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Seminars

FRIDAY FEB. 7

ROOM 1

9 a.m. — 1 p.m. Applications Class
Travis Harper

2 p.m. — 3 p.m. Farm Different: Creative
Ways to Improve Input Cost in 2025
River Valley Ag Exchange

3:30 p.m. — 4:30 p.m. Forage, Pastures, Forage
Management Updates
Gene Schmitz, University of Central Missouri
Extension

ROOM 2

9 a.m. — 10 a.m. Moles & Voles
Billie Long, Master Gardener

10:15 a.m. — 11:15 a.m. Planting & Care of
Trees

Billie Long, Master Gardener

11:30 a.m. — 12:30 p.m. Culinary Herbs
Annie Albright, Master Gardener

12:45 p.m. — 1:45 p.m. Perennial Gardening
Marilyn Danko, Master Gardener

2 p.m. — 3 p.m. Postage Stamp Gardening
Marilyn Danko, Master Gardener

SATURDAY, FEB. 8

ROOM 1

9 a.m. — 10 a.m. Overview for Exhibitors
Rules Changes for 2025 Livestock
Dr. David Hertzog Missouri Department of
Agriculture

11 a.m. — 3 p.m. Applicators Class
Travis Harper

ROOM 2

9 a.m. — 10 a.m. Living with Wildlife
Wanda Rasa, Master Gardener

10:15 a.m. — 11:15 p.m. Butterflies in the Gar-
den

Wanda Rasa, Master Gardener

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Medicinal Herbs
Annie Albright, Master Gardener

12:45 p.m.-1:45 p.m. How to Attract Pollinators
Nancy Heidrich, Master Gardener

2 p.m. — 3 p.m. Weeds of the Lawn and Gar-
dener

Billie Long, Master Gardener

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Ag Expo to be held Feb. 7 – 8 at Missouri State Fairgrounds

By Chris Howell

chrish@sedaliademocrat.com

This week exhibitors are readying their displays for the 2025 Central Missouri Ag Expo at the Missouri State Fairgrounds.

Tractors are being loaded on trailers and soon the exhibit hall will be filled with all manner of equipment designed to make agriculture easier and more cost effective.

“This year’s Ag Expo will be Friday, Feb. 7 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 8 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.,” Ag Expo chairman Kevin Daniel told the Democrat. “There are a lot of vendors of wanting to show their products and they spend a lot of time getting them here and on display.”

Visitors this weekend will be able to get up close looks at new farm equipment and speak face to face with vendors including Crown Power & Equipment Co. and River Valley Ag Exchange.

Show in the Lowell Mohler Assembly Hall and Matthewson Exhibition Center is sponsored by Central Bank of Sedalia, Wood & Huston Bank, BTC Bank, FCS Financial, MFA Incorporated, KMZU and Real Radio: KMMO.

“It’s a good opportunity to go out and visit with them and find out what they have to offer,” Daniel said. “There will be several new vendors there along with some of the same vendors we’ve had for supporting us since the beginning.”

Shutterbugs are also invited to take pictures to be entered into the AgExpoPhotoContest, an amateur-only contest sponsored by the Sedalia Photography Club. Suggested subject matter is the beauty of life on the farm, farmers families and farm life, farm animals and equipment.

“There’s always a variety out there, of all kinds of different products and services,” Daniel said. “This is just the part of our fundraiser each year that we give back to scholarships. 100% of our funds are reserved for scholarships and promoting youth in agriculture.”

Children are invited and there will be seminars and displays geared towards kids in agricul-

ture.

“There’s a lot of activity that’s not just geared for agriculture,” Daniel said. “There’s something there for everybody, there’s a lot going on. A lot of the area businesses and people are always here to support us, and they have been supporting us for a number of years.”

The Central Missouri Agriculture Club was formed to support, promote and recruit agriculture and youth in Central Missouri.

For more information on the 2025 Central Missouri Ag Expo or for photo contest rules visit the Central Mo Ag Club Facebook page.

Chris Howell can be reached at 660-530-0146.

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State Fair Community College students Matthew Richardson, a conservation major, and Isabella Letourneau, a horticulture major, sell plants grown at the college during the Ag Expo on Feb. 2, 2024.
FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWEL | DEMOCRAT



Justin Hollrah and Brianna Bachman from Case IH are dwarfed by this self-propelled sprayer on sale for a cool \$400,000 on Friday, Feb. 2, 2024 at the Central Missouri Agriculture Club's annual Ag Expo in the Mathewson Exhibition Center.

FILE PHOTO BY CHRIS HOWEL | DEMOCRAT



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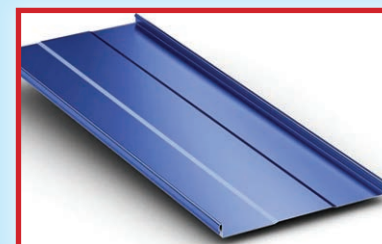


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Ag Club donates to area agriculture efforts



The Central Missouri Agriculture Club donated \$500 to Pettis County Achievement Days. From left, Kay Sparks, Cindy Gerke, Julie Carpenter, Ivy Elwell and Janice Klenke.
PHOTOS BY NICOLE COOKE | DEMOCRAT



The Central Missouri Agriculture Club donated \$1,000 to the Pettis County Dog Show. From left, Kay Sparks, Todd Great, Julie Carpenter, Amy Gibbs and Janice Klenke, along with dogs Courtlin and Haven.



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The Central Missouri Agriculture Club donated \$2,000 to the Pettis County Horse Show. From left, Mary Holsten, Julie Carpenter, Ivy Elwell, Jessie Elwell, Brad Elwell and Janice Klenke.



The Central Missouri Agriculture Club donated \$4,000 to the Pettis County Junior Livestock Show. From left, Kay Sparks, Jessie Elwell, David Dick, Cindy Gerke, Julie Carpenter, Brad Elwell, Ivy Elwell and Janice Klenke.



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The Central Missouri Agriculture Club gave \$26,700 in scholarships in 2024. From left, Kay Sparks, Kelcy Mullett, Madison Hoehns, Karli Smith, Brenden Morse, Mattilyn Mer- gen, Shelby Dotson, Autumn Ihajek, Todd Gerld and Janice Klenke. Not pictured are Coby Roads and Tanner Dohrman. PHOTOS BY NICOLE COOKE | DEMOCRAT

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The Central Missouri Agriculture Club donated \$500 to Pettis County Robotics. From left, Kay Sparks, Cindy Gerke, Julie Carpenter and Janice Klenke.

Karli Smith growing the flame of Ag involvement



Karli Smith, the daughter of Arron and Casey Smith of Houstonia, received several agricultural scholarships in 2024 that will assist her in obtaining an ag-business degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KARLI SMITH

By Faith Bemiss-McKinney
faithb@sedaliademocrat.com

Karli Smith, of Houstonia, was honored in May 2024 with agriculture scholarships that will help her achieve a degree in agri-business management at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Smith, a freshman at MU, is the daughter of Arron and Casey Smith. She received \$10,000 from the Central Missouri Ag Club, the Billie Ficken Memorial scholarship through the Ag Club, and the Dennis Klenke Memorial through the Ag Club and American Farmers Association (AFA).

Smith graduated from Northwest High School in 2024. She was also selected to go to an AFA seminar in November 2024.

Smith said she became interested in agriculture because she grew up on a cattle farm.

“Growing up, we had a small little cattle farm out in the country,” Smith said. “So, we were always involved with that. So, I think being involved with that so young is what sparked my love for it growing up. I was always very involved with FFA. That just grew the flame a little more. That’s when I decided that I wanted to keep agriculture in



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Shelby Dotson and Karli Smith help pack meals for food insecure students in the county on Feb. 20, 2024. FFA students from Hughesville, La Monte, Green Ridge, and Smithton helped pack 15,000 meals during the second annual event. FILE PHOTO BY FAITH BEMISS-MCKINNEY | DEMOCRAT

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my life for the entirety of it. So, that's why I'm going to Mizzou to get an ag-business degree."

While attending high school, Smith was a Pettis County R-V FFA member. She added that she was surprised to learn she received the scholarships at graduation.

"I went into the interview, and it was a little scary if I'm being honest," Smith said. "But I was surprised, but I was also very grateful because going to a big university is kind of intimidating. All the bills and stuff were piling up when I was looking at it all, and I was like, oh my goodness. But receiving that scholarship made me very grateful for this community and all the people in it."

When Smith was in her early teens,

she showed her horse for the Missouri State Fair at the 4-H and FFA competitions held in the summer before the Fair begins in August. She has also shown hams and bacon at the MSF.

Once she receives her degree, Smith plans to go into sales, but she wants to remain local and stay based in her hometown.

Smith shared some advice for other youth seeking a career in Ag.

"I would say to just do it," Smith said. "Because there's so much that agriculture can give you. And I've already met so many amazing people in the one semester that I've had at Mizzou. So, I would say, just go for it."

Faith Bemiss-McKinney can be reached at faithb@sedaliademocrat.com.



Ag student Shelby Dotson says growth involves risk

By Faith Bemiss-McKinney
faithb@sedaliademocrat.com

Living on a family generational farm is one reason Shelby Dotson, Sedalia, enjoys agriculture.

Due to her love for agriculture, Dotson also received scholarships in 2024, which will help her obtain a degree in an agriculture-related field.

Dotson, a freshman at the University of Missouri-Columbia, is the daughter of Allen and Autry Dotson, who own a 300-acre crop and cattle farm in Pettis County.

She received \$5,000 from the American Farmers Association and the Central Missouri Ag Club in May 2024. Dotson was also selected to go to an AFA seminar in November 2024.

Dotson graduated from Northwest High School in Hughesville in 2024 and is pursuing a major in agribusiness management and a minor in accounting and animal science.

She became interested in agriculture because her late grandmother, Bonnie Dotson, previously owned the family farm before her parents.

"I went to Sedalia (schools) during elementary school," Dotson said. "Then I went to Dresden and still didn't see a lot of farm people. Then I got to choose my high school. And that's why I went to Northwest because they have an FFA

program. And I wanted to be involved in that."

While in high school, Dotson was involved with the Pettis County R-V FFA, where she served as the chapter president last year, and in 2022-2023, she was the area eight parliamentarian.

Although she never showed livestock, she competed in contest teams with the Missouri State FFA, which went to state-level competitions at MU.

"I've been to state three times," Dotson said. "My sophomore year for the Meats' Evaluation; my junior year for Food Science. My junior year for Food Science, we actually won our district contest. Then last year we went to state for Farm Management."

Once she obtains her degrees, she plans to become an accountant, but she is also interested in working for the government, possibly as a loan officer.

"I want to do something ag-related," Dotson said. "Like for the government, I want to work for the Department of Agriculture."

Dotson said her advice to other young people interested in agriculture is to "take all the chances you are offered."

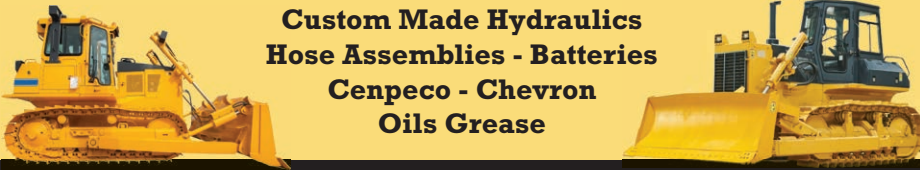
"And even if it makes you uncomfortable, there's no room for growth unless you take a risk," Dotson said.

Faith Bemiss-McKinney can be reached at faithb@sedaliademocrat.com.



Shelby Dotson, a freshman at the University of Missouri-Columbia, received scholarship money in May 2024 to help obtain a degree in agribusiness. She is the daughter of Allen and Autry Dotson, who own a 300-acre crop and cattle farm in Pettis County. PHOTO COURTESY OF SHELBY DOTSON

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Supporting youth in agriculture



Brooke Rieckhoff talking to Clover Kid judge Don Hutcheson, Pettis County Extension Council member, as part of Pettis County Achievement Days, held July 10-11 at Our Savior Lutheran Gym. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION



Grady Wilbanks and Eli Dehan waiting to talk to their judges during Pettis County Achievement Days, held July 10-11 at Our Savior Lutheran Gym.



4-H Clover Kids leading youth in saying the American and 4-H pledges at Achievement Days Pettis County Achievement Days, held July 10-11 at Our Savior Lutheran Gym.



Samuel Dehan, visits with judge, Mary Beatty, about his picture of his dog Bella during Pettis County Achievement Days, held July 10-11 at Our Savior Lutheran Gym.



Samuel Dehan, showing his dog's teeth for judge during the obedience class at the Pettis County Dog Show, held at Mutt, Manners and More in Windsor on July 13.



Bella hurdles a jump with Samuel during the obstacle course class of the Pettis County Dog Show, held at Mutt, Manners and More in Windsor on July 13.

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Clover Kids at Pettis County 4-H Show with their dog project leader, Amy Gibbs at the Pettis County Dog Show.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION



All Pettis County Dog Show participants at Pettis County Dog Show with their dog project leader, Amy Gibbs, on July 13 at Mutt, Manners and More in Windsor.



Pettis County Queen Keely Elwell distributes prizes for Pee Wee class of the Pettis County Jr. Livestock Show & Sale held July 14 and July 15.



Jackson Gerke talksto judge Matt Boatright during Pee Wee bottle calf show, held as part of the Pettis County Jr. Livestock Show & Sale July 14 and July 15.



Eli Dehan shakes hands with judge Brain Williams after his heifer was selected Overall Champion Female during the Pettis County Jr. Livestock Show & Sale, held July 14 and July 15. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION



Seth Hensley shows his pig during the Pettis County Jr. Livestock Show & Sale, held July 14 and July 15.

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Brooke Rieckhoff talking to the judge during the sheep Pee Wee class of the Pettis County Jr. Livestock Show & Sale, held July 14 and July 15.



Reagan Sneed with her Hereford steer during the Pettis County Jr. Livestock Show & Sale, held July 14 and July 15.



Rhett Sneed with his Hereford steer during the Pettis County Jr. Livestock Show & Sale, held July 14 and July 15.



Lary Smith presents the KMMO Youth in Agriculture Award to Ivy Elwell during the Pettis County Jr. Livestock Show & Sale, held July 14 and July 15.

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Dylan Deuschle with her Overall Reserve Champion Steer during the Pettis County Jr. Livestock Show & Sale, held July 14 and July 15.



Beef Showmanship honors were presented by Queen Keely Elwell to Eli Dehan, Jr.; Hunter Arnett, Sr.; Maggie Reed, Sr. and not pictured Isabella Bennett, Jr. during the Pettis County Jr. Livestock Show & Sale, held July 14 and July 15.



Swine Showmanship recognitions were presented to Keely Elwell, Sr.; Seth Hensley, Jr.; Elliott Cooley, Sr.; and Elyse Cooley, Jr. during the Pettis County Jr. Livestock Show, held July 14 and July 15.

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Central MO AG Club Banquet Pie and Cake Baking Auction



Sharon Bruner baked the Grand Champion pie, a Peanut butter French-meringue pie that sold for \$10,000 after a bidding war between Central Bank and Robby Toops with BASF. The bidders agreed to \$5000 each for a half of Bruner's Peanut butter French-meringue pie. Bruner's granddaughter Hadley Bruner took Second Place in the Youth Division with her Star-Spangled Pie.

PHOTOS BY CHRIS HOWELL | DEMOCRAT

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By Chris Howell

chrish@sedaliademocrat.com

The Central Missouri Ag Club Banquet Pie and Cake Baking Auction was held Saturday, Jan. 25, at the Pork Place on the Missouri State Fairgrounds.

The auction raised a record amount, totaling \$43,100 for kids in agriculture.

Janice Klenke is the chairman of the long-running event.

"It started out as city folks and country folks getting together to appreciate agriculture," Klenke told the Democrat. "It's evolved since then to having a pie contest and raising money for kids for scholarships and 4H and FFA and all kinds of things."

Sponsors like Wood and Huston Bank, FCS Financial, MFA, BTC Bank, Central Bank and others pull together to support the event and the kids who will benefit from the funds raised.

"This community is rooted in agriculture," Central Bank of Sedalia Senior Vice President Erica Petersen said. "To have an event like this where we can give back to the community makes everything happen for us. One of the beauties of the agriculture community is everybody always gives back, and that's what keeps things going; teaching the next generation and being there to support each other."

A hearty dinner and some live music made the banquet a special celebration of the lasting bonds made in the AG community.

"We love being a part of this event, we've been so blessed to be here for several years now," Petersen said. "For the last few years, we've been the pie people; so, we get to walk around and showcase the pies during the auction. At the end of the day you get a really yummy pie, but you also get to support something that's so vital to our community."

A local grandmother and her granddaughter found approval from the judges for the pies they baked and ended up winning prizes, plaques and commendations.

"I won Grand Champion on my Peanut butter French-meringue pie," Sharon Bruner said. "I was having trouble this morning getting my crust, but other than that it's very simple. It just takes a little time."

Contestants had to bake two pies for Saturday's event, one to be sampled by the judges and one to be raffled off.

"I enjoy cooking to begin with, and it's for a very good cause for the kids. I've been

active with 4H for 32 years and I just like doing it," Bruner said. "My son was in 4-H and then I've got two granddaughters in 4-H now, my one granddaughter brought a pie tonight, too. It's in the Youth Division.

11-year-old Hadley Bruner from Warrensburg took the second-place prize for her Star-Spangled pie. Like her grandmother, Sharon, Hadley also had some initial trouble with the crust, but experience gained on projects through 4-H helped her work through problems to ultimate success.

"It was kind of difficult because the crust didn't turn out very well," Hadley admitted. "I do cake decorating, painting, arts and crafts, bacon, ham."

For Central Missouri farmers who are used to banding together to face the rigors of raising crops and livestock, the annual dinner is a chance to now help the next generation get a proper start.

"We do want to thank all our farmers," Danny Young, Central Mo Ag Club President told the gathering. "wW know that it's not an easy life, people don't realize that they're the ones that they sell everything wholesale and they buy retail. Sometimes that's hard way to make a living, but that's what they do. It's a big business now, you must treat it like a big business. It's a different world than it used to be, we recognize that, we're trying to promote that and help the next generation get into agriculture."

Sharon Bruner's Grand Champion pie brought a whopping \$10,000 after a bidding war between Central Bank and Robby Toops with BASF. The bidders graciously agreed to \$5000 each for a half of Bruner's wonderful Peanut butter French-meringue pie.

Chris Howell can be reached at 660-530-0146.



Mixed medium pie

First: Chocolate chip cookie dough delight, Cheryl Lange. Second: White chocolate macadamia nut pie, Joy Beeman. Third: White chocolate coconut cream pie, July Kuhns.

Meringue

First: Peanut butter crunch pie, Sharon Bruner. Second: chocolate cream pie, Connie Soenker. Third: Mom's coconut cream pie, Jo Beeman.

Double Crust

First: Classic apple pie, Connie Kiburz. Second: Decadent blackberry pie, Jo Beeman. Third: Black n blue gooseberry pie, Sharon Bruner.

Youth

First: Barefoot coconut cream pie Raleigh Williams. Second: Star span-gled flag pie, Hadley Bruner.

Cake


First: Mocha chocolate cake, Cheryl Lange. Second: Grandma's angel food cake, Connie Soendker. Third: Dreaming of Spring cake, Julie Carpenter.



The Central Missouri Ag Club Banquet Pie and Cake Baking Auction at the Pork Place on the Missouri State Fairgrounds raised a record amount of \$43,100 for kids in agriculture Saturday.

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