

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. 82 NO. 12 DECEMBER 2017

Gould Farm hosts McDonald's for harvest tour

Farm Bureau places a high priority on engaging companies throughout the food chain through events like the Illinois Farm Bureau events like the Value Chain Tour and Agribusiness Roundtable, to name a few. But one of the most successful engagements has been asking IFB members to host companies for farm tours. On October 31, Chris, Eldon and Sandy Gould hosted 19 members of McDonald's Public Affairs and Supply Chain Management teams for a farm tour and discussion of farming practices.

Chris Gould spent the morning discussing farming practices, specifically those relating to soil conservation, soil testing, crop rotations, residue management and "prescription" application of products for crop production. Later in the day, visitors viewed cover crops and stopped by the hog barn and grain bins. They also took turns riding in the combine and the tractor pulling the grain cart. "It was important to take time out from harvest to establish relationships and open dialogue with some key players in the food industry," said Chris.

McDonald's was interested to hear what Illinois farmers are doing regarding sustainability. IFB worked with Kendra Levine, McDonald's U.S. Supply Chain Sustainability manager, to set up the tour.

"It's important for those within McDonald's whose work touches on upstream supply chain sustainability issues to

understand what happens on a farm, the challenges and the innovation taking place there. We all learned from Chris, and for some who had never been on a farm, the dialogue and tour were very educational. These opportunities ground us in reality as we develop strategies for our company and work to influence the industries in our supply chain," said Levine.

Lyndsey Ramsey, IFB's associate director of natural and environmental resources, shared information about the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction strategy, 4R4U, the IFB Nutrient Stewardship Grant Program and work she is doing to enhance pollinators.

When asked how McDonald's is looking to work on sustainability issues in the future, Levine said, "We are looking to set goals companywide on a variety of

sustainability focused areas that will cover the whole value chain we touch - from the farm to our restaurants. Specifically, for row crop ag, we're interested in knowing what practices that improve soil health, reduce impacts on climate change and protect water sources are being used by farmers in our supply chain. Our strategies around this are in development."

Farm tours like this represent one way Illinois farmers can interface with companies throughout the value chain. Getting representatives out to see farming firsthand gives them a much better understanding of what happens every day across Illinois and helps form their deci-

sion making in the future.

"I felt it was important to get firsthand knowledge of what may be coming at us as far as

demands, and certification of those demands, regarding sustainable practices," Chris added.



Nineteen McDonald's Public Affairs and Supply Chain Team members learn about combines at Chris, Eldon and Sandy Gould's farm near Kaneville in Kane County. The visitors got a firsthand view of farming to help make future decisions.

Nominations sought for KCFB Director

The Kane County Farm Bureau is seeking eligible candidates for election to the association's Board of Directors. A Farm Bureau director is an individual who helps provide governance, set policies, and supports the philosophy and actions of the organization. Directors should be willing to dedicate time to make a difference in agriculture and to provide direction, inspiration, and motivation to the largest, most influential and effective farm related organization in Kane County.

Eligible candidates are regular "MM" members (farmers and farmland owners) residing in Kane County.

Five directors will be elect-

ed, by ballots mailed in March, to MM members in each respective District. KCFB has five districts each made up of three townships.

To suggest potential candidates for election, members should call 630-584-8660 by February 15, or fill out the form on page 6.

FB ACT—Act today, win tomorrow

Be an advocate for Farms and Food, text FARM to 52886.

FB ACT is a tool for Farm Bureau members to drive policy agendas, focused on agriculture, and respond to the continuous threats posed by other interest groups and elected officials who don't share our same interests. As a member of Kane County

Farm Bureau, you have the voice and strength to stand up for farms, food, and our future.

How to Join FB ACT:

- Text FARM to 52886
 - Visit the IFB App
 - Enter www.ilfb.org/fbact into your browser
 - Contact us at 630-584-8660
- Ways to Receive IFB Action**

Requests:

- Open a text from FB ACT that alerts you to contact your targeted officials
- Receive a direct email from FB ACT the minute IFB needs you to act
- Pick up a call from the IFB President laying out what action IFB needs from you

DATES TO REMEMBER

December

- December 2-5**
IAA Annual Meeting, Chicago
- December 7**
Board of Directors, 7:00pm
- December 13**
Citrus Pick-Up, 10am-5pm, Heinz Brothers, St. Charles
- December 15**
Holiday Ham Orders Due, noon
- December 21**
County Ag Committee, 10am
Holiday Ham Pick Up, 12-4pm
- December 25-26**
KCFB Office Closed for Holiday
- December 29**
CDL Random Test Applications Due

Happy Holidays one and all!



Toys, treats and trees!
Look throughout these pages to find heaps of happy holiday ideas from the farm to your family

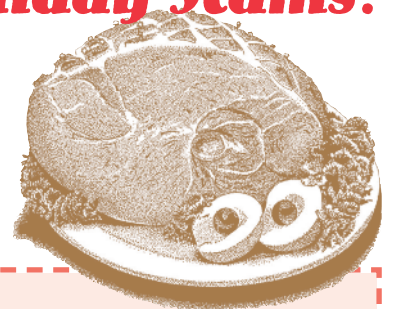
Happy Holidays!

Fresh Citrus

A limited supply of citrus (to possibly include oranges or grapefruit) may be available starting December 15 at Kane County Farm Bureau in St. Charles (right next to Costco). If you missed the order deadline for our December bulk citrus sale, give us a call 630-584-8660 to check supply or just stop in - first come first served.

December Special - Holiday Hams!

The special this month is delicious ham for your holiday dinner. Each ham is individually foil wrapped and boxed which makes them perfect for holiday entertaining or as gifts. They vary in weight from about 10-12 pounds for traditional and 7-9 pounds for spiral. Order yours today by sending in the form below or calling the Kane County Farm Bureau at 630-584-8660 by Friday December 15 at noon. Pickup is at the Farm Bureau on Thursday, December 21.



Name: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____ Member No.: _____

Please indicate quantity:

Spiral Slice

_____ Plus Mbr. (\$4.49/lb) _____ Member (\$4.99/lb) _____ Non-mbr. (\$5.74/lb)

Traditional

_____ Plus Mbr. (\$3.36/lb) _____ Member (\$3.74/lb.) _____ Non-mbr. (\$4.30/lb)

DEADLINE FOR ORDERING IS NOON. Friday, December 15.

Payment is due at pickup at Kane County Farm Bureau (Randall Rd. & Oak St., St. Charles) on Thursday afternoon, December 21

KCFB Board meeting review

Guests at the November meeting included Bob Effner, Elgin-St. Charles Agency Manager for Country Financial, to provide an update of the products and service offered by the Farm Bureau affiliate and Matthew Tansley, Land Use Planner for the County of Kane, with an update on the progress of the Food Hub. The County and PKE Enterprises of Elgin will enter into a business planning and operational agreement late this month. PKE has been involved in starting various food businesses in the area. Grant funds from Growing for Kane, Fit for Kids and a Food to Market Catalyst grants are supporting the planning and implementation of the Food Hub. A prescription produce program to address health equity is a likely candidate for the first program to be launched by the hub.

In unfinished business, Manager Steve Arnold reported on a 30 year lease extension agreement with American Tower Corporation. Various building and grounds improvements were discussed including interior and exterior lighting, replacement of sidewalks, parking lot improvements and the cost and feasibility of electronic signage on Randall Road.

Carolyn Gehrke of Elgin and Sarah Lenkaitis of Campton Hills will be representing Kane County in the Young Farmer "Discussion Meet" on Saturday December 2 at the Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in

Chicago. Members of the Board of Directors will attend to vote on policy resolutions on local, state and national issues and to elect leaders of the statewide organization.

In new business, President Joe White announced policy for director attendance at the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN January 6th thru 9th.

White nominated five regular (voting) members – Ray Feldott, Trent Pierson, Gerard Fabrizius, Carolyn Gehrke, and Lloyd Goebbert for the 2018 Nominating Committee along with five alternates – Clayton Feldott, Jim O'Connell, Sarah Lenkaitis, Mark Anderson, and Beth Engel. Directors with terms expiring in 2018 are Bill Keck, Bill Collins, Frank Carlson, Mike Kenyon, and Wayne Schneider. The 2018 Annual Meeting will be held in March or April – details to follow.

KCFB's 2018 holiday schedule was approved as presented. V President Wayne Schneider reviewed a recently submitted grant application to the IFB for Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRs) grant for \$12,500 to construct a bio-reactor demonstration project in Kane County.

In other new business, Directors discussed the new John Deere GreenFleet rewards member benefit, a direct mail campaign for fundraising for agricultural literacy and schol-

arship programs of the KCFB Foundation, potential new products for the Farm Bureau "Country Store," benefits for the new professional membership class and approved the Farm Bureau as a site for licensed food trucks.

President White shared a Thank You from the Texas Farm Bureau for the Texas Hurricane Relief contribution, and information on proposed policy resolutions.

Manager Steve Arnold reported on the November IFB Managers to Washington, the IFB Local / Regional Food Conference and a social media and branding workshop. Citrus Distribution is the 13th of December at Heinz Bros. Greenhouse in St. Charles.

Local Government Reports included County Board, Forest Preserve District and Kane County Agriculture Committee activities and a Stormwater Ordinance Agriculture Subcommittee update. There were no reports from the Farmland Protection Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, or Regional Planning Committee.

Bill Collins presented the membership/PR report including contributions from Good Done Great, Mary Hanson of Monsanto for KCFB FOUNDATION; Samuel & Christi Jones in memory of Jim Blicke, George & Carol Hatcher for the KCFB FOUNDATION; Louise & Glenn Johnson – Harvest for ALL and Gray-Urban Farms

LLC – Harvest for ALL.

Wayne Schneider reported on government affairs. On November 8th, there was an IFB Action request on House tax plan which could be completed by texting AG to 52886, after registering by texting FARM to the same number. The FarmWeek article write-up on the October 31st visit to the Gould Farm by McDonald's supply chain & PR department was distributed.

A written report on Ag-in-the-Classroom activities was provided by Ag Literacy Coordinator originating from Suzi Myers, along with Minutes of the November 1 Advisory Committee meeting.

Correspondence was circu-

lated from: Texas Farm Bureau – thanks for contributing to the Hurricane Irma Relief Fund; St. Charles CVB – thanks for meeting to discuss farm tours; IALF – announcing Leland Strom as a new CEO and President; Jenna Harvell – thanks for purchase of her steer at the 4-H Blue Ribbon Sale; Jackson Kettelkamp – thanks for the KCFB FOUNDATION Scholarship to JCC; Kathy Chwee – thanks for all the organization does to support members and educate consumers and Bill Carlberg, President, Fulton CFB – thanks to Joe White for service on the IFB Grant Committee.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Thursday, December 7th at 7 pm.

KANE COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD ATTENDANCE JANUARY 2017 THRU DECEMBER 2017

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

Congrats to Corron Farm for National Register of Historic Places nomination

The Corron Farm in Campton Township has been unanimously approved to be on the National Register of Historic Places. The final step in the process to place Corron Farm will be approval by the National Park Service.

Erica Ruggiero of McGuire Igleski & Associates in Evanston prepared the extensive research and paperwork required for the nomination. Corron Farm is presently on the Kane County Register of Historic Places, having been settled by Robert Corron in 1835 and purchased from the Corron family by Campton Township in 2002.

The main house, lovingly called the Old Brick, was built by Robert Corron between 1850 and 1854 from bricks kilned

from clay on the property. The home contains 40 windows and 40 doors with thresholds and window lintels quarried in Batavia.



In addition, Corron Farm Preservation Society and Campton Township announced this week that the historic 1875 dairy barn roof has finally been replaced after a stabilization of the structure was completed by Trillium Dell Timberworks of Knoxville, IL.

Funds raised by the

Preservation Society, matched by the township, plus an additional sum awarded by a Kane County Grand Victoria Riverboat Fund grant, were used to pay for the project. Additional funds need to be raised by the society to fulfill their promise to the township to contribute 50 percent of the cost of the roof.



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*.



Robert Corron
1816-1904

Robert Corron moved from Greenbrier County, Virginia to Kane County in October 1835 and staked-out a claim to the land on which he made his home in Campton Township.

Kane County Farmer

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Happy Holidays from KCFB

Kane County launches public-private food hub operation

Reprinted with permission from Kane County Connects, Wednesday, November 15th, 2017

The Kane County Board recently announced its selection of Dream Hub/PKE Enterprises to operate a regional food hub in Kane County under the name of “Dream Distributors.” Kane County Board President Chris Lauzen signed the Memorandum of Understanding after November’s County Board meeting.

“Kane County’s farmland is a key economic driver and valued reminder of our county’s heritage,” he said. “A new local food hub operation will allow Kane County farmers to capture a greater share of the growing local food economy while making healthier food options accessible to vulnerable residents.”

Dream Distributors is expected to produce more than \$2 million in revenue for agricultural producers in and around the county and have a total economic benefit of \$5.9 million, according to the county’s feasibility study.

“A local food hub will encourage Kane County farmers to produce more fruits, vegetables, dairy and meat products – which also supports the long-term viability of farmland – our county’s greatest resource,” said T.R. Smith, chairman of the Kane County Agricultural Committee.

Kevin Echevarria, CEO of Dream Hub, said the enterprise is nothing short of groundbreaking.

“This will be a well-rounded food hub that doesn’t exist anywhere else,” Echevarria said. “People will look in and ask, ‘How do we replicate this and bring this to our own community?’”

Dream Distributors will be located adjacent to Shared

while also teaching them how to cook with fresh ingredients.

Using Dream Hall – a food service concept currently planned for downtown Elgin in early 2018 – Echevarria plans to hold cooking demonstration classes free of charge. “There is a huge food equity component,”



Dream Kitchen, 1544 Fleetwood Drive, Elgin. An additional 3,000 square feet of food processing space will be added to Shared Dream Kitchen, a community incubator kitchen, bringing the total to 9,000 square feet, Echevarria said.

How Does It Work?

At Dream Distributors, produce and other farm products will be washed, packaged and distributed to restaurants and other institutional users in the region. Dream Distributors will also coordinate the logistics – working with farmers and producers to plan crop planting and harvesting, truck the foods to the plant for preparation, and create the wholesale channels to sell the produce.

Plans for Dream Distributors do not stop at getting locally-grown foods to large-scale users, however. Once in operation, a “food box” subscription service will get fresh fruits and vegetables into the kitchens of the county’s neediest residents



in the Dream Distributors plans, Echevarria said. “We will work through the county to create food equity, using cooking classes and our program space to help the underprivileged cook.”

Public-Private Partnership

For two years, Kane County has developed the food hub concept with its consultant New Venture Advisors. This process culminated in the selection of a private sector operator by the Kane County Board at its November 14, 2017 meeting. Kane County captured over \$200,000 in grant funds from a variety of investors to prepare for this hand off to a private operator.

Kane County concluded a feasibility study for the operation of a local food hub last year; a recommendation of the

tastes good. Most produce begins to lose flavor after long shipping times and then loses even more flavor from storage on grocery store shelves, waiting to be purchased.

Now that we are entering our cold season, it will be harder to find fresh local produce, but don’t forget about year-round local meats and poultry. If you are unsure where to purchase local meats, visit the Kane County Farm Bureau, or go online to bountyofkane.org; we list local farms with meats and specialty products, we have local meats from Imboden’s for sale in our office and we can also suggest other locations for purchasing meat.

Why not take advantage of what our great state of Illinois has to offer – buy local, eat local, and if possible, plan to start a garden this spring and grow local.

county’s food system plan, Growing for Kane. The plan identified a food hub as a potential resource to farmers, enabling them to distribute their food products to wholesale buyers who would otherwise be discouraged from doing business with them.

Dream Hub will up-front much of the start-up costs to launch Dream Distributors.

Kane County Economic Development funds will fund business planning and a grant from the Chicago Community Trust will help purchase equipment that processes vegetables for use in schools.

Kane County’s feasibility study also identified a series of health equity strategies that could be adopted as part of the food hub’s operating plan, including the healthy subscrip-

tion box program. The food hub project and the planning process that preceded it is a reflection of Kane County’s “health in all policies” approach to community planning efforts, recognizing the connection between land use and health.

Patty Marco of Maple Park-based Wiltse’s Farm is just one of the producers who have taken part in the food hub’s development, meeting with the consultant and county planners during the feasibility study phase.

She is excited, Marco said, because the hub will allow the family-run operation to expand its market locally. While they will still sell to farmers markets and local retailers “This is another market that we haven’t touched. This is a bridge to get us to the next step,” in bringing their produce to area customers, Marco said.

Specialty Crop, Agritourism & Organics Conference in January

Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism, and Organic Conference (ISCAOC) will be held Jan. 10-12, 2018, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. The conference, which features nearly 100 speakers and 60 trade show exhibitors, will again host four concurrent preconference workshops, general sessions, and breakout sessions aimed at helping Illinois specialty growers cultivate their operations.

Wednesday, Jan. 10, participants may attend one of the pre-conference workshops, including: High Tunnels; Social Media and Marketing; Growing and Marketing Pumpkins; and Legal and Labor Issues for Specialty Crop Growers.

A special opportunity for farmers is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 10, as University of Illinois Extension will conduct a full Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Workshop. This workshop will satisfy the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule requirement which is mandated for all farms selling more than \$500,000 in average annual produce sales. Farms must be in compliance by Jan. 26, 2018; the registration deadline for this event is Dec. 21, 2017.

Thursday, Jan. 11, the convention’s keynote speaker, Simon Huntley, Small Farm Central, will provide insight into ways farmers can focus on their consumers and promote stronger ties to your marketing efforts.

Participants also are invited to attend breakout sessions Thursday, Jan. 11 & Friday, Jan. 12 featuring: Agritourism and

Marketing; Fruits; Vegetables; Herbs; Organic Foods and Emerging Issues and Opportunities.

Following Thursday’s breakout sessions, the annual banquet will include a keynote speech titled, “What Works on Our Farm,” by Marty and Will Travis, Spence Farm, Fairbury. Their farm is the oldest family farm in Livingston County and was settled in 1830. It is a working small family farm managed today by the seventh and eighth generations.

The 29th annual Apple Cider Contest and 16th annual Hard Cider Contest will again be held in conjunction with the conference, with winners being announced during Thursday evening’s banquet. Registration for all apple cider contests will be Thursday, Jan. 11, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m., with judging beginning at 10:00 a.m. For additional information, contact Ken Johnson, cider contest coordinator at kjohnso@illinois.edu or 217-243-7424.

To receive registration materials or to obtain exhibitor information, please contact Charlene Blary at 309-557-2107 or cblary@ilfb.org. Conference registration will be offered online. A conference agenda, registration, and cider contest information can be viewed at specialtygrowers.org.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Crowne Plaza Hotel at a rate of \$98 per night. Call the hotel directly at 217-529-7777 and ask for the Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism, and Organic Conference room block to make reservations at the conference rate.

LIVE LOCAL, BUY LOCAL, GROW LOCAL

By Valerie Johnson



To those of you who couldn’t make it to the Live Local Food conference in Bloomington, here is some interesting take-away information for you to enjoy!

More and more consumers are looking for specific demands when buying food. Whether it be cage free, organic, or gluten free ... purchasing local foods are high on the list! In fact, it’s the #1 trend on “What’s Hot” for the past seven years according to the National Restaurant Association.

But, what does the word “Local” really mean?

There seems to be different

definitions of what defines local food. The USDA defines it as less than 400 miles from where it was produced. Grocery stores don’t follow the same standard – some define local foods as grown in the state it was produced, or less than 8 hours away. Southern Illinois is considered local, even though it’s a long car ride away from Kane County.

Studies show that people will pay more for local food, and for a good reason. Buying local creates jobs in our area, supports farmers, and encourages good stewardship of our land. Fresh food also keeps us healthy and



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Book of the month

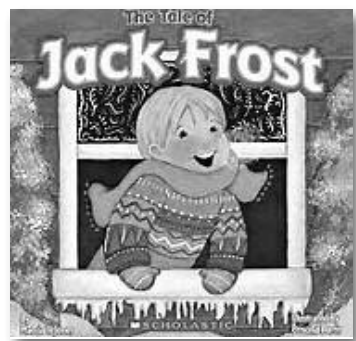
A festive winter story about how little Jack, the youngest, smallest boy in his village, grew up to become the legendary Jack Frost.

Little Jack, the youngest, smallest child in a village near the North Pole noticed everyone else had something special talent. His sister could make snowflakes. His brother could make wind. His cousin could make water freeze. Everyone could DO things. Everyone, that is, except Jack.

But when he finally discovers his own exciting winter power, Jack is greeted by cheers and admiration from his entire village. He is even given a perfect nickname, which he goes by to this day: Jack Frost.

We have quite a selection of

books concerning the various holidays, both for children and adults. Our library began due to a request years ago by Bob Konen and Dean Dunn. 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.



The Tale of Jack Frost by Marcia Thornton Jones

The results are in: Prairie Farms is the best of the best

Farm Bureau affiliate receives Six Perfect Scores in World Dairy Expo Dairy Products Competition

The winning streak continued again this year for Prairie Farms Dairy as they took home dozens of awards from the 2017 World Dairy Expo Product Competition. The awards ceremony was held at the 2017 World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wisconsin. Prairie Farms Dairy is a farmer-owned milk marketing cooperative formed by the formation of local cooperative creameries by county Farm Bureaus beginning in 1932.

Prairie Farms competed in nearly 30 categories and won 40 awards. The awards included 14 first place championship trophies, 11 second place medallions, and 15 third place medallions. The big win included six perfect scores for salted caramel milk, sea salt caramel milk, white milk (two trophies), chocolate milk and whipping cream. Prairie Farms swept the competition in three categories: southwest dip, low-fat chocolate milk, and fat-free chocolate milk.

"To earn prestigious World Dairy Expo Awards, a dairy company must offer top-quality products. Prairie Farms competed in 27 categories and won 40 awards, that's nearly 50% of

total category awards and more than any of our competitors. Our performance was outstanding in all categories," said Rebecca Leinenbach, Vice President of Marketing and Communications for Prairie Farms. "We serve millions of customers each day who deserve the highest quality products available, and during the past 75 years they have counted on Prairie Farms' commitment to delivering the Best of the Best from our farms to their tables."

The World Dairy Expo Championship Dairy Product Contest, sponsored by the Wisconsin Dairy Products Association, is the only judging contest of its kind in North America. There were over 1200 product entries from all over the country in 79 contest classes including cheese, fluid milk, yogurt, butter, sour cream, dairy dips, ice cream, cottage cheese and whey products. Winning companies are afforded unprecedented opportunities to promote their products as the "best of the best."



AG LITERACY CORNER

By Suzi Myers



'Tis the season of many traditions in my family ... things that make the holidays so special. Sometimes these traditions need to be changed, or modified, but then they continue on.

My family begins the holiday season's celebrations on the weekend after Thanksgiving. One of us "Aunts" hosts a brunch, complete with waffles, egg casseroles, fresh fruits, and lots of other goodies.

After we eat, everyone joins around a craft table and starts to make "ornaments" for the pine tree that we planted in the cemetery after my brother's death over 20 years ago. We make these ornaments out of Cheerios, cranberries, tiny marshmallows, orange slices, and popcorn strung together to make wreaths or just long strings. We also have a peanut butter and lard combination to spread on mini bagels and pine cones to be dipped in bird seed just before we hang them on the tree.

Once the ornaments are complete, we pile into cars to head out to the little country church

cemetery to decorate Brian's tree. I must admit, after 20 plus years, our baby tree is now HUGE and has had the bottom branches cut off, so the young kids have adopted two baby trees close by to decorate while we all ones decorate the original tree. As I said, things change.

With the addition of boys to the family through birth and marriage, along with some healthy dogs, another tradition has started. The kids play football/Frisbee toss in the adjacent empty field at the cemetery. Once the chill gets to be too much, pictures of us and the tree are taken and then all go home to our warm houses.

The "Aunts" make batches of tiropita. We get together one night before Christmas and make up a couple of batches of these delicious Greek cheese triangles to share with our family and friends during the holidays. I got the recipe MANY years ago from a Greek friend and made them once for the family. They all wanted more, so we decided to make them together,

as they take a long time to make alone. The tradition began.

Felting at Esther's Place is another tradition that we started over 10 years ago. My two nieces and I take an afternoon and go felt ... we've made a complete Manger Scene, reindeer, snowmen, and more throughout all the years. This tradition might have to be skipped this year, as my one niece will not be in the area during the holidays ... she came home and so the tradition goes on.

Of course we have family Christmas ... more than one, due to my family moving away from St. Charles. Before these celebrations, the tree has to be bought from the Mark's trees here at the FB; decorated with the many cherished ornaments; the house is decorated from one corner to another (I tend to overdue the decorations); special foods are purchased and baked; a new Christmas puzzle is purchased; gifts bought and wrapped; cards written and mailed; candlelight services at church; and then the fun of seeing family and friends gather at my house ... I cherish these moments.

These are some of my Christmas traditions. I hope you, your family and friends have a wonderful holiday season full of whatever traditions make it special for you ...

Happy Holidays.

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 Donna Tonovitz St. Charles 630-549-7694	 Bob Riedel West Dundee 847-428-5434	 Dan Cooper Sugar Grove 630-466-9600
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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 October 15-November 15, 2017.



KCFB FOUNDATION

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Samuel & Christi Jones	Heckel-Blickle Memorial Scholarship

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Donor	Beneficiary
Gray Urban Farms	Burlington/Hampshire Food Pantry
Glenn & Louise Johnson	Northern Illinois Food Bank



Farm Facts @ Fun

Compiled by Suzi Myers



We tend to think of winter as a time of rest, hibernation, and quiet. But a look at the calendar reveals many holidays around the world that prove this impression entirely wrong. The cold months are clearly a popular time for parties and celebrations. While some are filled with solemn tradition, others focus on fun and frolic. All pose opportunities for interesting and real-life lessons in geography, culture, history, and religion. The holidays mentioned are not a complete list, but a few to spark interest.

Outdoor decorations—Simple to make

These are incredibly easy to make
Materials: dishes, some bits & pieces (we had berries, holly, helicopter thingies, a shell and some sticks), some string, water. You could also use cranberries and bird seed as shown in photo.

- 1 Fill the dishes with water
- 2 Add a piece of string (make sure it is properly submerged or nice and long).
- 3 Place your items in the water
- 4 Place outside overnight to freeze
- 5 Hang and enjoy!



Holiday Countdown Chain

A great activity for young and old children is to make a simple paper chain with as many links as days until the holiday. The older children can write something they need to do to help get ready for the holidays, be it making place cards, decorations, or such. Or you could put Bible verses, symbols of holiday on each link, or the number of days left till the holiday, whatever you wish. Then make the chain.

Each day the child cuts off one link and does the activity, reads the Bible verse, or whatever you've decided. They can see that the chain gets shorter each day and also be able to count to see how many more days till the holiday.



Joe: What nationality is Santa Claus?
Moe: What?
Joe: North Polish.
Josh: Knock, knock!
Samantha: Who's there?
Josh: Dexter.
Samantha: Dexter, who?
Josh: Dexter halls with boughs of holly.
Q. What goes 'oh, oh, oh'?
A. Santa walking backwards!

Winter celebrations!

S O Q R Z M Q N D G C B H V N P L G S P J P J E F
V W K N V H N O I T A R B E L E C A R G C T Q P I
S A M T S I R H C Y E C R O W N L E V H N G N R J
A S C R B Y W F A C M S Z X B H S E U I H O K A V
H A K K U N A H I A A C N D L E E J M B T P S T Q
H Z B C X O K T U R N W S O N R F B V E A S A S Q
P Y E H W Z S E K U G B N T K I N G S V A U E S H
H F L F P L A H H R E H S O I T U J T L A I N F J
T F S I O O D S R N R W Q P I A H Y A W Z C E F C
J V B S M F H P N Z W L I R P T D G C C N K R N R
I H Y Z N A S A I N T X H B L E I P I A A H V A F
O S P C E R F J V E I A L U I P B D E L W W I I I
H T C T D H O L L Y Z K L G E S C S A P K C J P A
M K M X E V W M Z T K Z E T S G B J N R U C X V C
O M F F W M E H L I C Z I M Q E J N N L T Y G Q B
T U U M S N G G E R A H M X B F T T H W E X X Z E
I C R S O L L N K T I D P E M Q I H K O J M D Y M
V Q A R I D J G S E V Q U T W C Q R G D O A N P J
B H A N C C U H G P J N Z F M W T T X I O C A C C
M H K Y D D Z M E Z W N D G V I R A Y D E A J W M
P X P U U L M A I R I Z E F R N T R E E J V Z L B
B S G T B W E R E X H V P C M T C N O W C N Q G A
R S W C U N H L E J V X T A C E O Y I T A K Q U H
R V Q V Z J X S P U B H G H P R S T O M F D B L F
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- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| CANDLE
CELEBRATION
CHRISTMAS
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KINGS | KWANZAA
LIGHT
LUCIA
MANGER
MENORAH | MUSIC
PRESENTS
SAINT
SOLSTICE
SONGS | STAR
SWEDEN
TRADITION
TREE
WINTER |
|--|--|--|---|---|

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone (____) _____ Email _____ Age _____

Return to: Kane County Farm Bureau, 2N710 Randall Road, St Charles, IL 60174 by December 15, 2017 to be entered in our drawing for a holiday themed prize.

of the prophet Ibrahim (or Abraham) to sacrifice his son for God. Today, Muslims sacrifice an animal – usually a goat or a sheep – as a reminder of Ibrahim's obedience to God. The meat is shared with family and friends – Muslims or non-Muslims – as well as the poor members of the community.

Three Kings Day

At the end of the Twelve Days of Christmas comes a day called the Epiphany, or Three Kings Day. This holiday is celebrated as the day the three wise men first saw baby Jesus and brought him gifts. On this day in Spain, many children get their Christmas presents. In Puerto Rico, before children go to sleep on January 5, they leave a box with hay under their beds so the kings will leave good presents. In France, a delicious King cake is baked. Bakers will hide a coin, jewel, or little toy inside it.

Winter Solstice

The Winter Solstice occurs around December 21st. It is the shortest day of the year. People all over the world participate in festivals and celebrations. Long ago, people celebrated by lighting bonfires and candles to coax back the sun.

St. Lucia Day

To honor this third-century saint on December 13, many girls in Sweden dress up as "Lucia brides" in long white gowns with red sashes, and a wreath of burning candles on their heads. They wake their families up by singing songs and bringing them coffee and twisted saffron buns called "Lucia cats."

Christmas

December is...

- Read a New Book Month
- Human Rights Month
- Calendar Awareness Month
- National Hand Washing Awareness Week
- National Fruit Cake Month
- Root Vegetables and Exotic Fruit Month
- Bingo's Birthday Month

December 2017 Special Days:

- 1 Rosa Parks Day
- 7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- 12 Chanukah Begins
- 15 Bill of Rights Day
- 16 National Ugly Christmas Sweater Day
- 21 Crossword Puzzle Day and Yule – Day of Winter Solstice
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 Christmas
- 26 Kwanzaa begins and Boxing Day
- 31 Universal Hour of Peace and New Year's Eve

Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, is celebrated throughout the world on December 25th. People celebrate this Christian holiday by going to church, giving gifts, and sharing the day with their families. In some parts of Europe, "star singers" go caroling – singing special Christmas songs – as they walk behind a huge star on a pole.

The Christmas festivities in Ireland tend to be more religious in nature rather than being about simple fun. Christmas celebrations last from Christmas Eve until January 6 (Epiphany). On the 26th, known as St. Stephen's Day, an Irish tradition that is known as the Wren Boys Procession takes place. Children go from door to door singing, holding a stick that is topped by a holly bush and a wren. They ask for money for the "starving wren," which goes into their pockets. In ancient times, a real wren was killed and fastened to the stick, but today fake wrens are used.

The Christmas Eve festivities in the Ukraine are known as Sviata Vechera, which means "Holy Supper." The celebration begins when the first evening star is sighted in the night sky. In farming communities, the household head brings in a sheaf of wheat, which symbolizes the wheat crops of Ukraine. It is called "didukh," which translates to "grandfather spirit." In homes within the city, a few stalks of wheat may be used to decorate the table.

Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa, which means "First Fruits," is based on ancient African harvest festivals and celebrates ideals such as family life and unity. During this spiritual holiday, celebrated from December 26 to January 1, millions of African Americans dress in special clothes, decorate their homes with fruits and vegetables, and light a candleholder called a kinara.

New Year

In Ecuador, families dress a straw man in old clothes on December 31. The straw man represents the old year. The family members make a will for the straw man that lists all of their faults. At midnight, they burn the straw man, in hopes that their faults will disappear with him.

Happy Holidays
From Kane County
Farm Bureau to YOU!

Congratulations

Austin Lykins, whose name was chosen from the entries received for correctly completing last month's Word Search Puzzle. For his participation, he receives a bag of football themed products! Thank you, Austin, for reading the Kane County Farmer and continue to watch each month for more great opportunities from the Kane County Farm Bureau.

2017 Illinois Farm Economics Summit scheduled

This year's Illinois Farm Economics Summit will address the profitability of Illinois agriculture and how to manage financial stress. The University of Illinois Extension and members of the farmdoc team from the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics in the College of ACES is offering a series of five Farm Economics Summit meetings to help producers with key issues they're facing.

"Although very good crops in many parts of the state in 2016 helped incomes recover, the story of Illinois agriculture continued to be one of managing financial stress," says U of I agricultural economist Scott Irwin. "The stress has been brought on by low corn, soy-

bean, and wheat prices, and costs of production that have adjusted somewhat slowly to the new price realities. Producers and landowners continue to face a series of difficult management challenges as they grapple with adjusting to the current environment of low grain prices."

Speakers from the U of I farmdoc team will explore the farm profitability outlook and management challenges from several perspectives, including the 2018 outlook for crop and livestock prices, soybean yield trends, an update on the next farm bill, the financial position of Illinois farms, habits of financially resilient farm operations, and crop economics for 2018. The format for the meeting will be fast-paced and allow

plenty of time for questions from the audience.

Irwin says farm owners, operators, ag lenders, and agribusiness professionals will benefit from the information presented at this year's summit.

The farm economics summit

will be offered at five different locations December 18th thru 22nd. The local summit will be held at Faranda's Banquet Center in Dekalb on December 18th. Pre-registration deadline is December 11th and includes a discounted fee. Registration can

be completed at the door, as space permits.

Please contact Nancy Simpson for program, location, speakers, and registration details. Her contact information is: nsimp1@illinois.edu or 217-244-2880.

Calling all farmers and landowners!

Do you have an interest in agriculture? Would you like to take charge of your future by setting policy and building relationships that will last through the next generation of agricultural landowners and leaders? Do you have a desire to gather ideas and do something about the challenges and opportunities of farming in Kane County? Then perhaps you should consider running for a seat on the Kane County Farm Bureau's Board of Directors.

The KCFB Board consists of 15 directors, three seats in each of five East-West multi-township districts. District 1 consists of Aurora, Big Rock and Sugar Grove Townships; District 2 is Kaneville, Blackberry, Geneva and Batavia Townships; District 3 is Virgil, Campton and St.

Charles Townships; District 4 is Burlington, Plato and Elgin Townships; and District 5 is Hampshire, Rutland, and Dundee Townships. Directors serve three year terms so one-third of the directors seats (5) are up for election each year.

Our members belong to the Farm Bureau for many reasons. Some join to take action on behalf of agriculture. Others join to support Farm Bureau policies or assist with program efforts. Farm Bureau works on the local level, in Springfield and in Washington D.C. to support action not just on farm issues, but on many of the same things you're concerned about: protection of private property rights and the quality of the rural environment, tax policies and economic growth, and the

quality and safety of our food supply. Regular (voting or MM) members are eligible to run for the Board of Directors and help look out for the best interests of all of our members.

The KCFB Board meets the first Thursday evening of each month. For more information, about service on the Board of Directors, please contact President Joe White at 630 557-2517, Manager Steve Arnold at 630 584-8660 or any member of the Board of Directors. To nominate yourself or a neighbor for consideration, please fill out and return the form below to the Nominating Committee by February 15.

Board elections will be held by ballots mailed to regular (voting) members of the association in March.

Choose a fresh cut Christmas tree this year

Bring a little magic into your day by visiting the Marks' Tree Farm Christmas Tree lot located at Kane County Farm Bureau. Purchase the perfect tree while supplies last. Marks' provides quality, fresh cut Fraser Fir, Balsam Fir, Spruce, and White Pine direct from

their farm amid the north woods of Wisconsin.

We encourage Kane County Farm Bureau members to take advantage of the \$10 discount off of each tree. We invite non-members to stop inside our building to join and continue receiving discounts throughout the year and at many surrounding businesses using our Abenity app. While you are here, shop for holiday gift ideas including cards featuring the Teeple Barn, toy tractors and animals, and a selection of meat, poultry, BBQ spice, pecans and more!

Merry Christmas from Marks' Tree Farm! KCFB members receive a \$10 discount



The Boys & Girls Club of Elgin recently toured the Kenyon Brothers Farm in Elgin. The Boys and Girls club provides after-school programming to youth in the Elgin community.

Michael Kenyon, farmer and member of the Kane County Farm Bureau, was tour guide and narrator for the visit. The children had a lot of fun and learned about farms, crops and milk products.



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**TO: Nominating Committee, Kane County Farm Bureau
2N710 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60174**

Name (please print) _____
Mailing Address _____
Township _____ District # _____
Telephone (_____) _____
Signature _____
Membership # (if known) _____

Form completed and returned by: Name _____
Mail to this form to: Kane County Farm Bureau, 2N710 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60174
Return on or before February 15, 2018
The Nominating Committee will evaluate candidates and propose a slate to run for director.

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What's new in the COUNTRY agencies?

St. Charles Agency, Bob Effner, Agency Manager

Chuck Quick has been named the Financial Representative of the Month for October 2017 in the St. Charles/Elgin Agency, as announced by Agency Manager, Robert J. Effner, Sr., CLF®, LUTCF. Chuck has provided tangible plans for addressing the immediate and long term insurance needs of his clients through COUNTRY Financial's diverse products and services: Auto, Farm, Home, Life, Business, Retirement. Let Chuck's expertise help you! You may reach Chuck at 847-683-2100, charles.quick@countryfinancial.com or https://representatives.countryfinancial.com/charl

es.quick Congratulations, Chuck!

Aurora Agency, Kevin Gomes, Agency Manager

Ryan Mizgate, Financial Representative with the Aurora Agency, is our Financial Representative of the Month for October, 2017. Ryan began his career with COUNTRY Financial in June of 2014 and services clients out of his office located at: 1161 Oak Street, North Aurora, 60542, (630) 907-9485. Ryan's professionalism, community involvement and vast knowledge of auto, home, life, commercial and financial products make him a great person to do business with. Congratulations, Ryan!

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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.

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DnJ Heating & Cooling & services- Furnace clean & check \$60 for KCFB members residing in Kane County. Water heater, sump pumps, dryer vent cleaning, home maintenance, electrical, plumbing, gas, sinks, toilets, garage doors, sliding doors,

home generators. Service area: Kane, DeKalb, Kendall, DuPage, Will & NW Cook County. Schedule today - call: 630 788 1184

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Older 6-row 30" JD corn head poly dividers, chain drive hook up with the head carrier, \$1,900. Call: 630 715 0894

FOR RENT

Country cottage charming farmhouse for rent. 3 bedrooms with walk-in closets. 1-1/2 baths, eat-in kitchen with new appliances, full basement/porch, new washer & dryer. 2 car garage. Includes: electricity, lawn maintenance & snow plowing. West of Aurora, near I-88. No smoking or pets. Good credit. Call: 630 308 4363

Nine Kane Co. teachers awarded IL Agriculture in the Classroom grants

The Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom program and the IAA Foundation, along with the Illinois Farm Bureau recently released the names of the 2017-2018 Teacher Grant Winners. 9 teachers from Kane County schools were awarded grants to further promote agricultural education in their classrooms.

Kane County Farm Bureau Ag Literacy Coordinator Suzi Myers is proud to do her part in helping teachers apply for these grants. This year, teachers from both her Summer Ag Institutes I and II (held in June) were grant recipients. These Summer Ag Institutes introduce the teachers to agriculture in Kane County. The teachers received 3 graduate semester hours of credit for SAI I and 2 graduate semester hours

for SAI II. Both of these classes will be offered again this year.

The mission of the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom program is to bring accurate and authentic agricultural information to the student in grades PreK-12 across Illinois. "Each year our teacher grant program is very competitive, and our judging panel is amazed at the unique programs teachers use to infuse agriculture into their curriculum," said Kevin Daugherty, Education Director, Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom.

Susan Moore, Director of the IAA Foundation added, "We are so pleased to support Illinois educators with funds to implement more ag-related lessons, and always look forward to seeing what a positive impression

these special activities have in classrooms across the state."

Partner organizations of the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom program include Illinois Farm Bureau, Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education (FCAE), University of Illinois Extension, Illinois Beef Assoc., Illinois Corn Growers, Illinois Pork Producers, Illinois Soybean Association, Midwest Dairy Association, Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. In addition, annual donors include many agribusiness partners and event participants with an interest in supporting the future of agriculture. More information on the IAA Foundation can be found at www.iaafoundation.org.

Agriculture in the Classroom grant recipients:

Teacher(s)	School	County	Project Name or Book Grant
Jessica Brown	Todd Early Childhood Center	Kane	Greenhouse throughout the year
Keiann Cobb	Hall Elementary	Kane	360 View
Maribel Huff	Hall Elementary	Kane	Virtual Reality Farming in Illinois
Gisselle Moreira	Garfield Elementary School	Kane	From Worm to Flower to Fish
Marilyn Riesenfeld	Hillcrest Elementary	Kane	IAITC Soil & Water Book Grant
Christine Zollers	Kaneland John Stewart	Kane	IAITC Pollinators Book Grant
Sergio Rios-Valerio	McCleery Elementary	Kane	IAITC Soil & Water Book Grant
Lynn Kermer	Oak Park Elementary	Kane	IAIC Soil & Water Book Grant
Brooke Heinsohn	Kaneland High School	Kane	IAITC Pollinators Book Grant

2018 CDL Random Drug/Alcohol Testing Pool set to begin

Kane County Farm Bureau is renewing the Random Drug/Alcohol Testing Pool for individuals or businesses with Commercial Driver's Licenses to comply with Federal Highway Department of Transportation regulations.

If you have a commercial driver's license, you are under the Federal Highway Department of Transportation regulations for drug and alcohol testing. Owner/operators and small companies with drivers must join an existing consortium for the random testing. Farmer and certain family members have been exempted in certain instances.

Each person who has a CDL will be required to pay a \$125.00 or \$145.00 for on-farm testing consortium fee for fixed or location testing to be includ-

ed in the pool. We also require each person in the pool be a member of the Farm Bureau. (Farmer memberships are \$37.00/year and Associate Memberships are \$20.00/year). The program will run from Jan. 1, 2018 - Dec. 31, 2018.

The consortium fee covers the setup fee and random drug and/or alcohol tests during the year no matter how often your name is drawn. We will also provide one free supervisor training manual. If your name is not pulled, you will not receive a refund on pool money. A special feature of the Kane County Farm Bureau pool is a mobile unit that provides on-site testing. This mobile unit, with certified testing equipment and specialists, will add convenience and time saving elements to the overall program.

Foley Carrier Services, the management company that we have contracted to provide consortium services, provides other services in relation to the regulations. However, the consortium fee does not cover any of the non-random expenses.

To participate in the 2018 consortium, complete the enrollment application and mail a check for \$125.00 or \$145.00 payable to the Kane County Farm Bureau by Dec. 30, 2017. Please renew your Farm Bureau membership if you have not done so. We must have your renewal payment as soon as possible to continue the random selection process.

For more information about the CDL pool, please call Kane County Farm Bureau at 630-584-8660.

Several Kane County farms and businesses offer

CHRISTMAS TREES

These locations include:

- Abbey Farms - Aurora • 630-966-7775
- Heinz Brothers Greenhouse - St. Charles • 630-377-6288
- Klein's Farm & Garden Market - Udina • 847-683-9647
- Kuipers Family Farm - Maple Park • 815-827-5200
- Lee's Trees - Lily Lake • 630-365-2116
- Spring Bluff Nursery - Sugar Grove • 630-466-4278
- Tom's Farm Market & Greenhouse - Huntley • 847-669-3421
- Trellis Farm & Garden - St. Charles • 630-584-2024



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2018 Kane County Farm Bureau Random Drug and Alcohol Testing Program Consortium Enrollment Application

Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____ Farm Bureau Number _____
 Phone (_____) _____ Mobile (_____) _____
 Business Name _____
 For Setup Location _____

Prescription Medicine Name or Names _____
 Social Security Number _____ CDL License Number _____

Pool participation price: \$125 per driver for fixed location testing, \$145 per driver for on-site testing.
 All pool participants must be an "MM" or "A" member of the Kane County Farm Bureau.
 The program runs Jan. 1, 2018 to Dec. 31, 2018.

Make checks payable to: Kane County Farm Bureau and return by December 29, 2017.

Drop off check and application or mail to:
 Kane County Farm Bureau • 2N710 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60174

I understand that the fee includes my name in the Kane County Farm Bureau pool to cover the random drug and alcohol testing requirement including the setup fee and the random alcohol confirmation test as mandated by the U. S. Department of Transportation. I further understand that non-random tests such as reasonable suspicion return to work follow-ups, missed appointments, after-hours charges, and post-accidents tests are not covered by the pool money and those charges will be my responsibility.

Date _____ Signature _____

Young Farmers receive high honor

Congratulations to the Kane County Farm Bureau Young Farmers committee on being named the winner of a prestigious Illinois Farm Bureau award. Only one county committee each of the 5 membership groups in Illinois can receive the IFB Harvest for ALL award. Membership groups are based on total county members, with group I having the lowest number of members, and group 5 having the highest. Kane County is a part of membership group 5, along with 19 other counties, including nearby Cook, DuPage, DeKalb, Lake and McHenry counties.

For the 16th consecutive year, the KCFB Young Farmers will receive the IFB Harvest for ALL award for their member-

ship group. This award is presented to the committee with the highest achievements in helping feed the hungry through a combination of pounds of food donated, dollars donated and volunteer hours worked. Young Farmers play a key role in encouraging farmers and community members alike to donate and help restock the shelves of local food pantries as well as though their own donations and service hours. The group also coordinates an annual FFA Acquaintance evening at the Northern Illinois Food Bank where members of the Young Farmers and high-school FFA members can get acquainted and provide a valuable community service. Over 50 families and area agribusinesses made

pledges to 14 local food pantries with over \$14,142 in donations for the project year through September 1.

Projects are submitted by the end of August, and then evaluated blind by 3 evaluators. Those selected as most outstanding projects or project winners will be recognized at the IFB Annual Meeting in the Exhibit Hall, during a December 3 Awards Ceremony and with a certificate. Wayne Gehrke, 2016-17 committee chair, will be presented with this award at the 2017 IFB Annual Meeting at the Palmer House in Chicago on Sunday, December 3rd.

*Congratulations
Young Farmers!*

Touch-A-Tractor set for April 6-8

Kane County Farm Bureau's 13th annual Touch-A-Tractor will be held Friday - Sunday, April 6-8. We're making preparations to bring some farm to the city for this ever-popular event. It could be your first chance to get the kiddies out of the house this spring.

Kids get to touch and even sit in seats of big machines they normally only see from the road. They can participate in hands-on activities, ride pedal tractors, play with toy tractors and farm equipment and visit animals such as baby chickens, sheep, a calf and a miniature horse at the farm zoo.

Area moms tell us their kids ask them to come back year after year, so be sure to add this event to your 2018 calendar.

Touch-A-Tractor is also the KCFB Foundation's biggest

community event and fundraiser. For 2018, T-A-T will charge \$2 adults or \$5 family admis-



Touch-A-Tractor - the name says it all! Well almost. There are dozens of hands-on activities and fun for the family. Come on out to the Farm Bureau to celebrate the coming of spring, April 6-8, 2018.

sion, but offer FREE admission to holders of a Winners Choice Raffle ticket. All proceeds from

Touch-A-Tractor and the Winner's Choice Raffle benefit the college scholarship and agricultural literacy programs of the not-for-profit Kane County Farm Bureau FOUNDATION.

Please call us if you have an antique tractor or farm animals that you could bring to the event. We also need farmers to explain how the farm equipment works, volunteers to take tickets and staff kids games, make popcorn, and "ag-vocates" to talk with consumers about how their food is grown and raised. If you are interested in volunteering or have tractors or equipment to share, please call the KCFB at 630 584-8660 and ask for Steve or Suzi.

ty side of the healthcare debate for hard-working families. I went from shopping among six health insurance companies for a private insurance plan in 2016 to just three in 2017. For 2018, only two carriers offer coverage in my area. Thankfully, both include my general doctor this time, but only one allows the freedom of a PPO, or preferred provider organization plan.

I've purchased healthcare plans with deductibles as high



as \$6,450. I've saved in a Health Savings Account when eligible. And my fury reached a climax on Nov. 1, 2016, the opening day of health plan enrollment for 2017. That day I learned that my insurance premium would rise 45 percent for the cheapest, most suitable, Affordable Care Act (ACA)-compliant plan that I could find. Still, I barely heard mention in the media that this theft of hard-earned income impacted the presidential election one week later. I bet my annual insurance premium it did.

I know a local farming couple who pays enough in premiums to

buy a new car outright every year. A Stark County farm family of six was forced to find additional income this year to cover \$42,000 for insurance premiums, easily one-third of their income. That information comes from an article in Crain's Chicago Business, which this fall brought attention to health insurance costs for farmers. A northern Illinois farmer told the newspaper he pays \$10,200 per year in premiums for just himself - and then faces a \$7,000 deductible when he needs care.

I've heard it before: Just work for another employer to obtain health insurance. Keep in mind, those companies face soaring insurance expenses, too. Employers change plans and deductibles to reduce costs. They may absorb some or all of the rising expense, which can keep employees blind to the burden of the total bill. The tunnel we're in looks pitch-black at the end, and the crisis escalates while we wait for Congress to compromise. It's time to make health insurance costs bearable again for hard-working, law-abiding citizens who deserve better from their country.

About the author: Joanie Stiers' family grows corn, soybeans and hay and raises beef cattle in West-Central Illinois.

Christmas shopping at the Kane Co. Farm Bureau!



Visit the Kane County Farm Bureau's Country Store for a selection of farm related Christmas stocking stuffers.

Look no further, the KCFB Country Store can be your one-stop-shop for holiday gifts! Offering everything from the perfect, fresh-cut Christmas tree, Stocking Stuffers, Santa gifts, and much, much more; we have what's on your list.

Let us be your ERTL farm toy supplier as well. We're no Toyland, but we have a variety of farm toys sure to put a smile on a kid's face.



**ERTL has been known worldwide as the leader in farm toys for nearly 70 years and we are proud to present this year's lineup of officially licensed die cast toys and replicas.*

RECYCLE your Holiday Lights

Kane County Farm Bureau is working with Elgin Recycling to recycle your Christmas lights that no longer work. It's a one stop deal: test your light strings, bring bad ones to the drop off box located in the corner of KCFB parking lot, and then buy your Christmas tree from Mark's Trees located on site. ONLY loose strings of Christmas lights are accepted for recycling - please do not put them in plastic bags. The recycling will take place through December 22nd.

Recruiter of the Month

Each month we honor the person who signs the most members into our organization. This month, the honor goes to Todd Wilcox! Todd has been a COUNTRY Financial Representative since August of 1995. His office is located at 2N710 Randall Rd, St. Charles, IL. As a token of our

appreciation, Todd receives two tickets to Charlestowne Movie Theater. Thank you for your continued support of the Kane County Farm Bureau and congratulations on your success!



Todd Wilcox



Farm Gate

by Joanie Stiers

Gagging on Health Insurance Premiums Like a Horse Pill

When 2018 begins, the annual premium for my private health insurance plan will have increased by 121 percent in five years.

I have spreadsheets tracking health insurance costs like our farm's corn yield trends. And, as in corn production, the numbers can tell a story: Our health insurance system is in critical condition with no cure on the horizon. Our government leaders debate to no avail while self-providing citizens who are too young for Medicare hold their noses as they pay their health insurance premiums. We continue to feed money into the dilapidated system because if we don't, a single illness or injury could jeopardize our lives or the family businesses we've built.

We're gagging on monthly premium payments like a horse pill. Yet, rarely do I catch the mainstream media giving genuine attention to the affordabili-

CONNECT WITH US



The Kane County Farm Bureau COUNTRY STORE



The Kane County Farm Bureau Country Store is in search of cottage food products from members. We are looking for unique items that will add a special flavor to a meal, make the perfect sauce, or are the snacks that you just can't put down!

Please contact us with your non-perishable or shelf-stable items either in person, via e-mail, or give us a call to discuss. Here is our contact information:

2N710 Randall Rd, St. Charles, IL 60174
info@kanecfb.com / 630-584-8660

Happy Holidays from the Kane County Farm Bureau