



Grassroots

District 9 News

District Director Report



Brad Olson

WFBF President and District 9 Director

As we closed out the membership year on September 30, we're excited to report membership numbers we haven't seen in decades. For the first time in 35 years, all Wisconsin Farm Bureau counties experienced an overall membership gain. Not only that, but we also saw the largest increase in new voting memberships in many years, along with voting

gains in most counties—accomplishments we can all be proud of.

These impressive results reflect the strength of our grassroots organization. Members talking with friends, family and neighbors have truly

driven membership forward. A big thank you also goes out to Rural Mutual Insurance. Their exceptional year has played a key role in helping achieve these outstanding organizational numbers. We extend our gratitude to everyone involved.

This year also brought incredible opportunities to engage with significant organizations. In July, we hosted the EPA Region 5 in western Wisconsin, and in August, we welcomed representatives from the ALDI Grocery Stores to southern Wisconsin. Hosting both a government agency and a multinational company was a tremendous honor for our organization, and we look forward to continuing these partnerships.

Brad Olson
District 9 Director
brad_vickyolson@yahoo.com
715-566-2249

Honoring the Heart of Farming



Katie Richartz

District 9 Coordinator

As we wrap up fall harvest and reflect on another year in farming and Farm Bureau, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the essence of the work we do. Farming is the most glorious work you can do that nobody ever sees. It takes every inch of you—your heart, your soul, your strength and your spirit.

The fields don't applaud when the crop comes in and the soil doesn't sigh with satisfaction at a job well done. It's art without an audience, where success and failure often look the same to the outside world. Nobody knows if you won or if you lost, but you know. We know.

It's the kind of work where the rewards aren't always immediate and, sometimes, they're not even visible until the day you die. Yet, it's the work that sustains us all, and it's the work that sustains the world.

But here's the thing—you're not alone in this journey. In those

moments when the weight feels too heavy, when the victories seem small and the challenges insurmountable, Farm Bureau is here, standing with you. We're not just an organization; we're a family—a Farm Bureau family. We've got your back, from the smallest seed to the biggest harvest, through every season and every storm.

Whether it's advocating for policies that protect our way of life or creating opportunities for growth and learning, Farm Bureau is here to support you. We know the sacrifices you make and we're committed to ensuring that your hard work does not go unnoticed and that your voice is heard.

So, as we wrap up this year, let's take pride in the unseen, in the toil that shapes our land and our lives. Let's celebrate the victories we may not have known were victories and let's honor the losses that taught us more than we ever imagined.

Because in this life of farming, we are more than just workers of the land—we are artists of the earth, crafting a legacy that will outlast us all. And as we move forward, remember that you're not doing it alone. You have the strength of the Farm Bureau family beside you, every step of the way.

Thank you for all you do, seen and unseen.



Oxbo Tour Highlights Cutting-Edge Ag Equipment Made in Our Own Backyard

When you see green, you think John Deere. When you see red, it's Case IH. But what about green and gold? On September 24, the District 9 Promotion and Education committee hosted a tour of Oxbo, a global leader in innovative agricultural equipment manufacturing located in Clear Lake. This tour offered members a unique opportunity to learn about the latest advancements in agricultural technology that support not just local farms, but farming communities around the world.

Oxbo designs, manufactures and distributes cutting-edge harvesting equipment for high-value crops including berries, coffee, field corn, forage, fresh market vegetables, olives and vineyards. With production facilities in Clear Lake, WI; Byron, NY; Lynden, WA; and international locations in the Netherlands, the UK and France—along with the recent acquisition of H&S in Marshfield—Oxbo is a key player in agriculture worldwide.

Their products are used in over 40 countries, with a broad range of equipment supporting various industries:

- Seed industry: Sprayers, detasslers and harvesters
- Vegetable industry: Harvesters for fresh market and processed vegetables
- Other markets: Equipment for citrus, berries, field corn, forage, olives and vineyards

During the tour, attendees were warmly greeted by Oxbo plant manager Bruce Whitaker, who shared an insightful overview of the company's history, mission and commitment to quality. Whitaker captured the essence of Oxbo's impact, stating: "If you eat a pea or green bean in a can, chances are our machines picked it."

The highlight of the tour was watching the entire manufacturing process unfold, from raw materials to finished machines. Attendees even had the opportunity to climb inside a fully assembled 2580 sweet corn harvester and a green bean harvester, providing an up-close experience of the technology that powers farms around the world.

It's truly impressive that right here in our own community, Oxbo Manufacturing is producing equipment that's making an impact globally.

Their innovative solutions are helping farmers improve productivity and efficiency, driving modern agriculture forward. Oxbo's success is a reminder of the ingenuity and dedication within our local workforce—and something we can all take pride in, knowing that equipment shaping farms worldwide is built right here at home.

A special thanks to Oxbo for hosting District 9 Farm Bureau members and offering such a valuable and informative experience. We look forward to more events in the future.



1. District 9 Farm Bureau members enjoyed the tour of Oxbo!
2. Attendees were able to get inside the Oxbo 2580 sweet corn harvester and green bean harvester.
3. Can you name this piece of equipment? If you said pea combine (without the head) you would be correct!

Engage with Agriculture Event Held at K-Lund Angus

On Monday, August 26, District 9 had the honor of hosting one of the Wisconsin Ag Coalition's "Engage with Agriculture" events at K-Lund Angus. This series is designed to give candidates running for state office a firsthand look at modern farming practices, agri-businesses and agricultural processing facilities.

The event was a fantastic opportunity for bipartisan candidates to gain valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by today's farmers. By visiting K-Lund Angus and engaging directly with producers, candidates were able to see the innovation and dedication that drive our local agricultural industry.

Patrick Murray from Nutrien, representing the Wisconsin Ag Coalition, was in attendance to help facilitate the discussion. His presence emphasized the importance of collaboration between the agricultural community and those who will shape policy for the future. Murray's insights, along with input from local farmers, contributed to meaningful conversations about the needs of agriculture.

These educational events help ensure that, once elected, candidates are better equipped to represent the needs and priorities of Wisconsin's agricultural community. With agriculture being such a vital part of our state's economy and identity, the "Engage with Agriculture" series plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between policymakers and those working the land.

A special thank you to K-Lund Angus for hosting this important event and to all who participated. We look forward to continuing these valuable conversations and supporting the future of agriculture in Wisconsin!

Comprised of organizations representing farmers, commodities, agri-businesses, food production, and more, the Wisconsin Ag Coalition is committed to innovation, collaboration, and stewardship in Wisconsin agriculture. Our goal is to inspire policymakers like yourself to advocate for initiatives that promote a vibrant agricultural landscape, support rural communities, and contribute to feeding and fueling Wisconsin, our nation, and the world.



District 9 News

UWRF Collegiate Farm Bureau Gears Up for an Exciting Year Ahead

Collegiate Farm Bureau members at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls is gearing up for an exciting 2024-2025 school year! With activities spanning farm tours to learn more about Wisconsin's diverse agriculture industry, strengthening communication skills with the Discussion Meet, connecting with community members through volunteering at White Pine Berry Farm and showing off their line dancing skills at our barn dance.

Our officer team headed to Madison in August and met with Farm Bureau staff and other Collegiate Farm Bureau officer teams from UW-Madison and UW-Platteville. In Madison, we learned more about Wisconsin Farm Bureau at the state level and networked with students from the other schools. Developing our plans for the year ahead was another key priority of the meeting. While we are only one meeting into the school year, our membership is looking strong and ready to enjoy all that Collegiate Farm Bureau provides.

We cannot wait for the Young Farmer and Agriculturist Conference this December because it is always a great way for our members to connect with other Farm Bureau members and collegiate chapters to enjoy a weekend-long break from school in Wisconsin Dells. Two members from our chapter will continue preparing

for the Discussion Meet competition at the YFA Conference and WFBF Annual Meeting with the hopes of moving on to compete at the national competition.

After the conclusion of the YFA Conference, our largest event of the year will be here before we know it. If you guessed Ag Day on Campus, you would be correct! Back again for the 13th year, Ag Day on Campus will be taking place on April 10, 2025 in the center of campus. The event serves as an opportunity for students with no connection to or knowledge of agriculture to learn about it, along with those who are already well-versed in it to share their love for the industry. It brings together everyone from students to faculty and staff, and even community members and local businesses.

If you are interested in sponsoring or helping us at Ag Day on Campus, are interested in speaking at one of our meetings, having your county Farm Bureau collaborate with us or even hosting students on a farm tour, please do not hesitate to contact us at cfb@uwrf.edu. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram (@[uwrfcollegiatefarmbureau](https://www.instagram.com/uwrfcollegiatefarmbureau)), as well, to keep up to date

with all that is happening. Thank you again for supporting the UWRF Collegiate Farm Bureau and developing leaders like us. We are grateful to have many amazing Farm Bureau members here in District 9!



Congratulations to our 2024-2025 officer team as you kick off the year!

Back (from left): Maria Zillges (Treasurer), Emily Bittelman (CAFES Representative), Lashawna Vogel (President), Dafney Yates (Vice President), Katie Thome (Ag Day on Campus Co-Chair); Front (from left): Ellie Sauder (Secretary), Brooke Beardsley (Ag Day on Campus Co-Chair), Sierra Bakke (Reporter), JoHannah Gehrek (Ag Day on Campus Co-Chair)

Discussion Meet: It's Not Just for Young Farmers

On August 5, seasoned agriculturists from across District 9 gathered at Sawmill Pizza & Brew Shed in Clear Lake for the inaugural Older Farmer and Agriculturist (OFA) Discussion Meet held in conjunction with the Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) Discussion Meet. The event was a great success, bringing together experienced farmers to share their knowledge and engage in thoughtful dialogue on the future of agriculture.

Participants explored ways young farmers and ranchers can diversify their farm portfolios to open new revenue streams and how Farm Bureau can support them in strengthening their operations. This engaging conversation allowed participants to showcase their expertise while working together to find practical solutions.

Congratulations to Steve Mueller, who took home the title of OFA Discussion Meet winner! Steve will be representing District 9 at the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 8th, where he will compete in the first-ever state-level Farmers and Agriculturists Unlimited (FAU) Discussion Meet. We wish him the best of luck as he brings his experience and insights to the big stage.

Also participating in this competition were Kevin Ballman, Brad Olson, Paul Hetke and Carl Casper. Their contributions were instrumental in making the event a success and we thank them for sharing their valuable insights.

This inaugural event marked the beginning of what we hope will become a long-standing tradition for our more experienced members to stay involved and share their wealth of knowledge with the agricultural community.



Steve Mueller, Kevin Ballman, Brad Olson, Paul Hetke and Carl Casper participated in the inaugural OFA Discussion Meet.

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Reaches New Milestone: Over 51,000 Members Strong!

Membership is what drives Farm Bureau.

We are thrilled to announce that the Wisconsin Farm Bureau has surpassed an incredible milestone, reaching over 51,000 members at the end of the 2024 membership year, September 30!

A big congratulations to all of the county Farm Bureaus in District 9 for coming together and achieving all of their membership goals!

This achievement is a testament to the strength of our agricultural community and the unwavering support of our members, who continue to champion Wisconsin agriculture.

Our collective voice is stronger than ever, ensuring that the needs and concerns of farmers across the state are heard loud and clear at local, state and national levels. Whether advocating for policy changes, supporting agricultural education or fostering community connections, each one of our members plays a vital role in sustaining and advancing the future of farming in Wisconsin.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to this success, whether through recruitment efforts, sharing the value of membership or participating in Farm Bureau activities. Together, we will continue to make Wisconsin Farm Bureau a powerful force for positive change in agriculture.

Here's to an even stronger year ahead as we build on this momentum and continue our mission of serving Wisconsin's farmers and rural communities.

Thank you for being a member of Wisconsin Farm Bureau!

Celebrating District 9 Young Farmer and Agriculturist Award Winners and Finalists

As we approach the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer and Agriculturist (YFA) Conference in December at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, we are excited to celebrate the remarkable achievements of District 9's award winners and finalists. These dedicated individuals exemplify the spirit of innovation, leadership and commitment to agriculture.

Discussion Meet Finalists:

- Isaac Christenson (Polk Burnett)
- Serenity Palmer (Rusk County)
- Sierra Solum (Barron County)

The YFA Discussion Meet offers members a platform to showcase their speaking abilities on agricultural issues. Contestants are evaluated on their problem-solving skills as they engage in discussions on relevant topics with their peers. These three finalists will demonstrate their collaborative and analytical skills as they compete for the state Discussion Meet title at the WFBF Annual Meeting in December. The winner will also earn the chance to represent Wisconsin at the AFBF Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas in January 2025.

Outstanding Ag Professional:

- Travis and Bethany Senn (Polk Burnett)

The Outstanding Agriculture Professional Award recognizes YFA members who excel in their agriculture involvement, leadership abilities and participation in Farm Bureau and other civic and service organizations.

Applicants are agriculturists who derive a majority of their income from an off-farm job.

35 Under 35 Finalists:

The 35 Under 35 program recognizes and celebrates the creativity and innovation of young farmers and agriculturists who are preserving agriculture through leadership in environmental, social and economic practices. District 9 is proud to have the following individuals competing for this prestigious recognition:

- **Sustainable Self:** Katie Zimmer (Rusk County)
- **Sustainable Future:**
 - Sam Olson (Barron County)
 - Serenity Palmer (Rusk County)
 - Josh Roos (Polk Burnett)
 - Sawyer and Jillian Tietz (Polk Burnett)
- **Sustainable Service:** Isaac Christenson (Polk Burnett)
- **Sustainable Storytelling:** Brittany Olson (Barron County)

As we prepare for the YFA Conference, let's celebrate these outstanding individuals and their contributions to the agricultural community. Their commitment to excellence and innovation is vital for the future of farming in Wisconsin.

We wish them the best of luck as they represent District 9 at this year's conference!



Isaac Christenson

Serenity Palmer

Sierra Solum

Bethany and
Travis Senn

Katie Zimmer

Sam Olson

Josh Roos

Sawyer Tietz

Jillian Tietz

Brittany Olson



NEW LOGIN PROCESS

Member Information and Benefits

We are excited to share that we now have a member interactive database. At the top of wbf.com, you'll see three buttons: Login, Join, Renew. To create your account and access your member information, you will want to click the login button.

SCAN THE QR CODES BELOW



User Login



Member Benefits

Dairy Diaries: Doing It All for Our Girls

Anna Dalka

Dunn County Farm Bureau Member

When I first joined Farm Bureau my goal was to learn more about dairy farming. It's a tradition that runs on my side of the family and my husband's but ended before I got the chance to get involved. Last fall I reached out to our District Coordinator to see if she knew anyone looking for help and was connected with my current boss in Boyceville.

In January 2024, I started working part-time at Clark Valley Farm in Boyceville, a robotic dairy with all Holsteins. Most of the time I handle calf care and robot maintenance but sometimes I power wash equipment, pull cows to go into the robot and help with bedding in the milking barn. There was a big learning curve as someone who didn't grow up in the dairy world as well as learning to work with a robotic milking system. As the weeks went on, I developed a routine and relationships with each of our girls. The farm has become my second home, and I look forward to my shifts doing chores. I don't have any financial stake in the operation, but I truly care for our girls and the land as if they were my own. I take a lot of pride in the little bit I do to help and leave each shift feeling proud that I did my best to leave the girls with full bellies and a clean, comfortable place to rest.

The longer I've been involved in agriculture, I've noticed there's often a lot of negativity sur-



rounding the dairy industry. I've often mentioned an interest in dairy to other farmers and was told to stay away from it and focus on crops. Since working in the industry, I can understand where they're coming from because it is a physically and mentally difficult job, but I've also learned about all the positives:

1. Seeing the stars on clear early mornings never gets old
2. Enjoying beautiful sunsets while feeding calves
3. Getting to see your favorite girls for scratches and hugs on the hard days (1336 and 727 have my heart)
4. Staying physically active and being outdoors
5. Keeping a Wisconsin tradition alive and moving forward (there's a reason we're America's Dairyland)
6. Continuing the family farm or the passion for dairy on a new property
7. Getting to run cool pieces of equipment (skid steers, tractors, combines, grain trucks)
8. The pride of producing a high-quality product that feeds your community (yes, I will point out every time I see one of our haulers driving around town)

There's so much more to add to the list, but I really encourage people in the trenches of dairying or thinking about getting out, don't forget to take a look at the positive side once in a while. There are definitely days when it's 90 and humid out or 5 below and windy that I don't want to drive out to the farm, but I do it all for the girls. There's something about those black-and-white spots and goofy personalities that I just can't get enough of.

Federal Milk Marketing Order Reform Picture Comes into Focus

Travis Senn

Polk Burnett Farm Bureau Member

Over the past four years, the dairy industry has faced a variety of challenges, but one issue has consistently risen to the top: milk pricing reform. Let's be honest—milk pricing isn't exactly the most exciting dinner-table topic. But it's vital for the future of Wisconsin dairy, and now more than ever, we need to understand what's happening.

This issue came to a head in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when dairy farmers began facing negative Producer Price Differentials on their milk checks—sometimes reaching a staggering \$8 per hundredweight or more. These unexpected losses sparked a nationwide conversation about how milk is priced and the shortcomings of the current system.

There's an old joke in dairy circles: "There are five people in the world who understand milk pricing, and four of them are dead." While the saying is meant to be lighthearted, it underscores a real problem—understanding how milk pricing works has always been a challenge for farmers and industry professionals alike. I've been fortunate to work alongside and learn from some of dairy's foremost experts on milk pricing, and even with their help, it's clear the system is anything but straightforward.

One silver lining of this difficult period is that organizations like Farm

Bureau and others began investing heavily in educational resources—guides, podcasts, videos and presentations—to help dairy farmers understand the nuts and bolts of their milk checks. Today, I believe farmer literacy on milk pricing is better than it has ever been. With this improved understanding, farmers are more engaged and better prepared to advocate for meaningful reform.

Milk is the second-most regulated agricultural commodity in terms of price. The only one more regulated? Tobacco. Given the complexity of the system, any reform must be carefully considered, strategically planned and thoroughly stress-tested. That's why the USDA has established such a rigorous process to get reforms passed—it requires careful industry review and must ultimately be approved by the voting farmers in each federal order.

For Wisconsin farmers, however, there's a lot at stake. Proposed changes, such as substantial increases in make allowances (which serve as a built-in manufacturing rebate for processors), could have a disproportionately negative impact here. To help our farmers navigate these changes, WFBF hosted several workshops on how USDA's proposed FMMO reforms will impact our dairy farms.

Visit WFBF's FMMO resource center at <https://wfbf.com/policy/current-issues/federal-milk-marketing-orders/>.

Urgent Call for a Modernized Farm Bill: Addressing the Challenges Facing Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's latest forecast reveals a staggering 23% drop in net farm income since 2022, highlighting the urgent need for a modernized farm bill. This decline is compounded by record-high labor costs, interest expenses and property taxes, placing immense pressure on family farms struggling to survive.

Farmers and ranchers face the same inflationary challenges as all Americans, but they also contend with severe weather, declining crop prices and ever-evolving regulatory landscapes. This alarming trend signals a potential agricultural downturn, making it imperative for Congress to take action now.

The current farm safety net is outdated and inadequate, failing to provide necessary support for many family farms amid significant income reductions. With the expiration of the 2018 Farm Bill, an updated legislative response is critical to ensure the stability of our nation's food supply and, by extension, its security. Key points that underscore the importance of passing a new farm bill include:

Changing Landscape: The 2018 Farm Bill has not kept pace with the seismic shifts in agriculture, including the pandemic, soaring inflation, rising supply costs and global unrest.

Food Security and National Security: Safeguarding the U.S. food supply is essential for national security. The farm bill plays a crucial role in ensuring access to nutrition for families facing hunger and bolstering conservation efforts.

Economic Impact: The agricultural sector contributes significantly to the U.S. economy, supporting over 46 million jobs across the food supply chain.

Without a new farm bill, the country risks losing vital support structures that protect our food system. Here are five critical areas that will be

adversely affected:

1. **Farmer Safety Net:** Current reference prices for crops have not adjusted adequately to reflect rising supply costs, leaving farmers vulnerable.
 2. **Dairy Program Adjustments:** The Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program requires updates to ensure it meets the needs of modern dairy farms.
 3. **Sustainability Funding:** Incorporating conservation funding from the Inflation Reduction Act into the new farm bill is vital for sustainable agriculture practices.
 4. **Research Investment:** The U.S. is falling behind in agricultural research funding. Increased investment is necessary to maintain competitiveness and sustainability.
 5. **Nutrition Programs:** The farm bill provides critical nutrition programs that support food security for millions of Americans.
- America's farmers and ranchers can't afford further delays in passing a new farm bill. We need to urge lawmakers to address the immediate needs stemming from natural disasters and economic challenges



facing the agricultural sector. While temporary relief can provide short-term assistance, only a modernized farm bill will adequately address the long-term challenges our farmers and ranchers face.

The stakes are high, and the time for action is now. Farmers deserve a robust safety net to help them thrive in today's ever-changing agricultural landscape. Let's work together to ensure that Congress prioritizes the passage of a modern farm bill that meets the needs of all stakeholders in our food system. Reach out to your legislators and encourage them to pass an updated farm bill.

WFBF TRIP TO

TEXAS

FOR THE AFBF ANNUAL CONVENTION
7 Day January 25-31, 2025

[BOOKING NOW](#)

We invite you to "Step Up & Drive Forward" in San Antonio this January. Attend the AFBF Annual Convention and Trade show and have more fun with your fellow Wisconsin and Minnesota Farmers. While there you will meet Texas farmers and see the sights - which are bigger in Texas!

More Information :
StevieJayTravel.com/WFBF

A small graphic showing a location pin on a map with a dotted line and an airplane icon flying towards it.

District 9 News

Beef Quality Assurance Certification Meetings Scheduled



2024-25 is the three-year mark for many Wisconsin farmers needing to get recertified in the Beef Quality Assurance program. In 2018, certain packers announced they would only purchase cattle from farms selling finished cattle that are BQA Certified.

The UW-Madison's Division of Extension and the Wisconsin Beef Council will be hosting in-person Beef Quality Assurance certification meetings over the coming months. A complete list of those meetings can be found below.

Farmers needing to get recertified can also achieve that through two additional options:

Online by going to <https://www.bqa.org/beef-quality-assurance-certification/online-certifications>. At this site, you will log on and choose either the Cow/Calf, Stocker/Backgrounder or Feedyard courses. Once you've selected a course, you can work through each lesson at your own pace. The website will keep track of your progress, so you don't need to complete the entire course at one time.

Continuing Education (CE) Credits: The BQA program is also offering new educational courses that will provide you with credit towards renewing your certification – this option is only available to farmers who hold a current BQA certification. By completing three (3) continuing education credits from the options found on the website, your BQA expiration date will be extended by an additional three years. Available courses include BQA Transportation (2 credits), Biosecurity (1 credit), Foundations of Herd Health (1 credit), Principles of Stockmanship (1 credit), and Herd Health Management Practices (1 credit.) The Division of Extension also offers meetings throughout the year which offer CE credits.

The in-person BQA certification meeting dates below are current as of printing. Registration will start 30 minutes before the listed start time. Please go to <https://tinyurl.com/2hr5karf> or call one of the county Extension offices listed below to register. If no phone number is provided, call the Wisconsin Beef Council at 1.800.728.2333 to register.

- Nov. 13, 2024 | 1 p.m.: Iowa County Extension Office/Health & Human Services Bldg., 303 W. Chapel St., Dodgeville. 608.723.2125
- Dec. 06, 2024 | 9 a.m.: Equity Coop Bonduel, 455 N. Cecil Street, Bonduel. 715.748.1413
- Dec. 09, 2024 | 5 p.m.: South Central Livestock Exchange, S4340 County Hwy S, Reedsburg
- Dec. 10, 2024 | 1 p.m.: Equity Coop Monroe, N1365 State Road 69, Monroe. 608.723.2125
- Dec. 13, 2024 | 1 p.m.: Watertown Public Library, 100 S. Water St., Watertown
- Jan 7, 2025 | 5 p.m.: Multi-purpose Building, 11974 Ames Rd, Darlington. 608.723.2125
- Jan. 11, 2025 | 9 a.m.: Ice Age Pavilion, 847 Fayette Ave, Rib Lake. 715.748.1413
- Jan. 13, 2025 | 6 p.m.: UW-River Falls Mann Valley Farm, 129 S Glover Rd, River Falls
- Jan 16, 2025 | 12 p.m.: Equity Coop Lomira, N11579 Industrial Dr, Lomira. 920.294.4032
- Jan. 16, 2025 | 6 p.m.: Manchester Rod & Gun Club, W3614 S Gate Rd, Markesan. 920.294.4032
- Jan. 29, 2025 | 1 p.m.: Equity Coop Altoona, 5150 Hwy 53 South, Eau Claire. 715.748.1413
- Feb. 10, 2025 | 5 p.m.: Richland County Extension Office, 1100 US-14, Richland Center. 608.647.6148

BQA does more than just help beef producers capture more value from their cattle: BQA also reflects a positive public image and instills consumer confidence in the beef industry. When producers implement the best management practices of a BQA program, they assure the cattle they sell are the best they can be. Consumer research, conducted by the Beef Checkoff, showed that learning about BQA made consumers more confident in beef safety and animal welfare and improved positive consumer perceptions of how cattle are raised for food.

Any questions related to BQA certification or upcoming meeting dates may contact the Wisconsin Beef Council.

Get the **MOST** out of **EVERY DOLLAR** with your **FARM BUREAU MEMBER BENEFITS**

Wisconsin Farm Bureau members qualify for a variety of membership benefits and discounts that serve the needs of farmers, families and businesses in Wisconsin.

Learn more about your Farm Bureau member benefit savings by scanning the QR code or visiting wfbf.com/membership/member-benefits.

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



Barron County Farm Bureau Hosts Annual Meeting at Pioneer Village Museum

On a hot, sunny August 25, Barron County Farm hosted their annual meeting at Pioneer Village Museum in Cameron.

Members enjoyed free admission to the museum and a pie and ice cream social. Following the social, the business meeting was held where members voted on resolutions, board of directors and delegates to the 2024 WFBF Annual Meeting.

As a grassroots organization, Farm Bureau thrives on the voices and ideas of its members. These discussions are where the policy goals of Wisconsin's leading farm organization take root. During the meeting, a range of issues were brought to the table, reflecting the current challenges and future opportunities in agriculture.

The following resolutions, crafted and approved by Barron County Farm Bureau members, will be forwarded to the Policy Development Committee for consideration by delegates at the WFBF Annual Meeting this December:

State

1. We support the Wisconsin Farm Bureau continuing to promote discussion towards inclusion of the Dairy Revitalization Plan in the next Farm Bill and be a catalyst in bringing other farm organizations

into the discussion.

2. We support strengthening Page 5; line 1 & 3-4 "We support preserving Wisconsin agriculture land for agricultural production." "All new solar projects have to utilize brownfields, rooftops and degraded lands or low-yield, underutilized or marginalized farmland."

Internal

1. We support the Wisconsin Farm Bureau continuing to promote discussion towards inclusion of the Dairy Revitalization Plan in the next Farm Bill and be a catalyst in bringing other farm organizations into the discussion.

2. We support the development and implementation of a 9-point policy priority plan. This plan shall be annually approved by WFBF Annual Meeting delegates from county Farm Bureau recommendations.

Congratulations to Karyn Schauf, Sam Olson and Sierra Solum who were elected to represent Barron County at the WFBF Annual Meeting in December. Their dedication will help bring the voices of local farmers to the statewide stage.



Chippewa County

Chippewa County Farm Bureau Hosts Annual Meeting at Bloomer Brewery

On September 19, Chippewa County Farm Bureau members gathered for their annual meeting in the lively setting of Bloomer Brewery. The evening kicked off with a social featuring locally brewed beer and wood-fired pizza, creating a relaxed atmosphere for members to connect and enjoy a taste of the community.

The event took on a thoughtful tone as guest speaker Bob Sworski from Pondview Lavender Farm shared insights about his experiences in agriculture, offering a unique perspective on farming in the area. His presentation highlighted the diversity and innovation present within the local agricultural community.

Following the social, members got down to business, discussing key issues and voting on important matters. Members voted to amend a resolution concerning Country of Origin Labeling (COOL). The resolution called for an amendment to the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) policy on labeling, specifically changing language from voluntary to mandatory, ensuring that the policy would now read: "We support mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) that conforms with COOL parameters and meets World Trade Organization requirements." This change reflects the county's commitment to transparency and consumer awareness in the marketplace, advocating for clear labeling on agricultural products.

The meeting also saw new leadership developments, with Jamie Bischel of Chippewa Falls elected to serve a 3-year term on the board. Additionally, Mike Ripplinger, Tim Hager and Gabriela Strobel were chosen to serve as delegates representing Chippewa County at the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in December.

With good food, great company and productive discussion, the Chippewa County Farm Bureau annual meeting at Bloomer Brewery was a success—proving once again that agriculture is not just a business, but a community.



1. Chippewa County Farm Bureau board: Seated (from left) – Paulette Kressin, Maddie Woodward, Gabriela Strobel. Standing (from left) – Tim Hager, Mike Ripplinger. Missing: Jamie Bischel and Wayne Geist.

2. Bob Sworski from Pondview Lavender Farm was the guest speaker for the annual meeting.

3. Attendees to the Chippewa County Farm Bureau annual meeting were treated to delicious lavender desserts using lavender from Pondview Lavender Farm.

2nd Annual Chippewa County Farm Bureau Chili Cookoff

The 2nd Annual Chippewa County Farm Bureau Chili Cookoff will be held Saturday, November 16 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Open to all - come taste test chilis, learn about local Chippewa County ingredients and support your favorite businesses!

Location will be announced on the Chippewa County Facebook Page. If you are a business or organization interested in bringing a chili, please message us on Facebook or email Maddie at mkwoodward5@gmail.com



Scan Here
to visit Gather Wisconsin

f o p

www.gatherwisconsin.com

Dunn County

Dunn County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting Elects New Leaders and Passes Key Resolutions

The Dunn County Farm Bureau annual meeting was held on September 17 at the Shirley Doane Senior Center in Menomonie.

Members voted on resolutions at the meeting and will be forwarding the following to the Policy Development Committee for consideration to be presented to the delegates at the WFBF Annual Meeting in December:

1. Support for UW Extension staff to develop and deliver tractor safety curriculum in all Wisconsin counties, as required by state statutes.
2. Support for requiring utilities to provide setbacks and adequate clearances for field and farm driveways.
3. Support for requiring utility companies to properly mark all structures in the right of way and keep them cleared of brush, weeds and debris.
4. Support for the Wisconsin DNR to adopt testing requirements for a Class A fire suppressant that allow for biobased products like Soy Foam TF1122 to be included in the Quality Product Listing, rather than using only US Forest Service testing standards.
5. Support for continued state funding of agritourism.

Anna Dalka and Larry Bjork, both of Menomonie, were elected to the Dunn County Farm Bureau board of directors for a three-year term.

Delegates elected to represent Dunn County at the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federations Annual Meeting in December are: Kevin Gilbertson, Tony Christopherson, Justin Jensen and Larry Bjork.

A heartfelt thank you to retiring board members Carl Casper and Marv Prestrud for their years of dedicated service to Dunn County Farm Bureau. Their contributions have helped shape the future of agriculture in Dunn County.



Dunn County Farm Bureau vice president Kevin Gilbertson led the discussion on resolutions at the annual meeting.



Dunn County Farm Bureau board members: Seated (from left) – Tyler Nigon, Haily Sand, Anna Dalka, Kristyn Jensen, Justin Jensen. Standing (from left) – Kevin Gilbertson, Mark Schaffner, Larry Bjork, Ben Sand, Tony Christopherson, Doug Clark. Missing: Al Shannon, Dale Quilling and Tara Prochnow.

Madeline Horvath Earns Wisconsin 4-H Key Award

Madeline Horvath of Menomonie is a recipient of the 4-H Key Award presented on July 28 at the Dunn County Fair. She is a member of the Cedarlings 4-H Club.

The award was presented by the Dunn County Farm Bureau. For the 50th consecutive year, the awards were sponsored by the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation and Rural Mutual Insurance Companies.

The Key Award, the highest award given to 4-H members, recognizes those who have shown consistent growth in their 4-H program, who have developed their citizenship and leadership abilities and who have been helpful members in their club and community. Although it is a state award, Key Award recipients are determined by the county 4-H leader's organization, which evaluates a member's total record in making its decision.



Dunn County Farm Bureau presented Madeline Horvath with the 4-H Key Award at the Dunn County Fair.

Krings Honored for Their Years of Service at Pierce County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

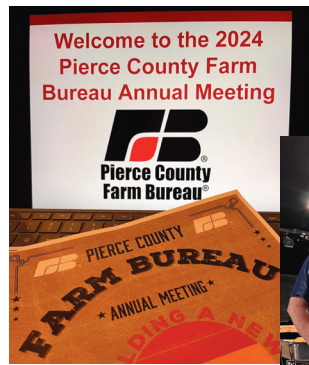
Pierce County Farm Bureau members gathered for their annual meeting on September 26 at the El Paso Bar & Grill. As a grassroots organization, it is the members at the county level who shape the policy goals of Wisconsin's leading farm organization. During the meeting, several key resolutions were discussed and passed, which will be forwarded for consideration at the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in December.

The resolutions included:

1. Support for making biofuels (both diesel and gasoline) more accessible across the state, with an encouragement for the governor to join six other states in promoting the year-round use of E-88.
2. Support for the growth of biofuels through the development of local crush plants, benefiting farmers and their local communities.

Representing Pierce County at the WFBF Annual Meeting will be Kevin Ballman, Paul Tonsager and Travis Kopp, who were elected as delegates for the December event.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Pierce



Travis Kopp and Kevin Ballman were honored to present the Pierce County Farm Bureau Distinguished Service to Farm Bureau Award to John and Monica Krings.

County Farm Bureau Distinguished Service to Farm Bureau Award to John and Monica Krings. This honor recognizes their years of dedication and hard work. The Krings have been pillars of the Pierce County Farm Bureau, serving in various roles from board members to agriculture advocates. Their contributions include running the milk stand at the Pierce County Fair, leading the Agriculture in the Classroom Essay Contest and organizing the annual Euchre tournament. Their commitment and service have left a lasting impact on the local agricultural community.

The meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on the past year's achievements and look ahead to future goals, ensuring Pierce County Farm Bureau continues to be a strong voice for farmers in the county.

Polk Burnett

Exciting Changes and New Energy at Polk Burnett Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

The Polk Burnett Farm Bureau annual meeting, held on August 29 at Deer Lake Winery, was an exhilarating gathering as members came together to celebrate a year of accomplishments and set a bold direction for the future. With the election of a dynamic new board and exciting plans for events like the Harvest Party, the organization is buzzing with fresh ideas and a growing sense of community involvement.

Members also celebrated significant strides in membership engagement, reflecting the heightened enthusiasm across the board. This renewed spirit is expected to drive the success of upcoming events and strengthen the ties within the local farming community.

During the meeting, the following resolutions were passed:

State:

1. We support requiring utilities to provide a set back and adequate clearances for field and farm driveways.

Federal:

1. We support make allowances reflecting the costs of the most effi-

cient plants making commodity cheese in the U.S.

2. We support dairy farmers having the ability to utilize a third-party verification entity for checking their standard weights and measures.
3. We support USDA reimbursing farmers for any required testing due to animal disease outbreaks.

Three new board members were elected: Jacob Loen of St. Croix Falls, Mikayla Peper of Osceola and Kellie Kjeseth of Deer Park. Their passion for agriculture promises to bring innovative leadership to the organization.

The delegates chosen to represent Polk Burnett Farm Bureau at the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in December are Eric Antonson, Josh Roos, Kellie Kjeseth and Isaac Christenson.

With fresh leadership, exciting new events on the horizon, and strong member engagement, the Polk Burnett Farm Bureau is primed to build on its successes and make the upcoming year even more impactful for the local agricultural community.



Polk Burnett Farm Bureau board members: Front (from left) – Maria Owens, Eric Antonson, Sara Byl, Mikayla Peper. Back (from left) – Kellie Kjeseth, Josh Roos, Chris Owens, Jacob Loen, Travis Senn, Ted Tietz.



At the Polk Burnett Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Rural Mutual Insurance agent Carl Thofohrda was recognized for his remarkable 25 years of service as an insurance agent. Congratulations, Carl! We are excited to continue our partnership with you.

Polk Burnett Farm Bureau Celebrates 2nd Annual Harvest Party

On October 19, the Polk Burnett Farm Bureau hosted its 2nd Annual Harvest Party at UW-Wanderoos. The evening was filled with great food, laughter and the sounds of live music performed by the Lovin' Country Band. This event brought together members and friends from the community, providing an opportunity to celebrate agriculture and the harvest season and enjoy each other's company.

Attendees were treated to a delicious meal and good conversations, fostering a true sense of community spirit. The night would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors: Dairy Business Association, Rural Mutual Insurance; Northwest Insurance Agency, Four Hands Holsteins, Edge, Burnett Dairy Cooperative, Bremer Bank, Cushing Co-op, Jarchow Law, LLC, Midwest Machinery Co, Polk-Burnett Electric and Baribeau Implement. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended and to all our sponsors for making this celebration a success. We look forward to many more in the future!



Finding a Niche in Farming

Serenity Palmer

Rusk County Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Agriculturist Chair

As I thought of what I wanted to write for this issue of the District 9 Grassroots Newsletter, I thought about what would benefit our county the most. I thought about the membership in the county and our goals to have more outreach. I decided it would be exciting to me to learn more about our members and maybe others feel the same way.

I was at a Rusk County Farmers Market during the last week of the membership drive in 2023 when I came across James and Katie's booth. I've always loved laser engraving so I stopped to say "hi" and talked to James about membership. As a fellow Farm Bureau member and a Farmers Market Vendor who sells interesting items, I reached out and asked a series of questions to get to know his operation more! Here's what I got from them:

James and Katie have been a Farmers Market Vendor since 2022. They started off selling items that complemented other goods in the beginning, for example, laser engraved cutting boards, outdoor keychains, coffee cups/water bottles and 3D printed items. In the last year, they have expanded their product. They have added baked goods (regular and sourdough products), chicken and quail eggs and very soon will be adding meat to their booth.

They became interested in selling at the Farmers Markets after attending them and finding a deep sense of community. Supporting local has always been important to them and they were excited to make connections and contribute positively to the community. Joining the Farm Bureau was an excellent next step in staying up to date with people who have a stake in the future of agriculture and making sure the products that they provide are to the best of their ability. Farm Bureau just seemed like a good fit for them, and they enjoy meeting the same-mind type of people.

James and Katie have been married since 2021. James is a jack of all trades and has a big passion for connecting with people. James is currently teaching online and taking care of Trails End Camp between craft shows and farmers markets. James is as enamored with his birds as he is with his wife. Katie is a licensed massage therapist by day and a birth worker by night. She is passion-

ate about her doula and midwife assistant work. Together, when James and Katie are not attending markets or shows they enjoy hiking and doing respite care.

James has always been a poultry person. In middle and high school, he showed poultry at the Rusk County Fair. In college at UW-River Falls, he took a class on poultry production. He even went to a poultry judging contest against some of the big-name colleges like Texas A&M, Penn State and so forth. He told me, "I've been wanting to get back into chickens for some time now, finally convinced Katie to go along with it. Then, I started to think, what is something that no one else really has or does in my area? Quail! I decided to do it, and Katie said no at first but as she says; I always get my way. I happened to find a farm that had some several hours away and we happened to be going that way, so I arranged it. Picked up the first ten and the rest is history."

The quail initially started as ten birds and quickly turned into over 80 birds. James shared with me: "It has been so fun caring for these sweet birds. Have you ever listened to a quail? It has quite the sound, almost like a cricket. In the short time we have had them, we have hatched three rounds of chicks with our fourth in the incubator right now. We collect their eggs daily and spend some time with them. Quail are a social animal; they live in coveys or clutches but do not like to be around humans too much. Did you know a poultry animal can remember faces? Just a fun fact, I think chickens can remember about 100 of them. Anyways, quail are unique birds that aren't as commonly kept as chickens or ducks in our area. We've enjoyed educating the community about quail and all their benefits. After all, quail eggs are considered a superfood."

Fun fact about James and Katie; they have found out that "chicken" math is a real thing, but in their case, it's 'poultry' math. Just a few birds can turn out to be quite a few. Next year they are looking forward to adding a few things to their booth at the market. One being chicken meat, and possibly turkey and waterfowl. Chickens are the gateway animal, they have been told, but currently, they don't have plans for hoofed animals in our future.

"We look forward to continuing to expand our "homestead", thank you for all your support!"



Rusk County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting Recap

Members of the Rusk County Farm Bureau held their annual meeting on September 12 at the Bruce American Legion.

A highlight of this year's meeting was the Q&A session with Rob Summerfield, 67th Assembly District Representative.

Samantha DuSell of Ladysmith joined the Rusk County Farm Bureau board of directors as the new Promotion and Education Chair for a one-year term. Delegates elected to represent Rusk County at the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federations Annual Meeting in December are Terry DuSell and Dan Weiss.

Rusk County Farm Bureau members approved the following resolutions during this meeting and will forward them on for consideration by the Policy Development Committee to be presented to the delegates at the WFBF Annual Meeting in December:

1. We support dairy inspectors being required to sign off with the farm owner or a reasonable representative to be sure that any marks are clearly understood by the producer.
2. We support more uniform clarification of regulations and restrictions on dairy producers.
3. We support limiting restrictions and regulations on direct marketing of ag products, cottage food producers, farmers markets, etc.
4. We oppose any expansion of Michigan border permits.

Thank you to the members who attended this year's annual meeting.



Rob Summerfield, 67th Assembly District Representative, engaged with members at the Rusk County Farm Bureau annual meeting, answering their questions and discussing key issues.

Sawyer County

Members Gather at Sawyer County Annual Meeting

Sawyer County Farm Bureau members and guests gathered at the Sawyer County Farm Bureau annual meeting on September 5 at Helsing's Bar & Grill in Radisson.

Members voted on resolutions, along with the board of directors and delegates to the WFBF Annual Meeting.

Members voted to forward the following resolutions on to the Policy Development Committee for consideration at the WFBF Annual Meeting in December:

State:

1. We support local towns and villages having a say in solar farm placement and operations.

Internal:

2. We support the development and implementation of a five-point policy priority plan, with a four-point secondary policy priority plan. This plan shall be annually approved by WFBF Annual Meeting delegates from county Farm Bureau recommendations.

Delegates to the WFBF Annual Meeting will be Mike Robers and Andrew Winiarczyk.



Wildlife Damage Summit Addresses Growing Concerns for Local Farmers

On September 19 at Cedar Lodge in Ladysmith, farmers from Sawyer and Rusk counties, gathered for a critical Wildlife Damage Summit to address the increasing impact of wildlife on local agriculture. The event shed light on the significant losses many farms are experiencing due to deer, bear and, more recently, elk. Some farms are now facing up to \$70,000 annually in crop losses, creating serious challenges for the agricultural community.

Despite efforts by the DNR and hunters to maintain healthy populations of wildlife, these numbers often come at a steep cost to farmers. While the current compensation program offers up to \$10,000 in reimbursement for wildlife damage, it falls short for farms suffering repeated losses of \$40,000 to \$70,000 each year. This situation has become unsustainable for many farming businesses, prompting a call for legislative changes to fully compensate farmers for their losses. However, progress on this front has been slow.



Rep. Rob Summerfield (left) and Mike Robers (right) look over bear damage to a cornfield near Ladysmith, Wisconsin. Photo credit: Danielle Nauman, Dairy Star

The summit featured a full schedule of activities, starting at 11:00 a.m. with a welcome and remarks. Farmer testimonials followed, giving attendees a firsthand account of the financial strain caused by unchecked wildlife damage. The event also included an open discussion and Q&A session, where farmers voiced their concerns and shared their experiences, further emphasizing the need for increased support and legislative action.

After the formal program, attendees enjoyed lunch before heading out for field tours. These tours offered a powerful, on-the-ground look at the damage many farms endure season after season. Organizers emphasized the importance of public awareness, urging more people to witness the scale of the problem firsthand. Farmers shouldn't have to carry the financial burden of feeding wildlife at the cost of their livelihood, and events like this are vital in raising awareness and fostering change.

St. Croix County

Many Hands Make Light Work at the St. Croix County Fair

As we reflect on another great year at the St. Croix County Fair, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the amazing volunteers who made the St. Croix County Farm Bureau food stand a huge success. Your hard work, dedication and countless hours spent behind the counter ensured that we could once again serve up delicious food to fairgoers while supporting the Farm Bureau's mission.

From setting up the stand to preparing and serving meals, managing orders and cleaning up after long, busy days, every task you took on played a vital role in our success. We couldn't have done it without each and every one of you, and your efforts truly exemplify the spirit of community and teamwork that makes our Farm Bureau so special.

This year, our food stand not only helped raise funds for important agricultural programs and initiatives, but also provided a great opportunity

for fair visitors to learn more about the work we do in supporting local farmers and rural communities. The friendly faces and hard work behind the counter made all the difference and your enthusiasm did not go unnoticed.

Whether you volunteered for a few hours or multiple shifts, every contribution was invaluable. It's because of people like you that we are able to make such a positive impact year after year.

Thank you once again to our incredible volunteers for your commitment and dedication. We look forward to building on this year's success and making next year's St. Croix County Farm Bureau food stand even better. You are the heart of our organization, and we are deeply grateful for all that you do!



Superior Shores Farm Bureau Annual Meeting Focuses on Resolutions to Support Wisconsin Loggers

The Superior Shores Farm Bureau annual meeting took place on September 6 at the Sand Bar in Ashland where members enjoyed coffee and pastries before diving into the business agenda.

During the meeting, members voted on key resolutions and elected new board members and delegates for the 2024 WFBF Annual Meeting. Ty Tuttleland of Mason and Brianne Radlinger of Butternut were welcomed to the Superior Shores Farm Bureau board. John Radlinger and Ty Tuttleland will be representing Superior Shores Farm Bureau at the WFBF Annual Meeting at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells in December.

The following resolutions were passed, focusing on protecting Wisconsin's logging community:

State:

1. We oppose any expansion of Michigan border permits.
2. We support restricting Michigan border permit holders to dawn and dusk hours of operation, with a maximum speed limit of 45 mph.
3. We support increasing truck weight limits to 98,000 pounds on six axles for all commodities, ensuring this includes all types of goods.

Thank you to all members who attended the annual meeting! We look forward to achieving great things together in the coming year, particularly in our efforts to protect and support loggers in Wisconsin.



The Superior Shores annual meeting boasts the best views of any annual meeting, featuring stunning scenery along the shores of Lake Superior.

SEE YOU SOON!

**BUILDING A
NEW FRONTIER**
WFBF ANNUAL MEETING AND YFA CONFERENCE
DECEMBER 6-9, 2024



 **County Farm Bureaus**
PO Box 5550 Madison, WI 53705

Address Service Requested

Non Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Platteville, WI 53818
Permit No. 124

This Issue Contains Highlights for:

Barron County
Chippewa County
Dunn County
Pierce County
Polk Burnett
Rusk County
Sawyer County
St. Croix County
Superior Shores



Protect what you value most

Your family. Your future. Your legacy & livelihood. They matter to us, too.

For nearly a century, it's been our mission to protect and rebuild families, farms and businesses across Wisconsin. We're here for you.



90 CELEBRATING
Years
1934 - 2024

Connect
with your
local agent

