

Vernon County Farm Bureau

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Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

Vernon County Represented at FFA Farm Forum

Nearly 200 high school juniors from across Wisconsin attended the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's FFA Farm Forum in Wisconsin Rapids on February 19-20.

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

"The Wisconsin Farm Bureau takes pride in hosting this special event with the FFA to help grow the next crop of agricultural leaders," said Jim Holte, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation President.

Joining Holte as keynote speakers were Jonathan Eckelberg, digital content specialist at the Wisconsin Department of Tour-

ism and Ethan Giebel, director of education at Cooperative Network.

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 44th year that 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, Kickapoo, La Farge, Viroqua and Westby in attendance.



Westby FFA members who attended included: (L-R) Katie Justin, Courtney Moser, Claire Hawthorne and Krista Hall.



Hillsboro FFA members who attended included: (L-R) Zachary O'Hair and Cameron Haas.



La Farge FFA members who attended included: (L-R) Pearl Franke and Amber Strait.



Viroqua FFA members who attended included: (L-R) Ella Swenson and Rachel Nigh.



Kickapoo FFA members who attended included: (L-R) Aaron Hatfield and Mason Geary.



COUNTYnews

VERNON COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION

Farm Bureau in Action



Ag Day at the Capitol was on January 27 in Madison. Vernon County members Alex Bringe and Scott Sherry attended. Members gathered at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center for a meal and issues briefing before they walked to the Capitol and met and discussed current agricultural issues with Representative Lee Nerison.



WFBF District 3 Director Dick Gorder was in Washington, D.C., with other members of the WFBF Board of Directors. He met with Wisconsin lawmakers to talk about trade, immigration reform, biotech labeling and wolves.



The District 3 YFA Chili and Grilled Cheese Cook-Off was held in February. YFA members and their families enjoyed an afternoon of socializing and healthy competition. Participants were very creative, using a variety of ingredients and recipes to make their cook-off entries. Vernon County's Alex Bringe served as the judge. The Chili and Grilled Cheese Cook-Off winners included: Gretchen Kamps, first place chili; Kent Jerrett, second place chili; Buck Johnson, people's choice chili; Justin Doyle, first place grilled cheese; and Melissa Doyle, second place grilled cheese.

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Conservation Farmer of the Year Named



Food, fun, prizes and conservation were the themes at the Vernon County Conservation Awards Banquet. Area youth who participated in the annual conservation poster and photo contests were recognized, along with showcasing the Conservation Farmer of the Year, Conservation Landowner of the Year and Conservation Teacher of the Year.

Vernon County Farm Bureau member Dan Obert was named the Conservation Farmer of the Year. Dan owns a dairy farm located near LaFarge and is a third generation farmer. He milks 34 cows and operates about 250 acres. Dan has incorporated many conservation practices and improvements into his farming, including contour strip farming, managed grazing and a stream crossing.

Vernon County Farm Bureau served as a sponsor of the event and continues to be a proud supporter and partner of the Vernon County Land and Water Conservation Department.

Ag Day on Campus - Save the Date!

The UW-Platteville Collegiate Farm Bureau will host Ag Day on Campus on **Thursday, April 21**.

Join the students on the West Lawn from 10:30 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, pet the farm animals and learn more about agriculture.

If you are interested in being a sponsor of the event, please contact Dayna Anderson at andersonday@uwplatt.edu.



District Director Update



Perspective

Heading to Orlando for the American Farm Bureau Annual Convention, I became acutely aware of perspective. The perspective of both time and space.

As I left Wisconsin it was very foggy and visibility was less than a half mile. In a matter of a few minutes of take-off we were above the fog and the sun was shining brightly. A few hours later I landed in Florida and the dreary weather of Wisconsin was quickly becoming a distant memory.

While I flew above the clouds with the sun streaming in the

windows I realized how, in a manner of time and space, my perspective changed.

Some days it is difficult to see through the fog.

I realize going into this coming year there is a lot of uncertainty and questions about markets and margins. I know the profitability of corn, soybeans and milk this next year is not going to be what we have been fortunate to experience during the past couple of years.

I know that government oversight and regulations continue to challenge us. Further, I know there is a continuing and concerted effort by those who do not understand agriculture wanting to dictate how we farm.

Some days it seems to be more than I can manage and yet I know that is why I'm a Farm Bureau member. On any given

day Farm Bureau is working on the very issues that challenge my farm's livelihood, thus allowing me to focus on my farm's needs.

It is important to keep things in perspective and have a profound understanding of what I can and cannot control. For almost a century now, Farm Bureau has been around in good times and challenging times as the voice of agriculture.

As the fog of uncertainty confronts us, be certain you don't overlook the importance and value of your Farm Bureau membership.

Best wishes and stay safe.

Dick Gorder
WFBF District 3 Director

Celebrate National Ag Day



March 15 is National Ag Day, a time when producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies

and countless others across America gather to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by American agriculture.

As the world population soars, there is even greater demand for the food, fiber and renewable resources produced in the U.S. The National Ag Day program believes that every American should:

- Understand how food, fiber and renewable resource products are produced.
- Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy.
- Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.
- Acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food, fiber and renewable resource industries.

Agriculture provides almost everything we eat, use and wear on a daily basis and is increasingly contributing to fuel and other bio-products. Each year, members of the agricultural industry gather to promote American agriculture. This effort helps educate millions of consumers.

By far, the most effective part of this program is the role you play in helping spread the word. A few

generations ago, most Americans were directly involved in—or had relatives or friends involved in—agricultural-related endeavors.

Today, that is no longer the case. That is why it is so important that we join together at the community level...our voices, in concert, become a shout that carries our message a great deal further than any one of us can do alone! We are pleased that you have joined this effort to promote American agriculture.

Download more helpful tools at www.agday.org! You will find:

- Talking points about the importance of agriculture.
- Ag Day logos.
- Sample presentation speech.
- Press release (to download and modify for your event).
- PSAs (to download and modify for your event).
- Print advertisements.

For more information, please visit wfbf.com/programsevents/nationalagday.

Celebrate National Ag Day March 15

Did you know that it can take up to 500 years to make an inch of **soil?**

Farmers use conservation practices to protect this resource.



2015 WFBF Annual Meeting and YFA Conference Highlights



The WFBF Annual Meeting was on December 5-7 at the Kalahari Resorts in Wisconsin Dells. Vernon County Farm Bureau members Alex Bringe, Jacqui Davison, Robert Nigh, Rod Ofte, Scott Sherry and Steve Wagemester served as delegates and participated in the policy adoption process.



District 3 was represented in the WFBF Producer Club. Membership workers who signed up five or more new members were recognized during the Producer Club luncheon.



Members of all ages enjoyed listening to the Peterson Farm Brothers during Saturday's afternoon session of the YFA Conference. The brothers shared behind the scenes details about their parody music videos and talked about the importance of advocating for agriculture. Several Vernon County members took the opportunity to get a photo with the brothers during the meet and greet session afterwards.



Nearly 45 YFA members from District 3 attended the 2015 Young Farmer and Agriculturist Conference that is held in conjunction with the WFBF Annual Meeting. Members networked, attended breakout sessions and learned more about Farm Bureau opportunities, all while enjoying the many amenities of the Kalahari Resorts. Vernon County was well represented at this year's YFA Conference. Trent Erickson participated in the Discussion Meet and Alex Bringe competed for the Achievement Award and was the winner of the 50/50 raffle.

There are Benefits to Your Farm Bureau Membership:

- Auto**
- General Motors Discount
- Health**
- ScriptSave® Prescription Drug Savings Card
 - Stroke Detection Plus
- Supplies and Products**
- Case IH
 - Caterpillar
 - FS-GROWMARK Patronage
 - Grainger
 - Polaris
 - Office Depot

- Communication**
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 - The Country Today
- Insurance**
- Rural Mutual Insurance Company
 - Farm Bureau Financial Services
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- AAA
 - AVIS Car Rental Discount Program
 - Choice Hotels International, Inc.
 - Wyndham Hotel Group

- Financial**
- AgriPlan Medical Reimbursement Program
 - Farm Bureau Bank
- Protection**
- \$500 Reward Protection Program
 - Accidental Death Policy

For complete details visit wfbf.com/benefits-membership.

Vernon County Farm Bureau Contacts:

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
Director, Dan Obert	608.489.3867
Director, Rod Ofte	608.452.2861
Director, Bill Putze	608.629.5455
Director, Phil Solverson	608.637.3587
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, Dave Larson	608.935.9500

District Promotion and Education Update



As we start a new year, we are reminded of the new things happening around us.

One new and exciting adventure is the Promotion and Education Committee. The long-time Women's Committee changed to the Promotion and Education Committee.

With this change, there are so many new ideas and opportunities being brought forward. I know some counties still have the woman's program and we are not asking you to change it. This will just give county Farm Bureaus more tools to use to strengthen programs. When new information arrives, I will pass it along.

I want to thank those who came to the District 3 Fall Women's

Summit. We had a great turnout and a lot of fun painting and learning more about Ag in the Classroom. This year's essay contest topic is 'Tell us about producing maple syrup in Wisconsin.' If you know a fourth or fifth grade student who wants to participate in the contest, more information can be found at www.wisagclassroom.org.

The 2016 Wisconsin Woman's Ag Summit recently took place on March 4-5. If you have never attended, I encourage you do to so next year. It is a wonderful networking event for women who share the same passion for agriculture.

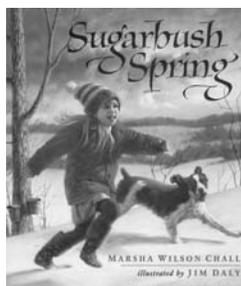
I hope that you have a great year and I look forward to seeing you at upcoming Farm Bureau events.

Nicole Adrian
District 3 Promotion and Education Committee
Representative

County Ag in the Classroom Update

Essay season is here again! We encourage fourth and fifth grade students to participate in the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's 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 agriculture. This year's topic is 'Tell us about producing maple syrup in Wisconsin.' The 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 2016 Book of the Year *Sugarbush Spring* by Marsha Wilson Chall is the perfect way to teach students about the production of maple syrup and help students get started on the essay topic.

All 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

Vernon County Dairy Breakfast

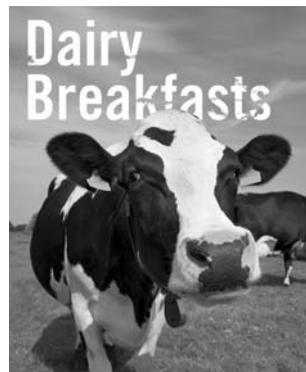
The Vernon County Dairy Breakfast will be held at Ocooch Dairy outside of Hillsboro on the eastern edge of the county on **Saturday, June 18**. Ocooch Dairy is owned and operated by Jim Mlsna and his children.

There will be guided tours of the 700 milking cow farm and of course, a hearty breakfast. Please watch you local papers for more details. Meetings are being scheduled to assist in planning the annual dairy event.

There is a 'rural art' project taking place in conjunction with June Dairy Month. 'The Cows Are Out In Vernon County' encourages artists of all ages to create a life-size weatherproof sculpture of a dairy cow.

Possibilities for materials are unlimited, but making sure it can stand up to a June rainstorm is the important part. 4-H clubs, school groups and high school ag classes are encouraged to participate in the fun.

For more information on this exciting opportunity to draw visitors in June or if you want to volunteer, please contact julie.johnson@hillsboroschools.org or daisychick80@hotmail.com.



Hope to see you at the Vernon County Dairy Breakfast.

District YFA Update

Winter One-derland!

We hope you are surviving winter! Our daughter, Zeeva, turned ONE in January, and it certainly has been a one-derland for us!



Between her and Farm Bureau, we've been on our toes since the WFBF Annual Meeting in December.

One more thing that has changed is that Charisse and I are not only the District 3 Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) representatives, but I also am serving as state YFA Committee Chair. This brings a new list of opportunities to our life.

We recently attended the AFBF Annual Convention in Orlando, Florida, the Young Leader Conference in Illinois and Ag Day at the Capitol in Madison.

In February, we participated in the District 3 YFA Chili and Grilled Cheese Cook-Off, AFBF YF&R Conference and the FFA Farm Forum.

Do you know a young individual or couple that excels in production agriculture? Encourage them to fill out the Achievement Award application! How about a young leader who promotes education or goes out of their way to help others? The Excellence in Agriculture award may be perfect for them! Both awards have cash prizes and the chance to win a trip to Washington, D.C., or Phoenix, Arizona, next January!



Just think, if you are ready for winter to be over, next time we write, we will be planting corn and cutting hay.

Derek and Charisse Orth
District 3 YFA Representatives