



# Grassroots

## District 8 News

### We Are Farm Bureau



**Ryan Klussendorf**

WFBF District 8 Director

There is no way to sugar coat it, Wisconsin Farm Bureau lost voting members this year. Instead of focusing on the state membership loss, let's celebrate our district voting membership gain.

I'm proud to share District 8 members signed 67 more voting members this year over last year. I look forward to continuing our path as the leading district in the state of Wisconsin.

In the last year when the world was hunkered down waiting for COVID-19 to be over, District 8 continued to have members step up and think outside of the box to come up with ways to engage members across the district.

Kudos to those who came up with the ideas, planned the events and put yourself out there when there were no guarantees anyone would come.

This year we can celebrate that we didn't wait for someone else to plan it, we dug in deep and changed direction from the past.

Farm Bureau isn't the office in Madison, it's the MEMBERS across the state in each county making things happen. It's you and me, our parents and kids, our friends and neighbors who get together and make a difference. The power in Farm Bureau is the grassroots members, we saw that in action at the WFBF Annual Meeting in December. We see that at every event the counties organize.

We are Farm Bureau; we are the leading District in the state, and we are just getting started. I am proud of you for not looking for an excuse to not have events, but instead saying WE CAN do this. District 8 is filled with members who when told they can't do something, we simply say, "Oh yeah, here hold my beer," as we plan, execute and celebrate our accomplishments.

Well strap in District 8 members, we have a whole year ahead of us that will be better than the last.

### Build Back Better Act, AFBF Takes A Stand

Content origin [www.FB.org/Newsroom](http://www.FB.org/Newsroom)

The American Farm Bureau Federation sent a letter to the U.S. House of Representatives stating its opposition to the Build Back Better Act, also known as the reconciliation package.

AFBF President Zippy Duvall commented, "After watching months of contentious, partisan debate surrounding the Build Back Better Act, AFBF stands in opposition to the legislation. While some elements of the reconciliation package would benefit agriculture, the massive amount of spending and tax increases required to pay for the plan outweigh the gains we would see in rural America."

We appreciate House efforts to protect farmers and ranchers by leaving key tax provisions untouched. Thousands of small businesses, however, would still be affected by tax increases forcing them to pass increased costs to families across the nation."

He noted that, "The economy is still recovering from the pandemic, supply chains are stressed and inflation is putting pressure on America's pocketbooks. Now is not the time to put an additional burden on families struggling to make ends meet. We urge lawmakers to find common ground and work in bipartisan manner to address the challenges facing our nation."

To read the full letter submitted by AFBF, visit [bit.ly/AFBFBBLetter](https://bit.ly/AFBFBBLetter).

### Get to Know Your WFBF Staff: Steve Mason, Executive Director of Operations and Treasurer



Steve Mason is the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Executive Director of Operations and Treasurer.

In November, he celebrated his 10-year anniversary with Farm Bureau.

Steve's primary duties include all financial aspects of Wisconsin Farm Bureau and oversight of the County Farm Bureau Services Program.

During the WFBF Annual Meeting, he can be found setting up technology for the breakout sessions and the scanners for each of

the banquets as well as helping out at registration.

Steve loves working for WFBF because it gives him the chance to work

directly with Wisconsin's farmers who help to feed the world.

Steve has a four-year degree in accounting from Lakeland University.

He and his wife, Marie, have lived in Verona 20 years and have been married for 16. They have two teenagers who keep them tremendously busy.

His oldest is about to get her driver's license. Whereas his youngest is looking forward to having an additional Uber in the house.

When he isn't at work he can usually be found at the rink watching his son play hockey or listening to his daughter play the piano or her violin.

When he can take a moment to himself, he enjoys lacing up the skates and playing a bit of hockey or going for walks with his wife and two dogs.

He also enjoys working on projects around the house and is constantly looking to learn a new trade.

## 2021: The Year of Joy

Ashleigh Calaway

District 8 Coordinator

Beginning in 2019, I started to give each year a theme word. At first, I didn't even realize I was doing it. It wasn't until 2020 that I noticed that I kept saying, "I'm not going to let anything steal my hope!"

Our family was hit hard in 2019 when we lost all but one ewe to wolves. Imagine waking up to 30 years of your family's breeding legacy completely gone. That's what happened to our family that fateful summer day. Followed by a storm that destroyed my in-laws vehicle, their roof, sections of our woods, and left us without power for days. That year we discovered our family word was 'faith.' We lived each day having faith that when the sun rose each morning that it was going to be a great day.

When the world shut down in 2020, the word of the year became 'hope.' I fought to keep my hope alive that each day things would get better; hope that I would be able to see my family, that the world would reopen and that we would come together and be one again. I also held on to hope when our family got COVID that we would be ok. I held on to hope that wolves would be delisted and that our family could find peace in being able to protect our livestock if needed.

2021 started out much like 2020 ended but with a variety of twists and turns. My word of the year choice was 'joy.' Every decision that I would make would be based on if it brought me joy or not. I started the year by giving back. Donating blood, stepping up to help our church's Sunday School program and finding ways to give back to my community. I found joy by continuing to be the cheerleader I love to be for you, our Farm Bureau members.

As 2021 ends, I can't help but find the joy in that our district had a 67 voting-member gain, counties hit most of the goals for the year and that so many of you came back and renewed your membership to this organization.

Granted, 2021 didn't totally end the way I anticipated. Recently, I took out a 586-pound black bear on my way home from a county board meeting.

Despite being obviously shaken up, there is still so much joy to be found following the accident including: Joy that I only had minor injuries, that we were able to save the bear fat to give back to the Pine River Tribe, that our Chief Administrator Officer Kim Pokorny does mission work with, that our freezers are full and that, in roughly 10 months, I will have a bear skin rug of my own.

There also is so much joy to be found in the family and friends that stepped in and took care of things for me. That reminded me it is ok to ask for help, that it is ok to listen to the advice you give everyone and pause/slow down and to enjoy every minute of this life you have been blessed with.

As 2021 comes to a close and we welcome in another year, I look forward to determining what word will define the year to come. I challenge you to look back at the joy you found in the last year and to look ahead with newfound appreciation for what is to come.



## Rural Agent Charitable Fund

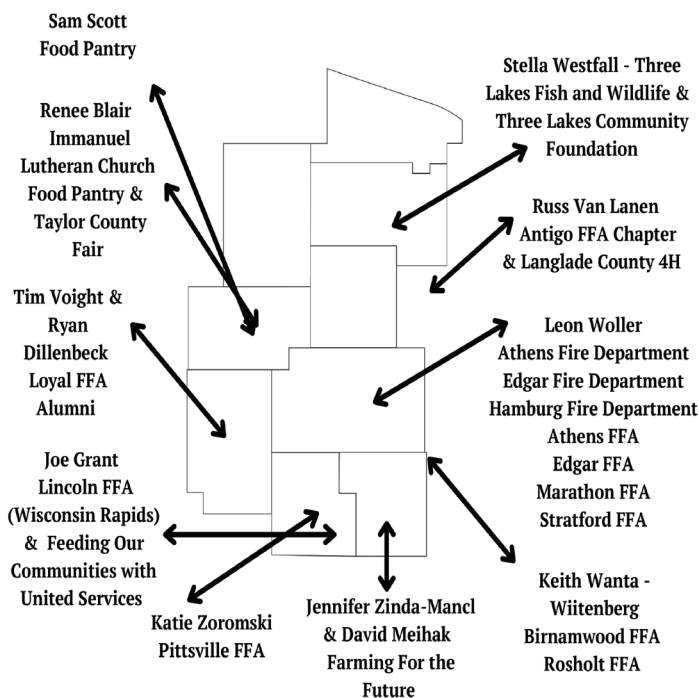
AGENTS GIVE BACK TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES,  
To help keep Wisconsin strong

Rural Mutual Insurance continues to ask, "What more can we do to support our customers and communities to help keep Wisconsin strong through the pandemic challenges?"



From the home office in Madison and locations throughout Wisconsin, corporately and individually staff and agents are involved with organizations to give back to communities. With agents throughout the state of Wisconsin, there is a generous outpouring of donations from Rural Mutual agents in local communities. Your community is their community.

As a Wisconsin only company, Rural Mutual Insurance strives to make Wisconsin a better place to live.



## QUEST FOR MEMBERSHIP

**The first three counties in the state to reach their early bird bonus will get 2 extra shipmates at an event of their choice.**

\*\*WFBF home office staff will volunteer at a Farm Bureau event of the counties choice. Each staff person will give 4 hours of time\*\*

**The first county in each district to reach their early bird bonus will receive pizza or ice cream sundaes at a county meeting.**



**We treasure our members. Thank you for your membership!**





## Opportunity Is Knocking ... Will You Hear It?

### Agriculture at Mid-State Technical College

Mid-State Technical College offers a variety of programs and pathways to help students prepare for careers across the agriculture industry. The agriculture programs are in very high demand and benefit from strong partnerships with area businesses to inform program design and give students opportunities to meet and work with industry experts.

### Agribusiness and Science Technology Associate Degree

The two-year associate degree program is agribusiness and science technology. This program prepares students to be owners or employees of a farm business in all sectors of the agriculture industry or work in businesses that support the agriculture industry. The program includes dairy and livestock management and traditional crop production.

Mid-State also has agriculture articulations, known as transfer agreements, with UW-River Falls and UW-Platteville. These allow students to complete an associate's degree in agribusiness and science technology at Mid-State and transfer directly to a bachelor's program with 60 of the 128 credits completed.

### Two Technical Diploma Options

Two embedded technical diplomas are offered under the associate's degree: Farm operation and agribusiness agronomy technician. These programs may be completed or may be a first step on the way to the full associate's degree.

Farm operation prepares graduates to confidently run the day-to-day operations on a farm. Students in this program learn about livestock and livestock products, livestock diseases and prevention, quality milk and meat production, soils, crop production and so much more.

The agribusiness agronomy technician technical diploma is Mid-State's newest agriculture program. It prepares students to use the latest technology to help farmers yield maximum production from the land. Students get hands-on experience producing a crop, keeping pests away, making soil more fertile, marketing commodities and managing a farm.



A few years ago, all seven counties in District 8 adopted the district initiative of 'Supporting Our Agriculture Community.'

When Farm Bureau made that decision, members talked about opportunities to help farmers looking to retire, farmers looking for a career change or members wanting to change their focus.

Members talked about the youth and how to help those children who want to further their education, stay close to home, etc.

There was a lot of discussion about the technical school system and how lucky members are to live in an area that is abundant in amazing technical schools, trade schools and apprentice programs.

This quarter, as technical schools are highlighted, it comes with a reminder that Clark County, Lincoln County, Marathon County, Price County and Wood County Farm Bureaus offer yearly scholarships.

If you know someone who should apply, visit [wbf.com/about/counties](http://wbf.com/about/counties) and then click on your county's website.

### Other Benefits of Agriculture at Mid-State

Mid-State's agriculture programs are known for flexibility, such as options for day or evening classes, taking classes full- or part-time and having the ability to start in fall, spring or mid-term.

Mid-State also offers some continuing education courses, such as artificial insemination of cattle workshop, healthy calving workshop, agribusiness farm tour and emerging trends in agriculture production management.

Within these programs, as well as some of the continuing education courses, students also have the opportunity to learn with our cow birthing simulator, Millie, letting students gain hands-on experience and confidence in a wide range of scenarios such as healthy calving and artificial insemination.

Students also have the opportunity to go to and learn at multiple farms in central Wisconsin for programs and courses.

To start classes or get more information, please contact Allyse Sullivan at 715.422.5453 or [allyse.sullivan@mstc.edu](mailto:allyse.sullivan@mstc.edu).





# District 8 News

## District 8 Hosts Soap Making Class

Natural soap making encompasses a wide variety of processes and methods.

Rather than employing harsh chemicals and removing those nourishing elements your skin needs, natural soap making seeks to create the healthiest bathing experience possible.

The internet is full of sites with this information, where it is easy to become overloaded by the sheer volume of it all.

Luckily for District 8, organizers partnered with UW Marathon Extension to have an in-person soap making class.

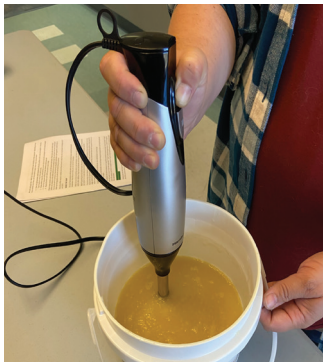
On Oct. 16, members gathered at the UW Extension building in Marathon County. The class went through the techniques of soap making with District 9 District Coordinator Katie Mattison as a teacher.

As the class proceeded, participants paired up and created soap masterpieces. Melting and mixing the precise ingredients to an emulsified blob of sweet smelling goodness.

As the class winded down for the day, each participant took home the soap they made to share with family and friends.

As any soap maker can attest, soap making is an incredibly fun and addictive hobby.

It doesn't matter if you are brand new or an experienced soap maker, it's an experience everyone will enjoy.



Brittany Zenner and Cheri Klussendorf

## Farm Dog of the Year

Do you have an amazing farm dog?  
Does that farm dog deserve recognition?

Nominate  
your farm  
dog to be  
recognized as  
the District  
8 Farm Dog  
of the Year.

Nominations  
can be made  
until **Jan. 31, 2022**, at  
[bit.ly/FarmDogNomination](https://bit.ly/FarmDogNomination).



## Top Membership Workers Recognized at WFBF Annual Meeting

Congratulations to Rural Mutual Insurance Agents Jenni Zinda-Mancl for signing up 88 new members and Stella Westfall for signing up 59 new members and to Price County Farm Bureau member George Blomberg for signing up 11 new members.



The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation invites you to attend

## AG DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

Monona Terrace Convention Center • Madison

**Early Registration Deadline: January 19**

**Cost: \$30** per person by registration deadline.  
**\$60** after deadline and at the door.

### Tentative Schedule of Events:

11:00 a.m. Registration  
11:30 a.m. Opening Program  
12:15 a.m. Lunch  
1:00 p.m. Legislative Briefing  
3:00 p.m. Leave for Capitol Visits

If you want more information  
or to attend Ag Day at the  
Capitol, please contact District  
8 Coordinator Ashleigh  
Calaway at 715.781.2306 (call  
or text) or [acalaway@wfbf.com](mailto:acalaway@wfbf.com).

Presented by:  **Farm Bureau**  
FEDERATION

Thank You to Our Sponsors:

 **Rural Mutual**  
Insurance Company

 **GROWMARK**

Due to Dane County ordinances for COVID-19 mitigation, masks and other provisions may be required for this event and details are subject to change.



## Wisconsin Farm Bureau Launched a Statewide Sustainability Series Leaders of the Land

**Rachel Gerbitz**

Director of Sustainability Communications and Partnerships

In August, WFBF launched a statewide sustainability series titled 'Leaders of the Land: A State Sustainability Series.'

This series of nine tours took place across the state in each of the Farm Bureau districts, highlighting diverse commodities and sustainability practices. The host of the District 8 tour was Gaynor Cranberry Company proudly owned by the Dempze family, who have been growing cranberries in Wood County for more than 140 years.

Heidi Slinkman and her sister Jennifer Dempze are the fourth generation on the marsh in the Cranmoor Township. Heidi affectionately refers to the pair of sisters as the 'Gaynor Girls.'

"We are one of the greatest American stories you have ever heard of," shared Heidi.

Gaynor Cranberry Company was established in 1876 by a pair of Irish brothers. Heidi's great-grandfather became the successor of the Gaynor brothers. Cranberries are native to North America.

The 'Gaynor Girls' are proud to carry on the generational legacy of Gaynor Cranberry Company while contributing to Wisconsin's ranking as the top cranberry producing state in the nation.

Gaynor Cranberry Company supplies cranberries for Ocean Spray. 100 percent of the 200-acre crop is verified sustainable.

"We absolutely value sustainability in all facets of farming and agriculture," noted Heidi. "When I think of sustainability, I think of economics, the environment, the next generation, the people, the community, the resources, the wildlife. All of those components are absolutely valuable and necessary for us."

For every one acre in cranberry production, Gaynor Cranberry Company owns another six acres of support land. This land serves as a wildlife habitat and supports essential pollinators. Cranberries do not self-pollinate. Bees are brought to the marsh to support pollination. The health of pollinators is essential to the success of the cranberry crop.

Responsible water use is a priority at Gaynor. The team uses water-efficient technologies to ensure vines receive nutrients at the right time, in the right amount for berry growth and protection of water resources. Cranberries are a perennial plant, and irrigation is utilized to protect the plant from frost. By protecting this year's berries, growers also are protecting next year's crop.

Water is used to harvest the state fruit. Cranberries float to the water's surface due to four hollow air pockets inside the berry.

"We work smarter, not harder," remarked Heidi. "When we float the berries, they are easier to collect."

Water is a tool in the cranberry grower's toolbox.

The team at Gaynor Cranberry Company responsibly uses water by only using as much water as they need. Water is a resource that is

borrowed and shared with neighbors.

Clean water is valued on the marsh because their families drink, play and swim in the water. To be economically sustainable, Gaynor Cranberry Company balances labor and machinery. The marsh's employees are treated like family.

"Our people and our community are our greatest assets, and so is the land we are preserving and continuing to farm on," said Heidi.

Cranberry growers are precision farmers. At Gaynor Cranberry Company, they are always trying to use the best management practices to be efficient with the berries. Equipment must be gentle with the fruit and be able to harvest quickly.

Cranberry harvest equipment is very specialized. Cranberry growers are self-made engineers, designing and investing for themselves.

Food safety is a top priority at Gaynor Cranberry Company. Heidi holds her team to high standards and has strict guidelines and expectations to maintain a clean, healthy product. They work hard to keep the marsh clean.

The fruit from the Dempze's family farm travels a short distance to the Ocean Spray plant in Wisconsin Rapids to be used for Craisins®, juices or concentrate.

When the berries arrive at the facility, Ocean Spray can determine the best use for each berry. Berries that are not used for human food can be recycled as feed for pets and cattle.

The cranberry industry is a strong part of Wisconsin's heritage and economy. The Dempze family realizes that in order to preserve that legacy for years to come, they must foster sustainable farming.

Heidi believes a cranberry bed is one of the most beautiful places in the world. The marsh supports an incredible amount of bird life, from bald and golden eagles, to whooping and sandhill cranes, owls, loons and songbirds. They take pride in keeping their farms healthy because they are directly tied to the environment.

"We work and live on the land," shared Heidi. "The relationship with the land is highly valued. It's easy to talk about because it's something we have always done."

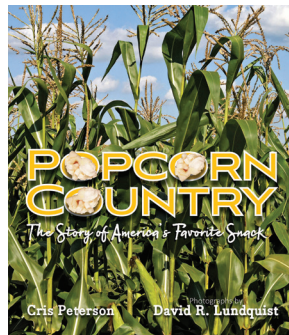




## Ag in the Classroom Book of the Year and Essay Contest

Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom is kicking off the 2021-2022 school year by announcing the book of the year, "Popcorn Country: The Story of America's Favorite Snack" written by Cris Peterson.

Author Cris Peterson offers a step-by-step examination of the history and science behind America's favorite snack. With photographs by David R. Lundquist, readers get a view of how popcorn is planted, grown, harvested, processed, tested and finally shipped all around the world.



Each year, the Ag in the Classroom program holds an essay contest in conjunction with the book of the year for fourth- and fifth-grade students throughout the state.

This year's essay contest topic is, 'What's Popping in Wisconsin? The value of corn to our economy!'

Accompanying lessons from the National Ag in the Classroom and the Popcorn Board are aligned to educational standards and are available online for teachers, students and volunteers to use in promoting and preparing essays.

Essay submissions must be 100- to 300-words in length and will be judged on content, grammar, spelling and neatness.

This year, students must make three references to Wisconsin agriculture. For essay contest rules, lesson plans and sample classroom activities, visit [wisagclassroom.org/events-activities/essay-contest](http://wisagclassroom.org/events-activities/essay-contest).

Essays are due **April 1, 2022**.

The contest is sponsored by We Energies, Wisconsin Soybean Marketing Board, Wisconsin Corn and the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation.

Nine district winners will be selected with one being chosen as the state winner in May. Each district winner will receive a classroom presentation for his or her class. Last year, more than 1,400 students participated in the contest.

Questions about the book or essay contest can be directed to Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom Coordinator Darlene Arneson at [darneson@wfbf.com](mailto:darneson@wfbf.com).

## Dairy Revitalization Plan

In February 2020, several Farm Bureau members were appointed to serve on UW's Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems as it undertook a project to research and evaluate supply management policies that would stabilize and improve dairy price.

Dairy economists Chuck Nicholson and Mark Stephenson spearheaded the research. The results of this work are now available, and Farm Bureau members are encouraged to become familiar with the results.

Visit [www.dairymarkets.org/GMP](http://www.dairymarkets.org/GMP). There you can watch a video with the economists who will explain their research, read their summaries and even try the concept out with an online tool in which you can insert futuristic scenarios for your operation.

Whether you have been a proponent or opponent of dairy growth management in the past, you need to become familiar so you can be part of this discussion in the future.

## 2022 Energy Summit

At the last district Policy Development meeting, members from across the district discussed alternative energy.

Since then, county Farm Bureau presidents have been in discussion about hosting a 2022 Energy Summit in the district to invite members and local town boards to attend.

We are looking to host this event in February. Here is your chance to provide us feedback on what topics you want to focus on.

Please complete the survey by using the QR code or by going to [bit.ly/2022ES](https://bit.ly/2022ES).



## 2022 Virtual Nutrient Management Training for Farmers

The Nutrient and Pest Management Program (University of Wisconsin-Madison) is offering a virtual training for farmers interested in writing their own nutrient management plans. This training will provide both the basics of nutrient management and an introduction to SnapPlus.

The same training will be offered on 4 different dates:

☐ January 4 (Tue) ☐ February 7 (Mon) ☐ March 1 (Tue) ☐ March 15 (Tue)

Please register online at least three days in advance of the training date you plan to attend:

<https://go.wisc.edu/2024y1>



Questions?  
Dan Smith [dhsmith@wisc.edu](mailto:dhsmith@wisc.edu) 608-219-5170





## Call to Action: We Need More and Better Leaders, We Need YOU



By Kim Bremmer, Clark County Farm Bureau Board Member

I have been all over the state witnessing local units of government attack farmers over road use, land use, water use and farm size, among other issues.

I've seen unlawful extensions of moratoriums continue to pass, even after elected officials are asked to follow the law.

I've seen time and time again the passage of local ordinances that would never hold up in court, but have heard board members respond, "I don't care."

I've watched the majority of meetings being run loosely by a version of parliamentary procedure that would make 4-H leaders cringe ... it's embarrassing, to say the least.

But frankly, there's no one to blame but us.

For decades, while most of us were too busy and paid no attention,

activists who seek to destroy our way of life have focused on getting elected to town and county boards to carry out their agenda. With activist threats to our farming operations, looming statewide, we face crises on multiple fronts.

We can no longer sit idly by while they continue to do this, the only way forward is for more leaders to step up, organize and run for local office.

You or someone from your farming operation is uniquely qualified to stand up for this cause. By running for office, you can help protect your farm and Wisconsin agriculture in a critically important way.

Where do you start?

Nomination papers can be circulated as of Dec. 1. If you are interested in a quick guide, or if you want help completing the forms needed for your candidacy, please let me know ([kim@aginspirations.com](mailto:kim@aginspirations.com) or 715.797.7796).

Be part of the solution in bringing common sense back to local units of government across Wisconsin. Our future depends on it.

## Owners of Boon Farms Are Stewards of the Land

By Ashleigh Calaway, District 8 Coordinator

Boon Farms is a family-owned dairy in central Wisconsin that was established in 1975 by Duane Boon.

Before he even graduated from school, Duane started his farm with the purchase of 14 heifer calves. In the 1980s, the Boon farm became Boon Farms with the purchase of two small farmsteads.

Today, Boon Farms has grown to 1,400 acres, more than 400 milking cows and 10 employees.

Together, they carry out the various daily tasks of the dairy, whether milking, feeding, breeding, building, fixing or hauling. Their top priorities are ensuring excellent animal health and comfort, as well as being great stewards of the land.

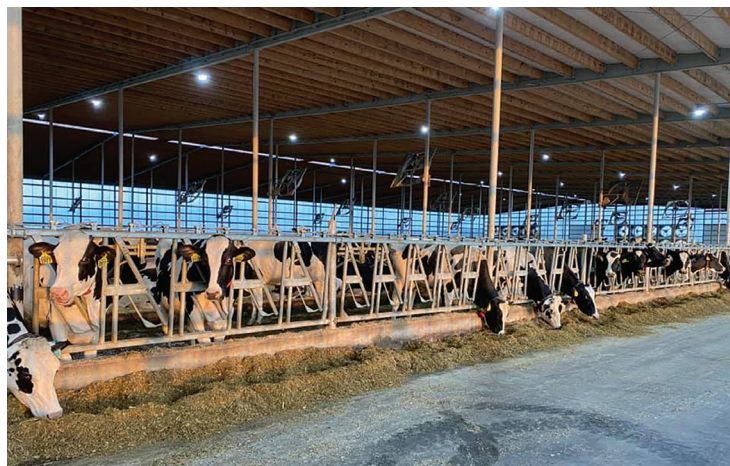
In 2020, Boon Farms transitioned to a robotic milking system. You can follow Boon Farms on Facebook at @Boonfarms or to read more about the Boon Farms promise and their maple syrup production, visit [www.boonfarms.com](http://www.boonfarms.com).

### Boon Farms Promise

- **Our Animals.** The health and well-being of our animals is our top priority. This means providing them with nutritious feed, regular veterinary checkups and comfortable, safe housing. We know that if we take care of them, they will take care of us.
- **Safe, High-Quality Milk.** We do everything possible to ensure the safety and quality of the milk supply. This starts with healthy cows and proper milking procedures, and ends with testing every tank of milk before it leaves the our farm to ensure a fresh, pure and wholesome product, free of antibiotics.
- **Our Employees and Family.** We take tremendous pride in the hard work and dedication it takes to uphold the standards and vision of our farm.
- **The Environment.** We have the utmost respect for the environment we all share. We are dedicated to protecting the land, air, and water, and employ many modern technologies to preserve our natural resources for future generations to enjoy.
- **The Law.** We promise to adhere to the permits, licenses and regulations that are required of our business. We take our role in food production very seriously and are committed to following local, state, and federal laws in all areas of our farm.

- **Using the Expertise of Others.** We continue to rely on veterinarian and dairy cattle nutritionists to provide counsel regarding medical care, balanced diets and best practices for disease prevention for our herd, and on soil and water experts to educate and train us on environmental stewardship.

- **Healthy Products.** We are proud to produce a product that is NATURALLY packed with calcium and eight other vitamins and minerals essential to your family's health and well-being.
- **Our Industry.** We are an American dairy producer. Our great country was built on agriculture, and we look forward to continuing the tradition of providing food that is safe, healthy and affordable for all consumers.
- **Our Community.** We consider ourselves privileged to be part of this community. We strive to add to the success of our neighbors by supporting local businesses and organizations, maintaining the integrity of rural landscapes and boosting the economy with jobs and commerce.





## Clark County Farm Bureau Hosts Annual Meeting

The Clark County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting was held on Aug. 23 at Boon Farms in Greenwood.

Members enjoyed a tour of Boon Farms led by Brad Boon, followed by a meal and the business meeting when members voted on resolutions,



Clark County Farm Bureau recognized Duane Boon for his years of service to the Clark County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

board of directors and delegates to the 2021 WFBF Annual Meeting.

Delegates who represented Clark County Farm Bureau members at the 2021 WFBF Annual Meeting were: Clark Turner, Walter Schuette, Tom Shafto Jr. and Duane Boon.



Members across the county gathered to enjoy a summer day at the Greenwood Park.



## Lincoln County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

Members of the Lincoln County Farm Bureau held their annual meeting on Aug. 27 at the Gruetzmacher Farms.

Delegates elected to represent Lincoln County at the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federations Annual Meeting in December were Melissa Yate and Geoff Depies.



## Meet: Aly Sosnovske, District 8 YFA Chair



Alissa Sosnovske farms with her family on a dairy farm near Gleason.

Growing up, she was a member of 4-H, FFA and the Lincoln County Junior Dairy Committee.

Alongside her family, Alissa raises registered Holsteins and Red and White Holsteins. She manages the farm's young stock.

## Others Added to YFA Committee

Kat and Brady Peper of Sauk County, Jacob and Jennifer Hoewisch of Waupaca County and Alissa Sosnovske of Lincoln County have been appointed to Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) Committee by the organization's Board of Directors.

Their terms started after the WFBF Annual Meeting and YFA Conference.





## President's Message



**Bill Mueller**

Marathon County Farm  
Bureau President

Another harvest season has come to an end. Thankfully, it ended with a bountiful harvest. I

know that some areas were blessed with rain while others struggled to overcome drought.

In talking with farmers, it appears most of Marathon County farmers were blessed with a bumper crop. It was a reassuring fall hearing from members across the county and state that they are optimistic for the future in agriculture. Here's to 2022, may it be all that you dream for it to be.

## Farm Bureau Hosts Annual Meeting

Marathon County Farm Bureau held its 2021 annual meeting on Sept. 16 at Rib River Ballroom.

Members discussed a wide range of topics for potential resolutions. Resolutions passed during this meeting were forwarded on for consideration by WFBF's Policy Development Committee.

In addition to the regular business at the annual meeting, Mike Borchardt was recognized with the Service to Agriculture Award.

Mike played an integral part in Marathon County Farm Bureau

from serving on the board to helping with the dairy stand at the fair and has been an integral part of our Little Britches program.

Thank you and congratulations to Mike.



## Wirkus Earns National FFA Proficiency Award

The last week of October brought 60,000 plus attendees to the 94<sup>th</sup> National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Among them was Tristan Wirkus, member of the Stratford FFA Chapter. Wirkus was the 2021 Wisconsin State Proficiency Winner in the area of Environmental Science/Natural Resources this past July. As the state winner, the application is forwarded on to nationals.

Wirkus was named as one of four national finalists; other finalists included members from Colorado, Georgia and Missouri. Each of the finalists do an additional round of interviews with a set of national judges and one national winner is selected.

During the fourth session, four finalists were announced on stage and then Wirkus was announced as the national winner. Proficiency awards are based on student experiences through his or her Supervised Agricultural Experience. Wirkus has been involved with his SAE projects since middle school. In the area of Environmental Science, Wirkus has served on the village Tree Advisory Board, assisted in organizing a community Environmental Awareness Day, constructed environmental lending libraries for the Heritage Trail, collected data for the Wisconsin DNR



Snapshot program, served as a student member of the EPPIC Watershed Educational Committee and more.

Wirkus is a freshman at UW-Eau Claire, where he is majoring in environmental geography with a GIS/GPS minor and was selected to complete a freshman fellowship program.

# Portage County

wfbf.com/about/counties/portage  
PortageCountyFarmBureau

## Highlights of the Portage County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

Members of the Portage County Farm Bureau held their annual meeting on Aug. 24 at the Arnott Lions Park just outside of Stevens Point.

Members in attendance enjoyed a meal prepared by the board of directors.

Members John Herman, John Eron, Jeff Dombrowski and Nathan Wolosek served as delegates and represented Portage County Farm Bureau at the WFBF Annual Meeting.





## Price County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting Highlights

Price County Farm Bureau held its annual meeting on Aug. 26 at The Palmquist Farm in Brantwood.

During the meeting, members discussed a wide range of issues including wildlife, step up basis and the direction of Farm Bureau.

Resolutions passed during this meeting were forwarded for consideration by WFBF's Policy

Development Committee.

As a grassroots organization, it is Farm Bureau's members at the county level who create and set the policy goals of the state's leading farm organization.

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau is often asked to get involved in issues affecting production agriculture and rural Wisconsin both in Madison and Washington D.C.



## Taylor County

wfbf.com/about/counties/taylor  
TaylorCountyFarmBureau

### From the Presidents Desk

**Rob Klussendorf**

Taylor County Farm Bureau President

As 2021 ends so does my first year as your Taylor County Farm Bureau president.

Although it came with some challenges it has been a very rewarding year. Due to COVID we had to cancel some of our in-person events but started the year out strong with various online meetings. Even though it was hard not having personal contact with friends across the state we still found ways to get the necessary business done.



One thing that did not change was the resolute membership and staff who worked hard to ensure that our voice was heard.

Which all lead us to be one of the first in the state to meet our new member voting goal. Your board of directors worked hard with the Northwoods Premier Beef Show putting on our annual steak and egg breakfast. Thanks to the Wisconsin Beef Checkoff dollars we were able to obtain funds to help get promotional materials available to consumers. If you have any other ideas on how we can help promote beef in Taylor County, please don't hesitate to reach out.

We also want to thank you for participating in some of our district wide events like "Soil your Undies," #FarmNeighborsCare and the statewide program of Hero's of Hope.

On a local level, we helped sponsor and put on the dairy dessert contest at the Taylor County Fair. We also participated in the Ag in the Classroom program but had to take on a whole innovative approach due to COVID restrictions. We also participated in the River Walk by putting up a display in partnership with our local Rural Mutual agents. We also joined forces with Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin doing a promotion of 'Chocolate Milk the Official Drink of Halloween' where we partnered with a public library and handed out more than 200 pints of chocolate milk.

As always, if you are interested in participating or helping out with any of these programs or have ideas for other program ideas please don't hesitate to contact any of the board of directors.

## Taylor County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

Members of the Taylor County Farm Bureau held its annual meeting on Sept. 9 at the Zenner Farm outside of Medford. Members enjoyed a meal catered by the Zenner family as well as a tour of the farm.



During the meeting, members discussed a wide range of issues. Delegates who were selected to represent Taylor County Farm Bureau at WFBF's Annual Meeting in December were Rob Klussendorf and Gary Kohn.

## A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words ... Pictures Are Worth 142 Years of Family History



The Zenner Farm was established in 1879 by Michael Zenner. Since then, it has been passed down from one generation to the next. Over the farm's rich 142 years of history more has stayed the same than has changed. Each generation has been committed to the land, animals and community. The original farm house was built in 1911. In 2020, Alex and his family built where the original farm cabin was and moved it to its new resting spot. In 2017, Melvin 'MJ' and Alex Zenner took over the family farm and started a custom planting business. Since taking over and starting the custom business they have been hard at work implementing conservation practices. As the Zenner brothers look towards the future they couldn't be more overjoyed to see the fifth generation growing up loving it as much as they do.



## From The President's Cab



**Josh Calaway**

Wood County Farm Bureau President

We have all had nights and days on the farm or at our jobs that we can't make up. Stories you retell that have people just staring at you or you notice them trying not to laugh because yep ... it was one of those days.

Recently, we had one of those nights. In early November, I received a handful of calls and texts from an unknown number. Turns out that number was from a family friend who was first on the scene to my wife's accident. She was calling to let me know my wife was ok but needed me to come get her.

Fast forward to me arriving at the scene to see the front end smashed and airbags hanging on my wife's vehicle. I felt relief to then spot her talking with a Sheriff's Deputy and EMT (only later to discover my arrival interrupted her providing the deputy a field demonstration on moving cattle via their flight zone and blind spots. I would like to say this is the first time I have heard of her doing this but those who know her know this would be a lie).

It was then that I learned my wife and her vehicle took out a bear hunter's dream: a 586-pound black bear. For obvious reasons, she wanted to bring that bear home. So, once we were able, I took her home and settled her in with our niece and headed back out to get her bear.

To make the story crazier than it already was, on my way to get said bear, I hit an eight-point buck with my gooseneck trailer and the back door of my truck. So here we were again, calling the sheriff's department to report another animal down and to get the report started for a kill tag.

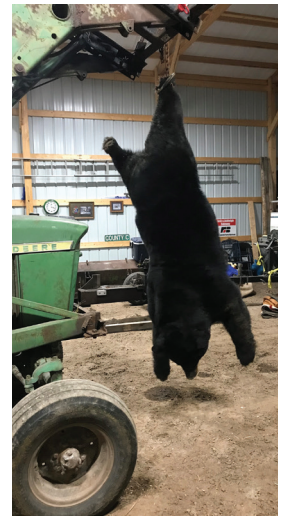
At that point, I was really kicking myself that we had also just sent a steer off to the butcher plant earlier in the week.

In the days that followed I found myself rethinking that night and how it could have been so much worse. It was on repeat in my head until I realized that I needed to focus on the positives of that night: my wife was ok, our freezers would be full and how amazing our 'team' is in providing support and helping out without being asked.

I share this story as a reminder that even when life seems to be handing you curveball after curveball, do your best to find the positives of the moment. Look for the people who are there offering a hand to help, who always show up on your darkest of days and to not be afraid to reach out for help when you need it. In the days that followed her accident, we were blessed with so many of those people.

Farm Bureau is no different; when you are facing issues on your farm, worried about legislation that could impact you or how to help consumers better understand what we do, reach out. We are here and ready to help. We have the resources, knowledge and the desire to help.

Wood County Farm Bureau has been around for 97 years, and we plan on being here for the next 97 years because we know that people like you are counting on us to be there and we are honored to do so.



## Wood County Farm Bureau Hosts Annual Meeting

The Wood County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting was held on Sept. 10 at the Pittsville Community Center in Pittsville.

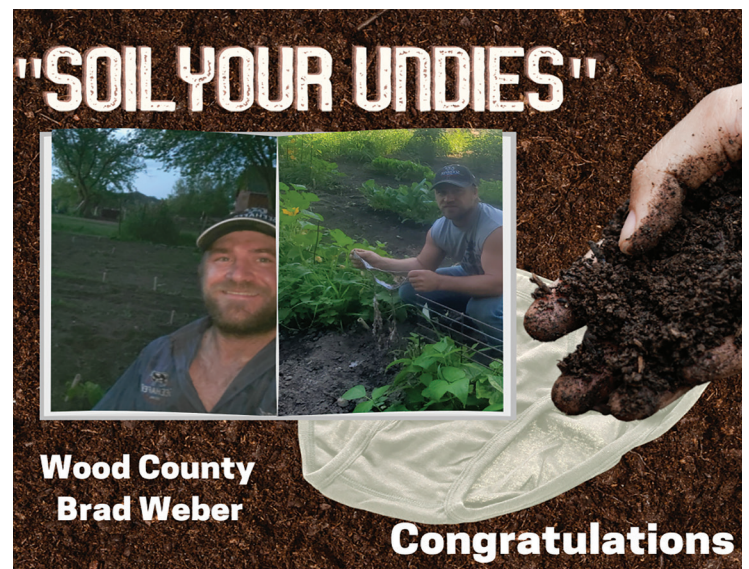
Members enjoyed a meal catered by Baum's Mercantile. Following the meal, members heard from Scott Coenen, executive director of Wisconsin

Conservative Energy Forum.

During the business meeting, members voted on resolutions, board of directors and delegates to the 2021 WFBF Annual Meeting.



Mark Cournoyer was presented with the Friend of Agriculture Award. Sarah Pigeon and Evan Hoffarth were awarded the outstanding Young Farmer and Agriculturist Award. We also welcomed Amy Sue Vurwink to the board of directors.



"Soil Your Undies" contest winner, a fun study on microbial activity in one's soil, Brad Weber was presented with a \$50 Fleet Farm gift card for having the most 'soiled undies'.





**County Farm Bureaus**  
PO Box 5550 Madison, WI 53705

Address Service Requested

Non Profit  
Organization  
US Postage

**PAID**

Platteville, WI 53818  
Permit No. 124

## This Issue Contains Highlights for:

Clark County  
Lincoln County  
Marathon County  
Portage County  
Price County  
Taylor County

**DOING BUSINESS WITH  
RURAL MUTUAL HAS NEVER  
BEEN EASIER!**

Visit our website to:

- Find safety resources
- Learn about insurance trends
- Report a claim
- Request a quote
- Reach out to your agent

**Rural Mutual**  
Insurance Company

**RuralMutual.com**  

