SPRING 2026

Grassroots

District 4 News

District Director Report



Joe Bragger

District 4 Director

"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do!" - Edward Everett Hale

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much!" - Helen Keller

Yep, that's right. Two quotes this time, yet they really go together. I am reminded of the Amish farmer who wanted to move his barn to the other side of the road. Was he going to take it apart and rebuild it? Surely, he couldn't just pick up a 35,000-pound barn and move it? Certainly not by himself? Yet, if maybe he had a big party and invited 800 of his friends to lend a hand, perhaps they could all lift the barn and move it. Okay, before you get your phone calculator out: 35,000Lbs/800 people=43.75 lbs per person. That's exactly what he did, and you can watch this and several other examples on YouTube. When everyone does what they can and combines their efforts with others, plus a little teamwork, almost anything can happen!

So, why am I taking you on this literary ramble? Because I truly believe in the grassroots efforts of our members, and if we want to continue to support our farms and agriculture in general, we will not need to look to others to pass a bill or prevent ordinances that negatively affect our ability to farm. If we want better financial opportunities and leverage, we have to work for it not "wait and see what is in the state budget or the farm bill." We need to be there before the proposals are laid out. We need to create the proposals!

Often, you will see a Facebook post of four or five members and a lobbyist or two testifying at the Capitol in front of a committee. These efforts are a necessary component of speaking up so legislators are fully informed and truly understand how policies will impact farmers and rural communities. However, that is just one component of the whole. To make our voices heard, we must be involved from the very beginning. We must strive to be active, not reactive. We must be the ones leading these conversations and advocacy initiatives, from our local communities all the way to the Capitol.

Now, imagine a movement starting in District 4 in which we have county leaders and their neighbors ready to act as a unit when we need to pass or prevent something. Imagine if these members made hundreds of calls to their legislators, imagine if they went to Madison or a county or town meeting, each lifting their share to move a mountain. I know some will say, "What do I pay my dues for if I have to do the work?" Yet, who is better than us!

Please consider attending a county Farm Bureau monthly meeting or, most certainly, your county annual meeting, and reach out to your county Farm Bureau president or board members. County presidents, let's set up our networks and not wait for others to determine our future. Let us, together, shape our futures. Let's prepare!

Have a safe spring and, as always, enough is too much!

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

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Agriculturist Program

District 4 News

Communication and Connection: Have We Gone Too Far?



Jenn Rittenhouse

District 4 Coordinator

The paradox of modern life is difficult to ignore. We have never been more connected, yet many of us have never felt more alone.

In just a few decades, communication technology has advanced at a breathtaking pace. From handwritten letters that took weeks to arrive, to instant messaging that delivers thoughts across continents in milliseconds, humanity has effectively erased distance as a barrier. Smartphones now serve as portals to the world, allowing us to see faces, hear voices and share experiences in real time. Social platforms promise constant interaction, and notifications remind us that we are always within reach of someone, somewhere.

The difference lies in what we have optimized for. Modern devices prioritize speed, convenience and volume. We can send hundreds of messages a day, react with a tap and scroll endlessly through curated glimpses of other people's lives. But communication is not simply the exchange of information; it is the exchange of understanding. It requires presence, attention and vulnerability, qualities that technology, for all its strengths, does not inherently foster.

In many ways, our tools have outpaced our habits. We have learned how to broadcast, but not always how to listen. We share updates, but not always emotions. Conversations are frequently fragmented and split across apps, interrupted by alerts, or reduced to brief, performative interactions. The depth that once came from slower forms of communication is often replaced by immediacy, leaving little room for reflection.

There is also the illusion of connection. Seeing constant activity in the form of likes, comments and messages can create a sense of social fulfillment, but these interactions are often thin substitutes for genuine relationships. A message can be sent without being felt; a reply can be given without true attention. In this environment, it becomes easy to confuse being "in touch" with being understood.

Ironically, the very devices designed to bring us closer can sometimes create distance. When we prioritize screens over presence, we risk neglecting the people physically around us. When conversations are mediated through text, tone and intention can be lost, leading to misunderstandings. And when we rely on constant digital interaction, we may find ourselves less comfortable with the silence, patience and effort that a deeper connection requires.

This is not to say that technology is the problem. Communicational devices have undeniably enriched our lives. They allow families to stay connected across continents, give voices to those who might otherwise go unheard and provide access to knowledge and communities on an unprecedented scale. The issue is not the existence of these tools, but how we use them.

The challenge, then, is to be intentional. To remember that communication is not measured by frequency, but by depth. To pause before responding, to listen without distraction, and to engage with others not just as profiles or usernames, but as complex human beings. It may mean choosing a phone call over a text, a face-to-face conversation over a comment thread or even embracing moments of disconnection to strengthen real-world relationships.

If you've made it this far reading, you may be convinced that technology is a great tool yet has lapsed our lives of connection. This is the beauty of Farm Bureau and organizations that can bring us together and help us connect. Let's not lose that beautiful landscape of connection with each other. Let's make it to events, reach out to each other, be willing to hold social gatherings. Let's also pick up the phone, call someone to just check in. Talk to the person at a meeting who you may never have talked to before. They may need that quick conversation to feel they matter.

In closing, I offer a reward to the first person who calls me!

What can you do this month?

#FarmNeighborsCare



District 4 News

Promotion and Engagement Update



Brenda Dowiasch

District 4 Promotion and Engagement Committee Representative

I have had the honor of representing District 4 on the Promotion and Engagement Committee. I will be completing my second term and final year in 2026, for a total of six years. Little did I know what a life-changing experience this would be for me when I applied for this position to serve.

As the Promotion and Engagement Committee, we work hard at establishing programs and organizing events to attend throughout the year. It is our goal to reach out to people through advocacy by being the trusted source of information when it comes to connecting consumers to farmers and food. Our Farm Bureau members use the resources gained to network with others and learn how to use practical tools to engage with consumers. One of the programs that we are working with this year is Ask A Farmer. I'm looking forward to using this program at a couple of events this year. The goal is to set up at a public event, like a dairy breakfast, to engage with consumers about agriculture.

A couple of weeks ago during a training, I was asked what the most significant personal or professional reward that I have gained during my leadership role. It was easy to answer this question without much hesitation, that it was the friendships. Farm Bureau has given me the opportunity to meet like-minded people from across the state. Many of these people and connections are very special to me. Some of my Farm Bureau friends have become more like family.

I would encourage you to think about serving on the Promotion and Engagement Committee, representing District 4. Not only will you be able to be part of amazing programming, but you will also get the chance to meet some wonderful people. If you would like to know more about Promotion and Engagement Committee or events that we are involved with, please feel free to reach out to visit more with me.

I look forward to serving you for the remainder of my term and hope that 2026 will be the best year yet.



2026 Promotion and Engagment Committee Applications

WFBF is seeking applicants from **District 4** to serve on the state Promotion and Engagement Committee. Current voting members in the following counties are eligible to apply: District 4 – Buffalo, Eau Claire, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau. Appointed members will serve a three-year term and may serve a maximum of two full terms.

To be considered for appointment, interested members should complete the application form by June 1, 2026. The application is available online at bit.ly/PromotionEngagementApplication_2026

If there are questions about serving on the state P&E committee, please reach out to Joe Bragger, Jenn Rittenhouse or Brenda Dowiasch.



CULTIVATING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau 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.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

- **Nine appointments**
  - One individual from each of the nine districts
- **Three-year terms**
  - Maximum of two three-year terms.
- **Chair and Vice-Chair**
  - Elected for a one-year term
  - Chair serves on the WFBF Board of Directors

APPLICATION TIMELINE

- **April**
  - Application opens
- **June**
  - Application closes
- **July/August**
  - Board approval
  - Appointees notified
- **December**
  - Term and duties begin at WFBF Annual Meeting

TIME COMMITTMENT

- **October**
  - New Committee Orientation
- **December**
  - WFBF Annual Meeting
- **January**
  - Committee Meeting
- **February**
  - Cultivate & Connect
- **April**
  - Committee Meeting
- **September**
  - Committee Meeting

Interested in applying for the WFBF P&E Committee or learning more? Complete the Committee Interest Form at bit.ly/wifbcommitteeinterest.

Scan the QR code to learn more!

District 4 News

2026 Young Farmer and Agriculturist Committee Applications

WFBF is seeking a new WFBF Young Farmer and Agriculturist Committee representative in **District 4**. This appointee will serve for a term of three years and may serve for no more than one three-year term. The respective WFBF District Board Member will recommend an individual or couple (only one person has voting rights) to the WFBF Board for appointment to the WFBF YFA Committee.

To be considered for appointment, prospective YFA Committee members must complete the application form by June 1, 2026 and shall be no more than 36 years of age at the end of their term on the committee. Newly appointed WFBF YFA Committee members are required to attend orientation on October 9, 2026.

Please reach out to Joe Bragger, Jenn Rittenhouse or Heather Erdman if you have any questions.



WFBF YFA Committee Responsibilities & Expectations

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

- Nine appointments
  - One individual or couple from each of the nine districts
- Three-year terms
  - Chair and Chair-Elect are elected for a one-year term
- Age requirement
  - Members must not reach age 36 before the end of their term

APPLICATION TIMELINE

- April
  - Application opens
- June
  - Application closes
- July/August
  - Board approval
  - Appointees notified
- December
  - Term and duties begin at YFA Conference

TIME COMMITTMENT

- October
  - New Committee Orientation
- December
  - YFA Conference
- January
  - Committee Meeting
- March/April
  - Committee Meeting
- June
  - Committee Meeting

Interested in applying for the WFBF YFA Committee or learning more? Complete the Committee Interest Form at bit.ly/wifbcommitteeinterest.

Scan the QR code to learn more!

District 4 Contacts

Joe Bragger, District 4 Director
715-530-0466 | jhbragger@gmail.com
Elected: 12/1/2010 – current term until 12/2026 (may seek re-election)

James Herricks, WFBF Dairy Committee
608-386-8936
First appointed: 12/16/2023 – eligible until 12/2027

Drew Ellis, WFBF Dairy Committee
608-863-1829 | ellisdr@yahoo.com
First appointed: 12/16/2023 – eligible until 12/2027

January Schaffner, WFBF Policy Development Committee
608-863-1528 | jan@schaffnertaxsolutions.com
First appointed: 12/16/2023 – term concludes 12/2026

Derek Trescher, WFBF Volunteers for Agriculture Committee
608-487-4269 | dtrescher@hotmail.com
First appointed: 12/16/2025 – eligible until 12/2029

Steve Boe, WFBF Volunteers for Agriculture Committee
608-896-1072 | steve.r.boe@gmail.com
First appointed: 12/16/2025 – eligible until 12/2029

Brenda Dowiasch, WFBF Promotion and Engagement Committee
715-579-7007 | brendadowiasch@hotmail.com
First appointed: 12/1/2020 – term concludes 12/2026

Heather Erdman, WFBF Young Farmer and Agriculturist Committee
715-577-5366 | hleigherdman@yahoo.com
First appointed: 12/1/2023 – term concludes 12/2026

Allison Doenier, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation Board of Trustees
715-530-3120 | allisonbragger@gmail.com
First appointed: 12/1/2024 – current term until 12/2027 (eligible for reappointment)

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.

District 4 News

Leadership Institute



Collin Weltzien

Leadership Institute Graduate

Participating in the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation's Leadership Institute has been a truly rewarding experience, and our recent capstone trip to Washington, D.C. was the perfect way to conclude the program.

Traveling to our nation's capital alongside fellow participants and Farm Bureau leaders gave us the opportunity to see firsthand how policies are shaped and how important it is for farmers to have a seat at the table. During our visit, we met with members of Wisconsin's congressional delegation to discuss key issues impacting agriculture, including trade, immigration reform, year-round E-15 and the farm bill.

Hearing directly from leaders at the American Farm Bureau, the United States Department of Agriculture and the European Union embassy helped me better understand the broader picture of agriculture beyond Wisconsin.

One of the highlights of the trip was the opportunity to attend a meeting at the White House office building, where we received updates from officials with the Environmental Protection Agency, National Security Council and Domestic Policy Council. Experiences like this reinforced how important it is for farmers to share their stories.

Beyond the meetings, we also had the chance to explore our nation's history by visiting places like the U.S. Capitol, Mount Vernon and the national monuments. These moments allowed us to reflect on the role agriculture has played and continues to play in our country.

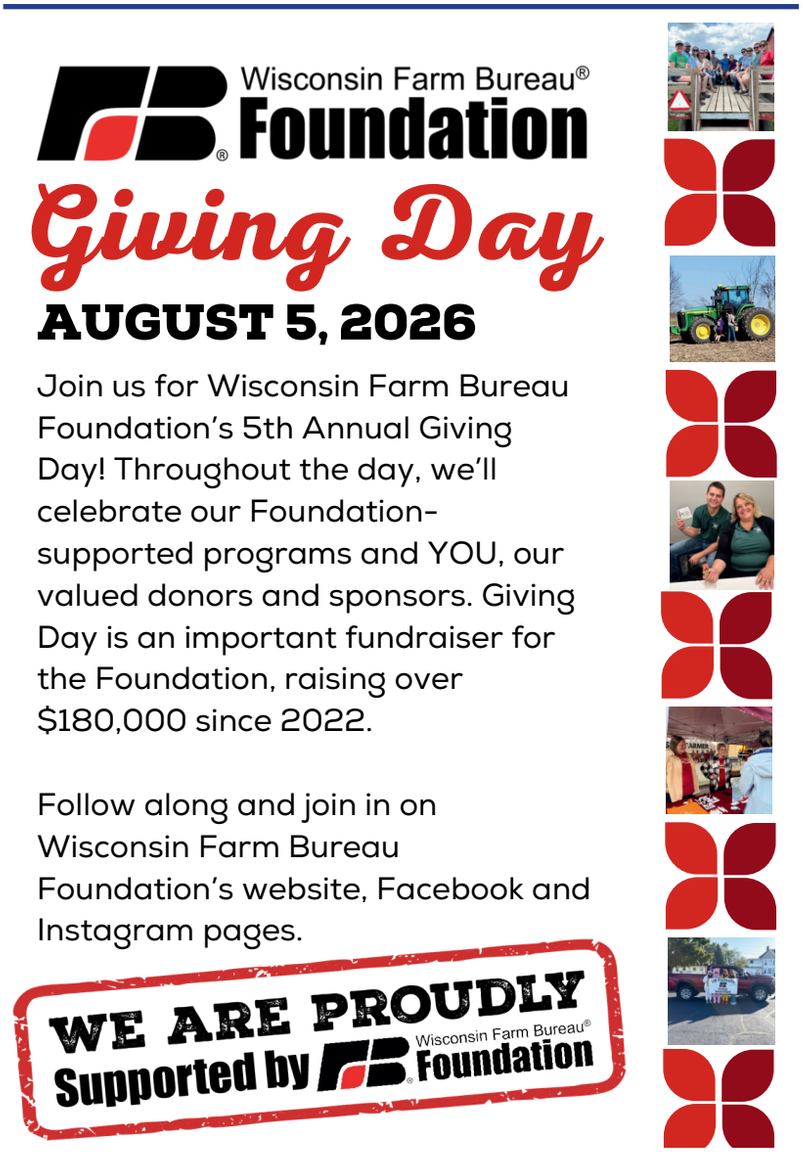
Completing the Leadership Institute has strengthened our confidence as leaders and advocates for agriculture.

We are grateful for the opportunity to be part of this program and to represent Buffalo County Farm Bureau. The relationships built and lessons learned will stay with us as we continue to be involved in Farm Bureau and support Wisconsin agriculture.

If you or someone you know is interested in an experience like this, applications for the 2027 Leadership Institute are now open and can be found at wfbf.com under programs. We highly recommend!







District 4 News

Farm Bureau's New Value Statement is Your Answer to 'Why Join?'



Sarah Hetke
Sauk County Farm Bureau Member

"Why should I join Farm Bureau?"

Have you ever received that question? It usually leaves me wondering, "Where do I even begin?" There's something for everyone, but what I find value in may not be the same as my neighbor.

I had the opportunity to serve on Wisconsin Farm Bureau's strategic planning task force. Alongside fellow members from across the state, representing a wide range of commodities, farm sizes and experiences, we spent many hours talking about where Farm Bureau has been, where it needs to go and how the organization can best serve members now and into the future. Outside of developing the current strategic plan, we were asked to develop a membership value statement.

At its core, the value statement answers a simple but important question: "Why should I join Farm Bureau?" With more than 53,000 members across the state, it is difficult to define membership value in a sentence or two. We wanted language that reflects the full breadth of what this organization delivers for Wisconsin agriculture yet knew we needed to keep it concise.

After several hours of conversation, we landed on, "A unified voice for agriculture shaping policy, developing members and engaging consumers."

"A unified voice for agriculture," resonated deeply with our task force. Agriculture in Wisconsin is incredibly diverse, yet we are strongest when we come together to advocate for policies that allow farms, agribusinesses and rural communities to thrive. Farm Bureau provides the structure, relationships and credibility needed to ensure farmers' voices are heard at every level of government.

Personal and professional development is another important aspect of Farm Bureau membership. Countless members have found value from participating in programs like the Leadership Institute, Campaign School and the WisGO Team to name a few. I have met members of all ages who have developed lifelong friendships from participating in the Leadership Institute, Young Farmers and Agriculturist Committee and so much more.

Farm Bureau value doesn't stop within the agriculture community. Equally important is our role in engaging consumers. As agriculture evolves, the gap between farmers and the public continues to grow. Farm Bureau helps bridge that gap through outreach, education and storytelling that builds trust and understanding. That work is essential, not only for the future of our farms, but for the future of food itself.

What I appreciate most about this value statement is how, after many rounds of brainstorming, we were able to concisely package major areas that show value to a diverse membership. It is not focused on one type of farm or one segment of agriculture. It reflects the diversity of Wisconsin Farm Bureau members and the wide range of services and support the organization provides every day.

Now, the value statement belongs to all of us. It is more than words on paper. We can use it to explain why we are members, to invite others to join and to remind ourselves of the collective impact we have when we work together. I encourage you to reference it often as you attend community events where you connect with potential new members. It is a tool that our taskforce hopes you find easy to use when recruiting new members and answering the question, "Why should I join Farm Bureau?"



District 4 IGNITE Conference Focuses on Engagement and Action

Farm Bureau members gathered in Eau Claire for an evening IGNITE conference centered on sharing ideas, building connections and strengthening member engagement. From the start, participants connected over conversation and gained insight into leadership opportunities and the role of Farm Bureau committees.

The evening quickly became interactive as members identified what energizes their counties and what may be contributing to burnout. Through small group discussions and idea-sharing, participants collaborated on solutions and explored simple ways to improve events and engagement.

As ideas developed, members focused on turning inspiration into action by identifying event concepts, addressing common challenges and creating realistic plans that fit their counties' capacity. A key takeaway throughout the evening was that meaningful engagement doesn't require large events, but rather consistent, intentional efforts.

"I really enjoyed learning about membership retention strategies and ways to make members feel valued, including how to better engage current members, attract new members and create an inviting environment for everyone," said Eau Claire County member Heather Erdman.

The conference concluded with members identifying next steps they can take back to their counties, leaving with fresh ideas, stronger connections and renewed energy to engage their members.



Eau Claire Farm Bureau member Heidi Strey presents her group's brainstorming ideas.

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


Randy and Kerry 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!

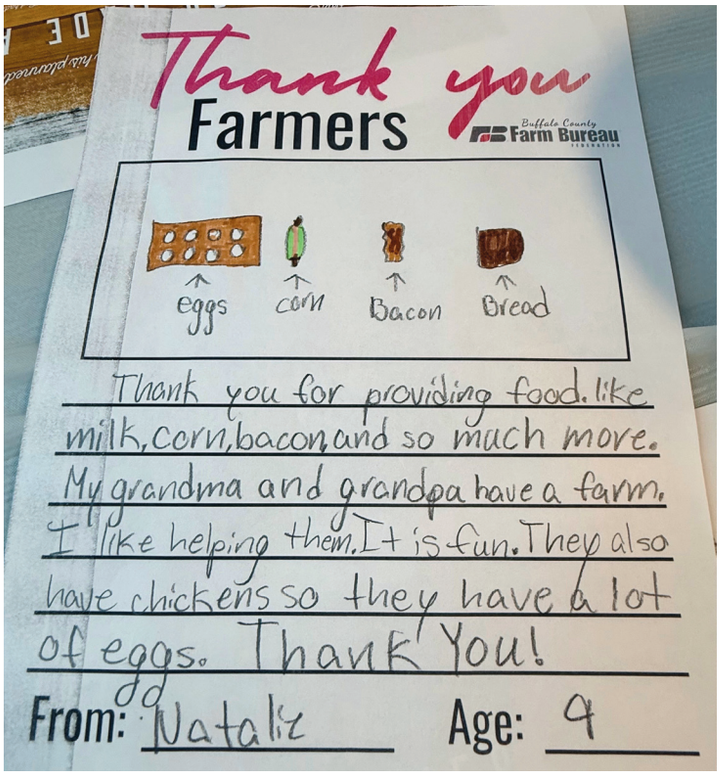
If you haven't explored Agri Plan yet, now is the time to start planning—so you're ready to take advantage of the savings when tax time rolls around.

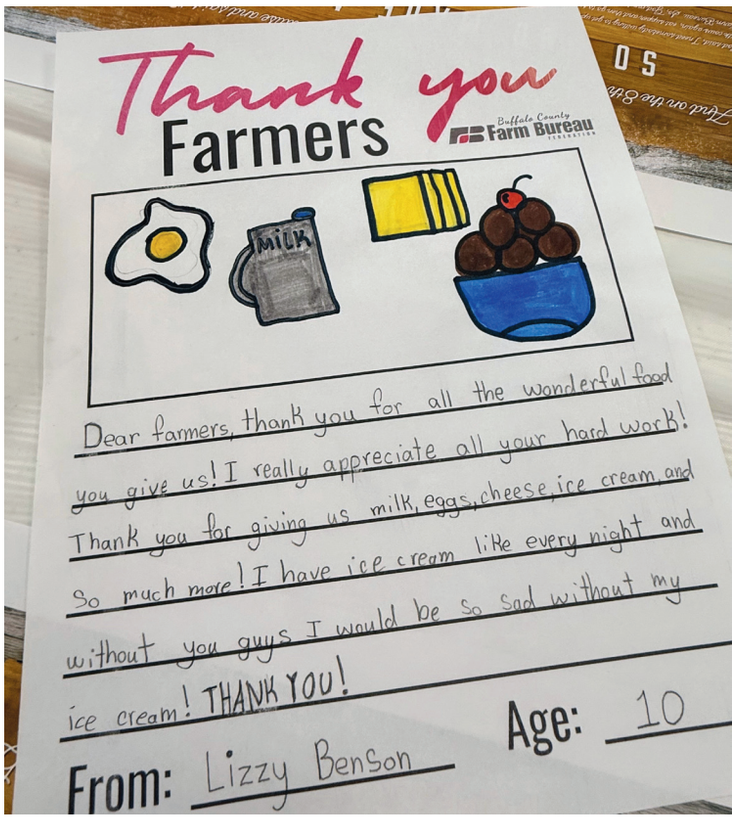
AgriPlan®

Farm Neighbors Care

Buffalo County Farm Bureau along with the Alma and Cochrane-Fountain City FFA chapters hosted an evening to thank farmers for their hard work. The event called "Farmer Salute" featured a complimentary dinner and a program with speakers including author Andy Caygeon and comedian John Deboar. Local elementary students also wrote thank-you letters for the farmers that were displayed on the tables for farmers to read. An enjoyable evening to come together during FFA week and honor farmers!













Buffalo County

wfbf.com/about/counties/buffalo
BuffaloCountyFarmBureau

Young Farmers and Agriculturists Tour AGCO

Collin Weltzien
Buffalo County Farm Bureau YFA Chair

Buffalo County YFA recently hosted a trip in partnership with the Alma FFA to tour the AGCO Assembly plant in Jackson, Minnesota, a facility known for producing some of the most advanced equipment in modern agriculture. The plant is home to the assembly lines for Fendt tractors as well as Rogator and Terragator applicators, giving our group a firsthand look at the precision and innovation behind these globally recognized machines.



Members of the Buffalo County Farm Bureau and the Alma FFA Chapter.

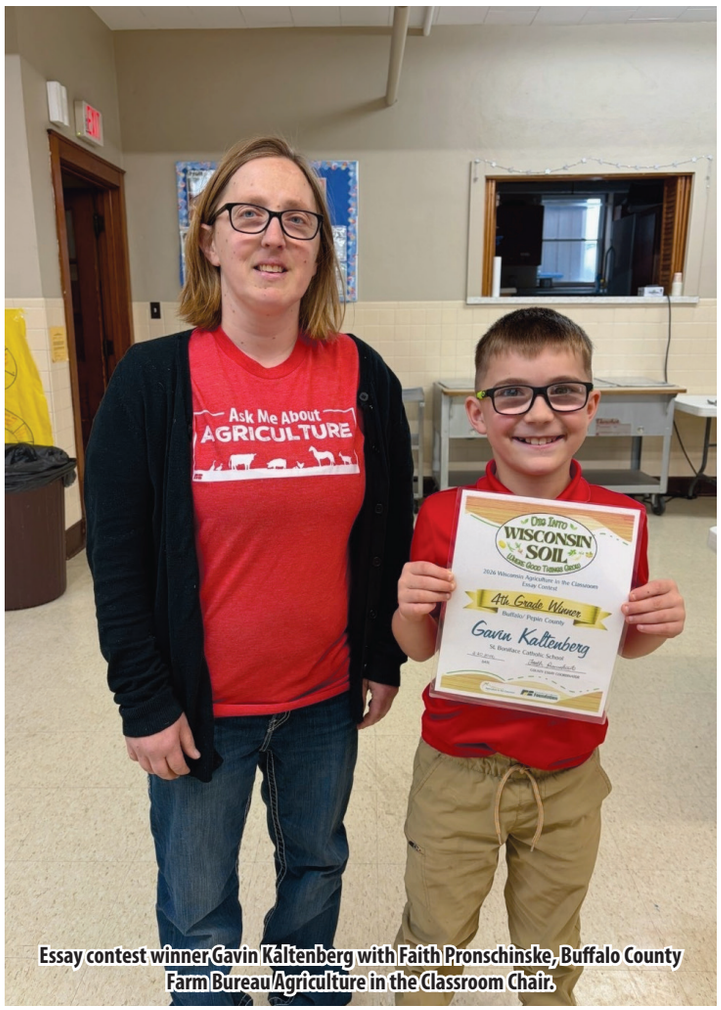
Throughout the tour, we were able to observe each stage of the manufacturing process, all the way from part fabrication and component assembly to final quality checks. AGCO's commitment to engineering excellence was evident at every turn, and our group gained a deeper appreciation for the technology and craftsmanship that go into building equipment farmers rely on every day.

A special highlight was the "Ride and Drive" portion of the day, where we had the unique opportunity to drive the tractors ourselves. This hands-on experience added an exciting and memorable dimension to the tour.

We also want to extend a big thank you to Lindstrom Equipment for helping put the tour together and for sponsoring our lunch.

Overall, the visit to Jackson was both educational and energizing for our group. We left with a renewed respect for the people and processes behind today's farm equipment and a stronger sense of connection to the broader agricultural community driving innovation forward.

Buffalo County Agriculture in the Classroom Essay Winner



Essay contest winner Gavin Kaltenberg with Faith Pronschinske, Buffalo County Farm Bureau Agriculture in the Classroom Chair.

Eau Claire County

wfbf.com/about/counties/eauclaire
EauClaireCountyFarmBureau

Eau Claire Farm Show



Heather Erdman, Steven Erdman and Brenda Dowiash attended the Eau Claire Farm Show and worked the Farm Bureau booth!



Katie Richartz, Steve Boe, Jenn Rittenhouse and Ashleigh Calaway also had a great time representing Wisconsin Farm Bureau at the Eau Claire Farm Show.

Jackson County

wfbf.com/about/counties/jackson
JacksonCountyFarmBureau

Jackson County Farm Bureau Youth Fair Project Grants

This year we are sponsoring ten $100 grants to youth to help improve their projects. Grant may be used to purchase feed, animals or equipment needed for the project.

The grant is open to any junior fair exhibitor that is enrolled in the following projects: dairy, swine, beef, goat, sheep, equine, poultry or other agricultural related project,

Scan the QR to get started!

Monroe County

wfbf.com/about/counties/monroe
MonroeCountyFarmBureau

Monroe County Agriculture in the Classroom Essay Winner



Lauren Haun was presented a certificate for winning first place in the essay contest by Dawn Powell.



Dawn Powell and Jenn Rittenhouse visited Lauren's school to congratulate her. Lauren celebrated with her entire class, who also submitted essays this year.

AB619: A Wisconsin Opportunity for Forestry, Agriculture and Energy

Dan Fremstad
Treampealeau County Farm Bureau Board and WFBF Policy Development Committee Member

In March 2026, Wisconsin took an important step forward with the passage of AB619, legislation supporting the development of a Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) plant in our state. I had the opportunity to testify on this bill on behalf of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau and Wisconsin's logging community, and I believe this effort represents a meaningful bridge between our natural resources and our economic future.

At its core, AB619 recognizes what many of us in agriculture and forestry have long understood: Wisconsin is uniquely positioned to be a leader in renewable, bio-based energy. Our forests and working lands are not just part of our heritage, they are part of the solution. This legislation helps unlock markets for low-value wood, forestry residuals and agricultural byproducts that too often go underutilized.

That opportunity is even more critical today. With the loss of several paper mills across Wisconsin in recent years, markets for pulpwood and other low-grade timber have significantly declined. For many loggers and landowners, those mills were the backbone of a reliable market. Without them, material that once had value is now harder to move, and in some cases, left in the woods. AB619 helps fill that gap by creating a new, dependable demand for these resources, restoring value to what would otherwise be wasted.

From a forestry perspective, this is a win for sustainable management. Creating consistent demand for residual materials strengthens forest health by encouraging active management, reducing waste and supporting responsible harvesting practices. For loggers and landowners, it provides another revenue stream in an industry that is often challenged by volatile markets.

From the agricultural side, the benefits are just as compelling. Farmers across Wisconsin are increasingly being asked to do more: produce food, protect the environment and now contribute to energy independence. SAF production offers a pathway to do all three. By integrating agricultural byproducts and supporting rural infrastructure, AB619 helps ensure that value-added opportunities remain rooted in our communities.

Equally important is the economic impact. A project like this brings investment, job creation, and long-term stability to rural Wisconsin. It strengthens the connection between industries that have always been interdependent—agriculture, forestry and manufacturing—and positions our state as a leader in the next generation of energy production.

This bill reflects strong collaboration among legislators, industry leaders and organizations like the Wisconsin Farm Bureau, all working toward a common goal: keeping Wisconsin's working lands productive and profitable for generations to come.

AB619 is more than just an energy bill. It is a statement about Wisconsin's future and the role our farmers, loggers and rural communities will play in shaping it.

Trempealeau County Agriculture in the Classroom Essay Winner



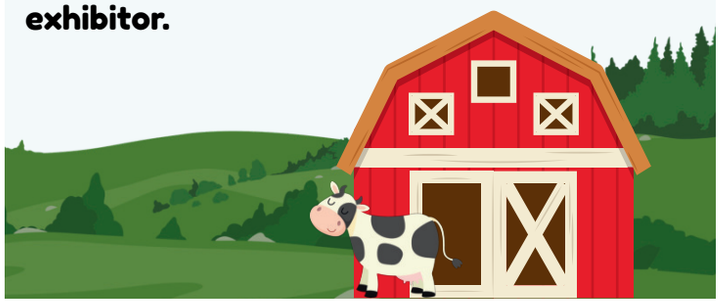
Brody Smith from Whitehall School was the 5th grade Agriculture in the Classroom essay winner for Trempealeau County.

Trempealeau County Farm Bureau Fair Exhibit Grant

This year we are sponsoring fifteen $100 grants to youth to help improve their projects. Grant may be used to purchase feed, animals, supplies or equipment needed for the project.

Scan the QR to get started!

The grant is open to any junior fair exhibitor.



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:

- Buffalo County
- Eau Claire County
- Jackson County
- Monroe County
- Trempealeau 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.



Rural Mutual Insurance Company

Home | Auto | Farm | Business | Life

RuralMutual.com