

2018

WFBF
ANNUAL
REPORT



Working for YOU,
while you're busy working.



T.W. Banta said, "Institutional assessment efforts should not be concerned about valuing what can be measured but, instead, about measuring that which is valued." I kept Banta's advice in mind when the WFBF Board of Directors tasked me with conducting a survey of our farmer members. Your executive staff worked with Kennan Wood of Wood Communications to craft

an online survey to measure what you, our members, value about the benefits and services WFBF and county Farm Bureaus provide.

WFBF conducted member surveys in 2006, 2010 and 2012, so we have previous results to compare with the current data we collected. The 2017 survey was conducted between August and October. About 10 percent of our voting members completed the survey, making it statistically valid.

Here are the key takeaways:

Our members put their **highest value** on being part of an organization that supports agriculture.

Member services and benefits is a top priority.

Our members place a high value on state and county Farm Bureau **programs and activities** even though many are not actively engaged at the county or state levels.

Our members highly value **communication**, and different age groups have specific forms of communication they prefer.

WFBF's biggest opportunity is to find ways to **increase active engagement** in our county and state Farm Bureau.

Specifically, 84 percent said they believe Wisconsin Farm Bureau is doing a 'good' or 'very good' job for its members. That's consistent with the 79 percent in 2006, 76 percent in 2010 and 84 percent in 2012.

Our members' top four programs and activities are:

- Member services and benefits
- Support of youth programs
- Lobbying and policy development
- Ag in the Classroom

On the county Farm Bureau level, 70 percent of our voting members are 'not very active' or 'not active at all.' We also found that 60 percent say their county Farm Bureau is doing a 'good' or 'very good' job of keeping them informed about the programs and activities taking place in their area. Specifically, 52 percent said their county Farm Bureau is doing a 'good' or 'very good' job of providing representation to local government on issues that impact their livelihood. Overall, 71 percent said their county Farm Bureau is doing a 'good' or 'very good' job.

When it comes to member communications, 75 percent find Rural Route magazine to be 'valuable' or 'very valuable.' 65 percent find their county newsletter to be 'valuable' or 'very valuable.'

The four topics most valuable in the county newsletters are:

- Notice of upcoming county events
- State events and news
- Information regarding member benefits
- Recap of previous events

Facebook and Pinterest are our members' favorite social media platforms at 62 percent and 22 percent respectively. When it comes to communicating with our members, 72 percent prefer the U.S. Postal Service and 53 percent prefer email.

Thank you to those who completed a survey. The information gathered helps your leaders understand what you value and how we can provide better services and benefits going forward.

Thank you for being a Farm Bureau member!

Dale M. Beaty

Chief Administrative Officer
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation



Members



Wisconsin Farm Bureau's core is its members. Programs like Young Farmer and Agriculturist, Promotion and Education and Leadership Institute challenge members to develop skills to better themselves, their community and their county Farm Bureau. There are three membership programs designed to empower county leaders.

Young Farmer and Agriculturist: Farm Bureau's YFA program offers leadership development experiences for members between the ages of 18 and 35.

Promotion and Education: The Promotion and Education program builds awareness and understanding of agriculture and provides leadership development for the agricultural community.

WFBF Leadership Institute: The WFBF Leadership Institute is a year-long experience that provides personal growth and leadership training to develop the next crop of county Farm Bureau leaders.

Membership growth is a top priority for Farm Bureau. A strong and growing membership provides more than financial stability; it also ensures that Farm Bureau will continue to have a growing pool of active, enthusiastic leaders who will contribute their ideas and energy to building stronger programs while strengthening Farm Bureau's voice at the county, state and national levels.

Through the efforts of Farm Bureau volunteers and Rural Mutual Insurance agents across Wisconsin, Farm Bureau membership grew to **46,622 members in 2017**, marking the **10th consecutive year of membership growth**.

The 2018 membership year ends on September 30, and despite the economic challenges that have faced Wisconsin agriculture in 2018, and the resulting impact on Farm Bureau's voting membership, WFBF is poised for an 11th consecutive year of membership growth.

Achievements

- Qualifying WFBF members have **more than 20 member benefits and services** that meet the needs of farmers, families and businesses in Wisconsin.
- Through June 2018, **179 county Farm Bureau volunteers** have together signed up **560 new Farm Bureau members**.
- In 2018, WFBF launched an online membership application. Since the launch in March, **more than 230 members** have signed up using this tool.
- In March, American Farm Bureau hosted County Leader Week on social media. Wisconsin's participation was extremely high with a **reach on Facebook of 33,131**.
- In April, WFBF hosted its first **IGNITE Conference** in Stevens Point. Held every other year, this conference strengthens county Farm Bureaus and county leaders by providing them with program ideas, resources and new skills to carry out the mission of their county Farm Bureau.



Through Farm Bureau I've learned the most powerful form of advocacy is conversation about our work in agriculture and not so much throwing out facts and figures. It's about what you say, listening and exchanging opinions with friends, family and others who we interact with in our day-to-day lives.

Leslie Svacina
St. Croix County
Farm Bureau

About Membership Programs Events Policy

Join

Home / Membership / Join

Thank you for considering a Farm Bureau membership. For your convenience, there is an option to join online or to print a membership application to be mailed the Wisconsin Farm Bureau office.

To renew your membership, [click here](#).

Online Application Process

Follow these steps to join:

- Click below to access the new online application.
- Complete the application and payment on our secure site. Your payment information will be handled through a third-party and will be kept secure.

[Apply Online](#)

Offline Application Process

Follow these steps to join:

- Download a printable membership application.
- Return the application with dues payment (click [here](#) for county dues list) for your county Farm Bureau to:

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
Customer Service-Farm Bureau
PO Box 5560
Madison, WI 53705





Communication with our members is crucial to Wisconsin Farm Bureau's success. Through efforts such as **Rural Route and county Farm Bureau newsletters**, WFBF keeps our members up to date on what is happening on the country-side and on Capitol Hill. Bringing members together to learn and grow from each other is equally important.



Innovate. Grow. Network. Inform. Train. Engage. IGNITE

Farm Bureau leaders from across the state gathered at the first ever IGNITE Conference on April 5-6 in Stevens Point.

Attendees had the opportunity to attend workshops based on four different tracks that included: building farm business policy, issues and advocacy; communicating for agriculture and farm business and governance and organization. In addition, there were four speakers who provided lessons, laughter and tears to those in the room.

Opening keynote speaker Mar Raab, Executive Vice President of New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau, reminded attendees of their value. Farmers have to be stable like a seed, be willing and able to grow. Farmers are also valuable because what a farmer does each and every day impacts every single person on the planet. In the agriculture industry, there are a lot of opponents who are more vocal than our advocates. Farmers need to be stable and willing to start a conversation with everyone. The agriculture industry isn't what we do, it's who we are.

Before a fun casino night, Damian Mason, Indiana Farmer and Agricultural Speaker, had everyone laughing with his comedy show that was geared to those who work in the agriculture industry.

He encouraged everyone to share feelings when educating consumers. A simple story that's plain and simple goes further than too many facts that consumers don't understand. Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Sheila Hankerd greeted attendees at the breakfast session on the second day. She encouraged everyone to be involved in getting their message to consumers and reminded attendees that 90 percent of farms in Wisconsin are still family owned.

It's never too late to get involved and having a relationship with your legislative officials can make a big difference when legislation is impacting how you can operate your farm. Closing keynote speaker Matt Lohr, from



From left: Pam DeBole (Waukesha), District 1 Director Dawn Danels (Kewaunee), Daphne Holterman (Jefferson), Carl Wolf (Washington), Rick Roden (Ozaukee), Jacki Moegenberg (Ozaukee), Kathy Tober (Walworth), Kathy Papke (Walworth) and Sue Thelen (Walworth).

Lohr Leadership, shared stories that brought tears to eyes throughout the room. He encouraged attendees to embrace opportunities to advocate for agriculture in five steps.

The IGNITE Conference will be held every other year. Save the date and plan to attend the next conference March 26-27, 2020, at the Madison Market West.

Lohr's five steps to advocate for agriculture:

1. Focus on your guiding values and what's important to you.
2. Tell your story.
3. Be determined. Success comes from how you play the cards you are dealt, appreciate the bumps in the road.
4. Have faith.
5. Willingly serve and look for ways to help others.

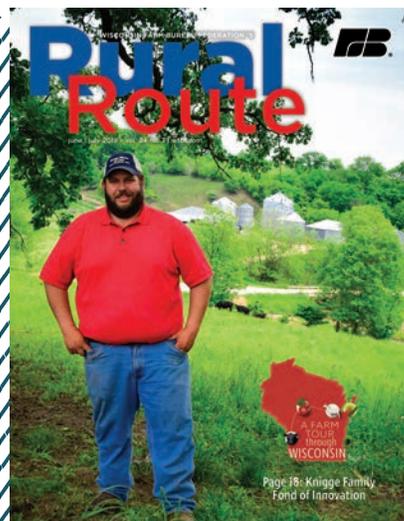


Jacki Moegenberg, Greg Zivild and Daphne Holterman were part of a panel about organizing a farm tour and educating consumers.

Summer Edition

Achievements

- **District 1 successfully completed a newsletter pilot.** The pilot took the county newsletters from that district and merged them into a comprehensive piece called Grassroots.
- Since January 1, **seven Lunch and Learns** have been hosted with topics ranging from Ag in the Classroom, Wisconsin Farm Center, policy development and UW Discovery Farms.
- The WFBF blog continues to be a place where members can voice their thoughts. Since January 1, **23 guest blog posts** have been written by **19 members or state commodity organization representatives.**
- Five issues of **Rural Route** magazine were mailed to voting members. In June, one issue was sent to voting and associate members.
- During the last year, **WFBF redesigned its website.** The new design is mobile-friendly and easier for members and guests to navigate.



Lunch & Learn with

WISCONSIN Farm Bureau

WHO: Members who want to learn more about Farm Bureau and agriculture

WHAT: Educational Webinars

WHEN: First Wednesday of every month from noon - 12:30 p.m.

WHERE: The comfort of your home or business. Tune in on your computer or any handheld device

HOW: RSVP at <http://bit.ly/WFBFLunchLearn> and we will send you a confirmation and directions on how to participate

2018 Lunch & Learn Topics

August - What's happening in Policy

September - Farm Safety

October - WFBF Annual Meeting Preview

November - Policy Topic Discussion



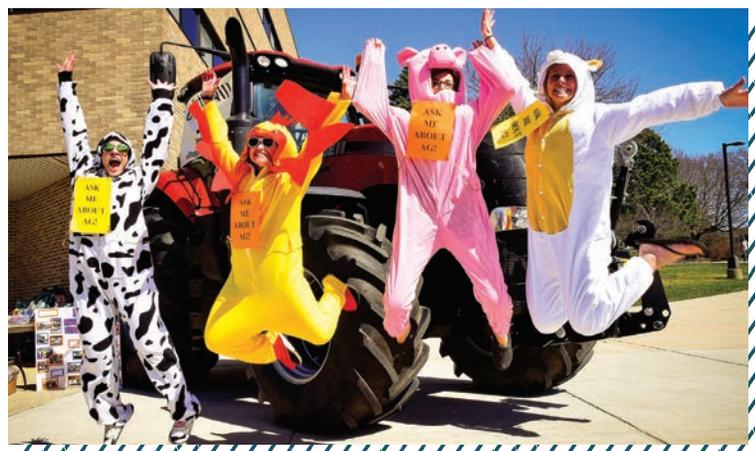
With **less than 2 percent of the population** involved in production agriculture, teaching others about agriculture has never been more relevant. Through many channels and programs, Farm Bureau members share their stories and why they choose to work in the agricultural community. Some of our outreach efforts were to consumers, while others involved key stakeholders or future leaders who help advocate for agriculture and make Farm Bureau successful.

Farm Bureau's **Ag in the Classroom** program can be found at the forefront of many of these outreach efforts. This program provides Wisconsin teachers and students with the tools to teach and learn how meals travel from farm to fork.



Achievements

- In 2018, more than **2,564 students** participated in the Ag in the Classroom essay contest. **Isaiah Claussen**, a fourth-grade student from Denmark was named the winner of the contest that asked students to write about technology in farming.
- Rural Mutual Insurance Company and WFBF once again exhibited at **Wisconsin Farm Technology Days** where they interacted with show attendees.
- WFBF **Promotion and Education Committee** members participated in more than **25 events** during the month of June. Community outreach included lunch with a farmer, dairy breakfasts, bus tours and essay contest awards.
- This spring, Collegiate Farm Bureau chapters at UW-Madison, UW-River Falls and UW-Platteville hosted an **Ag Day on Campus** event at their respective campuses to engage fellow classmates about agriculture.
- In January, nearly **200 students** attended Wisconsin Farm Bureau's **FFA Farm Forum**.
- **Ag in the Classroom** hosted a bus tour for teachers to farms and agribusinesses in western Wisconsin and three other one-day trainings.
- The WFBF **Promotion and Education Committee** had 38 people attend their first **Leadership Boot Camp**.
- County **Ag in the Classroom** programs reported that **305 volunteers** spent **7,311 hours** and reached more than **27,328 students** with county activities. Paid county and WFBF staff reached another **20,281 students** with Ag in the Classroom programming.





Advocacy

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation is a **grassroots organization** that works on behalf of farm families and individuals who support agriculture. Whether in the Capitol or the courts, WFBF works hard to promote policies on the local, state and national levels that lead to profitability for Wisconsin agriculture. To accomplish this, WFBF understands the importance and power of its members and staff working together to accomplish the organization's legislative and regulatory goals. The organization's policy is established by farmers through a structured policy development process. Suggestions and policy ideas come directly from members who propose and vote at county Farm Bureau annual meetings. Each December, policy ideas are presented during the WFBF Annual Meeting where delegate members vote. This process continues at the national level.



Achievements

- In 2018, more than **400 farmers and agriculturists** attended Ag Day at the Capitol.
- In June, WFBF held a **Focus on Dairy** meeting to discuss the dairy economy and Farm Bureau dairy policy. In July, WFBF, along with other state Farm Bureaus and dairy organizations, sent a letter to FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb asking for enforcement of current milk labeling laws.
- In March, **13 members of WFBF Leadership Institute** traveled to Washington, D.C., to advocate for agriculture. In June, a group of **YFA members** did the same.
- WFBF advocated for more funding to the state's farmer-led watershed initiatives. As a result, the state's watershed program received a **\$500,000 increase in funding**.
- Through WFBF's Dairy Committee and Farm Bill Committee, the organization advocated for strong crop insurance programs and **succeeded in getting additional support for dairy farmers** through dairy risk programs.
- WFBF was **instrumental in crafting an industrial hemp pilot program** in the state. WFBF continues to push for the removal of industrial hemp from the federal Controlled Substances Act and instead have it under the purview of the USDA as a crop.





Farm Bureau's vision is to **lead a growing and dynamic agriculture.** The only way to continue to do that is by looking ahead. To achieve our mission of leading the farm and rural community through legislative representation, education, public relations, leadership development and providing services and benefits to members, WFBF must prepare for the future.

Ag LEAD summit

LEADERSHIP • ENGAGEMENT • ADVOCACY • DEVELOPMENT



Goals

- Maintain excellence in delivering current **member programs and services.**
- Continue to grow **corporate sponsorship** for the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation.
- **AgLEAD Summit:** A new conference is being planned for March 8-9, in Appleton. This conference will strengthen county Farm Bureau leaders and consumers by providing resources and new skills to carry out the mission of their promotion and education program and build their advocacy skills.
- Continue to grow the **Local Affairs Program.**
- The WFBF **Promotion and Education Committee** plans to sponsor an ag promotion and education award. The funds they receive from working at the House of Moo at the Wisconsin State Fair will be used to provide financial assistance to county Farm Bureaus for a program or activity that would enhance the promotion of agriculture and education.
- In 2019, WFBF will **celebrate its centennial.** A kick-off event will be held at the 2018 WFBF Annual Meeting.

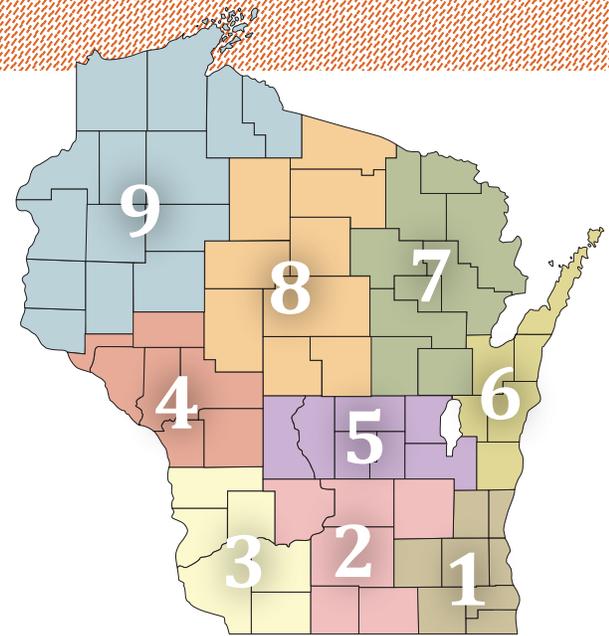
WFBF Legislative Accomplishments Timeline

- 1926 WFBF promotes state government department decentralization and establishment of district government.
- 1931 WFBF's "Voice of Agriculture" lobbying efforts go full time when William Kuschel is hired as WFBF Executive Director.
- 1945 WFBF supported 83 bills that directly benefited farmers and 84 of them became law. Four of the 10 bills WFBF opposed were defeated or withdrawn.
- 1953 Farmers Bureau gets passed working without double to protect farmers from talkings by the new interstate farmers of highway.
- 1955 WFBF succeeded in winning a 3-cent raise for property tax.
- 1957 WFBF secured funding for a new dairy science building at University of Wisconsin-Madison through a tax-use referendum.
- 1961 WFBF succeeded in winning a 3-cent raise for property tax.
- 1965 WFBF secured funding for a new dairy science building at University of Wisconsin-Madison through a tax-use referendum.
- 1967 WFBF set the way to a substantial commitment to the Highway Trust Fund which allowed to be used on production value instead of general fund.
- 1974 WFBF helped draft and pass legislation to protect farmers better from being taken for certain purposes.
- 1977 WFBF helped draft and pass legislation to protect farmers better from being taken for certain purposes.
- 1978 WFBF was instrumental in the establishment of the National Veterinary Medicine on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus.
- 1979 WFBF was instrumental in getting the program property tax on Madison.
- 1981 WFBF helped draft and pass legislation to protect farmers better from being taken for certain purposes.
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- 2014 WFBF helped draft and pass legislation to protect farmers better from being taken for certain purposes.
- 2018 WFBF helped draft and pass legislation to protect farmers better from being taken for certain purposes.

WFBF Celebrating 100 years as WFBF100

- 1920 WFBF organized with 28 others.
- 1921 WFBF holds 1st Annual Meeting in Appleton and passes 100 resolutions and elects 2,000 members in its maiden year of work.
- 1923 WFBF's "Voice of Agriculture" is published.
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- 2010 WFBF's "Voice of Agriculture" is published.
- 2015 WFBF's "Voice of Agriculture" is published.
- 2018 WFBF's "Voice of Agriculture" is published.

WFBF Board of Directors



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