

Soybean organizations' executive director announces retirement

Rae Wagoner
Communication Director

Debbie Ellis, the long-time Executive Director of the Kentucky Soybean Board and Kentucky Soybean Association, has announced that she will retire in November after a robust career of 40 years serving Kentucky's soybean farmers.

"It's time," she said. "Our organizations have accomplished a lot over the past 40 years, and I am proud of the programs and policies that have been established. I believe the boards have done a good job promoting soybeans and their uses. While serving in this role, I have met

some really great people and made so many good friends over the years. I'm ready to move on to the next chapter, and I know that our volunteer farmer-leaders are taking the task of finding our next Exec very seriously."

The Executive Director provides support for both the Kentucky Soybean Board, which invests Kentucky's portion of the soy checkoff, and the Kentucky Soybean Association, which is our state's membership and policy organization for soybean growers. This position is responsible for leading the team, overseeing the administrative functions of both organizations, and implementing

programs and initiatives set forth by the farmer-leaders who serve on the boards. This position reports to the Executive Committees of both the Board and the Association, who work together to ensure that both organizations are adequately served.

"We cannot thank Debbie enough for the good work she has done for Kentucky's soybean farmers and the greater ag community," Board Chairman Fred Sipes said. "She has given so much of herself over the years, and her retirement leaves a big void that will be tough to fill. It's hard to imagine Kentucky Soybean without Debbie

Ellis in it, and we are so thankful for the foundation she has created for us to continue building on. The impacts of her tenure will be felt – and appreciated – long after her retirement."

A job description and instructions for interested parties to apply may be found on the home page of the organizations' website, KySoy.org, under Careers. Applications will be accepted through July 3, and in-person interviews will be conducted by a panel of volunteer farmer-leaders at the Princeton office in August. Ellis has graciously agreed to help train her successor until retirement in November.



Submitted by the Kentucky Soybean Board and Association
Debbie Ellis.

Fernleaf Homemakers May meeting

Submitted by Janice Barnett-Gifford

Fernleaf Homemakers held their regular meeting May 5, 2026 at Hippie Burger. Ann Porter, President, called the meeting to order. Ann also gave our devotional reading titled "All their neighbors assist them" written by Lisa Livevey. Ann then offered our prayer titled, "The Homemak-

ers Prayer". Following the prayer the members pledged alliance to the Flag of the United States of America.

The minutes from the past meeting was previously distributed to the members for review. There being no corrections or additions the minutes were approved as presented.

Roll call was taken with members answering with

something they would like to consider doing next year. The treasurer, Janice Barnett-Gifford, her report. Following her report committee chairman polled the members to finalize their reports as they must be submitted in June to the state organization.

All clubs in Mason County are encouraged to talk to friends, neighbors and relatives encour-

aging them to become Homemakers. The work done by the clubs in our county is so very important and we need members in order to continue our most worthy projects.

The Fernleaf Club, thanks to Ann Porter and Debbie Ruark, has conducted meetings all year with our Auxiliary Club at the Assisted Living Facility. For that endeavor, a grant has

been awarded to show appreciation for their efforts in making the residents at the facility have a good time making crafts and having refreshments. A huge thank you to Ann and Debbie.

It was noted the club paid for one scholarship for a deserving child to attend 4-H camp this summer from June 29th to July 3rd.

Members were encour-

aged to continue to look for projects throughout the summer to continue our mental health awareness. So many are suffering from mental health issues and one of the largest groups is our farmers. Hopefully, next year, we can have a project where we can have various groups set up a booths and let the public know what resources are available to help with their mental health.

Ann Porter reported that the county soup, sandwich and auction was a success with proceeds divided between ovarian cancer and scholarships. Our club has voted to acknowledge college bound or college students' additional funds in memory of Betty Steele. Students will be informed that the increase is only for one year in honor of her. Betty was an active member of the Fernleaf Club for many years and would be honored that the club is recognizing her devotion to Homemakers through our scholarship program. A motion to increase the scholarship amount for one year was made by Rachel McCann and seconded by Elizabeth Pendleton.

Upcoming dates for our club are: May 17th, our spring dinner to be held at the Extension Office from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., June 10th we will have our regular end of the year outing at a restaurant to be determined and June 13th we will assist in the Clover Bud breakfast.

Hostesses for May were Ann Porter and Janice Barnett-Gifford.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

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