

# 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. 89 NO. 1 JANUARY 2024

## Kane County adds 1,000 acres of protected farmland

By Kane County Connects Staff

Farmland is intertwined with the agricultural heritage and economic vitality of Kane County and for that reason, County leaders have made preserving it a priority.

Since the early 2000s, Kane County has made significant progress in preserving its farmland under a Farmland Protection Ordinance. The County was the first in the state with this type of mechanism, allowing landowners to permanently protect their farmland. The goal is to create a balance between urban and rural development.

The County Board recently added six new farms to the list, bringing the total to 7,000 acres of protected farmland.

Since its inception in 2001, the ordinance has protected over 40 working farms, and the newly approved farmland marks a significant milestone in the County's efforts to conserve its rural traditions.

The Farmland Protection Ordinance is voluntary and highlights how local individuals

can act to promote sustainable agriculture and protect natural resources.



*"I would never want to see our farmland turned into a store, gas station or warehouse – these fields hold cherished memories and are part of our farming history,"*  
— Amy Schoger

Amy Schoger represents the "next generation" of family farmers in Kane County, growing corn and soybeans on land in Big Rock Township. She and her husband are following in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents who have also put land into the Kane County Farmland Preservation Program.

"This is our way of life; it's how we were raised, and it's all we know," said Schoger. "I would never want to see our

farmland turned into a store, gas station or warehouse – these fields hold cherished memories

and are part of our farming history," she added. "We want to continue to see cornfields for generations to come. By preserving our farmland, we have done that. It was an easy decision for us."

The six new farms now protected under the ordinance include:

- Schoger Ag, LLC in Big Rock Township and Kaneville Township
- Carl and Amy Schoger Farm

in Big Rock Township

- Souders Farm in Kaneville Township
- Maddox Farm in Virgil Township
- Hermann Farm in Big Rock Township
- Lucas Strom/Geneva Bank and Trust Farm in Campton Township

The six newly approved farms are now on the waiting list for application to federal match funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service farmland protection programs.

Currently there are over 600 family farms in Kane County and more than 1,000 family farmers supporting 14,000 local jobs and an estimated \$1.4 billion in total sales.

The benefits of protecting working farms include reducing greenhouse gases, suburban sprawl and increasing the tracts of uninterrupted farmland.

Agriculture and open space occupy nearly one-half of the land base of Kane County, leading Illinois in the number of nurseries, greenhouses, floricult

ture and sod production.

New livestock development also accounts for additional jobs creating additional economic growth within the County

Kane County has a long history of public policy efforts focused on its unique agricultural and rural landscape, starting in 1991 with an ordinance protecting farms from nuisance lawsuits. The County went on to develop a Stormwater Ordinance to protect and keep farmland productive in 2002 and establish and fund an Agricultural Conservation Easement & Farmland Protection Ordinance in 2001. There is also a Farmland Drainage Assistance Program to assist farmers in maintaining productive soil, and the Growing in Kane Ordinance to encourage and prioritize the production of fruits, vegetables, meats and dairy.

Kane County is now accepting new applications for the Agricultural Conservation Easement & Farmland Protection program.

## Scholarships available to help local students study agriculture

The Kane County Farm Bureau FOUNDATION is offering up to 20 scholarships available to students who wish to pursue higher education for a career in an agriculture related field. The applications are for the 2024-25 school year.

College students and high school seniors are invited to apply for these Kane County Farm Bureau FOUNDATION scholarships. Scan the QR code accompanying this article to start the application process, visit [www.kanecfb.com](http://www.kanecfb.com) or, pick up an application at the KCFB office, Randall Rd. and Oak Street in St. Charles. A brochure is also available on the website to assist students in identifying potential careers and areas of ag-related study.

Farm Bureau internships are also available for the 2023 winter, and 2024 spring and summer breaks. A separate Internship application is available on the

has awarded over \$500,000 in tuition assistance to local college students. The success of the Foundation's 2023 Drive-Thru BBQ's, Vintage Truck Raffle and Farms & Food Gala has allowed the Foundation Board to increase 2024-25 offerings to 21 scholarships valued at \$38,000.

• **KCFB FOUNDATION President's Scholarship:** (1 at \$5,000) for the most outstanding application for a KCFB Foundation Agricultural Scholarship from a high school senior.

• **KCFB FOUNDATION Agricultural Scholarships:** (Up to 10, at up to \$2,000 each). For students pursuing degrees in agriculture related career fields, or ag related service and support, whose parents are members of the Kane County Farm Bureau in good standing at the scholarship application deadline.

• **KCFB FOUNDATION General Scholarship:** (2 at

\$1,000 minimum) For high school seniors only whose parents are and have been members of the Kane County Farm Bureau in good standing since February 1, two years prior to the scholarship application deadline.

• **John Buck Memorial Scholarships:** (2 at \$1,500) For students from Kane, DeKalb, McHenry, Boone, DuPage, Lake or Will county pursuing a degree in an agriculture field with a preference for students from Kane County. (continued on page 2)



Scan to apply today!

website.

The KCFB FOUNDATION provided \$25,250 in scholarships to 19 college bound students last year and since 1989

### KCFB CALENDAR JANUARY 2024

- 1 New Year's Day, office closed
- 8 Young Farmers meeting, 6pm, @ M. Long's
- 11 Board of Directors, 7:00pm
- 17-19 Everything Local Conference, Springfield, IL
- 17-23 AFBF, Salt Lake City

All events at Kane County Farm Bureau unless otherwise noted.

### January Featured Special – Lemon Rosemary Pork Roast

The special this month is a box of 3 individually wrapped, 24 ounce boneless pork roasts cut from the most tender part of the pork loin. They can be cooked just like beef to an internal temperature of 145°F, sliced thin and served as an entrée. Each roast is netted together, and vacuum sealed to preserve the lemon-rosemary marinade. The special is offered for \$29.00 to Farm Bureau members, Plus Status members always receive a 5% discount on edible products at the Farm Bureau.

## 2024 Vintage Truck Raffle tickets available now

Tickets are now available for the KCFB FOUNDATION's 2024 Vintage Truck Raffle.

The 2024 Grand Prize is a 1947 Dodge pickup truck. As in past years, Raffle ticket stubs will provide FREE admission to Touch-A-Tractor in April 2024 on the lawn at Kane County Farm Bureau.

Tickets are \$20 each or 3/\$50. The truck runs and drives well. Perfect to promote a farm stand or pumpkin patch, as is

for car shows or a great style for a resto-mod. Ticket sales help provide college scholarships and Ag Literacy programs for Kane County students.

Return the form on page 8, stop by, or call the Kane County Farm Bureau at 630-584-8660 to purchase your tickets with VISA, MasterCard or Discover.

The winning ticket will be drawn on October 10th, 2024 during our Fay's BBQ drive-thru.



The KCFB Foundation is sponsoring a Vintage Truck Raffle to raise funds for College Scholarships and Ag Literacy programs. The Grand Prize in the 2024 Raffle is a 1947 Dodge 1/2 ton pick-up.

# Illinois Farm Bureau® members elect new president, vice president

Illinois Farm Bureau® (IFB) announced the election of Brian Duncan, a grain and livestock farmer from Polo, Ogle County, as the organization's 16th president, and Evan Hultine, a grain farmer from Princeton, Bureau County, as vice president. They will each serve a two-year term at the helm of the organization.

Four new members were also elected to serve two-year terms on the IFB Board of Directors. IFB is a nonprofit, membership organization directed by farmers who join through their county Farm Bureau. IFB's 329 voting delegates elected these new leaders during the organization's annual meeting in Chicago.

"This organization stands on the shoulders of giants – our farmer members – who have come before and plotted

a course for this organization," said Duncan. "I look forward to navigating and charting that course along with them, our county Farm Bureaus and our board of directors into the next chapter. It is an incredible privilege to work alongside the team we have at IFB."

In his capacity as IFB president, Duncan is also president of COUNTRY Financial, Illinois Agricultural Service Company and chair of the IAA Foundation.

Previously, Duncan served as IFB vice president. He also served as president of the Ogle County Farm Bureau (CFB) from 2004-2017, and on the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) Swine Advisory Committee 2003-2006, National Pork Producers Council

Price Discovery Task Force, Ogle County Pork Producers board of directors and the IFB Young Leaders Committee from 1990-1994. He was the IFB Discussion Meet winner in 1990 and Young Leader Achievement Award winner in 1999.

Duncan is a graduate of Sauk Valley Community College and an active member of Forrester Grove Presbyterian Church. He and his wife, Kelly, raise corn, soybeans, wheat, pigs and cattle on their farm near Polo; they have four children. Hultine has served as Bureau CFB president since 2017. He previously served as Bureau CFB Young Leader chair, IFB Young Leader Committee member 2013-2016, IFB Young Leader chair 2016-2017 and AFBF Issues Advisory Committee member 2017-2021.

He is a recipient of the 2022 IFB Young Leader Achievement Award. In 2023, he placed third in the AFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award competition. He holds a bachelor's degree in horticulture from University of Illinois.

Hultine is a sixth-generation farmer in Princeton, where he grows corn, soybeans and seed corn.

"For just as our crops flourish with proper care, so does an organization thrive when it nurtures and invests in its members," Hultine said during his candidate speech to the delegate body. "Whether you know it or not, you've been investing in me

for many years now. Now you're cashing in on your investment in me to see the policies, the values and the vision that resonate with each of you and to create the Illinois Farm Bureau that you want to be a partner with.



New IFB president Brian Duncan

## Scholarships

continued from page 1)

erence given to students with agricultural mechanics and turf management career ambitions.

Buck was the founder of Buck Brothers, Inc. and J.W. Turf, both of Hampshire, dealers and distributors of John Deere farm equipment and golf course maintenance equipment, respectively. The family & friends of John Buck established the John Buck Memorial Scholarship for agriculture students through the Kane County Farm Bureau Foundation.

**• Chuck Swanson Memorial Scholarship:** (\$1,500 minimum) For a student residing in Kane County pursuing a degree in an agricul-

ture related career field.

**• AGCO Parts Platinum Scholarship:** (\$2,500) One award for the most outstanding applicant currently enrolled and who has completed at least one full year of college education, pursuing a degree in an agriculture related field of study, residing in the state of Illinois.

**• AGCO Parts Division Scholarships:** (2 at \$1,000) Two awards for students from Illinois pursuing a degree in an agricultural related career field of study.

**• AGCO Global Women's Network Scholarship:** (2 at \$1,000) Two awards for women from Illinois pursuing a degree in an agricultural related career field of study.

For more information on FOUNDATION scholarship

programs, call Kane County Farm Bureau at 630-584-8660, or go to [www.kanecfb.com](http://www.kanecfb.com) and click on "Scholarships & Internships".

Application deadline is February 15, 2024.



Eric Metz of Plato Center, recipient of a 2023-24 KCFB Agriculture Scholarship.

## From Food to Flowers: Everything Local Conference Jan. 17-19

Save the date for the second annual From Food to Flowers: Everything Local Conference, Jan. 17-19, 2024 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield.

This combined Illinois Food, Farmers Market and Specialty Crop Conference is a collaboration among the Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Specialty Growers Association and Illinois Farmers Market Association to bring together more people than ever from across Illinois' local food, specialty crop and farmers market supply chains. Available in both in-person and virtual formats, this unique gathering combines the best parts of the events previously known as the Illinois Specialty Crop Conference and the Live Local: Local Food and Farmers Market conference.

This one-of-a-kind event brings together farmers and agribusiness leaders from across the state with other partners

throughout the Illinois local food supply chain. By more efficiently connecting the supply chain, more income is generated; fewer businesses handle the product in processing and transit; and the products are harvested and packaged at a fresher stage. These improvements benefit the local economies and food opportunities of communities across the state.

You asked, and we listened.

Producers want to know more about getting the most from their farms. Local food interests and farmers markets want to work with excellent producers to promote our state's local food systems. These efforts to build relationships don't stop at the fencerow or market gate. So, we've found a way to connect the right people to enhance the robust Illinois local and specialty agriculture system.

## 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 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 resources, renewable energy or agricultural heritage and history-related topics for inclusion in future issues of the Farmer.

KANE COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD ATTENDANCE												
JANUARY 2023 THRU DECEMBER 2023												
	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
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	X
B. DIENST <sup>A</sup>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
M. DUMOULIN <sup>A</sup>						X	X	*	*	X	*	X
K. ENGEL						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	X
W. KECK	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			*	*
A. LENKAITIS		X		*	*	X	*	*		X	*	X
D. PITSTICK			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

\* Attendance by electronic means. <sup>A</sup> Elected June 2023.

### Kane County Farmer

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# Get on board! Kane-DuPage SWCD seeks candidates to board of directors

Kane County residents are encouraged to help serve our local community by running for Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District's board of directors. All persons of legal voting age who own or reside on land located within the boundaries of the Kane DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District are encouraged to apply.

Nominations for the two year term of the office of Director may be obtained at the District's office at 2315 Dean St., Suite 100, St. Charles, between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm.

To obtain a petition, you must provide proof of residency or ownership of land located within the boundaries of the District. Petitions must be signed by a minimum of 25 persons who are of voting age and who reside or

own land within the boundaries of the Kane DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District.

Completed petitions must be returned to the District's office no later than 4:30 pm on January 15, 2024.

The Kane-DuPage SWCD's mission is to support residents' quality of life by leading efforts to ensure healthy soil, clean water, sustainable land development and regenerative agriculture. Learn more at their website: [kanedupageswccd.org](http://kanedupageswccd.org).




**KCFB FOUNDATION scholarships available to help local students study agriculture**  
Scan to apply today!

## Director candidates sought

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 those classified as "regular" (farmers and farmland owners) and "professional" (those with professions directly related to production agriculture) members residing in Kane County.

Five directors will be elected, by ballots mailed in in the spring of 2024 to voting members in Kane County. All directors are elected on an at-large basis.

To suggest potential candidates for election, members should call 630-584-8660, or fill out the form below. Farm Bureau leaders will be soliciting members to serve on a 2024 Nominating Committee, to suggest candidates for election.

Return on or before Thursday, February 8.

The Nominating Committee will evaluate candidates and propose a slate to run for director elections. Regular members will receive an election ballot in April or May of 2024.

### KCFB Board of Directors nomination form

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

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Township \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Membership No. (if known) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Form completed & returned by: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to: Kane County Farm Bureau  
2N710 Randall Rd., St. Charles, IL 60174

Return on or before Thursday, February 8th.

The Nominating Committee will evaluate candidates and propose a slate to run for director elections. Regular members will receive an election ballot in April or May of 2024.

# Northern IL Farm Bureau has TWO great travel opportunities

1 See three "Belles of the South": Charleston, Jekyll Island and Savannah. Tour Dates: March 15- 21, 2024. The beautiful Spanish moss-draped oaks, antebellum mansions, lush gardens, and ornate architecture

will make you feel like you've stepped back in time! Enjoy southern hospitality while visiting coastal islands, historic plantations, and beautiful cities! 2 Our second travel opportunity will take you abroad.

On the Danube Explorer River Tour you will visit five countries: The Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Slovakia and Hungary and enjoy a seven night cruise in a suite or stateroom of your choice onboard an

Emerald Waterways Starship. Tour Dates: August 24-September 3, 2024.

Both tours are organized by Mayflower Tours and County Farm Bureau members from Kane, McHenry, Winnebago, Boone, Lake, Stephenson, Carroll and Jo Daviess are invited to attend either of these tours. Please call for more information: 630-584-8660.

Historic Forsyth Fountain in Savannah, GA.



## Opportunities abound for Kane County teachers, volunteers

### S.P.R.O.U.T.S.

The Spring Program of Reading Outreach to Urban Teachers and Students brings volunteers into area 3rd grade classrooms to read an agriculture-themed book to students and share their knowledge about rural life and farming. The book is then donated to the school library. We are looking for volunteers for this activity, traditionally conducted in April. We encourage 3rd grade teachers, and volunteers, to contact our office at 630-584-8660 to register those interest in participating. Ask for Kelcee.

### Touch-a-Tractor

Kane County Farm Bureau's 3-day spring open house is a fun opportunity for "city folk" to see antique and new tractors and combines up-close, sit in seats, take photos and mingle with local farmers. Kids will enjoy the many farm-themed activities and games. Touch-A-Tractor is scheduled for April 12-14 on the lawn at Kane County Farm Bureau. Save the date and come on out for some farm fun on our KCFB lawn!

### IAA Foundation Scholarships Now Available

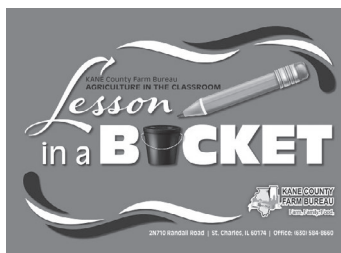
The IAA Foundation endeavors to enhance the future of agriculture by providing college scholarships to Illinois Farm Families, Illinois Farm Bureau members, spouses, or their children who major in agriculture, agribusiness, or an ag-related course of study. The IAA Foundation is pleased to administer scholarships on

behalf of agricultural partners and families who wish to support future generations and help assure a well-qualified and professional agricultural workforce in Illinois while supporting farming communities.

The application period runs from January 1 - February 15, 2024. Applications are due February 15, 2024. Find more information and apply online at <https://www.iaafoundation.org/our-mission-at-work/student-scholarships/>

### Lesson-In-A-Bucket

Are you an elementary teacher in Kane County? Are you looking for fun and innovative ways to bridge the gap between agriculture and your classroom? Look no further than Lesson-In-A-Bucket! KCFB will be lending monthly themed ag-lessons in a 5-gallon chore bucket - yes just like the ones you would find on the farm! Complete with themed books, activities, and Ag-Mags about topics such as apples, pumpkins, or corn!



This month's theme is all about dairy! Inside the chore bucket, K-5 teachers will find a classroom set of Dairy Ag-Mags that pairs perfectly with the Dairy Ag-Venture that helps

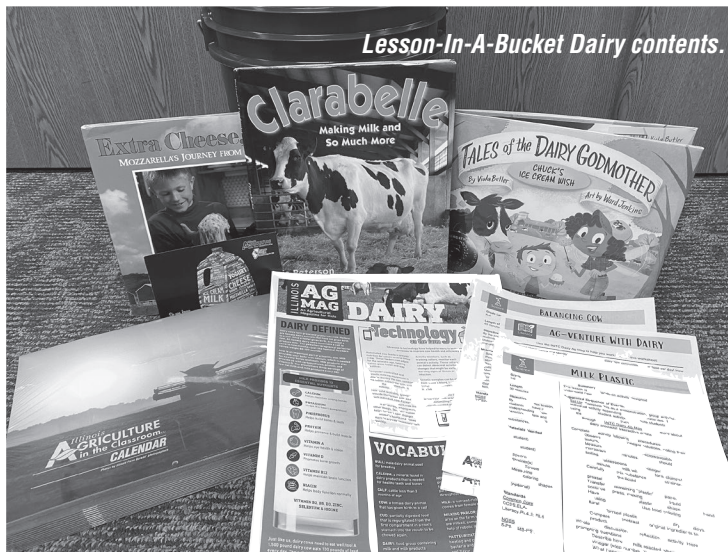
students apply their mathematics and literacy skills! In addition, teachers will find dairy themed activities such as Milk Plastic, which is a fun and interactive science lesson designed to help students understand how proteins are sensitive to acids. Students will get things moving with the Balancing Cow lesson which helps students understand what balanced and unbalanced forces are and what causes objects to move!

Each of the 5 lesson plans lay out the learning blueprint including target grade, subject, length of lesson, objective, materials needed, standards, suggested readings (some included in the bucket!) as well as instructions from beginning to end.

Who doesn't enjoy a scrumptious bowl of macaroni and cheese? What kinds of cheese do you like best? Have you ever stopped to wonder where the cheesy goodness comes from? As an added bonus there is a mAGic lesson about Dairy where students will follow the process from cow to cheese and learn the fascinating facts about the steps involved to make some of their favorite cheese with the Cud to Curd lesson! The Multidisciplinary Agriculture Integrated Curriculum (mAGic) lessons are designed to bring agriculture to life in your classroom. They address the Illinois Learning Standards in math, science, English language arts and social studies.

Inside each bucket, there is an infographic postcards for each student to keep all about dairy including nutritional facts, marketing myths, and consumer information about milk!

We hope you are udderly-excited about dairy and allow us to help bring agriculture into your classroom this winter! Need lessons or activities targeted towards younger audiences? Contact Kelcee to see how she can help modify lessons or activities to best meet the needs of your students! Buckets about apples, pumpkins, corn, and specialty crops are available for checkout too! Call Kelcee at 630-584-8660 to reserve yours today!



## AG LITERACY CORNER

By Kelcee Miller, Development & Ag Literacy Coordinator



### Hello Kane County & Happy New Year!

I hope you all had a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season! I cannot believe how fast 2003 flew by! Similar to Joanie's Farm Gate column this month (page 6), January is often a time for preparation, maintenance, and goal setting for the year ahead, whether it is on or off the farm. To help keep the spark and momentum rolling forward all year long, I'm going to share some of my tips and tricks for goal setting.

First and foremost with any type of goal setting, you have to be honest with yourself about where you are and where it is you want to go. Similar to driving a car, it doesn't do you any good trying to give directions or map out your route to an end destination without first knowing where you are.

Next, it is important to make sure the goals you are working towards mean something or hold a strong value to you. If your why behind said goal is not big enough or doesn't light a spark within you, you need to find a new goal. The meaning behind

your goals will be the fuel that gets you fired up every single day and pulls you through the "test days." Test days are life's way of challenging you to see how truly committed you are to achieving your goals. Will you step up and push through the obstacles in your way and resist temptations or will you cave under pressure and give up on your goal all together?

My next piece of advice is to set attainable and measurable goals for yourself. If you're just starting out, maybe try focusing on 3-5 smaller, more manageable goals. Sometimes with goal setting we can have a tendency to have a laundry list of goals we want to achieve, however it can cause us to feel overwhelmed if we aren't moving the needle or seeing progress and thus we throw in the towel. Try focusing in on the ones that mean the most to you and track your daily progress. Writing them out and seeing them daily is another key component in goal setting as well as holding yourself accountable. There are tons of apps, journals, and other resources these days that can be helpful in helping you track your progress. There is no right

## KANE COUNTY FARMER

or wrong, utilize the resource that works best for you.

Once you've done the previous steps, I encourage you to find yourself an accountability partner, friend, or coach for two main reasons. First, having someone you can check-in with daily or weekly to help you track your progress with an unbiased opinion. Are you doing the work you said you were going to do? Where might you need some improvements? This should be someone who can hold you accountable and call you out if you start to slack on the work you say you were going to do. If you'd rather keep them to yourself, make sure you are honest with yourself and have tools or resources available so you can visually track your progress and see how things are going. Secondly, having someone to hold you accountable also helps you to put things into perspective as well as celebrate the small victories or milestones along the journey toward your goals! Celebrating and stacking those little victories along the way as you work towards a big goal helps to keep the momentum rolling forward. Forward progress is still progress and being a better version of yourself than when you started to chase your goal is something to be celebrated!

Another piece of advice I have when it comes to goal setting is to eliminate distractions or temptations that could take your eyes off the target you are

aiming for. This could be such distractions as surrounding yourself with negative people, scrolling through your phone late at night when you should be sleeping, or sweet treats and tasty snacks in the pantry when you said you were going to eat healthier. If it's not helping you get closer to your goals or encouraging healthier habits then I would encourage you to reflect and reassess your surroundings and daily habits so you are setup for success.

These are just a few of my goal setting tips, but I encourage you to set big and small goals for yourself this year. Even if they scare you a little bit or seem out of reach – I promise you will come out at the end a better version of yourself for getting the courage to reach for more. Step outside your comfort zone. Get comfortable with the uncomfortable and learn something new along your goal journey. There is no one size fits all when it comes to goal setting. Find what works best for you and get to work!

As I have mentioned before,

when it comes to goal setting and my mindset in general, I like to use the analogy of driving a car. You are in control, in the driver's seat. In order to get to your destination or my goal, you have to make sure you are properly fueled up, in good maintenance and to keep your eyes forward and focus on your own lane. If you spend too much time looking in the rear view mirror or getting distracted while driving it will only slow you down, take your eyes off the road, or worse – lost. Not every day will be a smooth and easy drive and some days you may drive more miles than others. There will be bumps in the road and the occasional storm along the way, but as long as you keep moving forward every single day towards your goal; you will get there. So when it comes to goal setting, planning for the year ahead or setting New Year's Resolutions this year – I encourage you to keep your eyes forward and to consistently moving forward every single day!

Happy January!

## Book of the month

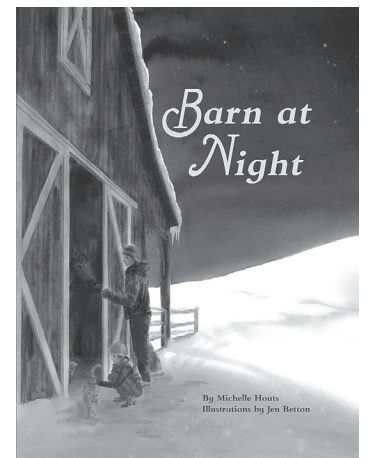
A farmer's work is never done. No matter the day or the season, there's always something that needs to be accomplished. And just like you and me, farmer's livestock need to be fed, watered, and tended to daily. Farmers understand that they have a responsibility of having another life depend on them. No extreme temps or holidays can stop a farmer from his or her daily chores and spending some quality time in the barn day and night.

The book of the month for January is *Barn at Night*, written by Michelle Haus and illustrated by Jen Betton. In this beautifully illustrated and sweet story, Haus takes readers on a journey to one farmer's barn at night. Told from the perspective a farmer's daughter, she shows us that even on the darkest and coldest winter days, the barn can be a warm, safe and magical place. For many farmers, the barn is not only a place that is a home to many barnyard animals and equipment, it's so much more than that. It's a place to learn, grow, and achieve whatever you set your mind to – big or small. It's a place where farmers learn some of the hardest lessons in life and have to take responsibility for their actions by having

another life or lives depend on them. The barn is the platform to create lifelong memories for both the farmer, their family and their animals.

Haus gives readers a glimpse of what it looks like to be up before the dawn and chasing the light at night in the crisp wintery air and how in the kindest of ways animals communicate to us. To see the excitement of *Barn at Night*, come on in to the Kane County Farm Bureau Library.

The Kane County Farm Bureau Library was made possible by Bob Konen and Dean Dunn, and later supported by the Bob Konen Family.



*Barn at Night* by Michelle Haus, illustrated by Jen Betton

## Local farm tours for Kane Co. teachers coming Summer 2024

Join KCFB for "behind the barn doors" tours of Kane County farms and local food businesses summer 2024!

Teachers will board a bus at KCFB and visit specialty crop, grain, and dairy farms, a nursery, a distillery, and much more agriculture fun!

Teachers will gain first-hand knowledge about agriculture which they can take back to their classrooms to share with their students and earn CPDUs with KCFB

this summer! Plus teachers who attend will also receive numerous learning materials and lesson plans too!

Stay tuned for more details to come!



## Helping you protect what matters most



Jeffrey Orman  
Agency Manager  
St. Charles  
630-584-0001



Bob Effner  
St. Charles  
630-588-2002



Kelly Landorf  
St. Charles  
630-762-1328



Jeff Jones  
St. Charles  
630-492-5293



Norma Grathoff  
St. Charles  
630-492-5324



Laura Osters  
St. Charles  
630-762-1326



Chris Regula  
St. Charles  
630-485-5155



Donna Tonoviz  
St. Charles  
630-549-7694



Orazio Difruscolo  
St. Charles  
630-762-1329



Ashraf Gerges  
Aurora  
630-898-3750



Edward Sluehm  
Geneva  
630-845-8245



Michael O'Brien  
Geneva  
630-762-0852



Luke Fawkes  
Elgin  
847-742-0002



Victor Alvarado  
Elgin  
847-742-0003



Miryam Cabrera  
Elgin  
630-762-1329



Bob Riedel  
West Dundee  
847-428-5434



Gary Bolger  
West Dundee  
847-531-6110



Sherri Schramer  
Elburn  
630-365-9500



Dominick Davero  
Elburn  
630-365-3737



Charles Quick  
Hampshire  
847-683-2100



David Berreles  
Hampshire  
847-683-2100



Dan Cooper  
Sugar Grove  
630-466-9600

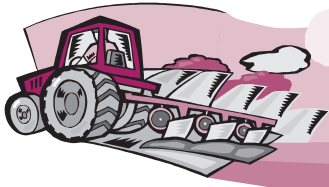


Ted Schuster  
Sugar Grove  
630-466-9600

"COUNTRY Financial" is the marketing name for the COUNTRY Financial family of affiliated companies (collectively, "COUNTRY"), which include COUNTRY Life Insurance Company, COUNTRY Mutual Insurance Company, and their respective subsidiaries, located in Bloomington, Illinois.

1220-509HC\_07683-5/2/2023





# Farm Facts @ Fun

Compiled by Kelcee Miller, Ag Literacy Coordinator

## The Farm in Winter



Farmers prep for the next busy season

We know that during Illinois winter we tend to get sick more often and freeze as soon as we step outdoors. We usually combat this by staying warm inside and taking care of ourselves to avoid the sick bug. What about animals on the farm? Check out this blog post from Illinois Farm Families to learn how one farm takes extra care of their dairy cows and calves this time of year. <https://watchusgrow.org/2021/02/01/caring-for-farm-animals-during-illinois-winter/>.

You may know that spring and fall are busy seasons for farmers in Illinois. However, work doesn't slow down just because the days get shorter, the temperatures get colder, and the rain turns to snow. Read this article from Illinois Farm Bureau Partners and learn more about what farmers do this time of year. <https://ilfbpartners.com/farm/farmers-for-all-seasons-learn-what-illinois-farmers-do-in-winter/>.

Did you know that there is a crop in Illinois that can grow in the winter? It's true – winter wheat is planted in the fall and harvested in early summer. Read below to learn some more facts about winter wheat in Illinois. <https://ilfbpartners.com/farm/farm-facts/winter-wheat-facts/>.

## Salt crystal snowflakes

### Materials

- Salt
- Mason jars (1 for each snowflake)
- Pipe cleaners
- Clothes pins
- Water (3 cups per mason jar)

### Directions

On a stovetop, boil desired cups of water based on the amount of snowflakes you intend to make (3 cups per mason jar).

Once water begins to boil start adding salt. Keep pouring it in until crystals start to form on the surface of the water. (It will take almost the entire container of salt for 3 snowflakes, so don't be shy!)

When the water is cooling, design snowflakes from pipe cleaners. Just make sure the snowflakes can easily fit through the mouth of the mason jar.

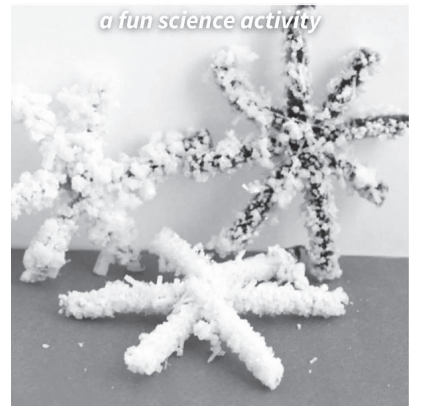
When the snowflakes are designed, attach a pipe cleaner hanger to the top of each snowflake so you can suspend

it in the mason jar.

Suspend the snowflake in the saltwater using a clothespin to hold them in place. Then let the snowflakes sit in a sunny window for 2-3 days.

After 2-3 days, remove your snowflakes and let them dry. Now your salt crystal snowflakes are ready to hang and admire the beautiful creations!

This homemade salt crystal snowflakes may found here: <https://livingwellmom.com/salt-crystal-snowflakes/>



a fun science activity

## Easy hot chocolate dip

The recipe of the month is inspired by our KCFB Young Farmer, Jessica Dunteman of Hampshire. Last month she hosted our monthly meeting and had this tasty treat as a light hors d'oeuvre before our meeting kicked off and it was such a hit! Perfect winter-time treat can you can easily pair with different dipping options!

### Ingredients

- 8 oz. frozen whipped topping (thawed)
- 2 packets hot chocolate mix
- ½ cup mini chocolate chips
- ½ cup mini marshmallows
- Graham crackers, cookies, pretzels, or fruit for dipping

### Instructions

Stir together the whipped

topping and hot chocolate mix until well combined

Fold in the chocolate chips and marshmallows

Transfer to a serving bowl and top with additional marshmallows and chocolate chips

Serve with graham crackers, cookies, animal crackers, pretzels, or fruit for dipping and enjoy!

Tip: Once complete, let it chill in the refrigerator prior to serving so the hot chocolate mix completely dissolves into the Cool Whip!

Recipe provided by: [https://crayonsandcravings.com/hot-chocolate-dip/?utm\\_source=pinterest&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=social-pug](https://crayonsandcravings.com/hot-chocolate-dip/?utm_source=pinterest&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=social-pug)

## January is ...

New Year's Day	1	Quinoa Day	16
Apple Gifting Day	1	Gourmet Coffee Day	18
Cream Puff Day	2	Popcorn Day	19
Swiss Cheese Day	2	Cheese Lover's Day	20
Spaghetti Day	4	Granola Bar Day	21
Whipped Cream Day	5	Blonde Brownie Day	22
Apple Tree Day	6	Hot Sauce Day	22
Bean Day	6	Pie Day	23
English Toffee Day	8	Rhubarb Pie Day	23
Apricot Day	9	Peanut Butter Day	24
Milk Day	11	Fish Taco Day	25
Curried Chicken Day	12	Peanut Brittle Day	26
Hot Tea Day	12	Chocolate Cake Day	27
Peach Melba Day	13	Blueberry Pancake Day	28
Hot Pastrami Sandwich Day	14	Corn Chip Day	29
Bagel Day	15	Croissant Day	30
Fresh Squeezed Juice Day	15	Hot Chocolate Day	31
Strawberry Ice Cream Day	15		

## Congratulations

to **Lena Harris** of Aurora, the December 2023 word search winner. Her name was chosen from the entries received for correctly completing last month's word search puzzle. For her participation, she receives a fun prize to be picked up at the Farm Bureau within the next 30 days (prizes will not be mailed). Thank you, Lena, for reading the *Kane County Farmer* and continue to watch each month for more great opportunities from the Kane County Farm Bureau.

## JOKE

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?  
*Frostbite!*

What do you call it when a snowman throws a temper tantrum?  
*A meltdown!*

Who is Frosty's favorite aunt?  
*Aunt Artica!*



Easy hot chocolate dip

## The Farm and Farmers in winter

Q	B	X	J	H	K	I	J	R	F	W	E	C	S	P	D	R	B	R	K	Balance Sheets
T	R	A	N	S	I	T	I	O	N	A	R	G	M	C	C	B	J	E	X	Baler
S	N	O	I	T	C	E	P	S	N	I	I	E	D	O	B	R	W	L	Y	Bookkeeping
S	N	O	I	T	A	R	A	P	E	R	P	L	L	E	W	Z	W	L	O	Chores
S	T	E	E	H	S	E	C	N	A	L	A	B	U	A	L	E	R	I	L	Equipment
C	R	K	C	S	F	S	I	P	G	R	F	O	N	R	B	W	R	T	E	Failures
E	S	I	N	Y	E	Q	R	U	N	E	O	Q	G	E	E	W	O	S	B	Grain
T	G	M	R	R	W	E	K	O	I	P	Y	U	Q	Y	F	S	H	N	I	Improvements
S	G	R	O	H	S	W	G	R	P	L	N	O	S	A	E	S	I	M	K	Inspections
N	E	H	A	E	K	X	R	G	E	A	U	G	I	F	X	P	P	O	U	Knowledge
W	C	S	A	H	H	G	A	E	E	C	H	Q	Z	C	L	R	N	I	E	Leases
J	I	R	S	N	C	W	I	R	K	E	U	M	C	A	O	L	Q	L	B	Maintenance
H	C	N	J	E	F	E	N	P	K	M	F	A	N	V	B	Y	M	C	G	Mowers
H	J	W	T	Q	C	T	R	E	O	E	F	S	E	S	G	G	A	H	P	Oil Changes
E	T	Q	I	E	X	C	L	P	O	N	N	M	P	E	I	W	T	A	R	Plans
G	Y	C	V	D	R	X	U	W	B	T	E	U	Q	S	Q	M	G	N	O	Preparations
Z	H	L	K	Z	D	W	Z	S	R	N	T	X	E	A	L	J	T	G	E	Recharge
E	Q	U	I	P	M	E	N	T	T	U	X	K	Y	E	Q	R	U	E	K	Regroup
K	D	L	T	V	C	X	A	S	I	R	J	Q	B	L	O	S	Y	S	E	Replacement
M	A	I	N	T	E	N	A	N	C	E	L	Q	P	H	E	R	F	N	Y	Research
																				Season
																				Successes
																				Tiller
																				Transition
																				Winter

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: Kane County Farm Bureau, 2N710 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60174 by January 15, 2024 to be entered in our drawing for a fun prize.

Prize must be picked up at the KCFB office within one month of newspaper publication.



### Farms prep for next busy season

We hadn't started changing oil in the tractors, backhoe nor skid steer yet, and our 15-year-old expressed concern. I explained that his favorite, after-school activity in the farm shop was on hold until after the two weekends of extended-family Christmas parties that cleared the space and prompted a deep clean for a holiday potluck, gift opening and gymnasium-style fun on the farm.

Soon enough, maintenance work will dirty the shop floor and oil absorbency granules will be our son's best friend. Most of our farm's equipment will rotate through the shop this winter for oil changes, inspections and replacement of high-wear parts. Planters will unfold for row-by-row examination, part replacements and technology upgrades. The hay baler, mowers and even the small things like Mom's garden tiller make their shop presence before field work resumes in April. The goal: everything works at go time.

Our farm team appreciates the pattern of normal, eight-hour workdays with a designated lunch break between harvesting and planting crops. We take this time to regroup, recharge, market grain and move forward. In this winter season of self-evaluation, my parents, brother

and I will meet to discuss farm improvements and transition plans. Bookkeeping, balance sheets, tax planning, land leases and employee meetings quickly fill the days between conferences and meetings about farm policy, grain marketing, agronomic research and other ways to better the farm.

Dad tends to our small herd of beef cows, a daily chore most pleasant in mild winters. Otherwise, heavy snow and sub-zero winds add shoveling, scooping and thawing to the routine. Our employees haul corn from our grain bins to facilities that produce biofuel and feed co-products. They deliver soybeans, depending on the type, to various places for export, seed or use in high-protein foods.

This year will bring a combination of sticking with what works and trying something new in search of the next tried-and-true. The knowledge passed down from previous generations tells us our farm was shaped on both failures and successes, but we're always aiming for the latter. Here's hoping for a safe and successful 2024 in farm country.

*About the author: Joanie Stiers farms with her family in West-Central Illinois, where they grow corn, soybeans, hay and cover crops and raise beef cattle, backyard chickens and farmkids.*

## 10 tips to prevent winter accidents/damage

By Tammie Sloup, FarmWeek

Mother Nature was not kind to the Midwest in 2023.

In fact, COUNTRY Financial's top three costliest storm events occurred this year.

"The Midwest was peppered with hail and wind events, and coupled with that, just the inflationary pressures and market and what claims are costing, it's been quite the year," Jesse Kohlbecker, vice president of Claims and Client Services at COUNTRY, told RFD Radio.

And with winter weather on the way, the risks increase for accidents and damage to property on the farm.

"Common things we see are things like frozen pipes and ice dams. That really can damage the roofs, but they can also cause water damage to the interior of the homes," he said. "In terms of our farm clients, winter brings an uptick in risk with respect to fires from temporary heating sources and electric connections. And of course, with winter comes ice and snow so we see an uptick in an auto accidents."

Kohlbecker shared tips to prevent accidents and damage:

- Clean gutters to prevent ice dams from forming
- Disconnect garden hoses
- Make sure tires are in good shape on vehicles

- Fill up propane tanks
- Prepare shelter for animals and make sure feed is stored in a dry location
- Ensure water lines are winterized or freezeproof
- Make sure snow removal equipment is easily accessible
- Keep heat on to prevent frozen pipes and flooding in homes
- Make sure temporary heating sources are approved for indoor use and in good condition
- Shovel walkways and use ice melt

According to a recent COUNTRY Financial Security Index Survey, one in four homeowners are performing home maintenance, Kohlbecker said. Yet 50% of homeowners are concerned they don't have enough coverage for home repairs.

"It's so important that you have a relationship with an insurance agent and you meet with that insurance agent at a minimum annually and have those discussions about maybe things that have changed in your life," he said. "Do you have a new addition to the family? Have you made significant repairs? Do you need to complete a farm personal property inventory?"

## Delegates advance policy resolutions at IFB annual meeting

Farmland ownership, forestry issues and reduced acreage requirements for agricultural land use and farm credit were key focus points of county Farm Bureau delegates at Illinois Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting.

Delegates received 23 policy submittals from August through November, and approved five policy changes from the floor, highlighting the grassroots legislative process which governs IFB's policy agenda.

"This is a great opportunity for our organization, all of our members get together, the grassroots process that we go through to set our policy is unique" Kevin Semlow, IFB director of governmental affairs and commodities, told reporters during a press conference. "Our members stood up and they made some pretty big decisions today."

Those big decisions included passing a resolution adding new language to policy regarding farmland ownership. The submittal from White CFB would add new language stating IFB opposes the purchase of American farmland by foreign entities considered national security threats.

Clinton County delegates, who proposed a similar policy at the July Resolutions meeting, added an amendment to the submittal which would restrict ownership from all foreign entities.

There was passionate debate on the floor with a delegate from Champaign CFB expressing concerns over the policy's potential impact on research companies, such as those near University of Illinois. Delegates from Ogle CFB expressed concerns regarding foreign owned packing facilities.

Janet McCabe, Cook County Farm Bureau president who chaired the State and Local Government subcommittee, responded to floor discussion by explaining the committee's reasoning for not originally including all foreign ownership. She said the committee felt strongly

ly about private property rights and did not want to restrict a willing seller from a willing buyer. McCabe also discussed companies that are owned by foreign entities and required to conduct seed research in each region.

The amendment to include all foreign ownership passed the delegate floor.

Delegates advanced a fall proposal made by Lee CFB, which supports reducing the required acreage to be enrolled in an agricultural area. Current state statute requires at least 350 acres of contiguous land for populations under 600,000 and 100 acres for denser populations over 600,000.

The policy adds language to existing IFB policy supporting farmland preservation. Delegates emphasized enrollment in ag areas is a voluntary commitment and would still need to be approved by a local county board.

"It is a voluntary program, and the county would still have approval, so by us saying we would be for a lower amount going in, we're for it but it would be up to the county to decide," McCabe said this fall.

Delegates added language to IFB's forestry policy supporting active forest management on privately-owned forests and woodlands, the planting of trees on land unable to meet conservation requirements to help control soil erosion, ongoing research monitoring and education regarding forest health and repeal of the state's 4% tax on timber sales.

The proposal came from Brad Petersburg in Jo Daviess County, who is a member of the Illinois Forestry Association and a strong supporter of good forest management. Petersburg helped work on the Forestry Development Act in the 1980s.

There were concerns raised from the delegate floor that repealing organizational support for the tax would send a message of farmers being unsupportive of

conservation efforts. However, delegates were informed that while the original purpose of the tax was to help facilitate forest management, in recent years the tax revenue has instead funded Illinois Department of Natural Resources operations.

"My message to everybody is that I strongly support forest management," Petersburg said in an interview after the submittal was approved. "The funds are no longer being used to support good forest management; they are being used to support IDNR's operating costs."

The new language supports repealing the Timber Tax and opposes any funds generated going to anything besides forest management.

Delegates passed a submittal changing language in IFB's farm credit policy. Introduced to improve the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Loan program, the new language supports improvements in all USDA loan programs.

The policy was supported by Young Leader chair Jenna Severs of Vermilion County, who was passionate during fall Resolutions on the programs impact for farmers just getting started. Severs also drew attention to the lack of clear guidelines for when USDA can "graduate" or revoke eligibility to receive a loan.

Delegates passed a new policy presented by Cook CFB, regarding food waste and resource recovery. The policy supports ways to turn non-consumed food into a resource through composting and it supports reducing the regulatory constraints for on-farm materials, urban food scraps and processing facilities.

Two submittals from Lee CFB addressing rural healthcare were approved, changing IFB policy to support all specialties, not just family physicians, as well as supporting capital investment into rural and "tweener" hospitals. These are hospitals with more than 25 beds, making them too large to be considered a Critical Access Hospital but with fewer than 275 beds, the threshold for being considered a rural referral center.

## Drop off locations for holiday lights

If a light string is well and truly broken, it can be recycled, but please don't put it your curbside recycling bin! Strings of lights, along with plastic bags, hoses, clothing, rope, and similar items are known as "tangles" at recycling facilities. As the nickname implies, these items easily become tangled in equipment, causing real risk to facility workers who climb onto disabled machinery to free trapped objects.

Many of the County's electronics recyclers accept holiday light strings and associated equipment like splitters and extension cords for recycling all year long, and some municipalities have teamed up with recyclers to establish additional drop-offs during the holiday season.

Kane County's two permanent centers (517 E. Fabyan

Parkway, Batavia, M-F 8am - 4pm and 900 Angle Tarn, West Dundee, 7am - 3pm) accept light strings year-round, as do some private scrap recyclers in Aurora and Elgin. Both the City of St. Charles and Village of Algonquin have seasonal drop offs that will be collecting through mid-January.

The recycling process for collected lights involves shredding everything and then separating the metal, plastic and glass using specialty equipment. The isolated materials can be recycled into new products.

A final note is that recycling programs are typically only able to accept loose light strings and associated wiring. A more complex item like lighted wreaths, garlands, or lawn ornaments would have to be disassembled and the lights removed in order to recycle those lights. Kane

County Recycling Centers can take small laser light projectors, fans for lawn inflatables, and the nylon/polyester fabric from lawn inflatables for recycling.

Programs accept plain light strings and electrical cords - lights that are mounted or embedded on other items must be removed to be recycled.

Drop off locations  
Kane Co. Pop-Up Jan. 6th  
S & S Metal Recyclers II  
Kane County Recycling Center  
St Charles Public Works  
City of St. Charles  
St. Charles Public Library  
Pottawatomie Community Center  
Wasco Nursery & Garden Center  
Elgin Recycling Center  
Elgin Recycling and Scrap Metal - Gilberts Iron Yard  
Kane County Recycling Center  
Village of Algonquin

# Welcome to the next level

This month we welcome the following KCFB members who joined our organization or reclassified their membership in August to \*Regular or Professional Status:

### Regular Members

David Canton Maple Park

We remind you of added perks that accompany your new Regular member or Professional Status and thank you for supporting KCFB's efforts at advocacy, education and hunger relief:

- Professional networking opportunities & engagement with farmers
- Agriculture, farm & food

- news delivered to your door
- New subscription to FarmWeek, the largest weekly agriculture newspaper
- Access to FarmWeekNow.com
- KCFB voting rights & ILFB delegate opportunities.
- Continuing subscription to the Kane County Farmer newspaper
- Free annual registration at one of 7 statewide conferences
- 302,000 member discounts, including Ford, Lincoln, John Deere, Case IH, restaurants, hotels & travel
- Discounts at the KCFB

Country Store on in-house sales of featured local foods

\*KCFB Regular membership is required of all who join our association that have a vested interest in and receive income from the production of farm products as an owner or operator of a farm business. Professional Membership status is available for all those employed in agriculture-related occupations, even with no farm income. If you are interested in "next level" membership and the benefits it carries, please contact KCFB in St. Charles at (630) 584-8660.

## Thanks to Our Donors

The KCFB FOUNDATION offers its sincere appreciation to the following for their contributions to our hunger relief, community service, education, and scholarship programs. Names shown are contributions received November 15 – December 16, 2023.



Donor	Beneficiary
Jon DeRaedt	Harvest for ALL – Burlington Hampshire Food Pantry
Micheal Wurtz (in Memory of Joyce A. Spitzer)	KCFB Foundation
AGCO Parts	AGCO Scholarship
Belinda Meyer	AGCO Scholarship
Bertha & David Solis	AGCO Scholarship
Juventino & Laurie Cantu	AGCO Scholarship
Thomas Richter	KCFB Foundation
Charles & Mary Heidgen	KCFB Foundation
Thomas and Deborah Konen (in Memory of Robert and Alyce Konen)	KCFB Foundation
Konen Family Foundation	S.P.R.O.U.T.S.

We sincerely appreciate your willingness to help support agricultural education, scholarships, leadership training, and community youth education. We could not do it without your support!

*Thank you to all the generous donors and volunteers who support Kane County Farm Bureau!*

## Cozy cows Q&A with Lenkaitis Holsteins Dairy Farm's Sarah and Andy

By Barb Baylor Anderson

As one of only three dairy farm families left in Kane County, Sarah and Andy Lenkaitis focus on three pillars: caring for cows, caring for people working with the cows and being good neighbors. The family always welcomes new ideas as the population of the Chicago collar county grows and they are eager to answer consumers' questions. Sarah shared with Partners information about their dairy farm, Lenkaitis Holsteins.

### How did the farm begin and how has it grown through the years?

The farm west of St. Charles was purchased in 1983 by Andy's parents. We began farming in partnership with them in 2014, built a new facility in 2018 and purchased the farm in 2021. I grew up on a Wisconsin dairy farm and work full time on our farm. Andy works full time for an ag equipment technology company. We are making upgrades, so the farm is more sustainable. We grew the herd to 85 cows and have room to expand to 110. The new barn design focuses on cow well-being. We grow our own feed with various cropping strategies while incorporating manure as a natural fertilizer.

### What do you do to be a good neighbor?

We have two subdivisions surrounding us, so we minimize the smell and noise. We built the barn in a strategic location to cut down on both. Nearly every-

thing from keeping fresh feed in front of the cows to cleaning the barn to milking is now automated with the latest technology. We designed the barn to store liquid manure underneath to protect it from the elements. Our manure separator works like a wringer washer. Fibers and liquid are separated, and fibers are used as cow bedding. We also share it with homeowners and landscapers. We offer tours to share the area's rich dairy history and answer questions.

### How do you keep your cows comfortable?

Our cows live the life. They are creatures of habit and like consistency. When they are clean, dry and comfortable, they give good milk. Cows prefer cooler temperatures than people, and they are susceptible to heat and cold stress in the wide range of Illinois temperatures. Our free stall barn is temperature controlled. The ventilation is automatic with fans that turn off and on, and curtains along the sides open and close to maintain the ideal temperature, much like a house with a thermostat. Cows roam the barn, rest, eat and set their own milking schedules.

### How do you keep your cows healthy?

Cows are animals, so unlike people who can describe their symptoms, we have to do some detective work if we

think a cow is sick. A veterinarian comes to the farm about once a month to assess the herd. Our cows each wear an activity collar much like a Fitbit. The collar records data on when each cow eats, rests, milks and ruminates. We know if a cow eats less, becomes inactive or has lower milk production, she may be sick. This data allows us to make informed decisions on how to treat any illness.

### How does technology improve your farm?

Technology allows us as caretakers to make daily tasks more ergonomic. In addition to automated barn cleanup and feeding, we have a robotic milking system that works with the activity collars. When a cow decides she wants to be milked, she enters. The system checks if enough time has passed since her last milking. Cows are milked two to five times daily. The machine cleans and preps the udder for milking, milks for three to five minutes and applies a protective teat dip before she exits.



The Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting at the Palmer House in Chicago featured a photo booth and a perfect pose from attendees (L-R) KCFB Board Member Brett Dienst; IFB Region 2 Manager, Chad Miller; KCFB office manager Liz Polovin; KCFB manager Steve Arnold and AITC coordinator Kelcee Miller.

## What's new at COUNTRY?

### St. Charles Agency, Jeff Orman, Agency Manager

Congratulations to Ted Schuster, who has been named the November Rep of the Month in the COUNTRY Financial® St. Charles Agency, as announced by Agency Manager, Jeffrey Orman. Ted is a great asset to our team and is dedicated to providing tangible plans for addressing the immediate

and long term insurance needs of his clients through our Auto, Home, Farm, Life, Business, and Retirement products and services. Let Ted's expertise help you! You may reach Ted at 630-466-9600 or Ted.Schuster@CountryFinancial.com or <https://representatives.CountryFinancial.com/Ted.Schuster/>. Congratulations, Ted!

## Recruiter of the Month

Each month we honor the person who signs the most members into our organization. This month, the honor goes to Lulu Medina! Lulu has been a COUNTRY Financial Representative since January 2017. Her office is located at 2000 W. Galena Blvd, Aurora and may be reached at: 630-449-0910. Thank you for your continued support of the Kane

County Farm Bureau and congratulations on your success!



Lulu Medina

## Plus Membership winner

Congratulations this month to Richard Jenkins of St. Charles, the January 2024 winner of our Plus (+) member monthly drawing for a FREE KCFB monthly special food product.

The next time Richard stops in our office, he will receive a

FREE box of lemon rosemary pork roasts from Inboden's Meats in DeKalb, one of the fine food products we offer each month.

In addition to the discounts and benefits of Plus membership, ALL KCFB PLUS (+) members are entered in a monthly drawing for a featured food product or seasonal prize.

For more information on member benefits, membership upgrades or PLUS (+) member status, call Liz at 630-584-8660.

## 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.

### WANTED

Want to buy – vintage & used tools. Also, we do cleanouts. Call Chris – 630-550-7182



# Young Farmers update

On a brisk December evening, the Young Farmers gathered in their Ugly Christmas Sweaters at Jessica Dunteman's family farm in Big Rock to eat pizza and enjoy beverages while they conversed about Farm Bureau updates as well as upcoming educational opportunities offered by the Farm Bureau.

Such updates included an AITC recap for Ag Literacy Coordinator, Kelcee Miller and a from those to attended IFB Annual Meeting in Chicago

where Wayne Gehrke participate in the Young Leader Discussion Meet and Brett Dienst received an award for Top Young Leader Chairman for Membership in Group 5.

Other new business discussed and encouraged young farmers to register for the upcoming Young Leader Conference that will be February 2-3, 2024 in Springfield, Illinois. In addition the group began to brainstorm ideas for Harvest for ALL hunger relief efforts such as a potential food drive, activity ideas for

Touch-A-Tractor that will be held April 12-14 on the KCFB lawn, as well as goals for 2024.

The Young Leaders plan to meet again on Monday, January 8th at 6:00pm at Michael Long's family farm shop in Big Rock so if you or someone you know is between the ages of 18-35 with an interest in networking and socializing with others who share an interest in the agriculture field, give us a call (630-584-8660) or better yet stop on by the office to become a member and join the fun today!

Young Farmers 1st Annual Ugly Sweater Party was a success! Pictured right to left: Michael Long, Jessica Dunteman, Jonathan Klein, Brett Dienst, Jason Biddle, Lauren Biddle, Baby Charlotte Biddle, Joseph White, Kelcee Miller, Davis Espe, Alex Olson, Chris Mangers, Tommy Koebel, Carolyn Brummel, and Trent Pierson.



# Teacher Institute Day, March 1, 2024

This institute day across Kane County provides an opportunity for Kane County teachers to learn more about local agriculture, farms, food, and soil health. In addition, teachers will learn how to incorporate that agricultural knowledge into classroom lessons. Join us at the Kane County Farm Bureau from 8:00am to 3:00pm to learn more about FREE classroom resources

and lesson plan ideas, and to hear from local experts! Space is limited and registration is ONLY available through the Kane County Regional Office of Education at [www.kaneroe.org](http://www.kaneroe.org). CEU's/CPDU's are available. Registration opens January 8th and is open until filled.



Jodie Wollnik, Director of the Kane County Department of Environmental and Water Resources, presents at the 2023 Teacher Institute Day at KCFB.



Teacher Miss Baldwin of Huff Elementary School in Elgin attended KCFB's Summer Ag Institute last summer and is implementing her "All About Soil" presentation into her dual language classroom this year! Above: Her 2nd grade students, with the help of their favorite custodian, David Buss. Right: Cotton underwear, fresh (R) and freshly dug out of the soil (L)! The "Soil Your Undies" presentation helps students gauge soil health by the decomposition of fabric.

## Soil your Undies!

Ag in the Classroom lesson a hit with local students!



# Touch-a-Tractor set for April 12-14

Kane County Farm Bureau FOUNDATION's 18th Touch-A-Tractor weekend of family fun will tentatively be held Friday - Sunday, April 12-14. We will bring some farm to the city for this ever-popular event. Cooped up kids and adults alike enjoy exploring all things farm at Touch-A-Tractor!

Kids get to touch and even sit in the seats of big farm machinery they normally only see from the road. They can participate in hands-on activities, ride pedal tractors, frolic in the corn corral, crawl through culverts, play with toy tractors and farm equipment and see farm animals. Area moms tell us their kids ask them to come back year after year, so be sure to add this event to your 2024 calendar.

Touch-A-Tractor is also

the KCFB FOUNDATION's biggest community event and fundraiser. For 2024, a Vintage Truck Raffle ticket will get FREE family admission all 3 days, all others will pay \$2 (adult) or \$5 (family) admission. Proceeds from Touch-A-Tractor and the Vintage Truck Raffle benefit the college scholarship and agricultural literacy programs of the not-for-profit Kane County Farm Bureau FOUNDATION.

This year, we are looking for tractors or farm equipment of ANY vintage. If you would like to put a smile on a kid's face, ALL tractors are welcome - the more, the merrier!

If you are interested in volunteering for this family-friendly event, or have tractors or equipment or outdoor games of activities to share, please call the KCFB at 630 584-8660 and ask for Steve or Liz.



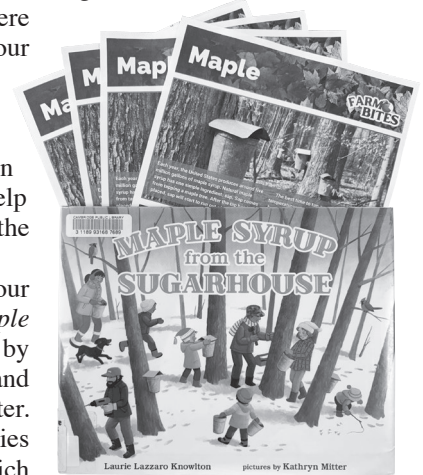
Touch-A-Tractor - the name says it all! Dozens of hands-on activities will keep cooped-up kids and parents busy and happy. Come on out to the Farm Bureau to celebrate agriculture and the coming of spring, April 12-14.

# Little Lending Library

Every month our Little Lending Library has a special feature, book, resource or all of the above! This is our way of helping connect with the community whether they are KCFB members or not. No matter who you are or where you are from, agriculture is everywhere and plays a crucial role in your daily life. It is our hope that through our (not so) Little Lending Library that we can help bridge the gap between consumer and farmers and help to make a positive impact in the name of agriculture.

The book spotlight for our young readers will be *Maple Syrup from the Sugarhouse* by Laurie Lazzaro Knowlton and illustrated by Kathryn Mitter. In addition we will have copies of our NEW *Farm Bites*, which

are one-page print resources in a variety of specialty agriculture topics that go right along with the book of the month all about Maple Syrup! Swing on by the KCFB Little Lending Library for this sweet deal before it's gone!



# Farm Toy of the Month

January's toy is John Deere green - but it's a mowing machine! Kids will enjoy mowing household carpets with this pickup truck hauling a John Deere Z930M zero-turn mower on flatbed trailer. The toy is 1/32, die cast metal, and is recommended for ages 3 & up.

Regular price is \$32.50, but during January, this toy is 10% off with your Farm Bureau membership. Mow-tivated toy shoppers - stop by, say hi, and get your John Deere mowing rig today.



**KCFB FOUNDATION scholarships!** Application deadline Feb. 15th. See page 1 for details.

## Vintage Truck Raffle KCFB Foundation

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ tickets (\$20 each or 3 for \$50)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_ MC \_\_\_ Discover \_\_\_\_\_ Exp \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_