

Richland County Farm Bureau

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Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

YFA Members – Mark Your Calendars for Contest Night



As we get close to summer, even though the nights are still in the 30s, one thing comes to our YFA minds—contests! The first applications due will be the Achievement Award and Excellence in Ag. We will be having a **Young Farmer and Agriculturist Contest Night on June 18, at 7:30 p.m. at the Grant County Farm Bureau building in Lancaster.** If you know of anyone interested in any of the contests, please tell them about this educational and helpful meeting. Both awards are for people who are living up to the Farm Bureau motto— "Doing great things for agriculture". The Achievement Award is for an individual or couple who is involved in production agriculture and at least 51% of their income comes from the farm. The Excellence in Ag award is for someone who earns 51% or more of their income off the farm. Teachers, salespeople, or anyone that spends time promoting agriculture are perfect for the Excellence in Ag award. We will use the Contest Night to help answer any of your questions or help fill out the applications.

Another big award coming up this summer is the Discussion Meet. On **August 26** we will be hav-

ing our annual District 3 YFA Discussion meet at the Grant County Farm Bureau building. We will have supper before the discussion meet starts. More details about the Discussion Meet and supper will be shared in July. The top three participants in the discussion meet will advance to the state contest in December at the WFBF Annual Meeting and YFA Conference. If you know someone with the gift of gab and knowledge of agriculture, get them involved! At the YFA Contest Night in June, we will also be holding a mock discussion meet to help practice for the District meet.

As we started our role as the District 3 YFA Representatives we were looking for a way to be more involved as a district. In April, we started the "5th Tuesday Potluck" and we were very pleased with the turnout and are excited about the future ones. The next "5th Tuesday Potluck" will be **July 29 from 7-10 p.m.** at Talmer Bank in Darlington. We hope to see everyone there for a night of fun, friends and food!

We look forward to seeing everyone out and about this summer! If there's anything we can help with or planning events to give your YFA a boost, feel free to contact us!

Derek and Charisse Orth
District 3 YFA Representatives

District Women's Update



I am looking forward to this summer after what seemed to be an extra-long winter with a short spring. It has been an exciting spring for me on the WFBF Board of Directors working with strategic planning and the process of it. Our state board does an amazing job looking at the future of the organization and agriculture together.

I want to thank all the counties for the Ag in the Classroom essays this year. We had close to 200 essays from District 3. The winner was a student at Belmont schools in Lafayette County. All of the counties sent in excellent essays and it was a hard decision to make. This summer we will pick a book and a topic for next year.

It was great to see many of you at the Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit in Madison. This year we had many great speakers and are always looking for input on the future years. If you have not attended and would like more information please let me know.

This fall we are looking at having the District 3 Fall Summit in Vernon County. I will have more information at a later date about it. Please remember to save your pop tabs for the WFBF Annual Meeting. Let's see if we can win this challenge. This is my second go around with Women Rooted in Ag. I am always looking for suggestions of great women in our district to talk to. If you know someone please contact me.

Nicole Adrian
District 3 Women's Committee Representative and Committee Chair





COUNTYnews

RICHLAND COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION

Ag in the Classroom Essay Contest Winner Announced

Students from St. Mary's School in Richland Center participated in the 2014 Ag in the Classroom Essay Contest. There were 12 students who participated in the contest. Each student was given a monetary award for their participation. The Ag in the Classroom Essay Contest is open to all fourth and fifth grade students in Wisconsin. Congratulations to Katie Schmitz, this year's winner! You can read her essay below.



Congratulations to Richland County Essay Contest winner Katie Schmitz!

Wisconsin gardens provide many food choices for us.

Gardens are very helpful. We can plant all different kinds of great tasting vegetables, and learn about Earth's beautiful treasures.

Worms are very helpful to gardens. If there were no worms all the dead materials would be all over the place. In gardens worms are considered decomposers. Decomposers are animals that live in the ground and break down materials. After the decomposers break down the materials in the soil it becomes nutritious organic matter for the vegetables that are growing. It is also good to have a compost pile so we do not waste materials. Worms make the soil fluffy so it does not get hard.

All plants need sunlight. They could not produce photosynthesis without sunlight. If they could not produce photosynthesis they would die because photosynthesis is the process of making food for themselves to live off of.

You must root plants first so they can grow big. Starting plants from seeds is very important because if you plant it right away outside the soil it may be too cold for the plant to grow. When you start a plant you need to put it in a container with some soil. The plant has to be watered and put in sunlight for it to grow properly.

Growing your own vegetables can be fun and easy. You can eat some kinds of vegetables as soon as you harvest them, but it is best to wash the vegetables before you eat them. If you wash and prepare the vegetables it will taste better. Wisconsin is beautiful and has good rich soil, and that is how Wisconsin gardens provide many food choices for us.

Get on the Bus with Ag in the Classroom



The time has come, the 2014 Ag in the Classroom Bus Tour is here! This year, we're excited to be touring farms and businesses in Grant and Lafayette Counties!

The dates for this event are **July 8-9**. We head out for the first stop at 8:45 a.m. on Tuesday and will finish up at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday! The cost for the tour is \$50 and includes materials, meals and bus transportation.

This event is open to any volunteers, teachers, or agriculture professionals who are interested. For more information, please visit www.wisagclassroom.org/programs-activities/training-opportunities or contact WFBF Ag in the Classroom Coordinator Wendy Kannel at 608.828.5719. We hope to see you on the bus!



You'll get a chance to meet Chuck on the Bus Tour. He's looking forward to seeing you!

Reminder to Call Before You Dig!

Building a shed?
Planting a tree?
Installing a mailbox?
811 is the number you should call before you begin any digging project.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

A federally-mandated national "Call Before You Dig" number, 811 was created to help protect you from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects. People digging often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked due to concerns about project delays, costs and previous calls about other projects. These assumptions can be life-threatening.

Every digging job requires a call – even small projects like planting trees or shrubs. If you hit an underground utility line while digging, you can harm yourself or those around you, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood and potentially be responsible for fines and repair costs.

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Women Rooted in Agriculture: Crawford County Member Colette Hromadka

Colette joined Farm Bureau in 2002 when she and her husband, Craig, needed insurance. They attended some YFA events and county events but did not become active until 2007 when Craig was elected to the county board. She then became active on the Women's committee. She started helping with Ag in the Classroom and the essay contest. She also started helping with the Dairy Bar at the county fair. About two years ago they started co-chairing the county YFA for Crawford County.

Colette attended the Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit a couple times, but for her, the most memorable one was two years ago. She got a lot of information from it and it is always fun to get away for a few days. She also enjoys working the Dairy Bar at the county fair because she gets to meet and see people and enjoys talking to them.

A stay at home mom, Colette also works seasonal at Cabela's in Prairie du Chien. Colette enjoys gardening and working

outside on the lawn. She also enjoys reading. Craig farms with his parents and they have three children. They enjoy spending time with family along with hunting, fishing, canoeing and many other outdoor activities.

What makes you excited about the future of women in agriculture? I don't know if woman in agriculture have changed or not, but what you hear about them has certainly changed over the years. Today, we hear a lot more about their involvement when it comes to educating others about agriculture. When I was in school, I don't remember having a lot of



Colette is pictured here with her three kids, Abigail, Danielle and Aaron.

classroom visitors who spoke about careers, but now people are visiting classrooms of all ages and talking about how agriculture affects them. More and more, kids are beginning to realize that agriculture is so much more than pigs and cows. There is even more involvement in the Ag in the Classroom programs and essay contest. I am also excited about women coming together and bringing ideas together. I like to connect and learn ideas from others using forums like LinkedIn, other social media and events where women come together. It is amazing to network in these ways and

learn new ideas from other women in agriculture.

The Beef Farmer and the Peanut Butter Sandwich

In early May I had the chance to visit a classroom of kindergartners to talk about how we raise beef cattle and what nutrition it can provide as part of a balanced diet. Throughout the day I saw four-year-olds through third graders so I was catching on to a few commonalities among the classes; they liked to tell stories and they could turn any story into a question just so they could tell it. At one point I made the statement that beef has protein, just like peanut butter. One young lady immediately raised her hand. I went through my normal screening process to a hand being raised. 'Is this a question?' She said 'no.' 'OK, is it a story?' Again, her response was 'no.' 'OK, go ahead then.' So, she took a deep breath and said, 'I have a peanut butter sandwich in my lunch today.' She was right. Not a question or a story, merely a statement of fact.



It took me a few days to realize it, but she taught me a pretty important lesson that day. While she didn't have a question or a story to share, she stated a fact that made a connection between her and me. She took the time to find the thing that linked us together and then she shared it with me. How often do I do that when I have a conversation? How often do you? You see, there are plenty of opportunities for us to tell our story, or answer questions and we hope people will make a connection. But what if they don't? Can we find ways to help them connect to the work we do, whether it relates directly to agriculture or not? If you have small children in your life, I'm sure you have stories that could match this one and you probably find yourself chuckling at the connections that little kids make to the things you say. Even though there might not always be a question or a story (though there usually is), sometimes a statement of fact gives us a chance to establish a connection.

There are 17 schools in Richland County. Perhaps you have children or grandchildren who attend one of these schools. Have you ever taken time to visit their classroom and share what you do each day? If you are a banker, they probably figure you swim in money and count it all day long. Perhaps if you're a farmer, they think you milk cows by hand and ride a horse to work. It doesn't matter what career path you have chosen for yourself, sharing your experiences could help lead another person down that path and help them see the world through your eyes. Admittedly, it will help you see the world through their eyes too.

Not sure about visiting a classroom by yourself? Give me a call, I'd love to go along, I'll even bring the peanut butter sandwiches.

Gretchen Kamps
WFBF District 3 Coordinator

District Director's Message



As I wrote earlier this year, Farm Bureau has been undergoing a comprehensive strategic planning process. First, thank you to everyone who participated in the listening sessions. The Board and staff listened to our members; what are their values, concerns and expectations as we move the organization towards its 100th anniversary?

We held six listening sessions around the state collecting input from members. The information was collated and the Board met in April to put together common themes and to prioritize them for action plans.

What we found out didn't surprise us too much. We're doing a lot that is right. Our members found great value in our governmental relations division and a strong desire to increase our involvement on issues that impact our farms.

Our members also appreciate and believe there is room for greater development of the Ag in the Classroom program. Today there are hundreds, if not thousands, of media outlets telling people what they should think about today's modern agriculture.

We, agriculture, have to tell our story or someone else will tell it. Who's better than those of us that live our lives on the farm to tell our story?

We're more than halfway through our strategic process, but the real test will be implementing the plan. It will be you, the membership working with the Board and staff, that will determine the success of our organization as we approach our 100-year anniversary.

Be safe.

Richard Gorder
District 3 Board Director

Richland County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the Richland County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting on October 8 in Richland Center! *Watch your mailbox for the invitation!*

save • the • date
10 • 08 • 14

There are Benefits to Your Farm Bureau Membership:

Auto	Health	Supplies and Products
• General Motors Discount	• ScriptSave® Prescription Drug	• Case IH
Communication	• Savings Card	• FS-GROWMARK Patronage
• AgriVisor (NEW)	• Stroke Detection Plus	• Grainger
• The Country Today	Insurance	• Office Depot
Financial	• Rural Mutual Insurance Company	Travel
• AgriPlan Medical Reimbursement Program	• Farm Bureau Financial Services	• AAA
• Farm Bureau Bank	Protection	• AVIS Car Rental Discount Program
	• \$500 Reward Protection Program	• Choice Hotels International, Inc.
	• Accidental Death Policy	• Wyndham Hotel Group

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

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.

Rural Mutual Insurance Company Celebrates 80th Anniversary

Rural Mutual Insurance Company is proud to celebrate providing 80 years of insurance services to farms, families, businesses and industries across the state of Wisconsin.

The Madison-based insurance company was founded in 1934 under the sponsorship of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation to provide personal auto insurance to the farm community at affordable rates. This affiliation has served Rural Mutual well in the past and Rural Mutual continues to build on this niche focus as evidenced by its leading farm market share during 2013.

"With over 80 years of service, our mission and vision has not strayed far from the original purpose of the organization," said Peter Pelizza, CEO of Rural Mutual. "Holding the position

as a leading farm insurance provider in the state of Wisconsin has been our mainstay, however expanding our footprint in the state to include a significant market share of personal as well as commercial protection is something we are proud of and will continue to cultivate."

For the fifth consecutive year Rural Mutual was selected as a "Ward's 50th Top Performer" by the Ward Group. This recognition means that Rural Mutual is considered one of the top 50 property and casualty companies in the nation based on its superior financial performance over the last five years. Rural Mutual is also recognized by AM Best with an "A" Excellent rating with a stable outlook. This rating is assigned to companies that have an excellent ability to meet their ongoing insurance obligations.

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Richland County Farm Bureau	888.830.2576
District 3 Coordinator, Gretchen Kamps	866.355.7343
WFBF Board Director, Richard Gorder	608.987.3424
RMIC District Manager, Dave Larson	608.935.9500

Are You Ready for Summer?



Summertime in Wisconsin is a time for fun. So what does summer and fun mean to you? Well, let's see! There's baseball... hey... how about those Brewers? They're in FIRST place! And all the softball leagues, youth recreation programs, swimming, boating, picnics, camping, golfing and vacations. Whew! Summer is definitely a busy time.

But summer also means summertime storms and protecting the things and people that are important to us. Now don't be sad, you knew I was going to get around to talking about insurance! We need to make sure we have adequate coverage limits on our homes, buildings, personal property and crops should Mother Nature decide it's our turn for a nasty storm. And don't forget boats, campers and recreational vehicles for coverage also. Now is also a good time to check and make sure you have the right coverage on your vehicles too.

Finally, the most important part of summer is you. Are you adequately covered? Do you have a current life program? When was your program reviewed last? There's no time like now for a life check-up.

Insurance is what protects the things and people we care about. Call us at 608.647.2972 or stop in at 177 E Mill Street, Richland Center, so you can have your summers of fun and enjoy your four seasons of Wisconsin.

Fred Clary
Rural Mutual Insurance Company Agent

Upcoming Dates!

Mark your calendar and plan to join us for these exciting events!

July 13 – Farmer's Appreciation Day – Dodgeville

July 29 – YFA Potluck – Talmer Bank, Darlington

August 26 – District 3 YFA Discussion Meet – Lancaster

December 5-8 – WFBF Annual Meeting and YFA Conference – Wisconsin Dells

