



Grassroots

District 8 News

From the Driver's Seat

**Kim Bremmer**

WFBF District 8 Director

Hi, my name is Kim Bremmer and I'm honored to be serving you as your new District 8 Director. I was elected in a special election at the annual meeting to finish out the remaining two years of Ryan Klussendorf's term. I'm grateful to be in a district that has had strong representation on the

WFBF State Board for many years and especially thankful to Ryan for his time, commitment and service on the board for the past four years. I'm also appreciative of all the delegates and members who were so supportive at the annual meeting – I'm looking forward to continuing the positive momentum and serving all of you!

For those of you who don't know me yet, I grew up on a dairy farm in Merrill. I went to UW-Madison and graduated with a degree in Dairy Science and a degree in Ag Journalism. On a professional level, I moved to Loyal after graduation and worked with farms as a dairy nutrition consultant at Vita Plus Loyal for 15 years. I loved the work but felt called to do more to advocate for agriculture and help bridge the gap between consumers and farmers. So I took a leap of faith, left my great job and started Ag Inspirations LLC in 2015. The mission of the organization is to inspire farmers to tell their stories, connect people to where their food comes from and represent the great success of American agriculture today. This has taken me as a professional speaker to all but 4 states and internationally to China, Europe and Canada. I'm passionate about sharing the success of the American farmer and helping protect the science, technology and

innovation used in growing and raising food. When the pandemic hit, I worked with a group of dairy farmers to start a milk verification cooperative that's qualified through the USDA. Today, I also serve as the Executive Director of Venture Dairy Co-op. We advocate for better dairy policy and protecting innovation through less regulation (talk about an uphill climb!). So, at the end of the day, you may find me speaking at a meeting, speaking up and battling at a town or county board meeting across the state, ghostwriting an article for a farmer, working with farmers on their agri-tourism ideas, helping host farm tours, pushing cows through a new parlor, covering a bunker, lobbying at the Capitol, etc. When someone asks me what I do, the best answer I can give is, "whatever needs to be done."

On a personal level, my daughter is in her junior year at St. Norbert in DePere, and my son is a sophomore at Loyal Senior High. I have always enjoyed cheering on our youth and have helped as a 4-H leader and previous Quiz Bowl coach for the Clark County Junior Holstein Association. I've also taught Sunday School for 20 years. Favorite things outside of work? Cheering at high school basketball and baseball games, playing my guitar around a campfire or having a big bass on the line who fights with me along a shoreline or through some lily pads.

As far as WFBF, I'm looking forward to an exciting year ahead! I expect we will be tackling energy issues, seeing some much-needed dairy committee meetings and taking on more and more local issues important to you, the members. Please consider taking the time to attend your county meetings to help stay up to date and help drive the direction of Wisconsin Farm Bureau. Feel free to reach out to me anytime – 715-797-7796. I look forward to meeting you and representing you for the next two years. Buckle up – this is going to be fun!

WISCONSIN FARM BUREAU 35 UNDER 35

NOMINATIONS OPEN MARCH 1-JUNE 1

35 Under 35 recognizes and celebrates young farmers and agriculturists who are preserving agriculture through leadership in sustainability. **35 Under 35** is open to WFBF YFA members ages 18-35. 35 finalists will be selected to receive special prizes and \$100 cash. Top individuals in each category will receive \$500 cash.

LEARN MORE AND NOMINATE A YFA MEMBER AT
<https://bit.ly/WFBF35Under35>



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Embrace the Chaos



Ashleigh Calaway

WFBF District 8 Coordinator

As winter settles in on the farm, my brain usually kicks into high gear, thinking about all the home projects that I am finally going to get done. After almost 18 years of marriage and farming, I've come to realize that maybe winter isn't about conquering the ever-growing to-do list but

embracing the unexpected joys.

This winter was no different, just as I thought I had a handle on the fall projects turned winter tasks, the rhythm of life on the farm took an unexpected turn. In the span of 24 hours, my home transformed into a bustling baby station. A set of goat triplets entered the world, with one tiny member needing extra care and two lambs found their way to our doorstep, their mother unable to provide the nourishment they needed.

Out came the pack 'n play from retirement and the emergency bottles were dusted off. Suddenly, my routine was a symphony of feeding schedules, cuddles and the delightful chaos that comes with caring for newborns. The coffee pot became a steadfast companion, a necessary ally in the dance of tending to these tiny beings.

Amidst the sleepless nights and the whirlwind of activity, there's a magical beauty in witnessing life unfold. The vulnerability of a newborn, the resilience of the smallest of the trio and the bond that forms in the quiet hours of the night – these are moments we as farmers all live for.

With two dogs, two cats, a pair of lambs and a baby goat, our house has become the very definition of chaos, and surprisingly, I am okay with it. A few years ago, I might have been overwhelmed by it all. But now, in this chapter of life, I find a profound joy in the simplicity of caring for these creatures.

Maybe it's age, maybe it's personal growth, but there's a newfound appreciation for the beauty in the little things around me. Life has a funny way of teaching us to find contentment amid chaos and I'm learning to thrive in these moments.

In this season of life, I've come to understand that it's not all about conquering projects; it's about embracing the unexpected, finding joy in the mess and cherishing the magic that happens when life takes us on unplanned adventures.

As the days grow longer and warmer, I invite you to reflect on the chaos and beauty in your own life. Perhaps, like me, you will discover the unexpected peace that comes in life's unpredictability.

Grassroots in Actions

In the ever-evolving landscape of progress, it is reassuring to know that some things never change. Wisconsin Farm Bureau's grassroots structure is something our members can be assured is here for the long haul. For over a century, Wisconsin Farm Bureau has stayed true to its grassroots policy development structure that makes it the trusted voice leading our state's agriculture community forward.

This revolutionary idea that policy originates from individual members bringing ideas to their county farm bureau, having their resolution passed at their county annual meeting, and then moved on to the state and even federal level is nothing short of remarkable.

Our grassroots structure works in other ways too. It works when issues arise and we need to call members into action. Recently, a Farm Bureau member was contacted regarding current legislation that could directly impact a group of individuals. In a matter of a week, that member rallied multiple county Farm Bureau members and hosted a meeting with over 55 people in attendance including two senators, one of which authored the bill.



**Senator Cory Tomczyk (left),
Tyler Wenzlaff (right)**

The meeting allowed for Farm Bureau staff to provide information regarding the legislation and for these individuals to discuss its potential impact on Wisconsin agriculture. This meeting was also an opportunity to share how Wisconsin Farm Bureau works.

Only time will tell what impact those conversations had but we know that regardless of the outcome, our organization showed up, listened and shared information, all things that Farm Bureau was founded on over 104 years ago.

Grassroots movements like this are a testament to the power of organizations like Farm Bureau and the members that drive positive change from the ground up. It is important that we celebrate these moments and encourage other members to do the same when necessary. In the words of the Lorax, "Unless someone like you cares whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

It is through the collective efforts of individuals that Farm Bureau remains to be Wisconsin's largest general farm organization, representing farms of all sizes, commodities and structure.

How Does Our Policy Development Process Work?



It starts with you, at the county level! Sharing your idea at your county annual meeting. (If it passes at the local level it can move on to the next step. If not don't be afraid to go back to the drawing board and try again next year.)



From there it goes to the state policy development committee for review. This committee is made up of members from across the state. They are charged with reviewing every resolution that is passed at the county level.



Next, it is presented at the state annual meeting and voted on by delegates from 61 county Farm Bureaus.



Once it passes the delegation it is put into our policy book then used by our government relations team as they advocate for agriculture friendly legislation.

Earth Week

Carbon Webinar Series



Dr. Frank Mitloehner
U.C. Davis
4/22/2024



Ben Huber
Insight FS
4/24/2024



Dan Christenson
PepsiCo, Inc.
4/26/2024

Join Wisconsin Farm Bureau during Earth Week for perspectives on carbon from researchers, farmers and industry professionals. Webinars will take place at 11 AM.

Visit www.wfbf.com/programs/sustainability for more information.

Getting Involved Locally



Erin Tomasik

WFBF Member Advocacy and Issues Coordinator

As the WFBF Member Advocacy and Issues Coordinator, my goal is to help farmers advocate for the issues that matter to them on the local level by providing members with the tools and information necessary.

More and more recently, we're seeing discussions popping up about agriculture in local units of government. Some are strictly information-based, such as a committee wanting more information on spray irrigation or manure storage. However, we are also seeing local governments start conversations that eventually lead to burdensome ordinances, revisions of ordinances and even livestock expansion moratoriums. The last thing we want is to be unaware of these conversations and learn about them when it's too late.

So, what can we do to stop them? Unfortunately, it's not a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Each conversation is unique depending on where they are occurring and what the intended outcome is. However, The first step

remains the same- contact your county's Local Affairs Chair. Each county Farm Bureau has an established Local Affairs Chair, dedicated to being the eyes and ears on conversations happening. A call, email or stop at the farm allows the conversation to continue and develop. After that initial contact, multiple things can then occur. The Local Affairs Chair may be aware of the situation going on and can provide you with an update or they may bring the discussion to the county Farm Bureau board. Lastly, the Local Affairs Chair will then contact and inform me of the situation and together, we can develop a game plan on how the county Farm Bureau should proceed.

Is this approach going to stop all burdensome ordinances from passing? No, unfortunately, it won't. However, the goal is to be aware of the discussions occurring and be involved if and when we can. We don't want to continue seeing things pass at the local level that can have a negative impact on farming and not have anyone show up for the public hearings. Things will continue to pass, and potentially get worse if farmers do not speak out against them. I am not asking farmers to stand up individually, but rather work together, as a county Farm Bureau, to continue having conversations and standing up for the things we need to.

Legislative Session Review



Jason Mugnaini

WFBF Governmental Relations Executive Director

Wisconsin Farm Bureau has had a very successful legislative session in 2023-24. Much of what gets done in any legislative session comes in the budget and this session was no exception. We made a major push to create the \$150 million Agricultural Road Improvement Program (ARIP)

to provide grants to upgrade weight posted roads that create problems for farmers. The first round of these grants is now open with applications from local governments due April 5th. Farmers are encouraged to reach out to their local officials to encourage them to apply and provide them the information needed to fill out the application using the ARIP Farmer Support Form from Farm Bureau's website.

In addition, we fought for funding increases for numerous other programs farmers rely on including:

- \$2 million for meat processor grants
- \$500,000 per year for grants to dairy processors
- \$2 million for the Wisconsin Agricultural Export Promotion program
- Farmer mental health funding of \$100,000 per year
- \$2 million for nitrogen optimization pilot program grants
- \$70,000 per year for livestock premises registration
- Additional \$50,000 per year for Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom program

- \$1.6 million for cover crop rebates
- Maintained funding for producer-led watershed protection grants
- \$22,176,500 in funding for county conservation departments
- \$125 million to address PFAS contamination
- \$1 million in 2024-25 for well compensation and well abandonment grants
- \$6.5 million for rural nonpoint source water pollution abatement grants
- \$200,000 per year for Targeted Runoff Management grants
- \$3 million reallocated to fund the Food and Farm Exploration Center in Plover

In addition to these funding priorities, we also found success in pursuing policy changes. The Farmland Preservation program got some much-needed updates to shorten the minimum enrollment period from 15 down to 10 years and increase the financial incentives for farmers, bringing them in line with the rising costs of compliance. We also passed a bill to maintain a farm voice on county conservation committees after USDA decided it was a conflict of interest to have FSA representatives sitting on the committees.

On the transportation front, bills passed to extend the allowable time period to use a farm CDL from 180 to 210 days, expand the use of permits for 98,000-pound six-axle milk trucks to allow hauling other milk products, and to create a CDL training grant program to address the shortage of available drivers pending a signature from Gov. Evers.



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WFBF member benefits may be changed or discontinued at any time without notice.



Ag Day at the Capitol

On January 31, more than 275 farmers and agriculturists gathered at the Monona Terrace in Madison for Ag Day at the Capitol.

Ag Day at the Capitol is an annual event for Wisconsin farmers and agriculturists to learn more about state issues affecting agriculture and meet with their state legislators.

Attendees started the day with a welcome from Wisconsin Farm Bureau President Brad Olson, a video message from Gov. Tony Evers and comments from Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Secretary Randy Romanski. Secretary Romanski encouraged farmers in attendance to stay connected with their legislators on both the state and federal level.

"It is really important for you to continue to do things like this," said Romanski. "Whether it is your first time or one hundredth time speaking to your legislators, your voice matters."

Following the Secretary's speech, Wisconsin Realtors Association's Director of Political and Governmental Affairs Joe Murray served as the event's featured speaker. Murray shared what constituents can expect for a political outlook in the coming year.

The afternoon session was a legislative panel on several current issues impacting agriculture in the state legislature. The panel was moderated by WFBF Executive Director of Governmental Relations Jason Mugnaini and was comprised of Senators Patrick Testin, Brad Pfaff and Joan Ballweg, and Representatives Tony Kurtz, Dave Considine and Travis Tranel.

The panel discussed:

- Recent investments in rural infrastructure.

- Improving access services, including affordable healthcare, for farm families.
- Government's role in new and emerging agricultural technologies.
- Ensuring a stable workforce for sustainable growth in agriculture.

The program concluded with issue briefings with a strong focus on encouraging the passage of AB 860 and SB 811, legislation which would allow Wisconsin Farm Bureau to provide members with a unique and affordable health coverage plan option that is currently operated by state Farm Bureaus in seven other states.



Additional topics included:

- Protecting animal agriculture from overreaching local regulation.
- Upcoming ARIP application process.
- Supporting agricultural economic development projects in Evansville and Stevens Point.

The afternoon's program concluded with attendees walking to the Capitol where they met with their legislators from their respective areas.

Rural Mutual Insurance Company and GROWMARK Inc. are major sponsors

of the event. Co-sponsors of the event, with Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, include the Dairy Business Association, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association, Wisconsin Corn Growers Association, Wisconsin Hemp Alliance, Wisconsin Horse Council, Wisconsin Pork Association, Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association, Wisconsin Soybean Association and the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association.

FFA Farm Forum

More than 315 high school juniors and FFA advisors from across Wisconsin attended Wisconsin Farm Bureau's FFA Farm Forum in Rothschild on Feb. 15.

"FFA Farm Forum is an opportunity for the next generation in agriculture to gain new experiences and leadership skills," said WFBF President Brad Olson. "We appreciate FFA members participating in FFA Farm Forum, investing in both themselves and the future of agriculture."

The keynote speaker was UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau member Katrina Hoesley. Hoesley encouraged students to live out their best values with intention and to connect their passions with a driving purpose to ensure success.

During the one-day event, FFA members attended career-based workshops including: 'Explore the World of Marketing and Communications' with Kendall Riskedal of broadhead. and Country Lights Soy Candles; 'Navigating Ag Horizons: My Journey from FFA to Farm Bureau' with Ben Sand of 715 Risk Advisors LLC; 'Redefining and Celebrating Sustainability' with Rachel LaCount of Wisconsin Farm

Bureau Federation; 'Ag Lending: More Than Just Loaning Money' with Josh Schmidt of AgCountry Farm Credit Services; 'FFA, YFA and Your Ag Experience' with Katrina Hoesley of UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau; and 'Your Passion + The Right Training = Career Success' with Adam Wehling of Chippewa Valley Technical College.

"FFA Farm Forum is a great partnership between Wisconsin Farm Bureau and Wisconsin FFA to encourage leadership development and exploration of careers in agriculture," said WFBF Director of Young Leader Programs Melissa Jacobson. "We were excited to provide this opportunity for future agricultural leaders."

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation sponsors FFA Farm Forum in cooperation with the Wisconsin Association of FFA. The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation was established in 1988 to provide support for agricultural education and leadership programs. Through donations and other contributions, the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation invests time and resources to support the next generation of agriculturists.



A Space to Gather



Cassie Sonnentag

WFBF Senior Director of Public Relations

I married into a huge family. My husband's grandma is quite the matriarch, with nine children, dozens of grandchildren, and over 30 great grandchildren.

Bring us together for a holiday meal or family

reunion and it is quite the sight to be seen.

Our entire family can boast a tie to a farm – whether they owned it, were raised on it, or their parents were. But as each member of the family grew, so did their interests. When you look around the table, our family is incredibly diverse. From farmers to computer techs to nurses to business owners and even a pastor, some of our family's ties to agriculture are stronger than others.

Our family's story is no different than any other. Across the globe, we are seeing ties to agriculture get more and more distant.

Under the direction of our membership through a strategic planning process in 2019, WFBF sought out ways to equip our members with consumer outreach tools. As a result, a new online resource called Gather Wisconsin was officially launched last year as a space for consumers to connect with the farmers behind their food.

Agriculture is more than just farming; it's how we feed our families, how we use our natural resources, and our way of life. From dairies to cranberries, Wisconsin is home to a robust and diverse agriculture community that generates a variety of products.

The goal with Gather Wisconsin is to be a central hub of information relating to agriculture. Alongside commodity groups and other contributors, we share factual information about food, farming and families to a consumer audience every week.

Our site features a robust blog and recipe section in addition to several evergreen content pages. The website makes strong connections to environmental stewardship and the role farmers and consumers share in protecting our resources.

The website was a first step towards broadening our outreach resources, but what we have to offer continues to grow. Since launching the site a year ago, we have launched Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest pages to complement the content of the site.

New this summer, we will also have a printed Gather Wisconsin magazine that will go out in June. This magazine will accompany the June | July issue of Rural Route and help us reach non-farm audiences through our associate membership.

We also are expanding our resources so counties are able to leverage Gather Wisconsin in local events. For ideas on how you can utilize Gather Wisconsin, I encourage you to check out the February Lunch and Learn by visiting bit.ly/GatherWebinar on your web

browser.

When it comes to big family gatherings, we all have a seat at the table. As generations get farther disconnected from the farm, these resources are more important now than ever before. If you haven't had a check out the website, I encourage you to visit gatherwisconsin.com and share it with those around you.



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 / pricedfb@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 / jjredrock@yahoo.com



Promotion and Education – 2024 Plan of Action



Heidi Slinkman

WFBF District 8 Promotion and Education Representative

Hello! My name is Heidi Slinkman, and I am honored to accept the appointed District 8 Representative position to serve on the Promotion and Education Committee. I also chair the Promotion and Education Committee on the Wood County Farm Bureau Board. I'm a cranberry grower for my family farm, Gaynor Cranberry Company. We have

148 years of farming heritage and the cranberries we farm have stamped history in immeasurable time. I have a passion for serving others through agriculture advocacy, education and outreach and I'm excited to connect with each county to learn more about your agricultural ties to the land, soil, plants, animals or any another space in between.

I accepted this position in the second half of 2023, attended the WFBF Annual Meeting and my first Promotion and Education meeting, as well as served as a delegate for Wood County Farm Bureau during the policy discussion.

Allow me to introduce myself with all the district representatives here:

<https://wfbf.com/programs/promotion-and-education/>.

Let's take a moment to review how the Promotion and Education Committee is structured for WFBF, as noted on their website:

The Farm Bureau Promotion and Education program is designed to develop, implement and promote projects and programs that build awareness and understanding of agriculture and provide leadership development for the agricultural community.

The Promotion and Education program is guided by an advisory committee that reviews, develops and recommends programs and resources. The nine-member committee is comprised of one representative appointed from each Wisconsin Farm Bureau district.

Our Promotion and Education District Representatives met again in January to workshop 2024 goals and priorities that match the mission/vision of the Promotion and Education Program. They are listed below.

Member Engagement & Training

Goal: Host Leadership Boot Camp

Goal: Each District Representative host a district event in line with the Committee's priorities.

Goal: Committee to host a WFBF Annual Meeting workshop

Consumer Resource Management

Goal: Connect County leaders with Gather Wisconsin materials and resources.

Advocacy

**Member
Engagement &
Training**



**Consumer
Resource Mgt.**

Goal: Committee to host a WFBF Annual Meeting workshop

In February, District 8 Director Kim Bremmer, YFA District Representative Jason Behrend, District 8 Coordinator Ashleigh Calaway and I met to review the Promotion and Education Committee's 2024 goals and priorities and put together a work plan to connect with members, county leaders, consumers, future members, government leaders, educators, students and community organizations to partner with such as YMCA, United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, Rotary Clubs and Chambers of Commerce to name a few.

We evaluated survey results from each county and derived a focus for each of our District 8 goals and discussed how we can engage with a uniform audience as a district. We identified a variety of consumer interfaces, defining youth as our target consumer audience. We plan to promote Farm Bureau programming such as Ag

in the Classroom, Gather Wisconsin and your county's scholarships and connecting Youth to jobs and career pathways in agriculture. This allows us to lean into the great programs and benefits the WFBF has to offer its members and the general public.

District 8 has a diverse and dynamic agriculture portfolio in our 7-county district. I'm looking forward to stepping 'out of the bog' and into new agri-spaces to better understand your voice in agriculture and how we can find the pathways of intersection.

We're mindful to look for ways to think outside the box for more consumer engagement activities or events that work for each county and community in District 8. This will offer us the opportunity to build strength in the Wisconsin Farm Bureau voice for agriculture and

grow memberships. The future's looking bright! Below is our work plan and we look forward to connecting with county leaders to expand on them further.

Member Engagement & Training

Teen Job Fair/Partnered Event (Wood County Farm Bureau is hosting a booth on 3/20/2024 at the Teen Job Fair, LHS, Wis. Rapids, Wood County.)

Consumer Resource Management

Indoor Event Barn Movie Night, details in the works. Location and Date TBD. An informative movie with a display of D8 and Wisconsin agriculture foods presented on charcuterie board style presentation.

Advocacy

Farmers for Mental Health / Mental Health Initiatives

This graphic illustrates our goals and ideas as scoops of ice cream, a notable Wisconsin treat and represents agriculture beautifully. Each spoonful or flavor represents a variety of outreach opportunities: Youth/Job Fair/Scholarships/ Training/Leadership Development/Advocacy/ Mental Health. This is an appealing and motivating District 8 snapshot for 2024 and we are ready to jump in and get started. Please reach out to me if you have ideas to share, feedback to offer or would like to simply share your farmer/agriculture story. Thank you for this opportunity to serve our District 8!

15th Annual Sweetheart/Doghouse Bowling Event

For 15 years, members from across the district have gathered for our Annual Sweetheart/Doghouse Bowling Event. This annual event has always been a hit, no matter if you were looking for a sweetheart, trying to get out of the doghouse with your current one or just looking for a

fun night off the farm. This year's bowling night was no different. We had almost 20 members in attendance. Everyone enjoyed two frames of bowling, some delicious pizza and great conversation.



Meet Brandon Jakobi – Clark County Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) Chair

We recently sat down with Brandon, to learn a little bit more about him and why he chose to head up the county's YFA program.

Brandon grew up on his family's 70-cow dairy just south of Loyal. A 2022 graduate of Loyal High School, he is currently in his final semester at Northcentral Technical College majoring in the machine tool program.

Having spent his entire life working alongside his dad and grandfather, it's no wonder that you can find him in one of four spots: the woods, the fields, the machine shed or the pits at a tractor pull.

While in high school, Brandon started his own custom round baling business. He bales hay, straw and corn stalks for over 25 different customers. He also helps his dad with their silage baggers and custom spraying.

Brandon's favorite part about working in the agriculture industry, especially dairy, is the variety of jobs there are to do. Any given day he can be a mechanic, heavy equipment operator, herdsman, fabricator or carpenter – sometimes all in one day!

Brandon has been a Farm Bureau member for about two years but has been involved in the organization for much longer. His first experience



with Farm Bureau was at a county annual meeting with his dad while still in high school. He was fascinated with how the farmers and members were able to vote and have a voice on policies that directly involved their day-to-day lives. His senior year he applied for and received the Clark County Farm Bureau Henry Stiemann Memorial Scholarship. Following that he was elected to the Clark County Farm Bureau Board of Directors. After attending board meetings, learning more about the organization and volunteering to help with events, he decided to run for the county YFA chair position. He is looking forward to planning a variety of events and getting to know more YFA members throughout the county.

We asked Brandon, "What is one person who inspired you to be involved in the agriculture industry?"

He shared, "My dad is a huge inspiration, he is passionate about so many different aspects of agriculture, he's taught me everything I know, including how important it is to not only be involved in organizations but to stand up and speak up when it comes to protecting the industry we love."



Applications Due
April 1, 2024!

CLARK COUNTY FARM BUREAU
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

2024

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Lincoln County

wfbf.com/about/counties/lincoln
LincolnCountyFarmBureau

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8 AM - NOON**



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/>

Navigate Your Farm's Future with AgCountry's Starting Gate Program

Josh Schmidt

AVP Branch Manager

Empowering the Next Generation of Farmers

AgCountry Farm Credit Services recognizes the intrinsic challenges that young or beginning farmers and ranchers face today. The Starting Gate program is a comprehensive approach designed to navigate you through various challenges with ease and confidence, ensuring a successful path forward in the ever-evolving world of agriculture.

Unique and Preferential Financing Solutions

Understanding that access to capital and meeting traditional down payment requirements can be significant hurdles, the Starting Gate program offers a tailored solution. By providing relaxed down payment requisites and underwriting, combined with competitive interest rates and minimal fees, we've created a financing model that puts your needs first.

Educational and Financial Service Incentives

Knowledge is power, especially when it comes to managing your farm effectively. Our program encompasses a range of incentives including exclusive invitations and scholarships for educational seminars aimed at enhancing your farming knowledge. Additionally, enjoy reduced service fees for farm accounting, tax advice and succession and retirement planning consultations, all designed to streamline your operations for success.

Leveraging Relationships

We explore all options—both internally and externally—to provide the

best possible solution to young or beginning farmers and ranchers. This means partnering with FSA on direct and participation loan financing options as well as FSA Guarantees, when appropriate. Utilizing state programs is also an option that we explore when discussing loan packages.

Dedicated to Your Success

AgCountry is more than a provider; we are a partner. Our commitment to your success is reflected through collaborative efforts both within and beyond our organization. By leveraging relationships with external agencies and exploring state programs, we aim to curate the best possible loan packages tailored to your unique circumstances.

Are you ready to set the foundations for a successful farming career? Contact your local AgCountry office today to learn more about the remarkable benefits of the Starting Gate program. Let's cultivate your future, together.





Marathon County Grilled Cheese Cook-Off

Chopped Style

Friday, April 12, 2024 @ 6:00 PM - Individuals
Saturday, April 13 @ 1:00 PM - Teams

Sponsors





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/>





PRICE COUNTY FARM BUREAU SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

2024

HAS BEGUN!

ARE YOU READY TO EARN SOME
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Taylor County

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TaylorCountyFarmBureau

Remembering Rae Kohn

Throughout history there are few individuals who have done something which at the time seemed minute but in fact created a ripple effect that has impacted hundreds if not thousands of people. Rae Kohn was one of them. Rae was a charter member of the Taylor County Farm Bureau, along with Ralph Berry, Alez J. Gabrys, Fed Mico and Bernard Dums. Taylor County was chartered in 1975.

Rae was born March 28, 1930 to John and Kathryn (Bauman) Kohn. Rae was a go-getter even from a young age. He joined the National Guard at age 17. When the Korean War broke out, he enlisted in the army and volunteered for the infantry. Rae also had a passion for beekeeping, gardening and deer hunting – harvesting his last deer at the age of 92. He grew up on the family farm in the town of Litter Black, where his family still farms today.

We often discuss the importance of legacy, especially in rural America. As farmers, we talk a lot about legacy in the form of crops, animals and our farms.

The definition of legacy is “a gift; something transmitted by or received from ancestor or predecessor from the past.”

When we think about legacy we think about the footprints we leave behind. Both Rae his wife Florette left a Farm Bureau legacy that will live on in every director who had the privilege of working with them and

every member past, present and future. We can only imagine how proud they would be of Taylor County Farm Bureau and the impacts it has made since its conception. When Taylor County Farm Bureau started it only had 77 members. Today it has over 650 members.

When Rae signed the charter for Taylor County Farm Bureau almost 50 years ago, we wonder if he understood the impact it would have on carrying our legacy through to the next generation. We wonder if he knew his sons Micheal and Gary would eventually serve on that same board, or that Gary would someday be the Vice President and head of the Policy Development Committee for that same board. Or how Farm Bureau would become about supporting one another in the face of challenge and celebrating together in moments of triumph. How as a diverse membership, we collectively work together to move the organization forward, whether that be in the county board room or on the policy development

floor, and ultimately do what we do best: protect and preserve Wisconsin agriculture for the next generation.

As we support the Kohn family during their time of grief, we should also thank them for sharing their parents with us. Thank them for the work they have done, their passion and their commitment to the organization. After all, it is thanks to people like them who have played a big part in moving agriculture forward.



Applications Due
April 1, 2024!

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2024

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From the President's Desk



Rob Klussendorf

Taylor County Farm Bureau President

Over the last three months, I have had the opportunity to travel and network with a variety of industry leaders. In December, I spent three days attending breakout sessions, listening to various keynote speakers and helping set policy to better meet the needs of our members at the WFBF Annual Meeting. Later in the month, I

attended county president's training, a two-day workshop, designed to help me better serve our community and members.

In January, I headed off for a three-day conference held by the Wisconsin Fairs Association. I was able to hear from a variety of speakers on how to engage more community members in projects. Towards the end of the month, I headed off to Madison again to for WFBF's Annual Council of Presidents and Ag Day at the Capitol. I was very honored to share how Taylor County has grown in membership.

By the time you have read this I will have spent a day in Eau Claire attending the IGNITE conference. This event is held every other year. It is a great program for anyone looking to further develop their leadership skills.

Bottom line, I have been hitting the road hard the last three months, but I know that I have gained more skills, learned new tricks and

reenergized myself to be the best that I can be. I understand not everyone can afford time away from their jobs or their farms but if we all do what we can, we can make one heck of an impact!

Over the next few months, we are going to be looking for your help! We need members who are willing to help share their experience in agriculture for about 2-3 hours for one day at our Local Farmer and Agriculturist in the Classroom Day. We also need help with our Annual Steak and Egg Breakfast and Beef Promotion event in May, and if you can, we would love to have help with this year's Ag Adventure tent at the fair to talk with fairgoers about what it takes to get the food they eat from the farm to the table. Big or small, Taylor County Farm Bureau has opportunities for everyone.

Lastly, I want to encourage everyone to take part in some of the WFBF opportunities that are coming up. One of them is their Lunch and Learn sessions held once a month. Some of the topics include: sharing your sustainability story, leasing and other legal options to increase farmland access as well as navigating the variety of mental health resources available. I would be remiss if I didn't put a plug in here to encourage you to apply for our Leadership Institute program. Nominations for Class 16 are. It is a remarkable program designed for members of all ages, backgrounds, and experiences.

Taylor County Farm Bureau has a place where each and every one of you can be involved in telling our stories about agriculture.

TAYLOR COUNTY MASS PRESENTS

NORTHWOODS PREMIERE

Medford, Wisconsin

OPEN HEIFERS | JUNIOR STEERS | JACKPOT SHOWMANSHIP

May 18, 2024

TAYLOR COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

SHOW STARTS AT 9:00 AM

Entry Fees: \$40 online by May 17, \$60 in person entry

Jackpot Showmanship: Ages 8-21, \$10 entry, 100% payback

GROUND OPEN FRIDAY AT 5 PM

WEIGH-IN SATURDAY 6:30-8:30 AM

Show order: Showmanship, Heifers, Steers

CASH PRIZES: Grand Champion Steer & Heifer - \$300
Reserve Champion Steer & Heifer - \$200
Third Overall Steer & Heifer - \$100

ENTRIES OPENING SOON AT [HTTPS://SHOWMAN.APP/SHOWS#/NORTHWOODS-PREMIERE](https://showman.app/shows#/northwoods-premiere)

For more information, visit: www.facebook.com/northwoodspremiere

Show Chair: Scott Brandner, 715-985-1192
Entries: Karyn Eckert, 715-360-1779 Sponsorship: Heidi Brandner, 715-678-6184

2024 Highlights

Youth Clipping and Fitting Clinic on Friday evening

PeeWee Showmanship

Profiles Show Supply on site

Steak & Egg Breakfast

Silent Auction

Save the Date:

Taylor County Farm Bureau Steak & Egg Breakfast

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2024

TAYLOR COUNTY FAIR GROUNDS - MEDFORD, WI

DON'T FORGET YOUR APPETITE!

From the Bog



Heidi Slinkman

Wood County Promotion and Education Committee Chair

Hello from Central Wisconsin in a wonky winter season. For some folks, winter getaways work well and following the sun, snow or ice is a great way to keep our family connections strong and our mental health restored.

Sustaining the farm is an instinctive mindset and that pivots this update to Ag Day at the

Capitol on January 31, 2024, presented by Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation and sponsored by agri-business industry leaders Rural Mutual Insurance Company, Livestock/Dairy/Growers Associations, Insight FS Growmark and others. The day included a meet and greet luncheon with the opportunity to dine and discuss relevant issues with Senator Testin and a listening session with keynote speakers such as DATCP Secretary Romanski and a panel of Legislators highlighting current key matters.

Attendance was strong, including a group of students and ag educator, Jeremy Radtke from Lincoln High School (Wisconsin Rapids). They joined members from the Wood County Farm Bureau Board including Vice President Josh Calaway and myself.

We were provided a folder of literature to help us prepare for our appointments with our district legislators and sorted out the valuable information with the opportunity to advocate for a Farm Bureau Health Plan legislative approval. Passing this bill allows Wisconsin Farm Bureau to offer a health plan as a member benefit, which adds significant value to farmers and members who have limited access to health care options. We care about Farm Bureau's membership because it fuels the ability to continue to be a unified voice which strengthens our Wisconsin

agriculture.

We visited with Rep. Scott Krug and Rep. Nancy VanderMeer and addressed the 2023 Budget Items for Agriculture and broke down for the students how tax dollars have an impact on legislative financial planning and spending as well as why it's valuable to include a prioritization for agriculture.

For example, we highlighted a few bulleted items that connected our personal (on and off the farm) stories while making the relatability back to agriculture. The students' diverse backgrounds and talents all connected back to a stable and thriving job market in their near future.

We pointed out the positive impact and value Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom has for students as well as the funding to support the Food and Farm Exploration Center. These integrated learning spaces help connect the future workforce to agriculture. The students shared their future aspirations to restore and rebuild a grandfather's dairy farm, become an accountant, pursue a law degree and to become an early childhood specialist/educator.

Our government leaders were delighted to share the day and talking space with this special audience, who someday very soon will become part of the workforce and a voice for agriculture in some capacity. The Wood County Farm Bureau Board shared in the sentiment and we look forward to next year's Ag Day at the Capitol with the inspiration to continue to invite our local schools to share in the day of agriculture advocacy. I am grateful for the experience and appreciative of the efforts our Wisconsin Farm Bureau contributed to make this day so successful.

thrive. Thank you for trusting in us with this magnificent tent! And thank you to the group of volunteers who helped answer cranberry questions!



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/>



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