



Grassroots

District 8 News

Never Forgetting Our Roots: Nutrition Comes Full Circle



Kim Bremmer

WFBF District 8 Director

As a past ruminant nutritionist and a mom, both animal and human nutrition has always been a fascinating subject to me. I have closely followed the latest round of updates (which happens every five years) for the U.S. Dietary Guidelines and listened in on the saturated fat working group for the past year. For decades, Americans have been told to fear foods that sustained generations before us – whole milk, beef, butter and eggs. But the newest U.S. Dietary Guidelines signal a major shift – and in many ways, a return to common sense.

This federal policy is important because it has enormous influence on eating habits. These recommendations are given to every American, starting with K-12 education and then, from doctors, nutritionists, dieticians and other health professionals who are required to be taught the guidelines. By law, the guidelines must be followed by all federal nutrition programs including food assistance programs, which touch one in four Americans every month (National School Lunch Program, SNAP, WIC, and feeding programs for the elderly). They also dictate what gets served in military mess halls and hospitals, as well as FDA regulations on food, including information on packaging. The guidelines clearly have the greatest influence on our food and what is considered a healthy diet. Yet we have seen in many of the previous updates a clear attack on animal proteins.

The newly updated guidelines place a renewed emphasis on animal proteins and natural animal fats, recognizing their essential role in

building strength, supporting immunity, maintaining bone health and keeping us satisfied after meals. Daily protein recommendations are now reflective of what farmers, ranchers and traditional food cultures have always understood: real nourishment starts with quality protein.

Nutrient-dense foods are once again taking their rightful place at the center of a healthy diet...beef is better highlighted as a key protein option, full-fat dairy is encouraged and even butter and traditional animal fats are recognized as acceptable sources of healthy fat. At the same time, warnings about dietary cholesterol have been removed, bringing long-needed clarity to foods like eggs.

Another major shift is the reduced emphasis on grains and carbohydrates, alongside recognition of low-carbohydrate diets as a legitimate option for managing chronic health conditions. Added sugars have been further restricted. You can learn more at nutritioncoalition.us.

The nutritional spotlight is moving back where it belongs: toward real foods that nourish the body. Is the policy perfect? No. Our next battle will be removing the 10% cap on saturated fat, but the overall direction is clear and improved. Federal nutrition policy is beginning to realign with both long standing wisdom and emerging science...the perfect place to be to honor advancements while not forgetting our roots. (Now, if only we can get our markets to follow this signal!)

This moment in federal policy is meaningful as it reflects a growing recognition that health doesn't come from ever-changing trends. It comes from the same foundational foods that so many of you produce that have sustained families, farms and communities for generations.

Sometimes progress isn't about inventing something completely new... sometimes it's about remembering some things we knew all along.



A Unified Voice for Agriculture

As the leading voice for Wisconsin agriculture, WFBF ensures that farmers' concerns are heard and addressed, allowing you to focus on what you do best—feeding, clothing and fueling our communities.

Shaping Policy

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation champions policies that protect farmers' rights, making sure that agriculture remains a thriving industry through proactive engagement at all levels of government.

Developing Members

Members gain access to leadership development, business resources and networking opportunities designed to help farmers expand their businesses and influence.

Engaging Consumers

Through outreach and education, WFBF bridges the gap between farmers and consumers, promoting a deeper understanding of modern agriculture and its role in everyday life.

When the Farmer Ends Up in the Ambulance

Ashleigh Calaway

WFBF District 8 Coordinator

The last normal thought I remember having before everything went sideways was thinking that farmers can't even run to the store and get what they need anymore. Supply shortages, backorders, empty shelves — and then people wonder why farmers are struggling mentally.

Ironically, that day was actually a really good one.

I took my mother-in-law and daughter fabric shopping and then out to lunch. We laughed through the whole day. It felt like one of those simple, perfect days you don't plan but are grateful for.

Then my body decided it was done.

My heart started racing. I couldn't catch my breath and felt like I couldn't swallow. Everything felt wrong. Suddenly my mother-in-law was calling for an ambulance as I thought I was having a heart attack.

As we waited for the ambulance to arrive, I stepped out of my vehicle because I thought I might be sick. The EMT asked if I was having back pain.

I told him, "I'm over 40 and farm. Of course my back hurts."

He laughed and clarified, "Any new back pain?"

And true farmer fashion? I walked into the ambulance myself. I refused to let them bring the cot out. There was no way my daughter was going to see me strapped down on a stretcher.

Once inside, I handled things the way many people do — with humor.

They asked if I was diabetic, had high blood pressure, or was allergic to anything.

I laughed and said, "At this age? Anything is possible."

The reality, though, was that my brain never left the farm.

While they were hooking me up to monitors, I worried whether chores would get done that night. Had I filled the feed buckets to make it easier in case someone had to cover? Would the house goats get fed on time, or would they end up off schedule?

And when they tried convincing me to go to the ER, my first concern wasn't my health — it was whether the hospital would take my insurance.

They looked at me like, "Are you serious right now?"

But it's tax season. All I'd been staring at for weeks were inputs and outputs. It's not hard to see why I was worried about how this would hit the farm's bottom line.

At one point, I remembered telling my husband just the day before that my only Valentine's Day request was that nothing die on the farm.

And there I was, hooked up to machines thinking, Well, I guess I'm not on the farm right now.

And here's the humbling part.

When doctors later asked what triggered everything, it hit me: I had just walked into my second farm store of the day and discovered they didn't have the supplies I needed.

Not the end of the world. I could always order online. The items at home were working just fine — I just wanted extras on the shelf in case they broke, because good planning and preparation help mental health during busy seasons.

But after a heavy season of additional stress, lack of sleep, and a brutal kidding season, that tiny inconvenience was apparently the straw that broke the farmer's back.

Because the truth is, this didn't come out of nowhere.

Kidding season has been rough. We lost multiple kids for different reasons, and every loss takes a toll. On top of that, pneumonia moved through our yearlings, we had to call the vet multiple times, and we dealt with toxic mastitis. It felt like every time we solved one problem, another popped up.

I tried hard to focus on the positives. Our new vet practice is amazing

— answering every question, letting us introduce the herd to them, and even offering to let our daughter ride along someday. Since she was four, all she's wanted to be is a vet.

I leaned on my goat mentors too. They helped me figure out what was going wrong, and later I called just to thank them for so willingly giving their time and knowledge. What I learned from them and from our vet will help ensure we don't face these same struggles again — and it's already helped with our sheep herd as well.

But even with the support and learning, the stress still stacked up.

I hadn't slept through the night in over a month.

And here's what I didn't recognize soon enough — managing the farm isn't the same as managing myself.

I actually do have a good system in place for hard seasons. Normally, I walk regularly, try to eat better, and lean on friends when things get heavy.

But this season stacked on top of a heavy workload off the farm, and somewhere along

the way things started slipping.

Walking fell off for a bit. Meals got skipped. And I stopped reaching out to friends because I felt like I was being negative — and that's not who I want to be.

The very people I usually call to work through hard things, I didn't.

Add all of that together, and apparently one more empty shelf at a farm store was all it took to tip things over.

The good news? My heart is fine. What I experienced was a panic attack — my nervous system finally saying enough.

And the lesson for me — and maybe for you — is this:

We need systems in place before things fall apart.

Not just for the farm. For ourselves.

Backup chore plans. People who can step in. Sleep when we can. Meals we actually eat. Time to move our bodies. Permission to step away when stress piles up.

Because the farm still runs if we take care of ourselves.

But it gets a lot harder to run if we don't.

So if you're in a hard season right now, check in with yourself. Take the walk. Eat the meal. Ask for help. Rest when you can.

Learn from the farmer in the back of an ambulance worrying about feed buckets.

The chores will get done.

You're harder to replace.





LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Grow your voice.
Lead your community.
Shape the future of agriculture.



ABOUT THE PROGRAM :

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Leadership Institute is a year-long, hands-on agricultural leadership experience that equips Farm Bureau members with the skills, confidence, and connections to lead boldly in their farms, businesses, and communities.

WHAT YOU'LL GAIN:

- ✓ Expanded professional network
- ✓ Deeper understanding of ag issues
- ✓ Stronger leadership and communication skills
- ✓ Personal growth

NEW FOR 2021!

The Mike & Shirley Duerst Institute scholarship program. Institute applicants who are not sponsored by their County Farm Bureau, employer or other organization and have financial need can apply for a scholarship to cover their participation fee.

Being a Leader vs. Inspiring & Leading

Who do you recognize on this list? Why do you remember them?

- Martin Luther King Jr.
- Samual Pierpont Langhry
- Wright Brothers
- Steve Wozniak & Steve Jobs



APPLICATION DETAILS:

- 🕒 Application deadline is June 15
- 🌐 Apply at <https://bit.ly/fbleader27>

Springer Hired as WFBF Treasurer and Executive Director of Operations

Sheri Springer has been hired by Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation to serve as its treasurer and executive director of operations.

In this role, Springer will be responsible for overseeing and managing the responsibilities of WFBF's operations division. She will direct and coordinate the organization's treasury activities and analyze financial records to forecast future financial positions and budget requirements.

"Sheri brings diverse experience and agricultural knowledge to Wisconsin Farm Bureau," said WFBF Chief Administrative Officer Bradley Uken. "We know Sheri will be a great addition to our organization and are excited to welcome her to the team."

Springer brings a wide depth of background and experience to the position. She is a licensed CPA and has held positions in the financial field with SVA Certified Public Accountants and CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA). Additionally, she is a part of a beef cattle ranch near Linden, Wis.



Promotion and Engagement: Cultivating Meaningful Connections

Rob Klussendorf

District 8 Promotion and Engagement Representative



At the committee's January planning meeting, the first task was setting priorities and direction for the year ahead. The Promotion and Engagement program empowers Farm Bureau members to engage

with consumers and share the story of agriculture. The program is designed to build awareness and understanding of agriculture through consumer engagement, grassroots education and training, and advocacy.

The nine-member committee includes one representative from each district and works to create opportunities for farmers and agriculturists to build meaningful connections that strengthen consumer trust and confidence in agriculture.

Our Three Priorities for the Year

1. Consumer Engagement and Resources

Promote and distribute reliable, trusted information that connects consumers to the farmers who grow and raise their food.

2. Grassroots Education and Training

Equip Farm Bureau members with effective tools for community engagement and provide training opportunities that empower volunteers to confidently connect with consumers.

3. Advocacy

Position Farm Bureau as a reliable, credible source of information so community leaders and consumers can make informed decisions about agriculture.

The committee also helped prepare for this year's Cultivate & Connect event, which has now taken place by the time you're reading this newsletter. Cultivate & Connect is designed to inspire, educate and empower Farm Bureau members and agricultural leaders by providing innovative learning experiences, networking opportunities and actionable insights to advance Wisconsin's agriculture industry.

Looking ahead, District 8 will host the next Cultivate & Connect event February 19–20, 2027, in Wausau — an exciting opportunity to showcase our district and bring members together.

Closer to home, Rob's goal for District 8 is to strengthen collaboration with county Promotion and Engagement leaders and build awareness of available programs and resources. By working together, counties can better support members who want to share agriculture's story in their communities.

If you're enthusiastic about agriculture and enjoy connecting with others, now is a great time to get involved. The Promotion and Engagement program offers leadership opportunities, training and tools to help members become trusted voices for agriculture.

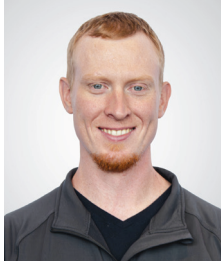
To learn more or get involved, contact your county Promotion and Engagement chair or reach out to:

Rob Klussendorf: rklussendorf@gmail.com | 715.965.8927

Rob Klussendorf serves District 8 as a representative on the Promotion and Engagement Committee through Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, helping strengthen connections between farmers, members and consumers across the state.

District 8 News

YFA Winter Recap and Spring Events Ahead



Jason Behrend
District 8 YFA Chair

Happy Spring! In January, I had the opportunity to travel to Des Moines to represent our YFA Committee at the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer Conference. With nearly 500 attendees, it was a great chance to connect with farmers from across Iowa and learn how agriculture looks a little different across state

lines.

The opening night featured remarks from Iowa Farm Bureau President Brent Johnson and Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig, who discussed both the successes and challenges facing agriculture today, including the ongoing push to expand availability of E15 ethanol fuel.

One of the most memorable parts of the conference was hearing from keynote speaker Dan Meers, better known as KC Wolf, mascot for the Kansas City Chiefs. His story about recovering from a serious accident while preparing a stunt was both inspiring and a reminder of resilience when facing setbacks.

While in Iowa, I also had the chance to tour the historic Iowa State Fairgrounds and attend several breakout sessions. Topics ranged from cybersecurity risks for farms to animal disease preparedness, with my personal favorite session focusing on nutrition and maintaining energy during busy seasons, led by a dairy farmer who also works as a dietitian.

Closer to home, District 8 kicked off the year on February 21 at Marathon Sports Center with bowling, pizza and great conversation. It was wonderful catching up with familiar faces and meeting new members. During the event, I encouraged attendees to challenge themselves this year by applying for an award or participating in discussion meet.

Our next District 8 event is coming up April 2 at 5:30 p.m. at Willow Springs. This spring-themed social will include dancing, games, icebreakers and great food. All adults are welcome, and members are encouraged to bring a non-Farm Bureau friend along. Cost is \$10 per person.

Mark your calendars for the District 8 YFA Discussion Meet on Sunday, July 9. The discussion meet gives members a chance to sharpen their speaking and problem-solving skills while discussing current agricultural topics with fellow members. Contact me if you're interested in competing.

As we head into planting season, please stay safe and take care of yourselves and your neighbors.



YOUNG FARMER AND AGRICULTURIST Awards

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT BIT.LY/WIYFACONTESTS

Farming for the Future Award

For YFA members who earn a majority of their income from on-farm production.

APPLY NOW AT:
BIT.LY/WIYFACONTESTS

Outstanding Agriculture Professional Award

For YFA members who earn a majority of their income from off-farm careers.

APPLY NOW AT:
BIT.LY/WIYFACONTESTS

35 Under 35

For YFA members preserving agriculture through leadership in environmental, social and economic practices.

APPLY NOW AT:
BIT.LY/WIYFACONTESTS



DUE JULY 1



Heroes of Hope

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

NOMINATE A NEIGHBOR

Do you know a story of farm neighbors helping each other? Perhaps you helped out a neighbor or were helped by a neighbor during a difficult time. Nominate them today as a Hero of Hope!

Nominations are open and can be found at <https://bit.ly/FNCHeroHope>



bitly

District 8 News

Ag Day at the Capitol

More than 300 farmers and agriculturists gathered at the Monona Terrace in Madison today for Ag Day at the Capitol.

Ag Day at the Capitol is the largest advocacy day for Wisconsin farmers and agriculturists, bringing together a variety of farm groups to learn more about state issues affecting agriculture and meet with their state legislators.

Attendees were welcomed by Wisconsin Farm Bureau President Brad Olson and listened to remarks from Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Secretary Randy Romanski. Sec. Romanski shared a recap of the recent agricultural legislative success stories, updates from the department and commended those in attendance for their involvement in agriculture advocacy.



“Your voice has influenced many things in the last few years,” said Sec. Romanski. “Share your story, share your experience because it makes a difference.”

Following Sec. Romanski’s remarks, Marcus Landry, former UW-Madison Badgers basketball player, delivered a keynote speech. Landry, who has started a family farm following his basketball career, shared his story of getting involved in agriculture.

“I am a part of this farm community and I wouldn’t change it for the world,” said Landry. “When we come together and show unity, we can make a huge difference.”

The afternoon program featured issue briefings on a variety of topics supporting agricultural market development, farm family stability, farm resilience, market transportation, and conservation and wildlife.

Following the program, attendees walked to the Capitol to meet with their legislators. Inside the Capitol Rotunda, attendees explored Farm Bureau spotlight booths and connected with Wisconsin Ag Coalition partners.

“Each one of you is a powerful voice for agriculture,” said WFBF President Brad Olson. “When lawmakers hear directly from the people who live these issues every day, it changes the conversation.”



Rural Mutual Insurance Company and GROWMARK Inc. are major sponsors of the event. Co-sponsors of the event, with Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, include the Dairy Business Association, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, Wisconsin

Cattlemen’s Association, Wisconsin Corn Growers Association, Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association, Wisconsin Hemp Alliance, Wisconsin Horse Council, Wisconsin Pork Association, Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association, and Wisconsin Soybean Association.

District 8 Farmer to Farmer

This is a voluntary program for members to help area farmers in their time of need. For example, you have a tragedy on the farm, with one call to your county Farm Bureau president they can activate a team of people in your community who are ready and willing to help. This team would be willing to provide a temporary home for the animals, haul them to another location, provide feed, help with chores, etc.



Our hope is to create this online form to support our members across the district, no matter their need. We hope that no one will ever need to use the information but, to have it ready if the need ever arises. Please use the QR Code below to access the form to add your name to list of people willing to help others in their time of need. Don’t have a smart phone? Go to <https://bit.ly/FarmertoFarmer>

Wolves and Agriculture: Sharing Farmers’ Perspectives

Josh Calaway
WFBF Wolf Advisory Committee Representative

Wood County member Josh Calaway recently had the opportunity to share the real-world impact of wolves on Wisconsin agriculture during a presentation to the Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau. His remarks helped provide lawmakers and staff with on-the-ground insight into how wolf populations affect livestock producers and rural communities across the state.

Following the presentation, participants also learned about non-lethal livestock protection tools currently being used by farmers, including deterrent devices and management practices designed to reduce conflicts between wolves and livestock operations.



The group then explored the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, where they had the opportunity to learn more about wolf tracking efforts and wildlife management practices in Wisconsin. The visit offered participants a firsthand look at how wildlife professionals monitor wolf activity while balancing conservation efforts with agricultural concerns.

Josh serves as a representative of Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation on the wolf management committee organized through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, helping ensure farmers and rural landowners have a voice in ongoing policy and management discussions.

Efforts like these continue to bring agricultural perspectives into important wildlife conversations while working toward solutions that support both conservation goals and farm families across the state.

District 8 News

FFA Farm Forum

More than 300 FFA members, advisors and guests from across Wisconsin attended Wisconsin Farm Bureau's FFA Farm Forum in Rothschild on Feb. 11.

"FFA Farm Forum is a place for learning and leadership," said WFBF President Brad Olson. "We appreciate FFA members' vision for the future of agriculture and are proud to present an event that supports their leadership paths."

The keynote speaker was Mark Holley, Chief Meteorologist at WSAW. Holley shared how his passion for science, technology and problem-solving turned into a career that has a real impact on agriculture and everyday life.

"I became a meteorologist to communicate with the people who need to know when to bale their hay and plant their crops," shared Holley. "In my career, it is important to be a good science communicator because the weather impacts everyone."

During the one-day event, FFA members attended career-based workshops including: 'From Farm to Finance' with Alison Kepner from Coemper Financial, 'A Career in Agricultural Engineering' with Ian

Hansen from MSA Professional Services, Inc., 'Discover Food Science' with Grace Lewis from UW-River Falls, 'Careers in Marketing and Insurance' with Jenny Martin from Rural Mutual Insurance Company, 'Career Paths within Agricultural Coops' with Joe Sikora from Insight FS and 'Understanding Animal Behavior' with Beth McIlquham from UW-Madison Extension.

"FFA Farm Forum is a valuable collaboration between Wisconsin Farm Bureau and Wisconsin FFA, fostering leadership development and career exploration in agriculture," said WFBF Director of Young Leader Programs Melissa Jacobson. "We're proud to support and inspire the next generation of agricultural leaders."

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



Starting Gate: A Program for Young and Beginning Producers Fostering Success

The Starting Gate program, by AgCountry Farm Credit Services, empowers young and beginning producers by providing personalized coaching in agricultural finance. Participants work with a dedicated financial officer and other experts to build skills in budgeting, financial planning and risk management, creating a strong foundation for their business goals. The program fosters a confident and knowledgeable community of producers who are ready to shape the future of agriculture.

Producers who participate in the program are highly engaged in utilizing Starting Gate resources, are eager to grow their business, and are typically 35 years of age or younger or have 10 years or less of farming experience.

Starting Gate participants have access to:

1:1 Coaching Sessions with a dedicated team to help them build a solid financial foundation and the skills to succeed.

Customized financial planning based on specific needs, opportunities and risks. The result is a tailored, viable and sustainable plan for achieving

their goals

Opportunities to attend education-focused workshops and events to deepen their knowledge and forge meaningful relationships with peers and industry experts.

Access to economic, sustainable and agricultural news from our team of analysts and outside experts dedicated to keeping them informed and ahead of the curve.

Annual financial review meetings to take stock of progress, identify areas of improvement for the coming year and work with the Starting Gate team on next steps to meeting long-term goals.

If you, or someone you know, would like more information regarding Starting Gate please contact Dawn Mroczenski, AgCountry FCS Developing Markets Office, at 715.748.3270.

District 8 News

How Cranberries Support a Heart-Healthy Lifestyle

Life stacks up quickly, and it's easy for health priorities to slip to the background. February—Heart Health Month—is a timely reminder to pause and refocus on cardiovascular health. Heart disease remains a leading health concern, but proactive steps like nourishing food choices, regular movement and monitoring blood pressure can make a meaningful difference.

At Cranberry Learning, we're often asked: How do cranberries fit into a heart-healthy diet? The answer is encouraging.

Why Cranberries Matter for Heart Health

Cranberries are a nutrient-dense fruit rich in bioactive compounds that support cardiovascular wellness. Research shows cranberries may help:

- Reduce blood pressure
- Improve blood vessel function
- Support healthy cholesterol levels

These benefits make cranberries a smart, natural addition to a balanced, heart-conscious diet.

Simple Ways to Enjoy Cranberries

Incorporating cranberries doesn't have to be complicated. Here are a few heart-healthy options:

- Fresh or Frozen – Add to smoothies, oatmeal or baking for a low-calorie, nutrient-rich boost.
- Juice – Choose from a variety of cranberry juices for your healthy lifestyle.
- Dried Cranberries – Toss into salads or pair with unsalted nuts for a satisfying snack.
- Homemade Sauces – Prepare your own cranberry sauce using limited sweeteners to keep it heart-friendly.

Trusted Cranberry Resources

For deeper learning and inspiration, explore these evidence-based and educational resources:

- Cranberry Institute

The Berry Best Guidebook (science-based cranberry nutrition)

<https://cranberryinstitute.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Cranberry%20Institute%20Digital%20Berry%20Best%20Guidebook.pdf>

- Ocean Spray

Cranberry recipe inspiration

<https://www.oceanspray.com/recipe-ideas>

- Cranberry Learning Inc.

Free lessons, recipes, and cranberry education

<https://www.cranberrylearning.com>

Call for Heart-Healthy Cranberry Recipes

As a simple and engaging way to bring heart-healthy learning to life, we're inviting you to enjoy a Cranberry Learning Inc. Baked Cranberry Oatmeal recipe featuring cranberries from Honestly Cranberry, a Central Wisconsin, family-based food company known for producing dried cranberries, promoting the health benefits of the cranberry superfruit. You can find the recipe here: <https://www.cranberrylearning.com/resources/baked-cranberry-oatmeal>

Together, small choices—like adding cranberries to everyday meals—can support heart health, spark learning, and strengthen our connection to food that truly nourishes.

A Cranberry Educational Tool and Cran-Career Pathway Guide. www.cranberrylearning.com

Could Agri Plan Save Your Farm Money?

Randy Wokatsch

I first learned about Agri Plan through the annual meeting, and it's been a great decision for our farm. This is now our second year using the program, and we've seen how it can help self-employed farmers deduct 100% of family medical expenses through the business. It's a practical way to manage rising healthcare costs, and for operations like ours, the savings can really add up. I'd encourage other farmers to take a look and see how Agri Plan might fit into their operation.

Agri Plan is available in Wisconsin through a partnership between Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation and TASC (Total Administrative Services Corporation). Built around Section 105 of the IRS tax code, the program is designed specifically for self-employed farmers and small business owners looking for ways to better manage rising healthcare costs.

Through Agri Plan, eligible farm families can deduct 100% of qualified medical expenses through their farm or business. This can include health insurance premiums, dental and vision expenses, prescriptions and many out-of-pocket medical costs. Many participants report saving thousands of dollars annually in federal, state and self-employment taxes—real dollars that can be put back into the farm and family.

For our operation, the savings have been very real. Based on our most recent tax year, nearly \$10,000 in eligible medical expenses resulted in more than \$3,200 in tax savings. With higher medical expenses this past year, we expect that savings to grow even more.

One important takeaway: Agri Plan works best when you plan ahead. To take advantage of the program, the farm must pay a spouse or family member a legitimate wage throughout the year—not retroactively. That means doing it by the book: proper payroll, required withholdings, and issuing a W-2 at year end.

Kerry and I had a bit of a leg up because I've always paid her a wage. I pay her quarterly, and she cashes those checks to cover personal expenses we would be paying anyway—so it's not really an "extra" cost to the farm. (And for the record, I still don't pay her nearly what she's worth!) For others, this step may take some setup, but once it's in place, Agri Plan can be a powerful tool.

As an added benefit, Farm Bureau members receive a discount on Agri Plan administration costs, and members can request a free savings analysis to see whether the program fits their operation. Simply go to www.tasconline.com/free-savings-analysis to see what you could be saving with Agri Plan. Remember to put Wisconsin Farm Bureau in the "Referred By" field in order to get a 15% discount on administration costs should you decide to move forward with the program!

If you haven't explored Agri Plan yet, now is the time to start planning—so you're ready to take advantage of the savings when tax time rolls around.



Randy and Kerry Wokatsch





Clark County Farm Bureau Scholarships Available

We are pleased to again be offering two \$500 scholarships to graduating seniors, college and technical college students pursuing a post-secondary degree.



Dairy Promotion Efforts Making an Impact Across Lincoln County

Mary Sosnovske

Lincoln County dairy promotion efforts were in full swing this past year, connecting families and youth with Wisconsin's dairy story through community events, youth programming and local partnerships.

June Dairy Month Breakfast Draws Big Crowd

Despite rainy weather, nearly 1,000 community members turned out for the annual June Dairy Month Breakfast held June 8 at Merrill Area Recreation Complex. Guests enjoyed a hearty breakfast featuring cheesy scrambled eggs, sausage, pancakes, cheese curds, milk, juice, coffee and even ice cream for dessert.

Families also enjoyed live music, tractor and equipment displays, wagon rides and a petting zoo. Informational booths highlighted Wisconsin dairy farming, and guests sampled locally produced cheeses while learning more about the dairy industry. The event reached 975 attendees in person, with an additional 500 people reached through digital promotion, supported by 40 volunteers and numerous community partners.

Promoting Dairy Nutrition in the Community

In April, a "Good for My Body" event at the Smith Center brought together 350 attendees to highlight dairy nutrition and the importance of incorporating real dairy foods into daily diets. With help from local volunteers and partner organizations, families learned about dairy's nutritional benefits while enjoying hands-on activities and samples.

Teaching Youth Where Dairy Comes From

Another highlight of the year was Dairy Day at T. B. Scott Library,



FARM TO FORK BANQUET SATURDAY MARCH 28, 2026 A BOOTS & JEANS AFFAIR

Cocktail Hour and Farmer meet-and-greet @ 6:00PM
Locally sourced meal @ 7:00PM

American Legion
6 Boon Blvd, Neillsville, WI 54456
Scan here to reserve your seat.



Or go to:
<https://bit.ly/f2f26>

BUCKET RAFFLE | FUNDRAISERS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS | YOUTH IMPACT

Lincoln County

wfbf.com/about/counties/lincoln
LincolnCountyFarmBureau



Lincoln County Farm Bureau SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

APPLY TODAY!

We are pleased to again be offering two \$500 scholarships to graduating seniors and first-year college and technical college students preference given to students pursuing a post-secondary degree in agriculture.

**Applications are due
April 1st, 2026**



Marathon County

wfbf.com/about/counties/marathon
MarathonCountyFarmBureau

Unexpected Visitors on the Farm

James Juedes

One never knows when something unexpected will happen on a farm. Maybe a cow calves early, a piece of equipment breaks down, or a visitor drops in. In this case, it was the last one—although I did have a bit of advance notice.

On the afternoon of January 26, I received a text from Rep. Tom Tiffany asking if he could stop by the next day while in the area visiting friends. Never being one to turn down visitors, especially those interested in agriculture, I told him he was welcome to come, pending confirmation the next morning.

Sure enough, the next morning he confirmed they would arrive around 2:00 p.m. I rearranged my schedule and tidied things up as best I could in the cold weather. Right on time, they pulled into the yard. We gathered in the milkhouse for introductions, and along with Tom and his staff was the Consul General of Israel to the Midwest, Elad Strohmayer, and members of his team. Quite the surprise!

It turns out he has connections to dairy farming in Israel and was interested in seeing an American dairy farm firsthand. We had some friendly discussion comparing cows in Israel and here at home—let's just say I'm still partial to ours.

We toured the barn, talked about dairy farming, and answered plenty of questions. They enjoyed meeting the cows and calves and learning more about how farms operate in Wisconsin. Before they headed out, we shared some locally produced milk and continued the conversation about agriculture and the importance of dairy farming both here and abroad.

After saying our goodbyes, Elad and I exchanged contact information with hopes of connecting again during warmer weather.

It was a fun and memorable visit, and a reminder that you never know when an opportunity will present itself to share the story of agriculture and meet new people along the way.



WAUSAU WOODCHUCKS

DULUTH HUSKIES

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21 - GAME
STARTS AT 6:35 PM

DUGOUT SEATING

WAUSAU WOODCHUCKS 2401 N 3RD ST. WAUSAU

Let us know how many spots you'd like to reserve—we're holding limited space and other groups are interested in this game night too! Questions call/text: 715.432.6697 tickets will be emailed once payment is received.

Call for Workshops



WFBF YFA CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL MEETING

PROPOSALS DUE MARCH 27, 2026

bit.ly/WFBFWorkshops26

THE *Power of One*
Strength of Many

Portage County

wfbf.com/about/counties/portage
PortageCountyFarmBureau

Portage County Farm Bureau SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

We are pleased to offer a \$500 scholarship to graduating seniors and first-year college and technical college students pursuing a post-secondary degree in agriculture.

Applications are due
April 1st, 2026



Price County

wfbf.com/about/counties/marathon
MarathonCountyFarmBureau

PRICE COUNTY FARM BUREAU SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

WE ARE PLEASED TO AGAIN BE OFFERING \$500 SCHOLARSHIP TO HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS, STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN AN APPRENTICESHIP/TRADES PROGRAM, OR A TWO- OR FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM STUDENTS PURSUING A POST-SECONDARY DEGREE PREFERENCE GIVEN TO THOSE PURSUING A DEGREE IN AGRICULTURE.

APPLICATIONS ARE
DUE APRIL 1ST, 2026



Taylor County

wfbf.com/about/counties/taylor
TaylorCountyFarmBureau

From the President's Desk



Rob Klussendorf
Taylor County Farm Bureau President

Farm Bureau was formed more than 100 years ago to support the work of county agricultural agents and to provide a collective voice for farm families. From the beginning, the organization has worked to pass legislation that benefits farmers and rural communities.

Today, American Farm Bureau Federation works nationally to influence policy on issues such as the Clean Water Act, environmental regulations and trade. At the state level, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation advocates on similar issues that directly impact Wisconsin farmers.

Right here at home, Taylor County Farm Bureau focuses on the concerns that affect our local farm families. Each of us has challenges that Farm Bureau may be able to help with and often your neighbors may be dealing with the same issues. Farm Bureau brings farmers together to solve problems and strengthen our agricultural community.

On the local level, Taylor County Farm Bureau recently supported three

FFA students who attended the FFA Farm Forum in February. We are also looking forward to hosting Alice in Dairyland as she presents "Expedition Agriculture" to local fourth graders, connecting students with farming practices, regional crops and food systems.

One of our biggest educational events is the Celebration of Wisconsin Specialties (COWS). We bring together all fourth grade students from every Taylor County school for a hands-on learning experience. The event features 15 different stations covering topics such as drones, robotic dairies, soil conservation, beef production, flower displays, bees, farm equipment manufacturing and gardening. COWS will be held at the end of April, and we are always looking for new presenters to help make it a success.

Farm Bureau also supports the Dairy Dessert Contest in July at the Taylor County Fair, along with Adventures in Agriculture.

Together, we can continue strengthening agriculture in Taylor County and ensure the next generation understands and appreciates where their food comes from. If you are interested in helping with any of these events or would like to learn more about Farm Bureau, please reach out: Rfklussendorf@gmail.com | 715.965.8927



Taylor County Farm Bureau

Deadline to apply is April 01, 2026.

Taylor County Farm Bureau will be awarding a higher education scholarship to one (1) high school senior from the county.

Visit <https://wfbf.com/about/counties/taylor/> for an application.



Wood County Farm Bureau SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

We are pleased to again be offering scholarships to graduating seniors and first-year college and technical college students
Applications are due April 1st, 2025



MANURE PIT RESCUE TRAINING

Farmer participants and firefighters in these training sessions will learn critical information about the hazards of working around manure pits, the importance of air quality monitoring, and how to use body harnesses, life lines, and retrieval equipment.

Firefighters and emergency personnel will also learn about the hazards of confined space manure pits and how to safely conduct rescues of victims from these structures.

- ✓ SATURDAY, MARCH 21 2026
- ✓ WAYERSKI FARMS: 5410 COUNTY RD. X PITTSVILLE, WI
- ✓ COST - \$10/PARTICIPANT FREE FOR SPECTATORS
- ✓ FIRST SESSION: 8:00 AM-11:30AM
SECOND SESSION: 12:30 PM-4:30 PM

Farmers and EMS professionals may come to watch and learn.

Firefighters are required to bring bunker gear and SCBA apparatus. (Must be clean shaven.) Max 30 per session.

Lunch provided for both groups from noon-12:30 pm.

TO REGISTER: Website: <https://bit.ly/2026ManurePitRescue>

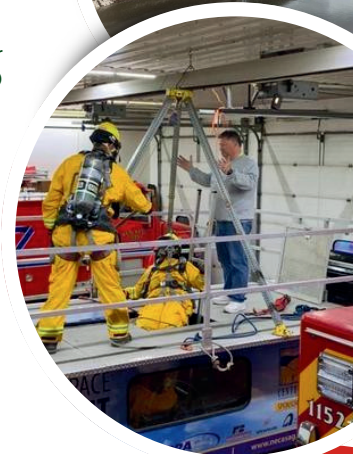
Questions: Call or text Jerry Minor, Pittsville Fire Department 715.459.7022

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**This Issue Contains
Highlights for:**

Clark County
Lincoln County
Marathon County
Portage County
Price County
Taylor County
Wood County



Our dividend grows your future

Wisconsin's strength starts with farmers like you. That's why we're returning **\$4.4 million** to farm policyholders this year — and **\$31.9 million** over the past decade through our Farm Dividend Program. *When our farms succeed, Wisconsin stays strong.*

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