



# Grassroots

## District 8 News

### From The New Milk House



**Ryan Klussendorf**  
WFBF District 8 Director

The weather is warming up and the flowers are starting to peak from the ground.

In no time at we will be in the fields sowing our seeds, while working long hours with little rest.

This time of year is very stressful and time consuming for a farmer but also their family. My wife gets little sleep as well, she cannot sleep knowing I'm in the field working so she usually will bring me out a late-night snack or drink to give me a little 'pep in my step' as I continue through the midnight hours. Unfortunately, my kids suffer as well.

I rarely get to see my kids' track races or baseball home runs while I sit behind the wheel of my tractor or tend to the newborn calves that are filling the barn.

This year, Wisconsin Farm Bureau is trying to be mindful of our mental health and the mental health of our farmers. Last year was no picnic and the stress of this spring is going to add to the mental hardship of the farming community.

I'm so proud of the District 8 counties that have teamed up to roll out our second delivery of the Farm Neighbors Care program. What a great way to show our members that we think of them and their

families as they struggle to get seeds in the ground.

That package can make your neighbors day when things have been going awry. It shows that no matter what, we are in this together, and will make it through another long daunting planting season.

Farming is a job that goes on while no one is watching. Getting that care package proves to the recipient that people are watching and care about their lives.

Planting the seed of hope and encouragement with each package is something we can all be proud of.

If you have a neighbor or friend that could use a little pep in their step, sign them up for a Farm Neighbors Care package.

Each county will hand out 20 care packages to members, friends and farmers in your county the beginning of May. Knowing your thought of when no one is watching might put the spring in your step to keep your planting season moving forward.

Use the link or QR code below to sign up anyone you think could benefit from the invigorating package today.

*"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."*



<http://bit.ly/fnc2021>



# #FarmNeighborsCare

*Sign up!* **AG NEWSWIRE AND POLICY PULSE**



- ☒ Political updates
- ☒ Farm Bureau news
- ☒ Ag events
- ☒ Weekly updates

**Ag Newswire**  
Sign up to receive a weekly update with the latest Farm Bureau, political and agriculture news directly in your inbox every Friday.  
[wfbf.com/communication/ag-newswire](http://wfbf.com/communication/ag-newswire)

**Policy Pulse**  
Stay up to date on the latest legislative news affecting you.  
<http://bit.ly/PolicyPulseSignUp>

### District 8 Farmer to Farmer

This is a voluntary program for members to help area farmers in their time of need. For example, you have a tragedy on the farm, with one call to your county Farm Bureau president they can activate a team of people in your community who are ready and willing to help. This team would be willing to provide a temporary home for the animals, haul them to another location, provide feed, help with chores, etc.

Our hope is to create this online form to support our members across the district, no matter their need.

We hope that no one will ever need to use the information but, to have it ready if the need ever arises. Please use the QR Code below to access the form to add your name to list of people willing to help others in their time of need. Don't have a smart phone then go to <https://bit.ly/D8EmergencyPlan>





## 2020 DISTRICT 8 FARM BUREAU PROUD CLUB QUALIFIERS



Randy Wokatsch  
8 New Members



George and Hope Blomberg  
6 New Members



Ryan Klussendorf  
5 New Members



James Juedes  
5 New Members

## 2021 DISTRICT 8 FARM BUREAU PROUD CLUB QUALIFIER



Rob Klussendorf  
6 new members

**WILL YOU BE THE  
NEXT TO JOIN THE  
RANKS OF OUR TOP  
MEMBERSHIP  
WORKERS AND  
EARN YOUR PLACE  
IN WFBF HISTORY?**



Clark County  
Kim Bremmer



Lincoln County  
Geoff Depies & Jim Yates



Marathon County  
James Juedes & Kelly King



Portage County  
Lance Wolosek & Jeff Dombrowski



Price County  
Dave Kivela



Taylor County  
Gary Kohn & Jack Johnson



Wood County  
Ben Tilberg

**Meet Your District 8 Local Affairs Chairs**  
Don't hesitate to contact your county local affairs chair regarding  
issues impacting you. Scan the QR Code for his or her contact  
information or visit [wfbf.com/about/counties](http://wfbf.com/about/counties).

The Local Affairs Chair is an important role for county Farm Bureaus. These individuals will be a resource for members when local issues arise and to bring issues to the county leader's attention. They also will be the local point of contact for Wisconsin Farm Bureau to provide a weekly Local Affairs Report that will identify agricultural issues that are happening in their county and neighboring counties. The county Local Affairs Chair will play a pivotal in engaging Farm Bureau at the local level and creating a strong Farm Bureau presence with local units of government.



## What Does Federal Delisting Mean For The Wolf Depredation Program?

By Brad Koele, Wildlife Biologist

With the recent delisting of wolves from the federal endangered species list, some livestock producers and pet owners are wondering how this change affects Wisconsin's wolf conflict program.

While the delisting has prompted some changes, USDA-Wildlife Services continues to follow up on all reported wolf conflicts. Swift reporting of a wolf-involved conflict remains critical for the collection of evidence and the timely implementation of conflict resolution options.

Verification of any wolf-involved conflict is still required for reimbursement of damages or loss.

The federal delisting of wolves from the endangered species list has prompted the following changes to Wisconsin's wolf conflict program:

- It provides the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and USDA-Wildlife Services the ability to implement an integrated depredation program using both lethal and non-lethal conflict prevention options. Previously, conflict prevention options were limited to non-lethal approaches. Lethal options include the issuance of wolf removal permits to landowners and implementation of wolf removal efforts by federal trappers. Wisconsin's administrative code also allows the landowners and leases on private lands to shoot wolves in the act of killing, wounding or biting a domestic animal. Shootings must be reported to the DNR within 24 hours.
- As a requirement of receiving conflict prevention assistance and for compensation eligibility, public hunting access during the state wolf harvest is required on lands where wolf hunting and trapping is feasible.
- Funding for wolf depredation compensation payments will transfer from the DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation Program to revenue generated from the sale of wolf hunting license and application sales. If revenues are not sufficient to pay all claims, payments will be prorated based on the available funding. Because of the potential for prorating, all wolf damage claims will be held by the department until the end of each calendar year when total the amount of compensation and available revenues are known.
- Claims for missing calves are now limited to reimbursement of up to five missing calves for each verified depredation. Previously there was no limit in place.

The department will continue to make wolf conflict information available to the public in a timely manner through the DNR's website, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search 'wolf depredation.'

Notification also will be sent to those who subscribe to the department's wolf depredation update list. Information includes an interactive map with general locations of verified wolf conflicts, a annual table listing all reported conflicts and the establishment of wolf caution areas at pet and hunting dog depredations sites.

The department and our partner, USDA-Wildlife Services, remain committed to assisting individuals who experience conflicts with wolves. Wolf conflicts should be reported as soon as possible to USDA-Wildlife Services by calling 800.228.1368 (in state) or 715.369.5221 in northern Wisconsin and by calling 800.433.0663 (in state) or 920.324.4514 in southern Wisconsin.



## Spring: The Season of New Beginnings



Ashleigh Calaway

District 8 Coordinator

For those of you who follow me on Facebook, you know that I started an inspiration album.

I started this on a whim to spread positivity with my followers and has morphed into a daily posting of inspiration for many. I was surprised by how many have reached out saying, "Thank you for starting that board" or "I really needed that message today."

Some of them are lighthearted, others dig a little deeper – either way they are doing what I hoped. They are helping others, including myself, find something to be smile about that day.

One of the quotes I found that had the biggest impact on me was, "Your mind is a garden. Your thoughts are seeds. You can grow flowers, or you can grow weeds." I have gone back and read that countless times each time, thinking about my own self talk or the words I use with others and how those words can impact them.

2020 dealt so many of us a hand we never thought we would encounter followed by 2021 starting off just as rough.

Isn't it funny how we forget our own accomplishments or how we can forget the impact that we have?

That is the thing with anxiety or negativity, it likes to sneak up and whisper in our ears telling us all of our faults and nothing positive. The worst thing you can do, is let those whispers stay there, because if you do, the harder it will be to not believe them.

It's easy to forget who you are, to get wrapped up in the mundane things or the pressures of the outside world. When this happens, we tend to forget how incredibly amazing we are. When you feel lost, it is important to find your ground, maybe it's going for a walk, time with friends or listening to music, whatever it is, DO IT.

All of us have a magic inside, something that makes us unique and special to those that love us.

Sometimes though when you are really lost, you need a friend to help remind you. That is why it is always important to remember it's ok to not be ok.

As I have said before and will continue to shout from every mountain top. We are better together and when we lean on each other we can and will do amazing things. Remember when the whispers get too loud to hear your own voice that it's ok to reach out. That there are way more of us who care then there are whispers.

That is beautiful part of Farm Bureau it helps give us a unified voice against the whispers and helps us not only build but strengthen relationships.

This year marks seven years of serving as your District 8 Coordinator and I am so very grateful for each of you. You are some of the most amazing people I have encountered, and I look forward to seeing you soon. Until then, don't hesitate to contact me with any ideas or feedback you have.

To offer ideas on what you want to see in 2021, scan the QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/D8feedback20>.





## Have You Been Affected by Negative PPDs? It's Time For Change



By Kim Bremmer, Local Affairs Chair

Negative Producer Price Differentials (PPDs) on farm milk checks were seen before the pandemic, caused by the market spread between Class III and Class IV milk. But the ease of depooling milk out of FMMOs, with different pooling rules in different orders, exploited the current extreme situation at hand, allowing processors to increase profitability at the expense of farmers.

These harmful negative PPDs are expected to continue through the entirety of 2021.

Important points to consider:

- The ease of depooling of milk by processors puts dairy farmers at a significant disadvantage through milk price volatility.
- Dairy farmers need transparency from milk processors, as farmers should be able to read their milk checks and clearly see how the price they are paid for their milk reflects the value of the commodity dairy products that are made with that milk.
- A legislative approach to milk pricing formula changes (like what occurred in the 2018 Farm Bill) lacks transparency and leaves decision making in the hands of a small number of voices – a Federal Milk Marketing Order Hearing, without bloc voting, is the most appropriate and fair means for the farmer voice to be heard.
- There are long-term strategic milk pricing reform issues that need to be addressed when we have a current milk pricing system that relies so heavily on Class I fluid milk, a product whose demand drops every year.

Below is a letter signed by hundreds of dairy farmers and state organizations from across the country, including Clark County Farm Bureau.

*National Milk Producers Federation  
Jim Mulhern, President and CEO  
2107 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 600  
Arlington, Virginia 22201*

*International Dairy Foods Association  
Michael Dykes, President and CEO  
1250 H Street, NW, Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20005*

Dear President Mulhern & President Dykes,

On behalf of the American dairy farmers, we want to extend our thanks to the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) for their willingness to pursue changes to the Class I price mover. This effort is a commendable response to the disastrous effects of negative producer price differentials (PPDs) which based on data from USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service represented a \$2.7 billion shortfall in Federal Milk Marketing Order component pricing revenue sharing pools.

In 2019, the Federal Milk Marketing Order's Class I fluid milk pricing formula applied a \$0.74/cwt differential to the monthly average of the advanced Class III and IV skim prices. This replaced the previous Class I formula, which was calculated based on the higher-of the advanced Class III or IV skim price.

The closing of schools and restaurants early last year, and the subsequent

federal response coinciding with the reopening of restaurants across the country, inflated the Class III and cheese prices. While Class III rose significantly, we did not see the same impact on Class IV milk values. Processors with the ability to depool their milk opted out of the order, thus benefiting themselves. Meanwhile, dairy farmers shipping to regulated plants faced significant deductions on their milk checks via PPDs because of processors who opted out of the pool.

This massive volume of depooling decreased dairy processor costs and increased their bottom-lines at the expense of dairy farmers. Additionally, farmers who chose to purchase risk management tools were unexpectedly unable to utilize them and suffered significant losses. Making matters even worse, this pricing formula pitted farmers against one another due to the unfair inequalities between neighboring producers and across different regions of the U.S.

This is an unethical situation where processors got to choose what to pay dairy farmers. Farmers deserve full transparency from their processors and a seat at the table to negotiate pricing and federal orders going forward.

We respectfully ask NMPF and IDFA to allow us a seat at the table for a more balanced voice of dairy farmers. As we move together to find a solution and fix the current pricing formula, it is critical that outcomes are fair and equitable to farmers from all regions of the U.S.

Currently, we are working on solutions that will result in a more impartial and even-handed pricing strategy - one that will address the unfair advantage processors are given over dairy farmers through the depooling process. We are not opposed to processors making a profit and protecting their risks- except when there are loopholes that have such a devastating impact on farmers through massive milk check deductions, while simultaneously removing our risk management tools.

We believe a dangerous precedent has been set, and we have concerns with circumventing the Federal Milk Marketing Order hearing process by way of legislation. The current legislative approach lacks transparency for individual farmers and leaves this seemingly secretive milk pricing decision-making in the hands of legislators and a small number of representative voices. Furthermore, the decisions affecting milk pricing should be made by those most impacted by the outcome of the decision-making process, and not by those who stand to benefit from loopholes.

We believe an expedited FMMO hearing should be requested immediately, along with an immediate solution to address the negative PPDs that are being passed onto farmers. The FMMO hearing process allows inclusive participation where all farmers can bring their ideas forward and be heard on the record.

We look forward to working with NMPF and IDFA and other industry stakeholders to immediately address these inequalities that are simply unacceptable for dairy farmers across the U.S.

It is time for transparency, honesty and collaboration across our entire industry to fix this.

Sincerely,

### So What Can We Do?

We need to keep the conversation growing to make sure the voice of farmers is included in milk pricing discussions moving forward. All farmers, including those that don't belong to cooperatives, should be able to bring solutions forward and participate on the record.

Direct input from dairy farmers must be a priority, along with the ability of individual ballots, rather than only bloc voting by cooperatives, provided to all farmers during a Federal Milk Marketing Hearing process.

It is unacceptable to continue moving down a path where only a few determine milk pricing formula decisions for all.



## Member Celebrates 25 Years and Counting

**Name:** Mary Sosnovske

**Years as a Farm Bureau member?** 25 years

**Who are your family members?** I am married to a wonderful man named Marty and have two fun, action filled children, Ben and Alissa.

**What type of farm operation do you run?** We have a dairy farm.

**Do you have any other occupations off the farm?** I am a 4-H club leader for the Prairie River Eagles, although not a paid position it is a year-round position that keeps me busy. Marty and Ben spend quality time in the winter logging.

**Why did you become involved with Farm Bureau?** A friend asked us to become involved with the Young Farmers Program and we were hooked.

**What do you think are the greatest benefits of being a member?** The ability to network with other people, who have similar interest and challenges makes for good lifelong friends.

**Why do you think it is important to be a part of the Ag Industry?** I was lucky enough to be born and raised on a dairy farm, I want to be able to share my passion for cows in a positive way to the general public who are not as lucky to have such a rich ancestry in dairy farming.

**What events, programs and committees have you been involved with?** I have attended the WFBF Annual Meeting, WFBF Young Farmer



Fly-in (Washington, DC) through Farm Bureau. I also have served on County Dairy Promotion Committee and June Dairy Month Breakfast Committee.

**Are you involved in any other organizations?** We are active members of the Merrill FFA Alumni and Lincoln County 4-H.

## 2021 WISCONSIN LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD SEEKING NOMINEES



**DEADLINE: AUGUST 5, 2021**

[sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA](https://sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA)



## Tractors



One of the greatest threats to an operator is rollover. Although new tractors have rollover protective structures, please wear your seatbelt.

- Proper training for all operators.
- Lower hydraulic equipment before dismounting.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Conduct safety checks each time the equipment is used.

## Emergency Preparedness



## PTO Safety



While these tips sound obvious, they are good reminders.

- Never step over a PTO (Power Take Off) shaft.
- Always replace guards.
- Always disengage the PTO before leaving the seat.
- Never grip a PTO guard while the shaft is turning.
- Keep children away.

## Proper Clothing



Loose clothing is a common cause of injury.

- Wear tight-fitting clothes.
- Keep cuffs buttoned and shirts tucked in.
- Remove loose jewelry and keep long hair tied back.

# FARM S

## Always i

## Fire



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Every member of a farm family and hired workers should be trained in life-saving techniques including first aid and CPR. Make sure everyone knows where to make emergency calls.

Install an emergency information box with a detailed map of the farm, emergency contacts and MSDS (material Safety Data Sheets) of all chemicals stored on the farm. Keep a well-stocked first aid kit that includes a tourniquet.

## SAFETY Season

Prevention tips can reduce the risk of fire and the extent of damage.

Keep ignition sources away from combustible material. Test fire and smoke alarms. Make sure you have proper fire extinguishers in barn, shops and sheds.

Invite local fire department to your farm to inspect and find best access routes to buildings.

### Highway Transportation



Driving or carrying equipment on state and county roads is one of the most dangerous farming operations.

- Make sure traffic is clear before left hand turns.
- Adjust mirrors to have clear view of traffic.
- Check lights and turn signals.

### Field Operations



Injuries that occur when an operator is in a field, alone, can leave a worker stranded with no help for hours.

- Make regular calls to let someone know where you are, if you miss a regular call-in, someone should call to see if you are OK.
- Do not clear clogged equipment while it is running.
- Control vegetation that can hide hazards.

### Livestock Handling



General precautions when handling livestock:

- Be alert.
- Carefully approach animals.
- Leave yourself an exit path.
- Avoid quick movements.
- Be patient.
- Always consider mature males and nursing females dangerous.



## Hang On to Your Hats



By Bill Mueller, Marathon County Farm Bureau President

The thing my wife hates the most is the hats I have accumulated over the years. With the craziness of the last year I hate to say, my collection is getting a little weak.

We have missed out on the WPS Farm Show, World Dairy Expo and Farm Technology Days to name a few.

The loss of these great gatherings along with the Marathon County Fair, Little Britches and even our board meetings has weighed on everyone's mental health. Who would have ever thought we would be in such an eccentric time in the world? Well hang on to your hats because we are in for a whole new year and no one knows which way the wind will blow.

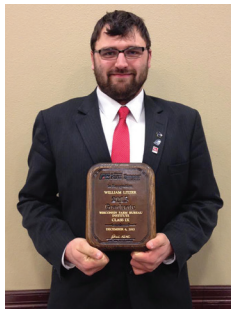
As the dawn of a new spring is here, I have been finding myself looking at the hay ground in the county as I drive, which fields will freeze out, which will make it another year.

Another big gust of wind will hit us all when we drive past any gas station. The cost of gas and diesel fuel keeps climbing on almost a daily basis. Where will this stop, most cooperatives are no longer willing to lock in prices due to the unpredictability. This will weigh on the mental health of a lot of farmers during this upcoming growing season.

A glimmer of hope and a light breeze we can look forward to is the futures on corn and beans, these crops must be better than last year as my other farmer friends are optimistic on the prices we can contract now.

As with most years, we can predict when the wind will blow, but be prepared and keep a hand free for the unexpected wind that might just blow your hat across the county.

## Farm Bureau Director Elected to Represent Section 7 of Wisconsin's FFA Alumni



Marathon County Farm Bureau Director William Litzer has been elected to a three-year term as Section 7 Representative to the Wisconsin FFA Alumni, serving Price, Taylor, Lincoln, Clark, Marathon, Wood and Portage counties. William is expected to promote agricultural education and support the 22 FFA Alumni and 26 FFA chapters in Section 7.

The past few years William has learned from the WFBF Leadership Institute and Alumni Chapters to help make a difference in his

community. We know how COVID has caused alumni organizations and Farm Bureau to take a hit not just membership-wise but also financially.

William has expressed his interest in using the 'ripple effect' to reach his goals. He will talk to members and businesses to see how they are holding up in today's world. Using this gate way to discuss agricultural education

and making sure it is not forgotten.

William has been an active member of Marathon FFA, FFA Alumni and Edgar FFA Alumni. These leadership roles along with his active membership and leadership in Marathon County Farm Bureau make William the perfect representative for the position.

When asking William what he thinks about agriculture education he said, "I believe that every student should have an opportunity for higher education when it comes to agriculture whether it is at a university or technical college. Agriculture will always be a major part of our community, not just in our county but our state as well."

As John Quincy Adams proclaimed, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

As Farm Bureau members inspire our youth to dream, learn, do and become more in the world of agriculture, we will make our community, state and nation better, too. If you see William around the district, please congratulate him on representing agriculture in a positive light.

## Portage County

[wfbf.com/about/counties/portage](http://wfbf.com/about/counties/portage)[PortageCountyFarmBureau](http://PortageCountyFarmBureau)

## Ag LEAD Summit, Setting The Stage For Local Success



By Lance Wolosek, County Farm Bureau Local Affairs Co-Chair and Director

The 2021 Ag LEAD Summit marks the second time I was able to attend this event and it came with a positive story for being an 'advocate' in my local community.

This year, the conference had a unique but all-to-common platform being done through Zoom

but allowed for viewing in the comfort of my home and done in one day.

The flexibility to pick topics that directly impact me personally and professionally was something I really enjoyed.

My top two favorite breakouts were, Beth Schaefer's 'Consumer Trends and Creative Ways to Meet Consumers Where They Are Today' and Ron Hanson covering 'Transferring the Farm For Future Generations.'

In Beth's presentation, she explained that the Millennial generation has the largest buying power in America and has surpassed Baby Boomers, which made me proud being of that era.

She also touched on the shift in expectations from today's consumers in a 'COVID World' and the importance of sanitation from the consumers eyes.

Ron Hanson had a powerful presentation on the transferring of farm operations to the later generations and exclaimed there are no shortcuts and easy solutions for contingency planning.

That stuck with me and made me realize how important it is to have

*One question/example he asked the group was, "If there are 10,000 family farms in Wisconsin today, how many of those farms would still exist in four generations?" The answer was 12. Only 12 out of the 10,000 farms would successfully pass the operation down to the subsequent four generations.*

a plan for the future, despite the challenges to communicate across generations and with family. Lastly, for those who have not attended this summit, I encourage you to get involved because it is a worthwhile and memorable experience.



## Meet: The Owners of Deer Creek Angus



Deer Creek Angus is as close as you can come to fulfilling the dreams of Karen Kerner and Greg Denzine.

From burgers for grilling to bacon-wrapped tenderloins, Deer Creek Angus has a large selection of Black Angus beef sold in individual packages and quarters, halves and whole animals. This local farm

can supply all of your beef needs.

Coming from two farm families, Greg and Karen established Deer Creek Angus Farm in 1994, after they married.

This small livestock operation near Phillips in northern Wisconsin is surrounded by beautiful woods and rolling pastures. All of their animals are raised on the farm in a stress-free environment. The quality feed (grass, hay and grain) given to cattle is grown on the farm and harvested by the family. All the calves are pasture-raised by 'Mother Cow.'

Management traits of calving ease, low birth weights, help to promote fast growth, marbling qualities and high survivability, all of which mean a greater product for their customers.

The farm features Angus cattle that are docile, easy to handle and have great longevity, providing a great asset in continuing the farm for the next generations.

Farm Bureau has been a major part of Karen's life since 1990s, she has worked actively on the Price County Dairy Committee up to 2014 with the birth of Alexis.

The family has since worked at beef meals and horse pulls with Alexis and Wyatt, helping volunteer at these local educational events is a priority. When asked why she felt it was important to be a part of the ag industry she said, "We are the next generation and it's important to teach and educate our children and community about ag industry."

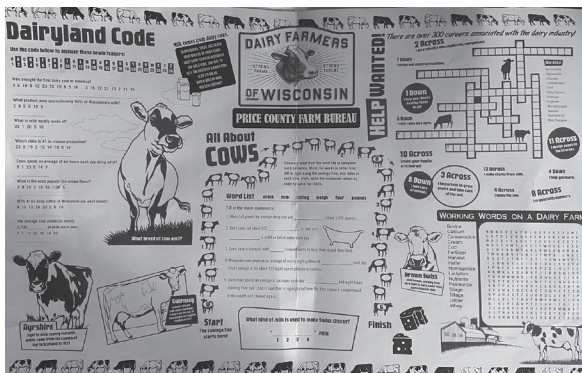
Greg works full-time off the farm at Xcel Energy, leaving Karen holding the gate alone during the day.

Karen and Greg are members of other community organizations like North Central Cattlemen's Association and their local church, giving their spare moments in time to help make these organizations just as successful as Price County Farm Bureau.

For more information, visit [www.deercreekangusfarm.com](http://www.deercreekangusfarm.com).



In June and December, Price County Farm Bureau partnered with Ogema Rail Trail, High Point Village and Prentice Market and Deli to promote Wisconsin Dairy. If you are interested in serving on our Dairy Committee, please reach out. We would love to have you.



Price County Farm Bureau is a proud supporter of local businesses and farmers. Be on the lookout for our latest way to promote the dairy industry. Remember whether you are dinning in or dinning out make sure you choose real Wisconsin dairy.





## Don't Be Afraid to Start Over Again: This Time, You're Not Starting From Scratch, You're Starting From Experience



By Rob Klussendorf, Taylor County Farm Bureau President

40 years ago, I began my involvement with Farm Bureau and decided it was the right organization for me personally along with my family.

Growing up on a dairy farm in Waukesha County, I was fortunate enough to grow up with two great role models.

My grandfather was very active in a variety of agricultural organizations and was the first signer of the Waukesha County Farm Bureau Charter, officially making it the first County Farm Bureau in Wisconsin.

My father also was very active in agricultural groups and served for a time as the Waukesha County Farm Bureau President. He, like many parents, provided me with my first opportunity.

He 'voluntold' me that a friend was picking me up for a Young Farmer and Rancher meeting one morning and that I best get ready.

It was at that first meeting that I truly learned what Farm Bureau was about. The presenter that day, not only changed my life, but changed how I viewed every obstacle. He stated, "If you don't like what is going on and do nothing, then you have no right to complain about it."

This has been the driving force behind my 40 years of volunteering in Farm Bureau and throughout my life.

Shortly after that meeting, I became the county Young Farmer and

Rancher Chair, now called Young Farmer and Agriculturist, then went on to serve as the district Young Farmer and Rancher chair.

Farm Bureau has provided me with so many opportunities as a young farmer one of them being attending a leadership conference. I can still here the presenter talking about the importance of goal setting and having a mission statement.

They asked each of us to write our own. Mine was, "To leave the community that we live in a better place to live."

As a young pup, you can imagine, I was ready to set the world on fire. I cranked through my goals, well all of them except one until this last year.

That goal was to serve as a county Farm Bureau President. Until this time, I stayed actively involved on various levels, typically serving as a committee chair of one thing or another. I stayed focused on my mission and raising my family.

When my wife and I moved to Taylor County, I joined the Taylor County Farm Bureau Board shortly after. My philosophy at the time was to provide mentorship to the young farmers still out there trying to navigate it all.

The funny part is I thought the same about the WFBF Leadership Institute. That was until I learned that I have just as much to learn from the younger generation. I might be able to help them learn about advocacy, running a meeting and juggling it all but in return they can teach me about technology, leadership and the modern consumers.

It just goes to show, sometimes you can teach an old dog new tricks, and sometimes that old dog can pave the way for the new pups.

## Watch Out Stage Crew at Work

In the past year, many organizations have become less active in our county; not because they don't want to continue to their yearly projects, but due to the restrictions that were put on all community members in 2020.

No need to worry, as Taylor County Farm Bureau has been working behind the scenes to support our farmers and continue our educational outreach to the county.

The promotion and education committee has been working with the county school districts to complete the annual essay contest and each school has received the Farm Bureau Book of the Year, "Full of Beans: Henry Ford Grows a Car" by Peggy Thomas and illustrated by Edwin Fotheringham.

What a great story about how Henry Ford and his team of scientists discovered that soybeans could be used to make different products like paint, plastic, fabric and food.

All fourth-grade classrooms received the activity book called, "This Business Called Agriculture," which is a activity book featuring assets of agriculture in Wisconsin.

Each year we offer to go into the schools and give students a firsthand look at what we do on our farms each day. Let's hope we can continue that tradition this fall.

On a district level, we have collaborated with all counties to create and publish on social media a 'Local Farmer Shopping Guide.' It is a great way to find localized members across the district who produces products for purchase.

Do you know someone who produces meat, vegetables, starter plants, wine, cheese or other products who want to be added to the guide? Please contact District 8 Coordinator Ashleigh Calaway to add valuable names and locations to the guide.

Looking toward the summer our board is looking forward to stepping into the spotlight again. We are right now planning and hoping to have our Steak and Egg Breakfast.

Activities like this and others we are planning this year take volunteers to help. Let a board member know if you are willing to help out or have a great idea that you need an organization to help execute let us know we are looking forward to being front and center stage this year in the spotlight our days behind the curtain are numbered.

**DON'T FORGET YOUR  
BIG APPETITE!**

Save the date for the:  
**Taylor County Farm Bureau  
Steak and Egg Breakfast**

**7:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 15**

**Taylor County Fair Grounds, Medford**

**\$9, Steak and Egg Plate  
\$5, Egg and Toast Plate**



## From The President's Cab



By Josh Calaway, Wood County Farm Bureau President

A year ago this spring, we decided to finally pull the trigger on a project/goal we had for several years.

We built a new shed, tinned the barn and tore down some old buildings that were past repair.

Doing this during a global pandemic was not my first choice but it was past time to pull the

trigger on the projects.

As you can imagine the projects took longer than anticipated, not by any fault of our contractors but due to their inability to get hands on material.

As my daughter likes to remind me, "Patience Dad, patience."

In January of this year, the project was finally completed. I have to say even on the coldest of days I have found myself outside reflecting on the changes we have made over the years.

I often think back to when I was a young farmer, just starting out,

looking to the older generation for guidance and inspiration. Sometimes though it is hard to remember that they too once walked in your shoes and what you see now is not where they started.

Just like Farm Bureau, we have covered a lot of ground in 100 years, have a made a lot of progress in the last few and I am confident we will make even more.

I do not tell you this to say look at me and what I've done, I share this with you to give you hope, to remind you that change does not happen overnight and that life is not a destination but instead a journey.

That, just like our organization, we are only as strong as the goals and vision we set. As a member you are part of that goal setting and vision, you are the backbone of this organization and the essence of what it stands for.

I want to thank you for your trust in me, our board of directors and organization.

I hope that you continue to reach out, to provide feedback and to help us move forward together because together we can ensure that Wisconsin Farm Bureau and Wood County Farm Bureau are here for the next generation of farmers and agriculturists.

## Local Affairs, Grassroots, Clean Water



By Ben Tilberg, Local Affairs Chair

Farmers care about land stewardship because they drink the same water, grow crops and raise their families on the land.

Land stewardship is directly connected to the bottom line and management of the land for long-term viability. Many local farmer initiatives

have been successful in working towards a common goal.

Wood County and Portage County farmers have been proactive in sustainable farm practices that improve water quality.

In 2016, Farmers of Mill Creek Watershed Council came together because they care about the soil, water and farmers. Their goal is to be stewards of environmental sustainability and to demonstrate that farmers are conservation leaders who care about land and water and are doing everything they can to take care of it. Fishers and Farmers Partnership, started with \$20,000 from Wisconsin's new Producer- Led Watershed Protection Grants and has grown every year. In 2021, DATCP awarded Farmers of Mill Creek \$31,749 from the \$750,000 in Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants to 30 farmer-led groups.

As stated in the Wisconsin State Farmer, "Grants support producer-led conservation solutions by encouraging innovation and farmer participation in on-the-ground efforts to improve Wisconsin's soil health and water quality."

These groups have focused on using cover crops and reduced tillage practices within the Mill Creek Watershed. Planting cover crops keeps the soil from eroding, adds nutrients to the soil and reduces weed growth, which then reduces the number of herbicides that are needed to eliminate the weeds.

Farmers also have switched from plowing to chisel plowing, to vertical tillage, to no-till. No-till has increased the amount of residue on the surface, which reduces soil erosion. Each farmer has a toolbox of tools to use that works the best for his or her farm and so he or she can be good stewards of the land.

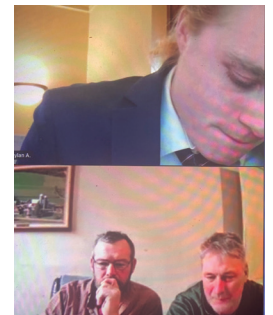
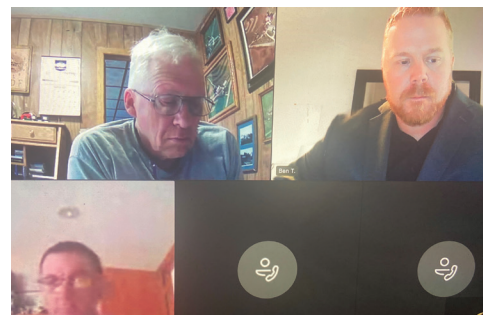
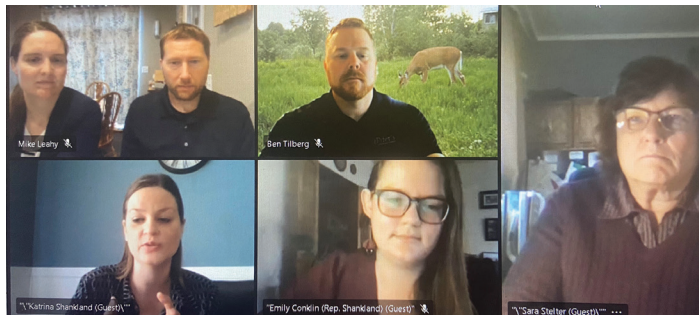
Lastly, many farmers do soil tests on their land so that they are only applying the amount of nutrients needed for what they are planning to grow.

Agronomists analyze soil samples and make recommendations based on the crop. Improvements in technology for soil sampling have included grid sampling with Global Positioning System, which marks the location where the sample had been taken.

Variable Rate Technology can then use the location to apply the exact amount of nutrients to parts of the field.

The farmer's story in implementing sustainable practices has evolved quickly and the continued supportive funding from the legislature is essential to make this transition.

Technology is expensive and not all farmers have the capital to make this investment on their own.



Local Affairs Chair Ben Tilberg represented Wood County Farm Bureau during Ag Day at the Capital. "The event was held virtually but still allowed for great conversations and ability to advocate for local farmers," noted Ben.





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