



AUGUST 2022

# Grassroots

District 4 News

## Ag in the Classroom Essay Contest Winners



The Ag in the Classroom essay contest offers fourth- and fifth-grade students a fun, competitive opportunity to put their writing skills to work while exploring how agriculture impacts their daily lives.

This year's essay question was, 'What's popping in Wisconsin – the value of corn to our economy.'

More than 1,500 students met the challenge and submitted essays sharing the knowledge, trivia and personal connections to Wisconsin corn.

Ag in the Classroom is excited to announce the winner, a fifth-grade student at Denmark Elementary School, Mollie Goral. The 2022 Ag in the Classroom essay contest is sponsored by WE Energies, Wisconsin Soybean Marketing Board, Wisconsin Corn and the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation.

Special thanks to teachers, county Ag in the Classroom essay coordinators and the WFBF Promotion and Education Committee for



The winning class instructed by Tony Garner, fifth grade, Pepin Area Schools.

submitting and judging essays.

District 4's essay contest winner was Ayva Tulip, a fifth-grade student at Pepin Area Schools. Her parents are Luke and Ashlin Tulip. Ayva's teacher was Tony Garner. Her essay was titled, "What's popping in Wisconsin?"

District	Student	School
1	Kathryn Sorenson	Allenton Elementary
2	Autymn Norton	Juda School
3	Ariana Reinsbach	Fennimore Elementary
4	Ayva Tulip	Pepin Area Schools
5	Kendall Carley	Omro Elementary School
6	Mollie Goral	Denmark Elementary School
7	Sylvia Spear	New London Middle School
8	Jacob Marti	Home School
9	Astrid Sommerfeld	Luck Elementary

County	Teacher
Washington	Becky Schuett
Green	Penny Ramos
Grant	Emily Kamps
Pepin	Tony Garner
Winnebago	Heidi Sokolich
Brown	Tammy Brunette
Waupaca	Aleah Friemark
Wood	Melissa Marti
Polk	Carolyn Peterson/Kendra DeLong

### What's Popping in Wisconsin?

Pop, pop, boom. The smell of butter reaches your nose, you can't help but think of it. Can you guess what it is? It is popcorn. Have you ever wondered how we use corn in Wisconsin? I think that corn is very important to keep growing because we use it in many ways. Wisconsin uses more than 180 million bushels of corn per year. I am going to tell you of the many ways Wisconsin uses corn.

Corn is used for many things. I know a few people who like painting, well corn is used in paint, glue, ethanol, antibiotics, plastics, fabrics, condiments, gum cake mixes and baby food. People also eat sweet corn. Sweet corn is grown in gardens in the warmer weather. Sweet corn can be frozen, canned, and eaten

straight off the cob. Field Corn makes up 90% of the corn you see. Cows, pigs, and other animals get feed silage. Silage is salad for animals. The machine people use to harvest corn is called a combine. Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, South Dakota, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Kentucky, and Wisconsin are a part of the corn belt. Wisconsin ranks number one for corn silage, tenth for grain, third for sweet corn processing. One ear of corn has 16 rows and 800 kernels. Ethanol is made with corn. Some vehicles use 85 percent ethanol. I believe farmers should keep growing corn in Wisconsin.

In conclusion, I believe Wisconsin farmers should keep growing corn for many reasons. Corn is used in human food, animal food, and gas. Wisconsin grows a lot of corn every year. Wisconsin should keep growing corn.

# District 4 News

## Schaefer Hired For Ag in the Classroom



Beth Schaefer was named WBF's Agriculture in the Classroom coordinator.

"Beth's experience working directly with education and promotion programs, engaging volunteers and collaborating with stakeholders will serve her well as she leads Wisconsin's Ag in the Classroom program," said Wendy Kannel, Senior Director of Member Relations.

Schaefer earned a bachelor's degree from UW-Madison in agriculture education and a master's degree in agriculture and biology education from the UW-River Falls.

Schaefer most recently served as a regional program manager for the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. Prior to that, she was an agriculture teacher and FFA Advisor in Merrill and Oconto Falls. She is a graduate of the WFBF Leadership Institute, American Farm Bureau Communications Bootcamp and served on the WFBF Young Farmer and Agriculturist Committee.

"K-12 students are our future farmers, consumers and agriculture stakeholders. Ag in the Classroom provides a platform to equip teachers and volunteers with accurate, meaningful lessons and resources to engage students in the amazing opportunities available to them in agriculture whether they are seeking a job or simply understanding how food, fiber and fuel are produced," Schaefer said. "I'm excited to guide Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom and continue building our reputation as a trustworthy source for educators seeking unique and engaging lessons in agriculture."

Schaefer and her husband, Matt, live near Brandon and have four children. She started her duties on March 21.

## Ag in the Classroom Hosts Summer School Edition Trainings

By Beth Schaefer, Ag in the Classroom Coordinator

Ag in the Classroom is preparing for back-to-school with teacher and volunteer trainings.

The Ag Immersion Experience for Educators, a new teacher-focused workshop, was held on Aug. 2, at the Farm Wisconsin Discover Center in Manitowoc. This day-long training introduced educators to sustainability efforts in agriculture.

School will soon be in session, are you ready to connect with classrooms in your community? Join Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom at noon on Tuesdays in September to dive into topics that will provide tools, tips and timely topics to grow your Ag in the Classroom.

Can't make the Lunch and Learns? All sessions will be recorded and made available at [wisagclassroom.org](http://wisagclassroom.org). Register at [wisagclassrooms.org](http://wisagclassrooms.org) or <https://forms.gle/iXVRYtg8BVPES4d49>.

**Calling All Volunteers:** We need your input to design the best volunteer experiences to prepare for the upcoming school year.

We are hoping to beat the gas pumps while providing opportunities to tackle coordinator training, classroom connections and prepare for 2022-2023.

Learn more about these opportunities and find hands-on activities through the lens of agriculture at [wisagclassroom.org](http://wisagclassroom.org).



## COUNTY FARM BUREAU ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE



### BUFFALO

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6

Social begins at 7:00pm with meal to follow at Danzinger Vineyards, S2015 Grapeview Ln, Alma, WI



### EAU CLAIRE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Meal begins at 7pm at Place to be Determined



### JACKSON

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Potluck meal begins at 12:30pm at Steve & Pat Kling's event barn, WI5300 Relyea Lane Taylor, WI

\*\* Please bring a dish to pass.



### MONROE

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22

Potluck meal begins at 7pm at Cashton Park, Cashton, WI

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



### TREMPEALEAU

TUESDAY, AUGUST 16

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

# District 4 News

## WFBF State Committees and District Members Who Serve

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau has a variety of state committees that include members from District 4. Below is a description of the different committees along with who from District 4 is on the committee.

### Dairy Committee

The Dairy Committee is advisory to the WFBF Board of Directors. This committee reviews issues and activities at the state and national levels effecting Wisconsin's dairy industry. Committee members are appointed for one-year terms and may not serve more than four consecutive terms.

District 4 members on the Dairy Committee include Mark Karow of Eau Claire County and Patrick Danzinger of Buffalo County.

### Dairy Growth Management Committee

At the January 2021 WFBF Board of Directors meeting, the board approved a special committee: Dairy Growth Management.

District 4 is represented by Nathan Kling of Jackson County on the Dairy Growth Management Committee.

### Policy Development Committee

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation's policy is established by farmers through a structured policy development process. Suggestions come from our members who propose and vote on them at county Farm Bureau annual meetings. From there, the policies move to the WFBF Policy Development Committee, and then delegate members vote on the proposals at the WFBF Annual Meeting.

The WFBF Policy Development Committee is referred to in the WFBF by-laws and is not advisory to the WFBF Board of Directors. The committee is charged with developing the proposed public policy for consideration by the voting delegates at the WFBF Annual Meeting. The committee reports to the delegates at the WFBF Annual Meeting instead of the WFBF Board of Directors.

District 4 member is represented by Jack Herricks of Monroe County on the Policy Development Committee.

### Promotion and Education Committee

The Promotion and Education Committee is a dynamic group of Farm Bureau leaders who develop, implement and promote programs that build agricultural awareness and provide leadership development to the agricultural community. They are passionate about sharing their agriculture stories and ultimately providing agricultural education for school-age students and adults of all ages.

The committee helps host the annual Ag in the Classroom essay contest and helps select the book of the year. They also have a 'Playbook' that provides resources and event ideas to county Farm Bureaus. The committee also helps plan the Ag LEAD Summit in odd years or the IGNITE Conference in even years.

Brenda Dowiasch from Eau Claire County is on the WFBF Promotion and Education Committee.

### Legislative and Political Action Committee

This committee is really two committees combined into one. The Volunteers for Agriculture® (VFA) committee is a legally constituted political action committee established by the WFBF. The committee operates under by-laws established by the WFBF Board of Directors. The committee is charged with increasing the political involvement of the agricultural community. This includes identifying and supporting candidates for state office that are determined to be 'Friends of Agriculture.'

Did you know that as a voting member, you can make a \$10

contribution when you pay your annual Farm Bureau dues? If you choose to not contribute, you simply subtract \$10 from the amount on the line marked 'total.'

Per Wisconsin law, the name and address of anyone who makes a contribution is reported to the Wisconsin Ethics Commission and is public record. Contributions are voluntary and not deductible for income tax purposes.

The Legislative Committee is advisory to the WFBF Board of Directors. The committee reviews issues and activities at the state and national levels effecting Wisconsin agriculture.

District 4 members on the VFA Committee include Kyle Danzinger of Buffalo County and Brandon Boettcher of Eau Claire County.

### Young Farmer and Agriculturist Committee

The Young Farmer and Agriculturist program is for members between 18 and 35 years old. The YFA program offers opportunities for leadership and skill development, along with opportunities to network with peers.

The committee coordinates the YFA contests that include the Discussion Meet and Excellence in Ag. Additionally, the committee plans the YFA Conference in December.

Savannah and Keith Henke from Jackson County represent District 4 on the YFA Committee.



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[wfbf.com/communication/ag-newswire](http://wfbf.com/communication/ag-newswire)

# District 4 News

## WFBF Promotion and Education Committee at Superior Fresh Aquaponic Farm

By Kevin Whalen, WFBF District 4 Coordinator

The WFBF Promotion and Education Committee sponsored a tour of the Superior Fresh Aquaponics Farm on June 24. The family managed farm, which is operated outside of Northfield and is one of the most innovative operations in the nation with advanced production practices in raising organic salmon and organic greens for the Midwest market.

Our group met at the farm for our tour at 9 a.m. and started with snacks of milk, water and donuts. The participants included members from Jackson, Trempealeau, Buffalo and Eau Claire counties along with three Rural Mutual Insurance agents and three WFBF staff members.

The attendees were split into two groups with one section touring the salmon production area and the other touring the 13-acre greenhouse area that produces more than 20 varieties of greens for the salad mixes.

This breakdown allowed the individuals a chance to see up close the practices that Superior Fresh puts into food production. Each group was led on the tour by a manager of the respective facilities.

The aquaponics production area has a variety of sizes of tanks with freshwater that is provided by groundwater. Non-GMO Atlantic Salmon are raised at Superior Fresh due to their highly desirable fillets and large supply of omega-3 fats. The eggs are hatched on site and the food supply is the egg yolk sac that supplies the nutrients for the fingerling's first 40 days of life.

An important task that we witnessed was the extensive cleaning that goes on in the tank and on the equipment. Employees were manually cleaning surfaces to prevent illness in the fry.

The fish were moved to progressively larger tanks that were sunk into the ground at a depth of more than 25 feet. During their growth, the fish are fed a highly nutritive pellet that is very efficient. For every five pounds of fish food, Superior Fresh can grow five pounds of salmon and an additional 25 pounds of organic vegetables.

Fish at Superior Fresh are raised for two years with changes made to facilitate proper stocking rates per tank and animals sorted by size. More than 20 tanks are used so fish are moved using a complex transfer system that allows for water pumping to stress the fish less during transfer.

A sorting table sits above the production tanks where employees direct fish either back to grow longer or to clean out tanks where fish wait to be processed at the on-site mechanized system. The preparation tanks allow time for fish 'clean out,' which produces a higher quality filet with no foreign taste.

We toured the facilities for processing the salmon, but it was not a scheduled day for actual processing. The on-site processing does allow for less travel costs and means that the salmon are processed to earn the name 'fresh' before delivery to individual markets.

Moving to the greenhouses, we appreciated the efficiency of the operation. With Superior Fresh's ecosystem, the operation works in harmony with nature by recirculating 99.9% of the water with zero



The group arrived early at Superior Fresh and received a three-hour tour of the salmon, organic salad pack and land restoration area.

runoff, harnessing the sun for the bulk of growth and doing it on a fraction of the land. It also uses a fraction of the water required to sustain a conventional farm. Superior Fresh can grow as much food on its farm as it would take a traditional farm to produce on 300 acres.

An additional benefit from this efficiency is control of pests and potential diseases. The growth enclosure allows for regulation of all environmental conditions. Greens grown in these conditions are less susceptible to contamination.

Plants for food production are either started from seed or from plugs using mechanized seeders. This prepares seed for the trays that float on hydroponic recirculating water beds. The water used in the hydroponic beds uses nutrients that the farm has processed from fish waste that was captured from the fish production unit. The large amount of trays are cleaned before seeding and organized into the hydroponic beds. Trays are transferred by hand and organized by seeding date to facilitate proper growth and harvest dates.

Loose leaf greens are grown strictly on these trays. These greens are harvested by hand and moved to packaging. Sustainability continues with the packaging and retail sales of each product. Superior Fresh's clamshells are made from recycled plastic. Each one used re-purposes up to four recycled water bottles per package.

Plants produced in the greenhouses include Romaine lettuce, Arugula, Butter lettuce, head lettuce and colored lettuce that are either sold as individual products or in blends. The head lettuce are grown for a time in special growth chambers that use vertical stacking techniques to improve energy utilization along with a more efficient use of space. This allows for higher management techniques to be employed in growth.

The tour moved to the land regeneration area of Superior Fresh which included:

- 800 acres of which were undergoing restoration to Prairie, Oak Savannah, and wetland.
- More than 3,500 trees and shrubs planted.. The plantings protect the land from erosion and provide habitat for native species.
- 110 Native Species. Plants and animals that haven't been here in years are returning, including the Purple Martin and American Kestrel.
- More than 50,000,000 Native Seeds Saved. Superior Fresh is building up a seed bank, ensuring these native species will survive for generations.
- Two large lakes that are fully stocked with fish. These areas were developed for use of employees and visitors.

The conclusion of the tour was a chance to sample some of the farm's production at a local restaurant. Each participant was given a choice of salmon filet, salmon patty or chicken on organic greens fresh salad. As you can see from the accompanying photos, we got a chance to learn about the future and enjoy the benefits of a high-quality food.

Thank you to Kylie Gappa of Superior Fresh for arranging the tour and to the employees for helping us learn about Superior Fresh.



After the tour, the group went to a local restaurant that served the fresh salmon and greens that Superior Fresh produces.

# District 4 News

## District 4 Sponsors Barn Quilt Workshop for Members

Sixteen Farm Bureau members from the Black River Falls area got creative on April 14 and attended the District 4 Barn Quilting workshop at the Albion Town Hall.

The activity, delayed for two years because of COVID, was directed by Mary Kolstad with assistance from her husband, Michael.

"Our mission is to 'color' the landscape with quilts on barns wherever they convey a sense of history and family," said the Kolstads.

Mary Kolstad taught business administration at Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire before retiring in 2016. Michael Kolstad previously worked as a technical education teacher at Elk Mound Schools until his retirement in 2014.

Here is a sample Step by Step process by one artist:

### Step 1: Prep your wood.

If you are using hardwood or plywood, you will want to sand it and make sure it is smooth and won't give you any splinters. In this step, you also will need to cut your wood to size.

### Step 2: Prime your wood. (optional)

You don't HAVE to do this step, but I chose to do it because this MDF (medium-density fiberboard) is dark, and I'm using quite a bit of white and a pale blue. I don't want to have to do six coats of paint for each color.

### Step 3: Draw your quilt block outline.

Using a pencil or pen, draw on your quilt block outline. Take your time and make sure you are drawing perfectly straight lines. I like to use my cutting ruler for this as a straight edge. You can use a tape measure and anything with a straight edge if you don't have a ruler like this.

### Step 4: Tape off your first blocks and paint.

The order in which you paint is up to you, but I suggest painting all the

pieces of one specific color at one time. Then you don't have to wash your brushes as often. I started with the pale blue blocks.

**Tip:** Don't forget to put your brushes in a cup of water or wash them off between coats so the paint doesn't get all gummed up on the brush heads. That can be a nuisance to try to clean up later.

### Step 5: Continue taping off your different colors and painting.

For the best, sharp results on your paint edges, pull the tape off while your last coat is still wet. Pull the tape away from the paint slowly, but remember, you can always touch up the paint after with a small detail brush. Also, wait for the paint to dry completely before you lay tape over it. If you don't, the paint will bleed between the two colors under the tape, and you will have more to touch up later.

### Step 6: Touch up any imperfections.

You may not have any imperfections to fix, but if you do, now is the time to touch them up.

### Step 7: Add your hanging apparatus.

There are several different ways you can hang a barn quilt. Depending on how large and heavy your barn quilt is, you may be able to use simple picture frame hanging prongs from your local craft store.

Quilt designs were pre-etched into either 2 by 2 or 4 by 4 sections with patterns in advance so that the projects could be completed by the end of the workshop. Taping and painting were the main challenges with plenty of assistance from instructors. The participants started early with an official start time of 8:30 a.m. The smiles on the artist's faces with their projects are a good indication of the success of the workshop. A big thank you for Brenda Dowiasch in organizing the activity.



WFBF Promotion and Education Chair Brenda Dowiasch and her quilt.



Brenda's mom constructing her quilt.



Cassie Sonnentag painted something she was proud to take home.



Mary and Michael Kolstad were the instructors.

## YFA Members Host Euchre Night

By Kevin Whalen, District 4 Coordinator

The Buffalo County Young Farmers and Agriculturists held its annual Euchre Night on April 23 at Buzz's in Mondovi.

The euchre party is one of the activities that survived the pandemic and was held last year about the same time. It was good to take a break and enjoy some cards since the spring was a little stressful with a compacted work schedule due to weather that was less than ideal.

It was great to see young farmers from Jackson and Pepin counties make the trek to Mondovi for some socializing. Most of the young farmers enjoyed the pizza and conversation. The card playing was just for fun with no prizes handed out. Great to see some traditions continue.



Members fueling up with pizza before playing euchre.



Members strategized by deciding who plays with whom and where to sit.



Trump cards are being thrown with velocity.

## Remembering Angie Bork, Buffalo County Farm Bureau Leader



Angie was born on Sept. 18, 1928, in Winona, Minnesota, to Alex and Anna Pellowski of Pine Creek, Wisconsin. She grew up on a farm near Pine Creek. On June 26, 1948, she married Roman Bork and they farmed together in rural Fountain City. Angie also worked for many years for the College of Saint Teresa managing the bookstore.

Angie was a community builder through active participation in many organizations. She received the Lifetime Commitment Award for her work at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart where for many years she hosted donut Sundays, managed the annual rummage sale and was involved with Perpetual Adoration. She volunteered for many years with the Winona Council of Catholic Women on the Cathedral, diocesan and national levels.

Angie was a staunch supporter of the Buffalo County Farm Bureau, participating in promoting both beef and dairy along with working with the Women's seminar and Youth seminar.

She hosted meetings in her home and was known for her ability to keep order in a very efficient yet polite manner.

Angie served as President of the Buffalo County Farm Bureau and served on the Wisconsin Tax and Education Commission.

In 1999 she was named Buffalo County Farm Woman of the Year.

Angie served on the first school board of Cathedral Grade School, was active with the Catholic Daughters of America and volunteered many years at Winona Health.

'Angie was an avid quilter and sewed thousands of 'Wee Quilts for Wee Folk,' which she donated to schools and organizations worldwide.'

Angie was a positive life force and very influential in the lives of her children and the many others that she mothered or mentored throughout her life.

Angie was a true farmer – deeply connected to all the seasons of the land and of life. Above all, she was grateful. She passed on her staunch support of agriculture to all who she encountered.

The heavens have gained a very bright star that although we will all sadly miss having her here with us, we are so very grateful for having had the chance to know and to love her.



## Two Osseo-Fairchild Graduates Receive County Farm Bureau Scholarships

Jesse Groell of Osseo and Heidi Strey of Osseo have been selected as 2022 recipients of the Eau Claire County Farm Bureau Scholarships.



Groell is a 2021 graduate of Osseo-Fairchild High School where he was the class valedictorian. Groell attended UW-River Falls where he is pursuing a degree in agricultural engineering technology.

Groell has been an active member of the community through his involvement in Russell Corner Badgers 4-H, Osseo Evangelical Lutheran Church, Christian Youth Alliance, Osseo-Fairchild FFA, high school band, jazz band, National Honors Society, Osseo-Fairchild Track and Field and the

high school quiz bowl team.

Currently, Groell is employed by Bert-Mar Farms in Osseo where he assists with milking cows, bedding, scraping floors and waste feed removal on the 90-cow dairy.

He also is employed at Wathke Farms in Fall Creek milking 30-cows and performing silo maintenance. In addition to working on two farms, Groell lives on an 80-acre crop and beef farm assisting his parents with daily operations including field work and caring for 4-H animal projects.

Groell hopes to complete undergraduate research in the area of design of power and machinery. He hopes to one day intern for agri-business employers to get hands-on experience solving problems and improving processes in the field with producers. Upon graduation, Groell hopes to work in agribusiness as a designer or field service engineer.

The Eau Claire County Farm Bureau congratulate both on receiving the scholarships and wishes them the best of luck in their future education.



Strey is a 2020 graduate of Osseo -Fairchild High School. Currently, Strey is serving as the Section 2 State FFA Officer. She is a member of the UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau, Wisconsin Junior Simmental Association, Grace Lutheran Church Alter Guild Team, UW-River Falls Block and Bridle and a past member

of the Russel Corner Badgers 4-H Club. Her SAE is Beef Production Entrepreneurship. The Strey family has a herd of commercial cattle, and she does a bit of showing on the side.

Strey is employed at Foster Farms where she prepicks strawberries, does weed control and she sets up irrigation systems. Recently, she created a promotional video for the farm to share on Facebook. Strey is the daughter of Steve and Leslie Strey in Osseo. She also is employed at Freddy's Dairy Bar on UW-River Fall's campus where she sells dairy products to staff and students.

Strey is a junior who is majoring in agriculture communications and marketing.

## County Farm Bureau Members Say, 'It's In Our Jeans'



The Eau Claire County Farm Bureau participated in the Augusta Bean and Bacon Days parade on July 3.

Throughout the parade, Eau Claire County Farm Bureau members handed out 1,000 beef sticks and 200 copies of the District 4 Farm Bureau Local Producer Shopping Guide along with 300 copies of member benefits flyers.

'It's in Our Jeans' was the theme for the float with many pairs on the line to show the depth of the Eau County Farm Bureau members' commitment to agriculture.

The group has shown tremendous dedication to grassroots growth by being a

county that has made early bird membership goals for the last three years.

The Eau Claire County Farm Bureau wants to thank Erdman's Diamond Valley Farms for raising the homegrown beef that was used to make the beef sticks.



SPONSORED BY THE AUGUSTA LIONS CLUB  
46th Annual AUGUSTA BEAN & BACON DAYS PARADE WINNERS

### FLOATS

1. Augusta Tire & Auto
2. Eau Claire Co. Farm Bureau
3. Augusta FFA Alumni



## Leopold Conservation Award Application Now Available

Jackson County Farm Bureau wants to remind farmers and community members that the deadline for the Leopold Conservation Award is approaching on **Monday, Aug. 1.**

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation is a proud partner of the Leopold Conservation Award Program that recognizes agricultural landowners actively committed to a land ethic.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes landowners who inspire others with their dedication to land, water and wildlife habitat management on private, working land.

In his influential 1949 book, "A Sand County Almanac," Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

"Wisconsin farmers are dedicated to leaving their land better than how they found it. We have many innovative and deserving farmers in our area that should be considered for this award," said Jackson County Farm Bureau President Ryan Sawyer. "We encourage you to nominate a farmer that goes above and beyond to protect and preserve the land, water and soil."

The Leopold Conservation Award recipient receives \$10,000 and a crystal award presented by Sand County Foundation, Wisconsin Farm Bureau



Federation, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin and American Farmland Trust.

Nominations may be submitted on behalf of a landowner, or landowners may nominate themselves. The application can be found at [www.sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA](http://www.sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA).

## Jackson County Sundae on the Farm

Sundae on the Farm began at 9 a.m. with a church service lead by Pastor Bill from Pine Hill Church of Christ.

After the service, the celebration revved up with Sundaes, grilled cheese sandwiches, cheese curds, cheese sticks and milk being served for the next four hours.

Attendees got a chance to tour the grounds in the three tractor drawn hay racks to see each of the activities available. The petting zoo was in close competition for kids for being the top draw along with the sawdust coin scramble and scavenger hunt.

The older crowd migrated to the antique farm equipment display and the live music that was performed in the machine shed. Another draw was the dress a calf competition that was held adjacent to the sponsors area. The herd was assembled by the Promotion Committee and decorated by

local youth groups. Each group selected a favorite breed. Jackson County attendees were allowed a vote for the 'Best Dressed.'

Winning youth groups were:

**Grand Champion:** Jackson County Jr. Milking Shorthorns

**Reserve Champion:** Milk Duds

**Honorable Mention:** Golden Nuggets

A final highlight was the more than 20 royalty who attended. Led by the newly elected Alice in Dairyland Taylor Schaefer from Racine County.

Additional attendees included: Miss Jackson County, Miss Black River Falls, Trempealeau County Dairy Ambassador and the Kerner Blue Butterfly Court.

A great job was done by the Jackson County Dairy Promotion Committee in providing dairy promotion close to home.



McNulty Family Farm hosted Jackson County Sundae on the Farm.



Grand Champion of the dress the calf contest was the calf fitted by the Jr. Milking Shorthorns.



Taylor Schaefer, newly crowned Alice in Dairyland, attended the Jackson County activity near Black River Falls.

## Caring for God's Creation: Pat and Jack Herricks Count Their Blessings

By Mary Ellen Bliss

For almost seven decades, Cashton native Jack Herricks has lived and worked on his family's dairy farm. "My grandparents began this farm as newlyweds in 1912," he says. "Grandpa had a long reign running the farm—he didn't sell it to my dad until 1957. Dad then took it over for the next 14 years." Tragically, Jack's father was killed in a tractor accident when Jack was only 19 years old. "I really loved farming and always wanted that to be my life's work," Jack explains. "So, I stepped in when my dad died, and I've been farming here ever since. I've been at this gig for 50 years!"

Jack's wife Pat has been by his side for nearly all of those 50 years. "I also grew up on a dairy farm about five miles from Cashton, so I knew the lifestyle," Pat says. "I always said I would never marry a farmer, but then I met Jack and here I am," she laughs. The couple married when Jack was 20 and Pat was 18.

Even though Jack loved farm life, as a youth he attended Holy Cross Seminary in La Crosse for his high school years. "I went there fully intending on becoming a priest, but halfway through my senior year I just knew it wasn't for me," Jack says. He started college with the thought of becoming a veterinarian. "I loved animals, but I was sure there wouldn't be room for me at the farm, being the second oldest of 12 siblings. I figured becoming a vet would be somewhat close to what I really wanted to do," he explains. Then the call came that his father had died, and Jack volunteered to leave college and run the family farm.

"In retrospect, I think Holy Cross Seminary helped prepare me for taking over the farm at such a young age," Jack says. "I already had a strong work ethic growing up on the farm, and the seminary nurtured that and developed responsibility. I also had a lot of faith and determination."

When Jack took the reins in 1971, the farm had 34 cows and 120 acres. Today, it has grown to 630 cows and 1,180 acres.

Two of the Herricks' three children work on the farm with their spouses and are part owners in the farm corporation. "Our oldest daughter, Angie, is the assistant herdsman, does farm accounting and helps Pat with payroll. Her husband, Donald, helps with cropping and is our farm mechanic," Jack explains. "Our youngest son, Daniel, is the herd manager. His wife, Michelle, takes care of the calf barn. She excels at that because you need someone with motherly instincts in that role." Pat takes care of the newborn calves at the farm, nurturing them until they are old enough for the calf barn.

Middle son Nathan and his wife, Janice, and their children live and work in South Carolina.

Jack and Pat have been blessed with seven grandchildren, who have helped at the farm through the years. "They learn different jobs as they grow up," Jack says. "Right now, our youngest grandsons help in the calf barn and mow the grass. They're also very involved in 4-H."

Jack points to the picture of the farm of his boyhood taken in 1958. At that time, they had dairy cows, hogs, chickens and draft horses.

Jack and Pat agree that one of the biggest challenges they've faced through the years was "going from managing cows to learning how to manage people."

"There was a time when Pat and I and the family could do all the work on the farm," Jack says. As the farm grew, they realized they needed additional help. They now have 10 employees, and their nephew Ben also works on the farm.

Our employees are our number-one priority and our biggest asset," Jack says. "Probably the single most important thing we do for our employees is to follow the golden rule—we treat everyone the way we want to be treated ourselves. I always say if our people are happy, our cows will be

happy!"

Pat says one of the biggest joys of being a farming family is the feeling of togetherness. Jack agrees, adding, "As the farm has grown and more people have become involved, we've tried to instill in everyone that we need to be proud of each other's strengths and support each other in our weaknesses. Together we're stronger than any one of us is individually."

The couple says it takes a lot of faith to be a farming family. "When you think about farming in general, there's a lot of things that can go wrong that are outside of your control," Jack explains. "For instance, it's a huge act of faith to put thousands of dollars into seed and fertilizer when there's no guarantee what kind of crop we'll get, or what the weather will be like. I witnessed that kind of faith in my parents, and it set a good example for my own Faith life."

Jack says his Faith life was further strengthened by a near-death experience he had in 2005. "Early in the summer, I noticed that I was feeling stiff and sore, and more tired than usual. I was only 53 so I thought old age was coming on fast and hard," he jokes. His condition worsened through the next few months, progressing to vomiting and fainting. Finally, he agreed to see a doctor. "We started at the walk-in clinic and the nurse told us to go immediately to the emergency room," Jack says. "The nurse there tried to take my blood pressure, but it wouldn't register. Soon there was a crowd of blue gowned medical staff surrounding me and the doctor told me they were taking me right to emergency surgery—I was down to 13 heartbeats per minute and was fading fast. I remember his exact words: 'You're about to die.'"

Jack experienced a strange phenomenon as they wheeled him into the operating room. "I couldn't see the end of the room because it was so long and narrow. It just seemed to go on forever," he says. "The next thing I knew I was waking up in recovery. I told my doctor what had happened, and he said what I experienced is called tunneling. It often happens to people just before they die. He said I was at the threshold of the door of death, but I didn't get through."

Jack would later learn that his illness was caused by undiagnosed Lyme disease. "After receiving a pacemaker, my recovery was phenomenal. I went home two days after surgery," he says. "Seventeen years later, I still feel grateful for the blessing God gave me that day. I think He must have had more things for me to do." Jack says the experience gave him a greater appreciation for life. "I know that every day is a good day; some days are just better than others," he says. "Going through that also helped me develop a servant attitude. I want to be of service to other people as much as I can."

Jack and Pat say they are grateful for the many blessings in their lives, including the opportunity to live and work on the family farm for more than five decades. "We don't glory in being the owners of this farm, we glory in being the caretakers," Jack explains. "Our land has been in the family for 110 years, and it's growing better crops today than it did when my grandparents first came to it. It's a good lesson to live by. We all need to be caretakers of what God has entrusted to us."

While Pat is ready for retirement, Jack says he still loves working on the farm every day. "As long as my health is good, I want to stay involved," he says. "I want to be a mentor and support person, someone to give guidance to our family that reflects all the experiences I've accumulated in



## Herrick's, continued

my lifetime. I always tell people that a family farm is built on the successes of the previous and present generations to support the future generations."

The Herricks Family Farm will be in the spotlight on Sept. 21 when they host Rural Life Day, an annual diocesan event that celebrates our connection to and dependence upon rural life. "It is such an honor to be chosen to host this event," Pat says.

The day will begin with Mass celebrated by Bishop William Patrick Callahan, followed by an awards ceremony to recognize accomplishments of local farms and farmers. There will also be a blessing of livestock, crops, the land, and farm equipment, followed by a delicious meal. "It will be a wonderful day to gather people together at our farm and celebrate the

bounty that God has blessed us with," Jack says.

"Rural Life Day is a celebration of production agriculture. It celebrates farmers who feed and nourish the world," Jack continues. "There are so many vitally important professions in the world, but only 1½ percent of the population is directly involved in production agriculture." Pausing, he adds, "When you think of it that way, farmers have a pretty noble profession."

*Photography by Michael Lieurance*

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## Coloring Contest

### Age Groups:

- 3 & 4**      *A prize is given to a winner in each age group.*
- 5 & 6**      *To participate, you must be a resident of Monroe County.*
- 7 & 8**



Name:

Age:

Address:

Phone:

Mail entries by Friday, Aug. 26, 2022, to: Peggy Wright, 605 W. Wisconsin Street, Sparta, WI 54656.

## County Dairy Breakfast Is a Success

The 41<sup>st</sup> annual Monroe County dairy breakfast was held on June 4.

For the Hawk Dairy Farm, agriculture runs through the veins of the Rynes family. The Rynes family is now under its third generation of family management.



Manager of the farm, Walker Rynes, said after graduating from UW-Platteville, he knew his place was on his family's farm.

"I worked at a bank for like a year and I knew it from day one that it wasn't going to work. I can say it for both my brother and my sister, too. We enjoy being outside and working," Rynes said.

Now, Walker Rynes and his family hosted the Dairy Breakfast and he was excited to give the kids attending a taste of the experience he had as a child growing up on the farm working with his grandparents. The event showcased antique tractors and animals, and provided a bounce house.

Chairperson of the Monroe County Dairy Breakfast Committee Keith Giraud said this event is a great way for people to reconnect with agriculture.

The Monroe County Farm Bureau served pancakes throughout the event. In addition to a meal, the Monroe County Dairy Breakfast provided visitors with the opportunity to learn more about where their food comes from and to meet local farmers.



## Denk, Strey, Goplin Elected as 2022-2023 Wisconsin State FFA Officers



**Casey Denk** of the Mondovi FFA Chapter was elected to a year of service as the 2022-2023 Wisconsin FFA State FFA President during the 93<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin FFA Convention. Her advisors are Darin Gray and Shauna White. Casey's parents are Mark and Tammy Denk. Mark serves as a board of director for the Buffalo County Farm Bureau.

Denk is attending UW-River Falls majoring in agriculture business with a minor in animal science and hopes to use her degree to stay active in the agriculture industry and the family farm.

Throughout her FFA career, she developed placement projects in beef production and sheep production, while also showing at the Buffalo County Fair and helping exhibitors to shear sheep and learn.

In between her work on the family farm, Casey has also developed a robust career in the Mondovi FFA, serving as a chapter officer for three years as well as the chair for both Food for America and the fruit sale. She competed in the agronomy and livestock career development events and remains active in organization at the collegiate level to continue to expand her industry experience.



**Heidi Strey** from the Osseo Fairchild FFA Chapter was elected to a year of service as the 2022-2023 Section Two State FFA Officer during the 93<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin FFA Convention. Her advisors are Eric Boettcher and Amelia Hayden. Her parents are Steve and Leslie Strey. Steve serves as a board of director for the Eau Claire County Farm Bureau.

Strey is attending UW-River Falls, majoring in agricultural marketing and communications,

with a minor in animal science. After she graduates with a bachelor's degree, her goal is to advocate for the agricultural industry by connecting producers and consumers. She wants to find connections and work directly with consumers and agriculturists.

Heidi is a member of UW-River Falls and Eau Claire County Collegiate Farm Bureau, UW-River Falls Beef Management Team and Block and Bridle and UW-River Falls Intersociety Ministries.

When she isn't at a club meeting, she can be found behind the lens of a camera. She enjoys taking pictures, when given the opportunity.



**Kendra Goplin** of the Whitehall FFA Chapter was elected to a year of service as the 2022-2023 Section Three State FFA Officer during the 93<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin FFA Convention. Her advisor is Melinda Goplin. Kendra's parents are Shane and Melinda Goplin. Shane is serving as Trempealeau County Farm Bureau's President.

Goplin is attending South Dakota State University pursuing a major in agricultural education. She wants to educate the public about the importance of agriculture to generate educated consumers.

Kendra's Supervised Agricultural Experience has been creating and teaching an Agriculture Literacy Program. She developed the curriculum for the program and created a YouTube channel to promote agriculture during the pandemic.

In addition to working on the Agriculture Literacy Program, Kendra organized a Fair Oaks Educational Trip, Nursing Home Community Projects and has been a Fruit Sales Manager.

Kendra also participated in FFA events including the Discussion Meet, Employability Skills and Parliamentary Procedure Leadership Development events. She served as chapter secretary, vice president and president, as well as the Agriculture Literacy Coordinator.

## Hovey Family Hosts Dairy Breakfast

The 41<sup>st</sup> Trempealeau County Dairy Breakfast was held on June 18 at the Brian Hovey Farm, which was originally purchased by Brian's father and mother, Amos and Doris in 1970.

Prior to that, Amos served in the U.S. Army. Upon his return, Amos and Doris married and started their family with five children: Linda, Gerald, Dave, Randy and Brian. Amos also owned his own can milk route for 10 years, only taking nine days off his entire milk hauling career.

After moving to Pigeon, the family filled the barn and milked 26 cows and farmed the 120 acres with a John Deere A & B, and teams of horses. Later, Amos removed the horse stalls in the barn and expanded to a 40-stanchion barn.

From 1990 to 1994, Brian and Amos milked cows in the 40-stanchion barn. Brian also drove milk truck, eventually purchasing his own truck and milk route. Recently, he sold it to end his 30-year career in the milk hauling business. In 1998, Amos was ready to sell the farmstead and 80 acres to Brian. He kept 40 acres across the road where he built his retirement home overlooking the farm.

As time passed, Brian acquired more equipment, rented land and purchased crop ground. In 2000, the stanchion barn burned down, seemingly marking an end to dairy farming. In 2002, Brian built a new beef barn and purchased a herd of beef cows. The beef barn was transitioned into a dairy barn by adding free stalls, an eight-stall flat barn parlor and a milkhouse. The heifer barn also was built to house the dairy youngstock and the beef herd at the time; Holstein cows were purchased,

and dairy resumed on the Hovey farm.

In 2009, the Lely A-3 Robotic Milking System was installed and began a new lifestyle of dairy farming; a Lely 120 Manure Collector was added to further ease the demands of daily labor and cow stress.

The farm consists of 430 owned acres with 230 head of Holstein cattle that are pastured. Milking cows run around 80 head with calves being raised for heifer replacements and market feeder steers. 800 acres are cropped with rented neighboring land to provide forages and most of the grain for the livestock with surplus being sold as cash crop.

The farm primarily runs with Brian and one full-time hired man, Brian Kulig, who began working full-time but helped part-time for nearly 20 years. Kulig also cash crops and owns a steer lot outside of Whitehall; this lot is furnished with purchased feeder steers from the Hovey farm.

Brian's family consists of his daughter, Amanda and her husband, Cam Daley, along with their daughter, Jolie Rae. Brian has two heelers, Si and Bandit. As of 2022, the Brian Hovey farm has become the sole supplier to Bennet Valley Cheese, a fresh cheese curd maker in the Gilmanton area owned by Charlie Nelson.

The Trempealeau County Farm Bureau continued its tradition of providing milkshakes. The only difference was that board members were able to prep the equipment during the June meeting. Adjustments were made to cup sizes and members are experimenting with using corn-based products for straws and cups. The consumers will let the shake makers know if the decisions were wise.



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