



Eau Claire County Farm Bureau

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Laurie Peterson, District Manager - (608) 347-0383

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

Plan to Attend: IGNITE Conference

Plan to attend the 2018 IGNITE Conference at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Stevens Point on **April 5-6**. Innovate, Grow, Network, Inform, Train, Engage or IGNITE is a information, training and fun-filled member engagement meeting for county Farm Bureau members.

The purpose is the strengthen county leaders and Farm Bureaus by providing programs, resources and skills to carry out the mission of county Farm Bureaus. More than 20 workshops will be offered following four training tracks including: governance and organization, building Farm Bureau, communicating for agriculture and policy, issues and advocacy.



National Ag in the Classroom Conference in Maine

The National Ag in the Classroom Conference is an opportunity for volunteers, teachers and staff involved in agricultural literacy to learn about resources, share ideas and network with others involved in agricultural education.

The 2018 National Conference will be **June 26-29** in Portland, Maine. Hotel information is available and conference registration opened on **January 15**.

The conference offers workshops, mini-workshops and traveling workshops. The traveling workshops (or tours) offered by the conference offer participants an opportunity to learn about production agriculture, agri-businesses, food systems, the green industry and other aspects of agriculture. Other experiences include speakers, luncheons in which out-



standing teachers and grant recipients are recognized, an exhibit area and other informal social activities.

Thanks to the support of the WFB Foundation's Jeanette Poulson Fund, three \$500 scholarships are offered to non-traditional educators and volunteers.

Applications are due **May 1** and can be downloaded at www.wisagclassroom.org under 'What's New.'

For information, visit www.agclassroom.org. If you have questions, please contact Ag in the Classroom Coordinator Darlene Arneson at 608.828-5644 or darneson@wfbf.com.

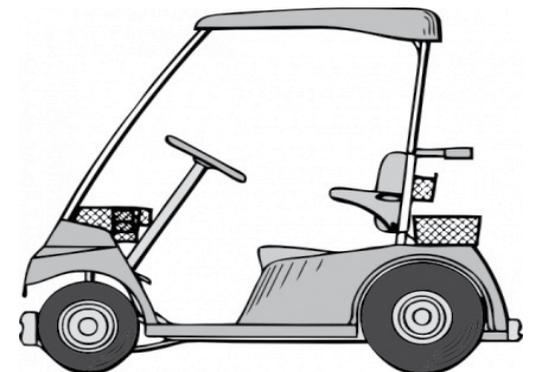
Plan to Participate in the Wisconsin Ag Open Golf

Hosted by the WFB Foundation, the 2018 Wisconsin Ag Open will be held on **Monday, September 10**, at Christmas Mountain Village in Wisconsin Dells.

All proceeds from the golf outing will support the WFB Foundation education and leadership programs such as Ag in the Classroom, 4-H, FFA, WFBF Leadership Institute and Young Farmer and Agriculturist activities.

Registration is \$125 and includes 18 holes of golf with cart, box lunch, appetizers, contests and door prizes. Sponsorships are available ranging from \$50 to \$1,500.

For information, please contact Ag in the Classroom Coordinator Darlene Arneson at darneson@wfbf.com or 608.828.5644.





COUNTYnews

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION



Eau Claire Farm Bureau Seeks Volunteers for 2020 Farm Technology Days

By Steve Strey, Eau Claire County Farm Bureau President

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY

2020
JULY 21-23



If you haven't heard by now, Wisconsin Farm Technology Days is in Eau Claire County in 2020 at Huntsinger Farms.

Huntsinger Farms is the world's largest producer and processor of horseradish. They also grow

more conventional crops like corn and beans. In the past they had raised livestock and grew a number of other field crops.

A few months ago, I was asked by Eau Claire County Extension agent Mark Hagedorn to be a producer representative in a small group of people who would make a presentation to the Farm Technology Days state board.

We went Madison and showed the board how great of a host Eau Claire County would be. They agreed and awarded the 2020 show to us. Now, the real work begins.

Mark had been instrumental in the Brown County Farm Technology Days show several years ago, so he knew just what to do. He began to put together an executive committee, and start the process of choosing a host farm.

Mark asked if I would serve on the vetting committee. Our job was to review the applications from host farms to verify that their operation and land would fit the criteria laid out by the state board. The committee consisted of myself, Bob Bosold, Greg Leonard, Andy Bourget and a representative of the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Department.

We received three applications and examined them for proper land size and topography, traffic flow, drainage, road access, field demonstration areas, tent city lay out, parking, fund raising capability,



Eau Claire County will host the 2020 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days. The farm hosting the event will be Huntsinger Farms, the world's largest producer and processor of horseradish.

cooperative attitude and other criteria. All three host families passed the test, and warranted a farm visit. Next, the entire executive and vetting committees boarded a bus and toured the farms. After the tours the executive committee met to hear some last-minute comments from the vetting committee and then voted to choose the host farm.

This is a great opportunity for the Eau Claire County Farm Bureau to shine. Farm Technology Days is in our county. We need to tell our story. We need to promote agriculture in a positive way. We need to showcase our area to the rest of the state. This is the profession we make our living from and raise our families on. Let's be proud of it, and show what good stewards and leaders we are.

The state board said approximately 1,900 volunteers are needed to pull off the show. There are jobs for anyone and everyone big or small. It's my goal to make Eau Claire County Farm Bureau a large part of the show. I challenge you to get involved.

For more information, please contact the Eau Claire Extension Office or myself. 2020 will be here before we know it.

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Eau Claire Farm Bureau Volunteers at Eau Claire's Country Jam



Each year, the Eau Claire County Farm Bureau works Country Jam VIP Security. Last year was no different.

For three days in July, members volunteered at the main gates by the stage and enjoyed country music by Luke Bryan, Miranda Lambert, Trace Atkins, Cole Swindell, Gary Allen and Dierks Bentley, just to name a few.

This happens to be the biggest fundraiser each

year. We raised more than \$1,000 to benefit our county activities.

This year's dates are **July 19-21**. Artists scheduled to perform are Florida Georgia Line, Brantley Gilbert and Brett Eldredge. More will be announced as they line them up.

For more information or to be part of next summer's team, contact Lisa Pettis at shortysjerseys@yahoo.com.

What Keeps Us Farming: A Message from the County President



A couple of weeks ago, Greg Leonard the head of the Land Conservation Department called me. He congratulated us on being the 2017 Eau Claire County conservation farmers of the year. I told him I didn't apply for the award. He assured me that wasn't the way it worked. Our name was put on a list of nominees by

the county land conservation committee, and when the committee voted, we won.

I asked him why, because we hadn't done anything big or

fancy. Greg said that it wasn't so much about big and fancy, but about the little things done over the years. He also said it was about a frame of mind and a way of thinking.

I thought about this and started making a mental list of the conservation-minded things we had done over the years. Then, I told Greg we would accept the award. On December 19, we went to the county courthouse and received our award in front of the county board. Greg gave a short history and description of our farming operation and asked if I would address the board room.

I thought, "what a great time to promote agriculture in a positive way and tell my story to people who were primarily non-ag."

After showing my appreciation by thanking the committee and county board, I told them this: "I've always believed that only the chosen few are truly blessed with the opportunity to feed and clothe the world, and we are just lucky enough

to be one of those few. The land isn't really ours. We are just caretakers and stewards of the land for the short time we are here. It has always been a goal of our farm to leave something for the next generation to take care of, and leave it in better shape than when we got it. So, that's what we'll continue to keep working on."

It truly is an honor to receive this award. The family was really excited. I want to take this opportunity to encourage all farmers to tell our story more often. We need to show the non-ag world how good of a job we do every day, year after year. We need to tell them about our rich history and show them our bright future. We also need to encourage our youth to be involved, so they can be the next leaders and ambassadors of agriculture. That warm fuzzy feeling that keeps us farming even when times are tough and prices are bad cannot die. We must instill this passion in our next generation.

Steve Strey

Eau Claire County Farm Bureau president

We're Going all the Way: A Message From the District 4 Director



I have never been prouder to be a part of Farm Bureau than after going to this year's AFBF Annual Convention and seeing the impact our state has.

Wisconsin is quite small with more than 40,000 members when you compare us to Tennessee's 600,000 plus members. Imagine our three delegates up against theirs during the policy

development process.

Before I dive into AFBF, I want to start from the beginning with a local resolution going all the way to the top and building national consensus.

A resolution that was brought forth by a Buffalo County Farm Bureau member was adopted by the membership of Buffalo County Farm Bureau during the county annual meeting in 2016. The resolution: We support industrial hemp production.

This was not the first time it was proposed, but confusion between industrial hemp and its very close cousin, marijuana, prevented the adoption of the resolution in 2015. After gathering more information and presenting at the District 4 Policy Development meeting, several other counties in District 4 also considered forwarding a resolution in favor of industrial hemp production in Wisconsin and the USA.

The following resolution was adopted: We support the production, processing, commercialization and utilization of industrial hemp and that it be regulated by the USDA rather than the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Great, we have a resolution; does it stop there? Absolutely not! Following the 2016 WFBF Annual Meeting, the task of promoting our policies went to our outstanding Governmental Relations team including: Paul Zimmerman, Karen Gefvert, Rob Richard and Steve Boe.

Rob Richard became the lead person studying and promoting industrial hemp legislation. Our resolutions process is closely followed by many of our legislators and after our approval of

industrial hemp, Representative Jesse Kramer (R-Kewaskum) approached Rob Richard with his bill supporting industrial hemp and, we were off to the races. Following a process of educating people on the differences between industrial hemp and marijuana, the once huge industrial hemp processing capacity that existed not only in the USA but with Wisconsin being one of the largest producers and the current \$600 million of hemp products being imported in the USA. We were in a position to have a hearing on the bill, so close.

With a lot of support and advocacy from Farm Bureau members, especially in Monroe County, we moved the bill forward and guaranteed its success. The members came through!

Countless phone calls and contacts were made from our members especially in Monroe County, county agents expressed interest in researching new opportunities that industrial hemp could provide for farmers, as well as our governmental relations team making contacts at high levels.

The Industrial Hemp Bill got a hearing without opposition. The bill passed the Assembly and the Senate without opposition and was signed into law as ACT 100 by Governor Scott Walker on November 30, 2017. That's right, Google it: Wisconsin ACT 100, 2017.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has 90 days from November 30, to set up the rules by which farmers can grow industrial hemp. We will have seeds in the ground in 2018!

Back to AFBF Annual Convention, where I started. While Wisconsin may have a small number of delegates, we accomplished much by our ability to build partnerships with other states.

The Wisconsin delegation organized and held two meetings on industrial hemp and dairy policy with other interested states. On the issue of industrial hemp, Congressman James Comer (R-Kentucky) discussed the strong interest in industrial hemp legislation from a bi-partisan perspective and what was needed for national legislation to happen.

Rob Richard secured the written support of 27 state Farm Bureau presidents. AFBF delegates passed a resolution in support of industrial hemp and now we will complete the process of pursuing legislation at a federal level so that we can move



(from left) District 4 Director Joe Bragger, District 2 Director Arch Morton Jr., Kentucky Congressman James Comer, WFBF President Jim Holte and District 7 Director Adam Kuczer met during AFBF Annual Convention and discussed the future of industrial hemp.

this process to home base.

I am very pleased to announce that in our District, Congressman Ron Kind (D-Wisconsin), signed onto the bill Congressman Comer authored. Five of Wisconsin's eight congressional delegates have signed onto Congressman Comer's bill, tied with Colorado for most co-sponsors from any state.

For more information about industrial hemp, please visit www.hemptrade.ca/eguide.

Whether it is industrial hemp, dairy policy or several others including the allowing of milk to be labeled by its fat free content (99% fat free versus 1% fat), Wisconsin Farm Bureau has worked to build strong credibility with other states. Even if we are relatively small in relation to other state Farm Bureaus, we carry a lot of weight for our members.

So, remember to share your issues or ideas ... we really can make things happen!

As always, enough is too much.

Joe Bragger

WFBF District 4 Board of Director
715.530.0466
braggfam@trivest.net

There are Benefits to Your Farm Bureau Membership:

Financial

- AgriPlan Medical Reimbursement Program
- Farm Bureau Bank

Supplies and Products

- John Deere's GreenFleet™ Loyalty Rewards Program (NEW)
- Case IH
- Caterpillar
- FS-GROWMARK Patronage
- Grainger
- Office Depot

Communication

- AgriVisor
- The Country Today

Insurance

- Rural Mutual Insurance Company
- Farm Bureau Financial Services

Protection

- \$500 Reward Protection Program
- Accidental Death Policy

Health

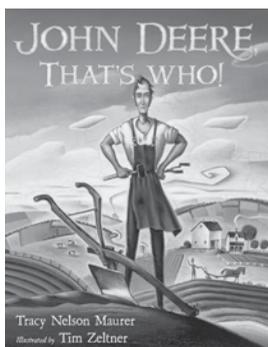
- ScriptSave® Prescription Drug Savings Card
- Life Line (NEW)

Travel

- AAA
- AVIS Car Rental Discount Program
- Budget (NEW)
- Choice Hotels International, Inc.
- Wyndham Hotel Group

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

Ag in the Classroom Essay Contest Entries Wanted



Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom offers an annual essay contest for fourth and fifth grade students.

Each year the topic has specific lesson plans, activities and other resources that teachers and home school parents can use to teach about Wisconsin agriculture. The 2017-18 topic is: 'Inventions that have made agriculture great.'

If you are a teacher, homeschool mom or 4-H club, you can find more information for the

contest or contest rules on the essay page at www.wisagclassroom.org/teachers-information/essay-contest.

Entries are due to Eau Claire County Farm Bureau postmarked by **April 2**.

Send entries to:
Jane Mueller
7525 Mueller Road
Fall Creek, WI 54742

Meet: YFA Chair, Jody Wilhelm



Seventeen YFA members from across District 4 attended the YFA Conference in Wisconsin Dells on December 1-3.

Happy 2018 from the Eau Claire County YFA. My name is Jody Wilhelm and I am the Eau Claire County YFA chair. To introduce myself, I am from Fall Creek, where I farm with my husband, Aaron. Together, we operate A&J Agronomy, a family run ag retail business. Our farm mainly involves cash cropping, but we also have raised and marketed feeder calves.

Having grown up in southern Minnesota on a 2,500-acre cash crop farm, I consider my agriculture experience a life-long endeavor. I attended UW-River Falls and earned a degree in marketing communications and beyond my current and family farming experiences, have worked with agronomy sales, vegetable field rep and research associate with a seed company. I have been involved in agriculture my entire life and couldn't love it more.

Speaking of a bit of fun, in December, I attended the YFA Conference, a two-day event that included membership activities such as breakout sessions, keynote speakers and a casino night. Some highlights were keynote addresses by Michele Payn, Cause Matters Corp., food to farm advocate and author and Chris Koch, a Canadian farmer and motivational speaker.



During the District 4 YFA meeting at the Kalahari Resorts, members participated in a variety of relay games. It was a great networking opportunity for members to get to know one another from across the district.

Some new topics members entertained were the impact of industrial hemp, insurance protocol for young farmers and big agriculture and its connection to family farms. The event provided great networking and a chance to get to know the other members. I look forward to meeting more of you in the new year.

Jody Wilhelm

Eau Claire County YFA chair

Please join other YFA members on February 24 for a fun meet and greet event. I am excited to announce that we will have a party involving an escape room, games, drinks and camaraderie. Starting time is 6 p.m. with escape room activities beginning at 7 p.m.

The event is open to District 4 YFA members. Bring your thinking minds to escape. The District 4 YFA escape room will take place on our farm, 349 West Lincoln Avenue, Fall Creek.

Eau Claire County Farm Bureau Contacts:

President, Steven Strey 715.797.2347
Vice President, Promotion and Education Chair, Lisa Pettis 715.533.4459
Secretary/Treasurer, Jane Mueller 715.878.4058
YFA Chair, Jody Wilhelm 507.380.6291

Director, Pat Baecker 715.214.6487
Director, Brandon Boettcher 715.533.2470
Director, Alvin Kohlhepp 715.225.2238
Director, Matthew Krenz 715.577.2247
Director, Devin Schlewitz 715.829.1555
Director, Wendy Strauch 715.533.9290
Director, Aaron Wilhelm 715.577.1887

Eau Claire County Farm Bureau 888.644.8329
WFBF Board Director, Joe Bragger 715.530.0466
District 4 Promotion and Education Chair, Darby Sampson 715.299.1409
District 4 YFA Chair, Rosli Bragger 715.530.2526
District 4 Coordinator, Cassie Olson 866.355.7344
RMIC District Manager, Laurie Peterson 608.347.0383

Meet: District 4 YFA Chair, Rosli Bragger



Hello! My name is Rosli Bragger. I am 23-years-old and have been a Farm Bureau member for three years.

During this time, I have completed in discussion meet twice. I have helped make milkshakes with the Buffalo County Farm Bureau for as long as I can remember.

Currently, I am a nursing student in Eau Claire where I also work at the Mayo Clinic.

While I am very busy with school, I do come home and help on my family's farm in Buffalo County on the weekends.

This past summer, my sister and I showed dairy cattle through the Wisconsin Holstein Association. I am very excited for the next three years and look forward to being more involved with agriculture through Wisconsin Farm Bureau as the District 4 YFA Chair.

WFBF Seeks Rural Route Photos

Wisconsin Farm Bureau members live and work in some of the most beautiful places. In Rural Route, WFBF wants to highlight those sights.



Please email your photos (high resolution jpgs, 4x6 inches at 300 dpi) to lsiekmann@wfbf.com.