



WINTER 2025

Grassroots

District 3 News

District Director Report



Robert Nigh

WFBB District 3 Director

Hello District 3!

We are all looking forward to spring. I hope your planning for this coming crop year will yield success.

With the new state legislature, we have a lot of work to do. Advocating for agriculture takes on a new dynamic with the results of the new maps. With a new administration in D.C.

and no Farm Bill in place yet, our staff will remain busy navigating these ongoing developments. Your government relations team is going to be very active and busy. We look forward to another year of legislative wins. Please lend a hand in introducing your new representatives in Madison to Wisconsin agriculture.

Membership is the lifeblood of our organization – keep up the great membership work! The early bird deadline this year is March 31. One new member every other month and you are a Farm Bureau Proud club member. We got this!

Public relations continues to get messages out to the public and helps to tell agriculture's story. They also work with press releases and help the entire organization with a multitude of projects. They too are extremely busy and do an awesome job for us.

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation is moving forward with fundraising success, from the silent auction to the live auction, legacy giving to added sponsorships. If you know of someone or an organization that would make a great partner, please share with Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation director John Hromyak or with myself. Watch for news of all the exiting things we are able to accomplish with a strong Foundation.

Operations continues to work diligently to keep our budget in the black. We are also finding many uses for the new database. Some things take time to set up but will save significant time once they are set up.

As always, thank you for allowing me to serve District 3 as your District Director and I look forward to seeing many of you at upcoming events this spring. Stay safe and informed!

Robert Nigh
608.606.4319



AG DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Be part of the conversation. Your participation in Ag Day at the Capitol 2025 will help shape policies that strengthen Wisconsin agriculture.

Highlights:

- **Keynote Speaker:** Brian Reisinger, author of *Land Rich, Cash Poor*.
- **Win a Free Book!** Register for Ag Day at the Capitol and be entered for a chance to win one of 200 free copies of Brian Reisinger's book.
- **Agriculture Showcase:** Explore the latest in agriculture on the 100 Block of MLK Blvd, featuring: agricultural equipment displays, livestock, free cheese samples and more!
- **Inside the Capitol Rotunda:** Farm Bureau spotlight booths, Ag Coalition partners, Interactive hydraulic sprayer simulator – a hands-on, motion-activated experience!

Registration Details:

Early registration is strongly encouraged.

- Early Bird Registration: \$35 per person (Deadline: March 21)
- Late Registration: \$60 per person (After March 22)
- Register now by visiting bit.ly/2025AgDayAtTheCapitolRegistration

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Monona Terrace Convention Center | Madison



District 3 News

WFBF Annual Meeting and YFA Conference Snapshots



District 3 News

WFBF Delegates Set Policy for 2025

More than 230 delegates at the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation's 105th Annual Meeting established new policy directives for the organization.

Wisconsin Farm Bureau delegates adopted the policies that will be included in the organization's policy book in 2025. Resolutions were submitted by delegates as part of the organization's annual grassroots policy development process. Topics discussed on the delegate floor included dairy, energy and transportation.

During the dairy discussion, delegates voted in support of increased transparency in milk pricing by requiring all entities that purchase milk to provide detailed and accessible breakdowns of milk checks to their producers. Delegates updated WFBF policy to no longer include support for the sale of raw milk. Delegates also voted in support of uniform clarification of regulations and restrictions on dairy farmers and requiring dairy inspectors to sign off with farm owners to clarify any marks. In federal dairy policy, delegates supported mandatory price reporting from all processors for federal orders.

During the education discussion, delegates voted to support Farm Business Management training at the local technical college level, with specific training geared towards beginning farmers, including financial and business management training, and beginning farmer support groups. Delegates also voted to support increase youth tractor safety class offerings across the state and utilizing qualified instructors or safety professional to provide more opportunities for students.

Delegates from the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's 61 county Farm Bureaus also voted to:

- Support the Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship Program.
- Support the use of biofuel blended fuels year-round.
- Support the creation of a program to connect farmers and agricultural service professionals wishing to transition out of production agriculture and agri-businesses with beginning farmers and service professionals.
- Oppose efforts to allow unrestricted foreign ownership of Wisconsin

farmland.

- Support limiting restrictions and regulations on direct marketing of ag products, cottage food producers, farmers markets, etc.
- Support the development of cost share programs designed to aid livestock producers in implementing or updating biosecurity measures.
- Support increased investment in research and development aimed at identifying sustainable and environmentally beneficial solutions for agricultural plastics, ensuring responsible management and reduction of environmental impact.

On the federal level, delegates voted to:

- Oppose NRCS inflexibility in EQIP contracts.
- Support lowering Dairy Margin Coverage tier 1 coverage to 6 million pounds or less.
- Support the implementation of the Dairy Revitalization plan.
- Support GPS mapping services designating a difference between primary commercial routes and other secondary roads to increase safety and decrease the pressure on secondary roads caused by "shortest distance or fastest" mapping.

The federal resolutions will be forwarded to the American Farm Bureau Federation for consideration at its annual convention in January.

The following individuals represented District 3 as 2024 delegates:

Crawford: Don Brown, Pat Dearth and AV Roth

Grant: Kent Jerrett, Allen Johnson, Derek Orth, Jackie Seelow, Ben Tranel, Christina Winch and Peter Winch.

Iowa: Laura Daniels, Krista Dolan, Ryan Dolan, Don Ley and Megan Yager

Lafayette: Tim Appell, Christina Benson, Benjamin Cooper, Paul Johnson and Jordan Torstencon

Richland: Josh Joseph and John Schweiger

Vernon: Alex Bringe, Andy Diehl, Drew Hendrickson, Kevin Larson and William Walleser.



Wiedenbeck Wins Farm Bureau's Outstanding Agriculture Professional Award

Tammy Wiedenbeck was selected as the winner of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Young Farmer and Agriculturists Outstanding Agriculture Professional Award at the organization's 105th Annual Meeting and YFA Conference on December 8.

Tammy is a partner on her family's seventh-generation farm, overseeing 200-head of cattle while also spearheading Traveled Acres Media, a company dedicated to sharing the global story of agriculture. Her leadership extends to the National Beef Board, where she has served on the Executive, Operating and Nutrition and Health committees. She is a proud lifetime member of the Grant County Cattlemen's Association and Lancaster FFA Alumni.

"Awarded to young leaders in agriculture, the Outstanding Agriculture Professional Award celebrates commitment and community," said WFBF President Brad Olson. "Tammy represents the profound influence Farm Bureau members have on rural Wisconsin."

Tammy is a graduate of the WFBF Leadership Institute and AFBF Communication Boot Camp, and a member of the AFBF GO Team and

Grant County Farm Bureau. She was the recipient of the WFBF's 35 Under 35 Sustainable Self Award in 2022 and received the Outstanding Alumni Award from UW-Platteville in 2023. Tammy credits agriculture as her life's cornerstone and aims to inspire appreciation for the industry providing food, fuel and fiber.

The Outstanding Agriculture Professional Award is presented to a Farm Bureau member between the ages of 18 to 35 who excels in their leadership abilities, agriculture involvement, and participation in Farm Bureau and other civic and service organizations. Applicants are agriculturists who have not derived a majority of their income from a farm (that they own) in the past three years.

Wiedenbeck will receive \$1,500 courtesy of GROWMARK, Inc., will have the opportunity to attend the 2025 American Farm Bureau

Federation FUSION Conference in Denver, Col. will be eligible to participate in the 2025 YFA Washington, D.C. Fly-In and be a guest of WFBF at the 2025 YFA Conference.



Sustainability: Buzzword or Paradigm Shift?



Derek Orth

Grant County Farm Bureau member and WisGO Team member

Lately, I've been wondering, is "sustainability" just a buzzword, or is it a paradigm shift? December was a big month for me, with, of course, the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Annual Meeting being the highlight. One of my favorite parts of the WFBF Annual Meeting is the presentation of the Leopold Award. Each year, a Wisconsin farmer is given

the spotlight for the fantastic stewardship these farms and their families are curating on their farms. Each winner is given \$10,000, and a video is created to showcase each farm!

Five years ago, I was part of the WFBF Strategic Planning committee. Our committee put together a list of five things to focus on for the next five years. Our fifth "bucket" was titled Environmental Stewardship. It's wonderful to see the things that have been put into place at Wisconsin Farm Bureau, including the creation of a new role; director of foundation and sustainability communications.

I also had the opportunity to attend the Acres USA Conference, which

was held in Madison for the first time. The diversity of the crowd boggled my mind. From barefoot hippies to businesspeople. There was a variety of people, speakers and an interesting group of vendors at the trade show. I learned more about trees, pigs and humic acid than I ever knew existed. I brought home ideas and shared things with my family to try on our farm.

Lastly, I was asked to represent Wisconsin Farm Bureau on a panel at the Wisconsin Water and Soil Health (WWASH) Conference and be part of a panel discussing advocating for soil health when talking to consumers and legislators. I was expecting a small crowd, but when I walked in, I was shocked to find over 500 farmers, salespeople, agronomists and educators attending. As with the Acres Conference, a diverse group from grazers to vegetable growers to large-scale dairy farms. I especially enjoyed the roundtable discussions, a half-hour conversation with other participants on specific topics. I learned many things about diverse cover crops, equipment and interseeding.

Each of these events proves to me that this is a paradigm shift, and every farmer is taking a stand to be a little better with our soil than we were last year. In the next couple of weeks we will be celebrating National Ag Day, and just next month will be our 55th Earth Day. What are you going to do to observe these special days? Plant a tree? Grow a pollinator patch? Reduce your tillage? Plan to use more cover crops?



District 3 News

Wisconsin Shines at American Farm Bureau Convention



Brad Olson was elected to serve a one-year term on American Farm Bureau's Board of Directors on Tuesday during the American Farm Bureau Federation's 106th Convention. Olson is a crop farmer near Frederic in Polk County.

Olson was first elected to the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors in 2022 to represent District 9, which includes: Barron, Dunn, Chippewa, Pierce, Polk, Burnett, Rusk, St. Croix, Sawyer and Superior Shores Farm Bureaus. He was elected WFBF President in 2023.

Brad and his wife, Vicky, farm more than 600 acres of crops and are members of Polk-Burnett Farm Bureau. They have two children and two grandsons.

WFBF Receives National Recognition

WFBF was the recipient of the Pinnacle Award and the New Horizon Award.

Wisconsin Farm Bureau was recognized for excellence in implementation of member programs and membership achievement in 2024. WFBF was recognized with the Pinnacle Award, the highest honor a state Farm Bureau can be awarded for program and member achievements. The Awards of Excellence recognize state Farm Bureaus that demonstrated outstanding achievements in four program areas: Advocacy, Coalitions & Partnerships, Engagement & Outreach and Leadership & Business Development.

WFBF also received the New Horizon Award, which honors the most innovative new state Farm Bureau programs. Wisconsin was recognized for Gather Wisconsin, a series of resources including blog posts, recipes, an annual print magazine and member activities that connect consumers with the farmers growing and raising their family's food.



Coates Competes in National Light

Kallie Jo Coates of Racine County made it to the Sweet-16 Round of American Farm Bureau's Young Farmers and Ranchers Discussion Meet.

The Discussion Meet contest is a panel discussion in which Farm Bureau members between the ages of 18 and 35 are judged on their ability to express their ideas and opinions and reach a solution to current issues affecting agriculture.



Coates works in office management for Harry Hansen Meat Service and is a marketing freelancer with Briar Marketing. Her and her husband, Devin,

own Coates Farm where they raise 150 laying hens in addition to 225 acres of corn and forage crops. She graduated from UW-Platteville with a degree in agricultural education before attending Texas Tech for a master's degree in agricultural communications.



Leahy Re-Appointed to Promotion and Education Committee

Lynn Leahy was re-appointed to AFBF's Promotion and Education Committee for the 2025-2027 term starting in March.

Lynn Leahy is a research agronomist at Heartland Farms, Inc., a 9,000-acre farm growing potatoes for potato chips near Hancock. She grew up on an 80-cow dairy farm in Argyle. Leahy holds a bachelor's degree in dairy science and a master's degree in horticulture, both from UW-Madison.

Leahy is a graduate of Wisconsin Farm

Bureau's Leadership Institute Class VIII. Leahy and her husband, Mike, reside in Plover.

The Promotion and Education Committee is comprised of 10 individuals representing qualifying Farm Bureau Promotion and Education states. It was launched in 2014 to develop and centralize resources that inspire and equip Farm Bureau members to convey the significance of agriculture.

Committee members support and encourage state Farm Bureau volunteers to participate in projects and activities by providing resources for programs, communicating with state leaders and contributing collaborative ideas.

Sands Complete Young Farmer and Rancher Committee Term

Dunn County Farm Bureau members Ben and Hally Sand completed their two-year term on AFBF's Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee. The couple grows rye, corn, soybeans, sweet corn and pumpkins on their farm near Menomonie.



The YF&R Committee is made up of 16 positions representing all regions of the United States. An individual or couple may hold each committee appointment. Committee members are responsible for program planning, which includes the coordination of YF&R Committee competitive events during AFBF's Annual Convention each January, and the Harvest for All program.

District 3 News

Young Farmer and Agriculturist Committee Update



Casey and Morgan Lobdell

District 3 YFA Committee Chairs

If you know either Casey or I, then you know this season is busy. While all farmers argue that every season is busy, the craziness of farrowing and lambing pretty much consumes our life.

This season requires perseverance and dedication to all the many animals that are joining our farm.

Along with that, we balance our off-the-farm careers. We can relate to the many young farmers who also balance a career and farm work. Soon, these animals will enter the hands of hardworking 4-H and FFA members. We had the opportunity to share our story of sustainability with Gather Wisconsin in the Leaders of the Land series. To us, encouraging the next generation of agriculturalists is one of the most important efforts. This episode was featured in October to celebrate Pork Month!

Mark your calendar for the discussion meet happening on July 23 at The Meat Schoppe. Two participants will be chosen to represent District 3 at the state competition! We have many fun summer activities in the works, that we'll start sharing about soon. In the meantime, if you have any questions for us, please reach out at 608.574.0403 (Morgan) 608.482.4525 (Casey).

Collegiate Corner



The UW-Platteville Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter has been staying busy with on-campus activities and WFBF events. Before the chaos of finals and the holidays, Collegiate Farm Bureau members traveled to Wisconsin Dells for the 2024 YFA Conference. Collegiate members enjoyed networking with WFBF members and learning about Farm Bureau opportunities available after college.

Promotion and Education Committee Update



Tammy Wiedenbeck

District 3 Promotion and Education Committee Chair

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Annual Meeting 2024: Leadership, Legacy, and Leaving a Trail

The 2024 Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting was a powerful gathering of farmers, ranchers and agricultural leaders, focused on inspiration, leadership and strengthening the connections that sustain our communities. With

messages of resilience, integrity and servant leadership, the event provided attendees with valuable lessons to take home and apply to their farms, families, and communities.

Blazing a New Trail

Ben Huber from Insight FS set the tone with a powerful quote attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." In farming, as in life, leadership means forging ahead, even in uncertain times. Huber shared the Three C's of Battlefield Leadership—Character, Competence and Courage—reminding us that true leadership isn't about taking the easy road but about making decisions that shape the future of agriculture for generations to come.

Farm Life, Communication and Integrity

Jolene Brown brought humor and hard truths to the discussion, sharing the realities of farm life, leadership and family dynamics. "There are days when divorce isn't enough," she joked, capturing the challenges of working alongside family. She highlighted the unique ways farmers communicate—whether it's "hush" when the markets or weather updates come on the radio, the expectation to "read my mind," or the all-too-familiar, "get out of the way, I can do it faster and better myself."

Jolene also reminded us of the importance of appreciating people beyond monetary value—knowing how to "neighbor" and showing gratitude for those who support us. She shared her family tradition: giving grandkids \$50 in an envelope with the instruction to use it to help someone else, teaching them compassion and the return on integrity (ROI).

Lessons from a Coffee Bean

Damon West took the stage with a powerful message of resilience, using the analogy of a carrot, an egg and a coffee bean in boiling water. The carrot softens under pressure, the egg hardens but the coffee bean? It transforms the water, becoming a change agent. "Be a coffee bean," he urged, reminding us that our circumstances don't define us—our responses do.

Drawing inspiration from Shawshank Redemption, he emphasized that pain is temporary, and action is essential. "If you want to win, get up. Take action." His challenge to attendees was simple: What are you prepared to do tomorrow with your opportunity? He encouraged farmers to focus on positive body language, daily growth (spiritually, physically, and mentally) and servant leadership—helping others reach their goals.

A Heartwarming Look at Farming and Football

Beyond the inspirational speakers at the WFBF Annual Meeting, members gathered on February 1 to watch Green & Gold, a touching film intertwining the stories of farming and the Green Bay Packers. The movie celebrated the deep-rooted connection between agriculture and Wisconsin's favorite football team, reminding viewers that both farmers and athletes share common values: hard work, perseverance and community spirit. It was a reminder that whether on the field or in the fields, dedication and teamwork drive success.

Looking Forward

The WFBF Annual Meeting wasn't just about reflection—it was about action. The lessons shared throughout the event challenged attendees to lead with courage, communicate with integrity and embrace change. Whether through farming, advocacy or community service, our members continue to blaze new trails, ensuring that agriculture remains strong for the next generation.

As we move forward, let's ask ourselves: How will we celebrate who we are and what we do? Because in farming, as in life, it's not just about surviving—it's about thriving.

Memories of Mary Jo

Remembering the Legacy of Mary Jo Johnsrude

Crawford County Farm Bureau was saddened to lose longtime supporter and active member, Mary Jo Johnsrude last fall. Mary Jo had just retired from the Crawford County Farm Bureau Board after many years of dedicated service. We will forever be grateful we had the opportunity to honor her at the Crawford County annual meeting before we lost her.

Mary Jo was always the first to send in her recipes to be featured in the district newsletters. She was a talented baker and cook and often had a delicious meal and dessert at every Farm Bureau meeting she hosted in her home. To honor her memory, we've compiled some of the many recipes she shared.

There is so much more we will miss about Mary Jo.



She had a servant's heart, which she used to give to her community in so many ways. The lasting impact she had on Crawford County Farm Bureau will live on forever. We hope these recipes will bring a piece of Mary Jo into your kitchen and help us all remember the amazing woman that she was.

Monkey Muffins

Ingredients:

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup mashed ripe bananas
- 2/3 cup peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup mini chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon sugar (for sprinkling on top)

Directions:

- In large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and FLUFFY.
- Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
- Beat in bananas, peanut butter, milk and vanilla.
- Combine dry ingredients and add to creamed mixture just until moistened.
- Fold in chocolate chips.
- Fill greased or paper-lined miniature muffin cups ¾ full and sprinkle with sugar.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 14-16 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.
- Cool for 5 minutes before removing from pans.
- Yield 6 dozen. These freeze well if desired.

Orange Burst Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 (6-oz.) package instant vanilla pudding
- 1 (6-oz.) package orange Jello
- 3 cups boiling water
- 2 (11-oz.) cans mandarin oranges
- 1 (9-oz.) container whipped topping

Directions:

- Mix together pudding and Jello.
- Add boiling water, mix well and cool slightly.
- Drain mandarin oranges and then add to mixture.
- Chill until almost set.
- Fold in whipped topping.
- Refrigerate.

Ham, Green Beans & Potatoes

Ingredients:

- 2 lb. fresh or canned green beans
- 2 lb. diced ham
- 4 baking potatoes, cut in bite-sized pieces
- 1 large onion, chopped

Directions:

- Combine all ingredients in slow cooker.
- Add 3 cups of water.
- Season with salt and pepper.
- Cook on low for 6 hours.

Beefy Potato Taco Casserole

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 packet taco seasoning
- 10.5 oz. Cheddar Cheese soup
- 4 cups potatoes, sliced
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup beef broth

Directions:

- Brown ground beef with garlic and drain.
- Place potato slices in the bottom if a slightly greased 6 quart slow cooker.
- Spread ground beef evenly over potatoes.
- Sprinkle taco seasoning over beef.
- Spoon soup evenly on top.
- Sprinkle cheese evenly on top of everything
- Gently pour beef broth evenly around slow cooker.
- Cover and cook on low for 4-5 hours (or high for 2-2½ hours).

President's Message



Peter Winch

Grant County Farm Bureau President

YFA Conference earlier in the weekend.

The resolution session was the reason we were there. It was time to set policies for the organization regarding what the members felt was important. This is a true grassroots process. Policies are submitted from counties all over the state to be reviewed by the Policy Development committee. After they are reviewed, they are brought before the delegates

of all the counties in the state. The delegates vote on policies that are put in our policy book for our staff to use to promote our view as one body. We had some of the policies that passed our county annual meeting voted at the state Annual Meeting. Most of them passed.

Now it is even more important with the ever-changing government to be sure that farmers have a seat at the table. Farm Bureau is our voice and we need to be sure that everyone hears what farmers have to say and how legislation affects farmers. Very few people in government anymore are farmers or even one generation or more from one. Membership is one of those parts of any organization that can be hard to do. As we gain members it makes our voice even louder. Farm Bureau is a well-respected grassroots organization that starts at the local and county level. I am proud to be a member and do what I can to help.

Please feel free to contact me at 608.778.1150 if you are interested in getting more involved with Grant County Farm Bureau. Have a safe and productive spring!

Young Farmer and Agriculturist Committee Chair Update



Andrew Dal Santo

Grant County YFA Chair

Welcome to 2025! It was great seeing everyone at the YFA Conference and WFBF Annual Meeting. It seems like it was just a few weeks ago but looking at the calendar, it's almost time to get equipment and machinery ready for spring. As we look back on 2024, let's take a moment to recognize our award winners from the 2024 YFA Conference in December. A big congratulations to Tammy Wiedenbeck for being named Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Outstanding Agriculture

Professional! And let's give a round of applause to everyone from Grant County who competed in various events. Grant County was well represented!

Looking ahead into 2025, be sure to keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates on upcoming spring and summer YFA events. If you haven't already, take a moment to like and follow the Grant County Farm Bureau YFA page to stay connected. And as always, if you have any questions feel free to reach out to me. I hope you all have a safe and efficient planting season, and I look forward to seeing the weather warm up and seeing you all at our next county YFA event!

Promotion and Education Update



Megan Yager

Iowa County Promotion and Education Chair

Greetings! I hope this newsletter finds you well. Winter is a time of rest for plants and hopefully a slower time for farmers. The slowdown is something I look forward to after a busy year. There are plenty of indoor projects to catch up on, books to read and maybe even some TV shows to binge-watch.

December is also the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Wisconsin Dells. This was my first year attending the conference as a delegate and not as a YFA member. I guess that means I'm getting older. It was neat to see the grassroots process firsthand and be a part of the policy discussion. We covered lots of great topics and established several new policies for Farm Bureau. I would encourage other members to try being delegates and see how their grassroots organization works for them. The conference had plenty of entertainment, food and conversation with Farm Bureau friends. The workshops on Saturday and Sunday afternoon covered a wide range of topics and there was something for everyone.

The 2024 American Farm Bureau book of the year has been delivered to local elementary schools and public libraries. This year's book is called

"My Grandpa, My Tree and Me" by Roxanne Troup and it helps provide the theme for this year's Agriculture in the Classroom essay contest, "Wisconsin Agriculture is Tree-mendous!" I look forward to reading all of the great essay entries again this year.

The Cultivate & Connect Conference was hosted by the state Promotion and Education Committee in February. Members, including myself, were able to learn new tools for preserving the industry we love. We learned how to build trust by engaging with companies, the press, policy makers and consumers. We also learned how to navigate challenging conversations to become a stronger advocate for agriculture.

I look forward to visiting more classrooms to promote May Beef Month. I show the kids a short presentation on the beef industry in Wisconsin and I tell them all about life on a beef farm. There will be plenty of questions from students and beef snack sticks for everyone to enjoy.

May everyone have a successful calving season and a safe spring planting season!

Finding Value in Your Farm Bureau Membership



Christina Benson
Lafayette County Farm Bureau President

By trait, I consider myself to be a natural photographer, versus a natural writer. I prefer to be in the background looking at the surrounding views, which is probably why photography is one of my hobbies. I don't need words to show the power of things around me, especially when it comes to capturing life on the farm.

Recently in Lafayette County, there have been a few discussions at the county board meetings regarding the value of a Farm Bureau membership. We may do a good job recruiting members to join, but where we sometimes fall short is helping members find the value in their memberships after signing up. For members that may feel that way, I want you to know Farm Bureau offers many wonderful programs such as the

Young Farmers and Agriculturist program, Agriculture in the Classroom, Leadership Institute, 35 Under 35, the list goes on. Not to mention, your membership can help you save money through the partnerships our member benefits program has with companies. Additionally, Farm Bureau also makes sure the voices of farmers and agriculturists are represented and heard at the Wisconsin Capitol.

What may be most important to you is your membership supports agriculture in your local community. With your contribution of joining, the Lafayette County Farm Bureau can invest back into your community by providing scholarships to high school seniors, local Agriculture in the Classroom activities, member activities, Promotion and Education events and the fair food stand.

There is much more the Lafayette County Farm Bureau does and can be doing. We are always looking for more members to become involved. Feel free to call or message me at 815.275.4400 with questions or ideas about how the Lafayette County Farm Bureau can grow!

Miller Recognized for Membership Efforts



Curt Miller was recognized for his membership efforts during the awards banquet at the WFBF Annual Meeting. Curt signed up 31 new members and was the top membership volunteer in the state. The value of a Farm Bureau membership is endless. Not only do members qualify for special benefits and services, but members also have the opportunity to get involved in several different leadership and educational programs. To learn more about the value of your Farm Bureau membership, visit www.wfbf.com/membership.

The Millers Take on San Antonio



As I am sure we are all aware by now, Curt Miller is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to Farm Bureau membership! He sees the value in it and tries to share its opportunities with as many Lafayette County residents as possible. And thanks to that, Membership Miller wound up with taking home the top honors at the 2024 WFBF Annual Meeting. Curt signed up a grand total of 31 new members during the 2023-2024 membership year!

As if being honored on stage for this accomplishment wasn't exciting enough, Miller won the membership incentive drawing. Only individuals who signed up 12 or more new members were included in the drawing. Miller

won a trip to San Antonio for the AFBF Convention, which was held this past January.

On January 24 Curt and Debbie Miller flew to San Antonio for their celebratory trip! There they had the opportunity to mingle with other state farm bureaus, attend workshops at the AFBF Convention and do some sightseeing around San Antonio! We could not have come up with a better honor to thank the Miller's for their dedication to membership and Wisconsin Farm Bureau!



Meet Your Richland County Farm Bureau Directors

Names: John Schweiger and Olivia Rodriguez-Golner

Agricultural backgrounds:

Olivia: I worked on two farms in Washington County and Ozaukee County. I milked cows and fed calves before and after my days in high school at Running Creek Farm. I would also feed calves at Roden Echo Valley. The Roden's have hundreds of calves and also farm summer camps for the youth.

John: I am a cattle rancher, auctioneer and crop farmer. My family farm has 1,500 acres and has around 600 head of cattle. We have cow-calf pairs, a backgrounding operation, replacement heifers and we also finish out steers. I auctioneer at Matthes Farm in Viola and South Central Livestock Exchange in Reedsburg.

What is your favorite job to do on the farm?

Olivia: This past summer I spent a lot of time riding with John in the tractor after my days crop scouting at Premier. My favorite part was helping John haul bales off the field while I drove the truck and trailer. It's a lot of fun being on the family farm and even bringing some field meals out to the boys during harvest. I'm hoping to buy a calf shed and some of my own Holstein bull bottle calves and have my own little part on the farm.

John: My focus on the farm is herd health, using my knowledge from my livestock business management degree from Southwest Tech. I have started backgrounding cattle for private sales while stepping into a bigger role in the general management of the family farm.

Why did you join Farm Bureau?

Olivia: Once I discovered the world of agriculture in high school, I saw the impact of Farm Bureau in my own community. From YFA events and scholarships I saw the many opportunities for camaraderie between agriculturists and ways to inspire the youth through the Ag Ambassador. Once I moved to Richland County with John, I saw a big need for YFA

members. I hope that we ignite the passion and expand the understanding of Farm Bureau in this area

John: I saw an increased need for leadership and voice at the government level on agriculture related topics. I saw Farm Bureau as an amazing way to capture that and use it for the good of the farmers in Richland County.

I am Farm Bureau proud because...

We are farm bureau proud because we believe in the voices of local farmers being heard while building relationships with local members and using our skills to better the community.

Preferred tractor color: Well, they don't say "nothing runs like a Case" so we are gonna have to go with John Deere. Our favorite dealership is also just around the corner at Slama's in Hillsboro.

Favorite ice cream flavor: What's the flavor of the day at Culver's again? We'll take that.

Fun Fact: Olivia and I met at PAS which stands for Professional Agricultural Students. We were competing against each other for the Impromptu Speaking Contest. We would never have met without our passion for discussing the agricultural industry. With our shared passion, I think we can make a big difference in Richland County and District 3. And who won the contest? Well, that depends on who you ask.

YFA Involvement: We had a blast at the YFA conference! Between dancing with the entertainment of dueling pianos, line dancing and reconnecting with friends from other counties, it was amazing. Because John is a voting member, he was able to experience the importance of speaking up for his local farmers by voting on policies. Overall, we think that it is a great opportunity for any young farmer or agriculturalist. If you are debating on going next year, we would say just sign up! You never know what you will gain from the experience.



Walleser Selected as Top Individual in WFBF's 35 Under 35

Five individuals have been selected to receive top honors in Wisconsin Farm Bureau's 35 Under 35 Award program. The award is presented by WFBF's Young Farmer and Agriculturist program in partnership with Insight FS.

The 35 Under 35 program recognizes the creativity and innovation of young farmers and agriculturists who are preserving agriculture through leadership in environmental, social and economic activities. This is the third year of the program.

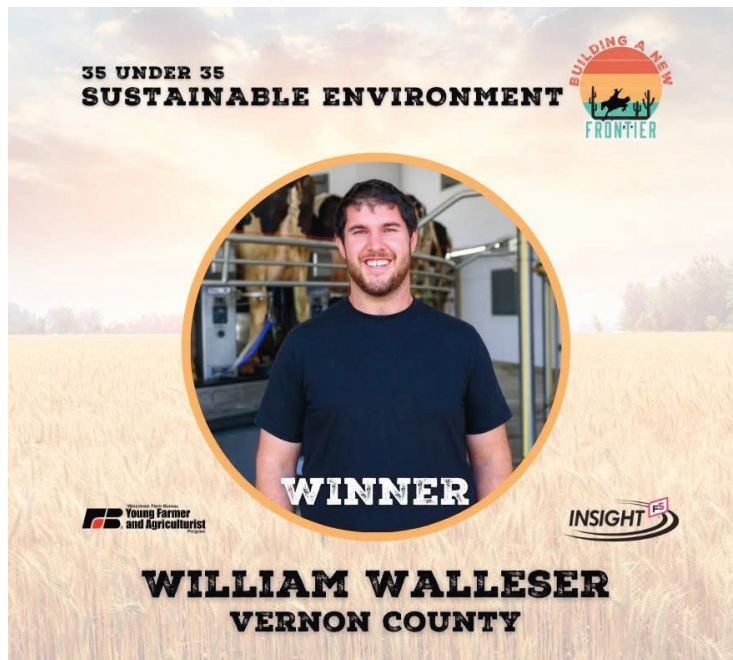
Applications were evaluated for their involvement in one of five categories – Sustainable Future, Sustainable Environment, Sustainable Service, Sustainable Storytelling and Sustainable Self.

Thirty-five finalists were recognized at WFBF's Annual Meeting and YFA Conference in

Wisconsin Dells on Dec. 7. Each finalist received a \$100 cash prize and apparel item. The top individual in each category received a \$500 cash prize.

"This year's cohort exemplifies the diverse meanings of sustainability—encompassing personal growth, community service and environmental stewardship," said WFBF YFA Chair Kat Peper. "Their commitment to advancing agriculture while promoting sustainable practices is a testament to the bright future of our industry."

The Sustainable Environment category recognizes individuals who are good stewards of the land and their resources. The top individual in the Sustainable Environment category was William Walleser from Vernon County. William dairy farms with his family in De Soto.



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