

# THE STURGIS NEWS

Delivering For Sturgis and Union County

141ST YEAR STURGIS, UNION COUNTY, KENTUCKY, WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026 NUMBER SEVEN

## KFB President Addresses U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee

Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) President Eddie Melton testified last week before the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee, calling on Congress to take immediate action to address the rising cost of fertilizer and the sustained economic pressure threatening farm families across Kentucky and the nation. The hearing examined fertilizer supply and affordability challenges facing U.S. farmers — pressures that have escalated in the wake of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and resulting disruptions to global fertilizer markets.

Melton, a fifth-generation row crop and beef cattle farmer from Webster County, Ky., spoke on behalf of farm families in Kentucky and across the country. In his testimony, he drew a di-

rect line from the hearing room to the fields of his own operation.

Melton noted that today's crisis did not emerge overnight. While disruptions at the Strait of Hormuz have compounded the problem, elevated costs for inputs like fuel and fertilizer have burdened producers for years.

"Since February, we have seen a 33% rise in anhydrous prices, a 55% rise in urea prices, and a 25% increase in liquid nitrogen," he said. "All the while, corn prices have declined from \$7 per bushel in 2022 to approximately \$4.50 per bushel today."

This year marks the fourth consecutive year of economic decline for the farm sector, driven by a combination of low commodity prices and high fertilizer costs. Melton described the

cumulative toll on farm operations across the country: "Many farmers are operating with little to no working capital, limiting their ability to manage risk or invest in future production," he said.

Melton cited findings from a recent American Farm Bureau Federation survey of more than 5,700 farmers and ranchers nationwide, highlighting what the numbers mean for Kentucky specifically.

In Kentucky, "just 29% of farmers reported being able to pre-book fertilizer with almost 72% stating they could not afford all the fertilizer they needed for this growing season," he said. "We know this is a direct result of rising fertilizer costs."

Melton called for both immediate relief and long-term policy change. "For

producers operating on thin margins, there is no flexibility to wait for longer-term solutions," he said. "Congress should act now with additional economic assistance to help farmers manage today's cost pressures, prevent further financial strain and stabilize operations while longer-term fixes are put in place."

In the near term, he called for greater transparency in fertilizer markets. Looking further ahead, he urged expanded domestic production capacity and a regulatory environment that allows investment and development to move forward in a timely and predictable manner.

"The challenges facing agriculture today are the result of sustained economic pressure that is reshaping the farm economy," Melton

said. "According to USDA, we lost more than 20 million acres of farmland between 2017 and 2022, along with more than 199,000 farms since 2017. If farm closures, farmland loss and consolidation continue, the long-term structure of American agriculture will begin to change. That change poses a risk to our national security by weakening domestic food production capacity and increasing reliance on foreign, less resilient supply chains."

Melton closed by reinforcing what is ultimately at stake for every American: "Ensuring that producers have access to affordable inputs and fair, transparent markets is critical, not only for their operations, but for the long-term stability



MEMBERS OF STURGIS City Council are pictured during last Wednesday's meeting. They are seated in front of mural which were painted by students at Union County High School. Some of those students and their respective murals are pictured in the photos below. The murals have been placed along Adams Street as a part of beautification efforts which are underway by a newly formed non-profit organization. Many other events and activities are planned by the committee as they work to make Sturgis more attractive.

## Sturgis City Council Holds Monthly Meeting

The Sturgis City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, May 13 with Mayor Billy Adams presiding and all council members present. Also in attendance were City Clerk Sandra Germane, City Attorney Vickie Davis, Codes Enforcement Officer Greg Warmack, and Sturgis Fire Chief Josh Bradburn.

Sturgis resident Steve Holt addressed the council concerning the placement of a sign on one of youth baseball fields recognizing Lew Martin. According to Holt, Martin and George Hina spent many years coaching and umpiring youth baseball in Sturgis. A sign in recognition of Hint has previously been placed on another of the fields. Holt told members the sign will be purchased by United Community Bank. The request was approved.

Ms. Davis and Lauren Gabbert, representing the Beautify Sturgis Committee, a recently formed non-profit, presented six murals depicting a historical overview of events in Sturgis. Those murals were painted by students in the art class

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