



# Grassroots

## District 9 News

### Your Voice Makes a Difference



**Peter Kimball**

WFBF District 9 Director

This year at the Pierce County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in October, member Kevin Ballman came with his family to learn more about Farm Bureau and what we as an organization are all about.

Kevin and his family farm outside of Ellsworth on rented land and are in the market for their own farm to base their farming operation out of.

During their search for a farm, they found that there are tax laws that favor farm transfers to family members. These are laws that they are not able to utilize as non-blood family members when buying a farm, which is putting unneeded barriers in front of beginning farmers.

At the Pierce County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Kevin proposed language to be put into the American Farm Bureau Federation Policy Book that reads, "We support the same tax benefits for transitioning the farm to non-related family succession as to related family."

It passed Pierce County Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting and headed off to the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation's Policy Development Committee.

At this point, it did not pass the committee; however, this is not where the story ends.

Kevin served as a delegate at the 2021 WFBF Annual Meeting and brought his resolution back on the floor to be voted on and it passed.

So, off it went to the American Farm Bureau to go through a similar process at the AFBF Annual Convention in January, and it passed.

Now, it is a part of the AFBF Policy Book, which like at the state, is the book that guides our organization in what we lobby for.

Why do I tell you this? It's the way Farm Bureau has kept its grassroots, member-driven focus of the past 100 years. It's a great example of one farmer in western Wisconsin who had an idea of how to better agriculture, brought it up at a local meeting, started the process and now his words help guide American Farm Bureau, the largest most influential general farm organization in the country as they work on our behalf advocating for us the farmers.

Your input as Farm Bureau member are the driving force behind what we accomplish together across our nation.

### WFBF Staff Spotlight

We as farmers enjoy the spotlight during National Ag Week in March but we want to take this opportunity to put that spotlight on someone who is always working behind the scenes for us!

May 27 will mark eight years Katie Mattison has served the Farm Bureau members of District 9. Organization is her middle name and she seems to effortlessly juggle the members and activities of nine busy counties.

We have seen our Farm Bureau presence in local affairs increase as evidenced by this newsletter. Our Young Farmers and Agriculturists are growing, fueled by her passion for them. Director engagement has increased and we have seen members supporting one another's issues across county lines. Why? In large part because of Katie.

Katie believes in us and our organization. She challenges us to grow as individuals and as county Farm Bureau leaders. She helps us find our voice for agriculture and the courage to speak up on issues that impact us. She champions us to go the extra mile to turn our ideas into realities. She is professional. She is optimistic.

Working with Katie, we are making a difference.

THANK YOU KATIE. We appreciate you in District 9.



**Pictured is Katie and her Corgi, Hoey, who she shows. Katie raises goats, is preparing for her next half marathon and breaking a new horse.**

## Young Farmer and Agriculturist AWARDS

APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

### OUTSTANDING AGRICULTURE PROFESSIONAL AWARD

FOR YFA MEMBERS WHO EARN A  
MAJORITY OF THEIR INCOME  
FROM OFF-FARM, NON  
PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE  
JOBS.

**APPLY AT:**

<http://bit.ly/fbagprofessional22>

### FARMING FOR THE FUTURE AWARD

FOR YFA MEMBERS WHO EARN A  
MAJORITY OF THEIR INCOME  
FROM THE FARM.

**APPLY AT:**

<http://bit.ly/fbfarmingfuture22>





## 'Let the Good Times Grow' for 10-year Anniversary of UW-River Falls Ag Day on Campus

By Serenity Hetke and Michelle Stangler, UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau Officers

As campus starts returning to a similar experience from before March of 2020, the UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau is excited to be back to a traditional Ag Day on Campus event format.

In 2020, hours of work and dedication between volunteers and the co-chairs, Alyssa Mori and Sarah Albers, were at it for the 'Every Farm Tells a Story' theme but resulted with a canceled event.

In 2021, students gathered once again, but with a modified event thanks to planning by members and Ag Day on Campus Chair Serenity Hetke. The event attracted many people to our Ag Day on Campus Facebook page with members stories featured leading up to the event. Students came together for an event, different in the past, for a scavenger hunt and free movie at the River Falls movie theater.

This year for the 2022 Ag Day on Campus event, students and staff alike are looking forward to having the traditional event on-campus scheduled for **April 19**. The event provides an opportunity for the community, students and staff to engage with agricultural-related organizations and companies during the day and have a free dinner and listen to a keynote speaker in the evening.

This year marks a 10-year milestone since the event was created at UW-River Falls. 'Let the Good Times Grow,' the 2022 Ag Day on Campus theme, encapsulates the innovation in agriculture today. Members of the Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter have been asked to share their stories about how agriculture has impacted their growth, both personally and in their careers. Many volunteers and committees are putting this event together, including Ag Day on Campus Co-Chairs Michelle Stangler and Barbara Dittrich.

The traditional event will be composed of two areas for people to interact with. The event is from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and includes clubs and businesses displaying how they are growing for the future with interactive booths.

The event will be held in center of campus and will offer many ways for people with different backgrounds to interact with agriculture

somehow. Participants will have the opportunity to learn first-hand from experts in the field and be able to have their questions answered. Clubs and businesses will display how they are growing for the future with interactive booths to help people from different backgrounds to learn and be able to receive something out of the event.

In the evening, a free dinner and keynote speaker will offer optimism of ways agriculture can grow and how it's leaning on help from us, as college students. Not only will the keynote speaker be able to offer their knowledge within agriculture, but the dinner also will include food from people Collegiate Farm Bureau members know in the community and home.

Collegiate Farm Bureau is excited to host this annual event again to its traditional format to share positivity to students, staff and community members about agriculture. Ag Day on Campus is the largest event hosted by the chapter. If agriculture wasn't enough to celebrate, the hard work and dedication that members have put towards this event will be something to celebrate as well.

**April 19** will be a day of fun, food and agricultural interactions with students, staff, and community members. UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau membership is empowered to, 'Let the Good Times Grow' now and for the future.

We thank Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federations members across the state for investing time in us, as students, so we can be fueled to stay involved in the agricultural community, be actively part of the UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau and leave a legacy for students to be part of in the future.



Want the picture perfect leadership experience?

# APPLY TODAY!

Applications are due August 15

Applications for the WFBF Leadership Institute are now available at <http://bit.ly/institute2023>

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 YFA Members Have a Busy Winter

By Haily Sand, District 9 YFA Chair

In December, we traveled to Wisconsin Dells for the annual meeting. Thank you for attending, we got a lot of ideas for activities in our District breakout session.

Please be on the lookout for postcards and notifications on Facebook for upcoming events happening in each county. We also had funds left over from the Dunn County Dairy Drive Through and used some of the money to purchase and hand out milk and cheese in the Menomonie Winter Daze Parade, where we won the community award.

In February, we worked with Dunn County and hosted a sledding party and farm tour at the Gilbertson's farm where we had attendees from UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau. Snacks were provided for guests and the hill was awesome.

District YFA leaders also traveled to Louisville, Kentucky, for the AFBF Young Farmer and Rancher Conference. We got to meet a lot of people and attend sessions on leadership and hot topics to include in our future meetings.

On March 3, we had the first of our Farm Series meetings. We invited members throughout our district to learn about FSA and ag lender options. We are planning to add to the series and cover other topics including NRCS and Land and Water Programs, Farm finances and entity structuring and succession planning.

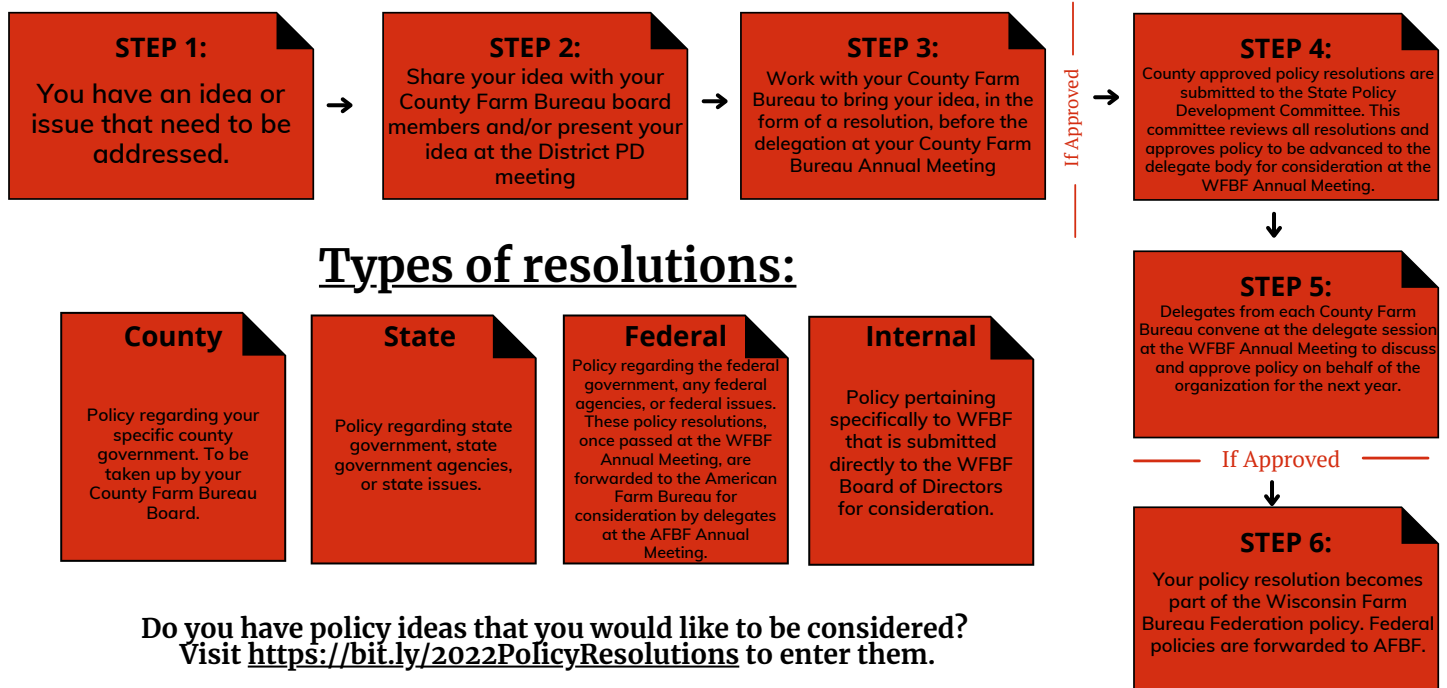
Other future events include attending the Terry Clark concert at Aquafest hosted in conjunction with Barron County on **June 11** in Rice Lake and a Garden Tour and Pizza party hosted with St. Croix County on **Aug. 1**.

If you have questions or are younger than 35 and haven't received YFA postcards, please contact me. I will add you to the list.



## Policy Development Process

Farm Bureau's Policy Development Process starts with YOU the members. Policy Development is the grassroots process by which Farm Bureau voting members craft, refine and propose new and updated policy through a series of steps starting at the county Farm Bureau level.





## Rural Mutual Insurance Northwest District Manager Report



By Laurie Peterson, Rural Mutual Insurance Company  
Northwest District Manager

Greetings, Farm Bureau members.  
It is a pleasure once again to get the opportunity to reach out to you through this newsletter.

Working in 18 counties and three different districts, this allows me to communicate with you with a little less windshield time, which

given this year's crazy weather, I truly appreciate.

By the month of December, Rural Mutual was optimistic that we were going to be able to get through the year without a significant weather event, but Mother Nature had other things on her mind. In mid-December, we experienced one of the most bizarre December storms in Wisconsin. Experts are dubbing it a Derecho.

The word of the day – DERECHO – defined as a widespread, long lived, straight-lined windstorm that is associated with a fast-moving group of thunderstorms that can cause hurricane or tornadic force winds, actual tornadoes, heavy rains and flash floods.

This DERECHO tracked from Kansas to Wisconsin and with 60+ mile an hour winds and was our Christmas present from Mother Nature this year.

It was one I think many would like to return to sender.

Given the breadth and severity of this storm, I am proud to say that our company, and specifically our Claims Department definitely shined. During a time of the year when most were planning vacations and holidays, our response to this storm and our policy holder's needs rose to the forefront.

Agents and assistants, the customer service team, our Information Technology Department and especially claims adjusters and the Management Team stepped up and worked tirelessly together to process and respond to more than 1,500 claims filed by our policyholders in a very short period of time.

Everyone in the company came together to make sure that we maintained our company's promise, 'to protect and rebuild' in times of unintended financial loss. This is just one of the many reasons that Rural Mutual, our vision and values, mean so much to so many.

Although these claims are not yet closed, Rural Mutual needed to close the books on 2021. Despite this large weather event, it was another profitable year not only for our company, but for our policy holders and our communities.

Another area where this company shined in 2021, was that Rural Mutual agents were invited to participate in a company sponsored Charitable Giving Campaign.

Food pantries, youth and community outreach programs, Veteran services, local FFA and 4-H programs and animal rescue organizations profited from the generosity of Rural Mutual Insurance.

In our district alone, we infused \$115,000 in charitable contributions into our local communities and the economy.

Another shining moment resulting from 2021 results that will be paid going forward is that once again, the board of directors has declared a Farm Dividend that will be issued and distributed in 2022.

Yet another example of 'Premiums paid here, stay here to keep Wisconsin strong.'

Optimism has helped me through many events in my life, and I'm of the belief that if you give good things, good things come back to you. As you can see, Rural Mutual is committed to this philosophy and now it is more important than ever.

## HOW ARE MY FARM BUREAU DUES USED?

Farm Bureau is a membership organization that relies on membership dues as a primary source of revenue. Dues for members in the counties in District 9 are \$55/year.

When you join Farm Bureau, you not only become a member of your county Farm Bureau, but also Wisconsin Farm Bureau and American Farm Bureau. Your membership dues are allocated as follows:

### **\$40** **WISCONSIN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION**

WFBF Dues are used to support activities, provide staffing and conduct programs around the state.

Consumer education, issue advocacy and member publications are services that are also funded with state dues.

### **\$5** **AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION**

Forwarded to support Farm Bureau activities at a national level. These funds support agriculture's voice in our nation's capital as well as the many programs that AFBF has in place.

### **\$0.80** **WISCONSIN MEMBER PROTECTOR PLAN**

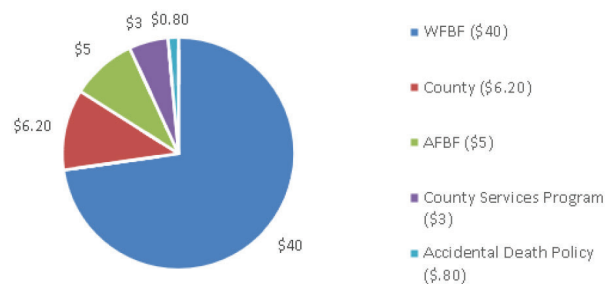
The Wisconsin Member Protector Plan is accidental death insurance for the member, their spouse and children.

### **\$9.20** **COUNTY FARM BUREAU**

\$3 of your dues are used to create this newsletter along with helping manage the month-to-month activities of your county farm bureau.

\$6.20 of your dues go directly back to your County. These funds are used for activities that range from educational workshops, agriculture promotion events and social activities for members.

### Dues Breakdown



## VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

### **\$10** **VOLUNTEERS FOR AGRICULTURE**

Volunteers for Agriculture is the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's political action committee. Since 1990, the VFA has helped elect candidates who work for agriculture's interests in Madison.

### **\$5** **WISCONSIN FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION**

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) entity, affiliated with Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, organized to support ag education programming.



## District 9 Members Offering Fellow Farmers Hope

By Brittany Olson, Barron County Farm Bureau Member

Since my better half and I took over management of our farm in 2016, our month-to-month schedules have frequently been punctuated by things like Sam's monthly Farm Bureau board meetings, the IBA guy stopping in, the milk tester dropping off sample tubes and bottles – and, for the last year or so, hopping on Zoom the fourth Monday of the month to lead peer groups through DATCP's Farmer Wellness Program.

On the surface, it may look like a few farm couples getting together over coffee and shooting the breeze, but the ultimate goal of the peer group initiative is to offer kindness, support and compassion from someone who has 'been there', too – particularly with high suicide rates in the farming community.

When you're frequently working by yourself day in and day out and struggling besides, being alone with your thoughts is a bad place to be. Other state departments of agriculture are creating similar programs for farmers and their families, as well, because no one needs to spend their days feeling insignificant and invisible.

Last winter, Sam and I were asked to hop on to become peer leaders for this program along with other farmers across the state who have battled their own demons in the form of mental illness.

We participated in a weekend-long training through the Wisconsin chapter of National Alliance on Mental Illness, where we learned about how to lead support groups and how to handle various situations that might arise when tensions are high and emotions are raw.

We also learned that there is a difference between being a peer leader and being a therapist, and every single farmer support group meeting has a therapist on the call as well to jump in if need be.

Even being asked to become a part of the Farmer Wellness Program has been a blessing, and it's been an even bigger blessing getting to know the other peer leaders and the farmers that have been joining us every month or two.

Most of all, I believe that we're called to share our gifts with each other, and leaning into what we have learned through fighting our own battles to help others fight theirs might be the biggest blessing of all.

We are currently hosting support group meetings on the second Tuesday and fourth Monday of each month, both at 8 p.m.

To learn more about the Farmer Wellness Program as a whole as well as the farmer and farm couple support group meetings, or to register for a meeting, visit [datcp.wi.gov/Pages/AgDevelopment/FarmerMentalHealthWellness.aspx](http://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/AgDevelopment/FarmerMentalHealthWellness.aspx).

## 2022 WFBF Policy Book Available

The 2022 WFBF Policy Book is now available. An electronic version can be found at [wfbf.com/policy/policy-development](http://wfbf.com/policy/policy-development).

If you want a hard copy, please contact District 9 Coordinator Katie Mattison at [kmattison@wfbf.com](mailto:kmattison@wfbf.com) or 715.418.0975.



## Healthy Soil Healthy Life

Congratulations to Josephine Mehling from Pepin County, the winner of the state youth conservation speaking contest. This contest is hosted every year by members of the National Association for Conservation Districts along with a themed poster contest. This year's theme was 'Healthy Soil, Healthy Life.'

Josephine's speech entitled, 'Burning Plastic and Creation of Dioxins' won the Pepin County, West Central Area and State competitions in the junior category. Josephine will represent Wisconsin at the national level later this spring.

The West Central Area sent seven entries from across the nine-county area to the State Competition. Cecelia Green from Barron County placed third at state in the Elementary Poster Division, and from St. Croix County, Ellory Hauk's speech, 'Recycling in Wisconsin' also placed third in the Elementary Division.



## A Battle for Your Radar



By Kim Bremmer,  
Clark County Local  
Affairs Chair

The message can never be repeated too often about the importance of you or someone representing your

farm serving on your local town or county board and attending the monthly meetings.

Anti-agriculture activists have done a great job filling these positions, with harmful outcomes becoming more and more visible around the state.

Taking a quick look to our friends in Polk and Burnett counties and understanding why we should care is the perfect example.

A battle has been brewing there for over three years as a small, but vocal group of activists has partnered with a local environmental non-profit to utilize resources and craft an operational ordinance, impossible for livestock farms to comply with.

What began as an anti-CAFO movement in Ashland years before that, has moved to neighboring counties and townships, now

affecting people with ~350 dairy cows.

We can no longer assume, “That will never come here,” because every backyard is our own.

The anti-agriculture crowd has momentum and a platform like never before. These six towns in Polk and Burnett counties have hired legal counsel to help draft an operational ordinance and support their actions.

Aside from all local, state and federal regulations and permit requirements that farms must comply with when building and expanding, this operational ordinance includes 11 additional plans that must be accepted by your local unit of government.

To highlight a few:

- Odor and Toxic Air Pollutions Prevention Plan (assessing air quality around the farm, including air from barn fans, additional filtration requirements, guarantee of no odor, etc.)
- Local Economic Assessment Plan (assuring there will never be any negative effects on property values around your farm, assuming any negative effect is from your farm, etc.)
- Animal Population Control and Depopulation Plan (covering all details of all animal handling, with daily animal counts submitted to the township so they can monitor daily death loss and how dead animals are disposed

of, etc.)

- Water Use Plan (showing estimates of all water use and a guarantee that your farm will never affect the local water table or any surrounding wells, particularly artesian wells, etc.)

The operational ordinance also requires an array of financial assurance, road bonds and reimbursement to the township for monitoring.

The additional plans also need to be reviewed by a third party at the expense of the farmer, along with additional applications fees and yearly maintenance fees.

Any member of the town board has access to any part of your farm, any time of the day. All tires on every vehicle in and out of your driveway need to be washed and sanitized, and no trucks, trailers, farm equipment or deliveries can be on the road before 8 a.m. or after 5 p.m., the list of demands seems endless.

Unreasonable? Yes. Impossible to get passed? No. Illegal? Likely.

But local units of government do retain some authority and the burden of proof in this issue will likely fall into a courtroom decision, when all could have been avoided with reasonable, common-sense people serving on the local boards.

Stay tuned.

**BEEF**  
Funded by  
Beef Farmers and Ranchers

**Burgers & Buns**  
★ Fun Run ★  
2022  
#MAYBEEFMONTH

**SPONSORED BY**

★  
**Wisconsin**  
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FEDERATION

**FARM WISCONSIN**  
DISCOVERY CENTER

**REGISTER AT BEEFTIPS.COM**

## Farm Bureau Co-Sponsors Burgers and Buns Fun Run, May 14,

May Beef Month is just around the corner, and ag organizations are ready to run with celebrations.

The Wisconsin Beef Council is proud to partner with the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation and the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center to host both virtual and in-person options for the annual Burgers & Buns Fun Run/Walk. Join us to show your support of the Wisconsin beef community and May Beef Month.

The Burgers and Buns Fun Run will be held at the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center in Manitowoc on **Saturday, May 14.**

Participants can enter to win a free beef gift certificate by posting a picture of your race experience and tagging Wisconsin Beef Council, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation and the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center on Facebook and Instagram.

Runners and walkers are welcome to check-in at 9 a.m. The race kicks off at 10 a.m. followed by free burgers and a brief awards ceremony.

Stay for some fun at the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center. All race participants will receive free admission for the day, and there will be more beefy activities for all ages.

### Burgers and Buns Fun Run Virtual Race

Can't make it to the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center on May 14? That's OK. You can take part in our virtual race on **May 15 through 31.** The Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center will offer a coupon for free admission through the end of summer. A virtual run is a 'race' that you can do anywhere and any way you want during a set time period. The beauty of a virtual race is that you can run, walk or skip your 5K whenever it's convenient.



## Barron County Farm Bureau President's Message



**Karyn Schauf**

Barron County Farm Bureau President

As I write this, I cannot help but wonder what will be going on in the world by the time you read this.

Only God knows. And I am certain little if anything in this newsletter will be as important as what is happening in our world right now.

In the meantime we continue to be faithful to

the tasks before us and fill as many moments as possible with prayers for our fellow human beings.

Barron County Farm Bureau has assumed sponsorship for the Farm City Banquet during National Ag Week that was started some 75 years ago in Rice Lake by the then Rice Lake Holstein Club. Service organizations have continued to keep it going until now. We look forward to really developing this opportunity in the future and we thank our 'Alice', Julia Nunes for being our keynote speaker this year.

Another bit of important news is the informational meetings for the Dairy Growth Management Research that was conducted. We as farmers, as Farm Bureau members can only make as good a decision as the information we base that decision on.

All dairy farmers and dairy related industry people need to understand

just what this research was about and its results. There are three points I'd like to make.

1. This concept has a long history, the bones of which go back to 2009 when the Holstein USA's Legislative Committee which I was asked to serve on had - after 17 versions - created the Holstein Association's Dairy Price Stabilization Program. The best parts of that plan and others make up this current plan.
2. Secondly, I am encouraged to see many different groups working together on a plan. From those Holstein beginnings, we now see Farm Bureau and Farmers Unions working with UW and the Dairy Hub on this research. How many legislators have told us, "when the dairy industry can come together on a plan let us know and we will support you." We are getting close.
3. Thirdly we see our Farm Bureau process play out. The impetus for this plan came from grassroots. In fact, many of the core tenets found their beginning at a District Farm Bureau Policy Meeting.

Support has progressed through our resolution process and these current informational meetings being held are fulfilling the resolution made at this year's annual meeting: "We support the continuing education of producers on the Dairy Revitalization Plan as based on the research by the UW Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems."

That brings us up to today. So please inform yourself.

## Getting Good Information First Step in Making Good Decisions

There was no buying and there was no selling but what was being exchanged was unbiased information as Barron County Farm Bureau hosted an informational meeting on the current carbon market on Feb. 28. Michael Geissinger, Regional Crops Extension Educator with UW-Madison Division of Extension was the presenter. Hearing unbiased facts farmers asked plenty of questions and enjoyed the opportunity to share, discuss with each other and then formulate their opinions.

Farmers have no shortage of decisions to make on any given day. They range from personal decisions to farm-business related decisions and on to larger, philosophical and legislative decisions. As varied as they are, good decisions have one thing in common: they begin with good information.

Today decision-makers struggle to identify information that is true and unbiased. Barron County Farm Bureau felt it important to bring good, unbiased information to members with recent informational meetings.

In September, Barron County Farm Bureau also hosted an informational meeting presented on alternative energy in response to a large solar farm potentially being built in the county. Presenters were



Scott Coenen, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Conservative Energy Forum and team member of Land and Liberty Coalition. They invited not only Farm Bureau members but also Farmers Union members, town and county board members. Attendance was strong and so were the questions indicating it was a topic many were trying to form their opinions on.

"As a grassroots organization, policies and directions WFBF takes come from our farmer members. When they have access to good information, they are able to make good decisions for agriculture. Helping provide that information is a service that benefits our members," said Karyn Schauf, Barron County President.



## Throwback Photo

This photo was taken in 1983 at a Barron County Farm Bureau Young Farmers skiing event at Mt. Hardscrabble.



Barron County Farm Bureau members were out in full force the week of March 21 to celebrate National Ag Day.

## Barron County Groundwater Study

Submitted by Tyler Gruetzmacher, Barron County Conservationist

Barron County is asking residents for help in a groundwater quality project. The project will check the groundwater quality in our communities. Water samples from 800 wells throughout the county will be collected over two years. The water samples will be used to identify and track groundwater quality and concerns.

“Barron County is lucky to have a lot of groundwater,” says Barron County Conservationist Tyler Gruetzmacher. “It is important that we understand what is happening with the groundwater in our area to make sure it is clean and safe.”

To help with the project, Barron County is partnering with the UW-Stevens Point Groundwater Center. The Groundwater Center will create a contact list from wells constructed after 1990. Starting in 1990, well records contain a Wisconsin unique well number. This number gives information on well construction, such as depth, that is important. Wells also will be selected based on location in the County.

“Our goal is to get samples from every corner of the county,” Gruetzmacher states. “We will be inviting people to help us based on where their well is located and what kind of soil and geology is found in

that area.”

Residents who own wells that qualify will receive letters in the mail in March inviting them to join the project. Those who agree to help will be mailed a sampling kit and instructions in May.

There is no cost for the sampling. This free test is valued at \$110. Samples will be tested for nitrate, chloride, total hardness, conductivity, alkalinity, pH, arsenic, iron, manganese, lead, copper, zinc, calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium and sulfate. Locations to drop off completed water samples will be set up around the county. Samples will be analyzed at the state-certified Water and Environmental Analysis Laboratory.

Well owners who participate will receive a copy of their test results and information about what the results mean. Groundwater Center staff will host meetings to answer questions and to provide information. An online dashboard will provide group results. Data will only be displayed generically. No personally identifying information will be released.

An example of a well testing dashboard can be viewed at: [https://shiny.theopenwaterlog.com/wellwaterquality\\_chippewacounty](https://shiny.theopenwaterlog.com/wellwaterquality_chippewacounty). A final summary will be available to the public and can help guide future decisions about Barron County's groundwater.

## Barron YFA Event Planned at Aquafest

Come for some music and the opportunity to socialize with other YFA members at Rice Lake's Aquafest, **June 11**. Pre-band shows start at 7 p.m. and Terri Clark will start around 9 p.m.

Concert attendees can stand or bring their own chairs as there is limited seating near the beer garden and in the bleachers.

The first 10 people to RSVP will receive a free concert ticket. Please RSVP before purchasing to Barron County YFA Chair Mitch Hoff at 715.455.3210 or District 9 YFA Chair Haily Sand at 608.397.0046.

Tickets are \$20 per seat and can be purchased online, however, tickets are nonrefundable. Tickets purchased online can be picked up at the Will Call gate the night of the event.

You must provide a photo ID. Ticket lists are complete on June 7 so tickets must be purchased prior to June 6.

If you are not one of the first 10 to RSVP, tickets can be purchased at [www.aquafestonline.com](http://www.aquafestonline.com).



**YFA NIGHT AT AQUAFEST**  
**FEATURING**  
**Terry Clark**  
**SATURDAY, JUNE 11**  
**7PM**

Wisconsin Farm Bureau  
**Young Farmer and Agriculturist Program**

## It's Wisconsin Chili Lunch time

**Rural Mutual Insurance Company:** Christina Jacobson joined cafeterias and kitchens across Wisconsin for the annual Wisconsin Chili Lunch. Participants celebrated farm to school and local farmers by serving a chili meal to students and eaters statewide on Feb. 24.

This Wisconsin Farm to School event encourages schools and other institutions to practice purchasing local foods and celebrate them on the tray. Schools and other cafeteria settings were encouraged to source as many local food ingredients as possible and serve a local chili however it suits them best. Institutions including schools, hospitals, early care sites and other community organizations participated and served chili, which coincided with National Chili Day. Schools used the 'official' Wisconsin Chili Lunch recipe or their own favorite recipe. The goal is to build stronger connections between locally-grown products and ingredients and students and eaters - and show how we can eat Wisconsin grown even in winter.

**Rural Mutual Insurance:** Christina Jacobson participated in the event with more than 100 other registered organizations in the state. Together these organizations served more than 67,000 bowls of Wisconsin chili. Participants included 61 K-12 districts and schools and 22 early care and education sites.

To learn more and find farm to school recipes, visit [cias.wisc.edu/our-events/chililunch](http://cias.wisc.edu/our-events/chililunch). Visit the Wisconsin Chili Lunch Facebook page to see fun and delicious photos from the 2022 Wisconsin Chili Lunch Day celebration.







## AGRICULTURE WORKS HARD FOR ► CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Family-owned farms, food processors and agriculture-related businesses generate thousands of jobs and millions of dollars of economic activity for Chippewa County, while contributing to local income and tax revenues.

### WHAT DO OUR FARMS PRODUCE?

1

Milk



2

Grain



3

Poultry & Eggs



4

Cattle & Calves



5

Hay & Other Crops



## Dunn County

wfbf.com/about/counties/dunn  
DunnCountyFarmBureau

### Dunn County President's Message



**Kevin Gilbertson**

Dunn County Farm Bureau President

I had a Farm Bureau member ask me a few months ago, "If I want to get involved in my county Farm Bureau what is there to do?"

This question made me stop and think, "What is there to do at the county level?" Are we even visible to our members and the public?

With that thought in my head, your county board has been more aggressive in trying to plan activities this year offering opportunities to get members engaged and our agricultural story to the residents of Dunn County.

This last December, Dunn County Farm Bureau participated in the Menomonie Christmas parade. We used extra money that was left from our drive through dairy promotion event last summer and walked the parade handing out more than 1,000 cheese sticks and chocolate milk.

We were well received in the parade actually running out of product before the end of the parade. We also won an award from the chamber for our effort. We hope to participate again.

We are in the process of planning more events for this summer. In June Dunn County Farm Bureau is partnering with Dunn County Dairy Promotion and are sponsoring June Dairy Month Night at the Red Cedar Speedway. We will have our names displayed as the night's Title Sponsor and will have dairy product giveaways. I'd like to thank Ben Sand and Tara Prochnow for organizing this event. In August, we hope to have a tour of a local agricultural business with a picnic. Please watch future newsletters and fliers for the details.

Once again with the summer fair season approaching the fair food stand committee has started making plans for this year's food stand. Please consider helping by working a shift at the stand. Talk to your friends, get a group together and sign up to work.

Again, thanks for entrusting me with being your county president again this year.

### Cropland Buffer Program Administered by Dunn County Land and Water

This is a new program administered by Dunn County Land and Water Conservation Division to enable farmers to try buffers on low producing cropland without any long-term commitments.

- \$200 per acre per year – flat rate.
- Two-year contract – may be extended when requested, if funding is available.
- Minimum of 0.25-acre, maximum dependent on available funding
  - Buffer width will be customized for each site.
- Seed mixes can be customized.

- Livestock feed.
- Pollinator habitat.
- Must be sod forming plants.
- Must be mowed at least once yearly – haying is allowed.
- No fertilizer/manure may be applied to enrolled acres.
- To be eligible land must have been cropped within the last two years.

For information, contact Heather Wood, Dunn County Water Resources specialist at 715.231.6532 or hwood@co.dunn.wi.us.



## Dunn County Students Attend FFA Farm Forum

More than 140 high school juniors from around Wisconsin attended WFBF's FFA Farm Forum in Wisconsin Rapids on Feb. 18.

"FFA Farm Forum is a time for learning and leadership," said WFBF President Kevin Krentz. "Thank you for being a part of FFA Farm Forum and for honing in on your leadership skills, learning more and investing in yourself."

The keynote speaker was Kaitlyn Riley, Director of Communications and Outreach with the Wisconsin Beef Council. Riley explored new ways to put the success of agriculture on center stage one voice at a time as advocates.

During the one-day event at Hotel Mead, FFA members attended career-based workshops including: 'Meat' Your Future in Wisconsin with Kaitlyn Riley and Matt Bayer, master meat crafter; Basics of Risk Management and Why It Matters with Mike North of ever.ag; Welcome

to Jeopardy: Rural and Agricultural Edition with Melissa Ploeckelman of the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety; and A Day in the Life on a Potato Farm with Mike Leahy, Lynn Leahy and Tom Schultz of Heartland Farms, Inc.

"FFA Farm Forum is a great partnership between Wisconsin Farm Bureau and Wisconsin FFA to encourage leadership development and exploration of careers in agriculture," said WFBF Director of Member Relations Mandy Ganer. "We were excited to host this conference for future agricultural leaders who have a passion for agriculture and a desire to learn."

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation sponsors FFA Farm Forum in cooperation with the Wisconsin Association of FFA. After holding the event virtually in 2021, this year's FFA Farm Forum marks the 49<sup>th</sup> time the event has been hosted in person for Wisconsin youth.



Boyceville FFA (from left): Olivia Ponath, Abby Schlough and Andrea Jensen.



Colfax FFA (from left): Jackson Moyer, Jayden Behling, Kennedy Shane and Brady Berg.



Menomonie FFA (from left): Samantha Stephens, Brady Fasbender, Emily Zukowski and Kira Prochnow.



## Pierce County

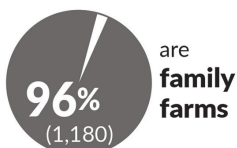
### Water Action Volunteer Training

**When:** May 2

**Where:** Nugget Lake County Park, Plum City

For more information or to register, visit [wateractionvolunteers.org](http://wateractionvolunteers.org) or contact the Pierce County Land Conservation Department.

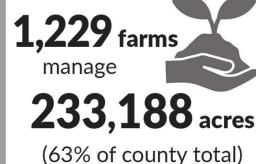
#### WHO OWNS THE FARMS?



#### HOW MUCH IS SOLD LOCALLY?



#### WHO TAKES CARE OF THE LAND?





## Community Members Show Billboard Size Support for Agriculture

By Sara Byl, Polk Burnett Farm Bureau Member and Farmer

Recently, farmers and other community members throughout Polk and Burnett counties came together to proudly display messages in support for agriculture on five billboards along State Highways 70, 35 and 8.

The show of support is in response to the anti-ag rhetoric that has been part of multiple meetings held at the town and county level. The goal is to counteract the division of communities and misinformation that has been a result of multiple meetings, listening sessions, letters to the editor and proposed ordinances to prohibit the growth and continuation of agriculture in Polk and Burnett counties.

This divisive agenda against agriculture is slowly spreading through local county and town boards trying to establish new rules and ordinances that would seriously hinder the growth and success of local agriculturalists that have spent many generations farming in Polk and Burnett counties.

Unfortunately, many of the meetings have lost the much-needed decency and basic rules of order to allow all to be heard as well as to be listened to.

The billboards are a visual response to remind people where their food comes from and that FAMILIES farm in Polk and Burnett counties.

As meetings became more combative and letters in the paper stronger, more people have become aware of the battle and have come to support agriculture.

With one simple email to local community members, support for agriculture was seen in a matter of hours as donations started coming in to put up the billboards.

In a matter of a couple of days, there was enough support to put up four billboards, and when an additional sign became available, another letter went out and the fifth billboard was paid for in short order.

With fewer people growing up on or living on a farm, it is more important than ever to try to connect people to real farmers and the truth about how food is grown and raised today. There is no one-way, one-size-fits-all way to farm.

No two farms are the same and farmers use best management practices that work for their individual farms. Why should any farmer be penalized for developing a business plan and following the law, while growing food for an ever-increasing population who is hungry for protein, milk and vegetables?

The supporters of the billboards are wanting to share the reality of 21<sup>st</sup>

Century agriculture. Wisconsin has 45% fewer dairy cattle than in the 1940s. And in 2020, Wisconsin produced 174% more milk with 36% FEWER cows than in 1930.

We have 93% fewer hogs than what we had at our peak. While the number of farmers and animal agriculture continues to decline and populations increasing, those fewer farmers are producing more than ever to continue to put food on our tables.

Advancements in animal and plant genetics, engineering, technology and innovation allow us to feed more people using less animals, less acres, less water, less energy and less resources than before ... all while doing a better job of protecting the environment than ever before.

Unfortunately, farmers don't have a great history of self-promotion. They spend countless hours tending their animals, crops, bills, participating in church, county fairs, FFA and supporting their local communities.

For most, self-promotion of who they are and what they do is difficult. In order to survive as a business in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, farming cannot be a hobby, it is a business that does everything it can to benefit both the community it resides in as well as the environment it so desperately needs to survive in order to continue farming.

Unfortunately, we are in a communications battle with Google searches and fear mongering by those that don't understand agriculture or what it means to put your life's work into caring for animals, the environment and feeding people.

As was recently asked at a local town board meeting, "If you need heart surgery, are you willing to let a dentist do it? If not, why are we going to let individuals who know nothing about agriculture dictate what farmers must do?"

Most anti-agriculture activists do not farm, nor have any of them, to date, requested building permits to build the 'correct farm' to show everyone how it should be done. Yet, their interest is truly about themselves, and their 'vision' of the country. "Who feeds the world?" ... Farmers feed the world, activists feed no one.

It's easy to get discouraged by a few loud negative voices. These billboards represent the community support of agriculture and our farmers.

May we continue to stand behind them as they grow our food, support our communities, and build viable businesses for their families today and into the future.



## Cost-Share Funding Available for Landowners for Conservation Practices

Submitted by Eric Wojchik, Polk County Land and Water Resources Department County Conservationist



Polk County Land and Water Resources Department has cost-share funding available for the design and installation of conservation practices aiming to minimize soil erosion,

protect water quality and increase agricultural system efficiency.

Cost-sharable practices must address a natural resource concern and continue to be maintained after installation to receive cost-sharing of up to 70%.

For more information, please contact the Polk County Land and Water Resourced Department at 715.485.8699.

The amount of funding in 2022 is limited. If you are interested, please contact us soon.

Cost-sharable practices include, but are not limited to:

- Manure storage systems
- Barnyard runoff control systems
- Manure storage facility closure
- Feed storage runoff systems
- Waterway systems
- Well decommissioning
- Critical area stabilization
- Prescribed Grazing Systems
- Livestock fencing
- Stream crossing



## Rusk County

wfbf.com/about/counties/rusk  
RuskCountyFarmBureau

### Extension 4-Part Mini Gardener Series

Rusk Community Garden volunteers will provide hands-on demonstrations and learning activities that are sure to be a hit with young 'budding' gardeners and their adult guests.

Registration is due by April 15. Cost is \$5 but scholarships are available. Register at <https://go.wisc.edu/478534>.



OPEN TO ALL YOUTH | COST \$5  
scholarships available

Rusk Community Garden Volunteers will provide hands on demonstrations and learning activities that are sure to be a hit with young "budding" gardeners and their adult guests. All youth participants will receive their own plant journal, seeds and other needed materials.

<b>PART 1</b> <b>Understanding the Needs of a Seed!</b> Learn everything you need to know about growing and starting seeds by starting your own mini-greenhouse AND helping to start seeds for the Rusk Community Garden! <b>April 30 at 10AM</b> Rusk County Sr./Youth Center	<b>PART 2</b> <b>Growing Environment</b> Learn about growing, what to watch for, and when you can start enjoying your mini-greenhouse crop. <b>May 21 at 10AM</b> Virtual check-in via Zoom
<b>PART 3</b> <b>Planting &amp; Maintenance</b> Help us plant at the Community Garden and learn about planting and maintaining your plants! <b>Saturday, June 11 at 10AM</b> Rusk Community Garden	<b>PART 4</b> <b>Harvesting</b> Learn about harvesting your garden plants and tips and tricks for showing vegetables at the Rusk County Jr. Fair! <b>Saturday, July 16 10:00 AM</b> Rusk Community Garden

All Participants will have the opportunity to help at the Rusk Community garden. Anyone interested in learning more, but doesn't have a garden space to grow can use the community plot.

**REGISTER BY APRIL 15**

**Register here: <https://go.wisc.edu/478534>**

REGISTER EARLY, LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE

Questions? Contact Kathy Splett 715-537-6250 or [kathy.splett@wisc.edu](mailto:kathy.splett@wisc.edu)



An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements

### Rusk County Farmers' Markets

**Location:** East Parking Lot of Courthouse

**When:** Open June through October; Wednesdays from 12 noon to 4 p.m.  
Saturdays 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon

**Bruce Community Farmers' Market**

Bruce Telephone Garden, corner of Highway 8 and N Alvey

**When:** June through October; Fridays from 2 to 6 p.m.

Are you a producer of fresh local fruits, vegetables, meats or other local food? The Rusk County Farmers' Market always welcomes vendor inquiries from local farmers.

To learn more, download the Rusk County Farmers' Market New Vendor Application and the Rusk County Farmers Market New Vendor Cover Letter.



*Upcoming Events*

**May 28th**

**BEEF, BREWS, & MOOS**

**June 11th**

**DAIRY BREAKFAST**

*Stay tuned for more details!*





## AGRICULTURE WORKS HARD FOR

### ► SAWYER COUNTY

Family-owned farms, food processors and agriculture-related businesses generate thousands of jobs and millions of dollars of economic activity for Sawyer County, while contributing to local income and tax revenues.

#### WHAT DO OUR FARMS PRODUCE?

1

Milk



2

Grain



3

Fruits, Nuts, Berries



4

Cattle & Calves



5

Hay & Other Crops



### Sawyer County Agricultural Fair, 2022

Plan now to attend the Sawyer County Agricultural Fair on **Aug. 11-14** at the Sawyer County Fairgrounds in Hayward.

The fair was established in 1907 and its mission statement is: The Sawyer County Fair exists to promote and encourage education, agriculture, the arts and entertainment through an annual fair and associated events.

There are big jobs, little jobs, physical jobs, mind-bending jobs, beautification jobs, manure related jobs, paper pushing jobs, food serving jobs, youth based jobs, many opportunities to help accomplish the mission of the fair and for it to be successful.

If you're interested in volunteering at the Sawyer County Fair, please contact 715.934.2721 or sawyercountyfair@gmail.com.

The Sawyer County Fair is a very rewarding, community-based, experience that showcases the county youth. Come see what's new and be a part of the fun.



*Have you "herd"?*

**Save the Date  
for the Sawyer  
County Dairy  
Breakfast**

Brought to you by:

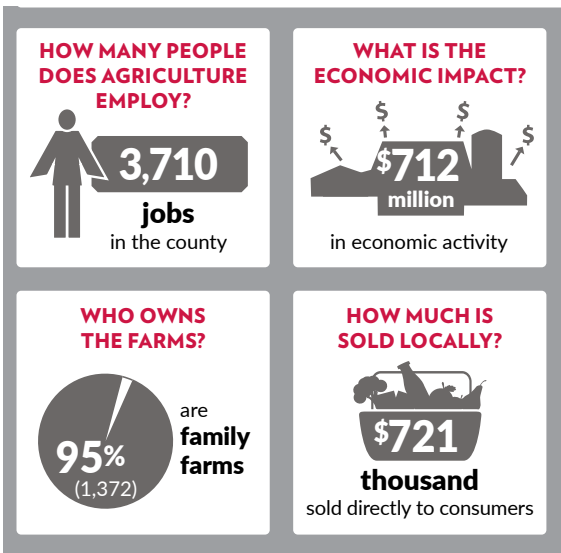


**SATURDAY, JUNE 25TH  
SAWYER COUNTY  
FAIRGROUNDS  
6:30 AM - 11 AM**



## AGRICULTURE WORKS HARD FOR ► ST. CROIX COUNTY

Family-owned farms, food processors and agriculture-related businesses generate thousands of jobs and millions of dollars of economic activity for St. Croix County, while contributing to local income and tax revenues.



## Aerially Seeded Rye

Spring Followup Field Event

April 13th 9:30 - 10:30 am New Richmond  
County Road T & 160th



Planted mid-September 2021



2 weeks after planting



2 weeks after corn harvest

Come see what the rye is doing now.

Above & below the soil.

Questions/RSVP,  
call/text Tara @  
715-492-0329

## Farmers Meet to Discuss Reducing Input Costs With Soil Management

Submitted by Tara Daun, Farmer-Led Watershed Coordinator, Hay River, Horse Creek, Dry Run and South Kinnickinnic Watersheds

On March 10, more than 50 farmers met at the Phoenix Grill & Event Center in Baldwin to hear from renowned Indiana farmer Rick Clark.

This event was sponsored by the Hay River Farmer-Led Watershed Council, the Dry Run Farmer-Led Watershed Council and St. Croix County to give farmers a venue to discuss rising input prices and how soil management can help control their costs.

After a casual lunch, Clark started in on his presentation of how he uses soil health principles and testing to reduce his equipment, diesel and horsepower costs on his 7,000-acre operation.

Clark then started showing the value of the organic matter produced by his cover crops noting that the best ROI on his now organic farm occurred when they were minimizing synthetic chemical use, but still using small amounts as needed.

One main takeaway was the value of letting cover crops grow in spring as long as possible, by interseeding covers, planting green in the spring and terminating the covers as late as possible, sometimes over a month after planting soybeans.

Tara Daun, who organized the event at the direction of the Farmer-Led Councils, said "Rick's information is all over YouTube and his website, so we weren't trying to just have him give his spiel again. Our goal was to allow local farmers in Wisconsin to really ask practical, specific and detailed questions of how to incorporate his successes onto their farms. We achieved that goal. I'm pleased that we had so many questions, we went over time and didn't even get to Rick's last slides."

## Food Stand Help

We are looking for volunteers to help clean and setup the St. Croix County Farm Bureau food stand prior to the St. Croix County Fair.

Help is needed the week of **July 20**.

If you are interested in helping, please contact Melanie Peterson at 715.505.1378.



## LEARN TO LINE DANCE

with Farm Bureau

THURSDAY, APRIL 28

White Pine Berry Farm

1482 Oak Drive, River Falls, WI

7:00-10:00 PM



Join Farm Bureau members from Pierce, Polk-Burnett and St Croix for a night of line dancing, complete with lessons led by St. Croix County Farm Bureau members. Dance along to favorites like Copperhead Road, Good Time, Footloose and many more.

Snacks and refreshments will be available. Adult refreshments are welcome but no hard alcohol.

For questions, please contact Lexi DuSell at 715.415.6701 (call or text).



## Request for Proposals: Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program

The Great Lakes Commission issued a request for proposals (RFP) for the 2022 Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program grant program.

For more than 30 years, the Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program has provided grants to reduce nutrients and sediments from entering the Great Lakes.

This year's program will continue to help local partners take action to reduce nutrient loads from agricultural watersheds, reduce untreated stormwater runoff and restore shoreline and streambanks in the Great Lakes basin.

Through the program, nonfederal units of government, tribes and incorporated nonprofit organizations are eligible to receive grants for up to \$200,000, supporting work over a period of up to three years.

Applicants are invited to submit proposals for activities associated with one of three project types: 1. agricultural nonpoint; 2. stormwater; and 3. Great Lakes shoreline or streambanks.

The due date for applications is 5 p.m. Eastern time on **April 22**.

Applications will be reviewed by representatives from the eight Great Lakes states, plus federal partners at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).

Final decisions on funded projects are anticipated in summer 2022. Selected projects would begin work not later than **Oct. 1**.

The Great Lakes Commission has managed the Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program for more than three decades.

Since 2010, the program has benefited from funding through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Funded projects support progress toward the achievement of GLRI Action Plan objectives and goals. The program is a partnership with NRCS, U.S. EPA, and the Great Lakes states.

For more information, please visit [www.nutrientreduction.org](http://www.nutrientreduction.org).

For more information, please contact GLC Program Manager Nicole Zacharda at [nzacharda@glc.org](mailto:nzacharda@glc.org) or 734.396.6084.

## New Agricultural Enterprise Areas Designated in 2022

In response to the 2021 Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) petition cycle, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has designated more than 62,000 acres of lands as AEAs in Douglas and Buffalo counties.

These AEAs went into effect Jan. 1.

Designations include the following new AEAs:

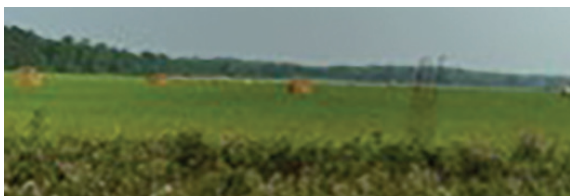
Northern Douglas County AEA, Douglas County

This AEA covers 32,881 acres in the towns Parkland, Amnicon, Cloverland, Lakeside, Maple and village of Poplar. This is the first AEA for Douglas County.

Goals for this AEA include:

- Maintain and preserve agricultural land suitable to the present and future needs of agriculture in the county through education opportunities and one-on-one meetings
- Engage in education and outreach to promote a diverse agricultural community
- Provide opportunities for farmers and non-farmers to build relationships and share information
- Promote nutrient management education with the support of a new agricultural technician paid with a grant from the National Association of Conservation Districts

To participate in the farmland preservation program in Douglas County, please contact Ashley Vande Voort, land conservationist, at 715.395.1266 or [Ashley.VandeVoort@douglascountywi.org](mailto:Ashley.VandeVoort@douglascountywi.org).



# STRESSED?

## We can help.

Lake Superior Community Health Center  
can provide support at no monetary cost.

**No insurance needed. Fully confidential.**

# 218-491-1788

[ajorgenson@lschc.org](mailto:ajorgenson@lschc.org)

*Fully funded by the Miller-Dwan Foundation.*

## Lake Superior Collaborative Symposium

The Lake Superior Collaborative Symposium is a space for information sharing, networking and action planning for professionals working on conservation, restoration, and climate-adaptive projects in the Lake Superior Basin of Wisconsin. This year's Symposium, held **April 27-29**, will include a combination of in-person field trips, pre-recorded lightning talks, breakout sessions with presenters and virtual sessions focused on Resilience, Restoration and Relationships.

To view the program and registration, visit [fyi.extension.wisc.edu/lakesuperiorcollaborative/2022-symposium](http://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/lakesuperiorcollaborative/2022-symposium).



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Barron County  
Chippewa County  
Dunn County  
Pierce County  
Polk Burnett  
Rusk County  
St. Croix County  
Sawyer County  
Superior Shores

# We're Here When You Need Us Most



We understand that accidents happen. You can count on our local claims adjusters to support you and help rebuild following an unintended loss.

**Visit [RuralMutual.com](http://RuralMutual.com) to learn more and find a local agent near you.**

**Rural Mutual**  
Insurance Company