



Carey's Comments

News and Views from Northwest and Central Louisiana

October 17, 2012

My Thoughts: The Blue Jacket Bonanza

It was almost 30 years ago when I put on my first blue corduroy FFA jacket. I didn't know it at the time, but that jacket was going to set my life on a course that I am still following today. Back then the FFA was called the "Future Farmers of America." Today, the official name of the organization is "The National FFA Organization." Regardless of what you call it, the effect it had on my life is immeasurable. The best memories of my adolescent years are tucked inside that jacket.

Three years after first wrapping that blue jacket around me, I was lucky enough to be elected State Area 2 Vice President of the Louisiana FFA. The following year I was elected State Secretary. I traveled all over our wonderful state promoting the future of agriculture and the FFA. I even met some of my current coworkers at Farm Bureau back when I was wearing that blue corduroy jacket.



It just won't fit!

Raquel Landry and I met way back then at an FFA convention. Little did we know that we would both become Farm Bureau "field men". (Raquel actually became our first female "field man".) I first met Farm Bureau Safety Director Wendell Miley when he came up to North DeSoto High School to help me put on a farm safety program when I was Chapter President there. And I even got to know the Assistant to the President Jim Monroe back in those days when he was gracious enough to be the guest speaker at one of our leadership camps in Bunkie.

I first set foot in the Farm Bureau State Office when Jim let the 1986-87 State FFA Officer team tour the building. For some reason, I only remember the board room on that tour. I had no idea that I would one day be spending countless hours being entertained by riveting discussions and committee reports in that very room. (There's a lot of sarcasm in that comment for those of you who have never sat through a state board meeting!)

There is no way that blue corduroy jacket will zip around my expanded waistline today (see picture above), but I want every teenager to have the opportunity to let that jacket take them places they never imagined. Maybe you can help. There's a program called the "Blue Jacket Bonanza" that was designed by the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau in conjunction with the National FFA Organization.

It's a way for parish Farm Bureaus to help needy students earn their own FFA jacket. I've included a letter below that will give you an overview. If you need more specifics, just let me know. I have the entire packet they have sent out. I think it's a great way to make a difference in the future of young people and agriculture.



Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau

Affiliated with the California Farm Bureau Federation and the American Farm Bureau Federation

DATE: August 16, 2012

TO: County Farm Bureau Presidents & Executive Directors

FROM: Teri Bontrager, SBCFB Executive Director

SUBJECT: Blue Jacket Bonanza... *Changing Students Lives One Corduroy Jacket at a Time*

Last January, the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau's Blue Jacket Bonanza program (BJB) was chosen as one of the American Farm Bureau's *County Award of Excellence* program winners and had the opportunity to showcase the BJB program at the AFBF's Annual Meeting in Hawaii. Since then the program has been recognized by the National FFA and we working together to bring the program to CFB's nationwide.

This innovative program helps promote agricultural career exploration, empowers young people to be accountable, encourages and stimulates interest in the agricultural industry, and makes a positive difference in the lives of deserving students who may not be able to afford an FFA Jacket. It will help to bridge the County Farm Bureau (CFB) to schools in their communities, reaches out and connects with agricultural education teachers, invites local media to participate in the awareness and outreach, and promotes a stronger relationship between your County Farm Bureau and the local community. It would be an exciting program for your YF&R's to adopt in their program of work as well as your AITC/Ag Education programs.

The BJB program has wonderful media/PR possibilities, but most importantly, through the program you will be providing **deserving students** the opportunity to **EARN** a jacket of their own. By supporting these students you are supporting the future of agriculture. These students are our future Collegiate Farm Bureau members, YF&R members, CFB Board Members, Community Leaders and the leaders of our State and Nation.

The National FFA is offering to CFB's thought-out the nation who participated in the Blue Jacket Bonanza program a **package rate of \$55 which includes: a jacket with the students name embroidered on it, tie or scarf and free shipping on two orders per year, plus a 2x3 patch (see attached) to be sewn on the inside pocket of each jacket.** We believe the patch will prove to be an incredible media/PR tool for your CFB. ***Just think, every time a student from your BJB program puts their jacket on they will have the patch to remind them how important their CFB feels they are!***

To become eligible to use the program and share in the benefits offered by the National FFA, CFB's are required to sign a Licensing Agreement with SBCFB at a cost of \$45 until September 30, 2012 and after that the cost will be \$55 per CFB.

I have attached a copy of the BJB Patch art and PowerPoint presentation for your review. If you would like more information about the program please contact me at tbsbfb@hwy246.net or call at 805/688-7479.

**The Blue Jacket Bonanza program is a program of the Santa Barbara Farm Bureau's agricultural education foundation, "Growing Agricultural Awareness Through Education Foundation" GAATE supported by the National FFA.*

In the News:



Agricultural tax exemptions are under the microscope right now. It's important that we inform our local legislators on the importance of those exemptions to Louisiana agriculture. [Ag Tax Exemptions Up For Debate](#)



The Louisiana dairy industry enjoys one of those tax exemptions, and we need to make the case for keeping it. Neil Melancon takes a look at the dairy tax credit on his bottom line report. [Dairy Tax Credit](#)



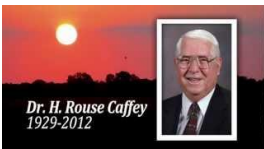
We are officially without a farm bill. Now what? Avery Davidson spoke with an LSU Ag Center specialist who says this has all happened before, but it is still placing a lot of uncertainty on everyone in agriculture. [Farm Bill Update](#)



Grass-fed beef production is on the rise and the LSU AgCenter is doing its part to increase the availability of grass varieties to producers, as well as systems to help keep those producers profitable. [Feeding the Demand](#)



Is organic food really better for you or worth the extra cost? I've always believed organic food is a real rip-off, and a Stanford University study agrees with me! [Organic Foods Controversy](#)



Long-time Chancellor of the LSU AgCenter, Rouse Caffey passed away recently at his home in Alexandria. He was 83 years old. [Rouse Caffey Passes](#)

It's Cotton Pickin' Time in Louisiana



New technology continues to improve the way cotton is harvested. Kristen Oaks takes a look back at the first big technological leap in the cotton industry, the cotton gin. [Ag Minute--Cotton Gin](#)



There's a new type of cotton picker in the fields right now. It eliminates the module builder by making a cotton "roll" that looks like a huge round hay bale. [A Better Way to Bale](#)

Farm Bureau's Cotton Advisory Committee will meet today, October 17th, 11 am, at the Cotton Restaurant in Monroe. Congressman Rodney Alexander has been invited to give a farm bill update and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources has been invited to discuss ground water regulations that are currently under review.

Farm Bureau Calendar:

Ag in the Classroom Workshops: I have two AITC Teacher Workshops scheduled for the parishes in my area. Encourage the teachers at your local school to attend one. All workshops start at 4pm and are wrapped up by 6:30pm. Visit www.aitcla.org for registration information.



Many: October 22nd, Sabine Farm Bureau, 575 Hwy 171 Bypass, Many 71449

Ruston: November 1st, Louisiana Tech, Lomax Hall

AITC State Committee Nominations are due *November 1st*. If you have someone in your parish who would like to serve on this committee, please let me know. The basic mission of the Ag in the Classroom program is to educate and increase the understanding of agriculture and instill an appreciation for our renewable food, fiber and fuel systems. The committee currently focuses its efforts on teacher training and curriculum development. For more info on the AITC program, see their website: AITC Louisiana

The National Poultry Waste Management Symposium will be held in Shreveport on *October 23rd-25th*. You can see an online brochure here: National Poultry Waste Management Symposium. The final day of the symposium will include a field trip to the LSU AgCenter's Hill Farm Research Station in Homer.



The American Farm Bureau Convention will be held at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee on *January 13th – 15th*. All parish presidents have been sent an information letter for any parish board member interested in attending. You will need to contact the State Office by *November 15th* to register and reserve a room.

Farm-City Week Veterans Home Donations: Each fall the Women's Leadership Committee makes donations to each Veterans Home in Louisiana. In my area, they will make donations to the home in Pineville on *November 26th* and to the home in Bossier City on *December 4th*. These programs are funded through donations from parish Farm Bureaus, so if you would like to donate, contact Julie Baker Richard at julieb@lfbf.org.

Snapshots



I spotted this truckload of cotton "rolls" headed through Rayville Sunday afternoon.



These cotton rolls were stacked in a field north of Alexandria last week.

Member Benefit Spotlight: Choice Hotels

One of the best ways to take advantage of your Farm Bureau membership is through our Choice Hotels discount program. I've used it a lot over the years. It's a pretty simple program. Use our discount number when you reserve your room and get 20% off. I've even tested it by calling and getting a quote on a room, then hanging up and calling back to get the Farm Bureau rate. It was 20% off the first quote on the same room. I usually book my rooms online, so I tested it there also and got the same result. I have come across a couple of Choice Hotels that wouldn't give the discount. One was a Sleep Inn on the beach in Florida, who said they don't honor any of the discount programs, and the other was at the front gate of Six Flags in Arlington, although they did honor it on a later trip.

One thing to keep in mind about this program is that you need to make the reservation through their 800 number or the website. If you call the hotel directly, they may not know what you are talking about. It's the same way if you just show up at the hotel and ask for it. They probably won't know anything about it. But if you go through their reservation center, either on the phone or online, they will honor it with no problem once you give them our number.

Unfortunately, that number is causing a bit of a headache right now. For some reason unknown to me, Choice decided to change our number. (One conspiracy theory among field men is that the program was getting a little too successful, but that's probably just all in our heads.) So now, everyone who has been using the old number will find that it doesn't work, and you have to get your hands on the new number. The card below will tell you all about it. We have these handy business cards with the new number on them, so just let me know if you need one.



The graphic is a business card for Choice Hotels. It features a dark, atmospheric background with a road leading towards a horizon under a cloudy sky. The text is white and yellow. At the top, it says "Choice Hotels Savings Card". Below that, in a white box, is "Louisiana Farm Bureau - ID# 00209610". Underneath is "choicehotels.com • 800.258.2847". A yellow banner at the bottom contains the website "ChoiceHotels.com" and a row of logos for various hotel brands: Comfort Inn, Courtyard Suites, Quality, Sleep Inn, Clarion, Camera Ready, MainStay Suites, Suburban, EconoLodge, Rodeway Inn, and Ascend Hotel Collection. At the very bottom, there is a disclaimer and a date.

Choice Hotels Savings Card

Louisiana Farm Bureau - ID# 00209610

choicehotels.com • 800.258.2847

ChoiceHotels.com

Comfort Inn Courtyard Suites Quality Sleep Inn Clarion Camera Ready MainStay Suites Suburban EconoLodge Rodeway Inn Ascend Hotel Collection

Only authorized association members may book using the Choice Hotels' Significant Organization Savings program. The rate ID# may not be distributed externally. Members may be required to show proof of affiliation with the organization at the time of check-in. 12-130/02/12