



Vernon County Farm Bureau

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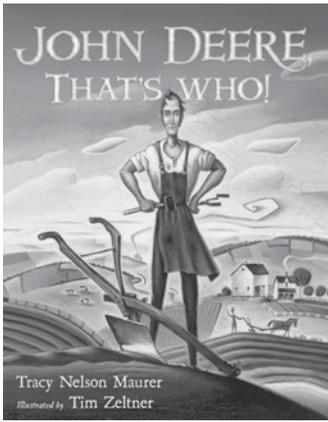

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Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

Vernon County Ag in the Classroom Update



All Vernon County fourth and fifth grade students are invited to participate in Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom essay contest.

This year's topic is, 'Inventions that have made agriculture great.' Each year, the topic has specific lesson plans, activities and other resources that can be used to teach about Wisconsin agriculture.

Vernon County Farm Bureau has several resources available to assist in the learning and exploration of

this year's topic. The 2018 Book of the Year, "John Deere, That's Who!" by author Tracy Nelson Maurer, is the perfect way to educate students about how John Deere improved and invented a plow and help students get started on the essay topic.

All rules, promotional materials, county Farm Bureau contacts, lessons and activities, and other resources related to the essay contest and book program can be found at www.wisagclassroom.org.

Vernon County contest entries are due by **April 2**. Essays should be mailed to:

Vernon County Farm Bureau
c/o Robert Nigh
S6266A County Road N
Viroqua, WI 54665



Ag Day at the Capitol – A Voice for Farmers

Ag Day at the Capitol was held on January 24 in Madison. The event 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 state legislators.

Vernon County Farm Bureau member, Alex Bringe, was in attendance. He along with 400 other attendees gathered at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center for a meal and issues briefing before walking to the Capitol to discuss current agriculture issues with legislators.

Topics for discussion included implementation of hemp legislation, CAFO transfer from the DNR to DATCP, high capacity well permitting process, wetland legislation, NR 151 targeted performance standards and other pertinent ag issues.



Governor Scott Walker also attended. Following his address announcing new rural and agriculture initiatives, he signed an executive order to provide markets for family farmers and agribusinesses.

"Ag Day at the Capitol is an opportunity for farmers to build a relationship with their elected officials and talk about how decisions made in the Capitol affect Wisconsin agriculture," said Jim Holte, Wisconsin Farm Bureau President. "It is imperative that we, as farmers, take time to talk with our legislators and visiting them at the Capitol allows us to do that in a powerful way."





COUNTYnews

VERNON COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION



2017 WFBF Annual Meeting Highlights



The 98th WFBF Annual Meeting took place December 1-4 at the Kalahari Resorts in Wisconsin Dells. 1: More than 60 YFA members from District 3 attended the YFA Conference that is held in conjunction with the WFBF Annual Meeting. Members networked, attended breakout sessions and learned more about Farm Bureau, while enjoying the amenities of the Kalahari Resorts. 2: Alex Bringe competed for the Achievement Award and was recognized for being a top finalist. 3: Many District 3 members participated in this year's Fun'd the Foundation trivia contest. Teams answered questions about current events, history, geography, music, sports, Farm Bureau and more. The contest raised funds that will be used by the WFB Foundation to help grow agricultural education and leadership programs. 4, 5: Vernon County Farm Bureau members Alex Bringe, Dave McClurg, Robert Nigh and Scott Sherry served as delegates and participated in the policy adoption process that guides WFBF's legislative agenda for 2018. Alex Bringe also was a member of the WFBF Policy Development Committee.

Farm Bureau in Action



In January, District 3 members met in Madison for the Winter Promotion and Education Meeting. Members enjoyed a morning of idea sharing and making plans for the year ahead. The meeting was followed by lunch at the Thirsty Goat and volunteering at the Second Harvest Foodbank. The staff at the food bank were impressed with the work ethic of these farm girls and how quickly they finished the assigned tasks of sorting pizzas and packaging potatoes.

District 3 Farm Bureau member Andrew Dal Santo was selected to be a member of the WFBF Leadership Institute Class XII. The first session was held January 18-20 in Madison. The class members dug into their strengths, discussed emotional intelligence and polished public speaking skills. Craig Culver, co-founder of Culver's, spoke to the class.



Kaitlyn Riley, a Crawford County Farm Bureau member and dairy farmer, assisted Wisconsin Farm Bureau on its social media platforms. She hosted WFBF's Takeover Tuesday on Instagram and Snapchat, and answered the question, 'Are there antibiotics in milk?' on WFBF's Facebook 'Ask A Farmer Friday'. To stay update on Farm Bureau news, be sure to 'Like' the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation page on Facebook and add wifarmbureau on Instagram and Snapchat.

Liked by cylonrollingacres, andreabrossard and 86 others
wifarmbureau I'm mostly in charge of calf care on Riley Farms. We do our very best to give cattle the best start in life because our partnership in agriculture would not work if our animals were not happy and healthy! I recently had the chance to network with other dairy professionals and learn new techniques for raising calves at the WFBF Young Farmers and Agriculturalists Conference this December thanks to Rural Mutual Insurance.

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President's Message



Maybe by the time you read this, spring has almost arrived. As I type this it's about zero degrees out, but the forecast is calling for highs in the low 30s.

Thank you to Steve Wegemaster for his years of service and for his continued dedication as he steps from the role of president to vice president.

The Vernon County Farm Bureau Board of Directors is scheduling events and activities for the year. We are excited about the opportunity as a leadership team to bring more value to you as members.

With the help of the state staff we will continue to monitor local legislative issues and plan to be more involved in activities that help our community to understand agriculture better.

We are seeking individuals to be a part of this leadership team. We have a pressing need for a promotion and education committee chair and other active directors.

On the membership front, we are always looking for new members and encourage current members to please renew your memberships. Farm Bureau truly offers something for everyone.

A buck a week. No, I am not talking deer hunting, but the many benefits of your Farm Bureau membership.

You can receive up to \$500 off of select Case IH equipment and save up to \$2,500 on excavators, skid steers, wheel loaders and more. Supplies at Grainger can be up to 80 percent off, plus free shipping. Preferred products at Office Depot also can be purchased for up to 80 percent off plus free shipping.

The \$500 Reward Protection Program also is a member benefit for those displaying the Farm Bureau reward sign. Accidental death benefit starts at \$1,500 and can increase to \$3,500 for consecutive years of membership at \$200 per year

increase in benefit.

Your membership dollars also provide for Ag in the Classroom resources, FFA Farm Forum sponsorships and opportunities for members to participate in leadership development trainings. Farm Bureau is always working for agriculture with many educational events and is a trusted voice of reason and accurate information for lawmakers.

So, the next time you need something for your farm, office or business, visit www.wfbf.com and click on the 'Member Benefits' tab. You might find savings on everything from your next hotel stay to prescription drugs. All this and more for just over a buck a week.

If you want to learn more about how you can get involved in Farm Bureau, please contact me at 608.606.4319 (call or text).

As always stay safe and stay informed.

Robert Nigh

Vernon County Farm Bureau president

District 3 Director Report



The bitter cold and long winter days will eventually give way to a new spring.

Those of us involved in agriculture

look forward to the new season with hope and promise. We also know with every new season there will be periods of uncertainty, anxiety and angst.

There is considerable news coverage in the media outlets talking of the challenges that await us this year. Profit margins are expected to be tight on all of the commodities and dairy is drawing particular attention. It is expected that dairy profitability may be the lowest since 2009, challenging even the most efficient.

I have no advice or words of wisdom. Each of us will do what we have to do to make it work. Working with our financial advisors and creditors, our suppliers, we will build our strategy for surviving this financially stressful environment. We can only hope this down cycle will moderate before we're forced to make draconian decisions.

While we're focused on our farms, we must not forget about some of the issues and elections that we all need to be cognizant of.

First we must not take lightly the pending Wisconsin Supreme Court race. The Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Volunteers for Agriculture will be interviewing and

endorsing a candidate. Please take notice of this endorsement as the makeup of the Supreme Court has a direct impact on agriculture. We continue to stay vigilant and engaged as an interpretation of the Use Value Assessment Law is being challenged in front of the Court. Who sits on the Court could affect the future of the Use Value Law and other agriculture sensitive issues.

There is an all-important Governor's race this fall, too. I feel it's pretty safe to say WFBF will be endorsing Governor Scott Walker. Governor Walker has been a steadfast supporter of agriculture in this state and recognizes the enormous economic impact agriculture has. A healthy agriculture economy equates to a healthy state economy. And while our Governor can't change or improve the price of our commodities, the Administration, working with the legislature, can impact the taxes and environmental issues that can impact our livelihoods.

Finally, I have announced my retirement from the Board of Directors. This will be my final year of a three-year term ending with the annual meeting in December. It will be 21 years I've had the privilege to represent District 3 on the Farm Bureau and Rural Board.

I hope to share some thoughts and memories with you over the coming months. I welcome the next generation of leaders representing our organization and agriculture.

Thank you.

Dick Gorder

WFBF District 3 Board Director

District 3 Young Farmer and Agriculturist Update



The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Agriculturists finished a great year with the 2017 YFA Conference and WFBF Annual Meeting. Many members enjoyed the casino night, trivia contest, bean bag tournament and comedian.

My favorite breakout learning session was being able to hear and speak with a lawyer on farm transition planning.

Even though I have attended the conference for many years, I'm still surprised by how many new people I met and the memories that were made.

Many members comment that it's their favorite Farm Bureau event, so if you ever have an interest in attending or have suggestions for next year's conference, please contact me.

We have a lot of fun events scheduled for 2018. We're planning to host the Southwest Shindig,

which will include live music and a barn dance for the counties in District 3 to attend. It will be held on **Friday, March 24** at Grant County Fairgrounds in Lancaster. We hope to see many of you there.

I recently returned from the AFBF YF&R Leadership Conference in Reno, Nevada. It was another great chance to meet people from across the country and broaden my horizons.

Sessions covered market volatility, strategies to keep your farm in the family, career success, risk management, managing relationships, social media, advocacy and more. I highly recommend that members take the opportunity to attend one of the national conferences that Farm Bureau offers.

It's going to be a great year and I encourage members to get more involved with Farm Bureau. I can tell you one thing, you won't regret a minute of it.

Tammy Wiedenbeck

District 3 YFA Representative

608.732.7431

wiede51@hotmail.com

IGNITE Conference | April 5-6, 2018 | Stevens Point

The IGNITE Conference is a state-wide information training and fun-filled member engagement meeting for county Farm Bureau leaders conducted by WFBF staff with assistance from AFBF staff and various outside speakers and presenters.

At the conference, you will learn about innovative county Farm Bureau programs, grow your knowledge of agriculture issues, network with other Farm Bureau leaders, become informed on roles and responsibilities within Farm Bureau, be trained to share your agriculture and Farm Bureau story and discover how you can engage all members to become active at the county level.

To learn more about the conference or to register, click on the 'Program & Events' tab on the WFBF website.

All Farm Bureau members are invited to attend the 2018 Wisconsin Farm Bureau IGNITE Conference, April 5-6, in Stevens Point.



AFBF YF&R Committee Update



Hopefully, we are wrapping up this inconsistent winter and are moving closer to green grass, turning dirt and early-bird membership bonuses. We just finished our first year on the AFBF Young Farmer and Rancher Committee. We traveled to Washington, D.C., St. Louis, Indianapolis, Nashville and most recently, Reno for the AFBF YF&R Leadership Conference. What a year it has been.

One common discussion this year has centered around getting more young people involved. Many of the members that have been in Farm Bureau the longest, started the earliest. How can we get more young people involved? What are you doing to find young agricultural leaders and show them the opportunities Farm Bureau has to offer? What can we do on a national level to get more people engaged and have an impact on members right here in southwest Wisconsin? Please contact us if you have ideas. Wisconsin is already doing great things with the three Collegiate Farm Bureau chapters and the FFA Farm Forum, but we are always looking for ways to innovate.

We also want to remind you about the Achievement Award and Excellence in Ag Award. The applications are due in July. So, if you started your application today and answered one of the questions each week, you'd have the application finished before the due date. There are hundreds of dollars in prizes including a brand-new truck awarded to the national winner. Check out the application on the WFBF website.

On a personal note, Zeeva welcomed a baby sister, Jaylee Riva, in October. It's very different at home with two kids instead of one. We're looking forward to a fun-filled and busy summer. Be on the lookout for events to add to your calendar throughout District 3, especially the district Discussion Meet in August

Derek and Charisse Orth
AFBF YF&R Committee Representatives



District 3 Promotion and Education Update

Hello! Thank you to those who traveled to Madison in January to the District 3 Winter Promotion and Education Meeting and Volunteer Activity. The day kicked off with a productive planning meeting, followed by a great lunch and volunteering at Second Harvest Foodbank, where we sorted frozen pizzas and potatoes.

Don't forget about this year's Ag in the Classroom essay contest. The topic is, 'Inventions that have made agriculture great.' It correlates nicely with the book of the year, "John Deere, That's Who!" a story about John Deere, who invented and improved the plow. Please encourage fourth and fifth grade students to apply.

Essay Contest Deadlines

April 2: Essays due to county Farm Bureau essay coordinators.

April 15: County winner submissions due along with a report on the number of essays received. District winners will be announced mid-May.

Spring will be busy as usual with a variety of ways to promote agriculture. Upcoming events include:

National Ag Day

Reading Event: Celebrate National Ag Day on **March 20**, by joining farmers, volunteers, teachers, FFA and 4-H members, college students, agri-business employees and others by reading books about agriculture to students, home school families, nursing home residents, day cares and others. Resources can be found

at www.wisagclassroom.org/teachers-information/essay-contest.

This year, students can participate in a coloring contest by drawing and then coloring the image based on, "What will farm machines look like in the future?" The contest is open to children ages 12 and younger and will be judged in three categories: ages 6 and younger, ages 7-9 and ages 10-12. All materials must be postmarked by **March 27**. Visit the website for details.

Teacher Training Updates

The summer bus tour will be on **July 24-25** in the Trempealeau and Buffalo County area. Venues and the schedule are being finalized. Summer classroom trainings also are being planned. This year there will be several dates.

National Ag in the Classroom Conference Scholarship

This is the second year of offering volunteer scholarships to the National Ag in the Classroom Conference. Applications are due **May 1** and are funded by the Jeanette Poulson Fund. Up to three \$500 scholarships will be awarded to worthy candidates.

If you have any questions or want to get more involved with the Promotion and Education Committee, please contact me at 608.482.3200 or katies_ladies@yahoo.com.

Katie Roth

District 3 Promotion and Education Committee Representative

Vernon County Farm Bureau Contacts:

President, Robert Nigh	608.689.2633
Vice President, Steve Wagemester	608.638.3187
Secretary/Treasurer, Scott Sherry	608.637.7440
YFA Chair, Alex Bringe	608.606.9182
Promotion and Education Chair, Dan Obert	608.489.3867
Director, Trent Erickson	608.606.9355
Director, Rod Ofte	608.452.2861
Director, Bill Putze	608.629.5455
Vernon County Farm Bureau	888.830.2572
WFBF Board Director, Richard Gorder	608.987.3424
WFBF Promotion and Education Chair, Katie Roth	608.482.3200
WFBF YFA Chair, Tammy Wiedenbeck	608.723.2382
District 3 Coordinator, Melissa Doyle	866.355.7343
RMIC District Manager, Randy Palmer	608.515.3123

Vernon County Students Attend FFA Farm Forum

Nearly 200 high school juniors from across Wisconsin attended the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's FFA Farm Forum in Wisconsin Rapids on February 16-17.

"This event is a great partnership between Wisconsin Farm Bureau and Wisconsin FFA," said Jim Holte, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation President. "Young ag leaders who attend this event participate in professional development activities and are able to network with their peers and Farm Bureau staff."

During the two-day event at Hotel Mead in Wisconsin Rapids, FFA members attended workshops on post-high school agricultural opportunities, social media, agricultural advocacy and leadership. Joining Holte as keynote speakers at the event were Mariah Martin, UW-Madison Collegiate Farm Bureau member along with Glen Schraufnagel, Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Service Agency 10 Consultant.

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation sponsors the FFA Farm Forum in cooperation with the Wisconsin Association of FFA. This year's FFA Farm Forum marks the 46th year the Farm Bureau family of affiliates has sponsored the event for Wisconsin youth. Each year the Vernon County Farm Bureau sponsors area students to attend FFA Farm Forum. Vernon County was well represented at this year's event, with students from Hillsboro and Westby in attendance.



District 3 YFA
SOUTHWEST SHINDIG

Saturday, March 24th • Doors Open at 7:00pm

Join District 3 Farm Bureau for the
2ND ANNUAL SOUTHWEST SHINDIG
at the Grant County Fairgrounds in Lancaster, WI

*The night will feature live music by Black Water Gin from 8pm - 12am.
Admission: \$10. | Food and drinks available for purchase. | Snacks provided.*

The event is open to the general public. Invite your friends, throw on your boots, and get ready for a fun night of dancing, socializing & great music!