



Eau Claire County Farm Bureau

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FROM THE **# 1 FARM INSURER**
IN WISCONSIN, WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY
THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND
LOYALTY!




Rural Mutual Agents in Eau Claire Co:

Chippewa Valley Group
(715) 514-4477

Laurie Peterson, District Manager - (608) 347-0383

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

* **WANTED:** *

First Time Attendees

Join us for the 2018 Wisconsin Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Agriculturists Conference
November 30-December 2 at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells.

Never attended the Young Farmer and Agriculturist Conference? Now is your chance to experience this conference for FREE! You will network, learn and have fun with engaging speakers, educational workshops, contests and more.

If you are a first-time attendee, Rural Mutual Insurance will pay the conference registration fee for you and a guest and two nights lodging at the Kalahari Resort. Registration fee includes registrant meals, workshop sessions and entertainment. BUT HURRY! This sponsorship is limited to 50 individuals/couples! Complete the short application by August 15 at <http://bit.ly/RuralSponsor18>

REWARD
Qualify for Cash - Refer A Friend

Any YFA member who refers a first-time attendee who is accepted for sponsorship and attends the event will qualify for a \$100 cash award.



Wisconsin Farm Bureau
Young Farmer and Agriculturist
Program

CONTESTS

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

If you are between the ages of 18 and 35 and a majority of your income is derived from production agriculture, this award is for you!

EXCELLENCE IN AG

If you are between the ages of 18 and 35 and are an agricultural enthusiast but have not earned a majority of your income from an owned production agriculture enterprise, this award is for you!

Applications & resources can be found at
<http://bit.ly/WIYFAContests>. Deadline to apply is July 9.



COUNTYnews

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION



IGNITE: It's time to 'Speak Up'

By Dawn Gibson, Eau Claire County Farm Bureau member

'Speak Up!' I think that was what I heard the most at IGNITE. I also heard how to effectively 'Speak Up.' Matt Rush and Damian Mason were two keynote speakers who gave messages that were meant for us to laugh at and enjoy ourselves but shared a common goal of encouraging us, as Farm Bureau members, to speak up and get involved.

This was my very first Farm Bureau activity and Eau Claire County Farm Bureau was so gracious to send me, as well as Leslie Strey and Lisa Pettis. I always knew I wanted to be an advocate for agriculture, but I did not know how or even if it would be something I could do or would be good at doing.

IGNITE centered around four main ideas about speaking up:

1. Building your local Farm Bureau.
2. Communicating for agriculture and Farm Bureau in your community.
3. Policies, issues and advocacy on an international, national, state and local scale.
4. How to be in successful groups that accomplish big goals.

There were eight breakout sessions each day to choose from, each focalized in one of the tracks. I chose topics that included how to have productive conversations about agriculture in a hostile climate, why local issues can be more important because precedents are set on the local level, how to get media to be your friend in your community and how to get more agriculture education in the school system in your area.

The speakers gave us tools to walk away with and information to use. Members attending from Eau Claire County Farm Bureau starting talking right away about ideas from the breakout sessions



Members from across District 4 attended the IGNITE Conference, on April 5-6, at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Stevens Point.

that would work for our county. The last keynote speaker was Secretary of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Sheila Harsdorf. She gave an update about Wisconsin agriculture.

I had no idea that 95 percent of the ginseng in the U.S. came from Wisconsin and that 96 percent of farms in Wisconsin are family farms. She was informed and spoke very well. Most importantly, I realized that Secretary Harsdorf was a dairy farmer in Wisconsin who got involved with Farm Bureau, and that experience brought her down a road in which she is still speaking up for agriculture on a state level but for the same reasons.

We can't afford to let someone else tell our story. If we are speaking up with the truth about agriculture, then we shape the dialogue. The farmer's voice gives common ground and something for the public to relate to. We spend money on people and products we understand and feel like would improve our lives. So, 'Speak Up.'

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New Rewards Program for Farmers: Rural Mutual Partners with Insight FS

Rural Mutual Insurance Company, the #1 farm insurer in Wisconsin, is excited to announce its new partnership with Insight FS, a Division of GROWMARK, Inc.

Insight FS is a leading cooperative providing agri-finance, agronomy, energy, feed, grain marketing and turf products to its patrons in Wisconsin. This partnership allows Rural Mutual's farm policy holders access to the Insight FS Rewards program.

With the Insight FS Rewards program, patrons are rewarded for purchasing products and services needed for their farms. Rewards can be increased through the purchase of an eligible Rural Mutual Insurance policy. Reward payments are based on total interest paid on FS Agri-Finance Loans.

For more information about the program, visit www.insightfs.com/disclaimer.

"At Rural Mutual, we're always trying to do what is in the best

interest of our policy holders," said Todd Argall, Vice President of Customer Acquisition and Services. "We believe that this new partnership will allow policy holders an opportunity to save money, while still taking care of their insurance needs."

Rural Mutual and Insight FS prioritize rewarding customers for their loyalty. In addition to the Insight FS Rewards program, earlier in the year, Rural Mutual introduced the only Farm Dividend program in the state. Both programs are designed to give back to faithful customers and policy holders. This is another way that Rural Mutual is helping keep Wisconsin strong.

Rural Mutual agents and Insight FS agri-finance specialists are ready to discuss your crop insurance needs and how you can be rewarded for your loyalty.

For more information, please contact your local Rural Mutual Insurance agent or visit ruralmutual.com.

President's Message



Recently, I heard the statistic that we are losing 11 dairy farms in Wisconsin every week.

The low milk price weighs heavy on dairy farmers minds as they have watched their farms equity slowly erode during the last three years. Most are struggling and looking for answers to fix the problem. We must

brainstorm to come up with possible solutions. Here are my thoughts.

I like to look at things as a whole and keep things simple. Look at the whole picture as they say. The ultimate goal is to make milking cows profitable. The way I see it, there are five ways to improve profitability.

1. Get a better price
2. Produce more
3. Get bigger
4. Reduce debt
5. Reduce costs

Getting a better price is out of the producer's control. This is the thing farmers have complained about for decades. If anyone truly understands and can thoroughly explain how milk is priced and the federal milk order works going back to Parady, I would love to hear it.

Producing more is the reason we are in this predicament. The oversupply and under consumption of milk is the reason the market is flooded. When milk price was low, farmers produced more to make up the difference. When milk price was high, farmers produced more to capitalize and make up for the low times. I think it is safe to say that we have proven producing more milk will not make dairy farming more profitable.

Getting bigger means taking on more debt. The last time I checked, having more debt, which means more payments, did not improve the bottom line.

Reducing debt is an awesome idea in any business. The way to reduce debt is with more cash flow. The current cash flow is negative. This is a problem.

Reducing costs means becoming more efficient. Farmers are experts at gaining efficiency. Most have strived their entire careers to learn better faster easier ways to do things. Unless a cow can be bred to feed, breed and milk herself, efficiency eventually maxes out.

If it seems I have been talking in circles and have not found a solution to dairy farm profitability, you are right. The answer is not in one of these five ways, it is in them all. These five ways to improve profit must be delicately balanced differently for each operation. Focusing on only one, sacrifices the others.

Let's continue to discuss and brainstorm to form a plan of action to stop the bleeding. Big or small we support them all. And remember only the chosen few are truly blessed with the opportunity to feed and clothe the world.

Steve Strey
Eau Claire County Farm Bureau President

Could You Escape?

By Jody Wilhelm, Eau Claire Farm Bureau YFA chair



In February, District 4 YFA members, as well as members from neighboring districts, got together to have some escape room fun. The event was held at Gizmo's Bar in Fall Creek. We had two rounds of escapees, both rounds were able to escape before time was up and the 'bomb' went off.

If you haven't been to an escape room, which most of us had not, it is a little daunting at first. We kind of looked at each other, started opening kitchen cabinets and picking up things and looking at the bottoms of them to find our first clue.

Team collaboration, and lots of laughing, was key so all the escapees in the room knew what clues the others had because some of them went together. There were some moments of how we missed that clue right in our face and some moments of pure brilliance. All in all, it was a really fun activity. After the escape room we played games and talked about agriculture. It was



Members from across District 4 gathered together on February 23 for the District 4 YFA Escape Room.

a great night of camaraderie with our farm friends. Hopefully we will be able to have another YFA event this summer. If you have any good ideas for fun events, please let me know.

YFA events are a great time to introduce people to Farm Bureau and tell them a little about what we do and why Farm Bureau is important to agriculture. YFA is a great way to meet people in your area who are passionate about agriculture and the future of farming.

It has been fun for my husband and I to meet people in our area who we didn't know before. Great ideas can grow while at these events from passive chit chat, and good friends who understand the struggles and triumphs of farming can be found.

Bring a friend to the next event or share the news with one of your friends you think might enjoy everything Farm Bureau has to offer.



Escape Room participants used the keys they found throughout the room to defuse the bomb.

Wisconsin Ag Open Golf Scheduled

Hosted by the WFB Foundation, the 2018 Wisconsin Ag Open will be held on **Monday, September 10**, at Christmas Mountain Village in Wisconsin Dells.

All proceeds from the golf outing will support the WFB Foundation education and leadership programs such as Ag in the Classroom, 4-H, FFA, WFBF Leadership Institute and Young Farmer and Agriculturist activities.

For information, please contact Darlene Arneson at 608.828.5644 or darneson@wfbf.com.



Be a part of the 2019 Leadership Institute by applying today!

The WFBF Leadership Institute is a year-long leadership development program to help you become a strong and effective leader. With six different sessions, you can network with Farm Bureau members and industry leaders and take your personal and professional leadership development to the next level. This program is open to ALL Wisconsin Farm Bureau voting members.

wfbf.com/programs/leadership-institute
APPLICATIONS DUE AUGUST 15

There are Benefits to Your Farm Bureau Membership:

<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AgriPlan Medical Reimbursement Program • Farm Bureau Bank <p>Supplies and Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Deere's GreenFleet™ Loyalty Rewards Program (NEW) • Case IH • Caterpillar • FS-GROWMARK Patronage • Grainger • Office Depot 	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AgriVisor • The Country Today <p>Insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Mutual Insurance Company • Farm Bureau Financial Services <p>Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$500 Reward Protection Program • Accidental Death Policy 	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ScriptSave® Prescription Drug Savings Card • Life Line <p>Travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAA • AVIS Car Rental Discount Program • Budget • Choice Hotels International, Inc. • Wyndham Hotel Group
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For complete details visit wfbf.com/benefits-membership.

District Discussion Meet and Policy Development Meeting Scheduled

Join us for the District 4 YFA Discussion Meet and Policy Development Meeting starting at 7 p.m. on **Tuesday, July 24**, at Sand Creek Brewery, 320 Pierce Street, Black River Falls.

Any member ages from 18 to 35 is eligible to compete in the Discussion Meet.

The question to be discussed is: **As the Voice of Agriculture, how can Farm Bureau be more inclusive of all agriculture and production practices?**

This includes, but is not limited to, women in agriculture, organic production, fresh produce, forestry and aquaculture.

The discussion meet handbook can be found at bit.ly/DMHandbook18.



(from left) Jody Wilhelm, Rosli Bragger and Emily Herness share a discussion during the 2017 District 4 Discussion Meet.

Following the discussion meet will be the District Policy Development Meeting. Any individual or county wishing to propose a resolution to be considered during the 2018 Policy Development process is encouraged to attend.

The schedule for the evening includes:

- 6:30 p.m. - Discussion Meet Registration
- 7 p.m. - District Discussion Meet
- 8 p.m. - Policy Development Meeting

For questions or if you are interested in competing in the Discussion Meet, please contact District 4 Coordinator Cassie Olson at colson@wfbf.com or 715.896.4526 or District 4 YFA Representative Rosli Bragger at rbragger7@gmail.com or 715.530.2526.

What Would You Do with \$100?

By Leslie Strey, Eau Claire Farm Bureau member

What would you do with \$100 to promote June Dairy Month? This is the question that was asked to 4-H Clubs in Eau Claire County. The Eau Claire County Farm Bureau and Dairy Promotion partnered to offer any 4-H Club in our county a \$100 grant if they submitted an idea to promote June Dairy Month. 4-H members discussed this at meetings, came up with ideas and turned in the applications.

We are excited to offer the grant money to the these 4-H clubs: **Russell Corner Badgers 4-H Club:** The members plan to deliver cheese trays to local businesses in the Augusta and Osseo area. The cheese trays will be available for customers and employees to enjoy. They will include a promotion poster about June Dairy Month.

Pleasant Valley 4-H Club: Members plan to serve ice cream at a local business. They will serve Castle Rock Organic ice cream. The members have a list of businesses that they want to partner with.

Eau Claire County Dairy Project: Youth from the Eau Claire County Dairy Project plan to hand out string cheese at the Sounds Like Summer concert series in Phoenix Park. Club members have plans to conduct dairy-themed games. They also plan on promoting it using Facebook and Volume One Magazine. Along with the concert event, they plan on providing dairy calves for a petting zoo for the Bitty Breakfast at the Children's Museum in Eau Claire. At that event, they plan on providing samples of dairy products.

Pleasant Valley Clovers 4-H Club: This club plans to hand out ice cream sandwiches or string cheese at the ball park in Cleghorn during a softball game or a Little League game.

Pleasant Hill Go Getters 4-H Club: Members of the Go Getters plan to serve ice cream sundaes at the Eau Claire Cavaliers Baseball Club on Saturday, June 30. They also are planning dairy promotion games for the youth to play, and have some trivia questions about June Dairy Month and dairy products. One of the youth leaders is leading this project as part of his Youth Leadership Project. He plans to display his project at the Eau Claire County Fair.

Country Cousins 4-H Club: The members plan to promote June Dairy month by walking around Fall Creek during their city-wide thrift sales telling shoppers about dairy in Wisconsin. They will hand out string cheese and Go-Gurts. Along with making signs to promote 4-H and dairy facts. They also have signs promoting the products that were sponsored by Eau Claire County Farm Bureau and Eau Claire County Dairy Promotion.

The clubs were asked to report back to Farm Bureau and Dairy Promotion with photos so we can see how their ideas worked. As you can see we have some enthusiastic clubs who are ready to go out and promote.

We hope to share photos with you on the Facebook page.

Eau Claire County Farm Bureau Contacts:

President, Steven Strey	715.797.2347
Vice President, Promotion and Education Chair, Lisa Pettis	715.533.4459
Secretary/Treasurer, Jane Mueller	715.878.4058
YFA Chair, Jody Wilhelm	507.380.6291
Director, Pat Baecker	715.214.6487
Director, Brandon Boettcher	715.533.2470
Director, Alvin Kohlhepp	715.225.2238
Director, Matthew Krenz	715.577.2247
Director, Devin Schlewitz	715.829.1555
Director, Wendy Strauch	715.533.9290
Director, Aaron Wilhelm	715.577.1887
Eau Claire County Farm Bureau	888.644.8329
WFBF Board Director, Joe Bragger	715.530.0466
District 4 Promotion and Education Chair, Darby Sampson	715.299.1409
District 4 YFA Chair, Rosli Bragger	715.530.2526
District 4 Coordinator, Cassie Olson	866.355.7344
RMIC District Manager, Laurie Peterson	608.347.0383

Farm Bureau Member Sign Sales Ending in 2018

Are you looking for ways to spruce up your farm yard or display your Farm Bureau membership? These single-sided 18" by 24" aluminum all-weather signs are ideal for indoor or outdoor use and can be personalized with up to 14 characters per line. The cost is \$45 per sign and orders received will be processed by group at the end of each month. With each sign purchased, \$5 is contributed to the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation to support agricultural education and agricultural leadership programs in Wisconsin.



Order forms can be found at wfbf.com/foundation/farm-signs or contact Darlene Arneson at 608.828.5644 or darneson@wfbf.com.

Chippewa Valley Farm-City Day: Fun for the Whole Family

Chippewa Valley Farm-City Day is free event about fun, sharing and educating, as well as fostering a mutual understanding about modern, agricultural practices between our agricultural and non-agricultural residents.

We look forward to seeing you at our 11th annual event in 2018. Bring your family and friends, and spread the word. There are opportunities to volunteer, please mark your calendar.

Date: September 7-8

Where: Seibel's Organic Dairy, Chippewa County in Bloomer

For more information, please contact Jane Mueller at 715.828.5018 or JaneFM84@aol.com.

