



Vernon County Farm Bureau

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Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

FFA Farm Forum Success



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

"Wisconsin Farm Bureau takes pride in hosting this special event with the FFA to help develop our next generation of agriculture leaders," said Jim Holte, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation President.

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 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 45th year the Farm Bureau family of affiliates has sponsored the event for Wisconsin youth.

Each year the Vernon County Farm Bureau sponsors area students to attend FFA Farm Forum. Vernon County was well represented at this year's event, with students from Hillsboro and Westby in attendance.



Ag Day on Campus Save the Date



The Collegiate Farm Bureau at UW-Platteville will host Ag Day on Campus on **Thursday, April 20**.

Join the students on the West Lawn from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for a day of celebrating agriculture. Grab a walking taco, enjoy delicious Wisconsin made snacks, participate in sheep shearing demonstrations, visit the farm animals and learn more about agriculture.

If you are interested in being a sponsor of the event, please contact Heidi Kaestner at kaestnerh@uwplatt.edu.

County Ag in the Classroom Update

Essay season is here again. As has been in years past, we encourage fourth and fifth grade students to participate in Ag in the Classroom essay contest. Each year the topic has specific lesson plans, activities and other resources that can be used to teach about Wisconsin agriculture. This year's topic is 'Tell us about cranberry production in Wisconsin during one of the four seasons.' This contest is sponsored by InSight FS, We Energies and the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation.

Vernon County Farm Bureau has several resources available to assist in the learning and exploration of this year's topic. The 2017 book

of the year, "Time for Cranberries" by author Lisl Detlefsen, is the perfect way to educate students about the production of cranberries and help students get started on the essay topic.

Rules, promotional materials, county Farm Bureau contacts, lessons and activities and other resources related to the essay contest and book program can be found at www.wisagclassroom.org.

Vernon County contest entries are due by **April 1**. Essays should be mailed to: **Vernon County Farm Bureau, c/o Steve Wagemester E7145 Airport Road, Viroqua, WI 54665**.



COUNTYnews

VERNON COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION



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Vernon County Farm Bureau Members Attend Ag Day at the Capitol



Ag Day at the Capitol was held on March 8 in Madison. The event is the largest gathering of farmers from across the state representing a variety of farm groups to learn more about state issues and meet with their state legislators.

Vernon County Farm Bureau members Alex Bring and Scott Sherry attended. They along with 400 other attendees gathered at the Monona Terrace for a meal and issues briefing before walking to the Capitol to discuss current agriculture issues with legislators Senator Jennifer Schilling and Representative Lee Nerison.

Topics for discussion were the state budget, transportation fund-

ing, groundwater legislation, agrichemical fee reductions and other pertinent ag issues.

"Ag Day at the Capitol is where farmers build relationships with legislators and explain the needs and opportunities for Wisconsin agriculture," said Jim Holte, Wisconsin Farm Bureau President. "The difference this day makes for agriculture is tremendous."



Orths Named to AFBF Committee



Derek and Charisse Orth have been appointed by the American Farm Bureau Federation to its Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee for the 2017-2019 term. They started in March.

The national committee is comprised of 16 positions representing all regions of the U.S. An individual or a couple may hold each committee position. The Orths completed a three-year term on the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Young Farmer and Agriculturist Committee where they served as chairs in 2016.

Derek and Charisse milk 250 cows with his parents at Orth-

Ridge Jerseys near Lancaster. Derek is a board director and Charisse is co-women's chair for the Grant County Farm Bureau. He is also a treasurer of the Wisconsin Jersey Breeders Association. The couple have one daughter, Zeeva.

Committee members are responsible for YF&R Program planning, which includes the coordination of YF&R competitive events during AFBF's Annual Convention each January. They also provide support in planning and implementing AFBF's bi-annual FUSION Conference for Farm Bureau volunteer leaders involved in YF&R, Women's Leadership and Promotion and Education.

National committee members are nominated by their respective state Farm Bureaus. They study farm and food policy issues, participate in leadership training exercises and hone other professional skills during their tenure as committee members.

Mark Your Calendars for the District 3 YFA Southwest Shindig

Join District 3 Farm Bureau for the first-ever Southwest Shindig. The night will feature music by Chasin' Mason from 7:30 to 11:30 p.m.

Who: Anyone aged 21 and older.

What: A night of dancing, socializing and great music.

When: Saturday, April 1.

Where: Vesperman Farms, Lancaster.

Admission: \$10 per person

Food and drinks will be available for purchase. Snacks will be provided.

The event is open to

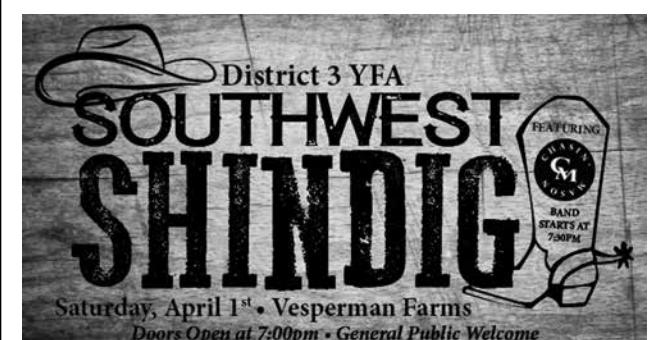
the general public.

Invite your friends,

put on your boots

and get ready for a

good time.



District Director Update



R-E-L-A-X

After a slow start to the 2014 season, Aaron Rodgers once told the media and Green Bay Packer fans, "R-E-L-A-X... we'll be fine."

These are wise words to consider as we enter the first weeks and months of a new administration in Washington, D.C., As with any new administration, there is uncertainty and confusion with leadership positioning, establishing priorities and messaging.

The Trump administration is no exception as they attempt to find their footing and voice. The 'whack a mole' management style will need to find its priorities and begin to focus ... I hope.

Your Farm Bureau is focused.

This year, Farm Bureau's priorities will be to engage and lead on issues that concern our farms, our businesses.

Environmental issues continue to rise to the top of our discussions as we address ground water and surface water issues. Words like 'karst' have become part of our vocabulary as we try to find answers to problems without shutting down agricultures' need to be able to grow.

Transportation is quickly gaining momentum in importance. Both Wisconsin and Washington need to address infrastructure concerns without borrowing our way to prosperity.

We need to listen to the first messages from U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue (expected to be confirmed) to understand the priorities of this administration on agriculture issues going into the next farm bill discussions.

Immigration reform, trade reform, infrastructure reform (including reliable high-speed internet), budget and health-care reform are leading issues affecting rural America. With an approaching \$20 trillion debt, money is going to be at the very center of all discussions.

R-E-L-A-X is a word that may suggest everything would or will work out without concern, but Mr. Rodgers wasn't suggesting such. A-Rod knew he and the team needed to care of business to be successful.

Farm Bureau will be engaged, taking care of business, to ensure agricultures' success.

Dick Gorder

WFBF District 3 Director

District YFA Update



I began my journey as a District 3 YFA Representative at the YFA Conference that was held last December.

I had the opportunity to meet my fellow committee members and many YFA members from District 3 as well.

I can remember four years ago when I attended my first conference and I only knew a few people attending, and now I have a hard time finding time to talk to everyone because the conference feels more like a large family reunion with friends who I have met from around the state.

It's such a great networking opportunity with those involved in the agriculture industry and I can't wait to meet more Farm Bureau members in the next three years as the District 3 YFA Committee Representative.

I know that I have big shoes to fill with Derek and Charisse Orth retiring this year, but luckily, they were appointed to the AFBF Young Farmer and Ranchers Committee and will still be a part of our state YFA Committee meetings.

In January, the whole committee met for the first time in Madison and discussed goals and plans for the next YFA Conference. If anyone has an idea for a new Farm Bureau district or county event, feel free to contact me anytime.

To stay up to date on what's happen-

ing with WFBF and its program areas, be sure to 'Like' or follow these social media platforms: **Facebook:** Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer and Agriculturist Program, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Leadership Development and Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom Program; **Twitter:** WIFarmBureau; **Instagram:** wifarmbureau; and **Snapchat:** wifarmbureau.

If you're interested in having the chance to travel to the AFBF Convention in 2018 and win some awesome prizes at the state and national levels, consider participating in one of the WFBF Young Farmer and Agriculturists contests. The Discussion Meet is for members who enjoy speaking on agricultural-related topics and talking with other members about ideas to solve issues affecting the agriculture industry. The District 3 Discussion Meet will be held sometime in late August.

The Excellence in Agriculture Award is for members who do not make the majority of their income from farming, i.e., agriculture teacher, fertilizer salesperson, veterinarian, farm employee, agricultural journalist or marketer. The Achievement Award, however, is for anyone who gets a majority of their income from on farm production. If you have any questions on these contests, please let me know. The short-form applications for these two awards are due **July 7**. If anyone needs help with their applications, don't hesitate to ask.

I'm looking forward to working with the YFA members of District 3 and helping spread the good word about agriculture and Farm Bureau.

Tammy Wiedenbeck
District 3 YFA Representative

2016 WFBF Annual Meeting Highlights



Vernon County Farm Bureau members Alex Bringe, Trent Erickson and Scott Sherry served as delegates and participated in the policy adoption process that will guide WFBF's legislative agenda for 2017.



Vernon County members enjoyed their time at the YFA Conference. One of the best parts about the conference is socializing and networking with other farmers and agriculturists from around the state and taking some time off the farm to have a little fun.



More than 60 YFA members from District 3 attended the 2016 Young Farmer and Agriculturist Conference that is held in conjunction with the WFBF Annual Meeting every year. Members networked, attended breakout sessions, and learned more about Farm Bureau opportunities, while enjoying the many amenities of the Kalahari Resort.



District 3 was well represented at the WFBF Annual Meeting and YFA Conference. Members served as delegates, competed in contests, participated in committee activities and discussed issues affecting the agricultural industry. Josh Bailie and Andrew DalSanto participated in the Discussion Meet, while Tammy Wiedenbeck and Derek and Charisse Orth fulfilled their responsibilities on the WFBF YFA Committee.

Farm Bureau in Action



Several District 3 members traveled to Green County for the 'Every Farmers Dream' Tour. Those in attendance toured Kuhn North America, Alp and Dell Cheese Store, Sugar River Pizza Company and New Glarus Brewing Company. A fun time was had by all.



The AFBF Fusion Conference was on February 10-13 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Members of the WFBF Promotion and Education Committee and Young Farmer and Agriculturist Committee networked with Farm Bureau members from across the U.S. and learned more about the Pennsylvania agriculture industry.



The WFBF Leadership Institute Class X and WFBF Board of Directors attended the AFBF Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C. They learned more about issues affecting agriculture and visited Capitol Hill to talk with elected officials about these issues. Institute members also visited many national monuments, museums and memorials. While at the Arlington National Cemetery, District 3 member Tammy Wiedenbeck had the honor of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



Vernon County Farm Bureau hosted an informational meeting on the usage of cover crops. Dr. Allen Williams, a nationally acclaimed cover crop expert, spoke on the characteristics of cover crops and their benefits in corn and soybean production. UW-Extension crops and farm management agent Ted Bay talked about the success of local cover crop farmers and the programs used in the Kickapoo Watershed. The event was well attended and offered valuable information to farmers interested in using cover crops to improve their bottom line.



Vernon County Farm Bureau Vice President Robert Nigh, attended the Council of Presidents meeting on March 7 at the Sheraton Hotel in Madison. He met with other presidents and vice presidents from around the state to network and discuss official WFBF business.

Tractor Rollbar Rebates Available

Tractor overturns are the leading cause of farm-related deaths. That's why it's so important that each tractor have a rollover protective structure (ROPS).

The Wisconsin ROPS Rebate Program reimburses owners up to 70 percent (maximum of \$865) toward the total cost of purchasing, shipping and installing individual ROPS. Wisconsin tractor owners can apply for a ROPS via the hotline, 877.767.7748 or www.ropsr4u.com.

A ROPS, when used with a seatbelt, is 99

percent effective in preventing injury or death in the event of an overturn. More than one-half of the tractors in Wisconsin do not have this protection.

The program is run by the National Farm Medicine Center at Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation, and is made possible through philanthropic support from the Auction of Champions. More than 180 ROPS have been installed since 2013.

For more information, call Barbara Marlenga at the National Farm Medicine Center, 715.389.1519.



Vernon County Farm Bureau Contacts:

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| President, Steve Wagemester | 608.638.3187 |
| Vice President, Robert Nigh | 608.689.2633 |
| Secretary/Treasurer, Scott Sherry | 608.637.7440 |
| YFA Chair, Alex Bringe | 608.606.9182 |
| Promotion and Education Chair, Dan Obert | 608.489.3867 |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Director, Trent Erickson | 608.606.9355 |
| Director, Rod Ofte | 608.452.2861 |
| Director, Bill Putze | 608.629.5455 |
| Director, Phil Solverson | 608.637.3587 |

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|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Vernon County Farm Bureau | 888.830.2572 |
| District 3 Coordinator, Melissa Doyle | 866.355.7343 |
| WFBF Board Director, Richard Gorder | 608.987.3424 |
| RMIC District Manager, Randy Palmer | 608.515.3123 |

District Promotion and Education Update



Spring is sure to go fast as there are many activities to keep Farm Bureau members busy while helping consumers understand agriculture's story.

As the District 3 Promotion and Education Committee representative, I'm excited to start my term and have truly enjoyed visiting southwest Wisconsin Farm Bureau counties and the volunteers who make it great.

Looking for ideas or activities? Visit wfbf.com to download a copy of the 'Playbook' which is full of 'plays' and tips in that will help in planning events. Categories include: Ag in the Classroom, consumer outreach, education and ag promotion, fundraising, member development and policy and development implementation.

Mark your calendars for the following dates and upcoming deadlines:

- April 1 - Ag in the Classroom essay contest entries due.
- April 15 - National Ag in the Classroom ag advocate applications due.
- April 15 - County essay winners to District Promotion and Education Chairs
- April 15 - AFBFA White-Reinhardt Mini-Grant applications due.
- April 25 - District essay winner due back to Ag in the Classroom coordinator.
- May - Beef Month promotions.

Do you have ideas for district tours or activities? Or questions about how to increase participation? Please let me know. I'm looking forward to serving you and being your liaison for state and national outreach activities.

Katie Roth

District 3 Promotion and Education Committee Representative

DID YOU KNOW?

In Vernon County, agriculture accounts for \$801 million in economic activity.