



# Portage County Farm Bureau

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<b>Stacy Groshek</b> (715) 544-6824	<b>Lauren McCann</b> (715) 544-1611
<b>Jenni Zinda-Mancl</b> (715) 341-5808	
<b>Dave Meihak, District Manager</b> - (715) 544-6824	

## Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

### Meet: John Herman, Portage County Farm Bureau Director



John Herman is one of the newest Portage County Farm Bureau directors.

He is an irrigation specialist by trade and decided to get involved with the Portage County board of directors to promote agriculture and educate consumers about

modern day agriculture practices.

“Agriculture is the one industry that everyone relies on from the food they eat to the clothes they wear,” said Herman. “So we must be diligent in sharing our story and connecting with consumers.”



### Register Now for the 2017 Wisconsin Ag Open

This year’s Wisconsin Ag Open will be held on **Monday, September 11**, at Christmas Mountain Village in Wisconsin Dells.

The event supports the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation’s efforts to expand agricultural leadership, 4-H and FFA program, agricultural literacy efforts, and other education, youth and leadership programs.

For information, visit [wfbf.com/aboutwfbf/foundation/wisconsin-ag-open](http://wfbf.com/aboutwfbf/foundation/wisconsin-ag-open).



**WANTED**

**Portage County Farm Bureau Needs You!**

**Volunteers and Board Members**

Portage County Farm Bureau is looking for members who are interested in serving in a variety of capacities.

We are looking for members who can volunteer time and talent to work with students and the county’s Ag in the Classroom program, members who are interested in serving on the board of directors, members who can volunteer time to help with special events.

If you are interested in making a difference in your county and agricultural community, please contact a Portage County Farm Bureau director and let them know how you can help.



# COUNTYnews

PORTAGE COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION



## Portage County Ag in the Classroom Is Busy with Activities By Lauren McCann



The Portage County Farm Bureau has been busy with Ag in the Classroom activities.

Jodi Otto spoke to students at Kennedy Elementary School about the dairy industry, dairy products and their nutrition.

Melissa Eron presented the winning Ag in the Classroom essay classroom at Rosholt Elementary with a tote full of lesson plans and activities.

We received a matching grant through the Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom program. Students will be able to learn about different agricultural industries and have hands-on activities.

This same tote will be offered again to the winning essay classroom. Through the grant, we purchased a soybean science kit.

If you know of a school that could use the kit, please contact Melissa Eron at 715.498.7013.



## Annual Summer Picnic Is a Success

On June 25, we hosted our third annual summer picnic.

This year, the board took a new approach and held it in conjunction with the Friends of Mill Creek Watershed summer field day.

Members and guests toured area farm land, learned new farming techniques and explored what farmers in the area are doing to improve soil conditions.

The event was held at Eron's Event Barn outside of Stevens Point.



## District 8 YFA Spring Tour Visits Wausau Area

By Lauren McCann

On March 24, the District 8 YFA hosted an agriculture tour around the Wausau area. Our first stop was Country Fresh Meats in Weston with YFA member Jamie Marx who gave us a tour of the facility and provided us with snacks and great insider information on their production and operation.

Then, the group traveled to Granite Vu Dairy, where YFA members Ryan and Lindsey Prahl showed the group around, discussed succession planning and their experiences with farm transition. Lindsey and Ryan addressed concerns about transitioning a dairy farm to the next generation and gave personal insight on who should be involved and the time line.

The final tour stop was Bull Falls Brewery where co-owner and brew master Mike Zamzow gave the group a tour of the brew house and walked through the German brewing traditions that he brought to life in Wausau. You can now find Bull Falls beer in cans across Wisconsin thanks to an expansion project that was completed in 2013 with Mid-Wisconsin Beverage, Inc.

Lunch was served at Bull Falls Brewery where attendees enjoyed a brew and food provided by Country Fresh Meats.



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## From the Desk of Don Radtke ...



I want to invite you to attend our District 8 Policy Development meeting on **Sunday, August 20.**

The meeting will start with a plated meal at 7:30 p.m., with discussion on local, state and national issues at 8 p.m. It will be held at Randall's Sports Bar and Restaurant in Abbottsford.

This is the perfect opportunity for you to bring ideas to address, correct or improve policy.

Serving as a WFBF Director, I get the chance to travel this great state to talk with farmers. I have heard a variety of conversations regarding water quality, food labeling and some discussions on dairy supply management.

This meeting will not only provide a great listening and learning environment for myself and county Farm Bureau leaders but also for Executive Director of Governmental Relations Paul Zimmerman and

our new Director of Local Affairs Steve Boe.

My hope is that this meeting will be the start of great conversations that, in turn, will lead to county policy and potentially state and national policy. I hope to see you there.

**Don Radtke**  
WFBF District 8 Director

## Spring Time Scare By Ashleigh Calaway, WFBF District 8 Coordinator



Spring time in central Wisconsin is a time filled with a variety of emotions, sights and sounds.

Most farmers are chomping at the bit to get into the fields while others are patiently waiting for their livestock to give birth. This spring was no different for us, well besides the excessive wet conditions and the loss of two ewes to a wolf.

Those of us who work with livestock know that it is not a matter of if an animal will pass, but when. Death on the farm is something that few ever talk about because of the emotional impact it has on the quiet, private, hardworking and dedicated people who care for the livestock every day.

Unfortunately, death is something that we've had to deal with many times and it's never taken lightly. On that note, it's been a rough spring on the farm.

It started March 20, when we had a cow die due to birthing complications. On the bright side, we saved the calf! Shortly after, we had a cow calve while we were at work. She struggled giving birth and we unfortunately lost her too. We were left wondering, as most farmers are when death happens, what we could have done different and how we could have saved them.

Fast forward about five weeks. While we had some control in the prior instances, this time it wasn't anything that we could have prevented. That is the part we can't get out of our minds.

My father-in-law and nieces worked hard to prepare the summer pasture for the sheep as they do every spring. This yearly routine has become a tradition for them and one that they truly look forward to. The sheep are kept close to the house until they all have given birth and the babies are ready to be weaned. Usually the ewes are ready for pasture by the end of April. This year was no different even with all of the rain.

My husband and father-in-law loaded the ewes into the trailer and hauled them to pasture for the summer.

For the ewes, this is the best time of year as they get to frolic through waist high grass and enjoy the wonderful

sunshine. They were on pasture for less than a week when tragedy hit.

With a heavy heart, my father-in-law told us two ewes were killed by a wolf. The wolf came on to our land, jumped over the fence and took their lives without hesitation.

As a family, we went to investigate. The sight of the ewes laying there with their throats ripped out will stay with me forever, along with the devastating look on the faces of my father-in-law and husband.

Thankfully, from my involvement with Farm Bureau, I knew there was a protocol that needed to be followed but that didn't make the process any easier. I hope no one reading this will ever need it but just in case you do, here is the information on how to report a wolf kill: <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/ER/ER0103.pdf>.

When something tragic happens, I typically shut off all emotion until the situation is dealt with. That evening was no different ... that was until I heard my father-in-law explaining everything to the Department of Natural Resources over the phone. Hearing the sheer emotion in his voice on the phone was one thing, then knowing he would have to tell his granddaughter (my niece), since one of the ewes was hers, was almost too much to bare. Just writing those words takes me back to that moment and I find myself struggling to keep the tears at bay ... more than a week later.

Everyone has their own views and opinions on wolves in Wisconsin. I have heard stories before about farmers dealing with wolves and the emotion that is hidden behind them.

This year, Taylor County Farm Bureau president Ryan Klussendorf testified on modernizing the Endangered Species Act and shared his story of how wolves have impacted his family's quality of life (sleeping with the window open year-round, only allowing their kids to play by the buildings and overall loss of sleep).

A few weeks ago, another Farm Bureau board member Jack



Johnson, lost a calf to a wolf. These losses are not only financially devastating, but emotionally. We have felt that emotional impact on our family.

That night changed many procedures for us. The ewes are no longer on summer pasture but back up by the house. The cattle are still on winter grounds (close to our bedroom window so

we can hear if anything strange is happening) and haven't been moved to pasture yet. There have been numerous conversations discussing how we will move forward.

We consider ourselves lucky that it was only two ewes killed and not more. I'm thankful for the DNR warden who we worked with. He said he has been working for almost 30 years and has pretty much seen it all in that time. He appreciated my father-in-law's level headedness and even temperament even though his heart was broken over the loss of the animals.

My husband and in-laws keep their thoughts and emotions to themselves. I am more inclined to share mine. I have never been one to keep my mouth shut and to their dismay, I am sure I never will be. In today's agriculture world, we can't afford to keep our mouths shut because when we do, that allows other people to make decisions and tell our story for us.

The emotional toll that wolf kills have on a farm family is rarely talked about and I am trying to change that. Imagine your family having to live on edge because you never know when a wolf might strike. Now, that's the reality for our family and many others in northern Wisconsin.

These ewes are so much more than livestock and a paycheck, they are our hope for the next generation of farmers in our family, they are the glue that has held a family together, created lasting memories and lots of laughter along the way. When we buried those ewes, I said a prayer and fought the tears from falling and that's a moment I will never forget.

If you have been through a similar situation, you need to share it. Unless you speak up we can't do anything to prevent this from happening again. Reach out to your county Farm Bureau, get involved in their policy development committee, attend your county Farm Bureau annual meeting, but mostly contact your lawmakers and tell them how wolves are impacting your farm and family.

They need to hear us loud and clear.

## There are Benefits to Your Farm Bureau Membership:

### Financial

- AgriPlan Medical Reimbursement Program
- Farm Bureau Bank

### Supplies and Products

- 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](http://wfbf.com/benefits-membership).

## District 8 YFA Update By Beth Schaefer



The District 8 Discussion Meet will be on **Sunday, August 20**, at 6:30 p.m. with the District 8 Policy Development Meeting to follow.

The question that will be discussed is: **Formation of family farm corporations is common practice. How can Farm Bureau work to ensure that the public's**

**positive perception of the family farm is not lost?**

**New Location is at Randall's in Abbotsford.** All members are welcome to watch the contest but only YFA members (18-35 years old) can compete.

Come to for the Discussion Meet and stay for the Policy Development Meeting.

**Mark your calendar for Sunday, August 20!**

## Family Farm Fun Night By Lauren McCann

The School at Altenburg's Farm is hosting a family farm fun night coordinated by their community outreach and public relations committee.



The date of the event is **Thursday, August 24**, from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

This free event is geared towards kids and families of all ages.

We hope that you can come and join us as we explore modern agriculture practices. Space is limited to the first 50 for each night.

To secure your family's spot, RSVP by contacting 715.421.2943 or [altenburgschool@gmail.com](mailto:altenburgschool@gmail.com).

Please let us know how many adults, children (and ages) and your first and second date choice. Thank you.

## AgrAbility of Wisconsin: Making a Difference By Mark Zimmerman

I've been dairy farming pretty much my whole life.

In 2014, I sold the cows due to health issues. Currently, my son and I raise more than 600 head of dairy steers.

Since I was a teen, I have been suffering from back issues. Over the years I have endured four different back surgeries to address the issue but still suffer from constant pain.

Although to many, 65 years young might sound like a good age to retire, I was determined to find a way to continue my way of life. I knew that in order for this to happen, I needed to get the seats replaced or upgraded in the skid steers and the main tractor I use.

This last summer, I reached out to AgrAbility of Wisconsin in hopes they

could help with upgrading seats in the main equipment I use daily.

I do about 90 percent of the feeding and cleaning on the farm. At the time I reached out, I was seeing the chiropractor two- to four-times a month.



After working through the AgrAbility process, which took about six months, they had three seats installed (about a \$3,200 cost) at no cost to me.

Within a week of having my seats upgraded, my back was feeling better.

After the first two months with the new seats, I am feeling so much better. I can now tolerate skid steer work with little to no discomfort.

Jobs that used to take me two days to accomplish, due to the pain, I can do now do in one day with almost no discomfort. I haven't been to the chiropractor since.

I can't say enough about AgrAbility's assistance. I can continue to be productive for years to come. You don't have to be totally disabled to qualify for help from AgrAbility.

My thanks to AgrAbility and Farm Bureau for supporting this program.

If you find yourself limited on what you can do on the farm, please check them out.

## Portage County Farm Bureau Contacts:

President, John Eron 715.498.5222  
Vice President, Mark Zajackowski 715.457.2860  
Secretary/Treasurer, James Isherwood 715.344.9654  
Promotion and Education Chair, Melissa Eron 715.498.7013

Director, John Herman 715.630.7317  
Director, John Kosmalski 715.677.3857  
Director, Leroy Miller 715.677.3435  
Director, Mark Schaffner 715.370.2904  
Director, Nathan Wolosek 715.421.5342

Portage County Farm Bureau 888.385.5945  
WFBF Board Director, Don Radtke 715.573.7208  
WFBF Promotion and Education Chair, Lauren McCann 715.539.2892  
WFBF YFA Chair, Beth and Matt Schaefer 920.728.4948  
District 8 Coordinator, Ashleigh Calaway 866.355.7348  
RMIC District Manager, Dave Meihak 715.344.6220

## Save the Date: Portage County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

Tuesday, October 17

7 p.m. - Registration  
7:30 p.m. - Meal

Guest speaker: WFBF Director of Local Affairs Steve Boe



## Meet Your Newest Area Agent

Lauren has a background in agriculture with a bachelor's degree in animal science.

She volunteers with the WFBF as the Wood County Ag in the Classroom coordinator and District 8 Promotion and Education Representative.

Lauren is passionate about working with farmers to protect their farms and livelihood. She also can assist with life and health insurance needs.



**Lauren McCann**  
715.544.1611 | 866.883.6297  
[lmccann@ruralins.com](mailto:lmccann@ruralins.com)  
Hours:  
Monday-Friday 8 a.m.- 4 p.m.  
Saturdays by appointment  
Closed on Sunday

## DID YOU KNOW?

Portage County agriculture accounts for \$386.5 million, or 10.9 percent, of the county's total income. This includes wages, salaries, benefits and profits of farmers and workers in agriculture related businesses. Every dollar of agricultural income generates an additional \$0.77 of county income.