





# Oconto County Farm Bureau

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## Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

### Ag Women's Summit Inspires Oconto Farm Bureau Members By Kayla Steffel



Advocate of the Year Carrie Mess spoke at the Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit last March.

were the same speaker, Jane Jenkins Herlong. She used her humorous stories of living and growing up on a vegetable farm in South Carolina to show us how she decided to go for Miss USA and push herself to achieve her goals. I don't think there was more than a few minutes between each laugh. Of course, once we stopped laughing we went to our first round of breakout sessions.

This was a difficult decision to choose just one to go to, but I couldn't split myself in half. I decided my focus would be on 'advocating' this year. Attending celebrating sustainability, where I learned how to acknowledge consumer concerns, and how to explain to them in their terms what we know to be true about farming. It was great.

Even used it when I bought my blueberry bush to let my Instagram followers know that blueberries are not a GMO product.

As they have since the first Ag Women's Summit I attended, WFBF, Badgerland Financial, and UW Extension put on an amazing program.

The opening and keynote were the same speaker, Jane Jenkins Herlong. She used her humorous stories of living and growing up on a vegetable farm in South Carolina to show us how she decided to go for Miss USA and push herself to achieve her goals. I don't think there was more than a few minutes between each laugh. Of course, once we stopped laughing we went to our first round of breakout sessions.

My second session was tight margins, tight belts, which was a great session on how other farmers make ends meet during times of low commodity prices. I mostly absorbed as much as I could for future reference when I do become a farmer's wife (dream job).

The third session continued my advocating theme in learning how to again acknowledge their concern, and then how to say what we do in a way that we tell the consumer a story. This was a good one as the speaker challenged us to focus on water and what it means to us as producers. I am waiting to use my answer yet, but one day maybe.

Our night time entertainment was a casino night. I stayed at the craps table, and killed it. Honestly, it is a very easy, fun game to play. Although, it was way more fun to use fake money than real money.

In the morning, I woke up and got ready early to listen to the Advocate of the Year Dairy Carrie speak. She explained what inspired her to blog in the first place, and how it morphed into what it is today. I took some notes, and enjoyed hearing her speak.

My last session before our keynote was mindfulness and meditation. I learned how to become more mindful of my surroundings, and how to use meditation to relax and relieve stress. If only I made more time for it.

Overall, I learned so much and could see college classmates and others. Excited to see how they are going to top this year's summit next year.

### Gillett Students Attend FFA Farm Forum



Gillett FFA students Hanna Brock, Evan Rank and Hunter Poffinbarger attended the Farm Bureau sponsored FFA Farm Forum in February.

Nearly 200 high school juniors from across Wisconsin attended the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's FFA Farm Forum in Wisconsin Rapids on February 17-18.

During the two-day event at Hotel Mead in Wisconsin Rapids, FFA members attended workshops on post-high school agricultural opportunities, social media, agricultural advocacy and leadership.

Joining WFBF president Jim Holte as keynote speakers at the event were Mark Holley, Sunrise 7 meteorologist and Chris and Amy Blakeney, owners of Amazing Grace Family Farm.

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation sponsors the FFA Farm Forum in cooperation with the Wisconsin Association of FFA. This year's FFA Farm Forum marks the 45<sup>th</sup> year the Farm Bureau family of affiliates has sponsored the event for Wisconsin youth.



# COUNTYnews

OCONTO COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION



## Oconto County Farm Bureau Members Attend Ag Day at the Capitol By Russ Brock



(from left) Lloyd Kirsch, Russ Brock and Wayne Staidl in the Ag Day at the Capitol briefing session.

I guess it's time to write something down about Ag Day at the Capitol, 2017. I am sitting in the parking lot while Barbara's in getting another laser and electromagnetic treatment here in Appleton. I haven't come to Appleton this many times since I worked here on construction 55 years ago. It's once a week now for who knows how long.

Well back to Ag Day. I was very glad Lloyd Kirsch consented to ride down with me. The riders from Outagamie County that usually ride with me were not able to do so, unfortunately for Lloyd, that meant he was forced to hear my stories again.

Governor Scott Walker came and spoke to us, probably about one half hour. Whether you agree with his policies or not, he is a very capable speaker. He spoke to us the entire time without the aid of any paper notes or teleprompter. He throws out figures about the ag economy in the state and its value. He does this with each commodity and the figures that go with each one, from milk, beef, cranberries, maple syrup, soy beans, corn, green beans and so forth. I am not sure that all his policies aid the farmer, but it is quite apparent that he understands our problems and our value to the state of Wisconsin.

The real reason that he came was to inform us of his budget proposal. He gave us some good news about our local road aid, it would increase the aid about \$150 a mile, in Maple Valley that translates to about \$6,000, that doesn't build much road, but at least it's not less. He also proposed increased dollars for rural broad-

band internet service, this is something badly needed in many rural communities one of which is Maple Valley and the surrounding area. He's looking at moving four positions out of the DNR and into DATCP. I say great.

Lloyd and I visited with Representative Jeff Mursau, where Lloyd tried to explain the waste of money being proposed in the reconditioning of Highway 22 in and around Gillett. I thought he did a good job of explaining it, but it's much too long and complicated for me to explain to you. Call Lloyd.

We kind of crashed a party of southern Wisconsin Farm Bureau members who were meeting with three of their representatives, one of which was Ed Brooks, whom I know quite well from my days as Foremost Farms director. The subject they were discussing was legislation to make it legal to put minutes of public meetings online and not have to publish it in newspapers. Lots of pros and cons on that subject, it gave me the opportunity to suggest to them that they had best start with broadband so everyone can see them. The legislators seem to be aware of rural roads getting behind in maintenance and replacement, as always is the case, money is the problem. How to get it and then how to make sure it gets to the counties and townships and not Madison or Milwaukee. Will be more on this next year, and a year after, and so forth.

My question to you is do you really think that we can get somebody else to pay for our roads? We always look to the state or feds for money, it seems logical to me that every time we send them a dollar we are likely to get \$0.30 back. Why would roads be different? I believe an increase in fuel tax is most likely the lesser of the evils.

Thanks again Lloyd for an enjoyable day and I'm hoping some of you younger types would take the time to go, as I've been at it for 45 years now and replacement is needed.

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## Ag in the Classroom Report By Kayla Steffel

Congratulations to the Oconto County Farm Bureau essay contest winner Hailyn St. Louis, a fourth grade student at St. Anthony School, who also was selected as the District 7 winner. Here is her wonderful essay:

### CRANBERRIES

*Do you love the taste of crunchy, tangy cranberries? If you do, it may interest you to know that Wisconsin is the #1 producer of cranberries in the U.S., and 60% of the country's cranberry supply comes from Wisconsin.*

*Cranberries are perennial plants, which means that they come back every year. They grow on low-running vines in sandy bogs and marshes. Cranberries are harvested each year from late September through October. In Wisconsin, cranberry marshes are flooded with water to aid in harvesting. Because the tart, tiny cranberries contain a pocket of*

*air, they float to the surface when the bog is flooded. They are then ready to be picked up by harvesting equipment. After harvest, the marsh is once again flooded with a protective layer of water that will freeze over. The blanket of ice keeps the vines safe from low temperatures and hard winds.*

*Did you know that early American whalers and other mariners brought cranberries on board their ships to prevent scurvy? Cranberries also keep your teeth healthy, get rid of bad bacteria and contain vitamin C. That's pretty cool!*

*In 2016, Wisconsin produced 5.2 million barrels of cranberries leading both the U.S. and world for the 22<sup>nd</sup> straight year. That's great news for all of us Wisconsinites who love the delicious fruit!*

*I hope you learned a lot about yummy cranberries.*

## President's Column

A president's report should be uplifting and positive in nature. So, here are some good things to note.

Unemployment is at a 20-year low. The republicans are backing down a bit on shipping all illegals back to where they came from (they are not all from Mexico) so farm owners will not have to relearn how to milk cows. I checked the alfalfa behind my storage shed (old dairy barn) and it looks good.

After this weird winter, I am amazed. My daffodils will flower for Easter "cause rabbits don't eat daffodils." They almost destroyed my raspberries. Must be a new race of super bunnies, because eating raspberry thorns should hurt.

We almost have a full board of directors. I would like to welcome Ken Harter and Dave Schneider on board.

This will be a short report as I don't want to discuss the dairy industry as my ulcers might come back.

Hope you all had a happy Easter and are looking forward to summer.

**Dennis Jahnke**

Oconto County Farm Bureau president

## District 7 Director's Report

It has been a very busy few months. The Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C., was a great experience with the members of the WFBF Leadership Institute Class X. It was great getting to know the Institute class members.

District 7 representative Kristy Erickson did an excellent job speaking up for agriculture when we visited with legislators. AFBF President Zippy Duvall was with President Trump when he signed the Presidential Order to repeal WOTUS. We had a director from EPA that said his agency would follow suit.

There is lots of talk regarding the 2018 farm bill so please voice your concerns to your legislators.

The WFBF Council of Presidents was very well attended, lots of talk on membership and there was a friendly reminder about the \$5 dues increase coming this fall. This was approved at the WFBF Annual Meeting a few years ago.

Ag Day at the Capitol was the highlight after the Council of Presidents. We had a great group of people from District 7 to walk to the Capitol and speak with their legislators.

This year, hot topics were high capacity wells, transportation funding for roads, rural broadband internet accessibility and a few more.

It is great to see how well agriculture is represented by our Farm Bureau members. It was also nice to see the amount of time that legislators and their staff took to listen to us.

I am on my way to visit all of the counties in District 7 to take time and listen to your concerns.

Please take time out of your busy schedule to come to District 7 meetings as they come up this year. Feel free to contact me anytime.

**Adam Kuczer**

District 7 Board of Director



Senator Tammy Baldwin discussed issues with the WFBF Leadership Institute Class X members who attended the Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C.



Members of the WFBF Leadership Institute and Board members from Districts 6 and 7 met with Representative Mike Gallagher in his Washington, D.C., office to discuss ag issues.



In March, the WFBF Leadership Institute Class X and some of the WFBF Board of Directors met with Senator Ron Johnson in Washington, D.C.

## Meet: Dave Schneider, New Board Member



Dave Schneider has recently been appointed to represent Oconto County Farm Bureau board District 1, the area north of Highway 22.

Dave owns and operates a 160 acre farm between Oconto and Oconto Falls where he raises Red Angus cattle in addition to his position as a reproductive services manager for Cooperative Resources International-Genex Cooperative.

Dave's 53 cattle are raised in a rotational grazing system, and there are other livestock enterprises including: chickens, sheep, goats, ducks, geese, rabbits, pigs and horses.

Crops grown on the farm include: hay, corn, oats, sorghum and vegetables.

Dave and his wife Lourdes have nine children.



## Meet: Ken Harter, New Board Member



Brat fry fundraiser grillmaster Ken Harter is a member of the Oconto County Farm Bureau board of directors.

He has also been the anchor of the Oconto County Farm Bureau brat fry fundraisers by using his grilling talents to keep the food quality at its maximum.

Ken Harter has recently been appointed to represent Oconto County Farm Bureau board District 2, the area south of Highway 22.

Ken lives in Oconto Falls and is retired from UW Extension where he served as the Oconto County ag agent for many years.

He is involved in many community organizations and has a passion for advocating for agriculture.

Ken has been involved in many Farm Bureau events in the past and has served the Oconto County Farm Bureau a number of times as a delegate to the WFBF Annual Meeting.

## Ag in the Classroom Summer Classroom Training Scheduled

Ag in the Classroom summer classroom training is scheduled for 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. on **Thursday, July 6** at West Madison Research Station and Gardens in Madison.



Join us for a day of learning about educational agricultural resources for all grade levels. We welcome classroom teachers, home school parents, 4-H and extension staff and volunteers and others involved in agricultural literacy to participate.

The registration deadline is **June 20** and for registration materials visit [www.wisagclassroom.org](http://www.wisagclassroom.org). Cost is \$20 which includes lunch, refreshments and materials.

For more information, please contact Darlene Arneson at [darneson@wfbf.com](mailto:darneson@wfbf.com) or 608.828.5644. Space is limited so register today.

## There are Benefits to Your Farm Bureau Membership:

<p><b>Auto</b> .....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Motors Discount</li> </ul> <p><b>Health</b> .....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ScriptSave® Prescription Drug Savings Card</li> <li>• Life Line (NEW)</li> </ul> <p><b>Supplies and Products</b> .....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case IH</li> <li>• Caterpillar</li> <li>• FS-GROWMARK Patronage</li> <li>• Grainger</li> <li>• Office Depot</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communication</b> .....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AgriVisor</li> <li>• The Country Today</li> </ul> <p><b>Insurance</b> .....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Mutual Insurance Company</li> <li>• Farm Bureau Financial Services</li> </ul> <p><b>Travel</b> .....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAA</li> <li>• AVIS Car Rental Discount Program</li> <li>• Budget (NEW)</li> <li>• Choice Hotels International, Inc.</li> <li>• Wyndham Hotel Group</li> </ul>	<p><b>Financial</b> .....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AgriPlan Medical Reimbursement Program</li> <li>• Farm Bureau Bank</li> </ul> <p><b>Protection</b> .....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$500 Reward Protection Program</li> <li>• Accidental Death Policy</li> </ul>
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For complete details visit [wfbf.com/benefits-membership](http://wfbf.com/benefits-membership).

## District 7 YFA Report By Brian Preder

The annual Gambler's game is always a great time for members to socialize and gather with members from around this district.

Following the game, we met with District 6 YFA members at the Green Bay Distillery for pizza and to meet fellow YFA members from our neighboring district. We had over 100 people attend this year's game and can't wait until next year.

With spring upon us, we are looking forward to the upcoming year. This means it is never too early to be thinking about the chance for a free trip to the Kalahari Resorts for the YFA Conference.

How do you get a free trip to the YFA Conference? Be sure to participate in one of the YFA contests. You can find information about the Achievement Award, Excellence in Ag, and Discussion Meet on the YFA page of the WFBF website. If you have questions about the contests, we have you covered.

We will have a contest training session on **May 23** starting at 7 p.m. at the CRI Resource Center in Shawano. It will be a great opportunity to answer questions about the applications and discussion meet. There also will be the chance to get tips from past applicants and winners. The district will provide food and beverages.

For more information, please contact me or your county YFA chair.

I can't wait to work with the talented group of YFA members in our district throughout the upcoming year. Have a safe and early planting season.



After a delicious meal at the River Rail in Shiocton last fall, District 7 YFA members participated in the District level of the YFA Discussion Meet. Kristy Fiedler (left at head table) went on to win the state contest.

## Oconto County Farm Bureau Contacts:

President, Dennis Jahnke	920.834.4707
Vice President, Gordon Aprill	920.846.2465
Secretary/Treasurer, Maryann Monette	920.826.7703
Promotion and Education Chair, Kayla Steffel	920.373.0261
YFA Chair, Joe Porior	920.373.0026
Director, Russel Brock	920.842.2257
Director, Ken Harter	920.846.2046
Director, David Schneider	920.321.6701
Oconto County Farm Bureau	888.377.0295
WFBF Board Director, Adam Kuczer	920.822.2772
District 7 Coordinator, Wes Raddatz	866.355.7346
RMI District Manager, Tom Gustafson	920.420.1106

## Oconto County Is on Facebook

Search for 'Oconto County Farm Bureau' on Facebook and you will find the latest information and notices about events going on in the county Farm Bureau.



Please 'Like' us.

## Hungry for Brats? By Dennis Jahnke



Dennis Jahnke serves up the brats, hamburgers, and refreshments at a previous fundraiser.

On June 2, at Witts Piggly Wiggly in Oconto Falls the Oconto County Farm Bureau will have a brat fry again this year. Go shopping hungry and stop by for a brat, hamburger or cheeseburger freshly grilled at a fantastic price. Take some home for the family or sit and eat them there at the store.

We're also pondering a menu addition or two, so stop by to see what else might be available. **Remember:** June 2 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

## Humor Corner

By Wes Raddatz, District 7 Coordinator

"Well Doctor, what did the x-rays of my head show?"  
"Absolutely nothing."

What is the center of gravity?

The letter V.

Dad, can you help me find the lowest common denominator?

Haven't they found that thing yet? I remember looking for that when I was in school, too!

If a frog parks illegally, does it get toad?



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