



Portage County Farm Bureau

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For information about our farm safety campaign, contact your local Rural Mutual agent.

Rural Mutual Agents in Portage County:

Michael Olson **Jenni Zinda**
(715) 570-7054 (715) 341-5808


David Meihak - District Manager

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation




The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation invites you to attend
AG DAY AT THE CAPITOL
 March 11, 2015
 Monona Terrace Convention Center • Madison, WI

Schedule of Events:	Early Registration Deadline: March 5
11:00 a.m. Registration	Cost: \$25 per person by registration deadline.
11:30 a.m. Opening Program	\$30 after deadline and at the door.
11:45 a.m. Lunch	
12:45 p.m. Legislative Briefing	
3:00 p.m. Leave for Capitol Visits	

Presented by: 

Thank You to Our Sponsors:



Ag Day at the Capitol is the largest gathering of farmers from across the state representing a variety of farm groups to learn more about state issues and meet with their state legislators.

The Rural Mutual Insurance Company and GROWMARK Inc. are major sponsors of the event. Co-sponsors of the event with the Wisconsin Farm Bureau include a variety of other dairy, beef, pork, horse, corn, soybean, cranberry, potato and vegetable groups.

Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit March 13-14

Women from the Wisconsin agriculture community are encouraged to attend the annual Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit at the Madison Marriott West in Middleton. The Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit is presented by Badgerland Financial, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation and University of Wisconsin-Extension. The purpose of the Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit is to connect women involved in all areas of Wisconsin's diverse agriculture community.

Go to wfbf.com/programmevents/womens-program/wisconsin-ag-womens-summit for the full schedule of events.

Register online by going to wiagwomenssummit.wordpress.com/register.





COUNTYnews

PORTAGE COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION

Highlights from the WFBF Annual Meeting

On December 6-8, Farm Bureau members from across Wisconsin gathered at the Kalahari Resorts in Wisconsin Dells to take part in the 95th WFBF Annual Meeting.



Members were able to take part in breakout sessions including farm succession planning and how to incorporate technology into their farms.

Members also were able to enjoy comedic relief from Wisconsin native Roger Radley. On Sunday more than a 1,000 members gathered to listen to motivational

speaker Chad Hymas tell his story of perseverance even through life's roughest moments. In 2001, at the age of 27, Chad's life changed in an instant when a 2,000-pound bale of hay fell on him and shattered his neck leaving him a quadriplegic.

For more information about Chad, visit www.chadhymas.com/.

Glacier Ridge Antique Tractor Club Parade

The Glacier Ridge Antique Tractor Club held its annual Christmas Parade on December 12.

Approximately 40 entries that consisted of local schools, businesses and farmers who decorated their tractors and combines along with club member floats. The parade was led by the Rosholt Fire Department through Polonia spreading Christmas cheer.



2014 YFA Conference Wrap Up

On December 5 more than 475 YFA members from across the state attended their annual conference. This annual conference held each year in conjunction with the 95th WFBF Annual Meeting was another huge success.

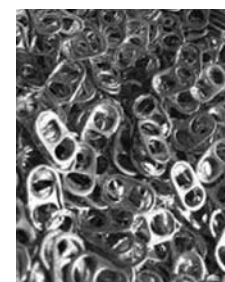
YFA members were able to take part in breakout sessions covering everything from agri-terrisim to social media. YFA members also were able to compete in state wide contests such as Excellence in Agriculture, Achievement Award and the Discussion Meet.



Portage County YFA members.

State-Wide Pop Tab Challenge

On December 11, Susan Bruggger, District 8 Women's Committee Representative, had the privilege of delivering close to 250 pounds of pop tabs to the Ronald McDonald House in Marshfield. This was just a third of what was collected during the WFBF Annual Meeting.



"I feel honored to serve on the state Women's Committee which spearheaded this statewide effort," Susan said. "To all of the members who helped us - THANK YOU! We will be doing this next year so - start saving!"



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Is Retirement in Your Future?

Do you have questions about the future of your farm or business, and the estate you leave behind?

Please join us for a Farm and Business Succession and Estate Planning seminar on Tuesday, February 24, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Hotel Mead in Wisconsin Rapids. We will have two presenters Rick Bollenbeck, an attorney who specializes in estate planning and Jared Nelson, a senior regional financial consultant with Farm Bureau Life Insurance.

Attendees will discuss viable solutions to business and estate succession issues many Wisconsin farm families face. The presentation will explore how to be fair to children in passing the business to heirs, while also providing a fair inheritance to non-active children, how to surmount common estate-tax traps; making sure attendees and their spouses are prepared for

retirement and the potential need for long-term care; and how to assemble and work with a team of professional advisors.

A complementary lunch will follow the seminar for all who attend.

Please save the date and join us!

Date: Tuesday, February 24

Place: Hotel Mead, 451 E. Grand Avenue, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

Time: 10:30-11:30 a.m. with lunch to follow

About our presenters:

Rick Bollenbeck is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1979), the Seattle University School of Law (1983)

and Boston University (Masters of Law and Taxation; 1985). Rick practices in the areas of estate planning, criminal law and litigation. He is an attorney with Bollenbeck Fyfe, S.C. in Appleton.

Jared Nelson, senior regional financial consultant with Farm Bureau Life Insurance is a 1998 graduate of Carroll College. He has 16 years of experience in the financial services industry and focuses on helping farms transition assets from one generation to the next. He grew up on a dairy farm in Melrose and lives in Mt. Horeb with his wife and three daughters.

Please RSVP by February 14 to Joe Grant at 715.421.5880, jgrant@ruralins.com.

Winter Strategies to Enhance Teat Health and Milk Quality

By Heather Schlessler, Marathon County UW-Extension Dairy Agent

With the temperatures dropping below zero many farmers are concerned with teat end cracking and increased incidence of mastitis. Throughout the year we need to be applying germicide and moisturizers to the teat end to help promote health and prevent mastitis, but in the winter it becomes even more important. When choosing a winter dip to use there are several choices:

1. Normal lactating cow dips which contain 5-10 percent conditioners
2. Barrier dips require 20 minutes to dry and tend to be harder to get off at the end of the winter
3. Winter dips (For use in cold temps when there is a threat of the teats freezing or dehydrating quickly). There are two main types of winter dips:
 - Dry powder – hard to apply, can wick moisture on teat. Need to cover the teat completely to fully protect and moisturize the teat.
 - High emollient dips have more than 50 percent skin conditioner (like antifreeze). These dips minimize initial freezing risk post milking because they are slow to evaporate. However the teat is oily/ wet for 2-6 hours.
 - With both types of winter dips you need clean stalls because they can wick bacteria onto the teat and they cost 2-3 times more than normal lactating cow dips.
 - Keep in mind that winter dips are only more effective than normal lactating cow dips when temperatures are really cold.
4. Chlorine dioxide must be mixed daily and creates a drop on the teat end that keeps the teat end soft and hydrated. Chlorine dioxide is a very effective germicide but it is very costly.
5. Quit dipping – Not a very good option. The teats are still wet after milking and have no contagious mastitis control. Without skin conditioner the teats dehydrate quicker as well.
6. Salves – usually do more harm than good. Salves lead to a higher colonization with *Staph aureus*, coat or trap infection, provide for spreading of contagious mastitis. Salves also lead to greasy hands and equipment. The grease



attracts dirt and debris. They are water based therefore offering little or no protection. If you must use salves use ones with a proven germicide, use them sparingly applying to the teat end only.

Remember that teat cracking is due mostly to changes in temperature, if you can minimize temperature changes you can minimize cracking. Teat end cracking can occur very rapidly, usually within two to three days.

Temperatures don't have to be below 0 to see teat end cracking. Even the "best dips" have variable effectiveness depending on the situation or conditions in which they are used. Therefore it is important to take into consideration your circumstances when choosing a dip and making changes.

To help minimize cracking of teats:

- Windbreaks: if wind is less than 5 mph, -20°F can be tolerated
- Feed and house indoors where possible
- Avoid drafts/humidity
- Avoid direct wind chills post milking if possible
- Temperature changes are devastating
- Remember that even the best machine is an irritant/ stressor to the cow – so want to maximize let down and avoid over milking

If cracking does occur:

- Minimize other stressors that exacerbate problem
- Keep teat disinfected/ healthy/soft
- Minimize secondary bacterial infections
- Do not use salves – can help breed bacteria

Keep in mind that *Staph aureus* love wounds. Having cracked teats amplified the chance of getting *Staph aureus* by 100 percent even if you do not have any cows with *Staph aureus*. Also remember that good teat health depends on excellent nutrition. Fluctuating temperatures lead to fluctuating intakes, so if you can minimize temperature changes you can minimize fluctuations in intake and teat end cracking.



Five dollars cannot buy much anymore.

That is, unless we're talking about the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation; then \$5 can make a huge impact.

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation provides the funding for the Ag in the Classroom program, collegiate Farm Bureau chapters at three Wisconsin universities, Farm Bureau's leadership Institute, as well as the Women's and Young Farmer and Agriculturist programs.

Keeping these programs financially viable is critical to growing future farm leaders and educating consumers about agriculture. To help fund the Foundation, in 2015 you will notice a \$5 voluntary contribution line-item for the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation on your Farm Bureau dues renewal statement or Rural Mutual Insurance bill. We hope you'll view this as an investment in farming's future and choose to make a contribution.

Why is this necessary?

Aside from contributions from generous supporters, the Foundation has traditionally relied on two annual fundraisers: the Wisconsin Ag Open golf outing and a silent auction at the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting. Programs like Ag in the Classroom and the Young Farmer and Agriculturist Program were moved under the Foundation's umbrella a few years ago. While this has provided a tremendous cost savings to our bottom line, it also means that additional funds are needed to keep these programs sustainable.

We in the agricultural community have always seen the importance of growing our future.

Moving forward, we want young students to know that farmers grow their food. We want college students from all backgrounds to see agriculture's opportunities. We need to help grow the next crop of agricultural leaders and help Farm Bureau members find their voice. The Foundation and this \$5 contribution is our vehicle to make these things happen.

In closing, we are asking you to:

GIVE to a way of life you love.

ENRICH the education of young people through agricultural education.

PLEDGE to get young people started in agriculture.

COMMIT to tomorrow's leaders.

INVEST in the future of farming.

FSA Announces New Yield Data for Safety Net Calculations

Farmers can update yield history through February 27, 2015

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers farmers new information to update program payment yields that will help them better select protections offered by the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. The new programs, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, are cornerstones of the commodity farm safety, offering farmers protection when market forces cause substantial drops in crop prices and revenues.

The Farm Bill provides landowners with the option of updating their farm program payment yields and this is the first time that many producers have been able to update yields since 1986. FSA has worked with the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to make available certified yield data that producers can use to better calculate how the new safety net programs

can offer the best protection against market swings.

Farmers can check with their local FSA county office to see if data is available for them. This data belongs to the producer and only the producer associated with the crop insurance records will be provided this service. Updating yield history or reallocating base acres can occur until February 27, 2015.

FSA also issued a reminder that from November 17, 2014, to March 31, 2015, farmers will make a one-time election of either ARC or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years. For more information, farmers are encouraged to make an appointment to go into their local FSA county office.

To find a local FSA county office, visit offices.sc.egov.usda.gov. Additional information on the new programs is available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Portage County Farm Bureau Contacts:

President, Gene Gagas	715.347.7755
Vice President, Mark Zajackowski	715.457.2860
Secretary/Treasurer, James Isherwood	715.344.9654
YFA Chair, John Eron	715.498.5222
Women's Chair, Melissa Eron	651.380.1710

Director, Sarah Hafner	608.333.1217
Director, John Kosmalski	715.677.3857
Director, Leroy Miller	715.677.3435
Director, Richard Roth	715.457.6646
Director, Mark Schaffner	715.370.2904
Director, Leonard Wiza	715.457.6648

Portage County Farm Bureau	888.385.5945
WFBF Board Director, Don Radtke	715.573.7208
District 8 Coordinator, Ashleigh Calaway	866.355.7348
RMIC District Manager, Dave Meihak	715.344.6220

Farm Loan Opportunities for Producers

The Farm Loan Team is available to help producers with their loan needs. The 2014 Farm Bill provides additional loan opportunities for new and existing farmers. A fact sheet outlining modifications to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs is available at fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsReleases?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=pfs&newstype=pfsfactsheet&type=detail&item=pf_20140324_insup_en_fbill.html.

The 2014 Farm Bill expands lending opportunities for beginning and established farm operations including greater flexibility in determining eligibility and raising loan limits.

Changes that became effective with the Farm Bill include:

- Elimination of the 15-year term limit for guaranteed operating loans.
- Modification of the definition of beginning farmer, using the average farm size for the county as a qualifier instead of the median farm size.
- Modification of the Joint Financing Direct Farm Ownership Interest Rate to 2 percent less than regular Direct Farm Ownership rate, with a floor of 2.5 percent. Previously, the rate was established at 5 percent.
- Increase of the maximum loan amount for Direct Farm Ownership Down Payment Loan Program from \$225,000 to \$300,000.
- Microloan borrowing limit increased from \$35,000 to \$50,000.

- Microloans will not count toward direct operating loan term limits for veterans and beginning farmers.
- Increase of the guaranteed percentage on Conservation Loans from 75 to 80 percent and 90 percent for socially disadvantaged borrowers and beginning farmers.
- Elimination of rural residency requirement for Youth Loans, allowing urban youth to benefit.
- Debt forgiveness on Youth Loans, which will not prevent borrowers from obtaining additional loans from the federal government.

For more information, please visit the FSA Farm Bill website.



2015 Calendar

February

- 13-16 AFBF Engagement Conference in Nashville (YFA and Women)
- 13 Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit early registration forms due; for more information, visit wfbf.com/programsevents/womens-program/wisconsin-ag-womens-summit/
- 20-21 FFA Farm Forum in Wisconsin Rapids
- 24 Portage County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting

March

- 6 Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit—Final Registration Due
- 11 Ag Day at the Capital
- 13-14 Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit
- 23 Portage County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting

April

- 1 Ag in the Classroom Matching Grant Applications Due
- 1 Ag in the Classroom Essay's due to county board of directors. For more information, visit www.wisag-classroom.org/
- 28 Portage County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting
- 30 Early Bird Membership Bonanza comes to a close; interested in sharing what Farm Bureau has to offer, contact Ray Maciejewski, Wood County Membership Chair

May

- 21 July Beef Promotion Material Order's Due
- 26 Portage County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting

June

- 15 Summer Ag in the Classroom (AITC) training and Bus Tour Registration Deadline; to keep up to date on AITC programs, Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WIAgintheClassroom
- 23 Portage County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting

July

- 1 Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) Achievement and Excellence in Agriculture Awards Due
- 28 Portage County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting

August

- 9 Wisconsin Ag Open Golf Outing Registrations Due; for more information, visit wfbf.com/aboutwfbf/foundation/wisconsin-ag-open/
- 15 Rural Mutual Sponsorship Forms Due; are you between 18-35 years old and interested in attending the YFA conference for the first time? Contact Melissa Eron, Wood County YFA Chair for a chance to be sponsored by RMIC.
- 25-27 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days, Dane County
- 25 Portage County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting

- 31 WFBF County Activities of Excellence entries due
- 31 AFBF County Activities of Excellence entries due to WFBF; top Women's and YFA Program forms due to WFBF

September

- 22 Portage County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting
- 22 County annual meeting, date and location TBA

October

- 27 Portage County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting
- 31 WFBF Annual Meeting and YFA Conference Registration Due to your district coordinator Ashleigh Calaway

November

- 24 Portage County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting

December

- 4-7 WFBF YFA Conference and 96th WFBF Annual Meeting

SAVE the DATE