

Polk County Farm Bureau

PO Box 5550 Madison, WI 53705

Address Service Requested

Non Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Platteville, WI 53818
Permit No. 124

**THE #1 INSURER OF FARMS IN WISCONSIN
IS REWARDING POLICYHOLDERS**
Introducing the Rural Mutual Farm Dividend Program



For more information about the farm dividend program and how you may qualify, contact your local Rural Mutual agent.

 **Rural Mutual**
Insurance Company
www.ruralins.com/farm-dividend

RURAL MUTUAL AGENTS IN POLK COUNTY

Carl Thomfohrda - (715) 485-3010

Laurie Peterson, District Manager - (715) 514-4477

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

Mark Your Calendars for Ag Day at the Capitol



 **AG DAY AT THE CAPITOL**
Wednesday, March 8 • Monona Terrace Convention Center,
1 John Nolen Drive, Madison

Join farmers and agriculturists from across Wisconsin in Madison and learn more about state issues affecting agriculture and meet with our state legislators.

Early Registration Deadline: March 1

Cost: \$25 per person by registration deadline.
\$30 after deadline and at the door.

Schedule of Events:

- 11:00 a.m. Registration
- 11:30 a.m. Opening Program
- 11:45 a.m. Lunch
- 12:45 p.m. Legislative Briefing
- 3:00 p.m. Capitol Visits



Ride the Bus to Ag Day at the Capitol

Don't want to drive yourself or worry about parking?

Ride the bus to Ag Day at the Capitol!

Bus Schedule

Depart:

- 6:30 a.m. **Baldwin:** Park and Ride, south of McDonald's
- 7:05 a.m. **Menomonie:** Walmart parking lot, west side
- 7:45 a.m. **Eau Claire:** Walmart parking lot, off Highway 53 and Golf Road
- 8:15 a.m. **Osseo:** Osseo Inn parking lot
- 8:40 a.m. **Hixton:** Hixton Travel Plaza
- 9:40 a.m. **Tomah:** McDonald's by Greyhound pickup area,
There will be a 15-minute break.
- 11:15 a.m. Arrive at Monona Terrace Convention Center.
- 5:30 p.m. Load bus and return home.

Note: Polk Farm Bureau has money available for sponsorship of members to attend.

To reserve your seat, please contact District 9 Coordinator, Katie Mattison at 866.355.7349 or kmattison@wfbf.com. Indicate which location you want to be picked up at.

Registrations are limited so reserve your seat today.



COUNTYnews

POLK COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION

Highlights from the WFBF Annual Meeting and YFA Conference

Tradition

1,140 Young Farmer and Agriculturist and Farm Bureau members converged on the Kalahari Resorts in Wisconsin Dells on December 2-5 for the YFA Conference, 97th WFBF Annual Meeting and 82nd Rural Mutual Insurance Company Annual Meeting.

More than 490 of the total attendees were young farmers and agriculturists attending the YFA Conference.

Some of the best and brightest YFA members competed in a variety of contests, attendees had the opportunity to learn new things at by attending breakout sessions and listening to excellent keynote speakers, members were recognized and awarded for their work and member delegates made their voices heard by setting policy that will guide the legislative agenda for the state's largest general farm organization during the next year.

Of the 1,140 members, more than 100 of those members were from District 9 including members from the UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter.

More District 9 highlights include:

- Representing District 9 in the YFA Discussion Meet were: Laura Benitz, Pierce County; Kirsten Konder, St. Croix County; and

Isaac Christenson, Polk County.

- Isaac Christenson represented Polk County and District 9 in the Final Four of the Discussion Meet.
- Representing District 9 in the Excellence in Ag Final Four were Leslie Svacina, St. Croix County; and Teresa Marker, Barron County.
- Teresa Marker won the Excellence in Ag Competition and represented Wisconsin at the AFBF Annual Convention in Phoenix, Arizona in January.
- Sally Albers of UW-River Falls won the Collegiate Farm Bureau Discussion Meet.
- Dave Kruschke, St. Croix County, received the highest award WFBF bestows on its members, the Distinguished Service to Farm Bureau award.
- Leslie Svacina, St. Croix County, graduated from WFBF Leadership Institute Class X.
- WFBF top 10 membership workers: Dean Bergseng, Pierce County, signing 10 members; and John Krings, Pierce County, signing nine members.
- Members who signed five or more members enjoyed being part of the Farm Bureau Proud Club, (formerly the Producer Club) where they received preferred seating for the Farm Bureau extravaganza and a special meal. Farm Bureau Proud Club members from District 9 were: Brian Douglas, Darryl Kovacik, Dean Bergseng, John Krings, Terry DuSell and Amber DuSell.
- WFBF District 9 Director Jim Holte was re-elected WFBF President.



Polk County Farm Bureau members who attended were: back row (L-R) Isaac Christenson, Dale Wood, Andrew Gould, Chris Owens and Erik Melin; front row (L-R) Chris Wood, Crystal Meier, Bonnie and Verne Williamson and Amanda Melin and Oliver.

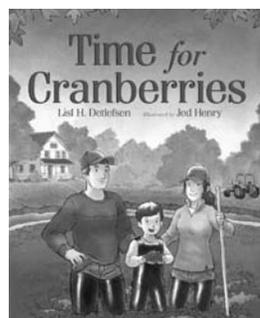


District 9 was well represented by many Young Farmers and Agriculturist members.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Farm Bureau Proud? Discussion Meet YFA Perspective Collegiate Farm Bureau
- 3 Meet: Kay Gilbertson Meet: Julie Wadzinski USDA Offers Loans New Rural Mutual Agent Board Contacts

Ag in the Classroom Announces Essay Contest and Book of the Year



'Tell us about cranberry production in Wisconsin during one of the four seasons.'

Each year, Ag in the Classroom offers an essay contest for fourth and fifth grade students in public, private and home schools, including 4-H clubs, Farm Bureau families and other organizations.

The 2017 topic is 'Tell us about cranberry production in Wisconsin during one of the four seasons.' This topic coincides with the 2017 book of the year,

"Time for Cranberries" by Lisl Detlefsen.

Polk County contest entries are due by **April 1**.

For rules, promotional materials, lessons and activities and other resources related to the essay contest and book program, visit www.wisagclassroom.org or contact Polk County Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom coordinator Crystal Meier at 715.292.7798.



Are You Farm Bureau Proud?



Farm Bureau's purpose is to promote, protect and represent the business, economic, leadership and educational interests of Wisconsin farmers.

Farm Bureau does this through: legislative involvement and political activity, public and media relations, education and training and leadership development. If you are proud of that, share it with your friends and neighbors by getting them signed up as members.

There are many incentives for signing new members to Farm Bureau:

- \$20 for each new member signed.
- **2x4:** Sign up two new members by **April 1** and you will be awarded with Farm Bureau work gloves.
- **5x5:** Sign up five new members by **May 1** and you will be awarded with a Farm Bureau Proud Carhartt vest.
- **8x8:** Sign up eight new members by **August 1** and you will be awarded with a Farm Bureau farm sign.

For more information, please contact District 9 Coordinator Katie Mattison at kmattison@wfbf.com or 866.355.7349.

Christenson Represents Polk County in the Final Four of Discussion Meet



Isaac Christenson excelled in the Discussion Meet at the YFA Conference where he made it through three rounds of competition to compete in the Final Four on December 4. Final Four finalists were: Kallie Jo Kastenson, Julie Sweney, Isaac Christenson and Kristi Fiedler, who was the winner.

The Discussion Meet contest is a panel discussion in which Farm Bureau members between the ages of 18 and 35 are judged on their ability to express their ideas and opinions and reach a solution on issues affecting agriculture.

Isaac is an agricultural business banker for Bremer Bank where he works with farmers on financial solutions. He earned a bachelor's degree in agriculture business from the UW-River Falls.

Isaac grew up showing sheep and pigs. He enjoys hunting, fishing, camping and kayaking.

Congratulations to Isaac Christenson on a job well done!

Young Farmer and Agriculturalist Members YFA Conference Perspective



Polk County Farm Bureau members Andrew Gould and Crystal Meier attended the YFA Conference for the first time and were sponsored by Rural Mutual Insurance Company.

Name: Andrew Gould
Employer name: Countryside Cooperative.
Number of years in Farm Bureau: One year.
Number of years attending the YFA Conference: First time attending.
What was your favorite part of the YFA Conference: The Friday night reception with the Soggy Prairie Boys and the Saturday morning keynote speaker, Vance Crowe, director of millennial engagement with Monsanto.

Why should other YFA members attend the YFA Conference: I think that other YFA members should attend because it is a great opportunity to meet other people from around the state. Also, there are many great things to see and take part in like the Discussion Meet and breakout sessions.

Name: Crystal Meier.
Employer name: Workforce Resource.
Number of years in Farm Bureau: Three years.
Number of years attending the YFA Conference: First time attending.
What was your favorite part of the YFA Conference: The Friday night reception because it was a great opportunity to network; and listening to the keynote speakers.
Why should other YFA members attend the YFA Conference: It is a great way to build your network or resources and gain knowledge in the field of agriculture.



Polk County Farm Bureau member Chris Owens attended the YFA Conference for the first time. He was sponsored by Rural Mutual Insurance Company.

Name: Chris Owens.
Farm name: Owens Farms, Inc.
Number of years in Farm Bureau: Five years in Wisconsin and three years in North Dakota.
Number of years attending YFA Conference: First time attending.
What was your favorite part of the YFA Conference: Networking and meeting people who share the same passion for agriculture as myself.
Why should other YFA members attend the YFA Conference: It is a great experience for meeting new people and to discuss what challenges are facing us in agriculture.

UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau Attends YFA Conference



UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau members enjoyed the YFA Conference in Wisconsin Dells in December.



UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau member Sally Albers won the Collegiate Farm Bureau Discussion Meet. Albers will represent Wisconsin in the National Collegiate Discussion Meet at the AFBF FUSION Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The first semester for the UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau was filled with events.

To kick off, we offered members free cheese curds from Ellsworth Creamery for attending the first meeting. We

volunteered at White Pine Berry Farm's Fall Family Day and ended the day with a barn dance. About 30 students attended.

The next event was the UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau Discussion Meet with three contestants including: Matt Kortbein, Sally Albers and Makayla Klumpyan. Matt and Sally advanced and Sally will represent Wisconsin in the national collegiate Discussion Meet at the AFBF FUSION Conference.

We also held a showing of *Farmland* and plan another showing this spring. Members volunteered for Feed My Starving Children in Eagan, Minnesota. 105 people packed meals to feed 77 people for a year. YFA Conference rounded out the semester with 21 members attending. They enjoyed the conference and look forward to attending next year.

Ag Day will be on **April 18**. Agriculture-related clubs and businesses come together to teach people about agriculture. If you want to participate as business, educational stand or donate, please contact us at uwrfcfb@gmail.com. As a chapter, we look forward to volunteering more, welcoming speakers and more educational opportunities for members.

We appreciate the support from WFBE.

Meet: Kay Gilbertson, District 9 Promotion and Education Chair



Kay Gilbertson was elected to represent District 9 on the Promotion and Education Committee.

Kay lives in Elk Mound with her husband Kevin and their three children: Brandon, Bailey and Kaleb, who are involved in their farm, FFA, 4-H, church and school activities.

They are members of Dunn County Farm Bureau and Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin. The couple is in partnership with Kevin's family on the family farm, Gilbertson Farms. They milk 475 cows and grow crops on 1,900 acres.

Kay serves as the Dunn County Ag in the Classroom coordinator, general leader of Elk Meadow 4-H club and as Sunday school superintendent. She is an alumna of UW-River Falls, where she earned a bachelor's degree in animal science.

Meet: Julie Wadzinski, District 9 Young Farmer and Agriculturalist Chair



Hello District 9! I am Julie Wadzinski and I will represent District 9 on the YFA Committee for the next three years.

I am originally from Marathon County, where I grew up on my family's 400-cow Century dairy farm. In 2006, my family sold our dairy cows.

In May of 2016, I accepted a position with Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College as a farm business production management instructor. Currently, I reside in Barron County.

In my spare time, I enjoy creating memories with my son, Bryan. I also enjoy reading, crocheting, gardening and outdoor adventures.

One of my passions is agricultural advocacy and sharing the ag story with consumers in addition to advocating for fair policy. I sought out training opportunities for advocacy and hope to use and hone those skills and passion on the YFA committee.

I earned a bachelor's degree in dairy science from UW-River Falls and was hired as a livestock nutritionist at Crystal Creek.

USDA Offers Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

Portable Equipment Can Help Producers, including Small-Scale and Local Farmers, Get Products to Market Quickly

By **Aaron Moore**, Polk County Farm Service Agency, County Executive Director

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will offer a financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment. The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program, which includes a smaller microloan option with lower down payments, are designed to help producers, including new, small- and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets.

The program also offers a new 'microloan' option, which allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of 5 percent. There is no requirement for three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible.

The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop farmers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage. Farmers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering to markets. Farmers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loan.

Eligible commodities include aquaculture, floriculture, fruits (including nuts) and vegetables, corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas sugar, peanuts, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass.

FSFL microloans also can be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a

commodity is placed in cold storage.

The traditional Farm Storage Facility Loan program is still available. This program provides assistance for commodity storage and handling systems. Loan amounts can be up to \$500,000 and amortized for seven, 10 or 12 years, depending on the amount of the loan. Applicants can finance up to 85 percent of the eligible costs.

All FSFL applications have a \$100 fee, must demonstrate a project need, environmental and financial review. It is recommended to start the loan application process at least 60 days prior to starting a project.

For more information about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or call the Polk County FSA office at 715.485.3138.



Polk County YFA

BOWLING NIGHT

Friday, February 24 McKenzie Lanes

7:30 p.m. 75 Highway 35

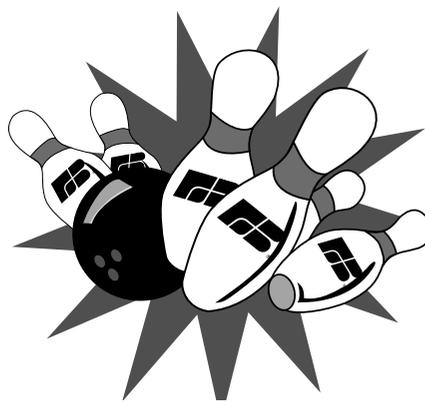
Centuria, WI 54824

Come and join Polk County Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Agriculturist members for an evening of bowling, networking and fun!

Cost: \$5 per person, includes 2 hours of bowling, shoe rental, pizza and pop.

Bring a friend who is not a Farm Bureau member and you get \$20 if they sign up to be a Farm Bureau member.

For more information or to RSVP by **February 22**, please contact Polk County YFA chair Erik Melin at 715.556.0803 (call or text) or District 9 coordinator Katie Mattison at 715.418.0975 (call or text).



Polk County Farm Bureau Contacts:

President, Jim Melin 715.488.2261
Vice President, Don Ellefson 715.485.3088
Secretary/Treasurer, Trent Jensen 715.268.8211

Director, Mike Garvey 715.825.3229
Director, Dean Johnson 715.491.9146
Director, Tim Mares 715.554.2174
Director, Ken Nelson 715.268.6426
Director, Dale Wester 715.646.1447

Office Secretary, Lisa Thomfohrda 715.485.3010
WFBF Board Director, Jim Holte 715.835.6708
District 9 YFA Chair, Julie Wadzinski 715.432.8740
Promotion and Education Chair,
Kay Gilbertson 715.271.8141
District 9 Coordinator, Katie Mattison 866.355.7349
RMIC District Manager, Laurie Peterson 715.514.4477

Meet: Candace Phillips Kuhl, Rural Mutual Insurance Agent

Candace Phillips Kuhl grew up in Hudson, and graduated from Hudson High School in 2011. After high school, she attended Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, where she earned an accounting degree.

Candace and her husband Bryan live in Turtle Lake with their puppy, Ward. She also is a dance teacher and choreographer. She loves sharing her passion for dance with the youth of Wisconsin. Candace also participates in judging for teams and local dance competitions.

Candace started with Northwest Insurance Agency as a sub-producer in October of 2016. She is enjoying learning the world of insurance and is fully licensed to sell. Candace is excited to be working for such a great company, surrounded by great colleagues.

For more information, please contact Candace at the Rural Mutual Insurance Office in Balsam Lake at 715.485.3010.

Polk County Farm Bureau Offers Scholarships

Polk County Farm Bureau is pleased to announce that it will be awarding higher education scholarships to graduating high school senior students who are enrolled in an accredited college, university or technical college.



All majors will be considered for this scholarship. The applicant or his or her parents must be a Polk County Farm Bureau member. Completed applications must be post-marked by **April 1**.

For an application, contact the Polk County Farm Bureau office secretary Lisa Thomfohrda at 715.485.3010 or visit wfbf.com/countyfarmbureaus/polk.

Welcome New Members

Bronson Beauvais*, Ronald Cormican, Jason Ellingson*, Randy Hughes, Cody Marek*, James Mortensen*, Jessica Owens, Julia Owens* and Norm Peterson.

* Denotes voting membership.

