

Grassroots

District 4 News

You Are the Voice of Agriculture



Joe Bragger

WFBF District 4 Director

Sometimes there is no point in writing something that has already been expressed perfectly. Recently, I received an email from Dallas dairy farmer,

Brittany Olson, that I want to share with you.

“It really has been a year since we packed a room at Barron Electric when Barron County Farm Bureau and Farmers Union hosted a farmer-led discussion on the dairy industry crisis. Wow!

One thing that bothers me as much, if not more, than the apathy of dairy industry leaders and elected officials is the apathy of farmers to speak up and do something.

So many of them are unhappy with the way things are, yet [fail] to show up and learn about what could be done or what could work [to fix the current situation]. They complain about the board of directors for their milk cooperatives, farm organizations, supply and service cooperatives, and the [checkoff], yet the same people keep getting reelected to those boards.

They say the future belongs to those who show up, and it’s true. It also takes a lot more courage to stand up to your friends and peers than it does to stand up to your enemies, and in this case, it rings a little too true as well.

Last week, our county Farm Bureau president, Karyn Schauf, invited about 20 farmers to a meeting where we could all look at the material that [farmer organizations] were presenting at the Dairy Together Roadshow, looking at potential solutions to our laundry list of woes. Maybe half of those farmers came. The others either had other things going on that day or simply were uninterested.

Another thought that occurred to me: every single dairy represented at the small meeting in Barron had about 100 cows or less. Every single cow represented at that table had a name, a face and a personality all her own, and we recognize that.

Wisconsin is not America’s Dairyland because of cow numbers or pounds of milk produced, but because of Wisconsin’s farm families. I’m tired of being told that consolidation is the status quo when it is abundantly clear that our end buyers want their milk to come from family farms.

According to food science and technology firm Eurofins, 93 percent of consumers surveyed believe it is important to support family farms and that family farms benefit local communities. I want to explicitly mention smaller family farms because those are the herds we’re losing at a disproportionate rate compared with other herd size categories, and once they’re gone it takes an act of God to get them back. That’s what the consumer wants, and they aren’t getting it.

So many of our fellow dairy farmers claim that they don’t know what to do or that it’s pointless to try and change things, yet

they don’t show up to meetings like the ones [organizations] are putting on across the state and country to learn about what they could do. At the very least, [it’s an

opportunity to] get off the farm for a couple of hours and get a free meal.

I get it; farming is hard and usually exhausting. Fatigue and stress are constant companions of mine. I maybe get five hours of sleep at night before dragging myself out of bed to do chores. But, [when] you really care, [you] find the energy to at least open your mind to some possible solutions.

After all, if there’s nothing that can be done to salvage and heal our once-vibrant and diverse dairy industry, why are any of us still milking cows?”

Brittany has expressed some of the frustration I have had with the apathy of some folks in the countryside. We live in the greatest country in the world where you can freely express your thoughts and be involved in a democratic legislative process and drive the direction of the country.

I cannot express enough the appreciation for the people that are standing up and trying make a difference.



Sam and Brittany Olson milk 40 cows on their farm near Dallas.

Some of you have attended countless meetings and spoken up for agriculture and for change that would help farmers and possibly prevent us from once again repeating the endless boom and bust cycles. Many of you have worked with watershed groups and represented agriculture’s commitment to water quality. Some have stood up for infrastructure improvements for our highways and for broadband.

For those of you who feel, “What does it matter what I do?” or “We have lobbyists to represent us,” imagine what would happen if we all got involved; imagine what would happen if the quiet grumbling became a united, boisterous voice; together we could fully embody Wisconsin Farm Bureau’s mission as “the voice of agriculture.”

As always enough is too much.

Farmers Attend Ag Day at the Capitol



Members heard from Wisconsin DATCP Secretary of Agriculture-Designee Brad Pfaff, who spoke about dairy, hemp and water.

On March 20, more than 300 farmers and agriculturists met in Madison for Ag Day at the Capitol.

The program kicked off with a transportation panel comprised of Wisconsin DOT

Secretary-Designee Craig Thompson, WFBF President Jim Holte, Wisconsin Counties Association Executive Director Mark O'Connell and Dan Cunningham, Forward Janesville, Inc.

The panel members discussed transportation items in the Governor's budget proposal and what funding possibilities would be viable moving forward.

"Maintaining and funding rural roads is desperately needed in Wisconsin," WFBF President Jim Holte said. "We cannot lose sight of the importance of rural infrastructure for our farmers and rural residents."

The featured guest speaker was Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Secretary-Designee Brad Pfaff who talked with attendees about dairy, hemp and water. He emphasized his rural roots and upbringing on a farm in rural La Crosse County and shared his plans to have DACTP help farmers in whatever way it can.

After legislative issue briefings by speakers, attendees walked to the Capitol to meet with their legislators.

"This year's meetings had a strong focus on the Governor's budget proposal and ensuring agriculture programs are well-funded," added President Holte. "Farm Bureau members also stressed the importance of farmers having a seat at the table for water-related discussions."

Rural Mutual Insurance Company and GROWMARK, Inc., were major sponsors of the event. Co-sponsors of the event, with Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, included the Dairy Business Association, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association, Wisconsin Corn Growers Association, Wisconsin Hemp Alliance, Wisconsin Horse Council, Wisconsin Pork Association, Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association, Wisconsin Soybean Association and the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association.



Members from District 4 met with their respective legislators during Ag Day at the Capitol on March 20.



Eight members from Monroe County Farm Bureau traveled to Madison for Ag Day at the Capitol.

COUNTY FARM BUREAU ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE



BUFFALO

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10

Social begins at 7:00pm with meal to follow at Danzinger Vineyards, 52015 Grapeview Ln, Alma, WI



EAU CLAIRE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Meal begins at 7pm at the Clear Creek Town Hall, 512455 N. Raven Dr., Strum, WI.



JACKSON

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Potluck meal begins at 12:30pm at Steve & Pat Kling's event barn, W15500 Rejyee Lane Taylor, WI

** Please bring a dish to pass.



MONROE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11

Potluck meal begins at 12PM at Jack & Pat Herricks' Farm, 12150 Hwy 55, Cashon, WI

** Please bring either a salad or dessert to pass.



TREMPEALEAU

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20

Meeting and meal begin at 6:00pm at Schroeder Shelter at Memorial Park, N Park Road, Blair, WI.

Your Moment Is Now



Cassie Olson
District 4 Coordinator

I'm proud to be a small-town girl. I live in a town with zero stoplights where everyone knows their neighbors and Friday nights are meant for fish fries. Living in a small town like Cadott, the opportunity to connect with a television celebrity is pretty much slim to none. Little did I know I would get to not only do just that, but also share my love of agriculture in the process.

As the District 4 Coordinator, I spend a fair amount of time behind the wheel in a given month. I work with six counties in western Wisconsin, attending their monthly meetings and special events. To pass the time behind the windshield, I've grown to enjoy taking in a number of podcasts to keep me entertained, educated and, in the late evenings, wide awake.

The podcasts I listen to encompass a



variety of interests including agriculture, leadership, politics and pop culture. Several years ago, I stumbled across a podcast called Off

the Vine with Kaitlyn Bristowe. Bristowe is the former lead on *The Bachelorette*. If you recognize her name, it may be because she was also the runner-up contestant on Iowa farmer, Chris Soules', season of *The Bachelor* the year prior.

Bristowe's podcast is geared towards women and features guest experts on topics such as fitness, health, skincare and mental health, just to name a few. While I would venture to guess her primary audience is largely urban, I have found myself looking forward to her weekly segments.

Off the Vine recently started a new segment on Friday's called Drunk Dial, where Bristowe calls listeners who have questions for the host. On a social media post recently, I submitted a question to Bristowe, assuming that, at best, she would read and answer the question on a future episode.

You can imagine my surprise when I received an email from Bristowe's agent asking if I was available for a phone call. As I patiently waited for the phone to ring, I mentally prepared myself to tell a joke or embarrassing story on the air. When the phone rang, I picked up to Bristowe's greeting: "Is this Cassie ... Cassie Olson?"

Our conversation began, and as we chatted, I made mention that I work with farmers. What Bristowe asked next was completely unexpected but entirely appreciated.

"What are your thoughts about documentaries that say 'dairy is scary' or negative things about farms?"

I thought to myself, "Is this real life right now?"

As I gathered my thoughts, I answered open and honestly. I suggested that listeners speak with farmers about concerns about their food and to do their research before taking a claim about agriculture as fact. Bristowe shared that she appreciated my answer and that she would be interested in having a farmer on her podcast.

That was it. A short, three-minute exchange was my chance to advocate. Bristowe captivates an audience of thousands on a weekly basis, and while I do not know the number of people who tuned into the podcast I was featured on, it is safe to say that it was received by a crowd of largely urban listeners.

We all have our 'tribes.' Collectively, we share a tie of agriculture, but think of the groups that you are connected or belong to that include non-farmers; maybe it is your church, a sports team, a club or your child's school. Maybe you or your spouse work off the farm in an unrelated industry or are a frequent flyer on a major airline. These 'tribes' or these people we interact with offer us the chance to tell the story of agriculture, oftentimes in unexpected ways.

As farmers and agriculturists, it is easy to preach to the choir. It is easy to share our message amongst like-minded peers, but it is when we go beyond our borders and speak out in a diverse crowd that our message can be truly received.



Kaitlyn Bristowe is the host of PodcastOne's Off the Vine with Kaitlyn Bristowe. Bristowe is a former contestant on *The Bachelor* and lead on *The Bachelorette*.

These opportunities do not always come our way by chance; sometimes we have to look for them. If you overhear a comment in the grocery store about your favorite food product, do not be scared to join the conversation. If you're in a meeting or sitting on plane, take the chance to talk about your farm. If you have the chance to call in to a radio show or podcast, tell them that you work in agriculture. Consumers have valid questions and valid concerns, but we can never truly answer them unless we let it be known who we are, what we do and how we do it.

They say that, 'opportunity knocks,' sometimes, however, we need to knock down the door.



DISTRICT 4 FARM BUREAU YFA DISCUSSION MEET & POLICY DEVELOPMENT MEETING

wednesday, July 24th, 2019

6:30 PM DISCUSSION MEET REGISTRATION;

7PM DISCUSSION MEET; 8PM POLICY DEVELOPMENT MEETING

REVOLUTION COFFEE, 38 MAIN ST, BLACK RIVER FALLS



Noll Named 2019 Calf Grant Recipient

Buffalo County Farm Bureau is proud to recognize Nessa Noll as the 2019 recipient of the Buffalo County calf grant.

Nessa is the daughter of Scott and Heidi Noll of Alma. Nessa's family milks 120 cows on Noll's Dairy Farm, LLC. Nessa shows cattle, pigs, sheep, rabbits and takes other projects to the county fair.

Recently, Nessa used her grant from Farm Bureau to help with the purchase of Vallowhill Lloyds of London.

London is a deep-ribbed, registered Ayrshire fall calf that Nessa hopes to show at the State Ayrshire Show and Buffalo County Fair.

London's grand dam was Family-Af-Ayr Kellogg Lacey-Et who had lifetime production of 32,940 pounds with a 3.4 percent fat and 2.9 percent protein.

Nessa hopes London does well in the ring, but also will milk like her grand dam.

Thank you to the Farm Bureau grant program for helping to put calves like London into children's show plans.



Nessa Noll was selected as the 2019 recipient of the Buffalo County Farm Bureau calf grant. She used her funds to purchase Vallowhill Lloyds of London, a registered Ayrshire fall calf that she will show later this year.



Zoning in Buffalo County

By Julie Lindstrom, Buffalo County Farm Bureau board member

County zoning can be controversial. I have worked in the Zoning Department in Buffalo County since 2012. At that time, the department was processing numerous conditional use permit applications for nonmetallic mines (industrial sand). Most of us in Buffalo County remember some of the public hearings. They were very controversial and could last four to six hours each.

Recently, the Zoning Department completed a comprehensive revision of the Buffalo County (general) Zoning Ordinance replacing an ordinance that had been in place since 1965. The writing of the ordinance revision started in August of 2015 and was not approved by the county board until July 2018. That was not an easy task and at times became somewhat controversial. It can be said there are some individuals who think zoning is a good thing and others who do not think it is necessary or do not agree with all the language in the zoning requirements in the ordinance.

Local governments in Wisconsin can decide for themselves whether they want general zoning. It is an option for them. I looked for statistics regarding zoning in the towns, cities and villages in Wisconsin. The most recent data that I could find was from the Department of Administration back in 2010. The data used 1,255 as the number of towns in Wisconsin. I learned that 61 percent of the towns are part of county zoning, 19 percent have Town Zoning and 20 percent are un-zoned. For the cities and villages, 93 percent have city and village zoning, six percent are un-zoned and there was no data for one+ percent of the cities and villages.

I think it is safe to say that zoning in Wisconsin, at that time, was a favorable way of regulating land use. It would be interesting to see how much change there is in these statistics nine years later. All 17 towns in

Buffalo County have been part of county-wide zoning since the first general zoning ordinance was adopted in Buffalo County in 1965.

Zoning code is written to help make the best use of land. When I reviewed the 2018 Zoning Ordinance and looked at Section 5 of the Ordinance on 'Purpose and Intent,' the one specific purpose that seems to me to fit into the whole picture of County Zoning is H. "Encourage land use and location of structures which is compatible with existing and planned land uses, and prohibit and control land uses deemed incompatible with nearby land uses."

When it comes to no zoning, I like to remind people that they may not want anyone to tell them what they can and cannot do with their land, but they need to remember that the same applies to their neighbor and they may not like how their neighbor is using his/her land.

My personal thoughts in the article are not intended to let the reader believe that I am for or against county, town, city and village zoning. I am employed in the Buffalo County Zoning Department and my job is to assist the zoning administrator with the ordinances that are administered in the Zoning Department. Information in this article was taken from the following sources: 2018 Buffalo County Zoning Ordinance; Zoning Board Handbook, UW-Extension, Center for Land Use Education; and Wisconsin Department of Administration.



A Message from the President ...



Steve Strey

Eau Claire County Farm Bureau president

Recently, I received a letter in the mail stating a local co-op I belong to had signed letters of intent to merge with the neighboring co-op. It got me thinking about the past. I am a relatively young farmer having only farmed for 20 years, but this is the fourth co-op merger in my career.

Every time a merger happens the experts say it is necessary, because the one co-op is broke and cannot continue to operate. They say efficiencies will be gained by joining assets and labor creating more competitive prices and better service. Then that merged co-op failed and merged with the next one down the road, then again and now again.

I learned a long time ago in agriculture that if you continue to do the same thing year after year and expect a different result in the end, it is the definition of insanity.

It seems like a race to see which co-op can get the biggest the fastest. Less co-ops to choose from means less competition, which is bad for business. When our forefathers founded these co-ops, they were in search of cheaper prices do to volume buying and quality local service.

I like to watch other farmers, especially big farms, to learn and keep up on change. We know that commodity prices are low right now, and input prices are crucial to profitability. What I have seen the last several years is farmers buying fertilizer directly off the barge at the river. Then they haul their grain back there, too. They also have spent money on fertilizer application and spray equipment.

Contracting direct feed stuff delivery to the farm, from processors also is becoming quite popular. All these things are done to save money and get quality speedy service, meanwhile bypassing the local co-op. Does anyone else see a problem here? Less big farms doing business with the co-op causes them to operate at a loss, making them raise prices, shut down local facilities or look for a better merger. Deja-vu.

It is time to make a change. I analyze the

entities of my farm business each year. If there is not enough money coming in a certain area, I spend less. I know this is a radical idea, but I think it might work. If our, yes, our co-ops, (you and I own them) continue to have operating expenses higher than profits, they are not sustainable.

If their products and services are priced higher than the privates, they will continue to lose business. If we lose these co-ops, we are disrespecting our ancestors who shed blood, sweat and tears to build them. This is not a manager or board problem. It is our problem.

I urge you to get involved and pay attention. Let's take our co-ops back and make them work for us. Let us put our heads together and brain storm to come up with a plan of action other than the classic merger.

Because remember only the chosen few are truly blessed with the opportunity to feed, fuel and clothe the rest of the world.

For more information or if you have questions, comments or please call me with ideas at 715.597.6096.

Communication the Center of WFBF's First Ag LEAD Summit

By Brenda Dowiasch, Eau Claire County Farm Bureau director

I was excited to attend the Ag LEAD Summit held on March 8-9 in Appleton. During the summit, we learned about leadership, engagement, advocacy and development.

Friday morning started with networking with other Farm Bureau Members from around the state. We kicked off the conference with Keynote Speaker, Donna Moenning, from The Center for Food Integrity. She shared some insights from what consumers look for. Consumers want to know more about today's food systems. I learned that they trust farmers over big businesses. So, make sure to share what you do with others, this opens up a line of communication. It can be as simple as striking up a conversation with someone while waiting in a line or at a school sporting event.

There were several breakout sessions that we could attend. After each session, we were encouraged to share on a group discussion board, "What Stuck with You?" My favorite breakout session was, Followers to Advocates, presented by Sarah Hetke. During this time, we learned to how to use social media to help promote and advocate for agriculture. When we are posting information and photos on these social media pages, we want to be talking about our industry in a positive way. I plan on using things that I learned to start a social media business page in 2019.

We closed with a brunch and keynote speaker, Jay Hill. His speech was on reconnecting farmers and consumers. Jay shared how he began farming at a young age. His first crop was 10 acres of onions on his family's hobby farm. His passion expanded to cropping in

Texas and New Mexico. He shared his ups and downs during the growth to his present-day operation. I enjoyed his honesty and passion for what he does. I recommend following him on social media. He does a great job advocating for agriculture.

What stuck with me? When people have questions about agriculture, they tend to ask Google for an answer. If we have open communication about what we are doing in agriculture, it encourages people to ask us these burning questions. We want to be the resources that they use when they might not understand something about farming.

So, when you are given the opportunity to talk about what you do, share with others. We are the voices for the farmers and the agriculture industry.



Eau Claire County Farm Bureau member, Brenda Dowiasch, attended the Ag LEAD Summit on March 8-9. Dowiasch took in workshops and speakers, making her trip a valuable learning opportunity.



Donna Moenning from The Center for Food Integrity presented the opening keynote on consumer demands.



WFBF's Director of Communications, Sarah Hetke, presented a workshop on social media advocacy.

Farm Technology Days: Photography Exhibit Invitation to Participate

Theme: Showcasing Wisconsin's Farm Life and Agricultural Diversity

- An official Entry Form is required and must be securely attached to the back of the submitted photo. Entry forms are available at www.wifarmtechnologydays.com/eau_claire. Submissions without an entry form will be rejected.
- Submitted photos must relate to the stated theme above.
- A high quality, creative photograph with good composition is required.
- Photos specific to a local farm or Eau Claire County agriculture are strongly encouraged, however, photos from across Wisconsin will be accepted.
- Submissions are open to youth and adults, including amateurs and professionals. Farm Technology Days committee staff and volunteers may participate.
- Entries submitted by a minor (under the age of 18 at the time of submission) or which include the visible face of a minor require parental signature on the entry form.
- Entries can be black and white, color or sepia and may be digitally manipulated.
- Photos must be taken in 2018, 2019 or 2020 and taken by the individual submitting the entry.
- Photos must be printed, matted or framed, and not exceed an overall size of 11" by 14".
- Each participant may submit one (1) photo.
- A photo title is encouraged for labeling and display purposes at the show.
- Entries will be accepted from Monday, June 1, 2020, through Friday, June 26, 2020, at the UW-Extension Office located at 227 1st Street, Altoona, WI 54720, Attn.: FTD photo. Entries can be mailed or dropped off during business hours.
- Depending on the number of acceptable entries, up to 50 photos will be displayed at the 2020 Eau Claire County Farm Technology Days in the Rural Entertainment Center (REC) tent from July 21-23, 2020. Additional photos may be displayed if space is available.
- One (1) "People's Choice Award" will be granted based on the highest number of votes an individual photo receives on site during the three-day Farm Technology Days event. Sharp Photo will provide an award to the winner.
- Three (3) "Participation Awards" also will be chosen based on a random drawing from all entries accepted. Each winner will receive a \$25 gift card from a local business.
- The Family Living Committee reserves the right to reject any entry deemed inappropriate and will coordinate a pre-selection process to determine which submissions will be selected for display.
- Following the 2020 Farm Technology Days show, selected donated photos may be displayed at other yet to be determined venues, locally or statewide or included on the organization's website.

If you have questions regarding submissions please contact familyftd2020@gmail.com, use 'Photo Show' in the subject line.

A Tremendous Opportunity: Dowiash, Gibson Participate in WFBF Leadership Institute

By Brenda Dowiash, Eau Claire County Farm Bureau director

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Leadership Institute has been a great opportunity to learn about yourself, while networking with others.

I was selected along with 11 other individuals from around the state. I was excited to find out that a fellow Eau Claire County member, Dawn Gibson, also was selected as a class participant.

For anyone who knows me I love to advocate

for agriculture. I have met others with common interests and goals. It has been great to be able to share ideas and work together.

The class is set up as several sessions throughout the year. We have learned about our strengths, emotional intelligence, building trust, public speaking and conflict management since the class started in January. It has been interesting to explore these topics with my class participants.

We are on break from meeting this summer, with homework to complete. We will be meeting again this fall to learn more about ourselves and how to be better advocates for Farm Bureau.

I am looking forward to traveling to Washington, D.C., in 2020 with this group, as the highlight of completing this course. I highly suggest applying for the next WFBF Leadership Institute, you won't be disappointed.

Jackson County

wfbf.com/about/counties/jackson
JacksonCountyFarmBureau

Jackson County Welcomes New Agriculture Agent



UW-Extension of Jackson County recently welcomed Jamie Pfaff as their new agriculture agent. Pfaff replaces Trisha Wagner who was promoted to outreach program manager within Extension's farm

management division.

Pfaff grew up in Jackson County and is excited to return to her roots. She earned her

bachelor's degree in agricultural business with a minor in dairy science from UW-River Falls.

Prior to her employment with Extension, Pfaff worked on her family's 600-cow dairy farm in Melrose where she still houses her animals. She also spent a brief period working in the poultry industry as a quality assurance specialist.

As the county agriculture agent, Pfaff's roles will include educational program development and responding to the needs of producers. Program development takes place both at the county and at the state level through collaborative efforts with fellow educators.

Key areas Pfaff hopes to focus on include farm management, dairy and livestock production and sustainable agriculture topics. Producers are encouraged to reach out to the Extension office with any agricultural questions or needs they may have.

Pfaff is excited to work with area farmers and provide objective, research-based information to help support the community. The Jackson County Extension office is located at 227 S. 11th Street in Black River Falls. Pfaff can be contacted at jamie.pfaff@wisc.edu or 715.284.4257.

Gilbertson Receives 2019 Farm Bureau Scholarship

McKayla Gilbertson, daughter of Tina Peterson, from Hixton, is the 2019 Jackson County Farm Bureau Scholarship recipient.

McKayla is a senior at Black River Falls High School planning to attend Chippewa Valley Technical College to pursue an associate's degree in business administration/management.

After completion of her associate's degree at Chippewa Valley Technical College, she plans to attend Winona State University to earn a bachelor's and master's degree in business administration.

Throughout high school, McKayla has been involved with many community groups such as: the Jackson County Electric Youth Ambassador's for two years, member of the Wazee Rider's Horse Club and the Coulee Region Rider's Club for 10 years, member of the Irving Stickights II 4-H Club for seven years, exhibiting swine, sheep and horses at the Jackson County Fair, served as Miss Jackson County 2017-2018, member of the Wisconsin Foundation Horse Group and American Quarter Horse

Association.

McKayla is deserving of this scholarship, not only because she is active in the community, but also in sports and clubs at Black River Falls High School.

She was involved in basketball, volleyball, golf, FCCLA, National Honor Society, Finance and Investment Challenge Bowl Team, Environmental Club and assisted with the school store.

Jackson County Farm Bureau congratulates McKayla for winning the scholarship and wishes her luck in her future endeavors.



Black River Falls High School senior, McKayla Gilbertson, was named the 2019 Jackson County Farm Bureau scholarship recipient. Gilbertson will attend Chippewa Valley Technical College to pursue an associate's degree in business administration/management.

Wanke Wins Ag in the Classroom Essay Contest

Congratulations to Brandon Wanke, the winner of the Jackson County Farm Bureau essay contest.

Brandon is the son of Phillip and Julie and is in Mrs. Johnson's fourth-grade classroom at Melrose-Mindoro Elementary.

Congratulations also to Emersyn Stacy who won the Black River Falls school district essay contest. Emersyn is a student in Miss Daggett's class.

Members of the Promotion and Education Committee read a book and did an activity with students to promote this year's contest topic, 'Making it happen at the Farmers' Market.'

Jackson County received 112 entries for the Ag in the Classroom essay contest.



Jackson County Ag in the Classroom committee members Savannah Brown, Erica Olson, Mariah Peterson and Darby Sampson (not pictured) visited with area classrooms to celebrate National Ag Day on March 14. Students competed in the annual WFBF Ag in the Classroom Essay contest, submitting more than 110 essays for the essay contest.

Meet: Candace Pomeroy, Jackson County Farm Bureau's New Director



Name: Candace Pomeroy
Family: Parents: Brad and Carol Anderson, twin sister: Charmayne Anderson
Husband: Shayne

Pomeroy and step-daughter: Shay Pomeroy

Occupation: Broiler service technician for Pilgrim's Pride in Arcadia

Agriculture background: I grew up on my family's dairy farm in Melrose, which is still in operation. I was a active member with the

Melrose Satellites 4-H Club and Melrose-Mindoro FFA including showing animals at the county fairs. After high school, I attended college at UW-River Falls and earned a bachelor's degree in animal science and decided to work in the poultry industry. After I graduated, I moved to Thompson, Iowa, to work at Rembrandt Foods, which is a 6.5 million laying hen facility that produces liquid egg product for big food corporations. I was an assistant manager in the barns for 4.5 years until I decided to move back to Melrose with my husband to be closer to our friends and family.
What is your favorite job to do on the farm? I enjoy feeding the cows and calves. I see a lot of chickens every day, but cows are still my favorite animal.

Why did you join Farm Bureau? I joined because I was looking for another way to meet people and be involved with my community again.

Why did you decide to join the Farm Bureau board? I want to show leadership and offer a new insight to educate the public about agriculture.

I am Farm Bureau proud because ... I believe in the future of Wisconsin agriculture and supporting the local community.

Preferred tractor color: Green

Favorite ice cream flavor: Blue Moon

Fun fact about me: I am an outdoors person and enjoy deer hunting with either shotgun or bow and also pheasant hunting. I enjoy any kind of fishing, as long as I'm catching bigger fish than my husband.

Pepped Up for Pizza: Fourth-Grade Students Celebrate National Ag Day

On March 14, Jackson County Farm Bureau members Savannah Brown, Mariah Peterson and Erica Olson celebrated National Ag Day with Black River Falls fourth-grade students at Red Creek Elementary School.

They brought in the book, "How Did that Get In My Lunchbox," which shares how our food gets from the farm to our mouths.

Each student was asked to share what their favorite food is, and how that food is grown or produced.

They then were given a slice of pepperoni pizza and did an activity about how farmers produce each ingredient on their slice. It was a fun way to interact with elementary students and share about the importance of the agricultural industry.

National Ag Day is a day to celebrate the entire agricultural industry and the many ways

that our food, fuel and fiber is produced.

It occurs in March every year and brings public awareness to agriculture. Wisconsin Farm Bureau invited members to print a #WIAgProud sign and share a photo on social



Jackson County Farm Bureau members Savannah Brown, Erica Olson and Mariah Peterson met with Black River Falls fourth-grade students to celebrate National Ag Day on March 14. The students learned about how farmers produce each ingredient that makes up pepperoni pizza and read the book, "How Did That Get in My Lunchbox," before enjoying some pizza.

media. Agriculture advocacy is an important activity to bridge the gap between consumers and the agricultural community. Jackson County Farm Bureau was proud to be a part of the National Ag Day Celebration.



Monroe County

Kowitz Earns Top Employee Award

The Wisconsin Custom Operators (WCO) recently honored a Norwalk man for his work and dedication to a custom farming business.

WCO's 2019 Employee of the Year award was presented to Norm Kowitz, an employee of Sullivan Custom Farming in Sparta on Feb. 20 during the organization's annual meeting at the Forage Symposium at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells.

Kowitz has worked for Sullivan Custom Farming for several years and is described as a gifted mechanic and an all-around great person.

"Norm strives to provide customers with exceptional service," said Brian Sullivan, who nominated Kowitz. "He treats each customer as if they are the most important by being present in communication and by being respectful of their land and farm."

WCO Created the Employee of the Year award to honor an exemplary employee who demonstrates excellence in the areas of safety, efficiency, customer service, environmental stewardship and profitability of a custom farming or custom harvest operation. Community service is a new category that was added to the award criteria this year.

"Many of our members have had the same crew for several years. These employees are highly skilled and keep our businesses going during the busy season and all year long," said Bryce O'Leary, WCO president, who presented the award. "Their commitment to safety, the

environment and our clients is outstanding – this award is our opportunity to honor them."

In addition to his excellent customer service skills, Sullivan says Kowitz's positive attitude and willingness to help others improves morale during busy and stressful times. Outside of work, Kowitz is active in his community and volunteers with the Lions Club, his local snowmobile club and countless community fundraisers and events.

"Norm has a smile on his face from the time he arrives until he leaves every day. He is a complete team player," said Sullivan during the award presentation.



WCO's 2019 Employee of the Year award was given to Norm Kowitz, an employee of Sullivan Custom Farming in Sparta on Feb. 20 during the organization's annual meeting at the Forage Symposium at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. (from left): Bryce O'Leary, WCO president, Norm Kowitz and Brian Sullivan of Sullivan Custom Farming.

Applications are collected for WCO's Employee of the Year in the fall and the winner is announced at the group's annual meeting in February. Members are encouraged to nominate those employees who set a positive example for their entire crew.

WCO is an organization comprised of individuals throughout the state who derive their income in whole or part from providing custom farming services. For more information about the Wisconsin Custom Operators, Inc., including membership and event registration, visit wiscustomoperators.org or info@wiscustomoperators.org.



Norm Kowitz is a 'gifted mechanic' who's excellent customer service skills and positive attitude earned him WCO's Employee of the Year Award in February.

Monroe County Farm Bureau Awards Three Scholarships

Monroe County Farm Bureau is pleased to announce their scholarship recipients for 2019. Receiving \$250 towards their continued education

are: Ashley Kempf of Cashton; Emily Powell of Norwalk; and Todd Wells of Sparta.



Ashley Kempf is a senior at Cashton High School and the daughter of Angela Kempf. Upon graduation, Kempf plans to attend

UW-River Falls to major in animal science with a pre-veterinary emphasis with plans of becoming a veterinarian. Throughout high school, Kempf has been involved in cheerleading, color guard, FFA, art club and volleyball.



Emily Powell is a senior at Brookwood High School and the daughter of Chad and Dawn Powell. Upon graduation, Powell plans to attend Ridgewater College to study agribusiness.

Once completed with her associate degree, Powell plans to transfer to UW-Platteville to complete her bachelor's degree, at which time she hopes to return to the area and obtain a career with Compeer Financial as a financial officer. Throughout high school, Powell has been involved with FFA, 4-H, wrestling statistics, track and field, drama club, National Honors Society, diversity club, band, forensics, Elroy Fair Junior Fair Board, FCCLA, volleyball, softball, student council, student 7-12 leadership group and Co-ops Network Youth Board.



Todd Wells is a senior at Sparta High School and is the son of Mark Wells. Upon graduation, Wells plans to attend Western Technical College to study business management. His goal is own

Foss Fine Meats in Sparta. While in high school, Wells has been involved with band and 4-H.

Coloring Contest

Age Groups:

3 & 4

5 & 6

7 & 8

A prize is given to a winner in each age group.

Mail entries by May 31 to:

Peggy Wright

605 W. Wisconsin Street

Sparta, WI 54656

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Age:



A Message from the President ...



Shane Goplin

Trempealeau County Farm Bureau president

Summer is right around the corner; but, who knows? We may get one more snow? Most of us cannot remember a winter like the one we just went through. Most of us experienced or know someone who lost a shed, barn, cattle or in some cases, all three. Ugh! February, for some, was a month that we cannot forget soon enough, but are still trying deal with the devastation that we experienced.



I witnessed some of the worst scenes this winter that I will not soon forget. The widespread devastation that some of our fellow farmers went through is something that nobody should have to endure. For some of us in the Farm Bureau family, these events were a call to action. We ask ourselves, "What can we do?" Many of us offered a hand in hauling cattle, helping clear barns from cattle that were trapped, move snow and whatever we could do to help out. We also wanted to get the word out that this worse than some people thought.

I along with our Wisconsin Farm Bureau District 4's state director, Joe Bragger, and our Wisconsin Farm Bureau Director of Local Affairs Steve Boe saw the need to contact DATCP Secretary-Designee of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Brad Pfaff. Secretary Pfaff, as well as Angie Sullivan, Agriculture Program Supervisor for DATCP, cleared their busy schedule for a day to spend touring farms and talking with them about what they were going through with this year's snow events. The goal of this was not to get money to help rebuild, but rather to listen and see for themselves what kind of impact the February storm had on some.

We toured and visited with four operations in both Trempealeau and Buffalo counties. As we drove up to our first farm, Secretary Pfaff said something to the effect, "Oh my gosh; this is horrible!" That is how we felt! Until a person

sees firsthand what had happened and talked one on one with the producers, no number of pictures could do it justice. I only could have wished we had time to visit every producer affected, but we just not able to do that. After speaking with Secretary Pfaff, there was a sense of calming and gratitude, just to know that people down in Madison are thinking of us and that they do care! I can wholeheartedly say that we are very fortunate to have Brad Pfaff in this position.

Once again, I will have the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., this summer for a conference, as well as being able to speak with our elected officials. Farm Bureau has given me so many opportunities and connections that I will be forever grateful for. Having said that, if there is ever something that you want to see changed, improved or feel strongly about, please contact me. We are a grassroots organization, and we know some of the best ideas come from within our county lines.

But as I write this, Mother Nature is finally starting to play nice with our weather. With the markets the way they are, no doubt, it is sometimes hard to get excited about getting back out in the field. For me, getting back in the seat of a tractor is the best therapy there is. Possibly because farming in this day in age is becoming less about being a farmer and more



about being a business person, economist, bookkeeper, lobbyist, therapist and on and on. Only a farmer can feel the joy of doing what you love on the farm. Here is to a safe and prosperous spring.



Trempealeau County Fair Project Animal Grants Offered

The Trempealeau County Farm Bureau is a great supporter of the animal exhibitors at the Trempealeau County Fair. This year, we are sponsoring 10, \$50 youth grants to help improve their projects. The grant is open to junior livestock exhibitors who are enrolled in the following projects: Dairy, swine, beef, goat or sheep. The grant may be used to purchase feed, animals or equipment needed for the project. Project participants must show their animals at the Trempealeau County Fair.

To apply for the grant, write a brief essay on how the grant will help improve your project, such as helping with feed cost, bedding, supplies, etc., and send with this form.

All applications must be submitted by closing time on **Sunday, July 21**, at the Trempealeau County Farm Bureau shake stand located across from the dairy barn on the fairgrounds.

Winners of the grant will be notified after the fair and must attend the Trempealeau County Farm Bureau annual meeting in late August to receive the check. For more information, please contact Amber Radatz at 608.317.0001.

Name _____ Age _____
 Parents/guardians _____ Phone _____
 Address _____
 Email _____
 Name of 4-H club/FFA chapter _____
 4-H leader or FFA advisor _____
 Name of farm _____ Years in 4-H _____ Years in FFA _____
 Fair projects (animal or other) _____
 Jobs/volunteering at fair (other than exhibiting) _____
 Parents' signatures _____
 Member's signature _____

Blazing the Trail with Ag in the Classroom

By Kendra Goplin, Ag Promotions chair

Wow! What a beginning to spring! From going to four different schools to promote the book of the year to receiving the essays, Farm Bureau has kept me busy.

After visiting Trempealeau Elementary School and teaching the students about bee communication and promoting the Book of the Year and the essay contest, it was awesome to hear from a parent that their son came home excited that day.

After asking the question, "What did you do at school today?" the young man quickly told his father about the importance of farmers' markets and information he had learned about bees. This was one of the most satisfying parts about my role this spring. It was rewarding to know that my message is reaching more than the students I teach. As promoters of agriculture, we never know who will be watching and listening. It is important that we always tell our story in a positive manner.



Ag Promotions chair, Kendra Goplin, with students at Galesville Elementary following her Ag in the Classroom visit.

end 13 schools in Trempealeau County had the book of the year and information about the essay contest by mid-March. We received 20 entries from three different schools for the essay contest.

Congratulations to Sacia Boland of Holy Family Catholic School on her county winning essay. Good luck Sacia in the district competition.



Ag Promotions chair, Kendra Goplin, with students at Trempealeau Elementary following her Ag in the Classroom visit.

and classroom presentations available through the Trempealeau County Ag in the Classroom Program. This summer, I look forward to creating an ag literacy program at the Trempealeau County Fair. Watch for more details.

For more information, please contact me at goplink@whitehallsd.k12.wi.us.

Be Ag. Strong

Volunteer for the Shake Stand

Trempealeau County Farm Bureau needs YOU. Trempealeau County Farm Bureau will once again be selling shakes during the Trempealeau County Fair, July 17-21. Funds raised from the shake stand help support Trempealeau County Farm Bureau's program funding and donations to local youth organizations throughout the year.

Sign up for one of the following shifts by contacting the shift leader listed below:

Wednesday

4 p.m., to close

Shane Goplin, 715.533.4218

Thursday

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Amber Radatz, 608.317.0001

4 p.m. to close

Mandy Speerstra, 715.533.2360

Friday

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Kyle Nilsestuen, 608.799.1688

4 p.m. to close

Brian Maliszewski, 715.530.1107

Saturday

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Todd Quarne, 608.484.1105

4 p.m. to close

Derek Hosmoen, 608.863.0105

Sunday

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Bruce Prudlick, 715.695.3446

4 p.m. to close

Kendra Goplin, 715.533.9896



Volunteers helping to make and sell shakes during the 2018 Trempealeau County Fair.





County Farm Bureaus
PO Box 5550 Madison, WI 53705

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**This Issue Contains
Highlights for:**

Buffalo County

Eau Claire County

Jackson County

Monroe County

Trempealeau County



Growing Farm Safety Traditions in Wisconsin



Safety is important. Be smart, be safe, live another day.

Review farm safety tips and resources at
RuralMutual.com/farmsafety

