

February 2013

Become A FFAN of National Farmers Union

National Farmers Union is excited to announce the creation of the Family Farmer Advocacy Network. We couldn't do our work in Washington, D.C., without the help of leaders like you across the country. Your grassroots contact with your members of Congress is critical to spreading Farmers Union's message quickly throughout the country.

To join our network and become a FFAN, please fill out the form at www.surveymonkey.com/s/96XG2RM to update your contact information. NFU staff will contact you occasionally with requests to contact lawmakers about specific legislative proposals to educate them about how the legislation will affect family farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for your help! We'll be in touch soon with further details.

For more information, contact
Brittany Jablonsky at
bjablonsky@nfudc.org.

PRESIDENT SHUMAKER SPEAKS AT ILLINOIS FARMERS UNION CONVENTION

President Shumaker was invited to speak at the Illinois Farmers Union (IFU) convention in early February. The participation was high and well attended by local farmers. Included in the issues for discussion were cuts to the FSA offices, farm bill & policy discussions, Hastings Insurance, and the failed GIPSA rule.

"There are no better farmers anywhere in the world than here in Illinois," remarked Illinois Farmers Union President Norbert Brauer.

"Shumaker's presentation was informative and exciting," commented Larry Leib longtime member. Shumaker talked about the opportunities NCBA, Farmer to Farmer and National Farmers Union have provided him with his two recent trips to Africa.

"You really don't know what it is like unless you go there," commented Bob.

National Farmers Union Vice President Claudia Svarstad and NFU Consultant Harley Danielson were also in attendance. Svarstad provided updates from NFU and the national office, while Danielson assisted the Illinois Board of Directors in strategic planning ahead of the convention.

The meeting of IFU was a complete success and those in attendance felt it was a step in the right direction for their premier organization.

ALASKA FARMERS UNION

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



So much happens in so little time. I am way behind on a column and way behind on communications. If you haven't renewed your membership then please do so, if you do not have one, join. Now is the time to link up and support each other. The farm bill is on extension, most of the lower 48 producers have been with little support, whether it be in the form of a program or money. I always like to listen to those who speak with the silver spoon in their mouth regarding the farm bill or the help our government provides. Look for grant money but you have to apply. Karen McCarthy (Murkowski), Johanna (DOA), Tony Nakazawa (CES), Bob Gerlach (St Vet), Leslie Ridle (Begich) and others have been providing notice on many opportunities; grant and otherwise. You just have to be plugged in. Get to know your friends, heck, get to know your enemies. We never know when we need help and where it will come from. Martin Luther King wrote while in jail referring to time, "actually time is neutral ... It can be used either destructively or constructively." Farmers have a lot of time and yet they don't have any time. How many times have you said, "If I could only find the time!" Stop for a moment and look at what you want, where you want to be, and then plan how to get there. Take time to take advantage of the myriad of opportunities waiting for you. Yes those opportunities have time or so I think! ONE you do not want to miss is the Co-op workshop in Anchorage on March 14. The main attraction is the keynote speaker Ken Meter. Now, I have had the pleasure of listening to Ken twice and the message is new and applicable to the location so this should be good. Call Andrew or Tony 786-5447 or 460-0825. You don't need to call me because if you don't go, you missed out! He is very good and extremely informative.

I have been to Africa twice since I last wrote, once in August/September and again most of the month of January. I would love to come tell my story to a group or class. Call and we will see if it can be done. National Farmers Union has been offering the opportunity for a couple of years,

working with the National Cooperative Business Association and the Farmer to Farmer program. The target countries are Zambia and Senegal. One of our new members had put in for Senegal and will be going towards the end of March. Each trip has an assignment, for instance on my first trip it was to work with vegetable farmers, and the second was on developing a cooperative. I can only say that my affiliation with the Cooperative Extension Service has been a big plus and a great help was all my friends as resources. The hard part was the 16-hour plane ride but then again it is much better than swimming across.

I had been invited to attend the Illinois and Indiana Farmers Union conventions this year as a speaker. Other than Alaska and Africa, I don't have much else to say. Hmm. Well, it is time to get ready for the summer. Some seeds need to be planted now so don't delay. Have a great spring, there is one coming.

-Bob

