

Vernon County Farm Bureau

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Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

Raise Your Voice for Agriculture



Mark your calendars for **Wednesday, March 8, 2017**, and plan to attend Ag Day at the Capitol.

It's important for us to raise our voice on issues. Take a few moments to become familiar with an issue that is affecting

you and call your legislators. Inform them how important agriculture is in Vernon County and share your views on issues and how they affect your farm.

Remember when you talk to your legislators to be respectful and thank them for their support of agriculture.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Melissa Doyle at 608.574.9884 or mdoyle@wfbf.com.

District 3 Members Named YFA Achievement Award Finalists



I'm proud to be involved with a group of people who are so committed to agriculture and the connections and relationships you make with them.

Alex Bringe
Vernon County
YFA member



Alex Bringe is a member of Vernon County Farm Bureau. Alex is a beef and grain farmer from Viroqua. He earned a bachelor's degree in animal science from UW-Platteville. He continued his education at Western Technical College in its farm business management

program. His lifelong interest in agriculture and politics led him to Farm Bureau. He is the Vernon County YFA chair and also serves as the pork chop fundraiser coordinator. He attended the YFA leadership trip to Washington, D.C., and the WFBF Annual Meeting as a county delegate. He also is a graduate of the WFBF Institute.



It's a great feeling to belong to an organization that understands our struggles and shares the same beliefs to unite us and make us stronger.

Chad & Katrina Gleason
Lafayette County
YFA members



local dairy farmers. The family grows and harvests their own feed on 80 acres of owned and 60 acres of rented land. Chad is a former director for the Lafayette County Farm Bureau. He enjoys farm-related activities and spending time with others who share his passion for agriculture. Katrina home schools their children and manages the books for the farm. She enjoys cooking, working with the family's horses and spending time with family and friends.

Chad and Katrina Gleason are fourth generation farmers, north of Shullsburg in Lafayette County. They have three children Cassidy, Gage and Kinsey. They specialize in dairy beef, and raise bottle fed calves to finished steers. The family raises about 400 calves per year from



**Summit
2017**

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COUNTYnews

VERNON COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION

Vernon County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting Recap

The Vernon County Farm Bureau held their annual meeting on September 20 at the Old Towne Inn in Westby. The evening began with a meal for all in attendance and was followed by the business portion of the meeting.

Members present selected delegates for the WFBF Annual Meeting, elected directors for next year and discussed resolutions. Crawford County members passed two resolutions, including the following:

Internal

1. We support giving technical college students the opportunity to participate in the Collegiate Farm Bureau Discussion Meet closest in location to the school their attending as a means to further Farm Bureau's reach.

State

1. We support the idea of food production and nutrition classes throughout the education system. These will be forwarded to the Policy Development Committee for consideration by the delegates at the WFBF Annual Meeting.

Thank you to everyone who attended the county annual meeting, we look forward to seeing more of you next year.



District 3 Farm Bureau in Action



The District 3 YFA Discussion Meet was on August 23 in Lancaster. There were six contestants including: front row (L-R) Amber Berning, Lafayette County; Kayla Anderson, Iowa County; and Becky Hasburgh, Iowa County; back row (L-R) Josh Bailie, Grant County; Dan Frank, Grant County; and Andrew DalSanto, Grant County. Josh, Becky and Andrew will compete in the Discussion Meet during the YFA Conference.



Each year, Vernon County joins Crawford and Richland counties for the District 3 Northern Tri-County Meeting. Members hear from WFBF staff and are briefed on legislative issues impacting the agricultural industry. The meeting also gives the attendees time to network, share ideas and discuss Farm Bureau business.



Farm Bureau Institute Class X recently traveled to Indianapolis to learn about Indiana agriculture and Indiana Farm Bureau. Trent Erickson of Vernon County is a current Institute member. The class visited Elanco to learn about the Elanco Pulse Institute. The class stopped at the CUE Farm at Butler University to learn about urban farming and at Fair Oaks Farms to explore more about cows, pigs and crops.



In July, Grant County Farm Bureau hosted District 3 YFA members for an evening of fun on the farm. Members and their families enjoyed a picnic dinner, hayride, outdoor games and a tour of Majestic View Dairy.

Collegiate Corner



The UW-Platteville chapter has had a busy and exciting fall semester. The students participated in the annual UW-Platteville homecoming parade, enjoyed an outing to Vesperman Farms and hosted the Collegiate Discussion Meet. The officer team did an impressive job organizing meetings and events, welcoming new members and representing Farm Bureau at the collegiate level. There are many more activities and events planned for the spring semester.

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District Director Update



Well another season is quickly coming to a close, the crop season as well as the election season. The county annual meetings signal the hectic fall harvest is around the corner and the race to get everything harvested before the weather challenges us more than usual.

This also is the time of the year when we begin to reflect and evaluate the past year's successes and where we could stand a little improvement. Did we pick the right seed varieties and fertilizer recommendations? Did our conservation plan meet expectations given the record rainfall events many of us endured?

Your Farm Bureau reflects and evaluates the past year successes and challenges, too.

Farm Bureau membership continues to grow despite the changing farm landscape. More than ever, farmers realize the importance of their membership in a professional organization. Our challenge will always be to understand we are a general-purpose organization with diverse interests and viewpoints.

Last December, Farm Bureau delegates voted to create the Promotion and Education Committee to further our outreach and communication to those whose lives are directly, as well as indirectly, affected by agriculture. Our challenge – while everyone eats, there seems to be a growing number of people who think there is only one way of thinking about our food supply.

Organic versus conventional, big versus small, GMO versus non-GMO are conversations we all have had, but we need to understand it serves no purpose. We are blessed to live in a world where we have choices and better yet ... respecting other's choices.

There will be a plethora of issues awaiting the new President and Congress as well as the state legislature in the new year. Issues that continue to need attention include: waters of the U.S., trade, immigration, transportation infrastructure, broadband infrastructure and many more.

Your Farm Bureau will be presenting our positions of interest.

Dick Gorder
WFBF District 3 Director



Wiedenbeck and Roth Appointed to State WFBF Committees

Tammy Wiedenbeck of Grant County was appointed to the WFBF Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) Committee and Katie Roth of Lafayette County has been appointed to the WFBF Promotion and Education Committee by the Board of Directors. Their terms begin at the WFBF Annual Meeting and YFA Conference on December 2-5 in Wisconsin Dells. Tammy and Katie will represent District 3 on each of the committees.



Tammy Wiedenbeck is a field representative for Equity Livestock Sales Cooperative. She assists farmers in southwest Wisconsin and northeast Iowa with livestock marketing. Tammy owns 20 shorthorn and angus

beef cows. She is a member of the Grant County Farm Bureau, secretary of the Grant County Cattleman's Association, board member of the Lancaster FFA Alumni and lifetime member of UW-Platteville alumni.

The WFBF YFA Committee consists of nine couples or individuals (ages 18-35) from across the state. Its goal is to get more young farmers and agriculturists acquainted with and involved

in Farm Bureau. They carry out a variety of statewide initiatives, such as conferences, contests and award programs.



Katie Roth grew up in Darlington on her family's 330-cow dairy farm. Married in early 2016, Katie works on her husband's farm Banner Ridge Farms, LLC, as the herdsman in addition to serving as a program technician for the Farm Service

Agency (FSA) in Grant County. Katie served a variety of roles in her county Farm Bureau including Young Farmer and Agriculturist chair, secretary and Ag in the Classroom co-Chair. She graduated from Wisconsin Farm Bureau Leadership Institute and the American Farm Bureau Women's Communications Boot Camp.

The Promotion and Education Committee, which replaced the Women's Committee in 2015, is a group of nine leaders who represent the nine Farm Bureau districts. Committee members develop, implement and promote projects and programs that build awareness and understanding of agriculture and provide leadership development for the agricultural community.

WFBF Seeks Rural Route Photos

Wisconsin Farm Bureau members live and work in some of the most beautiful places.

In *Rural Route* WFBF wants to highlight those sights with your families and friends.

Please email your photos (high resolution jpgs, 4x6 inches at 300 dpi) to lsiekmann@wfbf.com.



Buster the Bull Calf is One of a Kind

By Tammy Wiedenbeck, Grant County Farm Bureau Member



When I was no older than three or four years old, I can remember the first time that my brother brought a red and white spotted calf up to the farmhouse. The excitement sparkled in my eyes as my love for cattle took off that very day.

About 20 years later, our local veterinarian ended up diagnosing one of our Angus cows with cancer. We were fortunate, however, to save the bull calf that she had carried full term. From day one, we were the first living beings that the calf saw and we took on the role of raising him.

My nephews and niece who wanted to help with feeding a new pet, decided to name the calf Buster. For those of you who have been in the industry for a while, know that beef bottle calves are pretty tame, but not to the point where they think they are one of us. Well, Buster does.

Buster started following us like a puppy dog, bouncing around whenever we came outside to play with him or to do chores. I took him out of his pen to be the highlight of my Farm Bureau and Christmas card photo shoots.

When put with other cattle, Buster didn't

bond well and preferred to be by us when given the chance. I thought to myself, "This is the calmest calf I have ever seen on our farm. How would anyone look at this calf and not fall in love with him?"

With the Grant County Fair coming up, I decided to ask if it would be possible to give rides on Buster to kids. After many weeks of my question going unanswered, I got the exciting news in August that Buster could go to the fair. My goal was to not only educate fairgoers about the beef industry, but to also spark the interest of youth in livestock and agriculture, just as my brother had done for me many years ago.

Although I was slightly nervous about putting a saddle on a 600-pound calf and leading him around, he ended up being a hit at the Grant County Farm Bureau Ag Tent. There were children gathering around before we were set-up at the booth. Many photos were taken and smiles were shared. Many said, "I've never even ridden a horse before, let alone calf."

I hope that the memories that the kids made with Buster will be something that they remember for years to come. He was definitely a special gift to our farm and next year, we hope he will return to the Grant County Fair. Be sure to keep your calendars marked to come and visit.



There are Benefits to Your Farm Bureau Membership:

- Auto**
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- Health**
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- Case IH
 - Caterpillar
 - FS-GROWMARK Patronage
 - Grainger
 - Polaris
 - Office Depot

- Communication**
- AgriVisor
 - The Country Today
- Insurance**
- Rural Mutual Insurance Company
 - Farm Bureau Financial Services
- Travel**
- AAA
 - AVIS Car Rental Discount Program
 - Choice Hotels International, Inc.
 - Wyndham Hotel Group

- Financial**
- AgriPlan Medical Reimbursement Program
 - Farm Bureau Bank
- Protection**
- \$500 Reward Protection Program
 - Accidental Death Policy

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

District Promotion and Education Update

By Nicole Adrian, District 3 Promotion and Education Committee Representative



In August, the Promotions and Education Committee officially kicked off the 'Playbook.' The 'Playbook' is a resource found on the Wisconsin Farm Bureau website (wfbf.com) that is full of helpful information for members to use when planning county and district events, programs and activities.

Program areas featured in the 'Playbook' include: Ag in the Classroom, Consumer Outreach, Education and Ag Promotion, Fundraising, Member Development and Policy and Development Implementation.

If you want to add a play, you can download the form from the website and submit it to Deb Raemisch. The next update will be done on **December 15**. Please contact me with questions regarding the 'Playbook.'

The 2015-2016 Ag in the Classroom Book of the Year is *Time for Cranberries* by Wisconsin author Lisl Detlefsen. To go with the theme of the book, the essay topic is 'Tell us about cran-

berry production in Wisconsin during one of the four seasons.' The essay contest is open to fourth and fifth grade students in public, private and home schools, including 4-H clubs, Farm Bureau families and other organizations.

Essay submissions must be 100- to 300-words in length and will be judged on content, grammar, spelling and neatness. More information regarding the contest can be found by visiting the Ag in the Classroom website at www.wisagclassroom.org.

The Wisconsin Ag Women's Summit will be held in Madison on **March 10-11, 2017**. Workshops and activities are planned for both days. For more information, watch the *Rural Route* or visit www.wiagwomenssummit.com.

Thank you to everyone for the help and support during my six years of serving on the Women's Committee and Promotion and Education Committee. I enjoyed visiting each county during annual meetings and the fall workshops. I look forward to seeing you at the WFBF Annual Meeting on **December 3-5** in Wisconsin Dells.

AFB Foundation for Agriculture Focuses on Ag Literacy

Agricultural literacy is knowledge: "We believe everyone should have an understanding of where their food comes from."

The Foundation has taken steps to define 'agriculturally literate.' An agriculturally literate person understands the relationship between agriculture and environment, food, fiber and energy, animals, lifestyle, the economy and technology. These are the AFBFA's Pillars of ag literacy.

Agricultural literacy can be cultivated in any person, no matter the age or experience. Helping others understand the important role agriculture plays in their everyday lives is our goal. We work towards this by being a credible source for agricultural literacy information. Our materials and programs are designed not only to reflect reliable information, but also to meet today's standards of learning.

AFBFA has continued efforts to produce outstanding educational materials, create accurate resources and provide opportunities to tell the story. They are working toward making more of their materials free to educators and volunteers.

Thank you for wanting to get involved in helping others learn more about where their food comes from, how farmers and ranchers steward the land, how agriculture is everywhere, and how farmers and ranchers feed the world. These are crucial pieces in creating ag literacy.

Here are some ideas:

- **Volunteer:** In a school, summer camp, fair or after school program. Use any of the ag literacy resources including My American Farm, Food and Science Day Camp or select an ag book to help make your presentations effective.
- **Tell your story:** Blog, post, tweet! Share information with the others who may not have a farm background so they can understand what you are doing on a farm.
- **Promote ag literacy:** Help spread the word about ag literacy and the AFBFA's resources by talking to teachers, volunteers, posting about them online or displaying banners at a fair.
- **Contact:** A local Farm Bureau or Ag in the Classroom coordinator to see if they have volunteer opportunities.
- **Stay connected:** Sign up for the AFBFA newsletter to get the latest information on programs.



For more information or to access resources, visit www.agfoundation.org.

Vernon County Farm Bureau Contacts:

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 Director, Bill Putze 608.629.5455
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Vernon County Farm Bureau 888.830.2572
 District 3 Coordinator, Melissa Doyle 866.355.7343
 WFBF Board Director, Richard Gorder 608.987.3424
 RMIC District Manager, Randy Palmer 608.515.3123

District YFA Update



So long, farewell.
 Definitely a bittersweet moment as we write our last newsletter article.

Maybe we will have more free time or time to spend with the family. But, sadly, as we wrap up our tenure as the District 3 Young Farmer and Agriculturist representatives and YFA Chair, we are thinking about the

opportunities that we had and the many things we are going to miss. County annual meetings, 5th Tuesday Potlucks and Discussion Meets are a few things that we enjoyed.

We watched the UW-Platteville Collegiate Farm Bureau grow and flourish as its own organization within the ag community. We've helped members apply for awards and fill out applications for the Excellence in Agriculture and Achievement Awards.

During our role, we attended conferences and conventions throughout the U.S., which was truly an amazing experience when it was below zero at home and we walked on green grass in Florida. We have always felt welcomed in every District 3 county and appreciated meeting everyone and learning about each county's traditions.

Our district is in good hands as we pass the baton to Tammy Wiedenbeck. She has new goals, dreams and ideas to share. We will miss you and can't wait to see you again.

Derek and Charisse Orth
 District 3 YFA Representatives

2017 FFA Farm Forum Sponsorships

Vernon County Farm Bureau has money available to sponsor students interested in attending FFA Farm Forum on **February 17-18, 2017**, at Hotel Mead in Wisconsin Rapids.

The forum is for students who are ready and willing to explore topics and learn outside their comfort zone.

If you or an FFA student you know want to attend, please contact president Steve Wagemester by **January 5, 2017**.