A Few Dollars Makes a Big Difference



Brad Olson

WFBF President and District 9 Director

As you look at your Farm Bureau dues renewal, you will notice a \$15 voluntary contribution added to the total. What is this and what can those additional \$15 in contributions accomplish when you choose to include it with your Farm Bureau renewal?

A voluntary contribution of \$10 goes to support the Volunteers for Agriculture (VFA),

Wisconsin Farm Bureau's political action committee. The VFA helps to elect candidates who have agriculture's best interest in mind. We need legislators who know and understand what we do in agriculture. We need legislators who understand our way of life, the impact agriculture has on our economy and that we provide our state and nation with an abundant and safe food supply.

Your \$5 voluntary contribution goes to support the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation. These dollars are used to help fund Foundation programs including Ag in the Classroom, the Young Farmer and Agriculturist program and the Promotion and Education program, just to name a few. From getting agriculturally accurate books in local schools to teach students about agriculture, to working with 4-H and FFA, your contribution helps provide support for agricultural education and leadership programs across the state.

Next time you renew your membership with Wisconsin Farm Bureau, please consider including the voluntary contributions. These few dollars have an enormous impact from our local schools to the halls of the state capitol in Madison.

Thank you and God Bless, Brad Olson District 9 Director brad_vickyolson@yahoo.com 715-566-2249

Connecting Through Collegiate Farm Bureau Kendra Jentz

UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau President

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls has been busy on many adventures this 2023 -2024 Academic Year! From connecting with industry professionals through farm tours, developing leadership skills through the Discussion Meet, or bringing good to the community by volunteering at White Pine Berry Farm, UWRF Collegiate Farm Bureau has been trying to make the most of every moment. One of the highlights from the year was when 25 of our members had the opportunity to attend the Young Farmers and Agriculturalists Conference in December 2023. At the conference, they were able to attend workshops, listen to motivational speakers, network and have fun. We are proud of Katie Zimmer and Brooke Casey for competing in the state discussion meet, which took place with the YFA Conference.

Looking forward to the rest of the spring semester, we are excited to continue to deepen our connections and knowledge in agriculture through tours, a barn dance and partaking in conferences. Additionally, on Thursday, April 11 we will be hosting our 12th Annual Ag Day on Campus. This year's theme is Growing for Generations. Through this theme, we hope to not only encompass the history of agriculture but also highlight the new generations stepping into the vital roles of agriculture to ensure it is a sustainable industry for years to come.

If you are interested in sponsoring or helping us on Ag Day or interested in speaking at one of our meetings, please do not hesitate to contact us at cfb@uwrf.edu. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram at uwrfcollegiatefarmbureau, as well, to keep up to date with all that is happening. Thank you again for your continued support of young leaders like us and the UWRF Collegiate Farm Bureau. We couldn't do it without you!







Astound Yourself!

Each year, Rural Mutual Insurance Company sets a sales theme, and in 2023 it was to "Astound Yourself!". In 2023, Rural Mutual Insurance Company sales for Property and Casualty policies showed a record-breaking increase of 32% over 2022 reported sales. In partnership with the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, these sales also helped WFBF to achieve membership growth in 2023. In addition, these multi-line agents continued to protect livelihoods and futures through the sale of life insurance and annuity products through Farm Bureau Financial Services, marking an increase of 1.5% in sales over the previous year. Astounding certainly fits the agent's performance as 2023 was an amazing year.

The following District 9 Rural Mutual Insurance Company Agents were recognized for their outstanding performance during a Spring Honors and Awards ceremony that was held in Madison on the 23rd of February and will be attending a Leaders Conference later this spring. These Agents are: • Barbi Manter - Eau Claire and Baldwin - First Time Qualifier

- Tyler Holten Ridgeland First Time Qualifier
- Josh Huray Hayward First Time Qualifier
- Northwest Insurance Agency Carl Thomfohrda and Tony Aguado -Chippewa Falls and Balsam Lake
- Chippewa Valley Group Geof Liddle and Jeff White Eau Claire and Menomonie
- Laurie Peterson, the Northwest District Manager, was also recognized for her performance in leadership and recruitment. Congratulations to all these Top Performers.



Barbi Manter - Eau **Claire and Baldwin** First Time **Oualifier**



Tyler Holten -Ridgeland – First **Time Qualifier**



Josh Huray -Hayward - First **Time Qualifier**



Northwest Insurance Agency – Carl Thomfohrda and Tony Aguado – Chippewa **Falls and Balsam Lake**



Chippewa Valley Group - Geof Liddle and Jeff White - Eau Claire and Menomonie



Laurie Peterson Northwest District Manager -Leadership

District 9 Promotion and Education Committee Update

Steve Mueller

District 9 Promotion and Education Committee Member

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Promotion and Education Committee has been busy this winter aligning goals and planning activities to bring Farm Bureau members across the state outstanding leadership and educational activities.

As the District 9 representative, I am currently working with local county leaders to find out county needs, new ideas and to find a centralized event that will bring great benefit to the members of our district. The event will likely be held in late summer or in the fall as the fair and harvest season slows down a little bit.

While I have several ideas for an event, I am also very receptive to hearing from county farm bureau members about ideas or needs their counties may have. Chances are if it interests your county, other counties are in similar situations. If you have an idea or event you would like pursued in

your area, feel free to call me at 715.977.1224 or email at mueller.steve@ vahoo.com.

In October the state Promotion and Education Committee will once again be holding our Promotion and Education Boot Camp in conjunction with Agriculture in the Classroom's meeting. This combination has worked well for both groups. Also don't forget Agriculture in the Classroom essays are due April 15th. Visit wisagclassroom.com to find entry and submission details. Or if you need, feel free to reach out to myself or your local Agriculture in the Classroom leaders to help with any questions.





WISCONSIN FARM BUREAU 35 UNDER 35

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

Members Try Their Hand at Making Butter

At the end of January, Dunn County teamed up with District 4 and District 9 to host a butter-making class and a farm tour at Gilbertson dairy farm. We had about two dozen members attend. The event kicked off with a tour of Gilbertson's facility by Brandon Gilbertson, son of Kevin (Dunn County Farm Bureau Vice President) and Kay Gilbertson. Seeing their new barn set up along with their robots was very interesting. Just because they have robots, doesn't mean they aren't still checking in on the cows on a regular basis.

While the tour was going on, the kitchen mixers were on full speed, mixing up the heavy whipping cream to make cream and continually mixing to make butter and buttermilk. When the tour was over, everyone got a chance to flavor their butter. It could be left as unsalted butter, made into salted butter by adding a little salt or made into a compound butter. The Texas Roadhouse whipped cinnamon butter was a hit!



Want to Make Your Own Butter at Home?

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, room temperature, cut into cubes
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg Directions:
- Using a handheld mixer or stand mixer, whip the room temperature butter for 1-2 minutes, scraping down sides as needed.
- Add the powdered sugar, honey, cinnamon, and nutmeg, continue to whip for an additional 2 minutes, scraping down sides as needed.
- For best results, refrigerate for 1 hour, but can be used immediately. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.



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 a 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 \mid 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.

Spring Edition 3

gatherwisconsin.com

Farmers Become Lobbyists for a Day at Ag Day at the Capitol

There is something about over 200 farmers converging on our state capitol in Madison that brings joy. 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 Governor 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, as well as Representatives Tony Kurtz, Dave Considine and Travis Tranel.



The panel discussed:

- Recent investments in rural infrastructure.
- Improving access to 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 that 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 regulations.
- 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.





Grassroots in Action

Ashleigh Calaway

WFBF District 8 Coordinator

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 and hosted a

meeting with over 55 people in attendance including two senators. 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 individuals coming together to drive positive change from the ground up. We must celebrate these moments and encourage other members to do the same when necessary.

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.



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

How Does Our Policy Development Process Work?

Do you have policy ideas that you would like to be considered? Contact one of your county Farm Bureau board members or visit https://bit. ly/2024PolicyResolutions to submit your ideas.

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.

2024 WFBF Policy Book

The 2024 Policy Book has been updated and is available on the WFBF website at wfbf.com/policy/policy-development/. Hard copies of the book are also available. If you are interested in a hard copy, contact District 9 Coordinator Katie Mattison at 715.418.0975 or kmattison@wfbf.com



60th Annual Eau Claire Farm Show

2024 marked the 60th year for the Eau Claire Farm Show, which ran March 5-6 at the Chippewa Valley Expo Center.

This year's show brought together over 100 agriculture exhibitors from across the state and nation.

County Farm Bureau's from Districts 4, 8 and 9 came together to sponsor



a booth as well as a reception and workshop following the Farm Show on Tuesday, March 5. The reception and workshop were held at Chippewa Valley Technical College. "Creating a Culture of Sustainability for Your Business" was presented by Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation's Director of Sustainability Communications and Partnerships Rachel LaCount (Gerbitz).





Carbon Webinar Series

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



Dr. Frank Mitloehner Ben Huber **U.C. Davis** 4/22/2024



Insight FS 4/24/2024



Dan Christenson PepsiCo, Inc. 4/26/2024

Visit www.wfbf.com/programs/sustainabilityinitiative

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 careerbased 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 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."

Adam Wehling of Chippewa Valley Technical College.

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.

Bureau Federation; 'Ag Lending: More Than Just Loaning Money' with

Josh Schmidt of AgCountry Farm Credit Services; 'FFA, YFA and Your

Bureau; and 'Your Passion + The Right Training = Career Success' with

"FFA Farm Forum is a great partnership between Wisconsin Farm

Ag Experience' with Katrina Hoesley of UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm









Boyceville FFA

Chippewa FFA

Ellsworth FFA Hudson FFA

Farm Service Agency Reminds Farmers of County Committee Nomination Eligibility

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decisionmaking and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. To be eligible for nomination and hold office as a committee member or alternate, a person must fulfill each of the following requirements:

(1) be a producer with an interest in farming or ranching operations, (2) participate or cooperate in any FSA program provided for by law, (3) be a U.S. citizen, (4) be of legal voting age, (5) meet the basic eligibility requirements and (6) reside in the county or multi-county jurisdiction in

which they will be serving. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits.

> All nomination forms for the 2024 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by Aug. 1, 2024. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member available online at: fsa.usda. gov/elections.



Barron County



Barron County Farm Bureau YFA New Member Night

The Barron County Farm Bureau YFA program hosted its 2024 New Member night on February 23 at Spare Time Bowling in Turtle Lake. Our goal for this event was to use it as an introduction to Farm Bureau for new members and share YFA plans for the year ahead. Well, the event was a success as we hosted 10 individuals who were new to Farm Bureau and were looking to learn more!

Kent Nonemacher and Noah Massie walked away with the bowling awards for the night, Jasper Bushman won the 1-Year Membership to Farm Bureau and all enjoyed the pizza, conversation and comradery together. We are excited for the new members joining Barron County Farm Bureau and hope to build on the momentum from this YFA event going forward!



To Pay or Not to Pay! That May be the Question.

Submitted as a letter to the editor by Craig Hamernik

Maple Grove Solar LLC has suggested that the large-scale solar project, mostly in Maple Grove Township, may generate approximately \$763,000.00 annually for Barron County and \$563,000.00 for the Town of Maple Grove. Who pays this money to these municipalities? The short answer to this question is that the state generally pays municipalities and counties that have solar farms within their borders. (A special thank you to Representative Dave Armstrong's office for reaching out to the Legislative Council for the facts outlined in this letter.)

Under state law, the property of light, heat and power companies (generally utilities) are exempt from local property taxes. Instead, these companies are taxed at the state level through a license fee based upon their gross revenues. [ss. 70.112 (4) (a) and 76.28, Stats.]

To offset the loss in local revenue that results from the property tax exemption, the state provides a form of shared revenue (often referred to as "utility aid") to municipalities and counties with certain types of utility property within their borders such as solar. [s.79.04, Stats.] There is sometimes a misconception that the license fee that the state collects from utilities is directly remitted to municipalities and counties as utility aid. This is not the case. Rather, revenue from the gross receipts tax is deposited into the state's general fund. In turn, utility aid is paid out of a sum-sufficient shared revenue appropriation, funded largely from the state's general fund. When utility taxes are deposited into the general fund, they lose their identity and consequently, there is no direct relationship between utility tax collections and utility aid payments made to municipalities. Therefore, it is entirely possible that the State of Wisconsin could decide to divert funds that were paid in as license fees with the purpose of paying utility aid away from the municipalities that are forced to accept large-scale solar farms. For example, in FY 2021-22, the state collected approximately \$248.8 million in license fees from private light, heat and power companies. In 2021, the state provided approximately \$82.6 million in utility aid payments. You do the math!

I would suggest that residents of Wisconsin encourage our State Representatives to sponsor legislation that locks in at least 80% of the license fee collected be paid back as utility aid to the local municipalities that are having large-scale solar farms forced upon them with no voice into the citing of such unreliable electrical generation facilities.

Chippewa County



wfbf.com/about/counties/chippewa

ChippewaCountyFarmBureau

President's Message



Maddie Woodward

Chippewa County Farm Bureau President

Chippewa County Farm Bureau members, spring has arrived!

My name is Maddie Woodward and my husband, Danny, and I live in Chippewa Falls. Although we are both transplants, we have been able to quickly call Chippewa County home through our involvement with the Farm Bureau. I have worked for Pioneer Seeds as a

Territory Manager in Northwest Wisconsin for two years now and love working with an incredible team of sales reps. Prior to moving to Wisconsin, I worked in Texas for a year as an Associate Territory Manager in training within the Crop Protection business within Corteva Agriscience. I am a proud SDSU Jackrabbit Alum and have a huge passion for agricultural education that is fueled by public events, education and people I have met within Farm Bureau.

I have been involved in many different capacities leading up to now, including competing in the Minnesota FFA Farm Bureau Discussion Meet, serving as the South Dakota State University Collegiate Farm Bureau secretary and competing in the virtual American Farm Bureau Young Farmer & Rancher Discussion Meet representing Minnesota. I am excited to now serve as the President of Chippewa County Farm Bureau with a fresh group of energetic and passionate individuals alongside me. A couple of events we executed this year were a Chili Cookoff with businesses from Chippewa county and a bee social/DIY event where we partnered with a local beekeeper to present an informational workshop and assist community members in making lip balm and candles from beeswax.

Within Chippewa County, our main goals this year are to emphasize learning about our membership, coordinate events that serve our members while educating the public about agriculture and foster a better understanding of our local needs and how Farm Bureau can support those needs. We hope everyone has a safe and successful spring and are excited to see the beauty that comes from a focused planting season.

Chippewa County



Close Unused Earthen Manure Pits for Safety and Groundwater Protection

Kevan Klingberg, Program Agronomist, Chippewa County Land Conservation & Forest Management

In the 1970's and all through the 80's many Wisconsin dairy farmers constructed earthen manure pits and began managing liquid manure. This manure management style became "state of the art", and still is today. One huge difference is that those older facilities did not have engineered construction to create a strong barrier between the manure and leakage (into the soil and towards groundwater) below the facility.

Some may say those were the days of classic Wisconsin dairy farming! That nostalgic history is real: alfalfa, new seedings, high moisture corn, a little bit of corn silage; and 40 cow dairies adding cows and more cows, and capacity to provide farming opportunities for the next generation.

That is an honorable part of our history, yet many things have changed. The number of Wisconsin dairy farms is now but a fraction of the former farms lined up and down our country roads. That being said, there are many historic unused earthen manure pits that now ought to be properly

closed for safety reasons, as well as water quality reasons.

Sometimes these earthen manure pits are owned by an older couple that used to haul manure to their crop fields every fall and spring. Other times the manure pit is now owned by the next generation. And still other times, the manure pit is contained within a farmstead that a non-farming rural family now owns.

There is professional help and guidance available to landowners who desire to close unused earthen manure storage pits. County Land Conservation departments and County NRCS offices typically offer technical assistance, engineering guidance, and financial cost-sharing to close manure pits. Counties most often require a permit to close a manure storage facility. The closure must be conducted properly in accordance with County and State regulations.

Please call your local Land Conservation or NRCS office to take the first steps to close your unused earthen manure storage pit.

Dunn County



wfbf.com/about/counties/dunn



President's Message



Ben Sand

Dunn County Farm Bureau President

Hello all from Omaha, Nebraska.

I wanted to share with you all some of the events that I have been able to participate in over the last few weeks.

In January, Haily and I traveled to Salt Lake City, Utah for the American Farm Bureau Annual Convention. While in Salt Lake City we had Young Farmers & Ranchers committee

meetings, packaged meals at a local food bank and worked the competitive Young Farmer and Agriculturist event competitions. Haily was also elected to the YF&R executive team to serve as secretary.

At the end of January, Kevin Gilbertson and I attended Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Council of Presidents. There we were able to network with

county presidents and vice presidents from across the state. We went through some training with WFBF staff and had the opportunity to gain new ideas to bring back to our county. After Council of Presidents, we attended Ag Day at the Capitol. We met up with other members of Farm Bureau to talk policy with our elected officials.

At the beginning of March, Haily and I traveled to Omaha Nebraska for the YF&R leadership conference. My subcommittee group planned a successful conference where close to 900 Young Farmers & Ranchers from across the U.S. and Canada attended. There, we were able to grow existing relationships and build new ones. As the conference came to an end, Haily and I started our second and final year as YF&R committee members. We look forward to the year ahead and the experiences we will gain.

We want to thank the members of Dunn County for their continued support while we advocate for agriculture and we look forward to sharing our experiences with you!

Stay up to date! AG NEWSWIRE, POLICY PULSE, STEWARDS AND MORE!

Your Farm Bureau Member Benefit Savings Start the New Year Off Right, Get the Most Out of Your Member Benefits! Wisconsin Farm Bureau members quality for a variety of membership benefits and discounts that serve the needs of

Ag Newswire

Ag Newswire is a weekly email newsletter that includes political, Farm Bureau and general agriculture news. Each Friday, the latest and most relevant farm news will be delivered to your inbox.

Policy Pulse

Policy Pulse is an e-newsletter to keep Wisconsin Farm Bureau members up to date on the latest policy and legislative news and other happenings in the governmental relations division.

Stewards

Stewards is WFBF's sustainability e-newsletter for conservationrelated news, trending topics and upcoming events and deadlines.

VIEW ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN STAY UP TO DATE ON WISCONSIN FARM BUREAU NEWS AT WFBF.COM.

Uncommon Conversations Enlightens and Inspires Local Community in Farming Discussion

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

In early February, Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Glenwood City hosted another of their Uncommon Conversations events. These events focus on bringing the community together to talk about big ideas or issues of community importance. For this one, the church partnered with the Hay River Farmer-Led Watershed Council to discuss water quality and agriculture locally.

As participants entered, they were greeted by a map of the watersheds in St. Croix and adjacent counties. They placed a pin in the map noting where they reside and took a look at what watershed their property sits in. To start off the evening programming, Pastor Jonathan Zielske opened with a brief overview of the biblical message of stewardship for creation, founding the rest of the conversation in respectful discourse and setting an expectation of working towards a common good.

Becky Brathal of UW-Madison Extension then took a few minutes to explain to the attendees about the map they were greeted with and talked through local rivers and streams. Land in Glenwood City is part of the Tiffany and Sandy Creek watersheds, meaning that rain that doesn't infiltrate into the ground will end up in those creeks. Those creeks flow into the larger Hay River, which then flows into the Red Cedar River.

Stewart Bartz, local farmer and a leader in the Hay River Farmer-Led Watershed Council, spoke about his farming practices. The Bartz family has been farming in Dunn and St. Croix County for 6 generations and counting. Until 2020, the Bartz family had a dairy farm; with the pressure from the dairy market, they have transitioned to holistically managed beef where cattle are rotationally grazed through 32 paddocks on the farm allowing each section of pasture to rest for 30 days before seeing livestock again.

By incorporating regenerative management, farmer Bartz has seen a .75% increase in organic matter (OM) in his soils in 2 years. OM increases that fast are almost unheard of in row crop settings that don't incorporate livestock. But crops are also an important part of the farm's whole picture. Bartz noted "small grains are the ace in the hole for building our soil health." To exemplify how the improvements to his soil are beneficial to the community at large, he shared a video of water running off of his field from snow melt, it was crystal clear. Next to that video,

Bartz showed another video, which looked quite different. It showed brown water, that looked more like hot chocolate, running down the ditch past his farm from a neighbor's field up the road. All that "chocolate" in the water is actually nutrient rich soil which is a lost resource for the landowner and becomes a problem downstream, filling up ditches, creating more washouts and adding nutrients to systems where they're harmful.

The benefits to his farm and the greater watershed have encouraged Bolan-Vale farm to keep trying new things to improve the foundation of their farm, the soil. Bartz's farm, Bolan-Vale was the first farm in the northern half of the state to try seeding with a drone back in 2021. "I'm always trying something new every year. Most people drive by and shake their heads."

Bartz noted that his land management has included clearing poor shrubby groves of prickly ash and re-establishing healthy ground cover that holds the soil better than unmanaged brush. "A lot of people think conservation means not doing anything with the land, but I don't think that's true," he said. Bartz ended his presentation with a note on how the broader community can impact the environment and support healthy agricultural practices like those on his farm.

- 1. Buy local buying holistically-managed, locally-raised beef protects surface water and builds habitat for wildlife.
- 2. Get involved with a farmer-led group to learn more about practices that improve the farm and the greater community. If you own farm land, be intentional with your management and work with any renters to ensure that practices consider the long-term impact to the farm.
- 3. Work with public officials to keep communities farming-friendly.

After Bartz's presentation, the attendees had roundtable discussions about their relationship to the watershed and agriculture locally. Participants included local town residents as well as many rural residents and farmers who discussed their concerns of managing inherited farmland, how to talk to farmers in the community, and how to incorporate basic soil health principles locally. Questions ranged from understanding the nuances of chemical use on farms to smart questions to ask farmers.

To wrap up, Pastor Zielske asked the audience to provide words that represented their evaluation of the meeting. Participants shouted up "inspiring, encouraging, thankful, grateful, enlightened and appreciative."



Stewart Bartz of Bolan-Vale Farms & the Hay River Farmer-Led Watershed Council presented to farmers and non-farmers about his holistically managed beef and how his practices protect and improve water quality and wildlife habitat.



Becky Brathal of UW-Madison Extension reviewed watersheds and helped attendees understand which water bodies their land practices impact directly.

President's Message



Kevin Ballman

Pierce County Farm Bureau President

Greetings!

My name is Kevin Ballman and recently the title of president has landed on my plate. As I ponder the responsibility of this position, I have to take a second to thank Travis Kopp for the excellent job he had done as our president. Our county and state Farm

Bureau have been positively impacted by the passion for agriculture Travis has shared. I am grateful for Travis to continue to serve as vice president. Our board is grateful for the knowledge Travis has to share.

Our board moving forward has been patiently waiting to review the essays our fourth and fifth graders are creatively writing and submitting to the Agriculture in the Classroom essay contest. We as a board are extremely grateful for our parents, teachers and school administrators for their support of agricultural literacy within our county and state. The

board is excited to have a new Young Farmers and Agriculturists chair. We are optimistic about the opportunity to re-energize interest amongst young farmers within our county. The resiliency of our county Farm Bureau can only be enhanced by the involvement of our young farmers. We are so proud of our collegiate partners nearby in River Falls. We are hopeful that they can provide some guidance in brainstorming some great activities. Our board is also working on our milk stand at the Pierce County Fairgrounds. Amongst the upkeep of the building, we continue to evaluate the current relationships with our milk and cookie suppliers to ensure the most delicious milk and cookies at the fair. If anyone has ideas for a speaker at our annual meeting this fall, please reach out, these are your meetings. Hopefully, by the time everyone has the opportunity to read this you have all enjoyed the Eau Claire Farm Show and the Farm Bureau social event after. We truly hope spring does know when it is supposed to be here and all have a safe planting season.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Ballman

Pierce County Farm Bureau Donates Books

Pierce County recently donated the Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom book of the year, "I Love Strawberries!", to all school libraries in Pierce County. In addition to the book, information was also provided to the schools regarding the 2024 essay contest for fourth and fifth graders. This year's essay is titled "Wisconsin Agriculture is Fruit-Full". Fourth and fifth grade teachers were provided with resources to help integrate the essay contest into their curriculum.



In previous contests, Pierce County schools have submitted 130+ essays for review with the Pierce County Farm Bureau. Of those submissions, our students have been chosen to represent their community and school at the district level and state level of Farm Bureau. Pierce County Farm Bureau appreciates the support of parents, school administration and teachers in this learning opportunity for our young minds.

2024 essay contest submissions are due April 15, 2024.

Pierce County Young Farmers and Agriculturists



Conor Ballman
Pierce County Farm Bureau YFA Chair

My name is Connor Ballman. I am the newly elected Pierce County Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) chair. I farm with my dad on our row crop operation and am currently studying to be an agriculture service technician. I am passionate about advocating for and connecting with other young farmers and agriculture professionals.

I am excited to build a YFA committee within Pierce County to provide networking opportunities for our members. We are seeking ideas for YFA events. If you are interested in getting involved or have ideas, please contact me at connorballman6@gmail.com.



Pierce County Farm Bureau Board Members Attend WFBF Council of Presidents and Ag Day at the Capitol

The Council of Presidents meeting provided opportunities to network with other county Farm Bureaus across Wisconsin celebrating in their successes and collecting ideas to enhance our county Farm Bureau. Resources were shared by Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation to support Pierce County in member relations, young farmer engagement and advocacy of our vocation through local government entities.



After the Council of Presidents, members adjourned to take part in Ag Day at the Capitol. Members were excited to see the interest through the large attendance of members and even some of our collegiate members. We learned of key Farm Bureau legislative initiatives which we shared with our Assembly and Senate representatives through personal meetings with them.

Pierce County Members Attend IGNITE Conference

Pierce County Farm Bureau board members recently attended the IGNITE conference at the Metropolis Resort in Eau Claire on March 1, 2024.

The meeting opened with a motivational speech from a farmer whose family grows almonds in California. The conversation surrounded our ability to listen to differences in perspectives to help our organization be better at what we do.

After a fantastic lunch, the afternoon provided an opportunity to participate in several breakout sessions. Our county learned about communication, parliamentary procedure and the importance committees can play in additional member involvement. It was a great day to enhance our leadership skills for the benefit of our county Farm Bureau.



Pierce County Farm Bureau board members Conor and Kevin Ballman attend IGNITE.

Polk Burnett



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Building Bridges



Travis Senn

Polk Burnett Farm Bureau President

As I continue in my first term as president of Polk Burnett County Farm Bureau, there has been no shortage of new experiences. One such new adventure included attending the Council of Presidents, held in conjunction with WFBF's annual Ag Day at the Capitol. What an energizing experience it was.

One discussion stood out from the others to me, and it's a discussion our board in Polk Burnett has engaged in since I joined the board last year: what is the value of a membership with Farm Bureau?

The group discussed all aspects of a value proposition: identifying our target audience and their goals or needs, explaining our plan to help and describing a successful ending.

But this discussion led me down another train of thought. Many of us join Farm Bureau for different reasons. Some have goals of advocacy and representing our peers in policy discussions at the local, regional, state and even national levels. Some have goals of education and sharing agriculture's story with consumers. Some have goals of networking and building a stronger community. Some want access to Farm Bureau's numerous resources and support systems. Some have goals of leadership development and growth.

Whatever your goal is, chances are Farm Bureau can help you accomplish it. Continue to engage with your county. Ask your leadership questions. Find ways to get involved. Offer new ideas. Attend a conference. Compete in a contest.

I look forward to pushing our county to become more engaged in everything Farm Bureau can offer. There are talented people here who deserve their time in the spotlight. And there are leaders who just haven't had the opportunity to lead yet. Most importantly, I believe our members need a way to feel connected. Our group has the opportunity to foster a sense of belonging to something greater, forging deep connections that go beyond mutual affiliation.

My goal with Farm Bureau is to build a strong community and position our county's Farm Bureau as a resource for our members and our communities.

What are your goals with Farm Bureau?



Polk Burnett

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What's Your Why?

Sara Byl

Polk Burnett Farm Bureau Board Member and Local Affairs Chair

Quite often I get asked, "Why should I become a member of Farm

Bureau?" I will admit there have been times when I have had to come up with some unique answers because sometimes, I have questioned it myself. Then about 5 years ago, I had a local issue that came up in my township with activists pushing ordinances restricting local farmers. I started going to the Polk Burnett Farm Bureau board meetings asking for help. We were all unsure of how to go about this, but one thing that never wavered with my local board was their support. Many members came to meetings in my township and listened and spoke. The board sent many letters to my local board on reasons why they should not go down this ordinance path. The support we got from our local board and

members was something we might not have had if we were not members. You never know when you might have an issue come up where you need support and resources, being a member opens you up to like-minded people.

Fast forward a few years and I have attended a few state annual meetings and was elected onto our local Farm Bureau board. Being more involved has shown me how much the local and state Farm Bureaus offer to us all. One thing I can say is if you are wondering what you can do to get involved

and that is to go to your local board meetings! Go and engage with the board. I promise you there are opportunities for you to get involved in! There is so much offered at the state level as well. I just attended my first IGNITE conference where I attended workshops on parliamentary procedure, how to make your brand known and how to have an effective and well-run local board. And there were other classes that I did not get to take that were just as good.

Farm Bureau is a lot like any other organization. You get out of it what you put in. I encourage you to get involved. Run for the board, go to meetings, get on the YFA committee or become engaged with

the Ag in the Classroom program!

Being a member of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau gives you more than a title, it gives you support, knowledge and builds relationships!



Polk Burnett Member Named to Board of Trustees

Isaac Christenson of Amery joined a newly formed group of Wisconsin

Farm Bureau leaders who convened for the first time on March 6 as the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation Board of Trustees. The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation Board of Trustees was established by the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Board of Directors and will be responsible for expanding fundraising and program efforts.

"I'm excited to join the talented and experienced individuals who have so generously volunteered for this important role," said Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation Board of Trustees Chair Bob Nash. "Our Farm Bureau leadership and education programs will benefit greatly from the engagement of individuals, businesses and

other organizations from the agricultural community and beyond."

The creation of the Board of Trustees was a recommended outcome

from a year-long task force, which outlined long-term goals and created a full-time foundation director position.

"This is a significant step for the longterm success of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation and the programs it supports," said Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation Director John Hromyak. "I look forward to working with the Board of Trustees to identify and pursue new opportunities to develop our

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation Board of Trustees includes: Jim Renn, Ben Huber, Robert Nigh, Loren Wolfe, Roger Grade, Kaitlyn Kesler, Ken Harter, Sara Menard Huber, Isaac Christenson; at-large representatives Kristi Fiedler, Bob Nash (Chair), Andrew Dal Santo (Vice-Chair); and

base of donors and sponsors."

ex-officio members Brad Olson, WFBF President, and Joe Bragger, WFBF Vice President.



Rusk County



Rusk County Dairy and Beef Promoters Host Annual Beef, Bourbon and Beer Event

The Rusk County Dairy & Beef Promoters partnered with Heart of the North Brewing Company for their Annual Beef, Bourbon and Beer event on Saturday, March 9.

The dinner event featured unique beef and dairy products, with the goal of exposing consumers to new items and ultimately increasing demand for our products. The group grilled over 60 pounds of beef, including Terres

Major, Tri-tip and Picanha. Our featured soup was Zuppa Toscano paired with Apple Cheddar and 3-cheese with onion grilled cheese sandwiches. Multiple varieties of fresh cheese were served along with butter boards on each table. The meal concluded with a slice of cheesecake.

As an all you can eat event, everyone left very full!







Sawyer County



SATURDAY JUNE 22, 2024 6:30 AM - 11 AM

Have you "herd"?

Save the Date for the Sawyer County Dairy Breakfast

Brought to you by:



SAWYER COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

St. Croix County



President's Message



Steve Mueller
St. Croix County Farm Bureau President

The St. Croix County Farm Bureau has been busy this winter working on planning a very exciting 2024. Our board members represented the county at the Leadership Boot Camp in November, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in December and the IGNITE Conference in February. As well as sponsoring the Farm Bureau booth at the Farm Show

in Eau Claire in March. Also in March, we delivered the Farm Bureau book of the year to all libraries in the county.

A new event for 2024 will be held April 12 at 6 p.m. at the White Pine Berry farm. We are inviting all St. Croix County Farm Bureau members to join us at our first ever "Taste of Farm Bureau" member appreciation event. Our board is planning and preparing a meal for members and will be contacting you all personally to invite you to attend a night of good food and agriculture discussion. We also are extending our invitation to county and state legislative leaders that represent our county to meet our members and discuss agriculture. There will be cheese tasting, games for the whole family and some fantastic door prizes.

Our county Farm Bureau is also offering four \$250 scholarships to graduating seniors who are children of our members, so if your son or daughter qualifies, ask your guidance counselor about the scholarship opportunity regardless if your child is pursuing an ag degree or not. It's a member benefit to you from the county!

As we continue into summer and fall, of course we will have the food booth at the St. Croix County Fair, are working on a tour for area farm bureau members, and have our annual meeting planned for September 8th.

2024 will be a transforming and exciting year for the St. Croix County Farm Bureau and its members. Our goal is to bring members more benefits and engagement. Be sure to check out the St. Croix County Farm Bureau Facebook page as it is increasing engagement on activities and benefits to members.

The regular scheduled date for our county meetings has been changed to 1st Monday of the month at our building in Hammond. If anyone has questions or needs more info about anything St. Croix County Farm Bureau related you can email me at mueller.steve@yahoo.com or call at 715-977-1224. Or reach out to any of our other board members.

Hope to see everyone at an event in 2024!

St. Croix County



Taste of Farm Bureau

Join us for the Taste of Farm Bureau event!

- Date: Friday, April 12
 - 6 p.m.: Social Hour and Welcome
- 7 p.m.: Enjoy a meal served by St. Croix County Farm Bureau board members
 - Location: White Pine Berry Farm

The St. Croix County Farm Bureau board members are organizing a gathering for all Farm Bureau and county board members. It's a great opportunity to meet your board members and connect with other Farm Bureau members. Come, mingle and bring your entire family! The event will include a cheese-tasting competition, a chance to vote for the best dish and activities for the whole family. Contact Jenna Grulke at 715.977.2557 or achterjen14@gmail.com with questions or to RSVP.





Wednesday, June 12, 2024 from 1pm – 5pm Agriculture Service and Education Center - 1960 8th Ave, Baldwin, WI

Wednesday, July 10, 2024 from 1pm – 5pm Kinnickinnic Townhall – 1271 County Road J, River Falls, WI

Wednesday, August 14, 2024 from 1pm – 5pm Glenwood Town Shop – 3099 160th Ave, Glenwood City, WI

Wednesday, September 18, 2024 from 1pm – 5pm St. Croix County Services Center - 1752 Dorset Lane, New Richmond, WI

St. Croix County residents are encouraged to attend a free well water nitrate screening clinics to learn how to monitor and protect their drinking water. Bring about eight ounces of water in a closed container (preferably glass) collected within 24 hours of the clinic. It is important to run the tap for 10 to 15 minutes on cold at full flow before collecting the sample. Check the County website for a video tutorial. Nitrate analysis results are given on-site, with staff available for result intercretation and advice. Sample bottles for additional testing are available at the clinics (at the owner's expense).

2024 Hazardous Waste Collection Event

Barns, garages and basements are all places where you may have stored items with properties that make them hazardous. Look for symbols or words like toxic, poison, corrosive, reactive, ignitable or flammable. Bring these items to St. Croix County's hazardous waste collection event. This collection event is for household and agricultural waste.

- Location: St. Croix County Highway Shop | 666 E Hwy 12, Town of Hudson
- Date: Tuesday, September 24
- Time: 2:30 6:30 p.m.

Farms must pre-register waste materials with the County's Recycling

Specialist. The Recycling Specialist will then contact you to set up a drop-off appointment. The first 500 pounds are free. You will be charged for additional material. There is a fee of \$5 per gallon container for all paints and stains.

New Voucher Program!

Can't wait for the hazardous waste collection event? A new voucher is available when farmers bring their ag hazardous waste directly to Logistics Recycling (LRI). Contact the County's Recycling Specialist for more information and to get your voucher number. This program is available only for household and agricultural hazardous waste (not commercial). Latex paint is not covered with this program.

Contact the Recycling Specialist

Have questions about a recycling event? Contact the St. Croix County Recycling Specialist.

- Email: kris.poston@sccwi.gov
- Call: 715-531-1907

You can also find more recycling resources at: sccwi.gov/recycling



St. Croix County





St. Croix County Land and Water Conservation

Do you have washouts or gullies that have formed in a field? Are there areas where a waterway could be improved or constructed, or a low productivity spot on a field? A St. Croix County Conservationist can assist ag producers and private landowners with these issues. St. Croix County Land and Water Conservation Department works on soil erosion, animal waste, buffers and streambank protection concerns. Conservation staff can visit your site and help develop a plan to solve a variety of natural resource and on-the-farm concerns. For more information stop in the Baldwin Ag Center 1960 8th Ave Suite 140 or call (715) 531-1930.

Superior Shores

wfbf.com/about/counties/superiorshoressuperiorshoresfarmbureau

Wisconsin Limited Liability Law Signage

Josh Huray, Rural Mutual Insurance Company Agent, has a limited number of Wisconsin Limited Liability Law Signages available to members in northwestern Wisconsin.

If your farm is involved in agritourism and could benefit from one of these signs, give Josh a call at 715.934.2400.



Get Involved with Superior Shores Farm Bureau

We are seeking members who are interested in joining the Superior Shores Farm Bureau Board. The Board provides leadership for programs in the area, establishes policies which address the local needs of members and continues to be a strong voice for farmers in northern Wisconsin to represent your best interests.

Superior Shores Farm Bureau (comprised of Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, and Iron counties) is one of the 61 county Farm Bureaus that makes up the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation. Each of the 61 county Farm Bureaus in Wisconsin is organized and run by farmers and agribusiness professionals to provide local representation and promotion.

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation is the state's largest general farm organization representing farms of all sizes, commodity types and management styles. There are more than 47,000 member families that belong to the Wisconsin Farm Bureau. Voting Farm Bureau members (farmers) annually set the policy that the organization follows, and are involved in local, state and national affairs making it a true grassroots organization.

We would love for you to become part of the Superior Shores Farm Bureau Board!

If you are interested in helping maintain a strong Superior Shores Farm Bureau by becoming a board member, please reach out.

Josh Huray Board Member 218.428.0852 jhuray@ruralins.com Katie Mattison District 9 Coordinator 715.418.0975 kmattison@wfbf.com





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