

Vernon County Farm Bureau

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Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

YFA Members – Mark Your Calendars for Contest Night



As we get into summer one thing comes to our YFA minds, contests! The first applications due will be the Achievement Award and Excellence

in Ag. We had a Young Farmer and Agriculturist Contest Night on June 18, at the Grant County Farm Bureau Building in Lancaster. If you know of anyone interested in any of the contests, but they missed this informational meeting, please tell them to contact us. 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. The applications are due on July 1.


Another big contest coming up this summer is the Discussion Meet. On August 26, we will be having our annual District 3 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. If you know someone with the gift of gab and knowledge of agriculture, get them involved!

As we started our role as the District 3 YFA Chairs 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 3 YFA

5th Tuesday Potlucks
7-10 p.m.

Tuesday, April 29
Grant County Farm Bureau Building
9755 U.S. Highway 61 in Lancaster

Tuesday, July 29
Talmer Bank
Corner of Highway 18 & 23 in Darlington

Tuesday, September 30
Seneca Townhall
21041 Town Hall Road in Seneca

Tuesday, December 30
Richland Community Building
1050 N. Orange Street in Richland Center

Please join us for a night of socializing and eating! This will be a chance to connect with other Farm Bureau members and catch up with old friends.
Please bring a dish to pass. Drinks will be provided.

RSVP to:
Derek and Charisse Orth (608.778.9049 | derekjersey@gmail.com)
Gretchen Kamps (866.355.7343 | gkamps@wfbf.com)

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

VERNON COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION

Healthy Cows, Healthy Milk, Healthy YOU! Round Two of Destination Dairy Success

On May 13, the second annual Destination Dairy was held at Ocooch Dairy in Hillsboro and at Hillsboro Elementary School. Designed to be a



day to inform, educate and entertain students in grades PK-6 about dairy farming, and specifically why they should be drinking milk; this day provided children with an amazing wealth of knowledge in the form of many speakers and activities.

Children in pre-kindergarten through

third grade spent the day rotating through stations located throughout the elementary school. Station activities ranged from leading a show calf around the parking lot and learning what she eats, making butter in a jar, sponge painting with milk to create ice cream cones, seeing and touching what a veterinarian uses to keep cows healthy, and learning why their growing bodies need beef and dairy products.

Students in grades four through six spent the day on Ocooch Dairy, where everything was a living classroom. They toured the farm in the morning, with tour stops at the bunkers (how many elephants could this bunker hold?), freestalls (how are cows like teenagers?), parlor (how important is it to have a clean udder?), calf hutches (newborn calves eat that much?), special needs parlor (stethoscopes and some serious hand milking!), and manure pit/soil (manure is really necessary!). After an awesome lunch on the farm, the afternoon held more learning and fun opportunities for the lucky children. Five more hands-on learning stations delved into how much sugar popular drinks have in them versus milk, how a cow's stomach works, taking a calf's temperature, smelling and touching what calves eat, and the 'Tough Udder' a farm themed obstacle course.

With treats like string cheese, cheese curds, ice cream, and beef summer sausage and sticks, children had many exposures to some great healthy snacks. An adventure of this magnitude would not have been possible without many amazing businesses that recognize the importance of teaching youth about dairy farming. Mlsna Dairy Supply, Merial, Hillsboro County Market, Star Blends, Hillsboro Equipment Inc., Animart, and of course, Vernon County Farm Bureau are some of the many sponsors. It also would not have been possible without the help, energy, and time of 45 incredible people. Thanks to all of you for making it what numerous students refer to as their 'best day ever!'



Laura Daniels helped a student listen to a cow's stomach.



Julie Larson showed the students what calves eat.



Each student got a chance to lead a calf around the parking lot.

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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 27 schools in Vernon 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

President's Message

Hello Vernon County Farm Bureau! I think it's safe to say that we have finally put one of the coldest winters in the books. Spring is a time for new beginnings and the start for new seeds to grow.

We recently finished our early bird membership drive and met our goal. With the bonus received from the Wisconsin Farm Bureau, we continue to teach and educate elementary students. I was fortunate enough to join Gretchen Kamps and Jackie Davison on a trip to Viroqua Elementary School to award the winners of the essay contest. Gretchen and Jackie taught the kids about soils and the different layers that make up what we farmers depend on to grow our crops. And what better way to keep kids' attention than with food! Pudding, cookies and gummy worms made up all of the layers needed. When all was done, the kids were able to eat the "dirt". Great job ladies, the presentation was great and entertaining!

Thanks to all of the board members and Vernon County Farm Bureau members for renewing your memberships. With your help, we are able to plant the seed, and with proper cultivating, keep educating young students about farming that we all strive to make better for their future!

Have a safe and prosperous summer!

Steve Wagemester
Vernon County Farm Bureau President



Pictured (L to R) Jacqui Davison, Jessica Tryggestad (essay winner), Saige Zitner (essay winner) and Steve Wagemester.

Maple Syrup Event was Sweet

On March 29, the Obert Family hosted Vernon County Farm Bureau members to a morning at the sugar bush. The event kicked off with a lunch of pancakes, bacon and of course, locally made syrup! After the lunch, we walked to the maple trees and learned a lot more about how maple syrup is made in Vernon County. We started with the tapping of the trees, and then learned how the sap is collected, stored, boiled, processed and finally bottled into a delicious and tasty treat to be enjoyed all year.



We had a great turnout for a maple syrup educational day.

Many in attendance asked questions about buying supplies, how to get started making their own syrup and learning more and more about how trees heal from the process each year. A special thank you goes to the Obert and Gardner Families for all the cleaning, prepping and work they did to make this day a huge success!

Essay Contest a Success!!

Congratulations to Saige Zitner of Viroqua for submitting the winning essay for this year's Ag in the Classroom Essay Contest. Her essay was selected as top notch from the 53 essays submitted across the county. Essays were received from Hillsboro, St. Matthew's, Kickapoo, and Viroqua school districts.

A special thank you goes to all of the teachers who took the time to help their students participate in this fun contest. Paige Verbsky, of Hillsboro, was our second place winner, followed by Jessica Tryggstad, of Viroqua in third.



Paige Verbsky, of Hillsboro, was our second place winner



Jacqui Davison talked to Viroqua fifth grade students about plants and soil.

All three young ladies received mini gardens as a prize, and all students who submitted an essay received seed packets in hopes they will continue to be active gardeners.

The winning essay:

I have experience with a garden because our family grows one every spring through summer. We have grown watermelon, carrots, asparagus, strawberries, cucumbers, green beans, tomatoes, radishes, onions, squash and flowers. All my family helped with planting, tilling, watering, picking and harvesting. I really enjoy going out on a splendid day to go pick strawberries and eat them fresh that day, after they have been rinsed with water. Picking green beans and then eating them for supper that night is so divine. On the edges of the rectangular garden we planted flowers. The marigolds helped keep the rabbits away. I did not really like having to haul the wagon to the garden for our watermelon because my sisters would get mad at me and say that I wasn't trying to pull it. When I took a bite of watermelon after that, it was all worth it! My dad is the best griller I know, especially the way he puts vegetables that we've harvested on the steaks to give them more flavor. I think that everybody should own a garden because you're being active while taking care of it, you grow healthy foods, and it's very fun. I hope my writing tells people that growing a garden isn't such a waste of time and to give it a try.

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!

Upcoming Dates!

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

July 8-9 – Ag in the Classroom Bus Tour

July 13 – Farmer's Appreciation Day – Dodgeville

July 29 – YFA Potluck – Talmer Bank, Darlington, 7:30 p.m.

August 26 – District 3 YFA Discussion Meet – Lancaster

September 22 – Vernon County Annual Meeting – Rockton Bar

September 30 – YFA Pot Luck – Seneca Town Hall, 7:30 p.m.

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

Policy Development Picnic

This summer we'll be hosting a policy development picnic. This will be a chance for you to attend and share your ideas regarding policies that you think Farm Bureau should support at the county, state and federal level.

Watch your mailbox for a brightly-colored postcard later this summer and be sure to attend!



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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

Annual Meeting – Save the Date

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the Vernon County Farm Bureau annual meeting on September 22 at the Rockton Bar in Rockton! Watch your mailbox for the invitation!

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