

Kane County Farmer



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

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

VOL. 81 NO. 1 JANUARY 2016

Hultgren aide visits Engel farm

KCFB Director Joe Engel of Hampshire received a visit to his family's dairy farm in early December from Brandon McKee, a Washington D.C. based aide and agricultural policy staff advisor to 14th District Congressman Randy Hultgren of Wheaton. Engel reported that McKee made time to discuss what Engel believes are real and current issues facing production agriculture.

"We spent a lot of time talking about the relationship between farmers and consumers. Since consumers are so far removed from the production of their food, farmers have many concerns about the public obtaining accurate information," Engel said. "Consumers hold food companies more accountable than farmers, and consumers are often educated from random internet sources, so they look to companies for information before asking farmers."

Engel shared with McKee that consumers communicate their fears and opinions to the government, and the government then instructs farmers what to do. He explained that instead of enforcing more regulations on farmers, the government should assist farmers with educating the public about their food.

McKee emphasized that government staff and officials need to hear positive stories from farmers. They are aware that there are many examples of farmers being good stewards of land and practicing food safety, but the stories need to be shared so they can be passed on to constituents. Oftentimes, only negative stories from consumers are shared, since people so often more quickly react to something that upsets them. It is important

to remember the value of sharing positivity with elected officials!

Of his 1 3/4 hour visit to the Engel farm, McKee said, "I thoroughly enjoyed the tour of the Engel Farm. Joe was so gra-

Top: McKee (l) and Engel (r) discussed farm issues and consumer perceptions during the tour. Here newly weaned calves are kept in a warm, dry environment with lots of bedding and protection from the elements in the hay barn at Luck E Holsteins.

Below: Farm Host Joe Engel (l) and Congressional Staffer Brandon McKee (r) pause on a tour of the Engel dairy farm, Luck E Holsteins, near Hampshire on December 11.



acious and inviting. Meeting Beth and Dennis there also surfaced how tightly the Engel's farm holds to family values and supporting the local agricultural community and economy. What a great guy to have serving on your board!"

KCFB extends its thanks to McKee for his seeking out the opportunity to visit the farm and to Joe Engel for hosting. As with the Illinois Farm Families program, we believe that farmers

opening their farms to the public and public officials is the best way to build trust and confidence in the quality and safety of our food supply, and understanding of the consumer benefits of modern farm and food production systems.

KCFB receives numerous awards at IFB annual meeting

The Kane County Farm Bureau was recognized for its achievements during the annual meeting of the Illinois Farm Bureau held in Chicago December 5-8, 2015.

As part of its Annual Meeting, Illinois Farm Bureau presents program and committee awards in recognition of outstanding county Farm Bureau volunteer efforts throughout the year. A member of Membership Group V, County Farm Bureaus with 5,516 and more members, Kane County received Gold program awards in the areas of Membership Quota, Commodities & Marketing, Health & Safety, Local Affairs, Member Relations, and Policy Development; Silver awards in Legislative/Political Process, and Communication & Promotion; and a Bronze award in Ag Literacy.

The Young Farmers and Women's Committee received Gold awards for Committee Excellence, and the Multi-County Project and County Foundation received Silver

awards. The Harvest "Leadership Picnic" received the most outstanding project award in the Legislative/



Kane County Farm Bureau President Joe White (left) accepts a recognition plaque and the President's award from IFB Pres. Richard Guebert for KCFB's achievements during 2015.

Political Process category.

KCFB also received the President's Award, which is given to the county in each of five membership groups with the most well-rounded programs in each of the eight categories. The winning county must have also achieved membership quota.

For the twelfth consecutive year, the Young Farmers ranked first in their membership group
(continued on page 3)

FB volunteer event at Northern IL Food Bank

Join the Kane County Young Farmers at Northern Illinois Food Bank on Jan. 28 from 5-7pm to repack food for redistribution to local food pantries. FFA members from area high schools are invited too. You'll help in the fight against hunger, make some new friends and learn about the good things the

Young Farmers Committee is doing in Kane County.

We're especially interested in connecting with 18-35 year olds looking to get involved in community service or agriculture related events. No experience is necessary, just a genuine interest in farm and food related concerns. As this is a community service, and the fight against hunger can and should be waged by all, all Farm Bureau members, friends and potential members are welcome! Call the Kane County Farm Bureau to RSVP at 630 584-8660.

Out of 18,239 Chicagoland non-profits, the Northern Illinois Food Bank was included in Chicago Magazine's Top 20 Best Charities list in the November issue.

The Food Bank provided

their five millionth (5,000,000) serving of milk in December through their Milk2MyPlate program! All of Kane County



At last year's event, 16 KCFB members processed 3,600 pounds of oatmeal that had been mislabeled by the manufacturer. It was repackaged for distribution to the Food Bank's network of food pantries, providing 3,000 meals for the hungry in Kane County.

Thank you... The Kane County Farm Bureau would like to thank Jay Schrock and the staff at Heinz Brothers Greenhouse in St. Charles for the use of their greenhouse and assistance with the KCFB annual citrus sale distribution in December. The Schrock family has allowed Farm Bureau to use its warm and inviting greenhouses for citrus distribution to our members on cold December days for a quarter century. We appreciate their generosity in helping to provide this service to Kane County Farm Bureau members.

Didn't get your citrus this year? Watch the *Kane County Farmer* for information on "truckload" sales on citrus, fresh Illinois peaches, local turkeys, hams and other foods throughout the year, or call us at 630 584-8660 to be put on a mailing list for all our food specials.

DATES TO REMEMBER

January

January 1

Office closed for holiday

January 6-8

Illinois Specialty Crops & Agritourism Conference, Springfield, IL

January 7

Board of Directors, 7pm

January 10-13

AFBF Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL

January 11

Milk2MyPlate success celebration, Northern Illinois Food Bank, noon

January 28

Young Farmers/FFA Acquaintance Program at Northern IL Food Bank, 5pm

January 22 & 23

IFB Young Leader Conf., East Peoria

January Featured Product

Pork Chops

Our featured product for the month of January is Inboden's Meats delicious seasoned pork chops. Each 5 lb. box comes in 8 oz. or 10 oz. in boneless or bone-in varieties. Each chop comes in a vacuum sealed plastic bag. Just thaw, cut it open and pour it out on your grill for a perfectly seasoned, thick, juicy pork chop every time. Price is \$25 per box for KCFB members, \$24 for plus members and \$29 for non-members. It's a Farm Bureau member favorite! Available at Kane County Farm Bureau, Randall Road and Oak Street in St. Charles.

KCFB Board Meeting

Directors welcomed Brandon F. McKee, from the office of 14th District Congressman Randy Hultgren as a special guest at their December meeting. McKee has served 2 years under the Congressman and has agriculture and education issues among his responsibilities. The December visit followed a meeting of the Government Affairs & Public Policy Committee.

Directors approved numerous changes to the bylaws, changes mailed to voting members in November. Among the bylaw amendments approved were a change in the organization's fiscal year end, annual meeting and board re-organization dates, nominating committee make-up and director terms of service.

The Board heard a report from the KCFB Foundation of donors to Harvest for ALL for local hunger relief and to the Food Forward campaign to provide scholarships and ag literacy resources. Harvest for ALL Donors for the month included Bob & Nancy Brackmann, Bob & Beth Gehrke, Joe & Bonnie White, Elburn Coop, Land O'Lakes Foundation, Jon

DeRaedt, and Follman Farms. Food Forward donors included Joe & Bonnie White, and Jim Blickle for the Mary Heckel-Blickle Memorial Scholarship.

Management reported on several new and continuing initiatives including support for a grant application for continued operation of the St Charles Research Farm for beginning farmer training; a stakeholder meeting on phase 2 of the County of Kane's Food Hub Feasibility Study; a new IFB initiative on Nutrient Loss Reduction and a potential grant application from KCFB and the Kane-DuPage SWCD; and a new IFB pilot program for Direct Mail fundraising for County Farm Bureau Foundations.

Delegates and alternates to the IFB Annual Meeting in Chicago discussed changes in IFB resolutions on public policy at the local, state and national level. The IFB meeting concluded on December 7. Director and former IFB Board member Mike Kenyon presented the KCFB Board with a framed mosaic of the Illinois Farm Bureau's 100th Anniversary logo, purchased at a

silent auction at the convention. IFB celebrates the 100th Anniversary of its founding by county Farm Bureau leaders on January 26, 2016.

In other news, Vice-President Wayne Schneider announced plans for 2016 programs including dates for February's Shopping Spree and Lunches to Legislators programs. The Board is seeking participants for the Leaders to Washington program in March and the state association's annual Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference will be held in April, due to the schedule of the Illinois General Assembly. Schneider also announced that the committee was seeking recommendations on a host farm for a 2016 fall Harvest Picnic.

In Young Farmers Committee news, Dale Pitstick announced Heather Pierson as the new Chair of the KCFB Young Farmers Committee. Andy Lenkaitis of St. Charles has been appointed as new IFB District 1 Young Leader Representative to replace Pitstick, whose term expired in December. The Young Farmers will host a Christmas

dinner on December 16th at the Fireside Grill in Sugar Grove.

Correspondence circulated at the meeting included: a thank you for the flower arrangement from Donna Ryterske; an Illinois Farm Bureau announcement of Kane CFB Young Farmers as Harvest for ALL award winners; congratulations from Richard Guebert Jr., President, IFB, for

KCFB earning the IFB President's Award; thanks to KCFB for its contribution to the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Foundation from Don Norton, President, IALF; and Land O' Lakes Foundation, enclosing a "matching donation" of \$2,901 to match Elburn Co-op's contributions to Harvest for ALL to benefit Elburn Food Pantry.

Touch-A-Tractor returns in April

Kane County Farm Bureau's 11th Annual Touch-A-Tractor event brings a little bit of the farm to the city April 8-10 at Kane County Farm Bureau, Randall Road at Oak Street, in St. Charles. Hours for this free event are Friday noon-4pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10am-4pm.

This event is fun and educational for people of all ages and makes a great family outing. Kids can participate in hands-on activities, ride pedal tractors, shell corn, see farm animals, sit in the seat of a real tractor or combine, and enter for a FREE chance to win their very own pedal tractor.

At the conclusion of the events on Sunday, April 10 the

winning tickets will be drawn in the KCFB Foundation Winner's Choice Tractor Raffle.

If you'd like to bring an antique tractor or other farm equipment to Touch-A-Tractor, to add to the ambience and enhance the learning environment for our city neighbors, please call the KCFB at 630-584-8660.



Young Farmers update

by Wayne Gehrke, Secretary

The young farmers met in November to review the past year and plan future activities. Old business included reviewing the Harvest for ALL program and the state fair quiz bowl. This year, Andy Lenkaitis, Wayne Gehrke, Carolyn Gehrke and Chase Bornemann participated in the annual state fair quiz bowl, and finished in second place in the consolation bracket championship. First place would have taken the team into the finals, allowing them to compete for the quiz bowl championship. Despite not bringing home the hardware, a good time was had by all and we look forward to competing again next year.

New business included information regarding the annual meeting in Chicago and setting dates for future events. The Young Farmers gathered December 16 for a Christmas Party at the Fireside Grille in

Sugar Grove The annual FFA acquaintance program was discussed and set for January 28 at the Northern Illinois Food Bank, the same location and program as

Future Young Leader events:
Jan 22nd -23rd:
 ILFB Young Leader's Conference in East Peoria
March 11th:
 Euchre Tournament at the Kane County Farm Bureau

last year. Officer elections for the 2016 calendar year were held, with Heather Pierson elected as Chairman, and Wayne Gehrke as Secretary. Ryan Klassy announced his acceptance of a new position at Elgin Community College. Ryan was a great help to the Young Farmers and we thank him for his years of service and wish him the best in his new role at ECC.

Annual Meeting report: on Saturday, December 5th, Kristin DeSutter represented District 1

in the 2015 Young Leader's Discussion Meet, and advanced to the Sweet 16. Tara Yoder of Knox County won the meet. In the evening, a group of 17 members and guests enjoyed our annual Young Leader's Dinner downtown at Remington's on Michigan Avenue. We had a wonderful evening, and would like to thank everyone who joined us.

This year's IFB Young Leader's Ag Industry Tour is in South Florida, March 1-6. Some of the tour stops will include livestock, aquaculture, sugar cane, blueberries, peaches, tropical fruit and ornamentals, and environmental issues Florida agriculture is facing.

Young Farmers meetings are open to KCFB members age 18-35 and new faces are always welcome. Check KCFB's Facebook page for upcoming meeting dates and social outings or call 630-584-8660.



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*.

wishes to Andy, and thank you to Dale for his commitment to Kane County and Illinois Farm Bureau.



Andy Lenkaitis Dale Pitstick

Lenkaitis appointed as Dist. 1 rep for committee

Andy Lenkaitis, former chairman of the Kane County Young Farmers Committee, was appointed as the new IFB District 1 representative on the State Young Leaders Committee on December 6 at the Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. Andy replaces Dale Pitstick of Genoa, who retired after 4 years of holding the position.

Congratulations and best

Kenyon donates mosaic

KCFB Director Mike Kenyon of Elgin purchased this IFB centennial mosaic in a silent auction at the organization's annual meeting in December. The silent auction, along with a live auction, ice cream social and trivia night helped raise \$50,000 for the IAA Foundation, the charitable arm of the Illinois Farm Bureau, to use towards Ag-in-the-Classroom programs conducted

by county Farm Bureaus. The mosaic was made by Chelle Lehman of Stained Glass Arts by Chelle.



KANE COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD ATTENDANCE												
OCTOBER 2015 THRU SEPTEMBER 2016												
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG.	SEP.
C. BRADLEY	X	X	X									
F. CARLSON	X	X	X									
B. COLLINS	X	X	X									
C. COLLINS		X	X									
J. ENGEL	X	X	X									
G. GAITSCH	X	X	X									
B. GEHRKE	X	X	X									
W. KECK	X	X	X									
M. KENYON	X	X	X									
K. KETTLEKAMP	X	X										
D. LEHRER	X		X									
N. LONG	X	X	X									
D. PITSTICK	X	X	X									
W. SCHNEIDER	X	X	X									
J. WHITE	X	X	X									

Kane County Farmer
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 Steven J. Arnold, Editor
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OFFICE: Randall Rd. between Routes 64 & 38
Address: 2N710 Randall Rd., St. Charles
PHONE: 630-584-8660
 info@kanecfb.com www.kanecfb.com
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<p>■ DISTRICT 1 Aurora, Sugar Grove, Big Rock Twnshp. Nan Long 11461 E. County Line Rd. Big Rock, IL 60511 815-693-7214 Donna Lehrer 7S027 Jericho Rd. Big Rock, IL 60511 630-556-3476 William Keck P.O. Box 281 Sugar Grove, IL 60554 630-466-4668</p>	<p>Joe White President 47W727 Main St. Rd. Elburn, IL 60119 630-557-2517 Frank Carlson 104 Sumac Court St. Charles, IL 60174 630-513-9980 Chris Collins 1143 Anderson Elburn, IL 60119 630-934-4642</p>	<p>Mike Kenyon Secretary/Treasurer 1250 E. Main St. South Elgin, IL 60177 847-741-1818 Craig Bradley 37W791 Orchard Lane Elgin, IL 60124 847-888-2380 Dale Pitstick 128 N Hadsall St. Genoa, IL 60135 630-816-0223</p>
<p>■ DISTRICT 2 Kaneville, Blackberry, Gen./Bat. Twnshp. Bill Collins 1125 Lewis Rd. Geneva, IL 60134 630-484-6852 Karl Kettelkamp OS860 Rowe Rd. Elburn, IL 60119 630-365-2713</p>	<p>Dale Pitstick 128 N Hadsall St. Genoa, IL 60135 630-816-0223 Beth Gehrke 12N860 US Hwy. 20 Elgin, IL 60124 847-697-2538</p>	<p>■ DISTRICT 3 Virgil, Campton, St. Charles Twnshp. Frank Carlson 104 Sumac Court St. Charles, IL 60174 630-513-9980 Chris Collins 1143 Anderson Elburn, IL 60119 630-934-4642 Dale Pitstick 128 N Hadsall St. Genoa, IL 60135 630-816-0223 Beth Gehrke 12N860 US Hwy. 20 Elgin, IL 60124 847-697-2538</p>
<p>■ DISTRICT 4 Burlington, Plato Elgin Twnshp. Beth Gehrke 12N860 US Hwy. 20 Elgin, IL 60124 847-697-2538</p>	<p>■ DISTRICT 5 Hampshire, Rutland, Dundee Twnshp. Joe Engel 516 Sawgrass Ln. Hampshire, IL 60140 847-347-5561 Gerald Gaitsch 10613 Brittany Ave. Huntley, IL 60142 847-669-2003 Wayne Schneider Vice President 721 Lindsay Lane West Dundee, IL 60118 847-428-0488</p>	

Farm economy continues to concern Illinois farmers

Considering the current farm economy, 66 percent of Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) members surveyed prior to the organization's Annual Meeting feel less optimistic about the farm economy in the coming year compared to 2015. The answer was in response to an email survey of IFB members registered with IFB's Legislative Action Center.

"For the second year in a row, IFB members said they feel less optimistic about the coming year, and it's no surprise as to why," said Richard Guebert, Jr., president, Illinois Farm Bureau. "Over the last year, commodity prices have stayed below breakeven levels. Input costs like cash rent, crop protection and seed have not receded to follow the drop in commodity prices."

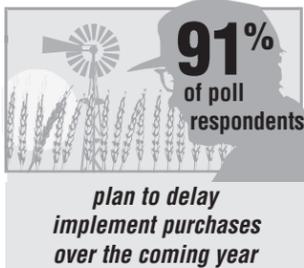
As a result of their concerns over the farm economy, 84 percent of respondents said they

plan to reduce inputs or expenses in 2016. When asked specifically how they would do so, 91 percent of respondents plan to delay implement purchases over the coming year, while 45 percent said they would delay or cut back on chemical and fertilizer purchases. Additionally, 38 percent said they would negotiate lower cash rent; 37 percent said they would buy less expensive seed; 24 percent said they would incorporate new technology; 11 percent said they would choose a lower level of crop insurance coverage; and 9 percent said they would give up a portion of rented ground for 2016. (Respondents were instructed to choose all options

that apply.)

Concerns over the farm economy were added to concerns regarding regulatory and legislative issues. Respondents were asked to rank several priority issues in terms of importance in the coming year. The top concern was striking down the Waters of the U.S. rule followed by tax reform; maintaining the viability of federal crop insurance; preserving the Renewable Fuels Standard and making transportation infrastructure improvements.

"As we look toward the coming year, farmers are going to have to carefully consider every decision they make to ensure they're protecting their farms



and are able to survive the farm economy downturn," Guebert said. "We're doing our best to provide our members with the information they need to make those tough decisions that will keep their farms on secure financial footing."

Members also were polled regarding their conservation and nutrient management efforts.

Just over 92 percent of respondents said they regularly test soil for potassium and phosphorus levels; 65 percent said they use variable rate technology for fertilizer applications; 56 percent split nitrogen applications; and 55 percent follow the University of Illinois Agronomy Handbook recommendations for phosphorus and potassium applications. (Respondents were instructed to choose all options that apply.)

Additionally, 46 percent of

farmers said they have used cover crops in the past, with 76 percent having planted cover crops for five years or less. Of those who have not used cover crops, 64 percent said they would be willing to do so in the future.

Eighty-four percent of farmers said they have installed buffer strips along streams or ditches on their farms. Nearly 53 percent of farmers said they receive no cost share or incentives for their best management practices.

"This is the fifth consecutive year we've surveyed members to gauge their feelings on key IFB issues, concerns and conservation practices," Guebert said. "It helps us as leaders ensure we're tackling the issues and needs of our members and prioritizing our resources to the best of our abilities."

Thanks to our donors...

The KCFB Foundation offers its sincere appreciation to the following for their contributions to our community service, education and scholarship programs. Names shown are contributions received November 15 through December 15, 2015.



Donor	Beneficiary
Follman Farms	Burlington-Hampshire Food Pantry
Dale and Linda Drendel	Northern Illinois Food Bank
Suzanne Myers	Northern Illinois Food Bank
Marlene & Rick Pump	Burlington Hampshire Food Pantry
Bruce & Angie Stastny	FFA Chapter Grants



Friday Night Dinner Group	(in honor of Paul Diehl's 80th birthday)
Anonymous	KCFB Foundation Scholarships
	KCFB Foundation Scholarships

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Sample Packs make great gifts!

Awards

(continued from page 1) in terms of the overall amount of funds, volunteer hours and food collected for the state's Harvest for ALL hunger relief effort. Past chairman Andy Lenkaitis also received the

County Chair Award.

Convention-goers enjoyed seminars and educational micro-talks on topics ranging from the Illinois nutrient loss reduction strategy to working through the challenges of farm succession planning. The keynote speaker at the Saturday

night session, Joe Marlotti, presented a humorous show on generational differences based on the best-selling book *When Generations Collide* by David Stillman and Lynn Lancaster.

See page 4 for another award photo.

Help raise Foundation scholarship funds with TRACTOR RAFFLE



Decisions, decisions ... this year's Winner's Choice Tractor Raffle grand prize winner will have their choice of one of two antique IH tractors.

WINNER'S CHOICE RAFFLE

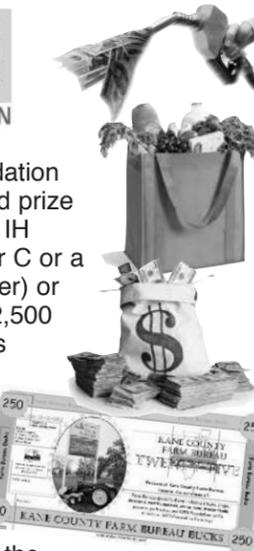
Kane County Farm Bureau FOUNDATION

The Kane County Farm Bureau Foundation Winner's Choice Raffle gives the grand prize winner a choice of two nicely restored IH antique tractors: a 1953 Farmall Super C or a 1947 Farmall Super A (with belly mower) or a John Deere riding lawn mower or \$2,500 cash. The farm, food and fuel theme is rounded out with second prize of \$500 in groceries, third prize of \$500 in fuel, and fourth prize of \$250 in Kane County Farm Bureau Bucks. The drawing is April 10 at Touch-A-Tractor.

This Winner's Choice Tractor Raffle is the Foundation's primary fundraising endeavor. Last year's raffle helped the Foundation provide college scholarships to 25 students and funded internships to help future Ag industry leaders get practical experience.

The Winner's Choice Tractor Raffle offers a chance to win one of these great prizes!

- Grand prize:** Winner's choice of a 1953 Farmall Super C, or a 1947 Farmall Super A or a John Deere riding lawn mower or \$2,500 cash.
- Second prize:** \$500 groceries
- Third prize:** \$500 fuel
- Fourth Prize:** \$250 Farm Bureau Bucks



Tickets are \$10 each or 3 for \$25. All proceeds benefit college scholarship and Kane County Farm Bureau Ag literacy programs. Call 630-584-8660 or complete the form below to request tickets.



MILK: Most Requested, Rarely Donated

\$60 helps provide a gallon of milk each week for a year to a hungry family

Help Northern Illinois Food Bank's Milk2MyPlateProgram provide nutritious, fresh milk to hungry families.

Donate at SolveHungerToday.org/Dairy



KCFB Foundation Winner's Choice Tractor Raffle

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____

Phone (_____) _____

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

Visa MC # _____ Exp ____ / ____

Signature _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

4th graders to learn about local farms and food at Ag Days

Have a child, grandchild, niece or nephew in 4th grade? Want them to know where their food comes from? Why natural resources like water and soil are important? How the source of

all things in their daily life is either agriculture or mining? Here's a chance for them to ask questions of people in dozens of careers, in the job field that feeds us all - in a fun, interac-

tive way.

Now is the time for teachers and parents to sign up. Public and private school 4th grade classrooms as well as home schooled students are welcome.

As many as 2,000 fourth-grade students and their teachers attend this agricultural themed expo in celebration of National Agriculture Week. Ag

Days includes local farmers and presenters from many facets of the agriculture industry, an indoor farm zoo and an outdoor farm equipment showcase.

The 31st Annual Ag Days will be held at Mooseheart Fieldhouse near Batavia on March 15 and March 16, 2016. Students get to talk to farmers about their jobs, play interactive

games and see farm animals and modern farm machinery.

"There's no cost for this two-hour field trip," noted Suzi Myers, ag literacy coordinator. "We'll send you a lesson to get them ready for the experience."

To register, contact Suzi Myers at 630-584-8660 or by email at aite@kanecfb.com for more information.

AG LITERACY CORNER

By Suzi Myers



"Live a life of love, honesty, appreciation, kindness and strength ... sprinkled with a little silliness."

This quote is perfect for how I strive to live my life. Anyone who knows me is aware of my silliness (I blame it on being a 4th grade teacher for so long that I sometimes think and act like a 10 year old). Silliness gets me through some hard days; building a snowman after shoveling my driveway as I wear my polar bear hat is a good example. This silliness makes me happy; I find joy in not taking things seriously all the time. To grab the chance to have some fun, do something silly and just relish the moment, that's what I hope to be able to continue to do.

My resolution for the coming year concerns the rest of this quote ... not only to be loving, honest, kind, strong, and appreciative, but to TELL others how much I appreciate them in my life. Margaret Cousins once said, "Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it in words is all that's necessary." How many times have I appreciated what someone did or said, yet not taken or found the time to tell them about it? In today's world, we don't need to get out a pen, paper, stamp, and go to post office to mail our appreciation ... we can simply express it in person, text or email it. So, Suzi, there is not an excuse this year ... let people know you appreciate

them and their actions.

Appreciation is not only about people, but things too. To stop and smell the roses is something I strive to do and yet fail miserably at. Too much to do, too little time is the universal excuse. Somehow, I've got to get better at appreciating that flower that struggled to bloom on my lilac bushes in December, the unbelievable beauty of snow blanketing the earth, the tracks of birds and animals in the snow letting me know where they've been, the rain stopping before the Fox River spills over into the street and my basement, the bald eagle perching in the tree across the street, and other such wonders of nature.

Gratitude is an attribute that makes our lives happier, it is a proven fact. Knowing I'm appreciated makes me happy ... so, it makes sense to me that if I'm grateful for someone or something they did and because of this, I'm appreciating them, to tell them would make their life happier. Maybe this is the real reason for my resolution ... making others happy. In our crazy world today, negatives are abounding ... maybe putting some positive vibes out there would be a good thing.

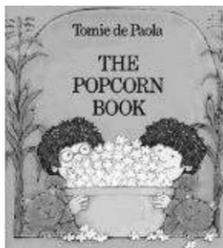
I'll start the New Year and my resolution off with letting all you readers know that I appreciate your taking the time to read my articles. It makes my day when you tell me you've read one and your thoughts about it. Thanks to you all and Happy New Year!

Book of the month

This book has two story lines going at once. Two young boys are watching television when a commercial comes on for popcorn. Just like the rest of us, it makes them hungry for popcorn. Mom gives them permission to make it. The question, "Why does mom keep the popcorn in the refrigerator?" prompts one of the boys to decide to find answers in a book. He not only finds the answer to this question, but also shares facts about the history of popcorn, various ways of cooking and eating it and even some Indian legends concerning popcorn.

A cleverly written facts-about-popcorn book that is available for check out at our

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



The Popcorn Book by Tomie de Paola

Volunteer at Ag Days

This March, Kane County Farm Bureau and dozens of Ag Literacy volunteers will organize the 32nd annual Ag Days at Mooseheart. Please consider being a part of this great tradition by volunteering your time on any of the days listed below.

For three decades, hundreds of Kane County 4th grade students have been gathering at Mooseheart Fieldhouse in March to learn about agriculture from farmers and representatives from local agribusinesses. This year's event will take place, March 15-16 and the Farm Bureau would like your assistance with this Ag in the Classroom event.

Students rotate through a series of more than a dozen presentations on agricultural topics. This is one of the Farm Bureau's longest running and most popular programs. Students will learn about crops, livestock, natural resources, farm machinery and more.

Call 630-584-8660 to sign up for specific dates and times when volunteers are most needed.



Joe White accepts the Most Outstanding Legislative/Political Process Project award for the organization's Harvest "Leadership Picnic", from Robert Gehrke (right) at the District 1 meeting.

See story on page 1.

Your help is needed during the following times chaperoning groups of students & teachers or providing 4-minute agricultural lessons.

Tuesday, March 15, 9:00 am-noon

Wednesday, March 16, 9:00 am-noon

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Farm Facts @ Fun

Compiled by Suzi Myers



Did you know?

- * Americans consume some **13 billion quarts** of popcorn a year ... that's 41 quarts per man, woman, and child.
- * Popcorn is a type of maize (or corn), a member of the grass family, and is scientifically known as *Zea Mays Everta*.
- * There are 4 main types of corn: Field, Sweet, Flint and Popcorn. Only popcorn pops.
- * The world's largest popcorn ball, according to Guinness World Records 2015, was created in 2013 at the Indiana State Fair. The popcorn ball weighed in at 6,510 pounds and was 8 feet in diameter.
- * Unpopped kernels are called old maids.
- * Popcorn is a carbohydrate, so it gives us energy.
- * Most U.S. popcorn is grown in the Midwest, primarily in Indiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky and Missouri.
- * Popcorn is a whole grain. It is made up of three components: the germ, endosperm, and pericarp (also known as the hull).
- * Most of the popcorn consumed throughout the world

is grown in the United States. Although world-wide sales of popcorn are steadily increasing, Americans consume more popcorn than the citizens of any other country.

- * Popcorn kernels can pop up to 3 feet.
- * Most popcorn comes in two basic shapes when it's popped: snowflake and mushroom. Snowflake is used in movie theaters and ballparks because it looks and pops bigger. Mushroom is used for candy confections because it doesn't crumble.

What makes popcorn pop?

Each kernel of popcorn contains a small drop of water stored inside a circle of soft starch. Popcorn needs between 13.5-14% moisture to pop. The soft starch is surrounded by the kernel's hard outer surface.

As the kernel heats up, the water begins to expand. Around 212 degrees the water turns into steam and changes the starch inside each kernel into a superheated gelatinous substance. The kernel continues to heat to about 347 degrees. The pressure inside the grain will reach 135 pounds per square inch before finally bursting the hull open.

As it explodes, steam inside the kernel is released. The soft starch inside the popcorn becomes inflated and spills out, cooling immediately and forming into the odd shape we know and love. A single kernel can swell to 40-50 times its original size! The first bit of starch that emerges forms a "leg" of sorts, which catapults the kernel like a gymnast as the remaining starch spills out. This is why popcorn jumps as it cooks.

There's a great video showing kernels of popcorn popping at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ok9qdHZcVIA&feature=player_embedded

Did you hear about the popcorn that joined the army? They made him a kernel.

Why aren't there many jokes about popcorn? Because they are corny.

What did the baby corn say to mamma corn? Where is pop corn?



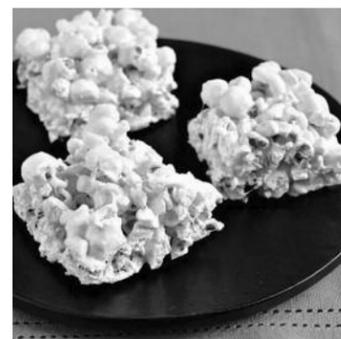
Marshmallow popcorn bars

Source: Real Simple

Ingredients:
 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for the dish
 1/2 cup popcorn kernels or one 3.5-ounce package plain microwave popcorn
 1 10-ounce bag marshmallows
Optional: M&M's to mix into the bars

Directions:

1. Butter a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Pop the popcorn according to the package directions.
2. Melt the butter and marshmallows in a large saucepan over medium-low heat, stirring until smooth, 5 to 7 minutes.
3. Fold in the popcorn until coated. Press into the prepared dish and let sit for 10 minutes before cutting into 24 bars.



and let sit for 10 minutes before cutting into 24 bars.

Popcorn activities for Popcorn Day (or any snowy day)

- **POPCORN MOUTH TOSS:** Two players stand a certain distance apart from each other and take turns throwing popcorn into each other's mouths. Take 1 step back after each successful toss. The team that gets the furthest without dropping any popcorn

on the ground wins.

- **POPCORN TOOTHPICK SWAP:** Place popcorn in a bowl. Place an empty bowl about 12" away. Each player has 1 minute to move the popcorn to the empty bowl, ONE piece at a time, using two toothpicks. Player with the most pieces wins.
- **POPCORN STRAW BLOW:** Place a piece of popcorn at the end of a table for each player. Using a drinking straw, blow the popcorn to the other end of the table. The first popcorn to arrive wins.
- **POPCORN CUP DROP:** Stand on a chair and drop pieces of popcorn into a cup on the

ground. Try to get as many pieces as possible into the target. Player with the most pieces in the cup wins.

- **POPCORN TOSS UP:** Each player has one minute to toss popcorn into the air and catch it with their mouth, one piece at a time. The person who catches the most pieces wins.
- **POPCORN DISTANCE THROW:** Throw a piece of popcorn as far as you can. Farthest throw wins. This was one of our favorites! You'll be surprised how hard it is to throw a piece of popcorn very far!
- **POPCORN CUP CATCH:** Give each player a cup or bowl. Toss each player 20 pieces of

popcorn one piece at a time and see how many they can catch. Player who catches the most wins.

Source: Or So She Says ... the Mother Lode of Ideas



***** Popcorn *****

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 E R E L I T R X H Z H H N W G K S Z R K
 C O T O D A T Q P Y Y D S D E E D T M R
 S C K Z V H R Q O K D W H V I R D O D J
 L P F I E L D G S R V R H A I U B K K D
 W O K F K S P S G P Y S A F Q T I H M F
 T P Q C T R X T Z L O M U T R S R I X N
 W Q A Q P A F E C Z Z P J Y E I Y Y W Z
 C N T N I L F A L L U H R G P O R G A A
 S C P J T P O M O K E R N E L M K R T E
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 U U Z F N E I R S E V Y Z P I L S N R S
 S J O T P X P B Z D B L O B M Y S E W S
 D N K F C L T C Z P A L Y A D D X E E T
 B W K C N I K V E B K P X Y Z O E D F S
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- | | | | |
|--------------|----------|----------|--------|
| BURST | GERM | KERNEL | SNACK |
| CARBOHYDRATE | GRAIN | MIDWEST | STARCH |
| ENDOSPERM | HEALTHY | MOISTURE | STEAM |
| ENERGY | HULL | POPCORN | SWEET |
| FIELD | ILLINOIS | POPS | SYMBOL |
| FLINT | | | WATER |

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Telephone _____ Email _____ Age _____

Please complete and return to the Farm Bureau, 2N710 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60174 by January 15, 2016 for a chance to win a prize!

Popcorn - Illinois state snack

Illinois designated popcorn as the official state snack food in 2003. Second and third-grade students at Cunningham Elementary School in Joliet, proposed popcorn as the state snack food (with help from their teacher, Fran Hollister), and State Senator Larry Walsh sponsored the bill.

Congratulations

Patricia Lemaire of St. Charles! Patricia's name was chosen from the entries received for correctly completing last month's "Winter Solstice" word search. This month's prize is a holiday ham compliments of Kane County Farm Bureau. Thank you, Patricia, for reading the *Kane County Farmer* and continue to watch each month for a chance to win a prize.

January is:

- National**
 Candy Month
 Wheat Bread Month
 Egg Month
 Oatmeal Month
 New Year's Day..... Jan 1
 Spaghetti Day..... Jan 4
 Milk Day..... Jan 11
 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday.....Jan 16
Popcorn Day **Jan 19**
 Peanut Butter Day..... Jan 24
 National Puzzle Day..... Jan 29

DeSutter represents Kane County in state discussion meet

KCFB Young Farmers member Kristin DeSutter competed in the IFB State Discussion Meet in Chicago on December 5. This was DeSutter's first state level appearance, and she advanced to the "Sweet 16."

DeSutter commented on her experience, saying "I enjoyed meeting with the other young farmers from across the state and getting to learn from them. Kane County was so supportive of me every step of the way - from members sending me good luck messages and watching my rounds to giving me pointers and one friend even snapchatting part of my speech - I was honored to represent Kane County at the Illinois Farm Bureau's 100th anniversary convention."

Tara Yoder of Knox County was named the Young Leader discussion meet winner. In addition to receiving a trophy, Yoder will receive two months or 100 hours of use of a Massey-Ferguson tractor, compliments of AGCO, and \$2,500 cash from the IFB. She also will receive expense-paid trips to the 2016

AFBF Annual Meeting, 2016 GROWMARK Annual Meeting, courtesy of GROWMARK, Inc., the 2016 AFBF Young Farmer and Rancher Conference and the 2016 IFB state Young Leader Conference.

Yoder, who is in her final year of eligibility for the discus-



Kristin DeSutter

sion meet, encouraged other young farmers to get involved early so they get a taste of the activities and how the discussion meet works.

"The discussion meet was one of the things I always wanted to do, but didn't know if I'd be competitive," Yoder said. "But, I've been involved in consumer advocacy and legislative

outreach and the discussion meet ties it all together. I really enjoyed the different perspectives everyone brought to the table. Being able to collaborate, discuss and come up with different solutions for different problems was a great experience because, being involved in the dairy industry, I don't always get to discuss a lot of these topics."

The IFB discussion meet judges contestants' ability to manage a small group discussion. Each contestant gives an opening statement. Participants exchange facts and insights on a pre-determined topic. Judges award points based on how well participants work with one another, how well they express themselves, and on their knowledge of the topic.

Topics for the 2015 discussion meet included a discussion on how Farm Bureau should protect and encourage producers' ability to use new technology and how the organization can work with government and the public to ensure public acceptance while encouraging innova-

tions; whether Farm Bureau should draft policy to protect livestock producers from false accusations regarding animal welfare; how to balance agriculture's water needs with maintaining vibrant communities and how historical water rights influence the discussion; how Farm Bureau could get the public to support right-to-farm laws and if those laws should be determined on the state or federal level; and how young farmers can influ-

ence state and local policy that more effectively balances the social and economic interests of farmers and ranchers versus burdensome federal regulation.

IFB promotes and sponsors the discussion meet with the goals of developing young peoples' leadership and communication skills on behalf of agriculture and of working together and reaching consensus on how to deal with current issues in agriculture.

NEW TRADITIONS

By Val Johnson



Val Johnson was a participant in the 2013 Illinois Farm Families Field Mom Program. This program exposed her to the field of agriculture and about topics discussed in the news lately. Val now spends her time working for the Kane County Farm Bureau in continuation of her agriculture learning experience.

New things are very exciting, but often times the thrill doesn't last as long as hoped. I myself notice this with some of my children's Christmas toys around this time of year. Once that certain something is able to be repeated with joy it becomes more than just something new, it blossoms into a tradition.

One tradition I enjoy sharing with my family is ice skating outdoors and then coming home to some homemade hot cocoa with marshmallows. Exploring beautiful western Kane County where the farm fields are resting for the winter brings back memories of weekends spent driving to and from NIU.

Now that I've been exposed to Holiday Hams and fresh Citrus from the Kane County farm Bureau, I hope to make these New Traditions as well.

What are your winter traditions?



Larsen house brings Christmas Cheer to Kane County

People from all over the county both young and old (our family included) went to visit the Larsen house light show in

Elburn this year ending on Jan 2nd. For all the Christmas lighting gurus, their website states they used over 1 million lights, 1200 channels, 20,000 feet of extension cords, 60 hours to program one song; and of course, 85 gallons of coffee consumed. The line of cars waiting to park was long, but we all agreed it was well worth the wait. Make sure and mark your calendars for this must see next year.

Visit <http://www.larsenlightshow.com> for more information.



Snow, Snow, and More Snow! - According to the Farmer's Almanac

The Farmer's Almanac is predicting more snow in January starting in mid-month, changing to chilly windy days. Clear skies are predicted to shine around the 25th, and more snow will close out the month.

The Farmer's Almanac also suggests the best days to accomplish certain tasks, such as, when to ask for a loan, to buy a home, or get married. These predictions are based on both the phase of the moon and its position in the zodiac. Many people believe that if you do these tasks on the dates the Almanac provides, you will get the best results possible. You can pick up your free copy of this year's Farmer's Almanac at the Kane County Farm Bureau while supplies last.

'Farmland' documentary now available

The U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA) developed a 45-minute version of the "Farmland" documentary with educational materials for high school educators to use in classrooms. Teachers can visit DiscoveringFarmland.com to access the edited version of the documentary along with lesson plans and discussion points. Additionally, USFRA made companion pieces available at the same site. Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom also houses this information

under the "COUNTY SUPPORT" tab at http://www.aginthe classroom.org/CountySupport/county_support.shtml

USFRA also created an online, one-stop-shop to order full-length copies of the documentary for movie theater and other public screenings. You can find details at <http://www.farmlandscreenings.com/>

Illinois Farm Bureau is a member of the US Farmers & Ranchers Alliance, a coalition of more than 80 farmer - and rancher-led organizations and agricul-

tural partners representing virtually all aspects of agriculture, working to engage in dialogue with consumers who have questions about how today's food is grown and raised. USFRA is committed to continuous improvement and supporting U.S. farmers and ranchers efforts to increase confidence and trust in today's agriculture.

For more information, contact Suzi Myers at the Kane County Farm Bureau, 630 584-8661 or aic@kanecfb.com.

Food Bank to celebrate success of Milk2MyPlate

The Northern Illinois Food Bank invites Harvest for ALL donors to join in a celebration of the collective success - and 5 millionth serving - of their Milk2MyPlate Program.

Through the collaborative support of Prairie Farms Dairy, financial donors like the KCFB's Harvest for ALL

donors, and a network of local agencies, the Northern Illinois Food Bank's Milk2MyPlate Program has provided over 300,000 gallons of nutritious fresh milk to hungry individuals and families since its launch three years ago.

The celebration will be held on "National Milk Day," Monday, January 11, 2016 from noon-2:00 pm at the Northern Illinois Food Bank, 273 Dearborn Court in Geneva.

The celebration will begin welcoming guests at noon, followed by lunch at 12:30, and a short program to recognize and thank donors who have helped

make Milk2My Plate such a success. Representatives of Prairie Farms Dairy, the Midwest Dairy Association and National Dairy Council will be on hand.

The Food Bank extends its sincerest hope that Harvest for ALL donors can join in as they reflect on the milestones YOU helped achieve: and more importantly share their enthusiasm and gratitude to sustain momentum for expanded efforts!

Please RSVP to Steve Ericson at sdericson@northernilfoodbank.org, or 630-443-6910 x112 by Tuesday, January 5 to attend this celebration.

Harvest for ALL Donors invited as honored guests

Recruiter of the Month

Kane County Farm Bureau honors the person or persons who sign the most members into our organization. This month the honor goes to Bobbi Boston who signed four new members. Bobbi has been a financial representative with COUNTRY® Financial since October 2004. She serves clients from her office at 2N710 Randall Rd, St. Charles, and may be reached at 630-485-5155. Thank you all for your continued support of Kane County Farm Bureau and congratulations on your success!



Bobbi Boston

New centennial Illinois Farm Bureau book available in KCFB library

One hundred years of Illinois Farm Bureau history comes alive in *A Voice for Illinois Agriculture, The Centennial History of Illinois Farm Bureau*. A copy of this book is now available in the Kane County Farm Bureau library.

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Shopping spree to provide hunger relief

Kane County Farm Bureau will host its 14th annual Food Check-Out "Challenge," a Shopping Spree to benefit local food pantries. The public is invited to come watch two local public officials race to collect food to help restock the shelves of two area food pantries. The contest will once again be held at the Batavia Jewel-Osco, on Randall Road at Main Street in Batavia.

Food Check-Out Week teaches Americans how to stretch their grocery dollars with healthy, nutritious food. Typically, consumers spend just 10 percent of their disposable annual income on food. This low number is thanks to the efficient efforts by America's farmers and ranchers, who work hard every day to provide a safe, abundant and affordable food supply.

All of the groceries collected during the 5-minute spree are purchased by the Farm Bureau and donated to the respective pantries. Many State Senators and State Representatives representing Kane County, local Mayors and elected officials have competed in the event, raising thousands of dollars in groceries for local food pantries.

IFB members set policy, elect new members during annual meeting

As the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) looks toward 2016 to celebrate its 100th anniversary, delegates to the 101st IFB Annual Meeting celebrated one of its longest-lasting traditions: grassroots, member-driven decision making to set the organization's policy for the coming year.

One of the most important actions the delegate body took was to pass their sense of the delegate body resolutions, one of which dealt with the importance of the Illinois General Assembly, governor and legislative leaders to get a state budget completed for fiscal year 2016.

"Many agricultural entities have been negatively impacted by the lack of a state budget,"

said Mark Gebhards, director, Governmental Affairs and Commodities, IFB. "We know that Soil and Water Conservation Districts, University of Illinois Extension Service, and county fairs have all felt the negative impacts of not having a budget in place. The delegate body simply wanted to send a message of a strong message to get this budget done as soon as possible and that certainly was conveyed through that sense of the delegate body resolution."

Delegates also focused their energy on several important resolutions, including property rights, renewable fuels, local government, transportation and nutrient management.

"Property rights have been one of the core principles that the IFB has included in the policy book for many, many years," Gebhards said. "And it's important now because of the multitude of utility projects either underway or proposed in the state of Illinois. The resolution focused on making sure that the Illinois Department of Agriculture has the enforcing ability that it needs to enforce the ag mitigation agreements that the companies would enter into and the Illinois Department of Agriculture would enforce on behalf of the landowners."

Delegates also discussed the need to ensure markets for their products, especially given the current commodity prices. "There was some emphasis placed on the renewable fuels industry," Gebhards said. "The delegates were interested in making sure that IFB looks for all opportunities to use renewable fuels, whether that means flex fuel vehicles, or various state agencies and federal agencies using that renewable fuel as part of their day-to-day operation."

Delegates also debated the need for a reduction in units of local government, funding for transportation and infrastructure, and the need to follow the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy.

Farmers that serve as voting delegates to the Illinois Farm Bureau listen to debate and discussion on policy resolutions at the IFB Annual Meeting in Chicago in December. Delegates representing Kane County at the meeting were KCFB President Joe White of Elburn, Donna Lehrer of Big Rock, Nan Long of Sugar Grove, and Frank Carlson of St. Charles. Alternates included Beth Gehrke of Elgin, Karl Kettelkamp of Elburn, Secretary/Treasurer Mike Kenyon of South Elgin, Craig Bradley of Elgin, Dale Pitstick of Genoa, Vice President Wayne Schneider of West Dundee, and Joe Engel of Hampshire. They were among the 370 plus voting members of county Farm Bureaus in Illinois who helped set policy on local, state and national issues for the state's largest organization of farmers.



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KCFB's 14th annual shopping spree, where public officials race to collect food for local food pantries, will be held February 26 at the Batavia Jewel-Osco. The public is invited to watch the "Food Check-Out Challenge" at 10:30 am on February 26.

WOMEN'S CORNER

By Louise Johnson
Women's Committee Chair



Have a wonderful New Year!

The Illinois Farm Bureau had their annual meeting in Chicago in December. It is very interesting to meet and to talk with farmers across the state about the different farming environments in our elongated state. I met an owner of the family farm called Tanglefoot Ranch. It is in the southern tip of the state, on the western edge of Shawnee National Forest, and not too far north of Paducah, KY. They raise freshwater prawns (shrimp-like crustaceans), which they allow visitors to help harvest in September. They also raise produce and livestock. If you are ever driving near the area, you might like to visit. Google their website.

We will not again be experiencing the high temperatures we had in December: Be prepared for winter! The Illinois State Police have an informative website. They have wintertime driving tips, information on making a "Coffee Can Survival Kit," indications of frostbite, & information on wind-chill. Go to <http://www.isp.state.il.us/traffic/traffictips.cfm>

For those long, cold January days when you just want to curl up with a good book, make a meal in your slow cooker. There are many variations; here is a

general idea of a meal. Adjust it to your taste!

Slow Cooker Meal ingredients:

Meat – Use any type you'd like, with the amount you need for your family. Less meat could be used if you add beans, such as red or black.

Onion – chopped, sliced, chunked, or whole, as desired.

Vegetables – either fresh or frozen, as desired.

Soup, can of condensed – Tomato, and/or cream (pick your favorite, such as celery, mushroom, broccoli, etc.)

Soup – You can add a portion or all of an envelope of dry onion soup mix.

Pasta or Noodles or Rice and/or Potatoes – You will probably want to add this later, especially pasta, so it does not get 'mushy.'

Water – Start with at least as many cans as the cans of soup that were used. Add more as needed.

Salt and pepper, as desired; however be aware that canned soup has lots of salt!

Curry powder – 1/8th teaspoon or less. This will add a little different flavor, but in this small quantity it will not be overpowering.

Cook all day on low. Assure that the meat is done! The noodles should be soft, and the vegetables tender.

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Happy New Year!



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College scholarship corner

Kane County Farm Bureau Foundation – 2016 scholarship applications are now available. Visit www.kanecfb.com to download an application and view all available KCFB Foundation Scholarships. You'll also find scholarship requirements and a brochure to help in identifying careers and areas of study. Last year, the Foundation awarded over \$30,000 in scholarships and internships to area students. The application deadline is February 15, 2016, and recipients will be named in April. Call 630-584-8660 with questions.

IAA Foundation – Agriculture students and Illinois Farm Bureau® (IFB) members and their children may apply for college scholarships offered by

the IAA Foundation, Illinois Farm Bureau's charitable arm. Sixty-six scholarships, ranging from \$1,000 to \$7,500 per year, will be awarded in total of \$118,500 for the 2016-2017 school year.

Available scholarships, eligibility guidelines, and application documents are available at the Foundation website, www.iaafoundation.org. Completed applications must be submitted online by 12pm on Feb. 1, 2016.

For more information, contact the IAA Foundation at 309-557-2230, or e-mail smoore@ilfb.org.

Kane County Corn Growers – Scholarships are available for both high school seniors and college students.

Applicants must be dependents of a current Kane County Corn Growers member. The application will be available at www.kanecountycorngrowers.com by February 1, and is due April 1, 2016.

Kane County Fair scholarships – Available to high school seniors who will graduate in this school year. They must also be a current member of 4-H and have exhibited at the Kane County Fair in at least one of the last two years. Applications will be reviewed and judged by the Fair selection committee. Scholarships are awarded to students pursuing higher education in any field. The deadline for applications is April 1, 2016. Please visit http://kanecounty-fair.com/visitors_2008_4Hscholarship.cfm to download the

application, and call 630-584-6926 with any questions.

Private well testing program offered in Feb.

The Kane County Farm Bureau and Kane/DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District are cooperating again to offer a water testing program in February 2016. A high quality water supply is vital for families, and this program helps provide peace of mind and identifies potential problem areas for homeowners of Kane County.

The program works simply as follows:

Step 1. Monday, February 8 – Friday, February 19, 2016

Pick up water test kits from the Kane County Farm Bureau, 8:30am-5 pm or from Kane/DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District, 8am - 4:30pm, M-F. Payment due for each test kit upon pickup.

Step 2. Sunday, February 21, 2016

Collect the water sample.

Step 3. Monday, February 22, 2016

Return water sample to Farm Bureau or Kane/DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District.

Costs vary for depending on which tests you have performed on your water. Three kits are available:

A. Basic Package (Nitrate Package) – \$45.00

Tests for nitrate, nitrite, ammonia, chloride, sulfate, soluble phosphorus, silica and specific conductivity.

B. Pesticide Screen – \$80.00

Indicates the presence of triazine herbicides, lasso, dual or harness.

C. Metals – \$95.00

Tests for 23 different metals.

More detailed sampling instructions will be included in each kit and additional information on how each test can help you is provided at the Farm Bureau or Kane/DuPage Soil and Water Conservation's District offices. Testing will be performed by Heidelberg College Water Quality Laboratory in Tiffin, Ohio, a certified lab that has been nationally recognized for its work in testing rivers and lakes, and results are mailed directly to your home. We are able to provide these deeply discounted testing fees because we are providing the laboratory a bulk number to be tested.

Call Kane County Farm Bureau at 630-584-8660 with any questions.

Midwest Women in Ag conference

The 15th annual Midwest Women in Agriculture Conference will be Feb. 17-18 at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Columbus, Indiana. The conference is aimed at meeting the needs of women in the industry by addressing the personal, family and farm issues that affect their lives, families and farm businesses.

Session topics include "What's it Worth if You Stay on the Farm?," "Showcasing Your Ag Operation via Social Media," "Improving Your Farm Financial Management Skills for 2016," "How SHOULD We Talk to Consumers about Farming Today?," "Protecting Your Profit Margins in an Unstable Market," "DNR Water Regulations: What Do I Need to Know to Stay Out

of Trouble?," "Taking the Dys out of Dysfunctional: Developing Functional Farm Meetings," and "Farmstead Planning." A preconference session, "Leasing Land on a Tight

Margin," is also available for an additional \$20 fee. Presenters include Jolene Brown – an award winning communicator, and an honored recipient of the Certified Speaking Professional designation, Karen Plaut – Senior Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs at Purdue University, and representatives of Farm Credit, Purdue

February 17-18, 2016



Extension, DNR-Division of Water, University of Kentucky, University of Illinois Extension, Indiana Soybean Alliance, Indiana Farm Bureau, and AgrAbility.

If registering before February 3, the cost is \$90 for both days, or \$80 for single day attendance. Registrations after February 3 increase to \$140 or \$115, respectively. To find out more about the conference and register, visit <https://ag.purdue.edu/extension/wia/Pages/default.aspx>.

Farm, Food & Fuel briefs

Illinois farm incomes down sharply for 2015/16

Grain farms likely will have low incomes for several years. The mid-2010s are shaping up as a period comparable to 1998-2002, the last time grain farming experienced a protracted period of low prices.

In 2015 and 2016, average net incomes on grain farms in Illinois are projected at levels similar to those from 1998 through 2002, the last time very low incomes occurred in agriculture. Current projections place average net income on Illinois grain farms at about \$20,000 per farm, considerably below 2014 averages. for 2014.

Pecan Closeout SPECIAL – We don't have freezer space! Stock up on pecan-halves and pieces for baking. Special prices only while supply lasts! When they're gone, they're gone.

- Mammoth Pecan Halves, 16 oz. bag\$9.00
- Medium Pecan Halves, Illinois grown, 16 oz. bag\$9.00
- Chopped pecans, 16 oz. bag.....\$9.00

Thank you ~~~~~



Kane County Farm Bureau offers its thanks to Bob Gehrke of Elgin for serving as District 1 IAA Director, serving farmers in Kane, Lake, DeKalb and McHenry counties on the Illinois Farm Bureau Board of Directors for the past 4 years. In his many years of dedicated service to Farm Bureau, as KCFB President from 2004-2010 and as an officer and Director for many years prior, Bob has always represented the interest of local farmers with integrity and a vision for the future.

As a Director of the Illinois Farm Bureau, Gehrke also served as a Director of COUNTRY Financial. He was also an elected representative of the interests of the state association and Illinois farmers on the Boards of Directors of Bloomington based Country Trust Bank and GrowMark Inc.

Bob, thank you for the hard work, self-sacrifice and dedication to serving both Kane County and Illinois Farm Bureaus. We look forward to a continued relationship with you and hope you will continue to put your talents and skills to work for the betterment of Illinois farms, families and food.

Illinois Farm Bureau celebrates its Centennial in 2016. Centennial events began at the 2015 Farm Progress Show, continue with an IFB birthday celebration for employees on January 26, 2016 at the IAA Building and conclude with a time capsule event on July 26 in Bloomington with all County Farm Bureau Presidents. The timeline below highlights a few of the many significant "mileposts" in the organization's history.

1916 – JANUARY 26, 1916 – County crop advisors meet with farmers on the University of Illinois campus and create the Illinois Agricultural Association (Illinois Farm Bureau) to become the voice of agriculture in Illinois to be controlled solely by farmers.

1916 – JUNE 19, 1916 – Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) begins work on state and national legislation that impacts farmers such as Grain Trade Act, a Pure Seed Law, and methods for the collection of real estate and personal property taxes. A Pure Seed Law was passed the following year.

1916 – NOVEMBER 17, 1925 – A charter to do business is issued to IFB's first insurance company: The Farmers Mutual Reinsurance Company, organized to help spread the risk of insuring farm buildings for fire.

1920s – MARCH 7, 1927 – IFB forms a new company: Illinois Farm Supply Company, which makes bulk purchases of gasoline, kerosene, high-quality lubricating oils and greases. These bulk purchases save members money. The Supply Company eventually becomes the GROW-MARK System and the FS member companies.

1920s – APRIL 27, 1927 – IFB's next insurance company is issued a license to insure automobiles: Illinois Agricultural Mutual Insurance Company.

1920s – FEBRUARY 1, 1929 – IFB's new life insurance company, Country Life Insurance Company, issues its first policy to serve farmers who were "woefully" under-insured.

1930s – 1933 – Real farm relief comes with the passage of the Agricultural Adjustment Act during the administration of Franklin Roosevelt. Commodity production was controlled through acreage reduction, which helped stabilize and improve farm income.

1950s – 1951 – Adoption of the Gateway Amendment made it easier for citizens to change the Illinois Constitution and clear the way for a constitutional amendment that would make the state less reliant on property taxes.

1960s – SEPTEMBER 1961 – IFB and its Family of Companies relocate from Chicago and dedicate a newly constructed building in Bloomington.

1960s – FEBRUARY 1, 1962 – Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc. is organized with the merger of the remaining three creameries in the State.

1960s – 1968 – IFB became a major player to lead a successful effort ("Con Con") to call a Constitutional Convention to re-write the century-old state constitution. A new constitution was adopted in 1970.

1970s – 1977 – The passage of the Farmland Assessment Law that taxes farm land on its productivity (income generation) rather than its sales value (fair market value).

1970s – 1981 – Illinois Agricultural in the Classroom program is developed to bring lessons about the importance of agriculture to students in secondary schools throughout the state.

1980s – 1987 – The IAA Foundation is formed with a mission to fund education, research, and charitable activities that benefit Illinois farm families and agriculture. Originally established as a place to provide scholarships, the IAA Foundation has grown to serve as the primary fund raiser for Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom, while also managing endowments and donor advised funds to further support agriculture and education.

2000s – OCTOBER 2000 – After two years of intense work and fundraising on the part of IFB, Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry opens the \$2.3 million *The Farm* exhibit, that brought the wonders of modern agriculture to millions of children and their families.

2000s – NOVEMBER 2009 – IFB, along with Illinois grain and livestock organizations, form the Illinois Farm Families Coalition to create greater consumer awareness of the positive benefits of modern agriculture through many on-farm visits by Chicago-area moms, and create a consumer website WatchUsGrow.org. Midwest Dairy Association joined the coalition in 2013.

2016 – JANUARY 26, 2016 – IFB celebrates its 100th birthday with a party for Family of Companies' employees.