

AG NOTES
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REMINDER 1

There are two very important opportunities for farm operators to consider. I've mentioned these in the past weeks, and I am again one last time.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is taking applications through December 11 for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program version 2. This is an opportunity for farmers to receive an updated payment adjustment for various commodities and livestock who experienced market disruption due to COVID-19 influences. The details are available on the CFAP2 website <https://www.farmers.gov/cfap>

The FSA office in Lewisburg is the service center for Bedford County. For folks who have never dealt with USDA programs before and for information and assistance in applying, contact the staff by phone at 931-359-6268.

REMINDER 2

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is taking applications for farmers interested in the EQIP program through December 11. This program has many facets to it, one of the more popular ones the grazing management program that helps pay for cross-fencing and water systems to enable a better job of managing animals and their access to grazing areas. But there are many other projects available.

The Bedford County NRCS office is on Midland Road next to the Ag Center, and the best way to contact them is by phone at 931-684-1441, Ext. 3.

Due to the COVID office operating procedures for both of these agencies, their staff is working onsite but behind locked doors, so call to discuss these programs and they'll help get the applications filed. Both of these programs are worth the effort, and I encourage you to make contact.

TREE SAFETY

There are a lot of cut trees going into homes right now. These trees will be decorated and enjoyed by a lot of people. It's that time of year! (Where did the time go?)

There will be accidents with these trees, too. That's the unfortunate part. Fires will happen and injury or worse can result. We need to pay attention here.

These trees need to be away from open flame heat, and not be near heaters of any kind. They'll need to be watered to prevent them from drying out and becoming the same as kindling and a fire hazard.

Electrical cords for lights and other decorations can present a hazard. They can get overloaded and heat up, short out and cause sparks or flames, and set trees and decorations on fire.

Safety is always important, and holiday safety is really important. It's sad to suffer at any time, but holiday tragedy is always critical. Pay attention, not condolences.

PEACE

This is a time of reflection and gratitude, concern for ours and others, compassion for those not as fortunate as we are, and an effort to make things better around us. How far we go depends on how selfless we are. This is truly a high calling.

I have a copy of a speech that my great, great grandfather, Dr. James H. Agee, gave on the floor of the House of Representatives of the Tennessee General Assembly when he served as a state representative. He later served as a state senator from our part of east Tennessee.

No one talks or writes like he did then, but the thoughts in it are noble and focused on doing the right thing, regardless of his 'peculiar politics'. To him, that was the highest test. It meant "more than all of the glittering diamonds on the plains of Alaska!"

The thoughts in the latest Progressive Farmer's Cornerstone section are on brotherhood, or sisterhood if you will. Here are some really good quotes.

Heywood Brown said "Brotherhood is not just a Bible word. Out of comradeship can come and will come the happy life for all." One of the Psalms says "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

Mark Nepo said "Time and again, we're asked to discover through love and suffering, that we are at heart the same." Marcus Tullius Cicero said "We are obliged to respect, defend and maintain the common bonds of union and fellowship that exist among all members of the human race."

The way this works is for every one of us, regardless of position on a thing, applies all of this to every effort for the betterment of humans. This comes from an anonymous person, but it's on target for the times. Think about it.