

# Pressing forward for ag literacy



By Zippy Duvall  
President, American Farm Bureau Federation

If you want something done right, often, you have to do it yourself. That's what the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is doing when it comes to how children's books portray agriculture. Believing that there should be more high-quality, enjoyable and, most of all, accurate books about agriculture available to children,

the Foundation has launched Feeding Minds Press to help meet that need. The Foundation will publish its first title, "Right This Very Minute," in January 2019. The book, by award-winning author Lisl Detlefsen, is about the foods we enjoy in our daily lives and the farmers and ranchers who are working right this very minute to grow it.

The Foundation has worked for years to identify "accurate ag books," chil-

dren's books that are educational, not pointless or, worse, making the wrong point about how agriculture works and how our food is grown. Unfortunately, it is getting more difficult to find books that meet that standard. So the Foundation is turning a challenge into an opportunity!

Feeding Minds Press will publish two to three books per year, depending on the manuscripts it receives. To

add value for authors, readers and educators, the Foundation will create educational resources to accompany the books it publishes, making the books great options for classrooms.

Do you know someone who has a story and would like to get it published? Feeding Minds Press is searching for manuscripts and will accept submissions throughout the month of March. Interested authors can learn more about what we're looking for and how to submit a manuscript here: <http://feedingmindspress.com/submissions.html>.

Children start to form their views about the world very early. By publishing books for children that open their eyes to the vital role of agriculture in their everyday lives, Feeding Minds Press will help shape a positive perception about today's agriculture. I look forward to seeing what comes from this publishing venture in the years ahead, and reading the published books to my own grandchildren!

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# The synergy of farming and the importance of large-animal vets

By Marytina Lawrence

Every late winter/early spring it seems there are medical issues that pop up. When the ground begins to thaw and freeze and thaw and freeze again, it can be tough on the cattle, and we have our eyes open for any and all potential health issues.

The other day (it was a Sunday afternoon), my farmer husband had a commitment in the evening and was going to be gone. With one last daily walk through the cows and calves, he noticed a calf that did not look quite right. Upon further inspection, it was determined that she definitely was going to need further care that would require a call to our veterinarian, which he made.

I was given all the information as he was out the door to an important appointment, then I went with my two older boys to get this calf into the shop. Dr. Dan arrived shortly and immediately stated his apology for feeling rushed as he had two more emergency calls after us that he would need to get to. Our call was an emergency also, as this young calf was showing signs of sickness that we diagnosed to need immediate care.

So with our help, Dr. Dan went to work methodically and compassionately, diagnosing the potential issue and developing a treatment plan that we would continue after his departure. I have always been grateful for our veterinarian. He is smart, efficient, caring and really good at what he does.

While he conducted his work, I helped when needed and visited with him about his day, remembering that it was a Sunday and the time was about 6 p.m. at that point. He has a young family and shares clinic duties with three other veterinarians who all rotate being "on call" on the weekends. He had not slept much in the last 24 hours due to the number of calls he had received, and yet his attitude was constant, positive and kind, as he always is.

I don't often think much about the level of time and commitment we spend on the farm because it is all I have known for 23 years. Every day can be considered a work day depending on the circumstances. But in that moment I realized we are not alone. It is the same for Dr. Dan. And without him we would be lost at times. He is someone we depend on and are eternally grateful to have. His dedication to his profession is intertwined with ours. And the synergy that creates is unmatched.

We knew it would be touch-and-go for this young calf as I shook his hand and watched him leave to visit his next patient. Thankfully, the calf made it and is doing great. But without Dr. Dan, things may have been very different on Monday morning.

So today I want to say thank you to all the large animal veterinarians who work day-in and day-out to help us care for the our livestock. It would be impossible for us to do our job without you.

# FAQ about Ag Day . . .

## What Is Ag Day?

It's a day to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture. Every year, producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless others across America join together to recognize the contributions of agriculture.

## When Is Ag Day?

Ag Day is celebrated on March 20, 2018. National Ag Day falls during National Ag Week, March 18-24, 2018.

## Who Hosts Ag Day?

The Agriculture Council of America hosts the campaign on a national level. However, the awareness efforts in communities across America are as influential - if not more - than the broad-scale effort. Again this year, the Ag Day Planning Guide has been created to help communities and organizations more effectively host Ag Day events.

## What Is Ag Day All About?

Ag Day is about recognizing - and celebrating - the contribution of agriculture in our everyday lives. The National Ag Day program encourages every American to:

- Understand how food and fiber products are produced.
- Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy.
- Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.

## Why Celebrate Agriculture?

Agriculture provides almost everything we eat, use and wear on a daily basis. But too few people truly understand this contribution. This is particularly the case in our schools, where students may only be exposed to agriculture if they enroll in related vocational training.

By building awareness, the Agriculture Council of America is encouraging young people to consider career opportunities in agriculture.

Each American farmer feeds more than 165 people ... a dramatic increase from 25 people in the 1960s. Quite simply, American agriculture is doing more - and doing it better. As the world population soars, there is an even greater demand for the food and fiber produced in the United States.

## What Can I Do to Help?

Put simply, get involved! Your participation in Ag Day is critical in helping us spread this positive message about agriculture. If you are interested in planning an event, download your Planning Guide today. Of course, there are other ways you can lend your support, including sending a letter to your local newspaper, calling your Congressional representatives or simply sharing information about agriculture with youngsters in your community.

## Where Can I Find More Information?

Contact the Agriculture Council of America at (913) 491-1895.



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