



Grassroots

District 8 News

From the Milk House – Opportunities Arise



Ryan Klussendorf

Outgoing WFBF District 8 Director

2023, like milk prices, has been a year of ups and downs. Whether you are riding the highs or swimming through the lows, decisions must be made. Life is about making decisions and seizing opportunities as they arise. I recently seized an opportunity to move our farm to greater efficiency and make operator comfort a whole lot better too. For a few years now, I have been looking to get a new skid loader. As my wife would say, it was more of a want than a need, but I was still looking. Milk prices were not great, we already had debt on the current skid loader but looking ahead at interest rates as well as the warranty on the current skid loader getting down to the last few months a decision had to be made.

After weighing all the pros and cons, having interest locked below 3% for years and user reviews on these units high, I decided to pull the trigger. As you can imagine, I was excited to have a new one on the farm, especially one with so many driver comforts. I called the sales guy and set up a time to come to the farm to sign for it.

I don't know if you noticed, but the part I left out was telling my wife. So, as we sat at the kitchen table for lunch, she looked out the window and said, "What's the salesman doing here?" Word of advice for anyone out there looking to purchase some equipment, tell your wife first. She wasn't upset, but more shocked I would purchase a new skid loader. I don't buy myself new things, I am a proponent of good used equipment I can repair myself. But when opportunities arise you need to be ready to seize them. I love the new skid loader, it moves quickly, has a ton of legroom and even a backup camera. It has been logging plenty of hours on the farm already and has not disappointed a soul on the farm.

Opportunities come and go just as fast as they pop up if you don't seize them. With every opportunity there are pros and cons. You will never know what could have been if you don't jump into the unknown every now and again.

Seven years ago, I jumped into the choppy waters of the unknown. I was an extreme introvert, hardly ever letting new people into my inner circle. I applied to the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Leadership Institute and that became one of the most life-changing opportunities I have ever seized. It pushed me to get involved, to be a leader and to give me a platform to speak the truth about agriculture. I never thought I would become a state board member or have friendships that dot not only the state but the nation.

This past spring another opportunity arose that was worth a second look. After speaking with my wife, I decided to try to reach a new level in my advocacy, running for the Ag Country Farm Credit Services Board. In August I won the election, prompting my resignation from Wisconsin Farm Bureau and Rural Mutual Insurance. This opportunity is allowing me to propel my advocacy for agriculture even further, providing opportunities to be in Washington, D.C. several times a year. The basis of these trips focused on talking to legislators regarding proposed legislation affecting agriculture, lending regulations to help beginning farmers get started in the industry, and to help keep money flowing for famers during years of tight profit margins.

Farm Bureau will always be the cornerstone and building block of my leadership journey, I will always cherish my time on the State Board, serving as your District 8 Director, as well as the friendships I have made. Just like when working on the farm, I will keep moving forward, seizing opportunities as they come, while checking the rear-view mirror remembering where it all started. I want to thank each of you for allowing me to serve as your District 8 Director the last four years and encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves.



AG DAY AT THE CAPITOL

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31
Monona Convention Center | Madison, WI

Early Registration Deadline: January 24
Cost: \$30 per person by registration deadline
\$60 after deadline and at the door

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

Visit
wfbf.com/events/ag-day-at-the-capitol
for the latest information

Contact Ashleigh Calaway,
715.781.2306 or acalaway@wfbf.com,
to reserve your spot and to find out if
your county Farm Bureau is offering
sponsorship of attendees!

That's a Wrap – 2023

Ashleigh Calaway

WFBF District 8 Coordinator

In early fall I had a member say to me “Ashleigh, where’s your spark? Not that you aren’t doing a good job you just don’t have that fire in your eyes like I am used to.” He wasn’t wrong. He hit the nail on the head for me and honestly, I think for so many of us.

2023 was a rollercoaster year for so many. We filled out bingo cards we didn’t even know we were playing. Through all the heartache and happy moments, one thing remained true, the people. This last year due to being locked into a world of grief that I couldn’t escape, I was forced to lean on others for strength, to push my “I need to have control” tendencies to the side and to let others in. What I learned is that in the end, it all worked out. We came out a bit more battered and bruised but so much stronger and tight-knit than I could have ever imagined.

Although the fire might have dimmed a bit this year, we still did some amazing things:

March – We hosted our annual #FarmerTalk session on carbon credits, cover crops and the farm bill.

May – We handed out our #FarmNeighborsCare packages in partnership with Rural Mutual Insurance Agent Jenni Zinda-Mancil

June – We promoted pollination kits at local dairy breakfasts, reaching kids and families in ways we never thought we could. It was something so simple that we, as farmers do as part of our standard practice, could have such a ripple effect.

July and August – Your county leadership was out making a difference at the local level in the form of your county fair.

Clark County – Sponsored t-shirts for the goat show, a show that has been growing leaps and bounds.

Lincoln County – Sponsored feed buckets for every youth exhibitor at the fair as well as trophies.

Marathon County – Hosted their 10th round of The Little Britches Program in partnership with Marathon County Holstein Breeders and Marathon County DHIA. They also helped sponsor the grilled cheese competition.

Price County – Ensured dairy products and information about the benefits of milk were available to fairgoers.

Taylor County – Hosted their AgVenture tent, for more details check out Taylor County’s piece.

Wood County – Provided sponsorship for: the Little Britches Program, the Forage Sample Contest and the Junior Dairy Showmanship Contest.

September – We rallied together as a district and achieved our third consecutive year of voting membership growth, with many counties blowing their goal out of the water.

October – We rallied again putting together an amazing Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation Benefit raising over \$7,500 in memory of our dear Aly Sosnovske

December – We celebrated having more District 8 membership workers in the Farm Bureau Proud Club this year than I ever remember.

It’s hard to believe that 2024 is almost upon us and I couldn’t be more excited to see what this next year brings. From my family to yours we hope that 2024 brings you and yours:



Photos were taken by Kelly Sue Montag.

Meet Jason Behrend – District 8 Young Farmer and Agriculturist Committee Chair

Jason Behrend

YFA Committee Chair

YFA D.C. Fly-In

The Washington, D.C. Young Farmer and Agriculturist Fly-in was in September. I had the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. along with over 20 other Young Farmers and Agriculturists. The purpose of the trip was to meet with Wisconsin lawmakers on issues that affect farmers. We pushed to get a farm bill passed. My subgroup met with Representative Derrek Van Orden, Senator Tammy Baldwin and Senator Ron Johnson. We also got to tour the White House, the Capitol, Mount Vernon as well as many monuments and memorials. All farmers need to stand together when issues come up in agriculture. We cannot divide farmers into what each group wants. For example, conventional farming vs organic or row crop farmers vs livestock producers. When we do that, we don't win as an industry. We can strive for what is best for all farmers. Thank you to WFBF and Wood County Farm Bureau for the great opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C.

Greetings from the Barn!

In late September I accepted the role to serve as your District 8 Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) Chair. I am extremely honored and humbled to be serving in this capacity and look forward to continuing to build on the foundation that has been laid. As a district, we have a long line of outstanding YFA members and I hope to see that number only grow.

I grew up on our family farm located in southern Wood County, where we raised dairy cattle until 2006 when we transitioned into beef. Several years ago, I took over our family farm and have since added hogs to the mix as well. I served on the Wood County Farm Bureau Board of Directors for 9 years and as the county YFA Chair for a year. I look forward to connecting with farmers and agriculturists of all ages and learning from other people's ideas.



Wisconsin Farm Bureau members met with Representative Derek Van Orden.

Meet Heidi Slinkman – Your District 8 Promotion and Education Committee Chair



Heidi Slinkman is a cranberry grower from Wisconsin Rapids. For the last 17 years she has served as the Business Manager for her family farm, Gaynor Cranberry Company. Heidi is married to her adoring husband, Brian, and they've grown their family with their son, daughter and their springer spaniel.

Heidi has served on the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association (WSCGA) Board of Directors and helped develop their WSCGA Leadership Program. She is a graduate of the UW

Extension Leadership Wisconsin Program. Heidi has also served on the Board of Directors for the Cranberry Institute and on Ocean Spray's Grower Council.

Chairing the Cranberry Expo for Wisconsin's 2018 Farm Technology Days, poised Heidi to continue cranberry and agriculture education outreach. In 2022, Heidi co-founded a nonprofit, Cranberry Learning Inc., a cranberry education resource and career pathway guide. She currently serves as Chairperson of the Promotion and Education Committee for the Wood County Farm Bureau Board and has begun helping with Wisconsin's Ag in the Classroom programs. Heidi is passionate for her family, farm and community.

Wisconsin Agriculture is "Fruit-Full"

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation Ag in the Classroom Essay Contest is an opportunity for fourth and fifth-grade students to explore Wisconsin history, geography and economics through the lens of Wisconsin Agriculture. An annual essay prompt challenges students to research and write an informative essay. The contest supports Wisconsin academic standards including English Language Arts and Social Studies. Top essays are recognized at the county, district and state levels. The generous support of sponsors and volunteers make this learning opportunity possible each year.

The essay contest gleans the annual theme from the 2024 Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom Book of the Year, *I Love Strawberries!* by Shannon Anderson. This year's essay contest focuses on our state's sweetest agriculture industry - fruit! Wisconsin is the number one producer of cranberries and is a leader in the production of cherries, apples, and strawberries. Our state's history, communities and economy have been brought to fruit-ion through agriculture endeavors.



Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom
Coordinator: Beth Schaefer
bschaefer@wfbf.com

Portage County: LeRoy Miller
715.677.3435 / lmill.pondacres@gmail.com

Clark County: Kristine Boon
715.429.0792 / kmboonatc@gmail.com

Price County: Dan Berg
715.658.0012 / priccfb@gmail.com

Lincoln County: Katie Giese
715.315.0918 / kategiese18@gmail.com

Taylor County: Rob Klussendorf
715.658.2201 / rflklussendorf@gmail.com

Marathon County: Amber Cordes
715.781.3236 / amber.cordes@live.com

Wood County: Jenna Okonek
715.572.4167 / jjedrock@yahoo.com

Where Do My Farm Bureau Dues Go?

Wisconsin Farm Bureau is a grassroots membership organization that relies on membership dues as a primary source of revenue. Each County Farm Bureau is no different. You might be wondering, where does all the money paid in membership dues go and what do they do with it? It would be easy to show you a copy of the budget that we have and say, this is what we do, but would it be as easy to do that without understanding the breakdown of dues and allocations that the money has?

Membership Dues: \$65/Year

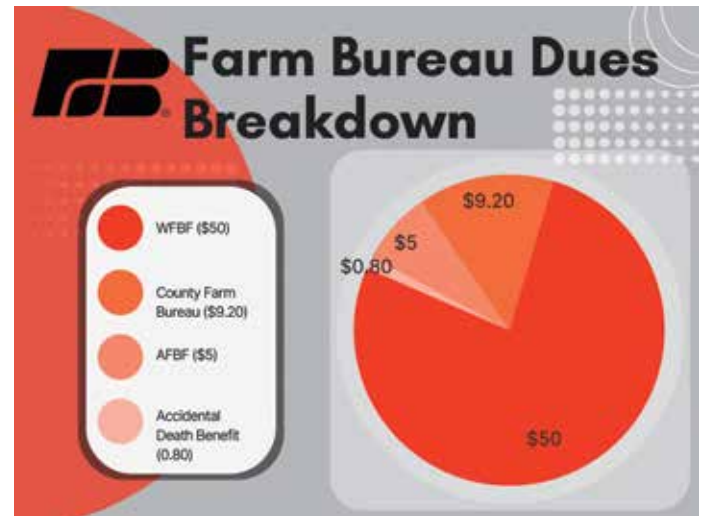
•**WFBF Dues (\$50)** are used to support activities, provide staffing and conduct programs around the state. Consumer education, issue advocacy and member publications are services that are also funded with state dues. To carry out its mission, Farm Bureau has several programs to ensure farmers have an effective voice. Farm Bureau also has leadership and educational programs to empower its members to be strong leaders in their communities. These programs include:

- Legislative representation
- Volunteers for Agriculture®
- Leadership trainings
- Public and media relations
- Agriculture in the Classroom
- Young Farmer and Agriculturist Program
- Promotion and Education Program

•**County Farm Bureau Dues (\$9.20)** is the portion of your dues that are used to support activities that take place right in your county. There are many things that each County Farm Bureau does including hosting educational workshops, agriculture promotion events, planning and sponsoring local events as well as scholarships and other programs for youth, consumer education activities and member service programs in your county.

•**American Farm Bureau Dues (\$5)** are used to support activities at a national level. It is these funds that support your voice at our nation's Capital as well as the many programs that AFBF has in place to educate consumers, share the message of agriculture and provide online resources to its members.

•**Accidental Death Policy (\$0.80)** is accidental death insurance for the member, their spouse and children. The benefit payment for a member and member's spouse is \$2,000. The benefit payment for member's children is \$1,000. The child must be under 24, not married and residing in the same household as the member.



As you can see, there are many programs and activities that are supported by the dues you pay each year. Farm Bureau members want to see their businesses and rural communities prosper. They want to be heard when decisions affecting their lives are made by elected officials. That is why they join Farm Bureau. We hope you'll continue to support your County Farm Bureau so we can continue to be a voice for agriculture.

Voluntary Contributions

When you receive your bill to renew your Farm Bureau membership you will see two additional voluntary contribution amounts. If you choose not to contribute, you can simply subtract the voluntary amount from the amount on the line marked 'total'.

Volunteers for Agriculture (\$10)

Volunteers for Agriculture® (VFA) is Wisconsin Farm Bureau's political action committee. Since 1990, the VFA has helped elect candidates who work for agriculture interests in Madison. The VFA builds strong relationships with legislators of both parties to help us achieve our legislative priorities.

Farm Bureau Foundation (\$5)

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation's mission is to support agricultural education and develop rural leaders. The WFB Foundation solicits and accepts contributions to assist with educational activities and instruction of young people in subjects useful and beneficial to the agricultural community in Wisconsin. Since its creation in 1988, the Foundation has made contributions that support the future of agriculture.

You Matter. Your Life has Purpose. You are Loved and this World is a Better Place because You are in it.

Brittany Olson

Barron County Farm Bureau Member and Mental Health Advocate

As a lifelong mental health advocate, suicide awareness is one of my pet projects. After all, like a lot of diseases, anxiety and depression can be fatal if left untreated.

Every suicide I hear about weighs heavily on my soul. Three University of Wisconsin-River Falls students have died by suicide this semester alone and my heart is particularly shattered.

If there was anything I could say to everyone who saw no other way out of their pain than to end their own existence, it would be this: "You matter. Your life has a purpose. You are loved and this world is a better place because you are in it."

Furthermore, seasonal depression is something to watch for (both in ourselves and those around us) as fall turns the page into winter. Seasonal depression is thought to be triggered by decreasing sunlight and if you find

yourself in this category you're in good company with millions of Americans affected every year.

If you think you or someone you love might be suffering from anxiety and/or depression, be straightforward and realize that what you're going through is treatable. Seek medical care from your primary healthcare provider and check psychologytoday.com for available mental health practitioners and therapists near you. I feel no shame in needing a multifaceted approach to improve my mental health and neither should you.

I'll leave you with a couple more reminders. You, dear reader, matter. Your life, dear reader, has purpose. You, dear reader, are loved and this world is a better place because you, dear reader, are in it.

Lastly, dear reader, be kind and gracious to everyone you meet. You never know what someone is going through and people may forget what you did or said you them but they'll always remember the way you made them feel.



Managing life's challenges in healthy ways allows participants to take better care of themselves and others.

This interactive program helps adults cope with stress & difficult times. WeCOPE has been shown to reduce stress and depression, increase positive affect, and improve healthy behaviors.

This FREE 7 week program meets via Zoom once a week for 1 hour. Participants gain the most from the program when they are able to practice skills between sessions.

A workbook and journal are provided to support this practice.

January 9 – February 20, 2024
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Register at:

<https://forms.gle/R5kdvK9YYEmJeJ54A>

County Educator Contacts:

Grant County (Bev): beverly.doll@wisc.edu 608-723-2125
Green/Lafayette (Bridget): blmouchon@wisc.edu 608-328-9440



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.

Mental Health Resources

National Farm Medicine Center at Marshfield Clinic in Wisconsin

- <http://www.marshfieldresearch.org/mfmc>
- Phone: 1.800.662.6900 or 715.389.4999

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- 800.273.8255 or TEXT Hope to #741741

•988 – CALL OR TEXT

FarmWell Wisconsin

- 24/7 Farmer Wellness Hotline 888.901.2558
- Tele-counseling and counseling voucher program

UW-Madison Division of Extension

- <http://farms.extension.wisc.edu/farmstress/>
- <http://extension.wisc.edu/health/behavioralhealth>

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

- <http://namiwisconsin.org/>
- Mental Health America (MHA)
- <http://www.mhawisconsin.org>

Farm Bureau is Advocating for You!



Tyler Wenzlaff

WFBF Director of National Affairs

In early November, WFBF Director of National Affairs Tyler Wenzlaff testified before the Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage on Assembly Bill 137. AB 137, authored by Senator Stafsholt and Representative Green, would require the Department of Natural Resources to amend the state wolf management plan with a population goal.

Wisconsin Farm Bureau policy supports a wolf population goal of 350. Wenzlaff testified supporting amending the bill to include a numeric population goal of 350. Scientific population modeling has shown a wolf population of 350 would provide for a healthy and stable population that would last for 100 years.

In October, the Natural Resources Board approved a wolf management plan without a numeric population goal. Instead, the plan favors an adaptive management style with a set of vague objectives which WFBF opposed.

The bill needs approval by the committee before going to the Assembly floor for passage.

WFBF is advocating for including HR 764 – Trust the Science Act into the 2023 Farm Bill. The bill asks the Department of Interior Secretary to reissue regulations to delist the gray wolf. The science on the gray wolf has been clear and should be followed. Wisconsin has shown the ability to manage its wolf population and delisting the wolf from the Endangered Species List must be enacted by Congress to stop the judicial activism.

Testimony on Assembly Bill 137

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, for this hearing today and for the opportunity to comment on Assembly Bill 137.

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation (WFBF) is the state’s largest general agriculture organization with over 47,000 members. WFBF represents farms of different sizes, commodities and management styles. WFBF appreciates Senator Rob Stafsholt and Representative Rob Swearingen for introducing legislation to establish a state wolf population goal.

WFBF supports many of the goals and objectives in the Wolf Management Draft Plan and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) ongoing efforts to maintain a healthy wolf population. While the 2023 Wolf Management Plan doesn’t define a healthy wolf population, the previous wolf management plan used the latest science and computer simulations to estimate a wolf population of 300-500 wolves has a high probability of persisting for 100 years. The 1999 plan established a state-delisting goal of 250 wolves and a management goal of 350 wolves. WFBF supports returning to 1999 management goal for a healthy wolf population.

Wisconsin Farm Bureau has concerns associated with the Wolf Management Plan. Our principal concern, and one we advocated for as a member of the Wolf Management Plan Committee, is the lack of a numeric population goal. The updated 2007 plan has a numeric population goal of 350 wolves. The plan instead favors an adaptive management approach in which a set of ambiguous objectives are set. The lack of a set numeric goal makes setting consistent zone harvest quotas virtually impossible as these objectives are broadly stated and easily redefined by the department.

In response to overwhelming public comments, the department was forced to add guidance with management goals based on population sizes. During the discussion of the Wolf Management Plan Committee, 10 members of the committee supported returning to a numeric population model. Unfortunately, the department has stated the population management goals added to the plan are simply guidance, not to be used to inform management decisions.

Throughout the process DNR has ignored rural Wisconsin and instead chosen a process that allows out of state special interests to drown out rural voices. WFBF, along with other rural stakeholders, have advocated for an in person public hearing on the wolf management plan. DNR has instead held online comment periods that have not differentiated Wisconsin residents from out of state special interests. DNR’s process weighs a resident of California’s opinion the same as Wisconsin, this is just wrong and a disservice to rural Wisconsin residents who live every day with the threat of wolf-related conflict.

While WFBF supports the intent of Assembly Bill 137, we would recommend a slight change in language. On line 8, WFBF recommends inserting the word “numeric” between statewide and wolf and “of 350 wolves” at the end. Line 8 would then read “that establishes a statewide numeric wolf population goal of 350 wolves.”

In conclusion, Wisconsin Farm Bureau supports the intent of Assembly Bill 137. WFBF would ask the authors to amend the language to clarify the intent of the authors to the department. Again, thank you to Senator Rob Stafsholt and Representative Rob Swearingen for authoring Assembly Bill 137.”



Navigate Through Challenging Farm Decisions and Plan for Success with a New Online Course

By Joy Kirkpatrick, Farm Succession Outreach Specialist

A recent review of research by Farm Management Canada examined the Relationship Between Strategic Management and Farm Success and reported these three conclusions:

1. Improved strategic management improves profitability.
2. Strategic managers tend to be more profitable over time.
3. Not only can strategic management lead to 100% returns in profitability, but they also lead to 100% returns in terms of operational and personal goals that define personal success.

Are you ready to scale up your strategic management skills? Are you considering a change for your farm or ag business? Or maybe you have an issue that needs to be addressed to improve your business and you are not sure how to get started on that planning. *Navigating Your Ag Business: From Stress to Success* is a new UW-Madison Division of Extension online course that will provide you strategies to answer these three questions:

1. Where are you now?
2. Where do you want to be?
3. How do you get there?

Navigating Your Ag Business: From Stress to Success combines online self-paced learning activities with live online group meetings, fostering a supportive peer community while collaborating with facilitators. The course

starts on January 1, 2024, with the first live Zoom meeting scheduled for Friday, February 2, 2024, from Noon – 1:30 pm. The self-paced learning continues through February and March, with the second live Zoom meeting on Friday, March 22, 2024, from Noon – 1:30 pm. By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Prioritize their current unique stressors
- Select which financial camp they are in
- Develop a vision and goals for their farm and family
- Design an action plan to address their identified stressor and reach their vision and goals

The 2024 course is a grant-supported pilot. Participants will be asked to evaluate the materials and course after completion. Space is limited. Multiple farm members are encouraged to participate and attend the live sessions. To learn more about the course and to register go to <https://farms.extension.wisc.edu/programs/navigating-your-ag-business/> Direct any questions to Joy Kirkpatrick, Farm Management Outreach Specialist, joy.kirkpatrick@wisc.edu 608.263.3485.

This program is a partnership between UW-Madison Division of Extension's Farm Management Program and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, & Consumer Protection's Farm Center. It is supported by USDA NIFA Award 2020-70028-32728.

Clark County

wfbf.com/about/counties/clark
ClarkCountyFarmBureau

"No Farmers, No Food: Will You Eat the Bugs?"



By Kim Bremmer, Local Affairs Chair

We can all likely make a list of food films that attack farmers and modern farming practices using lies and half-truths. But a recently released documentary gives a voice to farmers and ranchers from around the world, sharing the untold stories of those forced out of business through the agenda behind global green policies.

This film, "No Farmers, No Food: Will You Eat the Bugs?" challenges us to think about the causes of increasing food prices, the consequences of the increasing and never-ending regulations on farmers as well as the motivations behind the "Global Green Solution."

I recently attended an American Agri-Women Conference in Sacramento, California with Debbie Bacigalupi, one of the ranchers highlighted in the film. I've had meetings with Doug LaMalfa over the years, a U.S. representative for California's 1st Congressional District, who is also a rancher and in the film. It's often easy for those of us in the Midwest to brush off issues happening on our coasts as things that "will never happen here." But watching this film, even



as a Midwesterner, hits close to home. This one is definitely worth your time.

And I couldn't help but think about this film as I saw bug candy at checkouts on my trip and in fancy candy stores in Old Town Sacramento...I purchased them as a show-and-tell. I don't plan on being hungry enough to try them!

You can watch the full trailer and the first 10 minutes of the documentary for free or the entire film for \$4.00 at nofarmersnofood.com. I'd love to hear your thoughts!



Applications Due
April 1, 2024!

CLARK COUNTY FARM BUREAU
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

2024

HAS BEGUN!

ARE YOU READY TO EARN SOME
MONEY FOR COLLEGE?

FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT US AT:
[HTTPS://WFBF.COM/ABOUT/COUNTIES/CLARK/](https://wfbf.com/about/counties/clark/)

\$5000

Sosnoske Family Offers a Hands-On Learning Approach

The Sosnovske family, Marty, Mary and Ben, hosted an informal dairy internship for local youth, Julie and Jessica Conlan. A couple days each week, the girls learned to help feed the calves and were given a crash course in milking. They observed various facets of dairy farming such as artificial insemination, operation of the barn cleaner and silo unloader, the arrival of the milk truck, the heifer barn and other dairy farm daily events. Julie and Jessica are experienced beef cattle farmers but this was their first encounter with dairy farming. This summer learning experience provided a new perspective on dairy farming and how hard dairy farmers work. It also provided plenty of opportunities to cuddle with the farm cats and kittens.

Welcome to the Farm Bureau family: Jerry, Stephanie, Jessica and Julie Conlan of rural Tomahawk.



**Lincoln County Farm Bureau**

Apply Today!
Applications are due April 1, 2024



SCHOLARSHIPS

Lincoln County Farm Bureau will be offering scholarships to Lincoln County graduating high school students in 2024.

Find the application and requirements at
<https://wfbf.com/about/counties/lincoln/>

Marathon County

**Marathon County Farm Bureau**

Find the application and requirements at
<https://wfbf.com/about/counties/marathon/>

Applications are due by March 1, 2024.

Marathon County Farm Bureau is pleased to announce that it will award up to four (3) \$500 higher education scholarships to graduating seniors.

The scholarship will be awarded to graduating high school seniors enrolled in an accredited college, university or technical college. The applicant or his/her parents must be a current Marathon County Farm Bureau member.



Portage County

**Portage County Farm Bureau**

APPLY TODAY!

SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE IN 2024

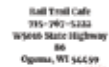


Portage County Farm Bureau is proud to offer scholarships to high school seniors graduating in 2024 who wish to pursue higher education.

Applications will be accepted until April 1, 2024. To apply, please visit: <https://wfbf.com/about/counties/portage/>



**Thank you to the 2023 Price
County Farm Bureau Horse
Pull and Beef Cookout
Sponsors**



\$500

APPLICATIONS DUE APRIL 1, 2024!

PRICE COUNTY FARM BUREAU SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

2024

HAS BEGUN!

ARE YOU READY TO EARN SOME MONEY FOR COLLEGE?

FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT US AT:

[WFBF.COM/ABOUT/COUNTIES/PRICE/](https://wfbf.com/about/counties/price/)

Taylor County

wfbf.com/about/counties/taylor
TaylorCountyFarmBureau

AgVenture Tent Huge Hit at Local Fair

This year the Taylor County Promotion and Education Committee seized the opportunity to revamp the local FFA's Ag Venture Tent at the Taylor County Fair. Due to declining volunteers and students busy showing animals, the local FFA instructor reached out to Committee Chair Rob Klussendorf to help organize and supervise the tent during fair week. Traditional attractions such as the corn and soybean sandboxes, leading an animal pen, displays on chickens, meat animals, dairy and the favorite pedal tractors course continued to be showcased. This year at the prompting of a Farm Bureau member the tent also offered a daily craft for kids to make and take home, along with story time and a fun candy-

filled piñata.

This has been a great break for visiting families at the fair with plenty of seating and fun free activities for kids to take a break from the heat. The Promotion and Education committee is already working hard to explore new ways to reach fairgoers in the tent next year. Telling your agriculture story is a great way to volunteer and become involved. We are looking to highlight different types of area farmers at the 2024 fair. We are looking for a display and scheduled time for you to be available to talk with residents on farming in Taylor County. Please reach out to Rob if you are interested in helping.



Applications Due April 1, 2024!

TAYLOR COUNTY FARM BUREAU SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

2024

HAS BEGUN!

ARE YOU READY TO EARN SOME MONEY FOR COLLEGE?

FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT US AT:

[HTTPS://WFBF.COM/ABOUT/COUNTIES/TAYLOR/](https://wfbf.com/about/counties/taylor/)

\$500

From the President's Desk



Rob Klussendorf

Taylor County Farm Bureau President

In what seems like the blink of an eye the year is almost over. 2023 has been filled with great accomplishments for Taylor County Farm Bureau and I could not be prouder of the direction we are headed. A few weeks ago, at the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Taylor County was highlighted for two gold star programs!

First, in the Ag in the Classroom division we won Gold for our C.O.W.S. program. This collaborative effort between Taylor County Farm Bureau and the Medford School District to educate county 4th graders on local agriculture activities was a huge success. Secondly, we won a Gold Star for our Membership Program. This year we spent time knocking on doors and participating in area trade shows to show the importance of Taylor County Farm Bureau. 2023 marks the third year in a row that Taylor County has shown a voting member gain! I look forward to keeping this membership gain streak going in the future.


Some of our other accomplishments this year were the great opportunity to revive the AgVenture tent at the Taylor County Fair, a record turnout for our annual Steak and Eggs Breakfast and we granted our second scholarship to an area high school student continuing their education in agriculture. These opportunities would not be possible without the hard work of our board and active members. I appreciate your work to keep Taylor County an active vibrant county.

One of my personal favorite things about 2023 was our annual meeting held on September 7. The board brainstormed on how to increase turnout. We decided to partner with the North Central Wisconsin Cattlemen to highlight a pasture walk at Jack Johnson's Farm with a meal followed by our annual meeting. We had a record turnout, with engagement from members who came for the first time ever.

As we close this year and move on to 2024, we are always looking for new people and ideas to tell our agricultural stories. I am excited to see where Taylor County Farm Bureau goes, what we decide to become engaged in and what new things we can do to create a trusted source of agricultural knowledge to our county residents. Stay tuned, the sky's the limit.

Wood County

wfbf.com/about/counties/wood
WoodCountyFarmBureau



Apply Today!
Applications are due April 1, 2024.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Wood County Farm Bureau will be offering scholarships to Wood County graduating high school students in 2024.

Find the application and requirements at <https://wfbf.com/about/counties/wood/>

Ag Rescue Training Program – a Huge Success!

By Chief Jerry Minor, Pittsville Fire Department

The third Ag Rescue Training Program is now recent history adding 25 additional fire and EMS agencies to the list of departments having personnel trained in this specialized response area. This year we had personnel from Missouri, Colorado and Minnesota to add to those Wisconsin departments. This program has brought our overall attendance to over 300 students and 130 departments since the start of this venture. This year we added an additional workshop, Large Animal Technical Rescue, a program created by the Wisconsin Large Animal Rescue agency out of Dane County.

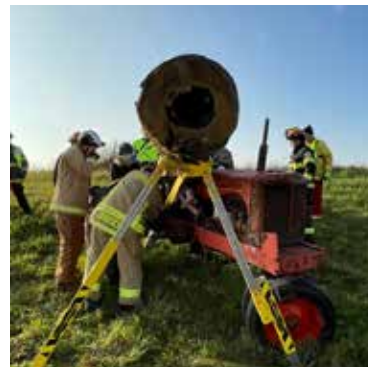
Training began on Friday, October 20 with another Train the Trainer Program – that helps us expand this program out to more and more agencies every year. Friday night lecture presentations were given by Krista Quick EMT P / PA - Barneveld Area Rescue, Wes Larson EMT P Lifelink 3, Kyle Koshalek and Matt Pilz NFMC and Dr. Howard Ketover

Wisconsin Large Animal Technical Rescue.

The sponsors that make this event possible include:

Heimans Holsteins, Heeg Farms, NFMC, MCHS, Auction of Champions Donors, Central Wood Fire and Rescue Association, Hastreiter Industries / SR Truck, Nelson Jameson Foundation, Medical Education Dept – MCHS, Dinges Fire, MacQueen Emergency, The Mike Biadasz Memorial Fund, Allenton and Columbus Fire Department staff, Wood County Farm Bureau, Rural Mutual Insurance, The Andersons, The Yerkes, JBZ Products, Hahn Transportation, Waushara Co EMS, Firefighter Training development and Coaching, Life Link Air Medical Transportation, Mid State Technical College. Their contributions are priceless!

Once again, special thanks for their continued support- partnership and belief in this program. Kyle Koshalek, Melissa Ploeckelman and Dr. Casper Bendixsen of the National Farm Medicine Center and our neighboring fire departments – YOU ARE THE BEST!



From the Bog

Heidi Slinkman

Wood County Promotion and Education Committee Chair

Promotion and education supporting Wisconsin agriculture comes natural during the harvest season and we give thanks for all the opportunities that presented a connection to a variety of learning spaces.

As a cranberry grower, we had “berry vision”, with harvest operations extending six to eight busy weeks from late September through the start of November. We picked, packed and hauled our state’s #1 fruit crop to their receiving stations and off to the grocery stores for fresh bagged berries or to the manufacturers for sauce and other Thanksgiving-featured items. Ope! That also means I regrettably had to miss the Leadership Boot Camp Training Series. I trust attendees learned a lot from Farm Bureau’s staff and from the special guests who highlighted storytelling strategies.

Given the focus harvest requires, it’s difficult to host public tours. However, I had the pleasure to host the very first Live Virtual Harvest Tour with Minnesota & Wisconsin’s Ag in the Classroom programs on my family farm, Gaynor Cranberry Company. It was a dream come true. I’ve always desired to host a live harvest tour to bring our cranberry farm and our harvesting practices to classrooms nationwide. Since it’s rare to live near a cranberry farm, this opportunity allowed us to learn how to feasibly produce an agriculture educational experience, straight from the farm. We learned new technologies to prepare the equipment and we took time to practice the script, the tour layout and of course, the Wi-Fi connectivity. Despite a few technical hiccups, we had a blast and the students were fascinated. The Live Virtual Cranberry Harvest Tour was recorded and can be found by searching Minnesota or Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom online, on Facebook or YouTube.

I’m passionate for cranberry learning, too. Wisconsin Ag in the

Classroom also invited me and Cranberry Learning Inc., to join a fall literature feature, “Scoop on Cranberries Virtual Workshop”, with author Lisl H. Detlefsen. Educators enjoyed learning about children’s agricultural literature, story JamBoarding and classroom activities with cranberries. My daughter, Victoria, assisted and together we featured a lesson on soil using edible ingredients easily found in your grocery stores year-round. I love this lesson because it teaches how important dry filtered soil profiles are to cranberries, since they don’t grow in water and this lesson can be utilized all year long. Follow Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom to view this recorded lesson and connect to Cranberry Learning online for more cranberry lessons at <https://www.cranberrylearning.com/resources/category/Lessons>

The autumn season also translates to food, communities gathering together, and festivals! I’d like to highlight several volunteers who believe in the future of agriculture and serve tirelessly to ensure students have resources and opportunities to grow into agriculture careers. Pam Verhulst, Co-Founder of Cranberry Learning Inc., was the Volunteer Coordinator for the Warrens Cranberry Festival Self Guided Harvest Walking Tours and together with Agriculture and FFA Educators, such as Mr. Jeremy Radtke from Lincoln High School, Wisconsin Rapids, they recruited community members and student volunteers who are enthusiastically engaged with agriculture. I’d be remiss if we didn’t acknowledge the beautiful Cran-Ag Education Event Tent, sponsored by Ag Country Farm Credit Services. The great late Dennis Bangart connected us to his team, Ally Martin and Chris Lotzer, who see value in community agriculture outreach and education. We thank them greatly for their support. Financial organizations such as this help the agriculture community thrive. Thank you for trusting in us with this magnificent tent! And thank you to the group of volunteers who helped answer cranberry questions!



Nepco Lake District is Looking For Farmers

What is the Nepco Lake District? They are a government organization responsible for maintaining and improving the quality of Nepco Lake in Wood County. One of their main activities is to operate weed harvesting equipment on Nepco Lake. They have two large weed harvesting machines that navigate the mid-depth areas of the lake to cut and remove lake weeds to improve navigation on the lake. The machines then transfer loads of weeds to a trailer on the shoreline and the trailer removes the weeds from the lake. We attached a few photos showing the harvester in operation and transferring the lake weeds to the transport trailer. Nepco Lake is a clean 500-acre watershed lake created by a dam. The weeds removed from the lake are a natural organic fertilizer which could benefit farmers in the area. The lake weeds are a good natural source of nutrients and organic materials that can be used to improve the sandy soils in our area. There are many other lakes across Wisconsin where lake weeds are harvested and the weeds are used by farmers to improve the soil.

Why are they looking for farmers? They hope to find farms in the area interested in obtaining free loads of lake weeds. The Nepco Lake District

will deliver the weeds, about five to ten cubic yards per load at a time and drop the weeds at a location on the farmer’s property. It would be up to the farmer to spread the weeds on their fields. The weed harvesting operations will begin again in June 2024 and run through September. During this period we estimate that there could be anywhere from 1000 to 2000 cubic yards of lake weeds delivered at no cost to any interested farmers. The weeds will be wet when delivered, however, they quickly dewater, dry out, and rapidly begin decomposing.

What kind of weeds are they talking about? Primarily wild celery or eel grass. They are happy to show any interested farmers where the weeds were disposed of during this summer.

If interested in participating in this program please contact:

Lyman Tschanz
Treasurer
Nepco Lake District
262-442-4400



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“

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