

Freeburg Elected Hay Association Officer



Freeburg

Centro, California.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Amy Freeburg, Freeburg Hay Company, Gayville, was recently elected Second Vice President of the National Hay Association (NHA).

Elections were held at the association's 120th Annual Convention held in Lancaster, Pa. Sept. 24-26

"We are delighted to have Amy continue her service to the hay industry as an NHA officer," said Bob Eckenberg, NHA President. Mattawa. Wash.

Elected to serve with Freeburg as officers were Eckenberg and Terry Button, Rushville, NY, First Vice President. Elected to the position of director were Carl Blackmer, Livonia, New York; Randy Britten, Bryan, Texas; Pete Eckblad, Virginia Beach, Virginia; David Fink, Germansville, Pa.; Clayton Geralds, Munfordville, Ky.; Christine Grooms, McCook, Nebraska; Tim Hall, Idalia, Colorado; Greg Jackson, Brawley, CA, Bob McDowell, Rudyard, MI, John Randall, Bloomfield, NY, David Rhea, Arlington, Nebraska; John Russell, Pemberville, Ohio; John Strieter, Bay Port, Michigan; Rod Van Orman, Ellensburg, Washington; and Dan Wray, El

SD Local Foods Conference in Deadwood

BROOKINGS — The 2015 South Dakota Local Foods Conference is scheduled for Nov. 6-7 at Cadillac Jack's Resort (360 Main St. in Deadwood).

"This conference provides educational programming and networking opportunities for producers and resource providers of specialty crops and other niche local food products," said Chris Zdorovtsov, SDSU Extension Community Development Field Specialist.

Other components of the event include local food meals, a local food panel of successful stories, and vendor booths.

Friday, Nov. 6, will consist of three tracks focused on marketing, production and two in-depth sessions on business tools and analysis and specialty crops and traditional foods on the reservations.

The marketing track will offer a number of sessions including how to provide food tasting experiences at farmers markets, introduction to community supported agriculture (CSA's) marketing, school sales using the fresh fruits and vegetables program, a marketplace panel and product

The production track will include topics on growing healthy berries, season extension, permaculture, honey bees and organic production.

Saturday, Nov. 7, Marty Travis will be the keynote speaker. Travis is a producer and food hub manager from Illinois, who will share his history and experiences of forming a local food system while also trying to chart where the future will take them.

"By sharing our challenges and successes I am hoping to inspire the folks in your area to visualize a vibrant and exciting food community," said Travis.

Travis and SDSU Extension will also provide daylong breakout track on food hubs.

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The second in-depth session on Saturday will focus on

developing farm food safety plans.

The final daylong track will focus on helping producers develop estate plans and strategies for transitioning their farm operation.

Registration is due by Oct. 30.

Registration information can be obtained by visiting http://www.iGrow/events or contact Chris Zdorovtsov at christina.zdorovtsov@sdstate.edu or at 605-782-3290 for more information.

The Local Foods Conference is sponsored by a collaboration of partners including; SDSU Extension, South Dakota Specialty Producers Association, South Dakota USDA Rural Development, Dakota Rural Action, the South Dakota Small Business Administration, the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and North Central SARE.

Follow the South Dakota Local Foods Conference online https://www.facebook.com/SouthDakotaLocalFoods.

Renewable Energy Applications Sought

LINCOLN, Neb. — The next deadline for Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP) grants is Oct. 31, 2015.

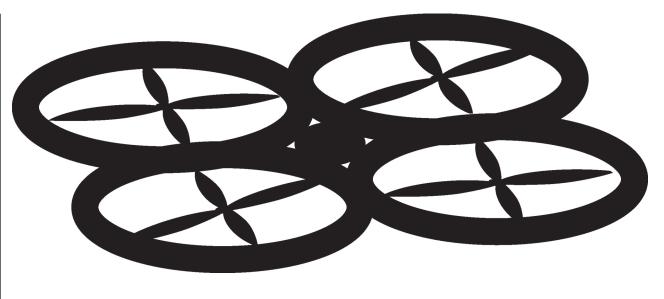
This deadline for grant applications has designated funding for small projects requesting \$20,000 or less (25 percent of total eligible project costs). Grant requests for this round have a simplified, streamlined process and can be as low as \$2,500 for renewable energy projects and \$1,500 for energy efficiency projects. All agricultural producers, including farmers and ranchers, who derive 50 percent or more of their gross income from agricultural operations are eligible. Businesses in a rural area, meeting the Small Business Administration size standards, may also apply. A private entity, a rural utility, and rural electric cooperatives are typically eligible, however non-profit and public bodies are not eligible.

USDA Rural Development provides financial assistance in the form of grants and guaranteed loans to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements through the REAP. This program provides funds for the purchase and installation of renewable energy systems and to make energy-efficiency improvements. The renewable energy projects range from installation of solar, geothermal, wind, and biomass; and energy efficiency improvements to irrigation systems, poultry houses, upgrading air conditioning, lighting and refrigeration systems.

Applications are due by 4:30 p.m. CST on Oct. 31. Contact Jeff Carpenter, State Energy Coordinator, at the Nebraska USDA Rural Development State Office, Suite 308, Federal Building 100 Centennial Mall North Lincoln, Nebraska 68508, call 402-437-5554 or email jeff.carpenter@ne.usda.gov.

The next funding deadline will be April 30, 2016, for projects of any size with maximum grants limited to \$500,000 for renewable energy projects and \$250,000 for energy efficiency projects (25 percent of total eligible project costs). Any eligible applications not funded during the Oct. 31 funding cycle will be reconsidered.

To find the office which services your county visit: http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency/ne/. Click on View All State Program Contacts. You may also visit this web site for more information on the program and to apply for funding, details.



Flight Plans

Growing Drone Use In Agriculture Is Slowed by FAA Rules

BY RITA BRHELP&D Correspondent

ab correspondent

Farming is taking to the skies with unmanned aircraft systems, but proposed FAA rules may be slowing this emerging technology.

"Technology is advancing at an unprecedented pace, and this milestone allows federal regulations and the use of our national airspace to evolve to safely accommodate innovation," said Anthony Foxx, U.S. Transportation Secretary in Washington, D.C., in a recent press

"Registering unmanned aircraft will help build a culture of accountability and responsibility, especially with new users who have no experience operating in the U.S. aviation system," he added. "It will help protect public safety in the air and on the ground.

While its use among farmers is only in its infancy, an unmanned aircraft system (UAS) – basically a flying drone armed with a digital camera for capturing images – are gradually becoming more popular among producers who are seeking a perspective of their crops otherwise known only to crop duster pilots – from above.

"A UAS is nothing more than a platform for sensors that you already use," said James Robbins, horticulture professor with the University of Arkansas in Little Rock, Ark., who spoke during a September webinar hosted by the UAS in Agriculture Learning Network. "A UAS just gives a different view."

He has been experimenting with drones in his research to test possible applications in agricultural production, such as evaluating plant spacing in a field or

where to apply targeted pesticide.

"Unlike satellite images that acquire several acres in one frame, and airplane images, the UAS image has a much smaller footprint," said Dharmendra Saraswat, an University of Arkansas precision agricultural engineer who works with Robbins. This means that individual UAS images must be stitched together to form a single field, but it also means that details in the images can be much more precise.

Saraswat and Robbins have experimented with using algorhythm technol-

ogy on the drone's camera to be able to

automatically calculate plant spacing.
Pioneers in the field, Robbins and Saraswat have also identified various challenges for drone operators to be aware of, including solar flares, wind speed, lack of battery longevity and from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations—the last aspect of which he described as "burdensome."

The FAA announced on Nov. 20 the creation of a task force to develop a registration process for drones. The 25- to 30-member group is to determine which UASs should be exempt from registration, such as toys, as well as general safety recommendations.

According to the FAA, pilot sightings of drones doubled from 2014 to 2015. Reports included sightings at during flights as well as at major sporting events and during wildfire operations.

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"These reports signal a troubling trend," said Michael Huerta, FAA Administrator in Washington, D.C. "Registration will help make sure that operators know the rules and remain accountable to the public for flying their unmanned aircraft responsibly. When they don't fly safely, they'll know there will be consequences."

FAA safety rules proposed in February suggests that flights of non-recreational drones weighing less than 55 pounds be limited to daylight and visual line-of-sight. The FAA would also require aircraft registration and markings as well as operator certification. A UAS operator would need to be at least 17 years old and pass an aeronautical knowledge test to obtain certification, which would need to be renewed every 2 years by a passing grade

on a FAA knowledge test.

Other proposed rules include: that a UAS operator would always yield to avoid collision with manned aircraft, would not be allowed to fly a drone over people not directly involved with the flight, would restrict flights to less than 500-feet altitude and no faster than 100 miles per hour, would need to perform a pre-flight inspection that includes checking communications between the control station and the UAS, and would be required to stay out of restricted airspace and obey all FAA

temporary flight restrictions. "We have tried to be flexible in writing

these rules," Huerta said. "We want to maintain today's outstanding level of aviation safety without placing an undue regulatory burden on an emerging industry."

Currently, drone operators are prohibited against operating in a careless or reckless manner and from allowing any object to be dropped from the UAS.

These FAA proposed rules may seem strict, but there is good reason, according to Jessica Freeman, executive director of the Colorado Agricultural Aviation Association in Platteville, Colo., who spoke during the UAS in Agricultural Learning Network webinar.

"Low altitude airspace is shared airspace," she said. Defined as anywhere from 0 to 400 feet above ground level, this is where a UAS would fly and also emergency medical flights, crop dusters, wildfire control flights and other aircraft operations. Other hazards at this altitude include towers and birds.

"A pilot will likely hit an obstacle that he cannot see," Freeman said. "Small unmanned aircraft are essentially invisible to manned aircraft operating in the same airspace"

Some UAS operators argue that their drones are too small to present a hazard to manned aircraft, but Freeman explained, "Even a small bird under 4 pounds can cause major damage to a small plane."

The likelihood of a crop duster and a drone meeting in midair is high, she said. Eighty percent of all UASs are involved in precision agriculture. Meanwhile, there are 3,000 crop dusters across the United States working on 71 million acres.

Susan Buffler, project manager of the

UAS in Agricultural Learning Network, and who also spoke during the webinar, gave these safety tips when flying a UAS:

• Stay under 400 feet

Stay at least 5 miles from any airport
Watch out for people, vehicles and any other obstacles

• Place strobe lights, bright paint and other markings to make the UAS more visible to pilots.

The site, www.airmap.io, shows where restricted airspaces are located. For additional tips, check out www.thinkbeforeyoulaunch.org.

Farmers Make Positive Impact On SD

ST. LOUIS — America's Farmers Grow Communities will partner again with farmers to award more than \$3.3 million to community nonprofits across the country. In South Dakota, 49 organizations will receive donations in 2016. Sponsored by the Monsanto Fund, the program's purpose is to make a positive impact in rural communities by giving farmers a chance to direct \$2,500 donations to eligible nonprofit organizations of their choice.

Farmer enrollment for Grow Communities runs through Nov. 30, 2015.

Since the program's inception, farmers have directed donations to help fire departments purchase equipment and complete training, send FFA and 4-H groups to contests and conventions, provide food pantries with meals to serve those in need and boost agriculture curriculum in rural school districts. Other beneficiaries of the program have included health care organiza-

tions, youth and community centers, state parks and economic development programs,

among many others.

"Thanks to the participation of farmers from across the country, more than 7,000 nonprofit organizations have received donations through Grow Communities in the past five years," said Deborah Patterson, Monsanto Fund president. "We are excited to team up with farmers once again to help support the causes that mean the most to them and strengthen rural America."

South Dakota farmers can enroll in the program and find a complete list of program rules and eligibility information at www.GrowCommunities.com or by calling 877-267-3332 toll-free. Program winners will be announced in January. Follow Grow Communities' new Facebook page to learn more about the program and connect with past winners at facebook.com/AmericasFarmersGrowCommunities.

America's Farmers Grow Communities is part of the America's Farmers initiative. Since 2010, the America's Farmers campaign and programs have advocated on behalf of farmers and their efforts to meet society's needs through agriculture. Today, consumers are more interested than ever in agriculture and how food is grown. Farmers and others in the industry are joining in on the conversation to help raise awareness about agriculture and share their stories with their communities.

Learn more at cfiengage. org.

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