



Polk County Farm Bureau

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RURAL MUTUAL AGENTS IN POLK COUNTY

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

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

Farm Bureau Members become 'Lobbyists for a Day'

Members of Polk County Farm Bureau, along with nearly 400 other farmers and agriculturists from the entire state of Wisconsin attended Ag Day at the Capitol on January 24 in Madison.

Attendees began the day at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center where they heard from Governor Scott Walker who spoke about the importance of agriculture to Wisconsin's economy and signed an executive order that will support rural economic development. He stated, "We want more reasons for our children to stay in our communities."

Members also were briefed about hot topics in



Members met with elected officials and their staff to talk about issues that are important to Polk County and Wisconsin Agriculture.

agriculture including implementation of industrial hemp legislation, CAFO transfer from DNR to DATCP and Wetland legislation.

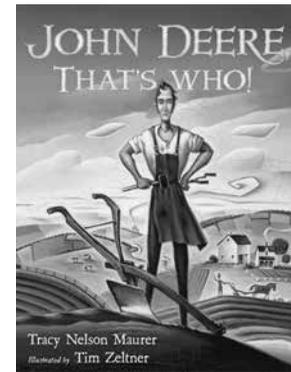
Following the briefing session at the Monona Terrace, members converged at the Capitol to meet with local representatives and speak about issues important to their farms and Wisconsin agriculture.

Ag Day at the Capitol is the largest lobby day for Wisconsin agriculture. Each year, farmers and agriculturists representing all facets of the state's diverse agriculture landscape come to Madison to learn more about state issues affecting agriculture and meet with their state legislators.



Attendees to Ag Day at the Capitol saw Governor Scott Walker sign an executive order that provides markets for family farmers and agribusinesses.

Ag in the Classroom Essay Contest Announced



Each year Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom Program 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 2018 topic is, "Inventions that have made agriculture great." This topic coincides with the 2018 Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom book of the year, "John Deere, That's Who!" by Tracy Nelson Maurer. Tracy is a native to Wisconsin, growing up near Superior; she resides in Forest Lake, Minnesota.

Students and schools in Polk County interested in participating need to submit essays by **April 2** to the Polk County Farm Bureau essay coordinator.

For questions, to obtain materials or submit essays, please contact Polk County Ag in the Classroom coordinator Crystal Meier at meierc@workforceresource.com or 715.292.7798.

All rules, promotional materials, lessons, activities and other resources related to the essay contest and book of the year may be found at www.wisagclassroom.org or by contacting Crystal.





COUNTYnews

POLK COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION



Highlights from the WFBF Annual Meeting and YFA Conference



More than 1,100 Young Farmer and Agriculturist and Farm Bureau Members converged on the Kalahari Resorts in Wisconsin Dells



District 9 was well represented by Young Farmers and Agriculturists at the YFA Conference

on December 1-4 for the 98th WFBF Annual meeting and YFA Conference, and 83rd Rural Mutual Insurance Company Annual Meeting. More than 500 of the total attendees were Young Farmer and Agriculturist members 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 hard 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 over the next year.

Of the 1,100 plus members, more than 100 of those members were from District 9 including members from the Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter at UW-River Falls. Here is a list of more District 9 highlights:

- Representing District 9 in the YFA Discussion Meet were: Laura Benitz, Pierce County; Isaac Christenson, Polk County; and Nathan Kringle, Barron County.
- Barron County Farm Bureau member and current District 9 YFA chair, Julie Wadzinski, was elected Chair-elect and will serve as the 2019 WFBF YFA Chair.
- Members who signed five or more new members during the last membership year enjoyed being part of the Farm Bureau Proud Club (formerly known as Producer Club), where they received preferred seating for the Farm Bureau extravaganza, a special meal and a thank you gift. Farm Bureau Proud Club members from District 9 were: Kay Gilbertson, Jerica Meyer, Dale Quilling, Dean Bergsens, Peter Kimball, Jim Melin, Terry DuSell and Paul Hetke.
- WFBF District 9 Director Jim Holte was re-elected WFBF President.

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Andy Gould, Jim Melin, and Dale Wood served as delegates for Polk County Farm Bureau at the WFBF Annual Meeting.



Jim and Patty Melin were recognized for signing more than five new members and are members of the Farm Bureau Proud Club. Congratulations!



Isaac Christenson represented Polk County Farm Bureau in the semi-finals of the Young Farmer and Agriculturist Discussion Meet.



Representing the UW-River Falls Collegiate Chapter at the YFA Conference were: back row (from left) Kati Kindschuh, Sally Albers, Matt Kortbein, Jacob Timm, Alex Bacon, Jared Mack and Joelle Liddane; front row (from left) Beth Zimmer, Abby Sabel and Ashley Bergsbaken.



Polk County Farm Bureau members attending the WFBF Annual Meeting and YFA Conference were: (from left) Kristine Wood, Dale Wood, Amy Strobach, Andy Gould, Crystal Meier and Isaac Christenson; not included in the photo were Jim and Patty Melin.

Polk County Board Members State-of-the-State Address Experiences

By Dale Wester, Polk County Farm Bureau Vice-President

As part of Ag Day at the Capitol, I had the privilege of attending the State-of-the-State Address given by Governor Scott Walker. This was a first-time experience for me and it was most striking to me that bipartisanship is very much present in Wisconsin as well as in Washington, D.C.

Overall, our state is in good condition. The unemployment rate is 3 percent, our state pension fund is fully funded, the state portion of the real estate

tax has been eliminated, school funding has been increased and steps toward infrastructure improvements also were introduced.

I can't help but think how much more effective our government would function if we all tried to 'walk in the other persons moccasins' and tried to understand the reasons behind other's positions and respectfully worked at reaching a workable compromise.



District 9 Leaders Julie Wadzinski, Dale Wester, Jim Melin, Marv Prestrud and Dave Kruschke sat in on Governor Scott Walker's State-of-the-State address while at Ag Day at the Capitol.

By Jim Melin, Polk County Farm Bureau President

Dale Wester and I were very privileged to attend the State-of-the-State Address by Governor Scott Walker during our recent trip to Madison for Ag Day at the Capitol.

I was informed and amazed of the many accomplishments our Governor and elected officials have worked on recently.

Some of the accomplishments include acquiring more money for local road improvements, simplifying the application

process for new and existing high capacity wells, working on new markets for Wisconsin agriculture products. We also were glad to hear that a farmer has been placed on the DNR board.

Although there are disagreements between leadership in the state, there is still forward momentum for Wisconsin agriculture. Farm Bureau members can be very thankful for that.

Farm Bureau Leaders Attend Council of Presidents



Attendees to the Council of Presidents from District 9 posed for a picture with Secretary of Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Sheila Harsdorf: (from left) Marv Prestrud, Mary Prestrud, Dale Wester, Jim Melin, Dave Kruschke, Kevin Gilbertson, Kay Gilbertson, Terry DuSell, Betsy DuSell, Andrew Winiarczyk and Jim Holte.

Farm Bureau County leaders from around Wisconsin gathered in Madison January 23-24 for the annual Council of Presidents meeting.

During the two-day event, leaders updated their knowledge with training and heard from many speakers including Mark O'Connell, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Counties Association and Steve Boe, Director of Local Affairs with Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation. In addition, Peter Pelizza, Rural Mutual

Insurance Company's Executive Vice President and CEO gave an update on Rural Mutual Insurance Company.

The keynote speaker was Secretary of Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Sheila Harsdorf. She encouraged attendees to get involved in their local government by saying, "If you've never thought about running before, if you have the opportunity I encourage you to do so."

Polk County Farm Bureau Offers Scholarships

Polk County Farm Bureau is pleased to announce that they will award higher education scholarships in 2018 to graduating high school senior students who are enrolled in an accredited college, university or technical college.

All majors will be considered for these scholarships. The applicant or his or her parents must be a current Polk County Farm Bureau member.

Completed applications must be post-marked by **April 2**.

Applications can be obtained by contacting Polk County Farm Bureau office secretary Lisa Thomfohrda at 715.485.3010 or by visiting wfbf.com/countyfarmbureaus/polk.



Celebrate National Ag Day on March 20, Promote Agriculture



Help celebrate National Ag Day by joining farmers, volunteers, teachers, FFA and 4-H members, agri-business employees and others by promoting agriculture.

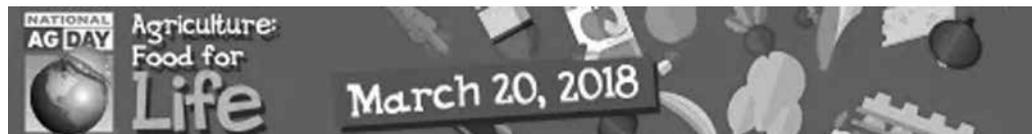
Join Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom and the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation and celebrate National Ag Day on **Tuesday, March 20**.

- Celebrate by joining farmers, volunteers, teachers, FFA and 4-H members, college students, agri-business employees and others by reading books about agriculture to students, home school families, nursing home residents, day cares and others. Who can participate? Anyone who has an interest in agriculture, enjoys reading, working with youth and has time on **Tuesday, March 20**, to read, visit and do an activity with an audience. Resources can be found on the Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom website.
- Share agriculture facts from the WI Ag in the Classroom Facebook and Twitter page that will be posted on the hour. When posting on social

media, use the hashtags #WiReadsAg2018, #wiagproud and #agday2018.

- Have students in your county participate in an Ag Day Contest. This information can be found on the Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom website. We will promote this contest on our Facebook page for children to send in but you can make it a county contest.
- Organize a pizza party on a farm, in a classroom or at a mall. Explain how ingredients from kids' favorite food come from farms and ranches and how each is processed and delivered to the grocery store or restaurant.
- Host a classroom field trip to a local farm or ranch or to a university's agricultural research farm. Or, bring the farm to the classroom. This provides a great opportunity for children to learn about career opportunities in agriculture.
- Distribute information about agriculture or other information through local stores. Ask your grocer to feature the Ag Day logo or other positive messages about agriculture on grocery bags or signs used during Ag Week. You might also set up a farm-to-your-table display in your local grocery store.
- Share your photos from National Ag Day with us. We are happy to share what you have been up to. Photos can be emailed to aitc@wfbf.com.

For more ideas and ways to celebrate National Ag Day, please visit www.agday.org.



Lunch & Learn with Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

WHO: Members who want to learn more about Farm Bureau & agriculture
WHAT: Educational Webinars
WHEN: First Wednesday of every month from noon - 12:30 p.m.
WHERE: The comfort of your home or business. Tune in on your computer or any handheld device
HOW: RSVP at <http://bit.ly/WFBFLunchLearn> and we will send you a confirmation and directions on how to participate

2018 Lunch & Learn Topics

February - WFBF's Local Affairs Program	May - DATCP Farm Center	September - Farm Safety
March - Discovery Farms	June - WFBF Leadership Institute	October - WFBF Annual Meeting Preview
April - Agrability	July - Election Update	November - Policy Topic Discussion
	August - What's happening in Policy	

The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same



Greetings Farm Bureau members,

For those of you I have not met, let me introduce myself. I am Laurie Peterson, the new Rural Mutual Insurance District manager for what we consider to be the Northwest District of the state.

My territory consists of 18 counties and I have had the pleasure of working with WFBF members and District Coordinators in Districts 4, 8 and 9. Although I have met some of you and attended several annual meetings last fall, it was not physically possible for me to attend each of these meetings because of scheduling conflicts.

The meetings I did attend allowed me to meet with hard-working members who reside in each district and celebrate with them, their successes. It was evident at these meetings the impact that this organization has on individuals, communities and schools. I look forward to meeting even more of you in the years to come.

I started in this position on January 1 of 2016 and what a year of learning and growth it has been. Prior to becoming the district manager, I was a Rural Mutual Insurance agent for 10 years and had an office in Medford where I worked closely with the Taylor County Farm Bureau board.

I believed then and still believe that there is a great deal of value in the relationship between Rural Mutual Insurance and

WFBF. I took every opportunity to align myself and my agency to reinforce that strong relationship between the two organizations.

Although my position with the company has changed, my approach to the relationship we have with the WFBF remains the same.

With my first year in this position coming to a close, I believe I have a better understanding of the time required and the responsibilities. I believe as district manager, it is my responsibility to encourage our agents to continue their work helping each county to meet membership goals, but I want to see that taken to the next level.

Beyond signing members, if there is an opportunity for myself or an agent to volunteer at a dairy breakfast or work a shift at the food stand at the Dunn County Fair, please contact them or me. We will do our best to see if we cannot get you the help and support you need to continue the good work you do.

The agents and my contact information is published in each edition of the newsletter or contact District 9 Coordinator Katie Mattison. Together, we can make great things continue to happen.

Laurie Peterson
Rural Mutual Insurance Company, District Manager



Polk County Farm Bureau Membership Dues Increased on December 1

At the September 2017 Polk County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, the Polk County membership voted to increase the county membership dues by \$5. The dues amount increased to \$55 effective December 1, 2017.

The additional \$5 will go to the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, as they are increasing their dues amount.

When you join Farm Bureau, you not only become a member of Polk County Farm Bureau, but also the Wisconsin Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau.

Prior to December 1, your cost to be a Polk Farm Bureau member was \$50. That is broken down as follows:

- **Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation = \$41, effective December 1, 2017**
State activities, conducting programs and staffing. Consumer and youth education, issue advocacy, leadership development and member publications are services that are furnished with state dues.
- **Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Services Program = \$3**
When county secretaries retired, Farm Bureau offered a services program to counties. Polk County is a part of this program in which the district coordinator acts as the county secretary. There are three portions to the program that include administrative, financials and the newsletter program.
- **American Farm Bureau Federation = \$4**
A portion of your dues are forwarded to support Farm Bureau activities at the national level. These funds support agriculture's voice in our nation's capital as well as the many programs that AFBF has in place to educate consumers, share the message of agriculture and provide online resources to its members.

- **Accidental Death Policy = \$1**
\$1 of your dues is applied toward an accidental death insurance policy that is a benefit of membership that covers you as a member, your spouse and eligible children. Coverage begins at \$500 and increases in value for the member and spouse with each consecutive year of membership up to \$3,500.
- **Polk County Farm Bureau = \$6**
Funds local events and activities. This includes county meetings, scholarships, ag in the classroom and many more activities to promote Farm Bureau and agriculture in Polk County.

The Polk County Farm Bureau dues are \$55 effective December 1, 2017. Going forward, when you get your dues renewal the amount you will pay will be \$55 per year.

Thank you for being a member of the Polk County Farm Bureau. We appreciate you!



Polk County Farm Bureau Contacts:

President, Jim Melin	715.488.2261
Vice President, Dale Wester	715.646.1447
Secretary/Treasurer, Trent Jensen	715.268.8211
YFA Chair, Erik Melin	715.566.0803
Promotion and Education Chair, Crystal Meier	715.292.7798
Director, Mike Garvey	715.825.3229
Director, Andrew Gould	715.554.1357
Director, Dean Johnson	715.491.9146
Director, Ken Nelson	715.268.6426
Director, Chris Owens	715.566.2804
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

Welcome New Members!

Joshua Bush*, Adam Hedlund*, Terry Kolstad* and Ryan Peterson*.

*Denotes voting membership.

You Can Renew Your Farm Bureau Membership Online



Renewing your Farm Bureau dues is easy and convenient. All you need is your Farm Bureau member number. Don't know what yours is? Contact District 9 Coordinator Katie Mattison at kmattison@wfbf.com or 866.355.7349. To renew your membership, visit www.wfbf.com.

Plan to Attend: IGNITE Conference

At the 2018 Wisconsin Farm Bureau IGNITE Conference you will learn about innovative county Farm Bureau programs, grow your knowledge of agriculture issues, network with other Farm Bureau leaders, become informed on roles and responsibilities within the county Farm Bureau, be trained to share your agriculture and Farm Bureau story and discover how you can engage all members to become active in your county Farm Bureau. This highly engaging and motivating conference is open to Farm Bureau members who are interested in igniting a spark and taking their county Farm Bureau to the next level.



For information or to register for this exciting event, visit wfbf.com/programmevents/event-registration.