

**AG NOTES**  
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**FARMERS MARKET**

Even though the Celebration is to start this week, we'll be open both weeks as usual. Our sale starts at 2:30 pm at the pavilion next to the big blue water tower at the Celebration grounds. Come visit the vendors who are local. We'll see you there. There is no parking fee for the market.

**UPDATE**

I wrote here about scouting for armyworms. I stand by that, but there appears to be uncertainty about the post from Alabama about sightings just across the state line. However, I did get a picture sent to me of one adult moth from here that resembled this insect, but the lab could not confirm it because of poor condition of the wings and discoloration of the specimen. Simply, we were not sure. There was some resemblance but not enough to be able to confirm it. I did get a report that there were some sightings in another county, but I have not confirmed that either.

The main thing here is to keep up vigilance for this insect. You should always pay attention to your animals and their surroundings. And don't panic. One adult moth does not make for an outbreak. Now, the threshold for treatment is if there are 2-4 caterpillar larvae per square foot, depending on the source. That's a considerable difference from one moth. Watch for them, then act when there is justification.

**AG ENHANCEMENT**

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture has released its new version for 2022-2023. The new sign-up period is October 1-7, 2022. I have the new TAEP A packets here at the office available for pick-up. Please be sure to read the eligibility rules for you as an applicant and for the projects themselves. In this case, the details are important. There are separate packets for ag diversification (TAEP B) and poultry (TAEP C), but I have all three.

The master producer certification for all areas is January 1, 2019 or later. Anything prior to that date is no longer eligible for 50% level of funding. However, there will be ample time to get certified between now and the time of reimbursement requests next year. The various quality assurance certifications for beef, pork and dairy are spelled out in the packet. I can help with some of these, but they have to be in place and current before October 1.

**BEEF MEETING**

The Middle Beef Producers Association will meet at the Bedford County Ag Center on September 8 at 6:30 pm. This meeting was moved due to the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration schedule. The speaker for this meeting is Courtney Carter Bridges with Trans Ova Genetics, a specialist in reproduction.

Please call the office at 684-5971 to let us know that you are coming for the sponsored meal. This will be a great opportunity to hear about new technologies in cattle reproduction.

## **I'LL BE THERE**

I've written before about the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration. I'll say this again.

I'll be in the stands at the Celebration. I've missed very few nights since 1970. The first time I came to this town was in a horse van and how I spent ten nights at old Barn 19. Never did I dream that I would get to live here. It's always a wonderful time to appreciate these great animals.

There have been legitimate concerns about these magnificent animals and their treatment, but no one that I've talked to, and I mean no one, condones abuse and the people who have done it. There is a new generation of horses and horse owners and trainers. To me it's so much better now.

To be sure, there have been tremendous strides in this effort to correct the problem of abuse and performance enhancement. The numbers speak for themselves. Compliance numbers are huge compared to non-compliance. Since all of the final judgments are subjective opinions in nature, most folks wonder if there will ever be an absolute zero of non-compliance. However, there are so many horses that comply with the inspections by licensed and certified veterinarians charged with enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) and by lay persons who have been trained by these government officials to help in the inspection process and certified to perform as an extension of the veterinarians. The inspection protocol is one of the most stringent in the livestock industry.

How do these compliance figures compare to other fields? It is common knowledge athletes of different sports have been accused of illegal activities. We have heard about these challenges at all levels of competition, from the Olympics on down and in many sports. Professional, college, high school and even lower age level sports are not immune to controversy in some of these areas. The compliance rates of these activities are comparable to the HPA numbers in that non-compliance is the exception rather than the rule.

Good people still support these activities in spite of even a small non-compliance rate. We don't shut down the Olympics or high schools or colleges or professional teams who have had a bad apple that contaminated part of the barrel. We watch them and support them anyway, leaving the compliance enforcement up to the experts. We do expect that the experts do their job in using research-based scientific methods and fair regulations to protect the horse and at the same time their owners from subjective and inaccurate decisions in the process.

The good in this horse industry is huge. The county and community benefits, the scholarships to higher education and other community club projects that are funded from horse show fund-raisers, the pride of the community and our state and country are all by-products of these activities. In this case, the livelihood of so many good decent people and their neighbors who care about the animals is at stake. It's not just the good of the horse, which is primary, but also the good of the people associated with the animal in any way.

That is why I plan to be there. I love the animal and its history. I appreciate its humble beginnings on middle Tennessee farms more than a century ago more than most folks. I recognize the effort of early breeders to blend the genetics to create this animal more than most. I appreciate the good trainers who work these animals honestly without shortcuts and gimmicks and who give them good care.

I'm going to be there in my seat. I'm going to eat and drink with the various groups that need my support. I'm going to support the industry that helps support my community. And if I see something that needs to be corrected, I'll do my best to get it done.

The excitement is building, and I can't wait. I'll be there!