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**LEWIS COUNTY FARM BUREAU**

*Serving Farmers and Ranchers of Lewis County*

January 2008

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## Prepare now for the next emergency

By Charles Gruhl

Our Lewis County Farm Bureau has toured the flood area. It is a mess! Yes, they need help. One of the outstanding problems was the rapid rise of the flood waters. One person said that while he was trying to save his farm, the water rose from dry ground to hip high in 20 minutes. His farm had never flooded before.

I sit here trying to figure out how we can prevent something like this from happening again. The next time we are all sitting together maybe after a meal, let's play a game. One half of the group will present a problem, and the other half will offer solutions.

Examples: A school bus just crashed into your living room, or an airplane just crashed into your barn as you were milking cows, or the heat lamp in the chicken house set the chicken house on fire. How can you help the injured? Who will call the fire department? Where are the fire extinguishers? Can the emergency people find your house? Is your house number clearly visible? Can large vehicles get to the accident site? What if it is dark and the accident causes a power failure? Where is the first aid kit? Who tries to save the animals?

Okay, the group that presented the problems now has to answer the other group's presentations of problems. This game is to help us plan for the emergencies

that none of us want to happen. When the game is over, I hope we will all want to make some immediate changes to make our farms safer!

## WFB Flood Relief Fund helping local families

While record floodwaters have subsided, relief donations continue to rise in an effort to help family farmers and ranchers recovering from December floods and storms.

Over \$225,000 in generous donations to the Washington Farm Bureau Flood Relief Fund are assisting family farmers and ranchers in southwest Washington with equipment repairs, animal care, and other immediate needs. The donations are making a big difference, according to Fund recipients.

"Such acts of kindness and concern have shaped the landscape of our recovery. The fact that your representatives personally visited our farm twice since this event has meant the world to us. Your sincere and tangible response to this disaster has proven your character, helped lift our spirits, and lightened the load of recovering from such a devastating event," said a Lewis County farm family in a letter to Farm Bureau.

To make a financial donation to the Flood Relief Fund, contact Washington Farm Bureau at (800) 331-3276 or go to [www.wsfb.com](http://www.wsfb.com) for more information. Contributions to the Washington Farm Bureau Flood Relief Fund are not tax deductible as a charitable contribution.



Farmland in Boistfort Valley near Chehalis was inundated with flood water in Dec. 2007.

**Mark your calendar: WFB Legislative Days Feb. 5-6, Olympia**

# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Neighbor helping neighbor, friends helping friends, farmer helping farmer, and the Lewis County Farm Bureau working hard to help them all!

The past few weeks have truly been a trial as we tried to figure out just how to extend a helping hand to our neighbors, friends, and fellow farmers who endured such loss in the recent flood. The devastation out in the Curtis Valley, in particular, was so overwhelming that it seemed surreal. Seeing, though, was believ-

ing, given the tremendous damage suffered by so many. Very few escaped unscathed.

We were humbled by the outpouring of assistance from the Washington Farm Bureau, United Way, the American Red Cross, Lewis County

Emergency Operations, and many other government agencies. The individual people who stepped up are true heroes, and there are many! The Baw Faw Grange emergency operations center, the folks who hauled hay and feed to the surviving livestock. There were those who recognized that the wet hay added further complications and took apart haymows, preventing further loss, due to fire. The many, many volunteers, from near and far, who gave of themselves, tirelessly, selflessly, to help THEIR agricultural community and surrounding neighbors.

To the individuals who were faced with the gruesome task of depositing of the drowned animal carcasses, we simply cannot thank you

enough. The incredible effort to assist those in need was truly admirable!

When the farming community asked for help, the Washington Farm Bureau set up an account with a nationwide plea for assistance and they have NOT been disappointed. The response has been incredible, with donations growing every day (over \$225,000 total to date). In explaining this type of response, Gary Joiner of WFB put it best, "You know what will happen when you ask farmers to help farmers. They come through." Dan Wood, also of the WFB, explained their quick action this way, "We work for amazing people!"

During a tour with legislators and state leaders, it was worthy of observation that hundreds of people were affected by the ravaging water. Many of them suffered tremendous loss, and yet they persevere, with a "can-do" attitude that is, for some, difficult to understand. Washington State Veterinarian Leonard Eldridge explained their remarkable attitude this way, "These type of people are the ones who won the west."

We are not done. Our fellow farmers, our neighbors, our friends will need our support – financially, physically, and emotionally – for a long time to come. It is up to us to set an example. Lewis County Farm Bureau members are workers and believers. We will stay involved in this recovery and pull together. With our help, Lewis County will become whole again.

*Ron Mauel*

## A terrible tragedy Hits the Boistfort Valley

By Larry Dacca, LCFB Board Member

At approximately 6:00 am Monday morning, December 3, 2007, my Fire Department, District 13, pager went off – sounding the alarm for flood assistance! That's when my 18-hour day began and also events that I will never forget. I have been a volunteer fire fighter since 1965. I have seen many tragic incidents – house fires, car accidents, and many types of other emergencies during my



Larry Dacca

fire fighting career. However, nothing prepared me for this tragic event that destroyed homes, properties, and ways of life to my many friends in the Boistfort Valley. I have always considered myself fairly strong with my emotions, but when I went to console a friend who had his entire dairy herd drown, his home fill with water and mud, and his way of life put in the balance, I could hardly express myself to him! This was just one instance in many such scenes that were to follow in the days ahead in aiding hurting people and seeing their homes and possessions destroyed.

I have lived in the Boistfort Valley for only 2 ½ years, moving here from Puyallup in April 2005. I am the "new kid" in the Valley! However, I could not be prouder of the residents of the Curtis-Boistfort area. They are people with the strongest determination and willingness to help their neighbors as any I have ever known. Their willingness and strength to help each other and fight the good fight against Mother Nature is something all can be proud of. I don't know how long it will take to recover from this disaster, but I am confident that all of the residents, young and old, will pull together to try and bring some normalcy back to our community.

I live in an area called Anderson Hill Road. I am about 400 feet above the Valley floor off of King Road. Each night when I returned home and opened the door and walked into my rooms with all my furniture, TVs, computers, and mud free floors –

I felt guilty! My heart goes out to my friends and acquaintances who lost so much in our area. But just as sure as these record-setting waters stormed down our Valley, I

know the residents of the Curtis-Boistfort community will survive and bring our Valley back to the beautiful area we all call Home!

In closing, I feel that we are all guilty of taking our way of life for granted. Yes, with the media coverage we have today, we are bombarded with tragic events all over our country and the world. Sometimes I believe we all get a little desensitized or immune to these events. Speaking for myself, I know I have grown a little more aware of the true heartache and despair that truly takes over the lives of the victims.

To all the residents of our area that suffered through this tragic event, I ask for your Prayers for them

## Don't miss WFB Legislative Days

Lewis County Farm Bureau members are encouraged to attend Washington Farm Bureau Legislative Days, Feb. 5-6, at the Red Lion Hotel in Olympia. Activities are also scheduled at the Legislative Building on the Capitol campus and at the WFB Professional Office Building in Lacey.

Lewis County Farm Bureau will pay the \$50 registration fee for any member or invited guest that attends the conference. This year's Legislative Days features a candidate forum for candidates for governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, and Commissioner of Public Lands, in addition to the normal legislative and issue briefings provided by WFB staff and the legislative banquet.

A registration form is available at [www.wsfb.com](http://www.wsfb.com) or by contacting Shannon Garland, WFB Administrative Assistant – Public Policy, at (800) 331-3276 or [sgarland@wsfb.com](mailto:sgarland@wsfb.com).

Contact the Red Lion Hotel at (360) 943-4000 for room reservations, if needed. Single rooms are \$98 plus tax.