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KENT A. LEONHARDT



304-558-3550

agriculture.wv.gov



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NEWS RELEASE
May 1, 2017

Contact: Crescent Gallagher
Communications Director
304/558-3708; 304/380-3922 (cell)
cgallagher@wvda.us

WVDA ANNOUNCES THREE NEW KEY LEADERSHIP HIRES

Charleston, W.Va. – The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) has announced three, new, key leadership hires. Cassey Bowden will serve as the director of the newly created Agriculture Business Development Division. Karen Facemyer will serve as the director of the Cedar Lakes Conference Center. Lastly, Dr. James Maxwell will serve as the state veterinarian and the director of the Animal Health Division. All three positions will begin work with the WVDA in May.

“Throughout the interviews, we looked for leadership skills and innovative ideas from our candidates. All three of these individuals represented those qualities and will be great additions to our team,” stated Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “Cassey, Karen and Dr. Maxwell share our vision for the department, and we look forward to working with each of them.”

Cassey Bowden obtained a Master’s degree in Industrial & Employee Relations as well as a Bachelor’s of Science in Marketing from Marshall University. Before joining the WVDA, she worked as a marketing manager for the Marshall University Research Corporation (RTI/CBER).

Karen Facemyer holds a Master’s in Vocational Education Administration from Marshall University and a Bachelor’s of Science in Vocational Home Economics Comprehensive and Safety Education from Glenville State College. Before joining the WVDA, she served as the president of the Polymer Alliance Zone of West Virginia and was a member of the West Virginia State Senate from 2000 to 2012.

Dr. James Maxwell attained his Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences Doctorate from Colorado State University and a Bachelor’s of Science in Zoology and Chemistry from Northern Arizona University. Before joining the WVDA, he worked for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as the chief for the Bureau of Animal Disease Control.

“During the interview process, we solicited people outside of the department for different perspectives and to ask tough questions of our candidates,” said Chief of Staff Norman Bailey. “We went through a lengthy interview process, and I am confident that we ended up with the right people.”

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