



# Eau Claire County Farm Bureau

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## Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

### Teachers, Volunteers Attend Ag in the Classroom Bus Tour

Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom hosted its annual summer bus tour in the Arcadia area on July 24-25. About 30 teachers and volunteers from around the state toured the beautiful area.

Tour stops included: Pilgrim's Pride; Compeer Financial; Buck Country Grain; Arcadia High School Agriculture Department; Ecker's Apple Orchard; Suncrest Gardens Farm; Northern Family Farms, LLP; Superior Fish/Freshwater Family Farm; and Harvest Home Farm.

Thank you to Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom coordinator Darlene Arneson, for her work in organizing a great bus tour.



Teachers and volunteers from around Wisconsin were in Buffalo County for the WFBF Ag in the Classroom Bus Tour on July 24-25.

### Wisconsin Farm Technology Days Update

The Wisconsin Farm Technology Days is the largest agricultural show in Wisconsin and one of the largest in the nation. The three-day outdoor event showcases the latest improvements in production agriculture, including many practical applications of recent research findings and technological developments.

Huntsinger Farms of Eau Claire has been selected to host the 2020 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days in Eau Claire County. The event is scheduled for July 21-23, 2020.

Huntsinger Farms and its subsidiary Silver Spring Foods, Inc., was founded in 1929 by Ellis Huntsinger, who is nationally recognized as a pioneer in Horseradish farming.

Still family-owned by Huntsinger's granddaughter Nancy Bartusch and two great-grandsons, Eric and Ryan Rygg, Huntsinger Farms is now the world's largest grower and processor of horseradish.

Planning has started as the committee chairs have been chosen. Many volunteers will be needed to make this a great show. Please contact Mark Hagedorn, Executive Secretary, at 715.839.4712.



### New Ag Promotion and Education Summit, March 2019

On **March 8-9, 2019**, Wisconsin Farm Bureau will host a new agricultural promotion and education summit in Appleton.

The Ag LEAD Summit will give attendees the opportunity to learn more about tools, resources, ideas and best practices when advocating for agriculture and conducting promotional events.

The summit is being coordinated by WFBF's Promotion and Education Committee whose mission is to build awareness and understanding of agriculture and provide leadership development for the agricultural community.



# COUNTYnews

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY FARM BUREAU EDITION

## Eau Claire County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting – A Roaring Success



More than 60 members and guests attended the Eau Claire County Farm Bureau annual meeting on September 22.

Thank you to those who attended the Eau Claire County Farm Bureau annual meeting on September 22. The meeting was held at the Brackett American Legion where 64 members and guests had a pulled pork meal.

Rick Strauch and Matt Krenz were chosen to be delegates to the WFBF Annual Meeting in December. Brenda Dowiasch and Dawn Gibson were newly elected to the board of directors. Jody Wilhelm and Lisa Pettis were re-elected as the YFA and Promotion and Education chairs, and Steve

Strey and Matt Krenz were re-elected to the board of directors.

A great discussion on resolutions engaged members as they discussed what could be done to boost sales of dairy products and other ag commodities. More than 20 resolutions were adopted as county Farm Bureau policies that will be considered for state policies during the policy development process.

Thanks for a great year in Eau Claire County Farm Bureau.

## Dowiasch and Gibson Selected for 2019 WFBF Leadership Institute

Fourteen emerging agricultural leaders have been selected to participate in the WFBF Leadership Institute. This year-long leadership training program's mission is to develop strong and effective agricultural leaders.

“Today’s farmers and agriculturists must take the lead to be advocates for their farms and agribusinesses,” said Wendy Kannel, WFBF Director of Training and Leadership Development. “The Institute gives participants the skills and confidence necessary to lead the future of farming and agriculture in their county Farm Bureau, local community and beyond.”

Members of the 2019 Institute class are: Brenda Dowiasch, Augusta; John Eron, Stevens Point; Christine Gerbitz, Milton; Dawn Gibson, Eau Claire; Mike Harms, Darlington; Lindsey

Hellenbrand, Waunakee; John Herman, Stevens Point; Ashley Hoffman, Merrill; Bridget Manthey, Belleville; Amber McComish, Darlington; Jaime Sawle, Omro; Scott Timm, Monroe; Kellie Zahn, Marion; and Katie Zoromski, Marathon.

The Institute consists of five, multi-day sessions that provide hands-on learning on agricultural issues, leadership development and speaking skills, interaction with Farm Bureau staff and government leaders at the state and national levels and networking with other participants. The class capstone event will be a trip, with the WFBF Board of Directors to Washington, D.C., in March 2020.

For more information or to apply for the 2020 class, please contact Wendy Kannel at 608.828.5719 or [wkannel@wfbf.com](mailto:wkannel@wfbf.com).

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## Sharing Their Story: Another Eventful Visit to the Farm By Brenda Dowiasch, board director



Eau Claire County Farm Bureau was proud to sponsor the event and host the annual baking contest.

Visit the Farm is not a new event to the Eau Claire County area but has evolved over the past several years. Prior events have been hosted by farms ranging from hobby to large dairy operations. The event is sponsored by the Augusta FFA Alumni, Eau Claire County Holstein Breeders and Eau Claire County Farm Bureau.

This year the event was hosted by Karow Farms of Augusta. Mark and Terri Karow are fifth generation dairy farmers. To them it was important to share with the public what a family-owned and operated farm looks like. They milk about 60 cows and crop 500 acres. Mark and Terri have two young children.

When guests arrived at Visit the Farm on August 19, there were many things to do and see. Activities included cattle judging, a petting zoo and kids' activities around the farm. There was a meal,

guest speakers and baking contest. With about 350 people in attendance, the guests were encouraged to walk around the farm to see how the day-to-day operation is run.

The baking contest was sponsored by the Eau Claire County Farm Bureau. There were around 30 different cookies and bar entries. Prizes were awarded to the winners of three different age categories, in addition to the best of show. Once the winners were announced, everyone was invited to enjoy a piece or two of dessert. It wasn't hard to find a couple to try.



Eau Claire County Farm Bureau members Mark and Terri Karow hosted the Augusta FFA Alumni Visit the Farm event on August 19. More than 350 visited the farm during the event.

## President's Perspective – From Across the Pond!



Over Labor Day weekend, we were offered the chance to travel to the Netherlands, better known as Holland, with our neighbors who originated from there.

Holland truly is the land of windmills, tulips, bicycles and wooden shoes. We toured the whole country in a rental car, never spending more than one and a half hours on the road at

one time. The Netherlands is only one-quarter the size of Wisconsin but has four times as many people. Holland is second, only to the U.S. in agriculture exports in the whole world.

The landscape is flat and square. An intricate series of canals carry water away from fields. Canals outnumber roads because one-quarter of the country is below sea level. Dikes and flood gates hold the ocean back while windmills and newer pumps pump the fresh water out. New style windmills and solar panels on barn roofs generate electricity. Draw bridges, ferries and tunnels make boat and vehicle traffic possible at the same time.

The countryside is flat as a pancake with lush green grass everywhere. The paddocks are dotted with thousands of Holstein dairy cows. Most cows are grazed some and housed in slatted floor free stall barns. Most are parlor milked with some robots as well. The feed is packed in bunkers or wrapped as silage bales.

The liquid manure in the under-barn pits must only be incorporated before September 15. All outdoor manure pits must have a cover on them to contain methane gas.

The cows are fed grass silage, not alfalfa, corn silage not more than 25 percent of the ration, and protein supplement. A typical year has six cuttings of 22 to 24 percent protein rye grass hay. The cow barn bedding is recycled dry manure, not sand. The barnyards, driveways and feed pads are cobblestone paver blocks, not concrete. The tractors and machinery come



Canals outnumber roads in Holland, carrying water away from fields.

in every shape and color, but most are newer. We saw many 150 to 400 cow barns. Most dairymen hire the custom chopping crews to put up feed. The custom guy we visited with said he only needed to travel 20 miles at the most to keep busy because of the closeness of the dairies.

Holland also contains other diversified agriculture. We saw many flocks of sheep grazing ditches and dikes. We saw 30,000 bird chicken barns and hog barns. Horses dot the country side at hobby farms and stables. Hundreds of giant greenhouses covering thousands of acres grow fruits and vegetables year-round. Cash crops like potatoes, wheat, sugar beets, onions, and flowers filled the acres between dairy farms. We even saw some beef herds of Belgian blue cattle.

The things we never saw were also amazing. I never saw one soybean field. I never saw one skidsteer, not even on a 500-cow dairy. Loader tractors, wheel loaders and telehandlers do the work. I never saw one Black Angus beef cow. We made it a priority to look for pickup trucks. After thousands of farms and hundreds of miles of interstate and back country roads in 10 days we counted 11 pickup trucks. I never saw a red barn. The government makes the farmers build green ones. I never saw one sale barn. The truckers haul directly to the slaughter plants.

We did tour a windmill built in the



Most dairymen in Holland hire custom chopping crews to put up feed.

1600s, had fresh cut flowers on the coffee table, road 25 miles on a bike and I now own a pair of wooden shoes. We sure feel blessed to have wonderful farmer neighbors that offered us a great opportunity.

I highly recommend a trip to visit the friendly Dutch people. I was so glad to see that even on the other side of the ocean there are some of the chosen few that are blessed with the opportunity to feed and clothe the rest of the world.

**Steve Strey**  
Eau Claire County Farm Bureau President



Cows are fed grass silage, not alfalfa.



## District 4 Director Message: Maybe It's Our Own ... Fault



This year, I have been asked several times, "What is Farm Bureau doing for dairy?"

The answer, quite frankly, is everything our members have asked for. If you go through our policy on dairy, you will notice that it is rather limited in scope: the definition of milk, milk in schools, notification by milk inspectors, MPP, etc.

Farm Bureau has worked to get real fixes to MPP, get support for dairy in the Farm Bill, worked on the definition of milk and expressed how the recent tariffs are affecting agriculture.

So, what do I mean? Maybe it's our own ... fault. Perhaps when we look at the recent three- to four-year downturn in dairy prices – and possibly a fifth year right around the cor-

ner – as members, we have to ask ourselves, does our policy language go far enough? The most important role a member can play in Farm Bureau is to be involved in the resolutions process.

It does little good to complain about our situation and not offer direction to the organization. Some members talk trade, some talk supply management, some bring up regulations that keep us from being competitive in world markets, yet we have little in terms of policy.

As your district director, it is important to me to hear from you and get your resolutions together. We can build strategy to get things accomplished for the benefit of our farms. Without good direction, the best we can do is hold informational meetings, hearing from those who benefit from our current oversupply of milk: exporters, processors, cooperatives, etc. While they tell us that they are suffering along with farmers, cheap milk is to their benefit.

Then, along came tariffs and trade wars, another reason for low prices. Remember that in May of this year we had record

exports of 18 percent of our production, yet milk prices barely started to rebound. Many may feel that trade is important, but at current levels of production, it would take a tremendous climb in trade to levels never seen before to make a difference. Please don't forget that a strong dollar doesn't necessarily help exports. Yet, we produce more and more.

So please bring your ideas and do not be afraid to speak up and provide input. Consider nominating someone that can articulate your thoughts as a state annual meeting delegate or volunteer yourself.

I am truly honored to represent you. District 4 has a strong legacy of getting things done and being innovative. Now more than ever we need to demonstrate that leadership and, together, be a part of the solution. If not us, then who?

As always, enough is too much!

**Joe Bragger**  
WFBF District 4 Director

## Eau Claire County Farm Bureau Purchases Fair Hog



Eau Claire County Farm Bureau was proud to support 4-H youth by purchasing Brittany Artac's show hog during the Eau Claire County Fair. Artac's hog furnished the pulled pork meal during the Eau Claire County Farm Bureau annual meeting on September 22.

The Eau Claire County Farm Bureau has purchased from the livestock auction for many years. We are proud to support young agriculturists and youth interested in exhibiting at the county fair. Thank you to the participants who make the Eau Claire County Fair great and congratulations on an outstanding year.



## A Productive Policy Meeting and Discussion Meet

Members from District 4 gathered at the Sand Creek Brewery in Black River Falls on Tuesday, July 24, for the annual YFA Discussion Meet contest and Policy Development Meeting.

Congratulations to Andrea Rippley, Allison Bragger and Kyle Danzinger, of Buffalo County, for advancing in the YFA Discussion Meet.

They will represent District 4 during the YFA Conference

in Wisconsin Dells.

Jackson County Farm Bureau member Savannah Brown was drawn for the District 4 membership incentive. For recruiting new members, Savannah received two tickets to the Badgers-Gophers football game in November and she received a variety of Wisconsin Badgers memorabilia.

Thank you to those who attended the Policy Development Meeting.



Jackson County Farm Bureau member Savannah Brown received the Badgers football prize package valued at \$500.



The District 4 Policy Development Meeting was held at the Sand Creek Brewery in Black River Falls on July 24.



(from left) Allison Bragger, Andrea Rippley and Kyle Danzinger, all of Buffalo County, will represent District 4 during the YFA Discussion Meet in December.

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## Calling All YFA Members

Are you between the ages of 18-35? Are you interested in meeting other young farmers and agriculturalists? Could you use a weekend away filled with fun and networking? You're in luck. Eau Claire County Young Farmers and agriculturalists are highly encouraged to attend the YFA Conference on November 30-December 2 at the Kalahari Resorts in Wisconsin Dells. Hear from invigorating speakers, sit in on educational workshops, meet Farm Bureau members from across the state and enjoy entertainment alongside your friends.

For more information or to register for the YFA Conference, please contact District 4 Coordinator Cassie Olson at 715.896.4526 or [colson@wfbf.com](mailto:colson@wfbf.com).



District 4 YFA members participated in a variety of relay races during the District 4 member meeting at the 2017 YFA Conference at the Kalahari Resorts in Wisconsin Dells.