

Portage County Farm Bureau

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Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

Winter Doesn't Stop YFA Members from Enjoying District Events

District 8 YFA members were busy this winter, attending various county events. Portage County hosted the first event on February 8 at the Eron's pond outside of Junction City. Quite a few of our YFA families took part in the daytime event and tried their hands at ice-fishing. While members ended up getting skunked, they still had a great time taking in the fresh air and enjoying the company.

Taylor County YFA hosted the next event; a day of tubing at Perkinstown Hill in western Taylor County. Member families enjoyed the tubing hill and had some hot cocoa in the chalet. Finally, the district held a bowling night on March 1 in Marathon County. Members enjoyed the conversation and camaraderie of the evening.

Look in your mailbox for the next YFA events, including a return of the Night at the Ball Diamond!



Members of all ages had a great time during the Saturday afternoon ice fishing event held in February. Jeff Okonek and his daughter tried to catch the "big one".



A group of YFA members from across District 8 gathered for a fun afternoon at the Eron's pond outside of Junction City.

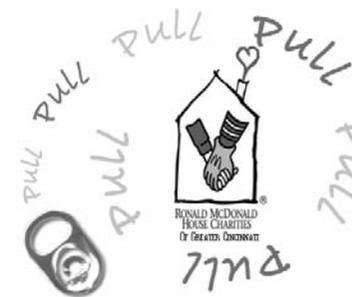
District 8 Women's Program Serves Families at Local Ronald McDonald House

District 8 Women participated in a statewide event to promote healthy eating at the Marshfield Ronald McDonald house Friday, February 28. Ladies from Clark, Taylor and Wood counties made a meal for the families who use the house as their home when a child from their family is ill and needs to stay at the children's Hospital in Marshfield.



In February, Farm Bureau members Ashleigh Calaway, Deb Esselman and Susan Brugger prepared a meal for the families utilizing the Marshfield Ronald McDonald house.

Don't Forget! County Farm Bureaus are still collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald house. Please continue to collect those tabs!





COUNTYnews

PORTAGE COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION

Volunteers Make the Difference

Helping Hands from the Heartland Benefit raises \$13,000 for South Dakota Ranchers

District 8 Farm Bureau members banded together after October's winter storm Atlas affected hundreds of ranchers in rural South Dakota to raise money to help their friends in agriculture in a great time of need.

Nine Farm Bureau members representing District 8 county Farm Bureaus formed a steering committee to develop the Helping Hands from the Heartland benefit.

Together the committee worked for three months to develop, raise funds and implement the one-night event at Dale's Weston Lanes



on Saturday, February 22. Through the hard work of many Farm Bureau members, a steak supper was offered, with more than 40 raffle items, all to

benefit others! The committee hosted the country/rock band Tuscan Road, who played an awesome concert during the event from 8 p.m. to midnight.

District 8 members raised \$13,000 which went directly to the South Dakota Farm Bureau CARES fund, for ranchers affected by devastating losses due to that early winter storm.

The Helping Hands from the Heartland committee would like to thank all of the volunteers and donors who made this Farm Bureau event a success. It was truly a grassroots effort!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Women Rooted in Ag -
Cheri Klussendorf
County Fruit Sales
YFA Woodchucks Game
From Farmer to Producer
- 3 Farm Bill 2014
Ag Day at the Capitol
Member Benefits
Board of Directors

Local Students Attend Farm Bureau's FFA Farm Forum

Stevens Point FFA members were among the more than 140 high school students who attended the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's FFA Farm Forum in Wisconsin Rapids February 21-22.

"The Farm Bureau is proud to host this annual event with the FFA to help grow the next crop of agricultural leaders in Wisconsin," said Jim Holte, president of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation.

During the two-day event at Hotel Mead in Wisconsin Rapids, FFA members attended workshops that covered topics including post-high school agricultural opportunities, current legislative issues and misconceptions about agriculture and biotechnology.

Joining Holte as keynote speakers at the event were two young dairy farmers who regularly engage the public on social media: Rick Roden of West Bend, a former chairman of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Young Farmer and Agriculturist Committee, and Carrie Mess of Lake Mills, who blogs under the name Dairy Carrie.

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 42nd year the Farm Bureau family of affiliates has sponsored the event for Wisconsin youth.



Members of the Stevens Point FFA chapter attended the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's FFA Farm Forum February 21-22 in Wisconsin Rapids. They included (from left): Jordan Kaminski and Mackenzie Betro.

Women Rooted in Agriculture- Cheri Klussendorf



The Women's Program is featuring different women rooted in agriculture. This month meet Cheri Klussendorf from Taylor County. She is the office manager at Medford Co-op Feed and Grain Services and a grass-based dairy farmer. Her hobbies include traveling and reading.

Tell us about your county Farm Bureau experiences:

I have been on the county Farm Bureau board for six years. I started as the Young Farmer and Agriculturist chair and have since been the vice president and now I'm in my third term as president. I have watched the dynamic leadership changes on the county FB board from the older to younger generation. We currently have seven Young Farmer and Agriculturist members on our board.

What is your favorite Farm Bureau event or memory?

I personally love the WFBF Annual Meeting. I really enjoy watching the grassroots organization at its finest. I enjoy the policy development at the county level all the way to the state Annual Meeting.

Tell us about leadership roles with other organizations:

I am a co-general leader of Little Whispers 4-H club, where I also serve as the county clover buds leader. I serve on our county dairy breakfast committee and I'm a youth soccer coach.

How has Farm Bureau connected you with other women in agriculture?

Last year I attended the Ag Women's Summit for the first time. I loved the interaction with other women in agriculture. Most farm women have one thing in common for sure: farm men. We are usually the sounding board when there are problems on the farm. It's nice to know that we aren't the "only one" who deals with the stressful problems. I have had a lot of fun with the women in our county during our women's

events. It is nice to have other sounding boards to talk to and to understand what we go through as farm wives. I really enjoyed the wine tasting that District 8 had this last year. After a little wine everyone starts talking and it was fun to see so many women let their "stress" go for a day!

What bucket list item would you like to cross off this year?

I would love to take a vacation off the farm and be away from work for a while. When we won the Young Farmer Achievement award in 2011, we won a trip to Hawaii which was our first vacation away from the farm and our kids for more than a day. We both loved the trip and the time off the farm that we made an agreement that we would take a trip away from the farm each year. One year with the kids and one year without, last year we were able to take our first real family vacation with our three sons to Disney World for eight days. This year I get to decide where we take our trip. I would like to go to Arizona for Brewers Spring Training. I don't really watch the Brewers a lot but my husband Ryan does, and with the winter we are having I would be happy anywhere warm!

Portage County Fruit Sales offer Members Savings and Benefits!

Portage County Farm Bureau holds three fruit sales annually as a member benefit to you. It also helps support the county Farm Bureau. The fruit is picked and shipped directly to our county to save you money.

The three sales are:

- Strawberries, citrus fruit and nuts: February/March
- Peaches and blueberries: July/August
- Citrus fruit, nuts and holiday gift packs: October/November

We usually offer two pick-up locations in the county. One is near Milladore and the other is in Stevens Point, depending on the number of orders. It is easy to order, just fill out the order form or call the contact number listed. You will be called when your order arrives. We do ask that you pick up your order promptly due to the fact that it is a perishable item. If you have any questions about ordering fruit please call Jodi Otto at 715.457.3195.



Upcoming YFA Event - Don't Miss Out!

Do not miss your chance to have a blast with your friends at the Wisconsin Woodchucks- Marathon County Farm Bureau and PPA June Dairy month game on **Friday, June 20**. District 8 YFA has reserved the Ministry Health Care Fan Deck for our use during this ballgame.



The night kicks off at 7:05 p.m. with the first pitch thrown. The deck includes all-you-can-eat-and-drink brats, burgers and beer, a great view of the ballgame and fireworks to end the night!

This opportunity is limited to the first 25 people who RSVP and costs \$25.95 per person. Please RSVP to Melissa Eron at 651.380.1710.

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 nix 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.



There are Benefits to Your Farm Bureau Membership:

Auto	Health	Supplies and Products
• General Motors Discount	• ScriptSave® Prescription Drug Savings Card	• Case IH
Communication	• Stroke Detection Plus	• FS-GROWMARK Patronage
• AgriVisor (NEW)	Insurance	• Grainger
• The Country Today	• Rural Mutual Insurance Company	• Office Depot
Financial	• Farm Bureau Financial Services	Travel
• AgriPlan Medical Reimbursement Program	Protection	• 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.

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District 8 Coordinator, Lindsey Prahl	866.355.7348
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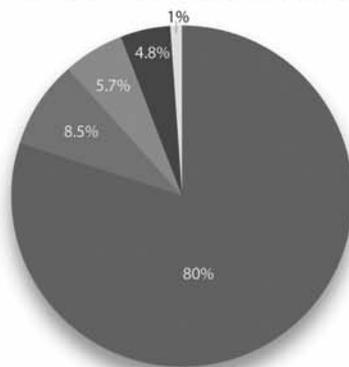
Farm Bill 2014



Summary

- This five-year bill provides certainty to Wisconsin farmers and consumers
- Significant dairy reform
- Funding for research and specialty crop research
- Strengthens livestock disaster programs
- Strengthens crop insurance
- Eliminates direct payments
- Creates payment limits
- Tightens eligibility rules for Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)
- Consolidation or repeal of nearly 100 programs
- 23 duplicative conservation programs consolidated into 13

What's included in the farm bill?



- Food Stamps/Nutrition (SNAP), \$390.7 billion
- Crop Insurance, \$41.4 billion
- Conservation, \$28.2 billion
- Commodity Programs, \$23.5 billion
- Other 8 Program Titles, \$4.8 billion

Dairy

- National monthly feed costs will be calculated based on the monthly market-reported prices for corn, soybean meal and alfalfa hay.
- Dairy production margin calculation is based on a consecutive two-month period. The two-month average feed cost will be subtracted from the two-month all-milk price.
- An administrative fee of \$100 will be charged to all participating dairies.
- Production history will be the highest base from 2011, 2012 or 2013. Annual adjustment will occur based on any increase in national milk production.
- Margin protection payments are based on a consecutive two-month period. Dairies shall determine their margin coverage level annually. Coverage levels are \$4 to \$8 in \$0.50 increments. Percentage of coverage ranges from 25% to 90% in 5% increments of the production history.
- Payments will be issued when, for a consecutive two-month period, the average actual dairy margin is less than the coverage level selected by the dairy.
- The first four million pounds will be calculated at a separate coverage level from any production exceeding four million pounds. The premium for the first four million pounds of milk will be reduced by 25% for 2014 and 2015.

- Must be established by September 1, 2014
- Voluntary program
- Margin Protection Program included
- No supply management

Crop Insurance

- Price Loss Coverage (PLC) provides a payment to the grower when the market price is below a fixed reference price for covered crops.
- Agricultural Risk Protection (ARC) payments will be provided when either a farm's revenue from all crops or the county's revenue for a crop is below 86% of a predetermined benchmark level of revenue.
- Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) is an option to purchase area coverage with an underlying individual policy or plan of insurance.

Portage County Farm Bureau Members Attend Ag Day at the Capitol



Members stopped for a quick picture before they made their way to the capitol building. (L to R) Mike McGuire and Gene Gagas talked to their legislators about hot topic issues like Implements of Husbandry usage on roadways.