

Beyond the storm – FB members rebuild for the future

The can-do, patriotic zeal of Kansas farmers and ranchers remains strong in the aftermath of the storm's damage. Farm Bureau members Kim Gamble and husband Ki farm in **Kiowa County**. They've been busy planting the last of their corn delayed by heavy rains and the tornado. "It's the spirit of our people and how committed they are," Kim says. "They are excited to rebuild our community and farms and make them better. We're thankful to be alive and have our friends and family."



A few bricks are all that remains of Rodger and Connie Grizzell and daughter April Cleveland's home of 35 years in **Stafford County**. They lost livestock, their wheat crop and eight irrigation systems in the tornado, but Rodger's optimistic about replacing them in the coming days. "We're doing well," Connie says. "The volunteer response has been unbelievable. We're thankful to be alive."



Edwards County farmer Darrell Wood had just kicked back after planting more than 6,000 acres of corn. He stands next to a home called Prairie Oak Farm just southwest of his home that sustained minor damage. "Some of my neighbors lost everything," Darrell says. "We can start over, put in new irrigation systems and move ahead. A person has to take some bumps in life and get up and move on."



Three of five college students from William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo., and Brian Coles, KFB staffer, help gather debris out of a wheat field in **Barton County**. "We wanted to help the farmers and people of these Kansas communities get back on their feet," Tyler Folan, St. Louis says. "Lot of tornadoes impact the Midwest and we can't get over how genuine you people all are. It's great to be able to help."

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Farm Leader Letter is a publication of Kansas Farm Bureau. It is received in the homes of nearly 40,000 farmers and ranchers who are dedicated to agriculture and rural Kansas.

Kansas Farm Bureau represents grassroots agriculture. Established in 1919, this non-profit advocacy organization supports farm families who earn their living in a changing industry.

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Farm Leader *Letter*

A publication of Kansas Farm Bureau

Special
Weather Recovery
Edition

Prayers, Compassion and Elbow Grease

It was a storm the likes of which few in Kansas had ever seen. At least 12 people lost their lives and dozens were injured. Homes, livestock, crops, outbuildings, farm equipment, vehicles, irrigation equipment, fences – the very stuff that makes a farm – swept up in one of the strongest tornadoes ever witnessed.

Edwards Co. farmer Ryan Russell was watching the storm coverage on TV the night of Fri., May 4. His farm near Trousdale was directly in the storm's path after it leveled Greensburg. "We have a lot of neighbors who need our prayers," said Russell, whose parents' home nearby was flattened. "They lost their house, vehicles, tractors, planters..."

When Crawford Co. FB president Jim Michael heard about the storm, he thought of a tornado that struck his farm near McCune in 2000. He dropped everything, rounded up six friends and headed west. "We knew there would be farmers on the outskirts of where the tornado hit who would need help," Michael said.

The regular meeting of the Stafford Co. FB was scheduled for Monday morning after the storm. They met, but when they realized one of their board members failed to show,

Expanded coverage

There's an extra page in this *Farm Leader Letter* to better tell the story of how Mother Nature's fury impacted the lives of Farm Bureau members in Kansas – and how their farm organization is responding.



Ken Penner, Gray Co FB member, prepares burgers during a cleanup day in Stafford Co. May 11. Assistance came from Cowley, Gray, Kingman, Riley and Stafford Co. FBs.

president Marlyn Spare quickly revised their agenda and adjourned to that board member's farm to help pick up. "We're fortunate in the farming community that neighbors look after neighbors," Spare said.

It was a sentiment that ran strong and repeated itself. KFB field staff worked side by side with county FBs organizing volunteer and other relief efforts to support FB members. A group of FB folks from Cowley Co. rounded up a local FFA chapter and spent the day cleaning up storm debris. A tornado also struck as far north as a lake near Bennington, where members of the Ottawa Co. FB gave of their weekend to haul away truckloads of debris.

"The outpouring of concern shows the true spirit of FB members," said KFB president Steve Baccus, who with his wife, Pat, and dozens of other FB volunteers, pitched in to help families begin to recover.

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Standing up for farmers when it matters most

One of the expectations FB members have of their advocacy organization, is to stand up for them in the event Mother Nature dishes out her worst. That's exactly what KFB leaders and lobbyists have been doing in the days and nights since the severe weather of early May.

"We stress the importance of building and maintaining good, working relationships with our partners in government," said Steve Baccus, KFB president. "It's times like these, when our relationships with elected leaders pay off."

Shortly after the tornado struck Greensburg, a federal disaster declaration was made for Kiowa County. KFB was instrumental in working with our partners in state and federal government, to ensure they had a complete and accurate assessment of the extent of farm damage sustained due to the violent weather.

In the storm's path, livestock were killed or injured and crops were damaged or destroyed; in some cases, plants were literally sucked right out of the ground. Homes, outbuildings, farm implements and irrigation equipment were damaged or destroyed. Lives and livelihoods were disrupted.

After the storm, in response to FB's efforts to share the mounting damage tolls with lawmakers, the federal disaster declaration was expanded to include Edwards, Pratt and Stafford counties. A few days later, following assessments, Barton, Phillips, Osborne and Ottawa counties were added to the declaration. The expanded declaration was key, since it means affected producers are eligible for individual assistance to restore or replace essential property and pay production costs associated with the disaster year.

The individual assistance declaration provides producers with access to low interest loans from UDSA for farm related losses, and through grants and loans from FEMA to damage to residential and personal property.

Rural families who sustained damage to their homes can apply for disaster assistance by registering online with FEMA at www.fema.gov or by calling (800) 621-FEMA (3362). Registration with FEMA must be done by July 7. After registering, affected farmers/ranchers should contact their FSA office.

Loan assistance is also available through FSA in counties contiguous to declared areas including Barber, Clark, Clay, Cloud, Comanche, Dickinson, Eliis, Ellsworth, Ford, Graham, Hodgeman, Jewell, Kingman, Lincoln, Mitchell, Norton, Pawnee, Reno, Rice, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Saline and Smith.

Preliminary Damage Assessments are also underway in northeast Kansas counties affected by storm-related flooding.

And even though state legislature had officially adjourned its 2007 session, legislative leaders were urging lawmakers to return to Topeka for the ceremonial *sine die* adjournment session to authorize legislation to allow state funds to be spent helping Kansans recover from the storm aftermath.

Permanent Disaster Assistance?

A New Years' Eve blizzard and ice storm, a wheat killing Easter freeze and now losses sustained from tornadoes, high winds and flooding. And that's just Kansas. Our Congressional delegation has championed disaster assistance for farmers when the need arises, but with the budget pressures facing Washington, at what point does the political will for *ad hoc* agricultural disaster assistance wane? It is exactly these sorts of requests that led to your member-driven policy push for permanent disaster assistance and crop insurance reforms.

Budgeting for disaster assistance before it occurs – and allowing access to strong, viable and flexible risk management tools won't force farmers to ask Congress for federal aid when weather disasters strike.

Farm Bureau Mutual wastes no time

Within hours of the tornado that struck Kiowa County and surrounding counties, Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company had more than 20 adjusters in the area and more adjusters and auto appraisers joined them shortly thereafter.

Within 12 days of the storm, nearly 200 Farm Bureau Mutual policyholders who sustained damage either had their claim inspected and settled, or inspected with an understanding of the basis upon which a settlement will be made.

To provide support until claims can be settled, Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company issued a \$4,000 advance for living expenses. In addition, disposable cell phones were distributed to policyholders who lost their homes and were without telephone access.

Also about 100 FBFS agents and employees

from the Manhattan Regional Office volunteered their time and energy in the area, working in fields clearing debris so farmers can get into their fields.

More information is available at www.fbfs.com and 800-226-6383.



Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company, Kansas Farm Bureau and Kiowa County Farm Bureau have teamed together to rebuild the office they share in Greensburg to ensure continued service to their clients and members. Bruce Frost, FBMIC's Exec. VP, Steve Baccus, KFB president and 7th KFB district board member Keith Miller have organized the joint initiative. "Farm Bureau is a vital part of the Greensburg and Kiowa County community and we intend to lead the way in rebuilding the town," Baccus said. The building site has been leveled and construction is expected to begin soon. The new structure will include extra space which the Kiowa County Farm Bureau will make available to community organizations as the recovery effort in Greensburg continues.



COURTESY: ABC NEWS

Kiowa County FB insurance agent Scott Sparke was featured on ABC's *World News* on May 9, the day President Bush visited Greensburg. The news crew captured video of Scott stringing up the Kiowa County FB's 'Helping Feed the World' banner on what was left of the county FB building.

How can I help?

Volunteer your time

Volunteer help is still needed! Debris remains scattered in many fields and there are still some heavy equipment needs for debris removal and a need for fence building expertise and fence supplies.

STAFFORD COUNTY FB

(620) 549-3292

BARTON COUNTY FB

(620) 792-2236

PRATT COUNTY FB

(620) 672-3161

VOLUNTEER COMMAND POST (SE, ED, PR, KW)

(620) 797-0337

FEMA (COORDINATING GREENSBURG VOLUNTEERS)

(888) 413-4327

FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN FARMERS

(217) 249-2549

EDWARDS COUNTY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

(620) 659-2188

Make a donation

Donations to assist storm-stricken FB members are welcome: **Kansas Farm Bureau Weather Recovery Fund** ATT'N: Accounting Department 2627 KFB Plaza Manhattan, KS 66503 -or- online at www.kfb.org/kfbweatherfund

Future PAL

Glenn Brunkow, Pottawatomie County Farm Bureau, is one of 10 young agricultural leaders selected to participate in the fourth class of the AFBF Partners in Agricultural Leadership (PAL) honors program.



Brunkow

Farm Bureau's PAL program is designed to strengthen participants' leadership skills and put their abilities to work for the benefit of agriculture.

Upon completion of the PAL program, participants will be fully equipped to represent agriculture in the media, on speaking circuits or in legislative activities. PAL graduates serve as "advocates for agriculture," promoting awareness on issues important to those in the farm-to-consumer food chain.

Advance planning

Farm Bureau will host Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, Sept. 5 in Cheyenne County for the annual KFB Governor's Farm & Ranch Tour. KFB Governmental Relations staffers Terry Holdren and Harry Watts (left) recently trekked northwest to begin planning the event with the Cheyenne County FB board. Here, Shawna Blanka, Alisa Rath (Cheyenne Co FB coordinator), Jeanne Dunn and Roger Zwegardt discuss policy issues they intend to raise with the Governor.



Farm flashes

Time to celebrate beef

This month, celebrate Beef Month in the company of America's favorite outdoor appliance – the grill. Before taking the first bite of that steak or burger, toast Kansas beef producers. The economic impact of the cattle industry contributes to nearly every county in the nation, especially in rural communities. In Kansas, there are over 32,000 beef producers providing wholesome, nutritious beef.



EPA extends compliance dates

EPA has extended the compliance dates for facilities affected by the Oil Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) regulations in order to provide the time necessary to comply with the revised requirements that EPA expects to propose in 2007. More information can be found at <http://epa.gov/oilspill/>.

Working women

KFB Women's Committee met May 15 and 16 at state headquarters in Manhattan. The committee broadens opportunities for women to become increasingly involved in all aspects of FB, actively participating in the implementation of priority issues involving agriculture education, improving the quality of life in rural communities, promoting the industry and advocating for agriculture. Pictured here, Vice Chair Gay Beth Moore and Carolyn States, 6th District representative, discuss opportunities for influencing the political process.



Swine cleared for processing

Approximately 56,000 swine in various states including Kansas that consumed feed rations supplemented with pet food scrapings containing melamine and related compounds were cleared for processing by the USDA. Testing of meat from swine exposed to the feed confirms melamine and melamine compounds does not accumulate in pork and is filtered out of the body by the action of the kidneys. USDA will provide compensation to producers for certain additional costs incurred as a result of voluntarily holding the animals.

Members receive agroforestry award

Roy and Cherry Brown, Smith County Farm Bureau members, received the 2007 Kansas Agroforestry Award from the Kansas Forest Service. The award recognizes the Browns as leaders in the successful implementation of agroforestry practices. Their leadership has encouraged other neighbors to establish windbreaks and other agroforestry practices.

Interstate meat sales legislation

Members should urge their congressional delegates to take prompt action on legislation that would allow interstate sales of state-inspected meat and poultry products. Currently, beef, poultry, pork, lamb and goat inspected under state programs may only be sold within the borders of the state in which it is inspected. Foreign-produced meat and poultry products can be freely shipped and sold anywhere in the U.S. as long as that foreign country's inspection program is equivalent to U.S. federal standards. Removing the ban on interstate sales will expand marketing opportunities for farmers and ranchers and provides more opportunity for rural businesses.