Kane County Farmer

KANE COUNTY FARM BUREAU®
Farm. Family. Food.™

Enhance the quality of life for member families;
Promote agriculture, farms & food; and,
Advocate good stewardship of our land and resources.

VOL. 81 NO. 3 MARCH 2016

Dine with Farm Bureau & your Legislator on March 11 or 14

Farm Bureau members invited to share lunch, experiences and FB policy with legislators

Now in its 14th year, Farm Bureau's "Lunches to Legislators" program gives farmer-members the opportunity to meet local State Representatives, Senators and Congressmen, along with their staff, in a simple, but effective program to remind them of the importance of the farm and food sector. Through Lunches to Legislators, local Farm Bureau members deliver boxed lunches to local legislative offices and have the opportunity to visit with elected officials and their staff.

Due to the popularity of this legislative program, visits will be made on two dates this year to give more volunteers a chance to participate. On Friday, March 11 and Monday, March 14, Farm Bureau members will take boxed lunches, Farm Bureau policy books and farm and food facts literature to legislators' district offices. Lunches are ordered prior to the visits and picked up by FB members at the Kane County Farm Bureau in St. Charles before everyone heads out for a day of getting to know local legislators, or renewing old relationships.

New faces are always welcome. Help represent KCFB and thousands of your fellow Farm Bureau members. A pre-program briefing will be held for members wishing to participate in the program on the evening of Thursday, March 10 where Farm Bureau legislative priorities and tips for meeting with local public officials will be shared over a light dinner.

To learn more or volunteer, contact Steve Arnold at the Kane County Farm Bureau at 630-584-8660.

L-R: KCFB Secretary-Treasurer Mike Kenyon of South Elgin, an unidentified legislative staffer, Senator Karen McConnaughay and KCFB President Joe White of Kaneville enjoy lunch and conversation as part of 2015's Lunches to Legislators.

DATES TO REMEMBER

March

March 1
Food for Thought Committee, 11:30, Brookfield Zoo
March 4
Teacher's Institute, Exciting Energy, KCFB, 7:30-4
March 1-6
Young Leader Ag Industry Tour, South Florida
March 6-12
Ag Safety Awareness Week
March 8
Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow, KCFB, 9:00 am
March 9
Women's Committee, 9:15 am
March 10
Legislative Briefing, 6 pm
Board of Directors, 7 pm
March 11
Lunches to LegislatorsYoung Farmers Euchre Tourney, 6:30 p.m.
March 14
Lunches to Legislators
Ag Days Set-up, Mooseheart
March 13-19
National Agriculture Week
March 15-16
Ag Days at Mooseheart
March 21
Foundation Board of Directors, 8:00 a.m.
March 21-23
IFB Leaders to Washington
March 22
Meet the Buyer, Northern Illinois Food Bank, 9 am

Attention Farmers! 'Meet the Buyers' on March 22

Illinois farmers are invited to attend the "Meet the Buyers" event on March 22, 2016. This one-day event will take place at the Northern Illinois Food Bank, 273 Dearborn Court, Geneva, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Doors open at 8:30 AM).

This event is an opportunity for farmers to meet with buyers one-on-one, and learn what it takes to do business with the grocery and foodservice industries. Buyers interested in sourcing local and regional food will be available to meet with fruit and vegetable farmers as well as farmers providing meats, cheese, dairy products, eggs, artisan products, value-added products, and more. Among the buyers scheduled to appear are Jewel-Osco, Fresh Thyme, Blue Goose Market, Goodness Greeness, Niemann Foods (County Market), Artisan Specialty Foods, Northern Illinois Food Bank, Testa Produce, Midwest Foods, Get Fresh, Farm Logix, WI Food Hub Co-op and others. The day will include group and one-on-one meetings with buyers, lunch, a produce box packing presentation and tour of Northern Illinois Food Bank's facility.

Event registration fee is $15 for Farm Bureau members ($20 for non-members) and includes all event materials and lunch. Due to limited seating, registration must be completed by March 18, 2016. On-site registration, if seating is available, will be $35.00 per person. On-site registration is first come, first served, and as space allows. Lunch is NOT guaranteed with on-site registration. This is a popular event and space fills up quickly – online registrations are encouraged.

For more information and registration, visit http://www.ilfb.org/ifb-news-and-events/conferences-events/march-22,-2016-meet-the-buyer-event.aspx.

March Featured Product

Homemade Corned Beef Brisket

The special this month is a three-pound home brined corned beef brisket. Each brisket will come sealed with the seasoning and includes the cooking instructions for your St. Patrick's Day celebration. The Member price is $19.50, PLUS Members $17.50, and non-Members $22.50.

Overstock Sale!
While supplies last.

5 lb. Marinated Steakhouse Porkchops – $16
5 lb. Southwest Marinated Chicken Breast – $20
5 lb. Black & Blue Beef Burgers – $16
5 lb. Bratwurst – $20
5 lb. Mediterranean Burgers – $17.50
5 lb. Lemon Rosemary Pork Roast – $17.50

The Kane County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Committee and Kaneland FFA volunteered at the Northern Illinois Food Bank on January 28. The group repackaged 907 lbs. of corn flakes and 1940 lbs. of potatoes, providing 2,372 meals to be delivered through the Food Bank's 13 county service area which feeds 71,000 people weekly. Kane County's Young Farmers have led their membership group in Harvest for ALL contributions for 14 straight years. The annual tally includes dollars donated, pounds of food donated and volunteer hours served. KCFB thanks the Kaneland FFA Chapter for assistance in this most important work, feeding our hungry neighbors, something Kane County farmers are engaged in every day!

CONNECT WITH US

KCFB Board Meeting

February 4, 2016

The Board of Directors met on February 4 at 7:00pm. All Board members were in attendance and several guests including Charles Coffey, Batavia, who reported on the Illinois Department of Agriculture/Illinois Farm Bureau "Homegrown by Heroes" initiative to assist veterans in establishing farms and marketing farm products; Kenneth Shepro, candidate for Kane County Board Chairman; Mark VanKerkhoff, Director of the Kane County Development & Community Services Department, who reported on the upcoming Beekeeping Open House; and Susie Thompson, Illinois Association FFA Secretary, who provided a presentation to the Board on the recently concluded Illinois Leadership Seminar for State FFA Officers to South Africa.

Directors reported on several topics. Pitstick reported on a Young Farmers/FFA meeting held at the Northern Illinois Food Bank. Craig Bradley provided a recap on the January 11th celebration at Northern Illinois Food Bank of the 5 millionth serving of milk. KCFB was recognized for its support of the "Milk2MyPlate" program at the celebration. Bill Collins noted that a local group was seeking sponsorship and organizational help to conduct an Open Class or Jackpot Show at the Kane County Fair.

A written report was received from Natasha Lewis about the Illinois Specialty Crop, Agri-tourism & Organic Conference in Springfield. Manager Steve Arnold distributed a "Future of the Organization" interim report from the planning team. Committee Reports were then delivered including a report on and request for assistance at AgDays, to be held on March 15 and 16 at Mooseheart.

The Kane County Farm Bureau's upcoming programs and meetings were discussed including The Food for Thought Regional advertising committee meeting to be held on Tuesday March 1 at Brookfield Zoo; Illinois Farm Bureau's Leaders to Washington program on March 21-23 (Joe Engel will participate); and ALOT (Agriculture Leaders of Tomorrow) to be held at the Kane County Farm Bureau in both February and March. It was also brought to the Board's attention that the Kane County 4-H Foundation is seeking support for a 2016 Pork Chop Dinner Fundraiser. A motion was approved for the KCFB to be a Gold level sponsor of the fundraiser.

The Board recognized and shared their gratitude towards all contributions from this month's donors to Harvest For ALL: Paul (Griz) Stover, John Van Bogaert, William & Patricia Watson, Michael Kenyon, Wayne Schneider and Karl & Julie Kettelkamp, and the following who donated towards the Food>Forward for scholarship and ag literacy programs: Charles & Mary Heidgen, Dan & Anne Heinrich, Heinz Bros. Greenhouse/Jay Schrock (in memory of Joel Schrock), and William & Patricia Watson.

Thank you letters from a number of scholarship applicants, the Food for Greater Elgin food pantry for a Harvest for ALL donation, the KCFB Women's committee for the Christmas Party, and a note from Susie Thompson thanking the Farm Bureau for her ILSSO sponsorship, were distributed to the Board as well.

In New Business news, the Board approved acceptance of online electronic membership renewals and a link to complete the transactions to be placed on the Kane County Farm Bureau's website to allow members to renew their Farm Bureau's memberships online.

All consent agenda items were approved. The next scheduled Kane County Board meeting will be March 10 at 7:00 pm., preceded by dinner and a legislative briefing at 6:00 pm.

Illinois Association FFA State Secretary Susie Thompson of Maple Park attended the February 4 meeting of the KCFB Board to report on the IL Leadership Seminar for State Officers to South Africa.

Thompson thanks members of the KCFB Foundation for helping to "sponsor" her participation in the leadership development seminar. Pictured from left to right are Wayne Schneider, Mike Kenyon, Susie Thompson, Joe White, and Karl Kettelkamp.

Illinois FB celebrates 100th birthday

What would Illinois agriculture look like if Farm Bureau had never been founded? Illinois Farm Bureau President Richard Guebert Jr. shuddered to think about that fact during the 100-year birthday celebration on January 26.

"Who would advocate for farmers? What would the farm bill look like? What would members be without fire, auto and home protection, or the farm inputs provided by GROWMARK? Where would we be without the ice cream on the birthday cake? We're all better off because of Farm Bureau," Guebert told employees of IFB and affiliated companies COUNTRY Financial, GROWMARK Inc. and IAA Credit Union.

Guebert added that members make the organization strong and successful. He noted IFB's rich heritage rests on a foundation built on grassroots participation by all members. The organization was founded Jan. 26, 1916. A time capsule from the Illinois Farm Bureau's move from Chicago to Bloomington in 1961 will be opened as part of the IFB's Centennial Year celebration on July 26, 2016 in Bloomington.

Five past presidents of the Illinois Farm Bureau joined President Richard Guebert Jr. at the 100-year birthday celebration, including Kane County own John White Jr, of Elburn, (far left) Illinois Farm Bureau Vice-President 1973-83 and President 1983-93.

KANE COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD ATTENDANCE
OCTOBER 2015 THRU SEPTEMBER 2016

	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JLY	AUG.	SEP.
C. BRADLEY	X	X	X	X	X							
F. CARLSON	X	X	X		X							
B. COLLINS	X	X	X	X	X							
C. COLLINS		X	X	X	X							
J. ENGEL	X	X	X	X	X							
G. GAITSCH	X	X	X	X	X							
B. GEHRKE	X	X	X	X	X							
W. KECK	X	X	X	X	X							
M. KENYON	X	X	X	X	X							
K. KETTLEKAMP	X	X		X	X							
D. LEHRER	X		X	X	X							
N. LONG	X	X	X		X							
D. PITSTICK	X	X	X		X							
W. SCHNEIDER	X	X	X	X	X							
J. WHITE	X	X	X	X	X							

Farm & Food briefs

Kids, Learn How to be a Soil Scientist

From the Ground Up – The Science of Soil offers an online Family Farm for kids where they can choose an avatar and navigate the science of soil testing and proper fertilizer application in order to grow a prize winning crop on their virtual plot of land. Prizes are presented at the end to those who learn how to add their fertilizer correctly. Visit TheScienceofSoil.com, good luck, and enjoy Your Day with NPK.

Kane County is having a C.O.W. about farmland

The Kane County Development and Community Services Department presented a Farmland Protection Virtual Tour at the County Board Committee of the Whole (C.O.W.) last month. Those that were unable to attend the meeting and who are interested in what Kane County is doing to protect valuable farmland , encourage the growth of agriculture and local foods and preserve open space in Kane can visit the online meeting portal at www.countyofkane.org

AFBF Approves Strategic Action Plan

The American Farm Bureau Federation has released highlights of its 2016 strategic action plan, which addresses public policy issues in the coming year. The plan is a result of deliberations of delegates to the AFBF's 97th Annual Convention in Orlando.

The board-approved plan focuses the organization's attention on a number of key issues including:

• Creating a more-positive dialogue with consumers about modern agricultural practices;

• Protecting farmers' ability to use biotech plant varieties and other innovative technologies;

• Opposing unlawful expansion of federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act; and

• Moving forward with congressional approval of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement.

Welcome new members

You receive the *Kane County Farmer* because you are a Farm Bureau member. If you are a farm operator or owner, you benefit from a local, state and national organization committed to agriculture and your way of life.

If you do not have direct ties to farming, your membership helps promote local farms and farming, encourages wise use of our limited natural resources and preserves farmland and our agricultural heritage while allowing you to enjoy COUNTRY insurance and the many other benefits of one of Illinois' premier membership organizations.

We appreciate your membership and continued support and we welcome your comments on the content of the *Farmer*. We encourage you to make recommendations about farm, home, food, natural resource, renewable energy or agricultural heritage and history related topics for inclusion in future issues of the *Farmer*.

Kane County Farmer
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The buzz on beekeeping in Kane Co.

Kane County officials recognize the importance of a healthy and robust honey bee population. In response to this interest, the Kane County Planning Cooperative hosted a town hall meeting on Thursday, Feb. 11, to discuss the popularity of beekeeping in residential and urban settings and to look at possible adoption of local ordinances regarding beekeeping.

Photo courtesy of Heritage Prairie Market

Over 50 local beekeepers and local government officials attended the meeting, including five County Board members and representatives of three local beekeeping associations, Northern Illinois, Fox Valley and Cook-DuPage, to discuss-can working together to develop and sustain the bee population.

Local officials and planners expressed interest in reasonable beekeeping regulations that support the bee population while protecting residential neighborhoods. The meeting helped county officials to gather input from individuals experienced in beekeeping, allowed the participants to discuss the need for more public information about the benefits of bees and began examination of a possible clearinghouse for matching beekeepers with landowners, public and private.

Kane County Farm Bureau will monitor the possible development of a model ordinance for municipalities if or when it works its way through the County Board committee system, beginning with the Agriculture Committee. Members who have comments on the beekeeping and ordinances are encouraged to contact the Farm Bureau or the Kane County Development and Community Services Department.

Beekeeping Education

Want to learn more about bees and beekeeping?

Beekeeping for the Backyard Gardener is available on YouTube as part of the University of Illinois Extension's Four Seasons Gardening series. Jennifer Fishburn, Horticulture Educator, discusses the basics of starting a backyard colony, understanding honeybees and hive management. The program is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgCbulPr7oA

Backyard Beekeeping is a new class at Heritage Prairie Farm west of Geneva. Heritage Prairie Farm has been harvesting honey for local bee enthusiasts since 2006. Starting this March, they will be offering an interactive two part class. It will take place on Saturday, March 12th and Saturday, March 19th, from noon-4pm. Participants will also be able to purchase a basic start-up eight frame hive at a discount, order 3lb packages of bees delivered to Heritage Prairie Farm for an extra charge, and sign up for a later package installation demonstration in April.

Classes are limited to 20 attendants, To reserve your spot, contact Heritage Prairie Farm at (630) 443-5989.

National Ag Day contest

National Agriculture Day, which recognizes and celebrates the abundance provided by American agriculture, is March 15th this year. There are over seven billion people in the world today – that's over seven billion mouths to feed every day. Show your appreciation on Ag Day for the individuals that make this feat possible!

Every day during Ag Appreciation Week, March 13-19, we will be posting something on our Facebook to share our appreciation for those who serve in agriculture. Join us by liking our Facebook page and sharing any or all of our posts containing the #agday2016 hashtag. If you both like our page and share a post, you will be entered to win a prize.

Defensive Driving Class

The Kane County Farm Bureau Women's Committee has scheduled a 55 Alive Mature Driving Program for Tuesday and Wednesday, April 26 and 27. The class runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day at Kane County Farm Bureau, 2N710 Randall Road, St. Charles. You must attend both sessions to complete the course.

The eight hour course covers driving in various road and weather conditions, passing techniques, the effects of alcohol and drugs on driving and other defensive driving methods. Many insurance companies may offer a discount on auto insurance to those age 55 and older who qualify and attend all eight hours of the course. Contact your insurance agent for more details.

Attendees must be licensed drivers. Pre-registration is required. Cost is $15 per person for AARP members and $20 for non-members (payable the first day) to cover the cost of materials. For more information or to register, contact Kane County Farm Bureau at 630-584-8660.

Touch-A-Tractor means family fun, April 8-10

Join your neighbors for a weekend full of farming fun, April 8-10 at Kane County Farm Bureau's annual salute to spring. Touch-A-Tractor, our free community service open house has lots of antique tractors and modern farm equipment, plus activities for kids. Have lunch and visit with local farmers on hand to answer questions. All concession proceeds benefit KCFB Foundation Scholarships.

Kids can hold a baby chick, ride pedal tractors, shell corn, visit the farm zoo, and sit in the seat of tractors and other farm equipment. There'll be continuous showings of farm-themed movies and song parodies. Parents and grandparents can shop for farm-themed toys and t-shirts and ask local farmers questions about how your food is grown.

Children up to 8 years old can show us their colorful side in our new farm-themed coloring contest and, of course, get registered for our annual FREE Pedal Tractor Drawing to give them a chance to take home a shiny new pedal tractor of their own (one entry per child). Bring non-perishable food items for local food pantries to receive an additional entry.

Tickets will be available for the Kane County Farm Bureau Foundation's Winner's Choice Tractor Raffle. The grand prize can choose one of two IH antique tractors, a 1953 Farmall Super C, or 1947 Farmall Super A. Both will be on display at the event. See a full list of prizes below along with a ticket order form. Purchase tickets with VISA or MasterCard at 630-584-8660.

KCFB Foundation college scholarship recipients for the 2014-2015 school year will be announced at 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 10. Hours are Noon to 4pm on Friday, and 10am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday. There is no cost for admission.

Every member of the family can enjoy Touch-A-Tractor – a FREE community service event at the Kane County Farm Bureau. The fun lasts all weekend long with children's activities, food, farm equipment, farm animals and more!

Help raise scholarship funds with Tractor Raffle

Buy your chance to win one of six great prizes in Kane County Farm Bureau Foundation's Winner's Choice Tractor Raffle. All proceeds from the annual raffle benefit Foundation College Scholarships and Farm Bureau Agricultural Literacy programs.

Tickets are $10 each or 3 for $25 and are available at Kane County Farm Bureau (2N710 Randall Road, St. Charles), from the Farm Bureau directors listed on page 2, with VISA or MasterCard at 630-584-8660, or by sending payment with the ticket request form below.

In 2015, the Foundation awarded over $30,000 in scholarships & internships. Your contributions to the Foundation, through the annual raffle and other events throughout the year, help students attain their degrees, reach their goals, and help secure a bright future for the Ag industry.

The grand prize winner in the annual raffle to be drawn at our Touch-A-Tractor event on Sunday, April 10, 2016 can choose one of three nicely restored antique tractors: a 1953 Farmall Super C or a 1947 Farmall Super A (with belly mower). They'll also have the option of a machine that's a little easier to fit in the garage, a John Deere riding lawn mower, or they can take $2,500 cash.

There's a great lineup of food, fuel and Farm Bureau prizes that include a second prize of $500 in groceries, third prize $500 in fuel, and fourth prize of $250 in Kane County Farm Bureau Bucks.

For more information and rules on this year's raffle, scholarship programs or other KCFB Foundation programs and services, visit www.kanecfb.com or contact Steve Arnold at 630-584-8660.

WINNER'S CHOICE RAFFLE
Kane County Farm Bureau FOUNDATION

KCFB Foundation Winner's Choice Tractor Raffle

Please send me _____ tickets ($10 each or 3 for $25)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____

Phone (_____) _____

Return with check made payable to Kane County Farm Bureau Foundation, 2N710 Randall Rd., St. Charles, IL 60174 ***or*** *charge my:*

☐ Visa ☐ MC #_____ _____ _____ _____ Exp ___ / ___

Signature _____Date ___ / ___ / ___

Ag Literacy Corner

By Suzi Myers

Spring, Oh SO Close

By Willow Lawrence

Sunny today
but Oh what a chill
The wind inhales and exhales
the trees bend on the hill
Winnie the Pooh's Blustery Day
just cannot compete
In like a lion and
out like a lamb
I am so tired of paying for heat
I long for crocuses,
tulips and green
it seems like ages since they
have been seen

Yes, I agree with you, Willow Lawrence. The four seasons we experience in Illinois are beautiful, each in their own right, but somehow winter seems to drag on and on. This year has been such a strange winter, with more rains than snow ... foggy, rainy, dreary and cold. Hasn't been one of my favorite winters, as I actually enjoy shoveling snow in my Polar Bear hat, but this year the hat just hangs there and I get out my umbrella. Somehow that rain just doesn't equate to the beauty of snow for me. So let spring begin.

With spring hopefully just around the corner, it is that busy time of the year again, beginning with our Ag Days, March 15 and 16th and finishing with college credit classes for teachers in June. Many of my programs are only possible through the help of many wonderful volunteers.

SPROUTS, Spring Program of Reading Outreach to Urban Teachers and Students, is one of the programs that is highly dependent upon volunteers. The volunteer goes into a 3rd grade classroom, reads the *Heartland* book to the students and explains the year in farming, using toy farm machines, examples of crops and other visuals. We try to place the volunteer in a nearby school and times are worked out between the volunteer and teacher's schedules. Each classroom has a 30 minute presentation. Training for the program is given to new volunteers. Please feel free to call me at 630-584-8660 if you are interested in volunteering for the SPROUTS program ... you are needed.

Touch-A-Tractor is one of the spring favorites. We have new farm machinery, antique tractors, animals and fun for all. Volunteers are always needed to help out during this weekend program, April 8-10th. We need help setting up on Friday as well as during the program on Saturday and Sunday. Watching the smiling children and parents is a wonderful way to spend a weekend. Call the office if you can help out in any way.

March is here and the groundhog didn't see his shadow, so here's to the promise of rebirth that spring brings ... may it come soon.

Maple syrup days are among the first signs of spring

The trees know spring is coming. The sap is churning underground and ready to make its way up through the maple trees, bringing with it that sweet, sweet flavor that can be magically (through a lengthy process) turned into maple syrup.

Maple syrup can only be produced in certain parts of the U.S. and Canada and only at a certain time of the year, and now is that time.

Although the ground is still snow-covered and the air still frigid, something's happening in the trees.

"In the fall, when the leaves fall off, the tree basically shuts down," said Katie Zaban, manager of Pilcher Park Nature Center in Joliet.

"The sap is stored in the roots during the late fall and the cold winter time. When it's late winter, early spring and we have this temperature change where it's approximately 20 degrees at night and it warms up to approximately 40 degrees during the day, it's almost like a pump where when the sun hits the tree, it's making the sap rise up. When it gets cold at night, the sap runs back down to the roots. We tap into the xylem and the phloem layer ... underneath the bark, and that's basically the tube that lets the sap run up and down the tree. When we drill the hole into the tree with the spile, which is like a fancy spout, we are pushing that spile right into the xylem and phloem layer. When the sap runs, it goes right down into the spile and into the bucket we have hanging off of it."

Once they get enough sap – and it takes 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup (sap has one to two percent sugar and the rest is water) – it's off to the evaporator.

Here are some area events where you can see the process of how sap becomes maple syrup:

MapleFest

Learn how even animals through the ages have used maple trees for sap at the Fox Valley Park District's annual free MapleFest. Maple-themed snacks and hot beverages will be available for purchase. 9 a.m.-1 p.m., March 21, Red Oak Nature Center, 2343 S. River St., Batavia, 630-897-1808; Foxvalleyparkdistrict.org

Maple Sugaring Days

Forest Preserve District of Kane County naturalists will show how to tap a maple tree, and you'll have the opportunity to try your hand at drilling and setting your own tap. March 14-15, 2015 – 1-4 pm, LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve, 37W700 Dean St., St. Charles, 630-444-3190; www.kaneforest.com.

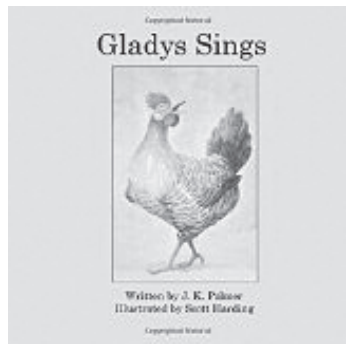
Book of the month

Who ever heard of a hen that could sing opera? Well, Gladys, Farmer Gobel's hen could. She was so talented that Mrs. Gobel sent her off to New York City's famous Carnegie Hall. What happened to Gladys in New York, was a dream come true.

Scott Harding's illustrations compliment this fun book with the underlying lesson that being different is okay and can be celebrated.

J.K. Palmer is a local author who we will be spotlighting at Touch-A-Tractor. Come out to meet her and listen to her story telling on Saturday, April 9th.

Gladys Sings is also available through our Kane County Farm Bureau Library. Thanks to a request years ago by Bob Konen and Dean Dunn that Kane County Farm Bureau start a library of agriculturally themed books for public use, we have an ever growing selection of titles. Feel free to come in to browse in our library and to check out books of interest.



Gladys Sings by J. K Palmer

Marshall to attend Ag Industry tour

Kane County Young Farmer David Marshall of Sugar Grove will be part of a group of 30 Illinois Farm Bureau Young Leaders to tour agriculture operations in South Florida as part of the IFB Young Leaders annual Ag Tour. Marshall is looking forward to the tour which will include farms that specialize in tropical fruit and ornamentals, sugar cane, livestock, aquaculture, blueberries & peaches.

Dates for the tour are March 1-6, and Marshall plans to share his experiences with other members of the Young Farmers Committee and the Board of Directors.

The Young Leader Ag Tour is one of many activities coordinated by the IFB State Young Leaders Committee. Other activities include annual awards and recognition programs, conferences, a discussion meet, quiz bowl, hunger relief activities, and Collegiate Farm Bureau events all designed to promote education, build skills, and develop future leaders for the county and state associations. To learn more about Young Farmer events, contact the Kane County Farm Bureau at info@kanecfb.com.

Farm Facts & Fun

Compiled by Suzi Myers

Nutrition

How to read the nutrition label on food

1 Start with the serving information at the top of the label. This will tell you the size of a single serving and the total number of servings per container (package).

2 Next, check total calories per serving. Pay attention to the calories per serving and how many servings you're really consuming if you eat the whole package. If you double the servings you eat, you double the calories and nutrients.

3 Limit these nutrients. AHA recommends limiting these nutrients: Based on a 2,000 calorie diet, no more than 11-13 grams of saturated fat, as little trans fat as possible, and no more than 1,500 mg of sodium.

4 Get enough of these nutrients. Make sure you get enough of beneficial nutrients such as: dietary fiber, protein, calcium, iron, vitamins and other nutrients you need every day.

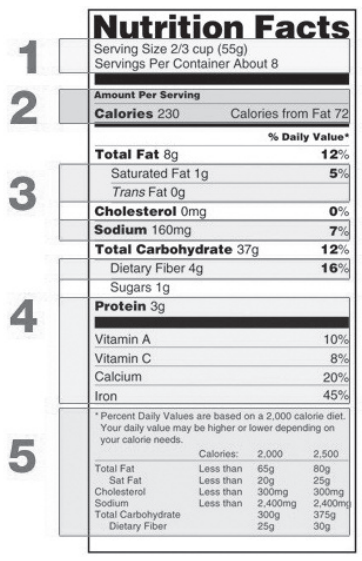
5 Quick guide to % Daily Value. The % Daily Value (DV) tells you the percentage of each nutrient in a single serving, in terms of the daily recommended amount, based on a 2000 calorie per day intake.

• • • • •

NOTE: Foods with more than one ingredient must have an ingredient list on the label. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. Those in the largest amounts are listed first. This information is particularly helpful to individuals with food sensitivities, those who wish to avoid pork or shellfish, limit added sugars or people who prefer vegetarian eating.

• • • • •

If you are looking to find out nutrient value of fresh fruits and vegetables, there is a chart listing all pertinent information at: http://www.fda.gov/food/ingredientspackaginglabeling/labelingnutrition/ucm063367.htm



Really, that's all for a serving? game Let your child go with you to grocery store and purchase their favorite snack, or just get it from the pantry. Be sure it has a nutrition label on it. Let the child read the label to find out the serving size and how many servings in the container/package. Give the child some plastic snack bags and let them count out the pieces in a serving and put them into the bags. (If there are 6 pieces per serving of Tootsie Rolls, each bag would contain 6 Tootsie Rolls. A large bag of Midgees contains 9 servings, so your child would have 9 bags of 6 pieces of candy.) Let them eat one serving of the product and store the rest till later. This is a very concrete way to let children know what the serving size really means.

Nutrition

S	V	B	F	F	S	D	M	X	E	S	P	C	L	I	T	A	P	A	N
M	F	O	L	N	N	I	F	T	O	Y	A	S	E	I	R	O	L	A	C
A	O	C	A	R	N	A	A	D	W	R	H	Q	Z	J	L	S	L	X	M
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PROTEIN
SERVING
SNACKS
SODIUM
SUGAR
VEGETABLES
VITAMINS
WATER

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____ Age _____

Please complete and return to the Farm Bureau, 2N710 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60174 by March 15, 2016 for your chance to win a bag of goodies!

Did you know?

- The food you eat contains substances called nutrients that provide the energy (fuel) for your body to make new cells, heal, fight illness, grow, play and work.
- Here are the 6 kinds of nutrients that provide your body with what you need to think, play and work properly.
- Proteins are used by the body for growth, and to help build and repair cells. Proteins also help keep muscles, skin, hair, and nails healthy.
- Carbohydrates are the main source of energy for your body. Some carbs like sugar give you quick energy. Other carbs such as starches give longer lasting energy.
- Fats and Oils are used to help the body store vitamins and build tissue to protect important organs. Fats are also used by the body as a "backup" fuel system.
- Vitamins are needed to help the body use carbohydrates, fats and proteins and to help its systems function. Many kinds of vitamins are essential to your diet.
- Minerals are used by the body to build new cells and control important body processes.
- Water dissolves some vitamins and helps bring nutrients to the cells in your body. Water also helps you swallow and digest foods, and helps keep your body temperature normal.
- Water is the most necessary nutrient of them all. People can't survive for more than a few days without it. Your body is approximately 70% water.

'State Dinner' winner from IL

With nearly 1,000 entries submitted to this year's Healthy Lunchtime Challenge, the 55 winning recipes were selected based on their healthfulness, taste, originality, affordability, and following USDA's MyPlate recommendations. On July 10, these young chefs and a parent or guardian joined the First Lady for the Kids' "State Dinner," featuring a selection of the winning recipes, followed by a visit to the White House Kitchen Garden.

Garam Masala Quinoa Burger with Raita

Posted by Shreya Patel on July 7, 2015

"I have watched my mom and grandma make all sorts of delicious food in the kitchen with an Indian twist since I was born," says Shreya. "I have been helping them cook since I was three. I love to mix, measure, chop, and even clean up afterwards. My grandma and I came up with this recipe together because we both love sandwiches. We make this recipe often to take to school for lunch or even on picnics with friends."

– Shreya Patel, Age 9, Illinois

Makes 4 Servings

Ingredients:

1 cup cooked garbanzo beans
1/2cup cooked quinoa
1/4cup chopped kale
1/4cup peeled and chopped onion
1 small boiled potato
1/2 teaspoon garam masala
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon peeled and grated fresh ginger
1 garlic clove, peeled and minced
1/4 teaspoon grated serrano chile pepper
1/4 cup panko breadcrumbs
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 cup Greek yogurt
1/4 cup grated cucumber
4 whole-wheat buns
Sliced tomatoes
Baby spinach leaves

Preparation:

1. Coarsely chop the garbanzo beans in a food processor or by hand. In a large bowl, combine the chopped garbanzo beans with the quinoa, kale, onion, potato, garam masala, cumin, ginger, garlic, serrano chile pepper, and breadcrumbs. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Stir the mixture thoroughly and form into 4 round patties

2. In a large sauté pan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the patties and cook, flipping once, 5 minutes per side, or until brown and crispy.

3. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the yogurt and cucumber. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

4. To assemble the sandwiches, place the patties on the whole-wheat buns, and top with the raita, tomato, and spinach leaves.

379 calories; 11g fat; 58g carbohydrates; 15g protein

Shreya Patel

March is:

National

Women's History Month
Nutrition Month
American Red Cross Month
Fire Prevention Month
Music in Our Schools Month
Craft Month
Frozen Food Month

Read Across America Day (Dr. Seuss Birthday) March 2
Employee Appreciation Day March 4
Pi Day March 14
Incredible Kid Day March 15
Saint Patrick's Day March 17

Congratulations

Leah Miller! Leah's name was chosen from the entries received for correctly completing last month's "Leap Year" word search. February's prize is some Graham's Chocolates. Thank you for reading the *Kane County Farmer* and continue to watch each month for a chance to win a prize.

What's new in the COUNTRY agencies?

St. Charles Agency, Bob Effner, Agency Manager

EDWARD STUEHM has been named the Financial Representative of the Month for December 2015 in the St. Charles/Elgin Agency, as announced by Agency Manager, Robert J. Effner, Sr., CLF®, LUTCF. Ed has provided tangible plans for addressing the immediate and long term insurance and financial security needs of his clients through COUNTRY Financial's diverse products and services: Auto, Farm, Home, Life/Disability/Health/Annuities/Long Term Care, Retirement Planning, Business and Investments. Let Ed's expertise help you – contact him at his office, 425 Williamsburg Avenue, Geneva, or by phone/email/website: 630-845-8245, edward.stuehm@countryfinancial, countryfinancial.com/edward.stuehm. Congratulations, Ed!

Aurora Agency, Kevin Gomes, Agency Manager

Brian Guenther, Financial Representative with the Aurora Agency, is our Financial Representative of the Month for January 2016. Brian began his career with COUNTRY Financial in January of 2002 and services clients out of his office located at 1920 Wilson Street, Batavia, 60510, (630) 406-6017.

Brian's professionalism and vast knowledge of auto, home, life, commercial and financial products make him a great person to do business with. Congratulations, Brian!

Edward Stuehm

Brian Guenther

Practice farm safety

The Kane County Farm Bureau encourages all our farmer-members to make farm safety a top priority. Agricultural Safety Awareness Week is March 6-12, but farm safety should be a top priority year-round.

The theme Agricultural Safety Awareness Week is ***"Caution – Safety is No Accident"*** and highlights a different safety focus each day of the week.

- Monday – ATV Safety
- Tuesday – Youth Safety on the Farm
- Wednesday – Tractor Safety
- Thursday – Roadway Safety
- Friday – Grain Bin Safety

"We need to make safety a priority on our farms," said Peggy Romba, who heads up the safety program for Illinois Farm Bureau. "Agriculture is one of the most dangerous jobs in the nation. It's no surprise that almost every farmer personally knows of a family who has lost a loved one in a farm mishap, not to mention the injuries that cause loss of fingers, hands, arms and legs."

Romba reminds us that spring planting will soon be underway. "That means tractors will be started, plows attached, and long days of hard work are ahead." The Farm Bureau affiliated RFD Radio Network will provide interviews on a variety of subjects with safety experts. A content list is available at RFD radio.com.

The Agricultural Safety Awareness Program is coordinated by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF). Farm Bureaus across Illinois take part in this special week by providing information about farm safety.

Fertilizer management high priority

An Illinois Corn Grower Association survey found interest among farmers in voluntary best management practices continues grow. The ICGA has conducted the annual policy survey for 15 years asking farmers what three issues should be among the organization's top priorities. Questions on best management practices have been included the past three years. River transportation, ethanol markets, exports and public education have been among the top priorities throughout the years of the survey, but best management practices is trending upward.

Bring antique tractors to Touch-A-Tractor, April 8-10

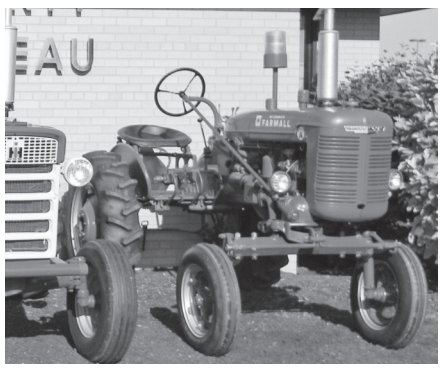
Special offer & dinner for participating tractor fans

Now's the time to think about knocking the dust off that antique tractor in the shed. If you only take that tractor one place this year – make it Touch-A-Tractor at the Kane County Farm Bureau!

Our 11th annual Touch-A-Tractor will be held Friday-Sunday, April 8-10, 2016. We're making preparations to bring some farm to the city for this ever-popular event that's fun for the whole family. If you have an antique tractor – whether you've spent hours restoring it or it's a still working tractor with lots of farming memories – please consider bringing it to the event.

There's nothing like the look on a child's face when they sit in the seat of a tractor they normally only see from the road or in a book. This year you'll get a special commemorative gift in appreciation for participating.

Due to space limitations and the size of modern farm machines, the Farm Bureau will again call on Sugar Grove area farmer Bruce Nagel, a long-time supporter of Touch-A-Tractor and Ag Days, to provide the necessary modern tractors, combine, tillage equipment, sprayer and planter to display for our urban and suburban neighbors. But antique tractors are needed – and the more the merrier!



We need YOUR antique tractor! Bring an antique tractor to Touch-A-Tractor, April 8-10 and receive a special commemorative gift, plus we'll have dinner on the grill for you on Thursday, April 7 to show our appreciation.

All tractor participants will also be treated to a free dinner at 5:30pm on Thursday, April 7 at Kane County Farm Bureau. Bring your tractor that night, or park it on the lawn anytime during the week leading up to the event.

Just clip and send in the form below or call 630-584-8660 to let us know the make and model of tractor you'll bring. We also need farmers, or retired farmers, to explain how the equipment works. So if you can be there any day of the event – please let us know!

Help make Touch-a-Tractor a success.

___ Contact me about volunteer opportunities (Saturday, April 9 or Sunday, April 10)

___ I will bring the following tractor or farm equipment to display.

Please provide a brief description of the equipment. For tractors, include year, make, and model.

_____

_____

Name _____

Address _____

City_____ St_____ Zip _____

Phone_____

Clip and return to Kane County Farm Bureau, 2N710 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60174 or call 630-584-8660 and ask for Carolyn or Val.

A Balanced Diet

By Val Johnson

Val Johnson was a participant in the 2013 Illinois Farm Families Field Mom Program. This is a portion of her blog about her experience after a touring Paul and Donna Jeschke's farm in Mazon, IL. Val now spends her time working for the Kane County Farm Bureau in continuation of her agriculture learning experience.

• • • • •

I wanted to learn more about agriculture. I thought that being a Field Mom could be a way to learn more about pesticides, crop nutrients, and organic foods. The month before my first farm tour I started researching, asking questions, and learning what I could, specifically about GMOs, pesticides, and organic foods. By the day the tour, I was mad at the way the U.S. farmers grew food, disturbed about the lack of GMO labeling on U.S. packaging, and confused about organic foods. I read so much about "dirty" foods in the last week I was hesitant to eat anything in my refrigerator! Then, the day of the tour came, and I wasn't quite sure what I was getting myself into, but I knew I would walk away with some sort of adventure and knowledge to share with my family and friends.

A discussion was led on the bus bound for Paul and Donna Jeschke's corn and soybean farm in Mazon. The farmers present were very knowledgeable and open to any question we fired at them. After what seemed like a fraction of the time, we arrived near the Jeschkes' farm. We passed by the type of barge that carried phosphate and potash mined in Florida, and then saw newly planted fields that were first showing their rows. After arriving at the Field Mom's corn and soybean acre, an expensive tractor and planter was explained. We took a short walk to the fields and learned from Dr. Brown, Agronomy Manager from GROWMARK, about the corn and bean plants, pests, pesticides and crop nutrients.

Most importantly, I learned that the same people who I thought a few hours before were out to get our family, and myself, are really people like you and I who are trying to make the best use of our country's land using science and technology. I now understand why farmers choose GMO seed over non-GMO seed. I also understand more about pesticides, crop nutrients, and organic foods. Lastly, you still need to wash your organic fruits and vegetables before you eat them. Organic foods can be dirty!

If you would like to find out more about pesticides, crop nutrients, organic foods, GMOs and more, visit www.watchusgrow.org.

Women's Corner

By Louise Johnson
Women's Committee Chair

As the old Irish proverb says: *"May the Lord keep you in His hand...And never close His fist too tight."*

March is here, which means that AgDays are here. This school excursion/field-trip is for any fourth grade classroom in Kane County. Consider coming and helping: all farmers and non-farmers are welcome. Call Suzi at the Farm Bureau to volunteer or for more information. I learn something new every year!

March 19th is the first day of Spring. However, the average last date for a frost in the Chicago-area is at the end of April. Enjoy any warm days, but do not plant outside too soon! Your friends in southern Illinois can plant near the beginning of April; Champaign County can plant around mid-April. This is why your college students may tell you about how lovely the flowers are blooming at school, while we still have two weeks to wait for blooms.

What do you know about non-GMO food? Did you know that no one has ever gotten sick from eating products containing GMOs? Did you know that extensive, world-wide testing, conducted by many accredited organizations, has found no illness/malady/health problem from them? Science-based learning is necessary to combat all the mis-information that is whispered and published.

For March I thought you might like a recipe for Key Lime Pie. The pie will have specks of green from the grated rind, so you do not need to add coloring to get a little green. However, if you want the dessert to be green, you will have to add a drop or two of food coloring, because limes are only green on the outside, the rind.

Frozen Key Lime Pie

9" graham cracker crust
8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
1 c. evaporated milk
1/2 c. lime juice (2-3 limes)
1 tsp. grated lime peel = "lime zest"
Whipped cream, if desired

Unwrap the cream cheese and microwave it, uncovered, for 10 seconds to help soften it. Beat the softened cream cheese until smooth. Gradually add the 2 types of milk. Beat until smooth.

Press and roll the limes on counter for a few minutes. This makes them juice more, so you may only need 2 limes. Wash the limes and then grate the rind to get zest. Add the lime juice and zest. Beat on medium for 1 minute. Clean off the beaters and then hand mix the gleanings into the filling.

Pour into the crust. Freeze at least 2 hours or until firm. Let stand at room temperature for 10 to 15 minutes. If desired garnish whole pie or each piece. Serve immediately.

Possible garnish: whipped cream, finely-sliced lime, berries, mint sprigs.

Farmer education, training & social opps

The next **Meet the Buyer Event** will be held on March 22 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the Northern Illinois Food Bank in Geneva. The price is $15 for Farm Bureau members and $20 for non-Farm Bureau members. For more information and registration, visit http://www.ilfb.org/ifb-news-and-events/conferences-events/march-22,-2016-meet-the-buyer-event.aspx. On-site registration is first come, first served, and as space allows.

Gathering of the Green 2016

Register online for the "Gathering of the Green 2016" from March 16-19, 2016 in RiverCenter, Davenport, Iowa. The Gathering of the Green is a convention-style conference held every-other-year in the Quad Cities (Davenport, IA) and dedicated to John Deere antique two-cylinder and New Generation tractor and implement enthusiasts. The ninth Gathering will be held on March 16-19, 2016 in the spacious and beautiful RiverCenter in downtown Davenport, Iowa. Highlights include:

Restoration-related technical and historical workshop, Vendors, Antique tractors and implements of all years and models on display, displays mirroring the 2016 "Gathering" theme Forge to Farm, Auction, welcome reception and Saturday banquet. Register online at www.gatheringofthegreen.com.

For questions about the Gathering program, email info@gatheringofthegreen.com or text/call Gathering Information at 563-886-7383.

Young Farmers Euchre Tournament

Members for 18-35 with an interest in agriculture, expanding their social network and meeting with local farmers are welcome to attend the March 11 Young Farmers Euchre Tournament. The event will be held at the Kane County Farm Bureau beginning with a brief committee meeting at 6:30 followed by euchre, pizza and snacks with Young Farmers from Kane, Kendall and surrounding county Farm Bureaus. Bring a friend or we'll pair you up with another player.

Thanks to our donors...

The KCFB Foundation offers its sincere appreciation to the following for their contributions to our community service, education and scholarship programs. Names shown are contributions received January 15 through February 15, 2016.

HARVEST FOR ALL

Donor	Beneficiary
Paul (Griz) Stover	Elburn Food Pantry

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIED AD RATES

Classified advertising rates: 20 cents per word/$20 minimum (60 words or less). DISCOUNTS for members: Associate members, 20%; Voting members, 30%; PLUS members, 40%. Advance payment requested. Ads due by the 15th of every month for the next issue. No advertising (classified or display) for financial or insurance services will be accepted. Call 630-584-8660.

FOR SALE

Alfalfa grass hay – large 3x3x8 and 3x4x8 bales – 1st, 2nd, and 3rd cuttings. Nutrient content available upon request. Call: 847-436-2538

Miller Model CP-250TS constant potential DC mig welder with a Model 10E wire feed attachment. 208/230/460 volt 3 phase input, 250 amp 35 volt output with a Max. OCV of 44 @ 100% duty cycle. Welder is mounted on a cart with pneumatic wheels. Has .030 and .035 wire feed wheels. No tanks or gauges. Works good, bought a newer model to replace this one. $1000 OBO. Call for more info – 630 878 1726

Hay for sale: 1st cutting @ $4.00/bale – 2nd cutting @ $4.50/bale – 3rd cutting @ $4.75/bale. Small quantities of each cutting. No rain. All sales are cash sales picked up at the farm located near Lily Lake. Email address: LilyLakeOF@aol.com Phone #: 630-244-5241.

LIVESTOCK FEED – 5-6,000# daily of bulk fruit/vegetable pressings. 7-10% moisture, high-protein, delivery negotiable. For more info., call KCFB and ask for Steve – 630 584-8660.

SERVICES

Jim Verhaeghe & Sons, Inc. – Tree removal, tree trimming, & stump grinding. Backhoe work & Tile Lines. Fully insured – Free Estimates – Jim Verhaeghe Sr. Call: 847 334 5730

Farm site demolition & clean up. New horse barns with underground utilities and earthwork. Drainage tiles, pasture mowing, spraying, new seeding, inter seeding & fence installation. We follow SIU Plant & Soil Science Practices. 10% discount for Farm Bureau members, 5% if you mention this add! Berning Earthwork Inc., Tom Berning 630-330-9970, BerningEarthWorks@comcast.net; Galusha Farms, Steve Berning, 630-878-6350, steve@GalushaFarm.com. Call: 630-330-9970

WANTED

Will pick up for free unwanted or old snowmobiles. Also buying older Polaris snowmobiles 1977 & 1978 TXL & 1979 TX's Call Jon, 630-254-9446

Want to buy vintage & used tools Call Chris, 630 550 7182

HELP WANTED

CLERICAL/CUSTOMER SERVICE – Entry level – East side of St Charles; Part-time M-F hours to fit your schedule. Some travel possible. Peerfect for homemaker or student. Call Bob, 630 377 7797

DESIGN & LAYOUT – Entry level will train – East side of St Charles; Part-time M-F hours to fit your schedule. Perfect for homemaker or art or computer student. Call Bob, 630 377 7797

Local Class A CDL Driver wanted for a full time position to make daily local runs in the Chicago land area. Must have a clean record and at least 1 year experience. Call 815-756-8600 For Inquiries. R. Zimmerman Inc.

'Change. Challenge. Opportunity.'

Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference

"Change. Challenge. Opportunity." is the theme for the 2016 Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference (GALC), to be held April 6-7, 2016, at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield.

With two days of general sessions and workshops, attendees will have the opportunity to discuss the changes, face the challenges and create opportunities that impact Illinois farms, as well as access timely information and tools needed to help advance the agenda of farmers and agriculture.

GALC workshop sessions will focus on three tracks: water quality, local government and leadership. Speakers also will highlight current federal and state issues agriculture is facing, including GMOs, livestock, transportation and trade.

IFB members will have the opportunity to hear from newly-elected American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall. Duvall will spend both days with IFB members, engaging them in discussion and asking for their opinions.

Again this year, attendees will see firsthand what happens when hundreds of farmers partner together on issues during the Statewide Legislative Reception Wednesday evening.

The cost of the conference is $50 for Wednesday only, $30 for Thursday only, or $70 for both days, which is a savings of $10. Attendees may register for the conference or obtain additional information, by contacting Kane County Farm Bureau at 630 584-8660 or visiting www.ilfb.org.

IFB participates in groundbreaking for new ag exhibit in St. Louis

The Saint Louis Science Center broke ground on February 2 for its GROW agriculture exhibit. Illinois and Missouri Farm Bureaus, along with County Farm Bureaus including Kane CFB, along with FB affiliate Prairie Farms Dairy, were recognized for their financial contributions to the project. With special efforts of the Illinois and Missouri Farm Bureaus to help connect the Science Center with the agriculture community, and other agriculture organizations in both states, the Science Center expansion is proceeding.

Major donors from other agriculture commodity groups and agriculture organizations from both states included representatives from 12 Illinois county Farm Bureaus, including Kane County Farm Bureau Manager Steve Arnold. All told, 40 guests from Illinois farm and commodity organizations attended the event. Illinois Farm Bureau President Rich Guebert emphasized the project's unique ability to help millions of exhibit visitors see beyond the grocery store, and learn about where their food comes from.

The GROW agriculture exhibit is 50,000 square feet and located on the property of the Saint Louis Science Center. The exhibit features zones to help visitors learn about: agriculture, water and weather, plants, modern farming, farm greenhouse work, fermentation, and a DIY farming experience. The six million dollar project is slated to open sometime this summer.

Illinois Farm Bureau, the IAA Foundation, 78 county Farm Bureaus, and 32 individuals contributed a total of $258,245 toward the exhibit. To learn more about Farm Bureau's involvement, visit www.ilfb.org/sciencecenter.

Groundbreaking for the "GROW" agricultural exhibit at St. Louis Science Center in January.

IFB sets Action priorities

Illinois Farm Bureau has set action priorities for the year. The priorities serve as a guide for the organization and our members, and helps us to effectively represent members as we develop policy and advocate for agriculture. This year's priorities are:

- Promote implementation of environmental stewardship practices;
- Influence efforts to improve state and national fiscal and business climates;
- Lead efforts to build trust in Illinois farmers; and
- Champion the economic well-being of Illinois farmers.

CONNECT WITH US

Youth crucial to Farm Bureau success

Evan Hultine, a farmer from Princeton (Bureau County), believes Illinois Farm Bureau Young Leaders can maintain recent success and expand the program this year. And, if anyone knows about boosting participation in Young Leaders, it's Hultine, who last month began his term as the 2015-16 Young Leader State Committee chairman.

Evan Hultine

Hultine was instrumental in developing a Young Leaders Committee in Bureau County more than five years ago. "We didn't have much of a group at the time, so I got some of my friends and others around the county to get involved (in Young Leaders)," Hultine told FarmWeek. "Now, we've got a good, core group."

Hultine, who was helping his father, Lynn, on the family operation at the time and also worked off the farm, was interested in expanding his professional network. "In college, Ron Warfield (former IFB President) was one of my professors," Hultine noted. "We talked about the value of Farm Bureau and the networking opportunities and professional development, and it seemed like a good place to start.

"As a young farmer, you don't have all the answers or always know where to go," he continued. "When you can get together and share stories with people (in Young Leaders) in the same situation as you, it makes it easier to figure out."

Other young farmers and ag professionals obviously feel the same way. Young Leaders in 2015 added 92 new members, created three new county programs, and grew Collegiate Farm Bureau membership to 425.

The injection of youth will be critical to the future success of IFB, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. "Hopefully, we can continue to build on the growing interest," Hultine said. "The more involvement we get with Young Leaders now will help steer where the organization winds up."

The Young Leader Committee of the Illinois Farm Bureau is made up of voting member representatives under 35 years of age from 18 Districts around the state. The newly named representative from District 1 (Kane, McHenry, Lake and DeKalb counties) is Andy Lenkaitis of St. Charles, a dairy farmer and engineer for GEA Farm Technologies in Naperville.

Young Leaders advised to follow 3 V's–Viable, Valuable and Visible

Matt Rush, a New Mexico farmer and motivational speaker (not to be confused with the former Young Leader chairman who goes by the same name) sees a bright future for American agriculture.

But farmers, particularly young ones, must actively engage with everyone from consumers to elected officials in order to help keep the industry "viable, valuable and visible."

That was a key part of his entertaining, yet motivational, message to a record crowd of more than 500 Illinois Farm Bureau Young Leaders during the YL annual conference in East Peoria.

"You have to be willing to be visible," Rush said. "Most of us are content to just sit on our tractor or horse and do our job. But people want to know who we are, why we do what we do, and why it affects them."

Evan Hultine, YL chairman from Bureau County, echoed that message. He called on his fellow Young Leaders to get involved in Farm Bureau's FB Act Program, which calls on members to vote and to respond to action requests by contacting elected officials about key ag issues.

"To be visible, we have to be vocal," Hultine said.

Precision conservation management program receives multi-million dollar investment

When making decisions about conservation practices, farmers must weigh financial risks, consider labor availability and cost, and manage time commitments. But the University of Illinois, the Illinois Corn Growers Association, and 30 other partners with agricultural interests have developed a new farmer service program – Precision Conservation Management (PCM) – to help farmers make those decisions. The USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced that it will make a significant award to PCM to roll out its services in Illinois, Iowa, and Kentucky over the next five years.

"We're partnering with the Farm Business Farm Management Association (FBFM), agricultural commodity organizations, Heartland Science and Technology Group, and many others, and using farmers' own data to help them efficiently, effectively, and profitably improve water quality and soil health," says Laura Gentry, Illinois Corn Growers Association director of water quality research and adjunct professor in the Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences department at U of I.

The PCM program has been specifically designed to help farmers meet the voluntary best management practices suggested in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, which aims to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus losses (runoff) by 45 percent.

USDA's Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Robert Bonnie traveled to the Bloomington offices of the Illinois Corn Growers Association to announce the award, which is part of NRCS's Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

Partner commitments of cash and in-kind contributions of more than $13 million will add substantial value to the NRCS award.

Gentry adds, "PCM was designed to help farmers make good, financially based, conservation decisions. As part of that goal, PCM will assist farmers with participating in NRCS programs and will demonstrate the good stewardship decisions farmers are making to protect our soil and water resources."

Farmers can enroll in the PCM program after the 2016 planting season, and can learn more about the program at http://www.precisionconservation.org/.

Nursing scholarship applications

Applications are now available for nurse practitioner scholarships through the Illinois Farm Bureau® Rural Nurse Practitioner Scholarship Program. There will be five scholarships, worth $4,000 each, granted this year.

The scholarship program, now in its 24th year, helps encourage and develop the pool of rural health practitioners to help meet primary health care needs in rural Illinois. Students who receive scholarships agree to practice for two years in an approved rural area in Illinois.

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must be Illinois residents and be a Registered Nurse accepted or enrolled in an accredited Nurse Practitioner Program. Funding is provided by the Rural Illinois Medical Student Assistance Program.

Applications are available at county Farm Bureaus® throughout the state, on the Rural Illinois Medical Student Assistance Program website at RIMSAP.com, or by writing Peggy Romba, Manager, Illinois Farm Bureau, PO Box 2901, Bloomington, IL 61702-2901. Applications are due May 1.

For additional information, contact Peggy Romba at 309-557-2350, or via e-mail at promba@ilfb.org.