president and Marion County Fair chair Dylan Wells recently accepted the two awards on behalf of the Marion County Fair.

The Marion County Farm Bureau proudly helped sponsor the 2017 Marion County Fair. We are already looking forward to another successful event in 2018!

More info on February 2018 trainings coming soon!

Forklift Driver Training | Propane Safety Train-the-Trainer | First Aid, CPR and AED