



# AgCREDIT

AGRICULTURAL CREDIT ASSOCIATION

# Leader

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## **Stockholders Meeting**

### OFFICIAL NOTICE

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You are cordially invited to attend the 26th ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS MEETING of AgCredit ACA, subsidiaries AgCredit PCA and AgCredit FLCA, which will be held on:

**Wednesday, April 12, 2017**  
**6:30 p.m. dinner and meeting**  
**Meadowbrook Park Ballroom**  
**5430 W. Tiffin Street**  
**Bascom, OH 44809**

Directions: East side of Bascom on State Route 18

Our speaker for the evening is Damian Mason, a professional speaker with a positive and informative message for the people of agriculture. Please plan on arriving by 6:00 p.m. The dinner and meeting will commence at 6:30 p.m.

Dinner tickets are available at your local branch office for a cost of \$3.00 per person. A limited number of dinner tickets are available. *We encourage you to get your tickets early.*

Our cooperative continues to be one of the most dependable, efficient and financially sound lenders in agriculture and achieved another exceptional year in 2016. We are pleased to provide a brief overview of the results of your cooperative's financial progress in our Annual Meeting program.



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# 2017 Annual Stockholders Meeting Information Statement

## AgCredit, ACA

The Farm Credit Amendments Act of 1985 and Farm Credit Administration (FCA) Regulations require the disclosure to Voting Stockholders of the information contained in the Annual Stockholders Meeting Information Statement.

### Section 1 - Dates, Times, and Places of Annual Stockholders Meeting:

By resolution of the Board of Directors, the 26th ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS MEETING of AgCredit, Agricultural Credit Association (the "Association") will be held at the time and place listed, below:

**Wednesday, April 12, 2017 – 6:30 p.m. dinner and meeting**  
**Meadowbrook Park**  
**5430 W. Tiffin Street**  
**Bascom, OH 44809**

The official NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS MEETING as printed in its entirety on the first page of this Annual Meeting Information Statement is incorporated herein by reference.

### Section 2 - Annual Report to Stockholders:

The 2016 Annual Report to Stockholders of the Association and all information contained therein will be distributed to the membership separate from the 2017 Annual Meeting Statement. Members are encouraged to review the annual report prior to attending the annual meeting.

### Section 3 - Agenda Items to be Voted on by Voting Stockholders:

The following items on the agenda will require a vote of the Voting Stockholders of the Association:

- A. Election of one (1) Director from Regions 1 and 7 for a total of two (2) to be elected.
- B. Election of eighteen (18) members to the 2018 Nominating Committee (one per county).

### Section 4 - Voting Eligibility and Requirements:

- A. **Eligibility:** Each Voting Stockholder will be entitled to one vote in the election of directors and nominating committee members.
- B. **Number of Voting Stockholders entitled to vote:** The number of Voting Stockholders entitled to vote in the 2017 election at the Annual Stockholders Meeting is 5,762.
- C. **Date of Record:** The date of record for determining the number of Voting Stockholders entitled to vote was the close of business on December 31, 2016.
- D. **Requirements:** For each position on the ballots the nominee receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected. In the event of a tie between two (2) candidates, the tie vote will be broken by the flip of a coin if the candidates agree to have the tie resolved in that manner. In the event the candidates do not agree to resolve the tie by a flip of the coin, another ballot will be cast in the same manner as the first one. In the event there is a tie between more than two (2) candidates, another ballot will be cast in the same manner as the first one.

### Section 5 - Director Information:

**A. Biographical Information:** Biographical information on current directors of the Association is presented below:

**Scott Schroeder, Age 50, Type of Agriculture: Grain and Livestock.** Scott works full-time with his three brothers raising corn, soybeans and wheat. They also own and operate a farrow-to-wean sow operation and a small cow/calf operation. Scott was elected to the Board in 2008 and re-elected in 2011, and 2014, representing Region 1, Putnam, Van Wert and Paulding Counties. His term will expire in 2017.

**Dustin (Dusty) Sonnenberg, Age 44, Type of Agriculture: Grain and Livestock.** Dustin works full-time with his wife, Cheryl, and sons, Cody and Bailey, operating Sonnenberg Farms, a direct market freezer beef operation and cash grain farm. Dustin also operates Jay Calf Ranch, where they start 650-700 heifer calves annually for a local dairy. Dustin was elected to the Board in 2016, representing Region 2, Lucas (excluding Jerusalem Township and the City of Oregon), Henry and Wood Counties. His term will expire in 2019.

**S. Jerry Layman, Age 68, Type of Agriculture: Grain.** Jerry cash rents a 180-acre farm and plants no-till corn and soybeans. Jerry owns 1/3 share of 280 acres with his brothers. He works part-time for Layman Farms, a 3,500 acre no-till cropping operation owned by a brother, raising corn and soybeans. They also operate a small custom drainage business in the off-season. Jerry is a retired high school agriculture instructor and principal. He also serves on the AgFirst Farm Credit Board. Jerry was elected to the Board in 2004 and re-elected in 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016 representing Region 3, Hancock and Hardin Counties. Association term limits consists of five (5) consecutive full three-year terms. His term expires in 2019.

**Deborah Johlin-Bach, Age 60, Type of Agriculture: Grain and Livestock.** Deborah and her husband, Gary, farm 1,223 acres on a full-time basis. Their crop rotation is corn, soybeans, rye and hay. Additionally, they raise beef for custom freezer meat and have a small free range flock of chickens – supplying local customers. They also have a peach orchard and a specialty business of Bobwhite Quail. Deborah is a former U.S. Army Officer. She was elected to the Board in 2007 and re-elected in 2010, 2013 and 2016, representing Region 4, E. Lucas (Jerusalem Township and the City of Oregon), Ottawa, and Sandusky Counties. Her term will expire in 2019.

**Gary Baldosser, Age 50, Type of Agriculture: Grain and Livestock.** Gary and Becky, his wife, raise corn, soybeans, wheat and hay in partnership with Gary's family. They also have a cow/calf operation with their two sons, selling market steers and freezer beef. Gary was elected to the Board in 2009 and re-elected in 2012 and 2015, representing Region 5, Seneca County. His term will expire in 2018.

**Michael Thiel, Age 49, Type of Agriculture: Grain and Livestock.** Michael has been a self-employed grain and livestock producer for the past 25 years. He owns 566 acres and rents an additional 534 acres. His operation is a sole proprietorship and is comprised of wheat, soybeans, corn, hay and pasture. He also runs a 30-head cow/calf operation comprised of

Angus/Maine-Anjou crossbred cattle. Michael was elected to the Board in 2015, representing Region 6, Marion and Wyandot Counties. His term will expire in 2018.

**Michael Stump, Age 58, Type of Agriculture: Grain and Livestock.** Michael and his father, Jim, and son, Aaron, farm 1,500 acres, 535 owned. The operation is comprised of corn, soybeans, wheat, hay and pasture. They also have a 50-head dairy farm. Michael is vice president and treasurer of Stump's Heritage Farm, Inc. Michael was elected to the Board in 2008 and re-elected in 2011 and 2014, representing Region 7, Crawford and Morrow Counties. His term will expire in 2017.

**David Conrad, Age 55, Type of Agriculture: Grain and Livestock.** David has been in partnership with his brother, Rick, on a dairy and grain farm for the last 36 years. The farm consists of 1,100 acres of which 580 acres are owned. The farming operation consists of corn, soybeans, alfalfa and rye. They have also been engaged in a custom forage harvesting operation for the past 18 years. Their dairy operation consists of 230 registered Holsteins. David was a director for the Town and Country Cooperative for 15 years with 8 of those years as chairman. David was elected to the Board in 2015, representing Region 8, Erie, Huron and Lorain Counties. His term will expire in 2018.

**David Stott, PhD., Age 53, Outside Director.** David is a professor and Director of the School of Accountancy at Ohio University. He also is a self-employed CPA since 2002. He resides in Athens with his wife, Ann. David was appointed to the Board in 2012 and 2015. His current term will expire in 2018 at the Board's reorganization meeting.

**Daniel Rengert, Age 73, Outside Director.** Daniel brings a strong background in business management in a global environment with his 44-year career with Overhead Door Company and the TODCO Division. He served in various senior management capacities including President of TODCO, and on the Senior Executive Team at Overhead Door. He owns 166 acres of farmland in Marion County with his wife, Marilyn. Daniel was appointed to the Board in 2012 and 2014. His current term will expire in 2017 at the Board's reorganization meeting.

### B. Director Attendance at Board Meetings and Committee Meetings:

No director of the Association attended fewer than 75% of the total board meetings and board committee meetings during the last fiscal year.

**C. Disclosure Required under FCA Regulations - Section 620.6(e) and (f):** Disclosures required by directors in this section under FCA Regulations Section 620.6(e) and (f) are incorporated herein by reference from Section 8 of this Statement.

### Section 6 - Nominees for Director:

In accordance with policy adopted by the board of directors, nominees for director of the Association are selected from specified geographical areas in order to achieve fair representation of stockholders in the Association's territory. All Voting Stockholders are eligible to vote for one (1) director candidate from each region that is up for election. Following is a list of the Association's regions and the number of Voting Stockholders in each region.

Region 1	Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties	1,002
Region 2	Henry, Wood and W. Lucas Counties	792
Region 3	Hancock and Hardin Counties	910
Region 4	Ottawa, Sandusky and E. Lucas Counties	525
Region 5	Seneca County	657
Region 6	Wyandot and Marion Counties	517
Region 7	Crawford and Morrow Counties	675
Region 8	Erie, Huron and Lorain Counties	684

The 2017 Nominating Committee participated in a conference call on June 30, 2016 to review policies and procedures related to the Nominating process. The Nominating Committee met on September 8, 2016 and selected the following persons as nominees for directors, by geographical area, to be elected after the 2017 Annual Stockholders Meeting, by mail-in ballot:

#### Region 1 – Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties

Richard King	Paulding
Scott Schroeder	Putnam

#### Region 7 – Crawford and Morrow Counties

Thomas R. Miller	Crawford
Michael Stump	Crawford

### Section 7 - Biographical Information on Nominees:

FCA Regulation 611.330 (a) requires the following information to be included in the biographical information on nominees: name, city and state of residence, business address, if any, age, business experience during the last five years including the nominee's principal occupation and employment during the last five years, any business entity on whose board of directors the nominee serves, or is otherwise employed in a position of authority and state the principal business in which the business interest is engaged, and any family relationship of the nominee that would be reportable if elected to the Board.

(continued on inside back cover)

# Leader

**CROP INSURANCE  
UPDATES**

**BUYING A BOAT?**

**JOE LEISER MEMORIAL  
AGCREDIT SCHOLARSHIPS**



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# Meet our Mortgage Loan Originators!



**Craig Coughlin**  
NMLS# 339722

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**Matt Gray**  
NMLS# 499868

Serves: Henry, Wood & Lucas Counties



**Mike Kleinknecht**  
NMLS# 965776

Serves: Crawford, Marion & Morrow Counties



**Deanna Schroeder**  
NMLS# 482650

Serves: Paulding & Van Wert Counties



**Mandy Stacy**  
NMLS# 499867

Serves: Ottawa, Sandusky & Seneca Counties



**Steve Stechsulte**  
NMLS# 563511

Serves: Putnam County



**Allison Walton**  
NMLS# 519889

Serves: Hancock, Hardin & Wyandot Counties

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NMLS# 460334

# Leader

is published quarterly for stockholders, directors and friends of AgCredit, Agricultural Credit Association.

## PRESIDENT

Brian Ricker

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Scott Schroeder, Chairman  
Gary Baldosser, Vice Chairman  
Deborah Johlen-Bach  
David Conrad  
Jerry Layman  
Daniel Rengert  
Dustin Sonnenberg  
David Stott, Ph.D.  
Michael Stump  
Michael Thiel

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Address changes, questions, comments or requests for copies of our financial reports should be directed to AgCredit, ACA by writing 610 W. Lytle Street, Fostoria, OH 44830, or calling 800-837-3678. Our quarterly financial report can also be obtained on our website: [www.agcredit.net](http://www.agcredit.net).

## ADVERTISEMENTS

If you are interested in advertising in the *Leader* magazine, which goes to more than 7,000 households in 18 Ohio counties, please call the Norwalk office for more information at 1-800-686-0756.

## IMPORTANT DISCLOSURE

We may report information about your account to credit bureaus. Late payments, missed payments, or other defaults on your account may be reflected in your credit report.

## WHISTLEBLOWER INFORMATION:

Reports of suspected or actual wrongdoing can be made anonymously and confidentially through the SpeakUp Whistleblower hotline or online. All information submitted to SpeakUp is taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

## WHISTLEBLOWER TOLL-FREE HOTLINE WITH SPEAKUP:

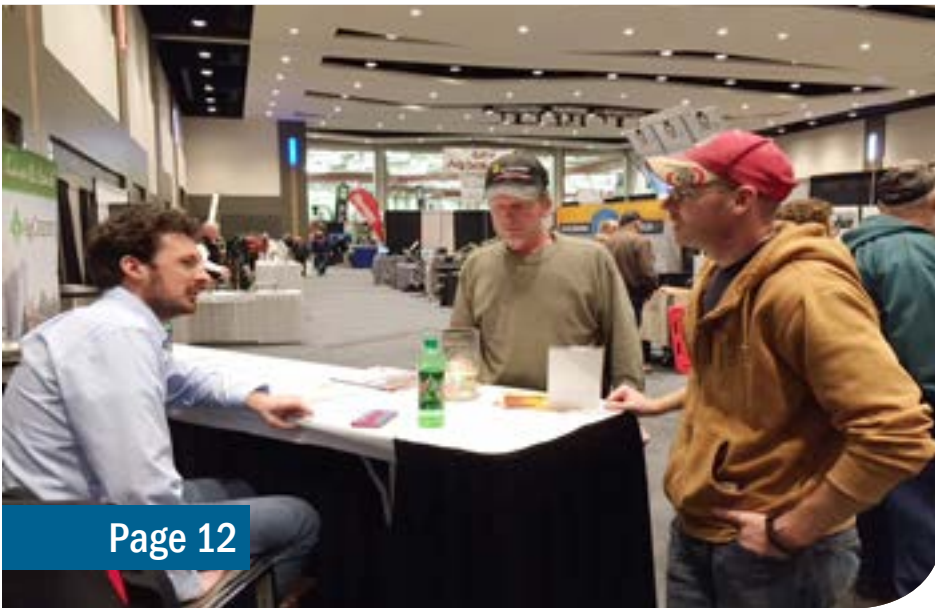
1-844-850-6494 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

## WHISTLEBLOWER ONLINE REPORTING:

<http://speakupAgCredit.intercedeservices.com>

COVER PHOTO BY CONNIE RUTH





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# GETTING A START



AgStart offers dependable, constructive financing and services to not only young or beginning farmers but also small, minority, women and veteran farmers.

## How did you get your start?

As you think about the question, you might be surprised by the number of people who come to mind in relation to you getting your start. The help may have been financial, encouragement, mentoring, training, or even your first job offer. Whether you own a farm, other business or work in another career, in many cases there were others who were instrumental in helping you get your start.

When I thought about the question, my family initially came to mind and I realized a number of people have helped me get my start. I am the youngest of eight children so I am grateful to my parents for their faith and love, to have an eighth child and provide me my start in life. My parents also helped my siblings and me get our start by teaching us about faith, family, friends, hard work and agriculture. I am thankful to my brother, Jack, who gave me my first summer paying job working in his masonry business. (Previously, like so many, I'd worked for free on the farm.) Also, I thought of my boss at my first job after college. He looked out for me and welcomed a young, single, farm kid into his home for Thanksgiving one year. He also invested many hours of his time into training. I would eventually leave the job for one closer to my family, but always felt guilty about leaving the position because of the time he had invested in me. I have learned karma has a way of getting even and now understand both sides of this fence. I could go on, but you get the picture about how many people shape and support our life journey. Countless people can and do make an impact although many never know the impact they made.

It is my hope when you ponder the question above that someone from AgCredit comes to mind. Even with the challenges we are currently facing in agriculture, our mission to serve our young, beginning farmers and rural communities has never been stronger. My goal is for AgCredit to be thought of as a valuable source to help many get their start in agriculture. In order to achieve this goal, we implemented a new program in

2015 named AgStart to help young and beginning farmers get their start in agriculture. AgStart offers dependable, constructive financing and services to not only young or beginning farmers but also small, minority, women and veteran farmers.

The AgStart program was developed by a committee of our account officers who have a deep-rooted understanding of agriculture and are familiar with the many challenges involved in starting out. Our account officers also have knowledge and understanding of the many funding resources and programs crucial to starting a new farm business.

I am pleased to report we were able to provide \$27 million in credit through 130 loans to our young and beginning farmers in 2016 with AgStart. We will continue to grow this program in the years ahead. The AgStart loans have lower costs, extended terms, reduced down payments and/or assistance with loan fees. We encourage you to reach out to your branch office for additional information on our AgStart program. Whether the operation is a young family member in a multi-generation farming operation, a military veteran who would like to connect with agriculture or a beginning farmer who wants to own a farm, the AgStart program offers dependable, constructive financing. We are excited about our new AgStart program and how it will further our mission of serving agriculture and our rural communities.

We understand a start is just that—and AgStart provides a variety of offerings to help someone succeed much like many of us received when we first started out. The recipe for success still includes hard work in developing and growing a business. If you know of anyone looking at getting a start in agriculture give one of our branches a call.

On a final note please join us this year at our AgCredit annual meeting to be held April 12 at Meadowbrook Park Ballroom in Bascom, Ohio. We will be reporting a number of highlights from last year, including \$18.4 million in profit sharing you will be receiving soon. We hope you can join us for an excellent meal and evening of fellowship.

## AgStart Program

**AgGrow Loans (for farm operators)** was created for farmers who are making their first or second farmland purchase or first or second contract livestock building purchase. This program offers:

- Minimal owner equity and current ratio requirements
- Low down payment
- Extended terms
- No loan origination fee
- Discounted loan closing costs

**AgGrow Loans (for non-farm operators – landlords)** was designed for farmers who desire to purchase farmland to continue or expand their family farm legacy or for a long-term investment in our agriculture communities. Benefits of this program include:

- Minimal owner equity and current ratio requirements
- Strong consideration given for off-farm business management experience

- No ACA (Agricultural Credit Association) origination fee
- Discounted loan closing costs
- Assignment on cash rent income highly encouraged

**AgNiche Loans (for non-traditional/niche farms)** are intended for farmers running a non-traditional operation.

Program benefits include:

- Flexible repayment terms to match income stream
- Strong focus on the following for each applicant:
  - Education/experience/research background of their non-traditional business
  - Business plan that includes a detailed marketing plan
  - Research of their public relations with neighbors and community
- Adequate record keeping plan required ■



# 2017 CROP INSURANCE UPDATES

BY THOMAS MILLIGAN



There are not many changes to 2017 crop insurance, but these few changes may have an impact on farming operations. For many years the Preventive Plant (PP) coverage was 60% of the guaranteed revenue for corn and soybeans. This year the corn PP coverage has been reduced to 55% and soybeans remain at 60%. Milligan Agency has heard that the percentage was targeted to drop to 50%, but a compromise was reached at 55%. However, a farmer can still add the Plus 10 (PT) coverage to increase the level to 65% or the Plus 5 (PF) to restore the 60% level. Both of these coverage endorsements have an additional charge. PP will also have more scrutiny in 2017 to ensure the issues preventing the planting of a crop are widespread enough to warrant a PP payment.

## Other Reminders:

### Sales closing date 3-15-17 to:

- Buy policy
- Cancel policy
- Change policy
  1. Levels
  2. Coverage type
  3. Endorsements
    - Yield exclusion
    - Yield adjustment
    - Trend adjustment
    - And more...

There has been additional land added to high-risk areas this year. Please check with your crop insurance agent to learn if your operation is impacted by

this change. A Written Agreement (WA) may be an appropriate response.

Please make sure your policy information is accurate. For example, changing your entity from a sole proprietor to an L.L.C. requires the policy to reflect that change. Marriage, divorce, partnerships, etc., also need to be noted. Any person or entity with greater than 10% interest in your crop must also be listed. ■

  
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The information provided in this column is only a sample of recent land sales around Ohio. Since there are many factors taken into consideration when a buyer and seller establish a price, these sales may or may not reflect the current market value in any particular area and should not be used in lieu of a formal appraisal by a state certified real estate appraiser to establish a value for a particular tract of land.

AgCredit's certified specialists are qualified to prepare appraisals for residences, land, dairies, hog confinement operations, grain farms and other specialty operations. For more information about Ag Credit's fee appraisal service call Bill Eirich, ARA, Chief Appraiser, 419-523-6677 or 1-800-837-3678, Ext. 1107. Bill will connect you with an appraisal specialist.

The following information was provided by:

- ▶ **Craig A. Miley Realty & Auction**  
703 Harding Way West  
Galion, OH 44833  
www.mileyrealty.com  
419-468-4602

#### **Location 1**

Acres: 157.81  
County: Morrow  
Township: North Bloomfield  
Date of Sale: 10/22/2016  
Selling Price: \$5,732 per acre  
Improved  
Well-kept 9 room, 5 bedroom farm home, barn, machinery shed, 110 acres tillable, 31 acres wooded

The following information was provided by:

- ▶ **Walter Bros. Inc.**  
901 N. Main St.  
Findlay, OH 45840  
www.walterbrosinc.com  
419-424-0944

#### **Location 1**

Acres: 78.56  
County: Seneca  
Township: Loudon  
Date of Sale: 11/23/2016  
Selling Price: \$5,850 per acre  
Unimproved

#### **Location 2**

Acres: 116.27  
County: Hancock  
Township: Amanda  
Date of Sale: 11/28/2016  
Selling Price: \$6,500 per acre  
Unimproved

#### **Location 3**

Acres: 57.07  
County: Hancock  
Township: Marion  
Date of Sale: 12/16/2016  
Selling Price: \$3,500 per acre  
Unimproved  
Not all tillable. Blanchard River flood ground

#### **Attention Auctioneers:**

Would you like to be featured in a future column? It's easy. Visit our website [AgCredit.net](http://AgCredit.net). Go to Resources, then click on Auctioneer's link to find the Recent Land Sale form. Fax the completed form to 419 332 2944 or email scanned form to [klaubacher@agcredit.net](mailto:klaubacher@agcredit.net).



RYAN CONKLIN

# BUYING A BOAT... AND MAYBE A TRUCK TO PULL IT?

BY RYAN CONKLIN, ATTORNEY

Some of you may recall Chris Janson's 2015 country music hit, "Buy Me a Boat." Simply put, the song talks about getting rich and buying a boat and a truck to pull it. For those of us not sitting on a pile of cash or holding a winning lottery ticket, buying a boat, a new truck, or a new side-by-side ATV can be a big purchase. Using Chris Janson's song as a backdrop, let's take a look at some of the legal issues involved in these types of purchases.

## What is a secured transaction?

Let's pretend you are buying a boat. If you cannot pay cash to the dealer for the boat, then the dealer, or a lender, sells the boat to you on credit using the boat as collateral. If you fail to make timely payments to the dealer or lender, then they can repossess the boat. Legally this is known as a secured transaction. If you are familiar with a mortgage, a secured transaction is very similar, except mortgages involve real estate whereas secured transactions deal with things, like boats, trucks, tractors, or livestock.

## What does a secured transaction involve?

Most secured transactions involve two key parts: attachment and perfection. Attachment typically occurs in the form of a security agreement or contract. Back to our boat example, when you purchase the boat, a lender makes you sign a security agreement. The contract must identify the collateral (the boat), indicate that you have a property interest in the collateral (such as ownership), and must be signed by you. This agreement will likely set forth other key provisions, such as payment terms or default.

The next step is known as perfection. Since it is possible for two separate lenders to use the same property as collateral, the law provides a way to establish which lender has first priority over the collateral. The lender completes the attachment process for your boat. In order to complete perfection, that lender files what is known as a financing statement with the Ohio



Secretary of State. This filing tells other lenders that it has a security interest in the boat, and it has first priority over anyone else wanting to use the boat as collateral in the future.

## What happens if you don't pay?

You have had the boat for six months now and can no longer make payments. Failure to make payments is known as an event of default, sometimes even if they are one day late. Unless there is a grace period in the contract, the lender can repossess and eventually sell the boat.

Repossession can be accomplished a number of ways. First, the lender can send a repo man to your property and remove the boat without a court order. The only requirement is that the repo man not "breach the peace." Generally speaking, this means the repo man cannot enter into your house or garage to get the boat, nor can he cause a public confrontation. However, if the boat is out in the driveway or in a public place and he can remove it without you noticing, then it is fair game.

Next, the lender can get a court order to repossess. If the lender files a repossession action against you, you will receive some court documents and will have five days to request a hearing. If you receive these documents, contact an attorney immediately. If you do not request a hearing, the court will side with the lender. Also, in some instances a contract will allow a lender to take you to court,

hire an attorney on your behalf, and get a judgment entered against you.

Finally, you can simply return the boat to the dealer or lender. This will not remove your obligation to pay the lender unless the lender agrees in writing not to do so.

## Wrapping Up

So, is there anything you need to do to protect yourself in a secured transaction? The best advice is to make your payments on time. This will prevent any issues from arising between the parties. Next, it is helpful to read security agreements or contracts. Specifically, look for terms of repossession, whether the lender must notify you of repossession, and any other provisions involving payment or default.

Third, if you find someone repossessing your property, simply ask them to leave. You should not threaten violence, but if the repo man does not leave you should call the sheriff's office. Finally, before you go out and buy a boat, think about whether it is something that is financially feasible. Experiencing a repossession can be a traumatic, and it can lead to other financial problems. The last thing you want is to deal with persistent calls from creditors and debt collectors who are looking to get paid.

Also, if you want to check out any current security interests in your name or your farm's name, visit the Ohio Secretary of State's website and search "UCC search." ■



# THE POWER OF GOALS

BY DR. DAVID KOHL

DR. DAVID KOHL

Goals are one of the basic components of a business plan. This is a transitional time of the year, often spent reflecting on the past and planning for the coming year and beyond. Establishing goals is a multi-faceted task involving the business, family and one's personal life.

In the future, goal-setting will not be an option, but a requirement for producers. At a recent meeting, this comment was followed logically by discussion surrounding business environment and many interrelated factors common to all farm businesses, regardless of size. For example, factors such as market volatility, price, costs and weather each impact business finances and operations. In one producer's case, his business is a large, multi-enterprise operation with numerous family members including brothers, sisters and cousins. There are two owners; one is a family member and one is not. Additionally, the non-family member owner also serves as the farm manager. The annual goal setting process for this group is focused and pointed making sure everyone is on the same page and headed in the same direction.

Establishing goals is also a critical tool in communicating with spouses, family, lenders, suppliers, landlords and even the community in general. Whether it is dealing with a financial planner or detailing transition management with partners, goals establish the parameters of the discussion. Specifically, goals allow you to map out a plan to get where you want to be.

In today's world of instantaneous communication and information overload, emotions often supersede logic in decision making. In marketing, for example, the tendency towards the sensational makes a good marketing and risk management plan absolutely essential. The plan provides objectivity and logic to seemingly illogical or even urgent situations.

Maintaining balance between business, family and personal priorities is critical, but can be tricky. This is yet another area where goals can help dictate a positive outcome. Long-term sustainability relies upon a strong equilibrium which means everyone involved must know and agree on the priorities. For instance, if a business is investigating a new enterprise expansion, a transition or maybe even an exit, a simple set of goals forces one to slow down first and think through possibilities on paper, before any commitments are made. Again,



this interjects logic, includes all the players and helps to avoid major missteps.

## Tips for the Process

Whether personal or with all business partners, goals should be written before they are verbalized. Occasionally, there may be a dominant personality, especially in family businesses, who attempts to control the goal-making process, or perhaps, even the actual goals. This creates a counterproductive, emotional environment where vital information is likely to be omitted. A scenario like this one is detrimental for the business, relations, as well as motivation.

Remember to list out both short (one to two years) and longer-term (three to five years) goals. In addition to business, family and personal goals, consider adding mental and physical goals as well.

## Does the process work?

The answer is resoundingly yes! I know an upper Midwest producer who decided to improve his health by losing weight. He laid out incremental goals of diet and exercise and lost 170 pounds. So far, he has maintained this goal for five years!

Another business established weekly team meetings as well as an annual strategic planning day. The outcome has been improved communications and development of a written business plan to better guide their decision-making. The business is enjoying smoother operations as well as more consistent profits.

One producer set a goal to improve his business marketing and consequently, decided to turn those responsibilities over to his daughter and son, both members of the Millennial generation. Together, they established goals within a marketing and risk management plan. As a result, they increased net farm income by 20 percent! Even with the increase, the producer felt they may have left money on the table, but appreciated that the logic kept them all out of emotional and stressful decisions.

Are you ready for the challenge? Over the holidays and into the first of the year, take the leap and write down your goals. You may just be surprised what emerges as most important. This is a great way to jumpstart your year, energize your business and maybe even see a dream come true! ■

## About the Author

David Kohl received his master of science and Ph.D. degrees in agricultural economics from Cornell University. For 25 years, Kohl was professor of agricultural finance and small business management and entrepreneurship in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia. He was on special leave with the Royal Bank of Canada working on advanced initiatives for two years, and also assisted in the launch of the successful entrepreneurship program at Cornell University. Kohl is professor emeritus in the AAEC Department at Virginia Tech.

Kohl has traveled more than seven million miles throughout his professional career! He has conducted more than 5,000 workshops and seminars for agricultural groups such as bankers, Farm Credit, FSA and regulators, as well as producer and agribusiness groups. He has published four books and more than 1,000 articles on financial and business related topics in journals, extension, and other popular publications. Kohl regularly writes for *Ag Lender* and *Corn and Soybean Digest*.

# YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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*Outside Director*



**Dr. David M. Stott**  
*Outside Director*

## Vote! Support Your Cooperative

On behalf of the Directors and Employees of AgCredit, I invite you to our Annual Stockholder Meeting on Wednesday, April 12, 2017. I encourage you to review the “Official Annual Meeting Notice,” which accompanies this issue of our *Leader* magazine.

As a stockholder in this member-owned cooperative, I urge you to take an active part by participating in our upcoming elections. You will be receiving your ballot by mail within ten days after the Annual Meeting. Please follow the ballot casting instructions and mail your vote back to the association prior to the established deadline. Your mailing envelope must be signed in order for your vote to be counted.

We appreciate your participation in one of the elements that sets your cooperative business apart from the rest—AgCredit, ACA Stockholders determine their own governance by electing their peers to the Board of Directors.

Your Board and Management Team have always believed in this simple observation: “Who better than farmers themselves know what farmers need?” Your vote supports this concept. Thanks for supporting your cooperative.

Brian J. Ricker, CEO





# ONE STOP SHOPPING. EASY EQUIPMENT FINANCING.

## Looking for an easy way to finance your equipment purchases this year?

Farm Credit **EXPRESS** is designed to provide you with competitive rates, flexible terms, and the conveniences you're looking for in an equipment finance program.

Here's how we make it easy:

- Apply for Farm Credit financing while you're at the dealership, and get an answer within 20 minutes
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- Enjoy the benefits of cooperative ownership — including our patronage refund program\*

We also have competitive rates and terms on used equipment purchases — so there's no reason not to ask your dealer for Farm Credit **EXPRESS**!

Farm Credit **EXPRESS** is committed to being the "key" to your satisfaction and success. Be sure to put it on your equipment shopping list!

Visit [farmcreditexpress.com](http://farmcreditexpress.com) for a list of participating dealerships.

\*Patronage payments are based on a variety of factors and, although our past payment history has been great, they are not a guarantee of future payments.

Your key to **easy** equipment financing



# AROUND AGCREDIT

## Calendar

- April 12** Annual Meeting
- April 14** Offices closed for Good Friday
- May 30** Offices closed for Memorial Day
- July 4** Offices closed for Independence Day

## Holiday Donation

Our Van Wert team had the opportunity to choose which charities AgCredit would donate to this holiday season. They selected Hands of Hope, a pregnancy care center in Paulding County and Coats for Kids of the Salvation Army in Van Wert County.

The AgCredit team donated \$500 worth of gift cards, checks and cash and an assortment of baby supplies and care kits to Hands of Hope. They also donated 35 coats, each with a new pair of gloves and a hat, and over \$500 monetary donation to the Coats for Kids program. We thank our entire AgCredit team for their generosity during this holiday season.



Deanna Schroeder (left), Mortgage Loan Originator in Van Wert, presenting the donation to a Hands of Hope volunteer.



## Ft. Wayne Farm Show

Our Van Wert team had a booth at the Ft. Wayne Farm Show, January 17-19. They spent their days talking to members and prospects about our great cooperative!



## Winter OSU Outlook Meeting in Upper Sandusky

AgCredit helped sponsor an OSU Outlook meeting at the Master's Building on January 31. Speakers included Barry Ward, Carl Zulauf, and Ben Wiginton. Over 120 attended the meeting and luncheon that followed.

## Marion Farm Management Meeting

Our Marion team hosted a marketing meeting on January 10 in Waldo. Speakers included Ben Wiginton of AgYield, Chuck Yoder of AgCredit, and Terry Ackerman of Grace Harbor Farms.



**Leader Magazine Advertising Now Available**

Contact the Norwalk AgCredit office if you are interested in advertising in the *Leader* magazine, which goes to more than 7,000 households in 18 Ohio counties. Call Connie Ruth at 1 800 686 0756 for more information.

**Find us on Social**

## Years of Service Awards

### 5 Years



Craig Coughlin



Julia Woodruff



Andrea Bayles



Janice Kohls



Pam Holman



Carrie Schlechter



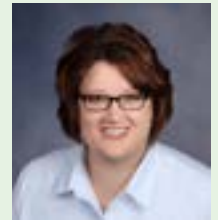
Felicia Knepper



Farrah Sherman



Logan Kreais



Kendra Heffelfinger

### 10 Years

### 15 Years



Denise Kin



Jeff Hoepf

### 20 Years

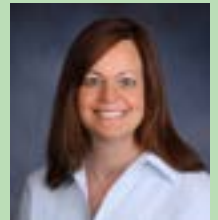


Craig Buskirk

### 25 Years



Karl Orians



Kathy Talbert

### 30 Years



Dan Ebert



June O'Neill

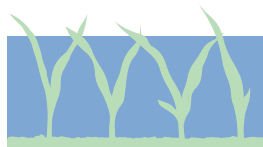
### 35 Years



Tom Schneider



Karen Frederick



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## Welcome New Employees



**Nathan Buzard** joined the AgCredit team as a Credit Analyst on November 16, 2016.



**Jordan Huntsman** began his career with AgCredit as a Credit Analyst on November 16, 2016.



**Calla Miller** joined the Ottawa team as a Loan Processor on December 7, 2016.



**Arielle Berletich** joined the Norwalk team as a Loan Accountant on January 9, 2017.

## Retirements



**Sandy Lenke** retired from our Fremont office on December 31, where she was an Account Officer for over 12 years.



**Doug Fedak** retired as an Agribusiness Account Officer on December 31, with 34 years of service.

## YBSMVW Advisory Committee

AgCredit's Young, Beginning, Small, Minority, Veteran and Women Farmer Advisory Committee met for the second time in December. Gary Matteson, Vice President of YBS Farmer Programs and Outreach for the Farm Credit Council spoke at the meeting. Committee members also discussed needs of current YBSMVW farmers and how AgCredit can reach out to help.



## Van Wert Outlook Meeting

Our Van Wert team held their Annual Outlook Meeting on January 20 at the Niswonger Center in Van Wert. Topics included 2017 Challenges, Crop Insurance Landscape for 2017, and 2017 Seed News. Over 70 producers attended.



## Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association Conference

Our team attended OEFFA's 2017 conference in Dayton, Feb. 9-11. Pictured, (l to r) Darrell Swinehart, Carrie Schlechter and David Green.



# 2017 ALPHABETICAL OHIO AGRICULTURAL FAIR SCHEDULE

Ohio State Fair (Columbus)  
July 26-Aug. 6

## County Fair & Location

### Dates

Adams County Fair (West Union)	JULY 9-15
Allen County Fair (Lima)*	AUG 18-26
Ashland County Fair (Ashland)*	SEPT 17-23
Ashtabula County Fair (Jefferson)*	AUG 8-13
Athens County Fair (Athens)*	AUG 4-12
Auglaize County Fair (Wapakoneta)*	JULY 30-AUG 5
Belmont County Fair (St. Clairsville)	SEPT 5-10
Brown County Fair (Georgetown)	SEPT 25-30
Butler County Fair (Hamilton)	JULY 23-29
Carroll County Fair (Carrollton)*	JULY 18-23
Champaign County Fair (Urbana)*	AUG 4-11
Clark County Fair (Springfield)	JULY 21-28
Clermont County Fair (Owensville)	JULY 23-29
Clinton County Fair (Wilmington)*	JULY 8-15
Columbiana County Fair (Lisbon)*	JULY 31-AUG 6
Coshocton County Fair (Coshocton)*	SEPT 29-OCT 5
Crawford County Fair (Bucyrus)*	JULY 16-22
Cuyahoga County Fair (Berea)*	AUG 7-13
Darke County Fair (Greenville)*	AUG 18-26
Defiance County Fair (Hicksville)*	AUG 19-26
Delaware County Fair (Delaware)*	SEPT 16-23
Erie County Fair (Sandusky)	AUG 8-13
Fairfield County Fair (Lancaster)*	OCT 8-14
Fayette County Fair (Washington C.H.)*	JULY 17-22
Franklin County Fair (Hilliard)*	JULY 15-22
Fulton County Fair (Wauseon)*	SEPT 1-7
Gallia County Fair (Gallipolis)	JULY 31-AUG 5
Geauga County Fair (Burton)*	AUG 31-SEPT 4
Greene County Fair (Xenia)*	JULY 30-AUG 5
Guernsey County Fair (Old Washington)* <sup>v</sup>	SEPT 12-17
Hamilton County Fair (Carthage)	AUG 9-13
Hancock County Fair (Findlay)*	AUG 30-SEPT 4
Hardin County Fair (Kenton)*	SEPT 5-10
Harrison County Fair (Cadiz)	JULY 3-8
Henry County Fair (Napoleon)*	AUG 10-17
Highland County Fair (Hillsboro)	SEPT 2-9
Hocking County Fair (Logan)	SEPT 11-16
Holmes County Fair (Millersburg)	AUG 7-13
Huron County Fair (Norwalk)	AUG 14-19
Jackson County Fair (Wellston)*	JULY 14-22
Jefferson County Fair (Smithfield)	AUG 15-20
Knox County Fair (Mt. Vernon)*	JULY 22-29
Lake County Fair (Painesville)*	JULY 25-30
Lawrence County Fair (Proctorville)	JULY 9-15
Logan County Fair (Bellefontaine)*	JULY 10-16
Lorain County Fair (Wellington)*	AUG 21-27
Lucas County Fair (Maumee)	JULY 11-16
Madison County Fair (London)*	JULY 8-15

## County Fair & Location

### Dates

Mahoning County Fair (Canfield)*	AUG 30-SEPT 4
Marion County Fair (Marion)	JULY 3-8
Medina County Fair (Medina)	JULY 31-AUG 6
Meigs County Fair (Pomeroy)*	AUG 14-19
Mercer County Fair (Celina)*	AUG 11-17
Miami County Fair (Troy)*	AUG 11-17
Monroe County Fair (Woodsfield)*	AUG 21-26
Montgomery County Fair (Dayton)*	JULY 10-15
Morgan County Fair (McConnelsville)*	SEPT 5-9
Morrow County Fair (Mt. Gilead)*	AUG 28-SEPT 4
Muskingum County Fair (Zanesville)*	AUG 13-19
Noble County Fair (Caldwell)*	AUG 28-SEPT 4
Ottawa County Fair (Oak Harbor)*	JULY 17-23
Paulding County Fair (Paulding)*	JUNE 12-17
Perry County Fair (New Lexington)	JULY 17-22
Pickaway County Fair (Circleville)*	JUNE 17-24
Pike County Fair (Piketon)*	JULY 28-AUG 5
Portage County Fair (Randolph)	AUG 22-27
Preble County Fair (Eaton)*	JULY 29-AUG 5
Putnam County Fair (Ottawa)*	JUNE 19-24
Richland County Fair (Mansfield)*	AUG 6-12
Ross County Fair (Chillicothe)*	AUG 5-12
Sandusky County Fair (Fremont)	AUG 22-27
Scioto County Fair (Lucasville)	AUG 7-12
Seneca County Fair (Tiffin)*	JULY 24-30
Shelby County Fair (Sidney)*	JULY 23-29
Stark County Fair (Canton)*	AUG 29-SEPT 4
Summit County Fair (Tallmadge)*	JULY 25-30
Trumbull County Fair (Cortland)	JULY 9-16
Tuscarawas County Fair (Dover)*	SEPT 18-24
Union County Fair (Marysville)*	JULY 23-29
Van Wert County Fair (Van Wert)*	AUG 30-SEPT 4
Vinton County Fair (McArthur)	JULY 24-29
Warren County Fair (Lebanon)*	JULY 17-22
Washington County Fair (Marietta)*	SEPT 2-5
Wayne County Fair (Wooster)*	SEPT 9-14
Williams County Fair (Montpelier)*	SEPT 9-16
Wood County Fair (Bowling Green)*	JULY 31-AUG 7
Wyandot County Fair (Upper Sandusky)*	SEPT 12-17

## Independent Fairs

Albany Independent Fair (Athens Co.)	SEPT 6-10
Attica Independent Fair (Seneca Co.)*	AUG 8-12
Barlow Independent Fair (Washington Co.)	SEPT 28-OCT 1
Bellville Independent Fair (Richland Co.)	SEPT 13-16
Hartford Independent Fair (Licking Co.)*	AUG 5-12
Loudonville Independent Fair (Ashland Co.)	OCT 3-7
Richwood Independent Fair (Union Co.)*	AUG 30-SEPT 4

\*Harness Racing

# Joe Leiser Memorial AgCredit, ACA \$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP

A total of three AgCredit, ACA scholarships will be given for the 2017-18 school year\*. Three students currently studying an agricultural curriculum at an accredited four-year school or at an accredited two-year school will each receive a \$2,000 award.

To be eligible, applicants must be an immediate family member (dependent) of a voting stockholder of AgCredit, ACA with a current loan. At the time of application the student must be attending a post-secondary school majoring in an agriculture-related subject. **Graduating high school seniors are not eligible to apply.**

- Children of current employees or directors of AgCredit, ACA, are not eligible for this scholarship.
- Previous recipients of scholarship funds are not eligible to re-apply.
- Previous applicants (who have not received scholarship funds) may apply every year they are eligible.
- The scholarship is to be used to pay education-related expenses and will be issued in the form of a joint check with the school.
- Applications must be postmarked on or before June 30, 2017. Mail to:  
ATTENTION: Karen Welter  
AgCredit, ACA  
610 W. Lytle St.  
Fostoria, OH 44830

The selection committee will consist of three current board members of AgCredit, ACA. They will review all complete applications and choose the three recipients. No interviews will be conducted. The process will be completed by July 31, 2017.

*\*The scholarship selection committee reserves the right to reduce or expand the number of scholarships awarded based upon the number of eligible and complete applications received.*



# JOE LEISER MEMORIAL AGCREDIT, ACA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

(Please Print or Type)

## 2017-2018 ACADEMIC YEAR

Name \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Home phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Immediate family who are voting members of AgCredit \_\_\_\_\_

College/University/Tech School **you have been attending** at the time of application \_\_\_\_\_

(At the time of application the student must be attending a post-secondary school at least as a first quarter/semester freshman.

Graduating high school seniors are not eligible.)

School address \_\_\_\_\_

Class status: 2017-2018 school year \_\_\_\_\_ G.P.A. \_\_\_\_\_

Major \_\_\_\_\_ Minor \_\_\_\_\_

(must be agriculture related)

Two-year program

Four-year program

**Attach to Application** – 1) Current Official Transcript including the most recent term. Transcripts may be faxed (419-435-6847) separate from the application, however, the original is to be mailed. In lieu of an official transcript, an Advising Report **AND** copies of grade reports **from each term attended** will be accepted. 2) Two letters of recommendation from sources at the discretion of the applicant.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Please submit the following on no more than four (4) 8 1/2" x 11" sheets of paper (one side only). Additional sheets and backs WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED. Please provide information from the past two years only. Answers must be either **TYPED** or **PRINTED**.

1) Prepare a resume including the following items:

- a) Your past and present co-curricular activities including offices and extent of involvement.
- b) Your work experience or other commitments that may involve a large amount of time.
- c) Your scholastic accomplishments.

(Make a definite distinction among the three categories above.)

2) From your resume, pick one activity that has benefited you the most and explain.

3) Why have you decided on an agricultural program?

4) Tell us more about yourself and explain how this scholarship would benefit you.



DAVID WHITE

# CROP INSURANCE MYTHS DEBUNKED

By DAVID WHITE

It's budget season on Capitol Hill.

Discussions are underway to shape the 2018 Farm Bill. We've all heard the phrase, "Nothing is certain." However, based upon history, one thing is for certain – crop insurance will be debated on both fronts.

Crop insurance is a successful public-private partnership federally regulated and delivered by the private sector to help farmers maintain a safe and affordable food supply. Simply put, it serves the country as the nation's food insurance policy. It was a critical component of the 2014 Farm Bill, and will be considered for the next Farm Bill. It allows lenders to finance many young and beginning farmers who typically have less collateral and equity.

To help members of Congress better understand how crop insurance serves as a viable risk management tool for farmers, the Farm Credit Council – to which AgCredit belongs – has developed a list of frequently asked questions to dispel the many myths about crop insurance. Additionally, the Council – which serves as the trade organization for the 74 Farm Credit Associations throughout the country – has created a set of discussion points for Farm Credit System leaders and members to utilize as they engage with members of Congress and the public about this issue.

Here is a sampling of some crop insurance myths for discussion purposes:

## MYTH 1:

*Crop insurance is only for big corn, soybean, wheat and cotton farmers.* Crop insurance is actually available for more than 100 crops and to farmers of all sizes and in all 50 states. The number of acres of fruit, vegetables and other specialty crops covered by crop insurance increased from 7.7 million acres in 2009 to nearly 8.3 million acres in 2015. This is an increase of eight percent in just six years. Many specialty crops are insured at rates similar to or even higher than row crops such as corn, soybeans and wheat.

## MYTH 2:

*Disaster assistance would be better and cheaper than crop insurance.* In reality, crop insurance provides a certainty to producers (and their lenders) that disaster assistance can never provide. Crop insurance payments are also timely, unlike disaster payments which often come years after a loss. The cost of crop insurance versus disaster assistance is virtually impossible to compare because every disaster assistance package covers different commodities and different types of losses. If a farmer has a loss, they will typically receive a crop insurance payment within 30 days through the private sector delivery system.

## MYTH 3:

*The harvest price option (HPO) eliminates all risk from farming and is unnecessary.* Risk still exists for these farmers. The harvest price option simply provides farmers with the replacement value for their lost crop. There

are two very practical and common scenarios in agriculture that make HPO coverage a critical risk management tool – to farmers who use forward contracting as another means of mitigating their risk, and to livestock producers who grow their own feed.

## MYTH 4:

*Some claim that crop insurance is over budget.* Crop insurance costs are currently well below budget. Annual crop insurance costs peaked in 2013 at \$11 billion, due largely to the devastating 2012 drought combined with the high value of crops at that time. According to the first Congressional Budget Office estimates provided after passage of the 2014 Farm Bill, the actual cost of crop insurance has been almost \$2.7 billion under budget in 2014 and 2015 alone.

Given the recent multi-year trend of declining commodity prices and farmer net income, it is important for policy makers to maintain a strong farm policy, including keeping crop insurance affordable. Impairments to the program, including shrinking the risk pool, could have the consequence of making crop insurance unavailable to some and unaffordable to others.

Without the risk protections crop insurance affords, some Ag lenders would be forced to tighten underwriting standards and would be unable to provide credit to many farmers. In turn, this would make it very challenging for farmers to plant crops and purchase replacement capital assets, which in turn would adversely impact rural communities. ■



# Enter our 2018 Calendar Photo Contest!

## 2018 Calendar Contest Guidelines:

Ideas include: large and small farm operations, country kids, farm animals, flowers, outdoor landscape scenes, nature scenes, harvesting, sunrises, sunsets, barns, silos, wildlife, classic and/or antique farm equipment, and daily farm life.

The contest is open to all creative work—you don't have to limit yourself to the ideas above. You may submit new ideas or any combination of the above.

- Who is eligible: Members, employees and their family members are invited to enter our 2018 Calendar Photo Contest.
- Photos must be taken within our 18-county AgCredit territory.
- Photos must be submitted by the person who took the photos, and each person is eligible for a maximum of two prizes.
- Watch for instructions and a link on our website.
- All photos must be at least 1 MB in size.
- Orientation of photos must be horizontal (landscape).
- Please limit your entries to five photos. We will not accept more than five photos per person.
- Deadline for submission is June 30, 2017.
- All photos, used or unused, become the property of AgCredit.

## Cash Prizes Awarded:

1st Place—\$100

2nd Place—\$75

3rd Place—\$50

\$25 prize to each of the other nine winning photos. Photos featured on the back will receive a calendar.

Winning entries will be announced and featured in the 2018 AgCredit Calendar, the AgCredit Leader, social media, and our website.

**To submit an entry, go [www.AgCredit.net](http://www.AgCredit.net).**

If you have any questions, please contact Kayla Laubacher at 800-686-0756 or [klaubacher@agcredit.net](mailto:klaubacher@agcredit.net).



[AgCredit.net](http://AgCredit.net)



# A Rural Perspective: Mom's Letters

By JAMES MCCONNELL

JAMES MCCONNELL IS A MEMBER OF AGCREDIT WHO FARMS 2,500 ACRES IN SOUTHERN LORAIN COUNTY WITH HIS TWO BROTHERS.



JAMES MCCONNELL

Recently I was rummaging around in an upstairs room at the farmhouse where I grew up. I was looking for a specific book that as a youngster was given to me for Christmas by my

grandparents so I could pass it along to my grandchildren. I'd been in this room many times before and looked on every shelf and inside every cardboard box or wooden crate—or at least I thought I had.

There was an old, plain wooden box big enough to hold a few shoe boxes and that's about all. I knew I'd looked in it before and thought there wasn't much inside except some old souvenirs and pictures. I picked up a paper bag full of pictures and noticed a small wooden box that resembled a jewelry box. Not remembering what was in it or even if I'd opened it before, I turned the tiny little key and lifted the lid.

What I found was a real treasure. There were over sixty letters from my mother to my father written over the 14 months prior to their wedding in April of 1944. The postage stamps on each envelope showed a portrait of Thomas Jefferson and each letter cost all of three cents for first-class. Even without any modern day postal equipment for electronic scanning and sorting, it appears Mom could count on her letters reaching Dad (just seven miles away) no later than the second day.

Back then letters were the first and only choice for private communication.



Nearly everyone had access to a telephone, but there was nothing private about them. Most homes only had one phone and it was usually located in the busiest part of the house. Neighborhood party telephone lines were the norm in 1943 and that meant five to eight or more nearby homes all knew when there was an incoming call to anyone on the line. If someone else was using the phone, you had to wait until they were done and hope they weren't quietly listening to your conversation when you finally got your chance. Neither Dad nor Mom had exclusive use of a car of their own even

though they seemed to find a way to get together a couple times a week.

Mom and Dad were already engaged to be married before the time of these letters. Mom was 20 years old, had completed a two-year program at the Oberlin Business College and was working in the Superintendent's office of the Oberlin City Schools. She was the oldest of three sisters, lived at home, and helped her parents with their modest-sized farm. Dad was a few months older than Mom, lived at home and worked full-time on the family dairy farm.

I'm certain Dad wrote letters to Mom since she occasionally makes

reference to things he had included in a recent letter. Unfortunately, I haven't found any of his letters to her. They already knew the house where they were going to set up housekeeping after the wedding and Mom often wrote of their plans room by room. I'm sure those details were more important to her than to Dad; but she used these letters to share her thoughts and plans. Mom occasionally mentions wedding details and invitation lists, but not so much that I would imagine it was boring to Dad.

Reading these letters made me feel as if I was listening in to her side of conversations with Dad. They were forming their partnership bit by bit, one that would last for nearly forty-four more years. I was a witness to most of those years, but these letters provided an insight into a part of their life I never knew. Even though the words are just Mom's, it is easy to tell how in love they were and how anxious they were to get started with their life together.

Mom was always proud of her handwriting and it was as beautiful then as I always knew it to be. I'm not a handwriting expert, but it is impossible to read these letters and not know she was a person who paid attention to details. You can tell she chose her words carefully but easily. The spelling is flawless as is her sentence structure and grammar. I took for granted her skills as a proofreader of my school work, but now I have a better understanding of how those skills were central to her personality.

Holding those letters as I read them was almost like holding her hand again and being able to feel her warmth and the pulse of her heart. Trying to explain the emotions flowing through me as I read them and as I write this, is impossible. There is sadness for certain but it is also as if I have opened a surprise gift from her more than three years after her passing (It has also made me pull the Kleenex box closer). I doubt Mom ever thought these letters, her everyday notes to my father, would ever be considered a gift to anyone.

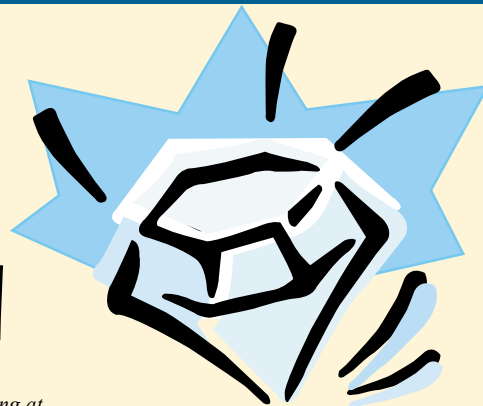
It struck me how differently relationships are built today and how we communicate in this high tech

world. Everything is fast and furious these days. Forty character tweets on Twitter are supposed to be sufficient. We are expected to send and respond to "Friend Requests" whether they are actually friends or not. If an appropriate response would be a simple "OK" we are prone to shorten it to "K", or more likely just "k". Why bother with capitalization? For that matter, why bother with spelling, complete sentences or correct sentence structure? Who cares about that stuff anymore?

I don't recall a single abbreviation in any of Mom's letters. But today abbreviations have attacked the English language like a bad disease with no foreseeable cure. LOL (laugh out loud), OMG (oh my God), BFF (best friend forever), NVM (never mind), TY (thank you), BRB (be right back), TTYL (talk to you later). I guess when you're trying to type messages with your thumbs on tiny keyboards, shortcuts are essential. I've seen a few text messages that were nearly 100% abbreviations.

Letter writing is almost a lost skill among today's younger generations. Email, Facebook, Tweets, Instagram and text messages don't lend themselves well to being saved in little wooden boxes for children and grandchildren to someday stumble across. The actual ink on paper, written by my mother and read by my father 74 years ago, with beautiful handwriting, complete sentences and a sincerity you can feel as much as read, may not have been special to them at the time but certainly is special to me now. TY, Mom. ■

# AGATES FROM AGATHA SEMI-PRECIOUS TIDBITS OF INFORMATION



BY CONNIE RUTH, AKA AGATHA CREDIT

*Agatha Credit is the nickname my late husband, Dan, bestowed upon me when I first started working at AgCredit. He enjoyed the enthusiasm I had for my new job.*

## Little Changes, Big Changes

I've always liked cats, but would never have considered myself a cat-lover until recently. Don't get me wrong; I am a softie when it comes to animals. My girls always had pets when they were growing up. Living in the country made it easy for me to say, "Yes," to requests to take in all sorts of animals: cats, dogs, rabbits, turtles, fish, goats, and (once) a rodent-like hamster. I drew the line at snakes and lizards, although I don't recall anyone ever asking for one.

My dog, Daisy, died last spring after a long illness. After I got over the initial loss, I'd have to admit it was quite nice not to have the responsibilities of owning a dog. I no longer had to rush home after work to let her out or find a dog-sitter when I went away. I also enjoyed walking fearlessly across my yard without stepping in any piles she'd left behind. I was not in a hurry to get another pet. However, as the months went by, when I came home to my quiet house, I sure missed being greeted at the door. I began to think more and

more about all the shelter animals needing homes. I noticed the sad-eyed animal faces in TV commercials (with a Sara McLachlan song playing mournfully in the background). I lingered over animal adoption Facebook posts. Finally, this past fall, I asked Jim if he wanted to adopt a cat with me and I wasn't surprised when he agreed.

Jim likes cats and over the years he's purchased cat food for stray, drop-off cats that show up at his door. The strays have a tendency to move on though when they realize he isn't planning to let them inside and isn't home much to bond with them. So Jim and I ended up bringing two cats home—to my house; one was from the shelter and another, irresistible second one was rescued with the help of our vet, Dr. Janet.

If you had asked me a year ago if I was a cat or a dog person, I would have emphatically said, "Dog!" and now I would just as emphatically say, "Cat!" It's a small change—it's not a big deal. I didn't see this change coming,





and is trying to believe she and her children will eventually be OK. The other is fighting cancer and doing her best to focus on the things she needs to do to win the battle. As their friend, I want to support each of them in any way I can. My first impulse is to reassure them by saying, “It will all work out just fine. In a couple years you will look back on this rough time in your life and feel relieved. You’ll be stronger and your life will be better.” But, as of right now, I can’t say this to either of them. I think it’s true and hope it will be true, but I am not 100% sure. Instead of trying to reassure either with my hopeful words I’ll just try to be there to listen if they want to talk. Right now maybe it’s best to just listen and be there.

Sometimes I need to put one foot in front of the other and focus on what is good in our world and try to accept stressful changes as they come. I don’t have a crystal ball but have to believe my friends will find their way and sunny days will eventually return. Jim and I weren’t thinking of ways to reduce stress when we decided to get pets again, but now we understand it’s hard not to smile when a sweet kitty jumps up on your lap and purrs in your ear.

So, here’s to fresh starts, healing hearts, and good health!

but now I am a self-proclaimed cat lady who installed bird feeders outside the living room window solely for her cats’ entertainment. Once in a while I even leave the Cat Channel playing on the TV when I’m at work. (Yes, there is such a thing!)

Sometimes change comes whether we want it to or not.

Some changes in life are big and scary—especially when we have no control over them. I have two friends who are going through serious changes in their lives. One has ended a long-term relationship. She knows she needs to move on



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# 2017 Annual Stockholders Meeting Information Statement

## AgCredit, ACA (continued)

### NOMINEES: REGION 1 - PAULDING, PUTNAM, AND VAN WERT COUNTIES



**Scott Schroeder, age 50, Leipsic, Ohio (Putnam County):** Scott and his wife, Mary, operate in partnership with his three brothers, Kevin, Martin, and Larry, a 3,700 sow farrow-to-wean operation. They own 1,100 acres and rent an additional 256 acres, raising corn, soybeans, and barley. In addition, they have a partnership with Larry on a small cow/calf operation. Prior to being a full-time farmer in 2002, Scott worked 14 years in the banking industry, serving in the areas of bookkeeping, loan accounting and lending. He has recently been appointed to the Ohio Pork Council as director for District 1. Scott has 6 relatives who are currently stockholders of the Association having 19 loans. Scott did not have any decision making authorities on these accounts. Scott serves on the boards or otherwise in a position of authority for KMLS Farms, LLC, which engages in farming, and L & S Cattle, dealing in a small cow/calf operation. Scott states, "I believe that the experience that I gained from my financial and agricultural business background will allow me to help with the continued success of AgCredit. I have a committed desire to meet the ever-changing times of the organization while still meeting the needs of our farmers and farm communities. I would be honored to devote my time in service on the Board of Directors."



**Richard King, age 65, Payne, Ohio (Paulding County):** Rick and his wife, Renee, farm with their daughter and son-in-law, Rebecca and Jason Rupp. They own 700 acres and rent an additional 1,250 acres, raising corn, soybeans and wheat. Rick has served for many years on the Paulding County Farm Bureau Board and is currently the treasurer. He also serves as treasurer for St. Jacob's Church in Payne. He also served on the board of Payne Equity when the cooperative merged with Mercer Landmark. Rick has 4 relatives who are currently stockholders of the Association having 4 loans. Rick states, "I enjoy and respect the employees of AgCredit. I would feel privileged to serve on the Board and help continue the traditions of a well-functioning Ag Lender!"

### NOMINEES: REGION 7 - CRAWFORD AND MORROW COUNTIES



**Thomas R Miller, age 55, Bucyrus, Ohio (Crawford County):** Thomas and his wife, Nadine, are full-time farmers who operate in partnership with Thomas's oldest son, Luke. They farm 2,000 acres with 1,000 owned and 1,000 acres rented. His farming operation consists of no-till corn, soybeans, and many conservation practices. Thomas served 12 years on the Crawford County Soil and Water Board and is currently in his first term of the Farm Service Agency County Committee.

He served 20 years as a volunteer fireman on the Bucyrus and Dallas Township departments. Thomas has one relative who is currently a stockholder of the Association having 7 loans. Thomas serves on the boards or otherwise in a position of authority for Circle M Farms, which engages in land holdings, Miller Brothers Equipment Company, dealing in equipment, and Miller Brothers, a farming operation. Thomas states that he would like, "to obtain a better understanding of the direction Ag finances are currently trending."



**Michael Stump, age 58, Bucyrus, Ohio (Crawford County):** Michael, his father, Jim, and his son, Aaron, farm 1,355 acres, (535 owned) consisting of corn, soybeans, wheat, hay and pasture. They also have a 51 cow dairy farm. Michael is vice president and secretary for Stump's Heritage Farms, Inc. Michael is also starting his 39th year as a 4-H advisor for Crawford County 4-H. Michael has 2 relatives that are currently stockholders of the Association having 6 loans. Michael did not have any decision making authorities on these accounts. Michael serves on the boards or otherwise in a position of authority for Stump's Heritage Farm Inc., a farming operation, and Stump Farms LLC, which engages in land holdings. Michael says, "I would like to continue my membership on the AgCredit Board of Directors. I have enjoyed serving with the high quality professional, as well as personable, staff. I look forward to continuing to serve the members of Crawford and Morrow Counties."

### Section 8 - Disclosures Required under FCA Regulations Section 620.6(e) and 620.6(f):

FCA Regulations Section 620.6(e) and 620.6(f) require directors and nominees for director make the following disclosures:

- That they have not had transactions with the Association during the last fiscal year, other than loans, which are not available to all stockholders as outlined in Section 620.6(e) of the FCA regulations.
- That they have not been involved in certain legal proceedings in the last five years as described in Section 620.6(f) of the FCA Regulations.

### Certification of Directors and Nominees for Directors:

All directors and nominees for Director have certified to the Association, in writing, that they have had no transactions with the Association during the last fiscal year which would have required reporting to the stockholders under FCA Regulations Section 620.6(e); nor, has any director of the Association or nominee for director been involved in any of the certain legal proceedings described in FCA Regulations Section 620.6(f) during the past five years. No such transactions or events have occurred since the end of the last fiscal year.

### Section 9 - Disclosures from Persons Nominated for Director from the Floor:

Any person or persons nominated as a candidate for director of the Association from the floor must provide, in writing, disclosures as required under FCA Regulations Section 620.6(e) and (f), see Section 6, to the Association within 5 business days. The applicable FCA regulations are incorporated in this section by reference from Section 8 of this statement.

### Section 10 - 2018 Nominating Committee:

The 2017 Nominating Committee nominated the persons listed below as candidates for the 2018 Nominating Committee. One member will be elected from each county.

COUNTY	NOMINEES	
CRAWFORD	Michael Kent	Kurt T. Weaver
ERIE	Neil Johannsen	Tadd J. Smith
HANCOCK	Evan Jackson	Kevin P. Flanagan
HARDIN	Dustin Wilcox	Doris Ralston
HENRY	Brad Kurtz	Timothy Brinkman
HURON	Brian C. Smith	Dan Stevens
LORAIN	Richard Brill	Chad Woodrum
LUCAS	Lonnie R. Perry	Daniel Fritsch
MARION	Todd S. Sims	Davey Neidhart
MORROW	Craig A. Staley	Daniel Barker
OTTAWA	Allen M. Gahler	Ronald L. Laubacher
PAULDING	Jerry L. Klopfenstein	Keith L. Wiesehan
PUTNAM	Steven P. Ellerbrock	Dennis D. Schroeder
SANDUSKY	John Huss	Steve Polter
SENECA	Jack Ziegler	Kevin Seigley
VAN WERT	Trent M. Profit	Gary Weick
WOOD	Dan Gerwin	John Cajka
WYANDOT	Randy Brown	Wade Vaughn

### Section 11 - Other Agenda Items:

Other items on the agenda of the ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS MEETING are:

- Directors Report
- Financial Report
- Report by President
- Any other business that may need to be brought before the membership

### Section 12 - Relationship with Independent Accountants:

During the 2016 fiscal year, the Association employed the accounting firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers to audit its financial statements. There were no material disagreements on any matters of accounting principles or financial statement disclosures during this period with the Association's independent accountants.

### PATRONAGE REFUND

The 2016 patronage refund will be mailed to all members eligible to receive patronage.

### Section 13 - Certification of Statements:

Each of the undersigned certify this statement has been prepared in accordance with the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, the signatories have reviewed the report, and the information contained herein is true, accurate and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief.

### Section 14 - Voting Procedures

Nominations from the floor may only be made by eligible Voting Stockholders at the annual meeting.

Director candidate nominations are restricted by Association bylaws to a geographical area. For Director candidate nominations any floor nominee must state that he or she accepts the nomination and each floor nominee then must provide the information referred to in FCA Regulations 611.330, 620.6(e), 620.6(f), and 620.21, in writing, to the Association within five business days of the nomination. The Association will provide the appropriate forms by which a floor nominee may complete the required disclosures.

Nominations for nominating committee are restricted by the bylaws to a geographical area. Any floor nominee for nominating committee must accept the nomination, in writing, to the Association within five business days of the nomination.

All Voting Stockholders of the Association are entitled to vote for candidates from all areas of the Association. Total number of Voting Stockholders eligible to vote is incorporated in this section by reference from Section 4 (B) of this Statement.

There will be no voting at the annual meeting. Within 10 business days following the annual meeting, ballots will be mailed to Voting Stockholders. The election polls shall be closed at the end of the 20th business day following the date on which the ballots are mailed to Voting Stockholders. Within 10 business days after the polls are closed the tellers committee shall convene in the office of the Association to tally the ballots returned to the Association prior to the closing of the polls. The tellers committee shall report the results of the election to the chief executive officer who shall send a notice to the members and the equity holders announcing the results of the election.

Scott A. Schroeder  
Chairman, AgCredit, ACA

Brian J. Ricker  
President and CEO, AgCredit, ACA

Daniel E. Ebert  
CFO, AgCredit, ACA



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AGRICULTURAL CREDIT ASSOCIATION

## **2017 ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS MEETING**

**Wednesday, April 12, 2017 – 6:30 p.m. dinner and meeting**

**Meadowbrook Park Ballroom**

**5430 W. Tiffin Street**

**Bascom, OH 44809**

### **Keynote speaker: Damian Mason**

Damian Mason is a professional speaker with a positive and informative message for the people of agriculture. Damian understands the business of food, fuel, and fiber production. He was raised on an Indiana dairy farm, has a degree from Purdue University in Agricultural Economics, and owns and manages a farm in Indiana. Damian delivers crisp Ag commentary and comedy that resonates with the people who produce, process, package, sell, and transport the bounty of North American agriculture. Damian's presentations have been a hit with over 1,600 audiences in all 50 states and 8 foreign countries.



**IMPORTANT STOCKHOLDER INFORMATION INSIDE THIS ISSUE!  
PLEASE REVIEW CAREFULLY**