

FARM BUREAU® Connection

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Farming, Family and Farm Bureau

By Kevin Krentz, Wisconsin Farm Bureau President



Farming, family and Farm Bureau are three pillars of my life that make me who I am. If one were to remove one of these pillars from my life, I might still be standing, but I wouldn't be who I truly am without all three.

Farming: I enjoy farming because every day is different. Every morning I develop a plan for my day, but as we all know, things don't always go according to that plan.

There is no typical day as a farmer, and I enjoy the challenges and experiences that it brings. Owning a family dairy farm, I'm able to go through those challenges and experiences with my wife and children. Farming also gives me the opportunity to be a good steward of the land as it is only mine to work for a short time before it is passed down to the next generation. I enjoy caring for my animals, even if it means putting their needs before my own at times. While it's a fast-paced and unpredictable lifestyle, I'm learning to slow

down, experience the good as it comes and be grateful for this life I've been blessed with.

Family: I love to travel with my family. The beauty within this country and the diversity of our landscapes and cultures is amazing. I also enjoy traveling around Wisconsin. Our state's wineries, restaurants, breweries, outdoor recreation areas and annual events are part of what makes me proud to be from Wisconsin.

Farm Bureau: Several policy changes that were influenced by Farm Bureau have been important to my farm, but the most important thing this organization has done for me is much more personal. The opportunities for growth and leadership that Farm Bureau has given me are unparalleled.

Since day one, the professionalism of Farm Bureau has motivated me to push myself and grow within the organization through Young Farmer and Agriculturist contests and the WFBF Leadership Institute (our year-long, premier leadership training course).

These three things sometimes meld together. We truly see ourselves as a big farming family at Farm Bureau. We are happy you are part of it.

POSITIVE IMPACT

'Bee' Creative to Help the Bees!

Have you ever wondered how you can make a difference for farmers in your community?

Bees and other pollinators are essential to a healthy environment. Nearly 85% of flowering plants, including many crops, need a pollinator to reproduce. Around one-third of our food supply relies on the help of bees.

Farmers need pollinators for their crops to grow and thrive.

Simple changes can make a huge difference to pollinators. Even small spaces have great potential to support the needs of this group.

Early pollinators need extra support at the beginning of spring when their food supply is limited. Native wildflowers and shrubs provide higher quality food for pollinators.

According to the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, there are four simple steps you can take to bring back pollinators.

1. **Grow pollinator-friendly flowers:** Need ideas for some native flowers and plants to grow in your lawn or garden? Try some wild geranium, purple prairie clover or wild bergamot.

2. **Provide nest sites:** Doing some spring cleaning in your yard?

Butterflies and other pollinators use dead leaves and brush to lay their eggs. Leave your brush pile to give the pollinators some time to grow!

3. **Minimize pesticide use:** Insecticides can directly harm the insects you are trying to bring back to your garden.

4. **Spread the word:** Post photos and tell your neighbors about your efforts to bring back the bees.

Even small spaces have the potential to meet the most basic needs of the entire insect life cycle. Pollinators are one of the easiest groups of animals to support in a residential landscape. Try incorporating diverse species in your flower beds and gardens.

Native plants are best for supporting the widest array of native pollinators. Bees, butterflies and moths rely on native species to support their diet. What percentage of your flowering vegetation is native?

'Bee' creative! How can you add more native vegetation to your yard?





Bovines, Books and Brews

By Cassie Sonnentag

Although Cris Peterson was neither born nor raised on a farm, she certainly got to one as soon as she could. For the past 49 years, Cris has been farming with her husband, Gary, on their family's dairy farm, Four Cubs Farm, in Grantsburg. Throughout her years as a dairy farmer, Cris discovered a passion for writing that has led her to write 12 award-winning children's books focused on agriculture. Her son Ben and his wife Nicki are the farm's fifth generation and have added craft brewing to the mix, which allows the farm to reutilize distillers grains by topdressing the herd's feed supply.

Bovines: Where it all started

Born and raised in Minneapolis, Minn., dairy farming is not a part of Cris' backstory. However, as her family traveled to visit their lake house in Grantsburg in the summers of her youth, Cris found herself falling for a boy named Gary, whom she later married upon graduating from the University of Minnesota.

"I went directly from a sorority house with 33 women to a farm with 33 cows," Cris said. "It was a hard adjustment, but it was also something I had always wanted."

Immersing herself in the farm, Cris soon found herself thriving.

"Everyone is always looking for something bigger, something better; I was so thrilled to be in Gary's family farmhouse," Cris said. "In this small community, we had no other options. So, I bloomed where I was planted."

The couple milked 45 cows in a tie stall barn until their son, Ben, came home to farm in 1998. The farm expanded progressively over time to 800 cows with a milking parlor until a barn fire devastated the family on Nov. 1, 2017. The fire consumed the farm's original barn which

housed the milking parlor, and for the first time since the late 1800s, cows were not milked at Four Cubs Farm.

"Our cows went all over Northwest Wisconsin," Cris said. "Thanks to neighbors, friends and even complete strangers, 860 cows were sent to different farms to be cared for as we recovered from the fire."

Over the course of five months, the freestall facility was retrofitted to install 16 robotic milking units. By October 2018, the farm was back to milking at full capacity. Today, Four Cubs Farm milks nearly 1,000 Holstein cows averaging 3.1 milkings per day.

Books: A divine intervention

Farming isn't a walk in the park and Cris realized that. She recalled a day on the farm when her frustrations got the best of her.

"I was so frustrated on the farm, and I remember crying out to God, 'You told me to do this!'" Cris said. "Almost immediately, I felt this voice in my ear tell me, 'Write children's book reviews.'"

Cris began reviewing children's books for her column, Huckleberry Bookshelf. The column grew from the local paper to the Wisconsin State Journal to the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Soon, children's books were arriving at Cris' doorstep day after day.

To read the full story, visit wfbf.com/member-profiles/meet-cris-peterson.



The Benefits of Bundling Insurance Policies



Rural Mutual Insurance Company offers a wide variety of insurance products, including home, auto, farm, business, life and health. Whether you are a business owner, homeowner, renter or farmer, we provide people from all over the state of Wisconsin with the exact coverage they need year after year.

Here are some reasons why you should consider bundling your insurance policies with Rural Mutual.

Bundling Ultimately Saves You Money

It's true, buying multiple insurance policies from the same company can make a substantial difference as far as what you pay. Managing multiple policies through one insurance company can help reduce your premium costs, depending on the types and number of policies purchased.

For example, with a Rural Mutual multi-policy, you can save up to 25% on life insurance when you bundle your home, farm or country estate insurance with your personal auto or town and country auto policies. To learn more about this discount, contact your Rural Mutual agent.

Bundling Provides Convenience and Peace of Mind

Bundling insurance policies under a single roof also allows you to stay in contact with the same agent every single time you have a question,

want to make a change or need to submit a claim.

Additionally, buying multiple policies from the same insurance company is easier than investing in separate policies from different companies. This way, policies can be managed from the same online account and purchased from or altered by the same agent – therefore reducing the stress that accompanies insurance for many Americans.

Rural Mutual Offers A Number of Discount Policies

Here are just a few more ways Rural Mutual Insurance customers are able to save money, time and energy.

- **Multi-Vehicle** – Enjoy a multi-vehicle discount when you add more than one household vehicle to your policy.
- **Good Student** – Students with stellar report cards can enjoy discounts.
- **Claims Free** – You can be eligible for a discount if you have not submitted a claim in three years.
- **Acquisition** – New Rural Mutual farm insurance customers who add auto insurance to their policies can get the rate they are currently paying – if it is cheaper than ours.
- **Pay Plan Discount** – Pay your premium every six months for a discount.

If you need more than one insurance policy, there can be many advantages to bundling, including lower rates, simpler communication and fewer headaches. Find out how Rural Mutual's bundling program can help lower your costs by contacting your local agent. You may also request a free quote to calculate how much you'll pay. Our agents know our products inside and out and are ready to help you design a bundle that best fits your needs.

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Agents contracted through the end of 2022 are eligible to receive a **\$2,000** signing bonus.

We're hiring throughout the state of Wisconsin. If you're interested in joining our sales team, contact us.

RuralMutual.com/Careers

 **Rural Mutual**
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Green Chile Shredded Beef

Ingredients

- 3-3½ lb. chuck or arm roast
- 10 oz. can green enchilada
- enchilada sauce
- ½ c. beef broth
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. salt
- sprinkle of pepper



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Trim excess fat from edges of beef. Place in a Dutch oven or roasting pan with lid. Add remaining ingredients to pan with beef starting with spices.
3. Bake 3 to 4 hours or until meat starts to fall apart. Check occasionally to make sure all the moisture doesn't evaporate, if it does add ½ c. water as needed.
4. When meat is done, place on a plate to cool until it can be handled, about 20 minutes. Shred beef and remove any extra fat or bones.
5. Place back in the pan with juices and combine well. There should not be a large amount of liquid, just enough to create a sauce on the meat.
6. Once it is heated through, serve either as a taco filling with cheese of choice or place in soft tortillas with cheese and roll them up and broil until golden brown like Chimichangas. Enjoy!

Italian Sausage Bow Tie Pasta

Ingredients

- 12 oz. box bow tie pasta
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 lb. Italian sausage, bulk or links with casing removed
- ½ c. onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 28 oz. can Italian-style diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1½ c. heavy cream
- 2 c. mozzarella cheese, shredded
- Optional: sliced spinach, kale or zucchini to add color and vegetables

Directions

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and cook pasta as directed until al dente. Drain.
2. While pasta cooks, brown sausage in olive oil in a large skillet. Add onion and garlic. Cook until onion is softened.
3. Add tomatoes and heavy cream and heat until simmering and slightly thickened. Add optional vegetables and cook for about 3 minutes.
4. Add cooked pasta and top with cheese.
5. Cover the pan and allow the cheese to melt.
6. Enjoy with an Italian bread.



These recipes are provided courtesy of Chad and Katrina Gleason from Shullsburg in Lafayette County. They own and operate Gleason Cattle Company Meats. Their business has grown from selling quarters in 2007 from their fourth-generation family farm to a diversified business of beef, grass-fed beef, pork and lamb sold by individual cuts, quarters and halves. They operate an on-farm store, attend five local farmers markets and have beef sticks in three local stores including Roelli Cheese Haus.

For more information find them online at:
• Facebook.com/GleasonCattleCompany
• Instagram @gleason.cattle.company