



Media Contact:

Crescent Gallagher
Communications Director
304-380-3922
cgallagher@wvda.us

December 12, 2018

Commissioner Leonhardt Applauds Appointment of Rucker

Charleston W.Va. -- Following Senate President Mitch Carmichael's announcement of Senator Patricia Rucker (R-Jefferson) as the new Senate Education Chair, Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt released the following statement:

"I know Senator Rucker will work tirelessly to find new ways to allow our students to thrive including the expansion of STEAM programs. She has already committed to studying how to increase vocational agriculture programs to be included all 55 counties throughout state. Programs like these are essential to inspiring the next generation of future agriculture specialists, as well other science-based careers. I am excited to work with her on these policy initiatives."

Earlier this year, the West Virginia Department of Education announced a 50-year high for FFA enrollment. Currently, 68 high schools and 10 middle schools have FFA chapters. Total membership statewide is at 5,360 students.

"Even if students enrolled in FFA or vocational agriculture programs don't pursue careers in agriculture, these programs teach valuable life skills. From leadership to public speaking, being involved in these types of programs can only benefit the student. We must do more to expand and support these initiatives especially in rural counties.

"As the Commissioner of Agriculture and a former State Senator, I know Senator Rucker will bring a fresh, welcome approach to the Senate Education committee. Since taking office, she has been a true friend to reducing unnecessary burdens and regulations to help our state grow. She will do a tremendous job in her new role."

-more-



The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.

###

