

# Eau Claire County Farm Bureau

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Rural Mutual Agents in Eau Claire County:

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Ken Truax - District Manager

## Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

## Inspiration Found at Ag Women's Summit

The Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit, presented by Badgerland Financial, Wisconsin Farm Bureau and the University of Wisconsin-Extension was held in Madison March



14-15. Eau Claire members at the event were Jane and Meg Mueller. The purpose of the event is to connect women involved in all areas of Wisconsin's diverse agriculture community.

Summit attendees were engaged in diverse topics such as agriculture advocacy, personal finance, technology, photography and health and wellness. There was also entertainment by Comedy City, an improv comedy show.

The keynote speaker was, Chariti Gent who presented whose presentations included, "Bold Action: Charting the Course in Choppy Waters and "I'm Really Gonna Do It This Time: A Simple System for Turning Those Good Ideas into Action."

The 2014 AgVocate of the Year award was also presented to Laura Daniels of Cobb and Karyn Schauf of Barron. This award honors Wisconsin women who are innovative leaders and have contributed to the success of Wisconsin agriculture.

## Rural Mutual Sponsors YFA Conference

Again this year, Rural Mutual is generously offering sponsorship for those who have never attended the WFBF YFA Conference in the past to become involved in our organization by attending this year's event. From the applications received by August 15, Rural will select up to 100 first-timers to receive sponsorship to the conference. Sponsorship will include the conference registration fee and two nights lodging at the Kalahari Resort.

In addition, Rural recognizes that it is critical for these new members to have a mentor at the county level. Thus, any YFA who refers new YFA members who are selected for sponsorship to attend this year's event may qualify for a \$100 cash award (you must be present at the Friday, December 6 banquet & program to collect the cash award).

All participants must be Farm Bureau members by September 30, 2013 to qualify for sponsorship. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Tracy Pape at Rural Mutual Insurance Company at 608-828-5401 or [tpape@ruralins.com](mailto:tpape@ruralins.com).

**Want to get away?**  
The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) Conference will be held December 5-7, 2014 at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells. Make plans now to join other YFA members for this exciting event!

Top-notch speakers, great entertainment, a unique networking opportunity and a weekend of family fun - and you are invited to attend, as our guest!



**2014 Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation**  
**Young Farmer and Agriculturist Conference**  
**AGENDA**

**Friday, December 5**  
Afternoon: Free Time  
3:00 p.m. Registration/Check-in  
5:00 p.m. First-Timers Orientation  
6:00 p.m. Banquet and Program  
7:30 p.m. District YFA Meetings  
8:30 p.m. YFA Reception/Entertainment  
Featuring Merit Brothers Band

**Saturday, December 6**  
7:00 a.m. Registration/Check-in  
8:00 a.m. Discussion Meet Contestant Orientation  
8:30 a.m. Discussion Meet Quarter Finals  
10:30 a.m. YFA Buffet Brunch and Program  
Excellence in Ag Presentations and Achievement Award Interviews  
1:30 p.m. Discussion Meet Semi-Finals  
2:00 p.m. Trade Show opens  
2:40 p.m. Breakout Learning Sessions  
4:30 p.m. Reception - Trade Show  
6:00 p.m. Farm Bureau Extravaganza!  
8:30 p.m. Free Time

**Sunday, December 7**  
7:30 a.m. Morning Devotional  
8:30 a.m. Collegiate Discussion Meet Final  
9:30 a.m. YFA Discussion Meet Final  
10:30 a.m. Buffet Brunch and Program  
• Announcement of YFA Contest winners  
YFA Conference Ends  
12:00 p.m.

Like us on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/WisconsinYFA](http://www.facebook.com/WisconsinYFA)

**A special offer from**  
**Rural Mutual**  
Insurance Company

If you've never attended this event before, Rural Mutual wants to sponsor you and your family. Just complete the sponsorship application on the back of this form and send it to the address at the bottom of the page. You may apply as an individual or as a couple, but don't delay - only 100 double occupancy rooms are available, and the deadline to apply is August 15!

If you are a Farm Bureau member age 18-35 and are selected for sponsorship, Rural Mutual will pay the conference registration fee for you and your spouse/guest and two nights lodging at the Kalahari Resort. Registration fee includes registrant meals, workshop materials and entertainment. If selected, you will be notified by September 12, and additional details regarding the conference will be mailed to you with a conference registration form that you will be required to complete.

**Refer a Friend - Qualify for Cash!**

Any YFA member who refers another who is accepted for sponsorship and attends the event will qualify for a \$100 cash award. *Limit: One award per family - you must be present at Friday night's banquet to qualify. See referral form on reverse side.*



## Eau Claire County Farm Bureau Country Jam Fundraiser

Do you like country music? Each year Eau Claire County Farm Bureau members volunteer their time to work at Country Jam. We work V.I.P. security. We are up by the stage and get to see and hear some of country music's biggest names! We are always looking for people to work a six hour shift from July 17-19. Before or after your shift enjoy music by Luke Bryan, Jake Owen, The Band Perry, Dierks Bentley and LoCash Cowboys, just to name a few. For more information contact Lisa Marie Pettis at 715.533.4459.





# COUNTYnews

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION

## Kohlhepp Receives Distinguished Service Award



Long-time Farm Bureau board director Al Kohlhepp received the Distinguished Service to Eau Claire County Farm Bureau Award.

## A Woman Rooted in Agriculture

Meet Darby Sampson of Jackson County.

Darby Sampson is a young wife and mother who is already an integral part of the agricultural community in Jackson County. Along with her husband, Clint, and their two sons (ages two and four), they farm in Melrose. Gardening and a bit of sewing are her hobbies.

Darby has been the Ag in the Classroom Coordinator for three years and a member of Jackson County Farm Bureau for seven years. She is also active in the Young Farmer and Agriculturist program. Outside of Farm Bureau, Clint and Darby work with the Jackson County Fair Livestock Project and are involved in the open class beef show at the Wisconsin State Fair.



### What makes you excited about the future of women in agriculture?

Darby believes that the role of women in agriculture is being more accepted. She sees women as truly full partners in family farms.

### What do you do for fun when you're not working?

Darby says that their love of farming and gardening carries over to their free time. When they have time to travel, it's usually for an auction or a farm show.

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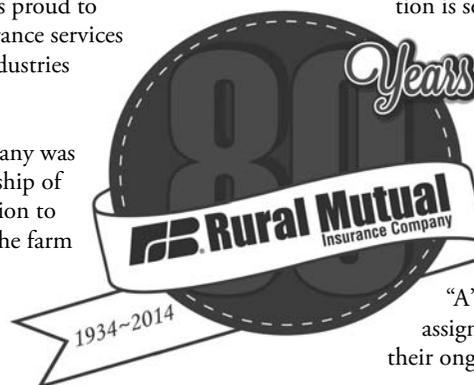
## Rural Mutual Insurance Company Celebrates 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Rural Mutual Insurance Company is proud to celebrate providing 80 years of insurance services to farms, families, businesses and industries across the state of Wisconsin.

The Madison-based insurance company was founded in 1934 under the sponsorship of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation to provide personal auto insurance to the farm community at affordable rates. This affiliation has served Rural Mutual well in the past and Rural Mutual continues to build on this niche focus as evidenced by its leading farm market share during 2013.

"With over 80 years of service, our mission and vision has not strayed far from the original purpose of the organization," said Peter Pelizza, CEO of Rural Mutual. "Holding the position as a leading farm insurance provider in the state of Wisconsin has been our mainstay, however expanding our footprint in the state to include a significant market share of personal as well as commercial protec-

tion is something we are proud of and will continue to cultivate."



For the fifth consecutive year Rural Mutual was selected as a "Ward's 50<sup>th</sup> Top Performer" by the Ward Group. This recognition means that Rural Mutual is considered one of the top 50 property and casualty companies in the nation based on its superior financial performance over the last five years.

Rural Mutual is also recognized by AM Best with an "A" Excellent rating with a stable outlook. This rating is assigned to companies that have an excellent ability to meet their ongoing insurance obligations.

Rural Mutual takes great pride in the state and will continue to ensure that premiums paid here, stay here to keep Wisconsin strong.

To learn more about Rural Mutual Insurance Company, please visit [www.ruralins.com](http://www.ruralins.com).

To learn more about the Ward Group, please visit [www.wardinc.com](http://www.wardinc.com).

## President's Perspective



Ahhh! SPRING! The birds are singing, the grass is green, the flowers are blooming and the barn cats are having kittens. Or is your farm like ours? The manure pit is about to run over, the winter feed supply is just about gone and the mud is over my boots. It's May 5 and I don't have one seed in the ground yet.

It is real easy to get caught up in the stress of our own farms and forget about the rest of the world at this time of year. The thing we must remember is that our livelihood of agriculture is part of a much bigger global economy. Every day the world is a changing place, with

things happening that affect our business of farming. Sometimes in a positive way, but many times in a negative way with not only a wolf at our door, but a whole pack of wolves trying to blow down the door. We must not let our busy schedules blind us from the wolves.

As I become older and hopefully wiser, I've learned I can't do everything by myself anymore. Sometimes everyone needs help. That's why I am a Farm Bureau member. The Farm Bureau does an awesome job fighting the wolves when we are in the fields or barn working hard. They keep a close eye on issues that affect us, making sure we can continue farming the way we know best.

Who is the Farm Bureau? We all are; each and every one of

us. All individuals united in a common cause to better our community. Join me in being active and taking a positive roll in banding together and helping like good neighbors do.

As we farm forward this spring, I'm reminded of the old high school cheer "Stand Up! Be Proud! Say your Name! Out Loud! We Are Farmers!"

Remember only the chosen few are blessed with the opportunity to feed and clothe the world.

Best wishes to all,

**Steve Strey**

Eau Claire County Farm Bureau President

## YFA Members! Mark your Calendars!

There are great opportunities for YFA members in Eau Claire County to participate in district and state events. Remember that these activities are available to voting members ages 18-35.

**Discussion Meet:** The District 4 Discussion Meet has been set for Wednesday, August 20 at the Community Center (old grade school) in Taylor. The Discussion Meet starts at 7 p.m. with dinner immediately following to make way for the policy development afterwards. The Discussion Meet is an activity designed to build crucial skills in young, active farmers and agriculturalists. By participating, members build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems. This



**In January, 2013 Discussion Meet winner Chris Pollack was a National Discussion Meet finalist and for that won a tractor from CASE IH.**

year's topic is: **How can young farmers and ranchers work to encourage membership growth and member engagement for the county, state and national Farm Bureau organizations?**

**Achievement Award:** The ideal candidate(s) for the Achievement Award is an individual or couple involved in production agriculture with a majority of their income subject to normal production risks. Selection of the winning YFA competitor is based on his/her efforts in production agriculture and leadership achievement. Participation in this program with individual recognition and the resulting publicity will help build the organization. **Applications are due July 1, 2014.**



**2013 Achievement Award winners Corey and Miranda Leis.**

### Excellence in Agriculture:

The Farm Bureau Excellence in Agriculture Award Program is designed as an opportunity for YFA members, while actively contributing and growing through their involvement in Farm Bureau and agriculture, to earn recognition. Participants will be judged on their involvement in agriculture, leadership ability, involvement and participation in Farm Bureau and other organizations (i.e., civic, service and community). The ideal candidate(s) for the Excellence in Agriculture Award is an individual or couple who do not have the majority of their income subject to normal production risk. **Applications are due July 1, 2014.**



**2013 Excellence in Ag winner Nicole Reese.**

If you are a YFA member interested in participating in any of these activities, please contact Alex Patten, Eau Claire County YFA chair, at 715.703.0767.

## Repro Money Road Show Series a Hit

By **Mark Hagedorn**, Eau Claire County Agriculture Agent



More than 30 dairy farmers, veterinarians and ag service providers participated in the third Reproducing Profitability Workshop offered by Eau Claire County UW-Extension. A recent county-wide needs assessment survey found that a majority of respondents indicated reproductive performance an area of interest. This program featured presentations from Dr. Paul Fricke from the Department of Dairy Science at UW-Madison, Dr. Richard Pursley from the Department of Dairy Science at Michigan State University, Pat Hoffman from the Marshfield Ag Research Station and Dr. Amy Stanton and Dr. Connie Cordoba also from the Department of Dairy Science at UW-Madison. Areas covered

included "Updates on reproduction research at UW-Madison and MSU", "Building better breeding criteria for dairy replacement heifers", "Using cattle behavior to maximize health, production and reproduction" and "An overview of the Repro Money Program and the impacts it can have on dairy herd reproductive efficiency".

The after program evaluation indicated that 89% of attendees had learned quite a bit or a lot as a result of the presentations offered. Participants also indicated overwhelmingly that this program was effective in answering any questions they had, resulted in being a good resource for materials to use in their farm or practice and presented ideas that could be utilized or implemented immediately.

All presentations are available at: [eauclaire.uwex.edu/2013/11/18/2013-reproduction-profitability-workshop-presentations-now-available](http://eauclaire.uwex.edu/2013/11/18/2013-reproduction-profitability-workshop-presentations-now-available)

## Eau Claire County UW-Extension Dates to Remember

- May 27-31** Eau Claire County Youth Tractor Safety Training. Contact Eau Claire County UW-Extension for more details at 715.839.4712
- June 11-12** 4-State Dairy Nutrition Conference in Dubuque, IA. Sponsored by UW-Extension
- June 13** Breakfast in the Valley at the Eau Claire Exposition Center. Sponsored by the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce
- June 26** 4-H Area Animal Science Days at the Eau Claire Exposition Center. Sponsored by Eau Claire County UW-Extension
- July 23-27** Eau Claire County Fair at the Eau Claire Exposition Center
- August 1** Plant Sale at the Eau Claire Exposition Center. Sponsored by the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Association
- August 12-14** Farm Technology Days held at Blue Top Farms and Feltz Family Farms in Portage County. Sponsored by UW-Extension
- September 13** Chippewa Valley Sustainable Future Festival. [www.sustainablefuturefest.com](http://www.sustainablefuturefest.com)
- September 12** Conservation Observance Day at the Joe and Marian Smith Farm. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association
- September 19-20** Farm-City Days at GJ Jerseys. Sponsored by the Chippewa Valley Farm-City Days Committee

SAVE the DATE

## There are Benefits to Your Farm Bureau Membership:

<b>Auto</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Supplies and Products</b>
• General Motors Discount	• ScriptSave® Prescription Drug Savings Card	• Case IH
<b>Communication</b>	• Stroke Detection Plus	• FS-GROWMARK Patronage
• AgriVisor (NEW)	<b>Insurance</b>	• Grainger
• The Country Today	• Rural Mutual Insurance Company	• Office Depot
<b>Financial</b>	• Farm Bureau Financial Services	<b>Travel</b>
• AgriPlan Medical Reimbursement Program	<b>Protection</b>	• AAA
• Farm Bureau Bank	• \$500 Reward Protection Program	• AVIS Car Rental Discount Program
	• Accidental Death Policy	• Choice Hotels International, Inc.
		• Wyndham Hotel Group

For complete details visit [wfbf.com/benefits-membership](http://wfbf.com/benefits-membership).

## Director's Message



Greetings,

I recently had the opportunity to go to D.C. with the Leadership Institute participants and watch them in action as they represented Wisconsin agriculture in our nation's capital. I was so impressed with the breadth of knowledge that was expressed on many different facets of farming; from taxation, animal

rights, trade issues and all of the different environmental regulations that affect us every day. Farm Bureau is one of the most respected organizations in the country and it was very evident in the way our legislators met with us as well as our

opportunity to meet with agency personnel at the Department of Agriculture and British Embassy.

It has also been refreshing to see how much the grassroots process of Farm Bureau is appreciated from our members as the comments are coming in from the Strategic Planning process that Wisconsin Farm Bureau is currently undertaking.

No one can tell agriculture's story better than our members. Keep telling yours.

Stay safe.

**Joe Bragger**

Cell: 715.530.0466 | Home: 715.985.2314  
braggfam@trivest.net

## From Farmer to Producer, Back to Farmer

By Casey Langan, WFBF Executive Director of Public Relations



Farmers and agriculturists use terms to describe themselves that hurt ag's image to its customers. There are two commonly used words that fail to conjure images that will win the heart and mind of the average American.

The first one is producer. I'm a dairy producer. I'm a grain producer. No you're not, you're a farmer. At least

that's who your customers would rather buy their food from.

Think of it, nobody goes to a producers' market to buy their fruits and vegetables; they go to a farmers' market. Consumer research shows the average American still trusts and holds farmers in high regard. Call a farmer a producer and it only plays to the stereotype that agriculture has become too clinical, technical, slick and uncaring.

It seems producer began to replace farmer back in the 1980s. Farmers were tired of being seen as hayseeds and wanted to be viewed as the business professionals that they were. So they thought calling themselves something else would freshen up their image.

Something's changed since then. Agriculture is no longer ignored. People have great interest in how food is grown, unlike the 1980s when farmers' markets were scarce and most people just assumed food grew in grocery stores. A generation later, the average American doesn't know a farmer, yet many are intrigued by those who grow food and raise livestock for a living. They like farmers. Yet we refer to ourselves as producers, which to most people, describes a person who runs the soundboard in a recording studio. It might sound like I'm being picky, but it only widens the divide between those who

drive tractors and raise livestock, and the other 99 percent of our country.

Another term that hurts us is operation. Producers don't own farms, they own operations. Say operation to most people and they think of their last trip to the hospital. It's not a positive connotation, and not a place for crops and livestock. People like farms. Consumer research bears this out. Still don't believe me? Tell me this: would people rather buy a fresh tomato from a farmer or a producer? Do they take their kids on a field trip to a farm or an operation?

Notice I used the term customer instead of consumer in my lead sentence? Consumer doesn't give people enough credit. They are our customers and in business, the customer is always right. At some point I think much of agriculture seemed to have forgotten this business principle. Too often we work off the premise in agriculture that we're right and that everyone else either doesn't understand us or is out to get us.

Well whose fault is that? We all shake our heads when we hear the average American is several generations removed from farm life. Maybe we need to look at this from another angle. Perhaps farmers got a little too removed from what was happening in the city?

Change takes time. Producer and operation has been engrained in all of our vocabularies. I make every effort to mix producers and operations from Farm Bureau materials. I would hope that my colleagues in education, government, journalism and commodity groups would do the same.

Agriculture faces no shortage of public relations challenges. Let's take a small step forward by simply going back to saying farmers and farms.

## Eau Claire County Farm Bureau Contacts:

President, Steven Strey 715.597.6096  
Vice President, Lisa Pettis 715.533.4459  
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YFA Chair, Alex Patten 715.703.0767

Director, Brandon Boettcher 715.597.5004  
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Director, Alvin Kohlhepp 715.874.6024  
Director, Matthew Krenz 715.877.3413  
Director, Jane Mueller 715.828.5018  
Director, Patrick Schaffer 715.878.9082  
Director, Devin Schlewitz 715.877.3403

Eau Claire County Farm Bureau 888.644.8329  
WFBF Board Director, Joe Bragger 715.530.0466  
District 4 Women's Chair, Jane Mueller 715.878.4058  
District 4 YFA Chair, Brian Maliszewski 715.530.1107  
District 4 Coordinator, Steve Boe 866.355.7344  
RMIC District Manager, Ken Truax 715.514.4477



Back Row: Devin Schlewitz; Alex Patten (YFA chair), Steve Strey (president), Pat Schaffer, Brandon Boettcher and Chad Dobberstein. Front Row: Al Kohlhepp, Matt Krenz, Jacki Pettis (secretary and treasurer), Tami Geske, Lisa Pettis (vice president and Women's chair) and Jane Mueller.

## Welcome New Members

Mary Cosman-Connell

Hannah Fritz

Joseph Gannon

David Grill

Dennis Judd

Lydia Klingbeil

Bayli Maliszewski

Travis Mc Fadden

Mary Schachtner

Miranda Thesing-Ritter

Stacy Whaley

Northwoods Unlimited LLC

Welcome  
to Farm  
Bureau

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