



COOK COUNTY GO-OPERATOR

To serve all our members with meaningful and beneficial programs that reflect our agricultural heritage

Mark Your Calendar



February

- 7th / 21st Zoom Book Club
- 15th Foundation Scholarship Application Deadline **PG 12**
- 23rd Risk Management of Commodities Webinar **PG 12**
- 28th Community Garden Grant Application Deadline **PG 12**

March

- 3rd Food Checkout Day Donations Accepted **PG 1/2**
- 7th Zoom Book Club
- 11th / 12th Beginning Beekeeping Course **PG 12**
- 14th Documentary Screening – Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman **PG 12**
- 15th Credit System & Improving Credit Score Workshop **PG 12**

For participation details on these programs and activities, check out the related information in this publication, go to www.cookcfb.org, or contact the office at 708-354-3276. You can register for most programs by using the member service center at www.cookcfb.org.

Question of the Month



Illinois Farm Families recently helped kick off the "We are the 96" campaign designating 2023 as the "Year of the Farmer". What does the number "96" represent?

Call the Farm Bureau at **708-354-3276**, fax your answer to **708-579-6056**, or email to fbcooperator@gmail.com to enter the drawing for a \$25 gas card.

(Please include name, FB number, and phone number)

January Winner: Joseph Sasso

Question: The Cook County Farm Bureau is set to begin another Zoom book club activity this winter. What is the book that will be used?

Answer: Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman



AFBF ANNUAL MEETING ACTION!

American Farm Bureau Federation® President Zippy Duvall, pictured left meets with Farm Bureau Director Ruth Zeldenrust during the AFBF Annual Meeting. Zeldenrust shared information about Cook County Farm Bureau's nationally recognized County Activity of Excellence, 'Party for the Pollinators,' which impacted over 5,500 individuals including 17 community partners. **See page 4 for additional photos and information.**

Members Encouraged to Support Cook County Families and Food Pantries AS PART OF FOOD CHECKOUT DAY 2023

In celebration of the healthy and nutritious food grown and raised by local farmers, Cook County Farm Bureau® members and partners are supporting local families and food pantries.

The year 2023 marks the 23rd anniversary of Food Checkout Day and Cook County Farm Bureau's latest effort to date to support local families in need. Rather than support a single charity or even a handful, Cook CFB will match member donations to any Cook County food pantry up to \$1,000.

Farm Bureau members who wish to donate to a local food pantry in celebration of Food Checkout Day are asked to complete the form below and to designate the food pantry that their donation and Cook CFB's match is for. The food pantry selected must be a registered 501(c)3. Farm Bureau will match the first \$1,000 donated. All donations will be considered part of Food Checkout Day.

In addition, Cook County Farm Bureau is partnering with four local food pantries for Food

Checkout Day. The food pantries were selected by our partners at COUNTRY Financial.

All Saints Food Pantry in Palatine is an extension of the ministries of All Saints Lutheran Church. All Saints Food Pantry supplies food to underserved individuals in the northwest suburbs of Cook County, including Rolling Meadows, Palatine, Mount Prospect, and Arlington Heights. Through their Pantry on Wheels, over 100 families are served weekly. The mobile pantry serves area apartment complexes on a rotating basis. Member donations will directly benefit the individuals served through the mobile pantry. All Saints Food Pantry was selected by Chicago Northwest COUNTRY Financial Representatives.

Alicia's House in South Chicago Heights is dedicated to Alicia who loved people and loved helping people. She would spend hours working with her Grandma Stella at the church food pantry, making bags of food

Support continues on Page 2

Pop-Up Solar Farm Shows Promise for Increasing Profitability, Energy Independence

By Carrie Steinweg, | Special Feature Writer

A company in Cook County was recently named a semi-finalist in the 2023 Ag Innovation Challenge by the American Farm Bureau Federation® and Farm Credit, a national business competition that showcases U.S. startups developing innovative solutions that address challenges facing America's farmers, ranchers and rural communities. TrackerSled, which is based in Oak Park and is a Cook County Farm Bureau® member, introduced a prefabricated, onsite assembly pop-up solar farm called the SunFarmor at the American Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Convention in San Juan, Puerto Rico in January where final award winners were announced.

Lawrence Kearns, founder and CEO of TrackerSled is an architect who specializes in projects that mix social, economic and environmental aspects. He designed the product and has been developing it since 2019.

"TrackerSled licenses EPCs (renewable energy contractors) to build 'pop-up' solar farms for farmers in weeks, not months or years, so they can become energy independent. Farmers use the tax credits

Solar continues on Page 2

Who We Are

Cook County Farm Bureau is made up of many members including farmers, landowners, foodies, greenhouse operators, specialty growers, food consumers and customers of the Farm Bureau's affiliated companies (Country Financial, Conserv FS, IAA Credit Union, etc).

We bring together many members with diverse backgrounds and food interests in an effort to support the success of local farmers and to keep agriculture present and strong in Cook County.

This Co-Operator publication for members is designed to share more about how Cook County Farm Bureau is working for local farmers and agriculture and to help our members know

more about farming, food, fiber and fuel that comes from farming.

As an added value, we are able to provide great membership deals, savings, discounts, benefits, programming and activities that reflect our agricultural heritage and modern expectations.

Please enjoy reading and thank you for your support of area agriculture and your membership!

Support

to hand out to people in need. Although her grandma had a specific way to nutritionally pack the bags, Alicia would always add her special touch by making sure each bag would contain a special treat, usually candy. To honor the memory of Alicia who passed away at the age of four, Grandma Stella and Poppy Juan started Alicia's House. Alicia's House feeds hundreds of hungry families and each bag of food contains Alicia's special loving touch. Alicia's House serves the communities of Beecher, Crete, Steger, Peotone, University Park, Monee, and South Chicago Heights. Alicia's House was selected by Chicago South COUNTRY Financial Representatives.

Niles Township Food Pantry in Skokie serves over 1,000 families in the area. With the assistance of the Niles Township Food Pantry Foundation, the pantry is able to provide assistance five days a week. Niles Township Food Pantry was selected by Chicago North COUNTRY Financial representatives.

Together We Cope in Tinley Park serves 27 south suburban communities in four townships, Breman, Orland, Palos, and Worth. Monthly, over 5,000 individuals rely on the services provided by the pantry. Together We Cope was selected by Orland Park COUNTRY Financial representatives.

Donations can be made by credit card by calling the Farm Bureau office at 708-354-3276 or by mailing in the form below with a check. Donations will be accepted until March 3, 2023.

Food Checkout Day 2023

Food Pantry Match Donations

Food Pantry for Match _____

Your Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

ZIP Code _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Please make checks payable to Cook County Farm Bureau.
**Checks should be mailed to Cook County Farm Bureau,
 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525.**
 All proceeds will be donated to Cook County food pantries.



TrackerSled founder and CEO Larry Kearns explains to judges how SunFarmor, a modular mobile solar energy system, can increase profitability and energy independence by supplying farmers with a means to generate their own inputs on their own farms. (AFBF photo) Photo/cutline from FarmWeek.

Solar

of the Inflation Reduction Act to pay for up to 50% of the cost and grid interconnection," Kearns explained. "To become energy independent, farmers can use additional tax credits to pay for 30% of a containerized ammonia plant for fuel and fertilizer. A 3.5-acre solar farm will produce all the energy, fuel and fertilizer required to operate a 1,000-acre conventional farm or a 2,000-acre regenerative farm."

Unfortunately, TrackSled didn't make it in the Final Four in the competition, which would have meant more funds to assist in his venture. However, as a top ten finalist, TrackerSled was awarded \$10,000. As part of the competition, Kearns presented a scaled model of a SunFarmor module and made a seven-minute pitch in front of three judges (a banker, agrochemical representative and market researcher).

"In solar-friendly states like Illinois, farmers can make up to 50% returns on the solar farm alone, selling surplus energy back to their electric co-op below retail prices," as explained on the TrackerSled website, "But by the end of the decade, farmers can

use that power to make carbon-free fuel and nitrogen fertilizer on their farms with containerized hydrogen/ammonia plants. In this case, their entire farm is earning more profit."

At 50-feet long, each SunFarmor module is made up of stacked tub girders, panel tables and solar reflectors with parts that can be assembled easily and towed by tractor to any area of a farm. Modules can be linked together to create a larger system based on the size of needs of a specific farm. A SunFarmor system is currently in place in a southwest Michigan farm powering a 400-acre organic farm.

"Every farmer I talked to during the conference encouraged me to continue to develop the idea," said Kearns. "I sat next to a Wisconsin farmer during Secretary Vilsack's speech. When Secretary Vilsack encouraged the audience to adopt practices that promoted independence and self-reliance, he turned to me and said, 'he's talking about you.'"

To learn more, visit trackersled.com.

Gratitude Journal

Each month, there are people that go out of their way to lend a hand to help with our cause in many ways, both big and small. We appreciate it greatly!

The Cook County Farm Bureau thanks...

- Board members and their spouses for discussing Farm Bureau's pollinator efforts with Farm Bureau representatives from throughout the nation during the 2023 American Farm Bureau Federation® Annual Meeting and Trade Show.
- Cook County Commissioner Josina Morita for taking time out of her schedule to meet with Farm Bureau staff to discuss the Farm Bureau and the organization's efforts on behalf of members.
- Dependent member, 9-year-old Claire T., for informing us that the January Ag Adventure Word Search puzzle was missing an "s" on a word. Thank you for being so observant and keeping us on our toes.
- Alyssa T. for earning volunteer hours with the National Honor Society at Reavis High School by assisting our AITC program with our second semester postcards. Thank you for your help!
- Our friends at BMO Harris Bank for foiling an attempted fraud with our bank account.
- Jessica and Rebecca Biernacki for representing the Young Leaders Team at the Illinois Young Leaders statewide conference in East Peoria in January.
- Young Leader Chairman Blake Lanphier for arranging a fun event at Pinstripes for the Young Leaders Team.
- Member and Country Financial agent Tony Munno for his compliments regarding the new look and readability of the Co-Operator.
- Member Dan Brennan for the kind note to staff member Bona Heinsohn regarding her column and the refreshing stories that she brings to members.

Co-Operator

Published Monthly

Cook County Farm Bureau

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Downwind

by **BOB ROHRER, CCFB MANAGER**

“What is Your Superpower?”

I have watched some of the Marvel and DC movies. These movies feature superheroes with amazing abilities. Wouldn't it be fun to have blistering speed, tremendous strength, spidey sense, magic, ability to breathe underwater, or amazing gadgets. Unfortunately, I'm afraid one of those "gifts" would probably be wasted on me.

What is my superpower...Deleting emails? Not answering the calls of telemarketers? Toilet plunger (my wife tries to claim this one)? Powerful stuff right there! Sure, I can pack a car with unmatched tightness and efficiency...so what?

Everybody is good at something, right? Some people are so good at things, it seems like they have a superpower! Physical skills, mental skills, communication skills, leadership skills and more can seem superhuman... Albert Einstein, Henry Ford, Michael Jordan, Lao-tzu, Moses, George Washington, Martin Luther King, Babe Ruth, Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela and others come to mind. These people seemed to have superpowers when it counted.

Growing up on the farm, my parents had a few superpowers.

One of my Dad's superpowers is that he can fix, repair, operate, weld, design, and fabricate nearly anything on the farm. Even the pile of equipment that I broke. I still shake my head in amazement.

One of my mom's many superpowers is that she creates beautiful quilts out of random cloth that most people would toss out.

Both parents seemed to have a superpower of knowing when I was doing something that I wasn't supposed to do. Spooky!

Has there been a farmer superhero? Mr. Greenjeans? Johnny Appleseed? The cast of Green Acres? Old McDonald?

How about Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Norman Borlaug and his battle to end world hunger. Borlaug was an agronomist who worked extensively to increase food production in countries struggling to feed their people including Pakistan, India and other Asian countries, Mexico, as well as countries in Africa. Superhero!

Farmers as a group could be considered "superheroes". For 12,000 years, farmers have produced food, fiber and fuel which serves as the basis for society. Rather than hunting and gathering, farming was invented, allowing others to branch out to specialize in other types of work. Farmers became masters of agriculture, horticulture, and animal science. Superheroes.

Farmer superheroes can grow abundant and nutritious food in fertile soils and environments or even inhospitable conditions including rocky regions, deserts, and flooded areas.

Today's farmers are currently showing their superpowers in the fight against climate change. They are producing more with less using science and technology. Their efforts include energy efficiencies, cover crops, nutrient management, soil health and control, water quality, emission reductions, and carbon sequestration.

And just think how farmers bring people together... Around the dining table, restaurants, clothing stores, events, markets, gas stations, greenhouses, bars, sports and yes, the Farm Bureau!

The world needs some superheroes today. I submit Farmers. Farmer superheroes are only missing a cool name. The names "Wonder Woman" and "Superman" are taken. How about Tomator? The Harvester? Ms. Protein? The Feederator? Jewel? Hydroponicsman? The Community? Foodsystem? The Greenthumb?

I'll keep working on it.

HOW FARM BUREAU SERVED YOU IN JANUARY

- ▶ **Promoted Farm Bureau and members' efforts in the area of pollinator habitat creation and preservation to members throughout the nation.**
- ▶ **Provided members with discount opportunities to attend the PBR Bull Racing Invitational, Chicago Blackhawks and Chicago Bulls games.**
- ▶ **Informed the county's ag community of the informative and timely Everything Local Specialty Growers Conference and offered registration reimbursement to member ag community.**



We need YOUR recipes for our 2023 Recipe Collection!

We want your recipes using fresh, local ingredients! Please submit by March 15th to be included in a raffle for CCFB Farm Funds to be used at a member Farm Stand to purchase your fresh, local produce, honey and more!

Email: membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org
OR Mail: CCFB/Recipes
6438 Joliet Rd Countryside, IL 60525



Recipe of the Month

Party Time Pasta

U of I Extension: Building Healthier Families Calendar

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 lb ground turkey or 1 c cooked chicken or turkey, diced
- 1 t paprika
- 2 c fresh tomatoes, crushed with juice or 14.5 oz can crushed tomato
- 1 can (14.5 oz) chicken broth, reduced sodium
- 2 c pasta, uncooked
- 3 c broccoli cut into small pieces

Topping:

- 1/2 c fresh parsley or 4 T dried parsley
- 1/4 c seasoned breadcrumbs
- 1/4 c Parmesan cheese, grated

DIRECTIONS:

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add ground turkey and paprika. Cook and stir until meat is browned, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, chicken broth and pasta to cooked turkey. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and simmer until pasta is almost tender, about 10-15 minutes. Remove lid. Place broccoli on top of pasta. Replace lid. Cook until broccoli is tender, about 5 minutes. Prepare topping. Mix parsley, breadcrumbs and Parmesan cheese. Sprinkle over broccoli in skillet. Cover and let sit 3 minutes before serving.

View or Download all 2022 Recipes online at: <https://cookcfb.org/discover-local/recipes>

Farm Bureau Leaders Attend National Meeting

Cook County Farm Bureau® Directors joined Farm Bureau members from throughout the country at this year's American Farm Bureau Federation® Annual Meeting. Members celebrated the heritage of Farm Bureau and grassroots engagement during the Celebration of Grassroots Reception prior to previewing the trade show and County Activity of Excellence booths.

Members also learned more about how Farm Bureau members can break through the chaos of a post-pandemic world and divisive political environment in D.C. to ensure that farmers' voices are heard in Washington.

In a celebration of Farm Bureau members hard work, CCFB Directors joined AFBF President Zippy Duvall for the state awards and recognitions. Members also joined the final four Ag Innovation contestants for their live pitch. For the past nine years, the Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge has showcased U.S. food and agriculture startups. Entrepreneurs competed for \$165,000 in startup funds. Unfortunately, Cook County Farm Bureau's local contestant TrackerSled did not make it to the final four.

Members also had the opportunity to hear an update from Tom Vilsack, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture before listening to a remote message from U.S. President Joe Biden. Bert Jacobs, Co-Founder of Life is Good® provided closing remarks focusing on finding the good in life regardless of the circumstances.

In addition to attending breakout sessions, activities on the Farm Bureau stage, and general sessions Farm Bureau Directors staffed Cook County Farm Bureau's County Activities of Excellence booth. The booth focused on Farm Bureau's 'Party for the Pollinators' program, which was designed this project to communicate farmers' efforts to preserve and increase pollinator habitat as well as to illustrate the connection between pollinators and our food system to urban consumers.



Cook County Farm Bureau Secretary/Treasurer Ruth Zeldenrust, pictured left discusses Farm Bureau's 'Party for the Pollinators' activities during the American Farm Bureau Federation® Annual Meeting with RFD Radio Network anchor/editor DeLoss Jahnke. 'Party for the Pollinators' was designed this project to communicate farmers' efforts to preserve and increase pollinator habitat as well as to illustrate the connection between pollinators and our food system to urban consumers.



Dan Biernacki (pictured right) and Karen Biernacki visit with a Farm Bureau member during the trade show at the AFBF Annual Meeting. Cook County Farm Bureau hosted a booth during the trade show featuring the 'Party for the Pollinators' program, which included four sub-projects: creation of a community pollinator garden; community presentations; pollinator garden community event; and large-scale community education event.



Board members Jim Bloomstrand, Ruth Zeldenrust, and Dan Biernacki along with volunteer leader Karen Biernacki joined members from throughout the U.S. for the closing session of the AFBF Annual Meeting. In addition to cheering on Illinois' Young Leaders, they also had the opportunity to hear comments from Tom Vilsack, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and keynote speaker Bert Jacobs, Co-Founder of Life is Good®.



Learn more about trucking regulations to help you stay legal and safe when you hit the road.

SAVE THE DATE

FEBRUARY

- 22ND AT 10 AM RANDOLPH CFB
- 22ND AT 6 PM CLAY CFB
- 23RD AT 10 AM WILLIAMSON CFB
- 27TH AT 10 AM CASS-MORGAN FB

MARCH

- 1ST AT 6 PM MACON CFB*
- 2ND AT 9 AM MONTGOMERY CFB
- 7TH AT 9 AM FORD-IROQUOIS CFB
- 7TH AT 6 PM WOODFORD CFB
- 9TH AT 6 PM LASALLE CFB
- 14TH AT 6 PM KANE CFB
- 15TH AT 6 PM KNOX CFB
- 15TH AT 10 AM JO DAVIESS CFB

MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON

Attendance is open to all Illinois Farm Bureau Members
REGISTRATION OPENS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH.
 Please contact your local County Farm Bureau to register.
 *Virtual option available





Farm Bureau Director Jim Bloomstrand chats with fellow Farm Bureau members during the American Farm Bureau Federation® Annual Meeting and Trade Show.

Cook County Farm Bureau® Foundation Fundraiser Raffle for Agriculture Education

**\$50 per ticket.
3 big payout winners!**

***Cash Payouts:**

- 1st \$2,500
- 2nd \$1,500
- 3rd \$500

**Payouts are based on selling \$300 tickets. If fewer tickets are sold, see raffle rules on CCFB Foundation landing page for adjusted payout schedule.*

Must be 18 or older at the time of entry purchase. Winner need not be present to win and winner is responsible for all local, state and federal taxes associated with prize.

The intended purposes from the proceeds of the raffle are to:

- Fund the Cook County Farm Bureau's award-winning Ag in the Classroom program
- Provide scholarships for members/dependents pursuing agriculturally related careers
 - Fund the Foundation sponsored internship to support the agriculture literacy program.

For sponsors, official rules and to purchase ticket please go to:
www.cookcfb.org/foundation.

Drawing will be held **Wednesday, June 14, 2023**. Details on how to "tune in" online to watch the drawing live will be shared on the website landing page.



2023 Cook County Farm Bureau® Foundation "Raffle for Ag Education"

SPONSORSHIPS

Join the Friends of the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation in support of the 2023 raffle to fund ag career related scholarships, Ag in the Classroom programming, an internship, and ag experiences for area youth in urban areas of Chicagoland. The event will culminate with a live virtual, online drawing on Wednesday, June 14th, 2023. *See details on the event landing page at cookcfb.org/foundation.*

Sponsorship Benefits	Platinum \$1,500	Gold \$1,000	Silver \$500	Bronze \$250
Company logo on Foundation Event website landing page & virtual platform	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recognition during virtual drawing event	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recognition of sponsorship in the CCFB publication, the Co-Operator (cir. 41,000)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sponsorship may be tax-deductible per IRS guidelines as a charitable or business expense	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sponsorship appreciation placard for company or individual use/display	✓	✓	✓	
Recognition posts on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram (7,000+ subscribers)	✓	✓		
Company logo added to event promotional materials and mailings	✓			
Banner during virtual event	✓			
1-3 minute video promotion message during virtual event and on event landing page/virtual platform (subject to approval by CCFB)	✓			
Mention as presenting sponsor in Foundation Annual Report	✓			
Complimentary ads 1/4 page in CCFB publication, the Co-Operator (subject to approval by CCFB)	4 ads	2 ads	1 ad	

I/We would like to support CCFB Foundation's Agricultural Literacy efforts through sponsorship at the following level (please check one):

- Platinum \$1,500 Gold \$1,000 Silver \$500 Bronze \$250

Business/Organization Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Business Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

Social Media: (please specify if Facebook, IG, Twitter) _____

Other pertinent information: _____

Company logo can be emailed to: linda@cookcfb.org. Call (708)354-3276 to donate by credit card. If you are making a donation by check, please mail to: CCFB Foundation, 6438 Joliet Rd, Countryside, IL 60525.

**The Cook County Farm Bureau® Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit-organization. Donations/contributions to the Foundation may be tax-deductible under IRS guidelines. Please consult your tax advisor if you have any questions.*

5 Questions with Gerry Kopping, CCFB Vice President



Gerry fishing in Key West for Barracuda

What impresses you about the Cook County Farm Bureau?

Just as our County Farm Bureau slogan states we support Farm, Family and Food in Cook County.

Why do you think that the Cook County Farm Bureau is important to your farming profession?

If we have issues on how our government controls or limits our ability to farm or sell our products, we have a voice through Cook County Farm Bureau that will help tell our side.

What is a memory stamped into your mind from your involvement with Cook County Farm Bureau? I had the opportunity to support and expand agriculture markets into Cuba as a part of a delegation through a Market Study Program. This was with the Illinois Farm Bureau and the support of the Cook County Farm Bureau.

When you are not working on Farming and Farm Bureau related business, what is something you like to spend time doing?

I like to spend time with my family and friends in Wisconsin snowmobiling, ATV riding, boating, hunting, fishing or walking our dogs. I also enjoy going to quarter horse shows and watching our animals compete.

What is your favorite tractor? I have an International Farm-All Super C that was purchased in Lemont at Ludwig implement many years ago and was the first tractor I drove raking hay as a child. I now went green with a John Deere 7420 IVT PREMIUM that I enjoy.

For more Q & A with Gerry, go to cookcfb.org/ccfb/q-and-a-with-leadership-and-staff/board-of-directors

SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

FOR FARMERS AND
FARM FAMILIES

WE ALL NEED SOMEONE
WE CAN TALK TO

With suicide on the rise within the agriculture community, the Farm Family Resource Initiative is launching an open support group for farmers and farm family members 18 years and older who have lost a loved one.

To register or for more information, contact Bonnie Landwehr at 217.757.8115 or email blandwehr54@siumed.edu.

First Wednesday of each month
Beginning November 2, 2022
3:30-4:30 pm | Virtual



PRESENTER
Bonnie Landwehr, LCSW is a licensed clinical social worker and behavioral health program supervisor with SIU Medicine's Department of Family and Community Medicine. She and her husband farm in Macoupin County.

FREE | CONFIDENTIAL | 24/7

CALL OR TEXT
1-833-FARM-SOS

EMAIL
FarmFamilyResourceHelpline@mhsil.com

VISIT
siumed.org/farm for more resources



Planting Seeds

By Katrina J.E. Milton, Director of Ag Literacy



Katrina J.E. Milton

Although I don't have the biggest sweet tooth, I do enjoy candy every now and again. My favorite candy is chocolate-covered gummy bears.

Candy has become a sweet tradition for many holidays throughout the year: trick-or-treating for Halloween, cakes and cupcakes for birthdays, chocolate bunnies, jellybeans, and Peeps for Easter, and candy canes for Christmas. To learn more about how chocolate became a Valentine's Day tradition, read this month's Ag Adventure page.

All of these holiday candy traditions have one thing in common: agriculture.

Sweeteners with agricultural ties include honey from bees; sugar produced from sugarcane, sugar beets, stevia, and coconuts; and syrup from corn, agave, barley malt, brown rice, and maple trees. Sugar can also be made from monk fruit, a gourd that is grown on vines in Asia, and syrup that has been made from the roots of yacón, a tuberous plant from South America. Naturally-occurring sugar alcohols, including erythritol and xylitol, are found in fruits and

vegetables and are considered sugar substitutes.

According to the USDA, there are also six FDA-approved high-intensity artificial sweeteners: saccharin, aspartame, acesulfame potassium, sucralose, neotame, and advantame. These sweeteners are called "nonnutritive sweeteners," because they contain zero or low amounts of carbohydrates, calories, or energy.

Advantame, which was approved by the FDA for use in 2014, is derived from aspartame and vanillin, the main chemical compound of vanilla bean extract. Vanilla comes from the bean seed pod of orchid plants. Advantame is 20,000 times sweeter than granulated sugar.

Here is more information about ag-related sweeteners:

- Sugarcane is grown in the U.S. in Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and Hawaii. Sugarcane is a tall perennial grass. It is planted from cane stalk cuttings, and it matures in 1 to 2 years. Two to four crops are harvested from the original cuttings before the sugarcane is replanted.
- Sugar beets are grown in 11 states: California, Colorado, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota,

Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. Sugar beets tend to be grown in rotation with other crops.

- Unless marked "pure cane sugar," granulated sugar is sugar beet sugar or a mix of sugar beet and cane sugar.
- Corn is grown in every U.S. state, and Illinois is the nation's top corn producer. High-fructose corn syrup is a sweetener made from corn starch at corn refineries.
- Stevia is a natural sweetener and sugar substitute derived from the leaves of an herbal shrub native to Paraguay and Brazil. The plant, Stevia rebaudiana, is related to chrysanthemums, chamomile, sunflowers, dandelions, and marigolds through the Asteracea family. Stevia is grown in Georgia and North Carolina.

Many candies have originated in Chicago, including Blommer Chocolate Company's chocolates; Brach's candy corn; Curtiss Candy Company's Baby Ruth and Butterfinger; Fannie May's chocolates; Frango mints; Ferrara's Lemonheads,

Juicyfruits, Chuckles, Atomic Fireballs, Red Hots and Boston Baked Beans; Johnson's Candy Company's Turtles; Leaf Candy Company's Whoppers, Jolly Ranchers, Milk Duds, Payday and Heath Bars; Mars, Inc.'s M&Ms, Three Musketeers, and Snickers; Schutter-Johnson Company's Bit O'Honey; Tootsie Roll Industries' Tootsie Rolls, Tootsie Pops, DOTS, Junior Mints, Sugar Daddy, Sugar Babies, Charleston Chews, and Dubble Bubble; and Wrigley Company's gum.

I hope your Valentine's Day is "sweet!" Enjoy the holiday knowing more about candies' ties to local companies and agriculture.

Katrina can be reached at aitc@cookcfb.org.

SOURCES:

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/crops/sugar-and-sweeteners>

<https://www.lstoptours.com/blog/candy-makers-in-chicago>



"I LOVE Strawberries" wins Foundation's Book of the Year

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture presented its 16th "Book of the Year" award to author Shannon Anderson for "I LOVE Strawberries." The award was presented at the American Farm Bureau Federation's 104th Convention.

"I LOVE Strawberries" follows Jolie and her faithful rabbit, Munchy, as together they find out just how delicious, rewarding and complicated it can be to grow your own food. Through Jolie's scrapbook-style journal entries, young readers learn how strawberries grow, what pests to look out for in a garden, why ladybugs are helpful and more.

Anderson is an award-winning children's book author and national

speaker. She taught for 25 years, from first grade through college level, and was named one of the 10 teachers who "awed and inspired" the "Today" show in 2019.

The "Book of the Year" award springs from the Foundation's effort to identify "Accurate Ag Books," a collection of nearly 500 books for children, teenagers and adults that accurately cover agricultural topics. Book of the Year selections are educational, help to create positive public perceptions about agriculture, inspire readers to learn more and touch their readers' lives as well as tell the farmer's story.

The Accurate Ag Books database is available online, agfoundation.org/recommended-pubs.



Ag in the Classroom Presentation

Presenter Wayne Kolweier shows Prospect High School students an antique corn drier during an Ag in the Classroom presentation on Friday, Jan. 20. Kolweier also explained to students that grain elevators are the modern-day equivalent of the old farm tool.

Ag Day 2023

Third grade classes are invited to attend Ag Day 2023, held at two locations this year.

Ag Day South will be held March 16 at The Children's Farm at The Center located at 12700 SW Highway in Palos Park.

Ag Day North will be held March 22 at Wagner Farm located at 1510 Wagner Road in Glenview.

This two-hour program will rotate students through learning stations to help them understand the importance of agriculture in Illinois. Choose from the AM or PM session to best fit your schedule. Program provides pre- and post-engagement activities and connects with science and social science curriculum. Through the generosity of the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation, the Ag Day 2023 is free; schools simply provide their own transportation.

To register for this free field trip experience, teachers can fill out the online registration form using the following links:

Ag Day South: <https://bit.ly/AGDaySouth2023>

Ag Day North: <https://bit.ly/AGDayNorth2023>

For more information about Ag Day 2023, call 708-354-3276 or email Jill at aitc2@cookcfb.org.

Free to attend

Ag Day 2023

Bring Your 3rd Grade Students to the Farm

Free to attend



March 16, South



March 22, North

9:15-11:15AM session or
11:45-1:45PM session

Contact Jill for additional information
708.354.3276 or aitc2@cookcfb.org

Ag Day South will be held at The Children's Farm in Palos Park

Ag Day North will be held at Historic Wagner Farm in Glenview





AGRICULTURE ADVENTURES

FOR FAMILIES



CRAZY Chocolate TRIVIA

- ❑ Chocolate comes from the cacao plant which grows near the equator. Africa, Asia, Central and South America and Australia have the climate needed to grow cocoa.
- ❑ Chocolate is a fruit
- ❑ It takes approximately 400 beans to make 1 pound of chocolate
- ❑ The average cacao tree produces 2,500 beans each season
- ❑ Farmers have to wait 4-5 years before a cacao tree is mature enough to yield fruit
- ❑ White chocolate isn't chocolate. White chocolate is made from cocoa butter, milk solids, milk fats, sugar, and vanilla.
- ❑ Soy is often found in chocolate as soy lecithin. The main purpose of adding soy lecithin to chocolate is to give it a more workable consistency, allowing it to be poured and molded easily.

Valentine's Day is February 14

Why Chocolates on Valentine's Day?

Valentine's Day has been celebrated since ancient Roman times. By the 1840s, Valentine's Day was a holiday celebrating romantic love. People living in Victorian England adored the notion of courtly love and showered each other with elaborate cards and gifts. Richard Cadbury was responsible for sales at his family's chocolate manufacturing company, Cadbury. The company had recently improved its chocolate-making technique to extract pure cocoa butter from whole beans, producing a tasty drinking chocolate. That process resulted in an excess amount of cocoa butter, which was used to produce many more varieties of what was then called "eating chocolate." Richard Cadbury recognized a great marketing opportunity for the new chocolates and started selling them in beautifully decorated boxes that he himself designed.



While Richard Cadbury didn't actually patent the heart-shaped box, it's widely believed that he was the first to produce one. Cadbury marketed the boxes as having a dual purpose: when the chocolates had all been eaten, the box itself was so pretty that it could be used again and again to store mementos, from locks of hair to love letters. ... Victorian-era Cadbury boxes still exist, and many are treasured family heirlooms or valuable items prized by collectors. *Source: History.com*

February Word Search

Last Month's Winner:
Rashid Ahmed

Bean	E	Q	T	K	V	E	H	G	D	V	K	Q	L	F	H
Butter	I	Q	W	O	A	S	Z	A	A	P	W	E	O	M	E
Cacao	B	A	F	H	D	B	R	L	G	T	M	R	V	B	A
Cards	P	O	U	R	Q	P	E	A	H	K	D	O	E	H	R
Chocolate	T	N	A	L	P	N	T	P	U	N	L	A	L	N	T
Gifts	L	C	P	Q	T	E	T	C	G	B	N	I	O	D	E
Heart	C	Q	N	I	E	G	U	A	N	R	K	U	M	D	J
Love	F	H	N	J	W	E	B	B	S	A	G	I	F	T	S
Milk	I	E	O	B	Q	P	R	E	L	G	P	Y	Z	P	Q
Mold	L	G	E	C	D	U	F	T	D	U	O	H	O	V	O
Plant	K	H	J	E	O	G	C	Z	L	S	O	A	C	A	C
Pour	V	E	K	T	H	L	S	Q	J	K	Y	T	T	Q	D
Soy	I	U	I	K	C	B	A	O	M	U	O	Z	U	D	I
Sugar	T	A	M	A	E	K	A	T	J	X	D	E	R	S	C
Tree	F	C	F	T	L	A	W	G	E	D	B	Z	O	J	V
Valentine															

Choose Your Prize: February Word Search

Choices include a \$25 Beggar's Pizza Gift Card, a \$25 Home Run Inn Gift Card, OR *3 AMC Movie Tickets *AMC Yellow tickets not valid in California, New York & New Jersey.

Complete the Word Search puzzle for your chance to win! Winners will be contacted by mail.

MAIL TO:
Cook Co. Farm Bureau
Ag Adventures Word Search
6438 Joliet Rd
Countryside, IL 60525

FAX TO: 708-579-6056

EMAIL TO: FBcooperator@gmail.com

Complete and submit an entry every month all in 2023 and your name is automatically entered into an "End of Year" drawing for a gift basket full of ag themed goodies.

Deadline is the 20th of each month. **GOOD LUCK!**

Name _____

Phone # _____

Membership # _____

Choose Your Prize Preference for If You Win:

If a choice is not made, movie tickets will be sent

Beggar's Pizza Gift Card 3 Movie Tickets

Home Run Inn Gift Card *(Choose one option only)*

Located on front of paper

FEBRUARY 2023
At The Farm Gate
 by Joanie Stiers



“We are the 96%” Families dominate Illinois farms

My mental pauses on the farm often arrive at sunrise, sunset and the moments when family is most accentuated on the farm. Harvest brings those experiences together: My dad and brother run the combines. My son and I operate the tractors with grain auger carts. A long-time employee who watched me grow up on the farm hauls grain, as does his son, a cousin and a local truck driver, all who now watch my kids grow up on the farm.

My daughter takes turns with our cousin’s wife to weigh grain trucks at our storage facility. My nephew replaces me in the tractor after football practice, and my mom manages the bills and delivers meals around sunset to keep our farm running and bodies fueled.

Family defines the farm. Family members make the decisions that care for the land and animals. They carry out the work, uphold the commitment to community and plan for the next generation.

We are the 96%. Families like ours operate 96% of farms in the state, and Illinois agriculture groups have designated 2023 the “Year of the Farmer” to proclaim this statistic. The celebration intends to debunk a disconcerting myth: A consumer survey indicates that people believe corporations run

most farms and that families only run 47% of the Illinois farms they see.

To the contrary, I see Matt grow grain and beef with his brother and nephews, Kevin farm with his brother and their wives, and Alan with his dad and sister. Lori farms with her husband, Ron with his daughter and brothers, and Jay with his mom, wife, brother and teenage kids.

Families dominate farm ownership across Illinois, home to more than 70,000 family farms of all sizes. Some farms support small families; some big families. Regardless of size, most will tell you that welcoming the next generation requires careful planning and often profitable expansion to provide a livelihood for another household.

Family farms look different than decades ago. Our tractors are bigger. Adoption of technology has evolved. Metal-sided buildings replace wood barns. But families still run farms and carry the wisdom and spirit of generations that worked the land before them to grow our food.

When people visit the grocery store in 2023, we want at least 96% of them to shop confidently, knowing that families operate almost every farm in Illinois.

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 and backyard chickens.

Watch for this Ad during the Game of Football’s Biggest Stage!

WE ARE THE 96%

2.12.23

During the biggest game in football, watch for the ad featuring Illinois farmers and one powerful message: 96% of Illinois farms are still owned and operated by families, just like yours.

ILLINOIS FARM FAMILIES
 Growing your food with care.

Your farm. Your family. Your year. Scan the code to learn more.

ILLINOIS BEEF ASSOCIATION | ILCORN | ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU | ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION | MIDWEST DAIRY

Family Farm and Food Bytes

AFBF AND JOHN DEERE PEN DEAL OVER RIGHT TO REPAIR

(Timothy Eggert, FarmWeek) - Farmers who use John Deere equipment now have the freedom to choose who uses wrenches on it after company officials and American Farm Bureau Federation reached a deal over the “right to repair.” The result of multi-year negotiations between Deere and an AFBF advisory group featuring staff and state Farm Bureau presidents, the 6-page Memorandum of Understanding is effective immediately. It contains a provision requiring both sides to meet twice a year to evaluate the MOU. The agreement stems from a 2019 policy adopted by AFBF delegates on the topic, directing the organization to engage with major ag equipment manufacturers about the issue.

The full text of the MOU can be read at fb.org/files/AFBF_John_Deere_MOU.pdf

ACHO CHALLENGES ILLINOIS GROWERS TO ‘BE THE CHANGE’



Former Chicago Bears linebacker Sam Acho shares a laugh during his address at the Everything Local Conference Wednesday in Springfield. (Photo by Kay Shipman)

(Kay Shipman, FarmWeek) - Sam Acho, former Chicago Bears linebacker and ESPN college football analyst, shared how professional athletes on different Chicago teams helped create a source of healthy food on Chicago’s West Side. He delivered the keynote address for the conference sponsored by the Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Specialty Growers Association and Illinois Farmers Market Association in the Crowne Plaza in January.

During the racial strife in 2020, Acho and nine professional Chicago athletes “pulled up chairs and sat in a circle and listened” to 10 police officers and 30 teens in the Austin neighborhood. While touring the neighborhood, Acho remembered he and one of the other athletes noticed only one grocery store, but 10 liquor stores. The athletes wondered if they could do something about that problem. The athletes proposed buying one of the liquor stores and turning it into a food market where the teens would work.

In August 2020, the Austin Harvest food mart pop-up opened with eight student entrepreneurs working after school three days a week. They sold fresh produce and flowers. When the open-air market had to close for the season, a radiothon helped raise money for a permanent building and ground was broken in May 2022.

“My thought is to challenge you,” Acho told his audience. “What if we come together? We saw athletes come together, Cubs, the Bulls, the Bears, the Blackhawks, the White Sox, the Chicago Sky — one Chicago. “We (at the conference) could come together — suppliers, distributors, growers, community members, the government

and be one Illinois. You’re all here. We’re all here now. Talk to people around the table.”

USDA AWARDS U OF I GRANT FOR BIOPRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The University of Illinois was awarded a \$2.5 million USDA grant for a project that proposes to convert swine manure and other organic feedstocks into biobinders for asphalt that increase the quality of recycled asphalt pavements. The grant is part of \$9.5 million in federal funding that supports the scale-up of sustainable bioproduct manufacturing in the United States. Three successful projects are funded through USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture’s (NIFA) Bioproduct Pilot Program, which funds research and development of value-added products from agricultural commodities. If the U of I project is commercialized, benefits include reduced landfill waste, reduced disposal costs for asphalt and food waste and low-cost products.

PARTNERSHIP AIMS TO PROVIDE FARMER VETERANS GREATER MARKET ACCESS

While the Homegrown By Heroes label continues to gain attention, a partnership with Food MarketMaker is helping increase market access for farmer veterans.

As the official farmer veteran branding program of America, the Homegrown By Heroes (HBH) label is administered nationally by the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC). It certifies ranchers, farmers and fisherman of all military eras to sell their product as veteran owned and produced.

About 2,900 farmer veterans are certified Homegrown by Heroes throughout the country. For the past year, FVC has been introducing its certified HBH growers to the MarketMaker platform to increase their farm sales. MarketMaker users can search for and identify the HBH growers in the interactive database of farmer sellers, food business and consumer buyers. For more information, visit foodmarketmaker.com or farmvetco.org.

Homegrown By Heroes — Illinois Products was added to MarketMaker in 2019 and has continued to expand. Food and farm businesses in Illinois can participate in the national HBH, FVC, and the HBH Illinois affiliation.

For more information on Illinois’ HBH program, go online, illinoisfarmerveterans.org/ ilhomegrown-by-heroes.com.

About Family Farm and Food Bytes: This is a collection of articles gathered from Illinois FarmWeek, FarmWeekNow and other media sources and is designed to keep you informed as a member and leader within the Cook County Farm Bureau® organization. We thank the FarmWeek staff for their reporting skills and talents. The articles summarized above are not intended to represent Cook County Farm Bureau policy or positions, but rather to provide members an idea of what is being reported regionally, nationally, and globally.

Manifolds, Manolos, and Manure

By Bona Heinsohn, CAE | CCFB Director of Gov. Affairs and Public Relations



Bona Heinsohn

Earlier this year, Farm Bureau leaders from throughout Illinois discussed and approved Farm Bureau's 2023 State Legislative Priorities. Priorities are based off of Farm Bureau policies.

Policies are recommended by members through Farm Bureau's grassroots policy process.

Farm Bureau's State Legislative Priorities include efforts on the estate tax. In order to keep farm families and small businesses together, Farm Bureau is working to increase the Illinois Estate and Generation-Skipping Transfer Tax Act exemption

level to an amount equivalent to the Federal Estate Tax and Credit level of \$12.06 million per individual. The current state level was established in January of 2013 and has not been adjusted to reflect current inflationary trends in farm estate values.

Illinois family farms and small businesses are unique in that the vast majority of estate value is not in liquid

assets. Value comes from land, machinery, livestock, and grain in storage, which means that to pay Illinois Estate Taxes, families must sell off parts of the family farm or some of the assets that they need to produce a product.

Another priority is maintaining a balanced process for siting livestock farms through the Livestock Management Facilities Act (LMFA) that protects both the environment and farmers' ability to raise livestock. Data proves that environmental issues on livestock farms are very rare.

The LMFA provides a balanced approach in protecting the environment and allowing farmers the ability to raise livestock on their farms. The LMFA provides consistent, statewide standards that ensure livestock farms are sited on scientific, objective criteria, and that the rules are applied uniformly throughout the state.

Publicly available data proves that the LMFA is working to protect the environment. The number of livestock related violation notices issued by the Environmental Protection Agency has been falling since 1997, the year following the implementation of the LMFA. In fact, 2018 set a record for the lowest number of violation notices for livestock farms with only 10 and recently in 2021 there were only 11.

A final priority of note is Farm Bureau's intention of

continuing to advocate for a balanced approach to the protection of private property rights. As someone who grew up with a city lot or larger sized yard and married a farmer, I've often struggled to understand why there's even a discussion about private property rights. After a conversation with a volunteer who grew up in Chicago and now resides in a heavily suburban area, I've realized that not everyone thinks about who owns the land that they're walking on.

As renewable energy and carbon capture programs increase, it's important that Illinois farmland is protected. Comprehensive agricultural drainage plans and Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreements offer property owners a balanced approach to protecting their land and being able to farm, sequester carbon, and generate renewable energy.

Balancing the protection of private property rights with appropriate development of projects will help maintain Illinois' standing as a leading agricultural state and help reduce conflict that sometimes occurs when projects are proposed.

Through Farm Bureau's grassroots process, all members have a voice in policy development and priority identification.

Bona can be reached at Bona@cookcfb.org.

Taxes in Illinois What's Behind a Property Tax Bill?

Behind a tax bill is a nearly two-year cycle that determines the amount of property taxes you owe. This cycle begins with the assessment of your property. A tax year is the year of the assessment and reflects the assessed value of real property as of January 1. The actual taxes owed are then paid the following year. For example, the taxes paid in 2022 are based, in part, on the 2021 property assessments. By law, property is valued at 33 1/3% of its total value, known as the property's assessed value. That value, once equalized, reflects your portion of the total tax burden spread among all property owners.

Concurrently, each local unit of government goes through an annual budget process to determine how much money will be needed to operate in the next year. Once the budget is set, the local unit of government determines how much of that budget will come from property taxes.

This amount is known as the levy.

A large percentage of funding for units of local government comes from your property tax dollars. The amount needed by each district is divided by the total assessed value within the district's service area.

Once each district has completed a budget and set its levy, the county clerk combines those totals to create an aggregate tax rate also known as the rate that is paid by the taxpayer.

As a local revenue source, these property tax dollars help provide the essential services within your community. Your schools, EMS providers, road districts, and community centers are just a few examples of taxing bodies that rely on property tax dollars to best serve communities.

Originally published in LINK July-August 2022.



2023 Legislative Priorities Briefing Now Available

In December, the Illinois Farm Bureau® Board of Directors approved the 2023 Legislative Priorities. These priorities guide Farm Bureau's engagement in state and local affairs. The video briefing featuring Kevin Semlow, Illinois Farm Bureau Director of State legislation and Bona Heinsohn, Cook County Farm Bureau Director of Governmental Affairs and PR is available at <https://youtu.be/FUZ76lyAkjU>.

AFBF Delegates Adopt Cook County Farm Bureau Policy on Food Access

Voting delegates at American Farm Bureau Federation's 2023 Annual Meeting adopted nearly a dozen new policies- including measures on food security- submitted by Illinois Farm Bureau- and more specifically Cook County Farm Bureau's members.

In December, Cook County Farm Bureau delegates advanced Illinois' first food access policy. This policy was the direct result of grassroots policy making in which Cook County members concerned about the prevalence of food deserts within the county

approached Governmental Affairs Committee and staff members regarding the need for policy supporting grocery stores in underserved areas.

The new nine-point policy approved by American Farm Bureau delegates supports a series of measures to combat food insecurity and food deserts, including:

- tax incentives to locate grocery stores in underserved areas
- increasing the number of SNAP-approved food sales outlets

- food insecurity networks like food banks and produce carts
- farmer cooperatives that help producers form marketing partnerships with food banks
- farms connecting directly with food banks, food recovery organizations and other food distributing nonprofits

It further includes support for programs to encourage healthy eating, food preparation and

proper food storage and efforts to make produce available for families living in food deserts.

Speaking to the submittal from the delegate floor Illinois Farm Bureau District Director Keith Mussman explained how food insecurity is not exclusively an issue faced by urban communities.

"It's a rural problem too. Many of our local communities have lost their grocery stores," Mussman said, pointing to how his hometown of Grant Park went from hosting 1,000 residents and three grocery stores when he was younger

to now having 2,000 residents and zero grocery stores.

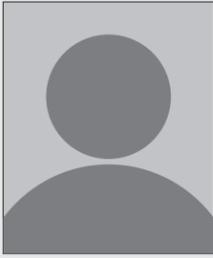
"I think that this would be a tremendous benefit for everybody," Mussman said. "Our urban customers get a better supply of food and it will help our rural communities get a better supply of food and help all our Farm Bureau members producing food."

The policy passed unanimously, which Illinois Farm Bureau President Richard Guebert said, "just shows how important food access is not only in state of Illinois, but all across the United States."

COOK COUNTY

Financial Representatives of the Month

The Financial Representative of the Month program is designed by COUNTRY Financial Agency Managers of Cook County to recognize overall Insurance Leaders in Life, Disability, Auto, Home, and Health production during the month. The agent earns the award through efforts to provide quality service to existing and new clients. Listed below are the various agents honored by their agency manager with the Financial Representative of the Month designation.



EDUARDO PEREYRA has been named Financial Rep of the month for December 2022. His office is located at 3924 W North Ave., in Chicago, IL. His phone number is 773-420-0062. Eduardo has been a Financial Representative since April 2022.

Chicago North Agency, Victoria Nygren, Agency Manager



***KATHY SPIEWAK** has been named Financial Rep of the month for December 2022. Her office is located at 11 W. Wise Rd., in Schaumburg, IL. Her phone number is 847-716-1010. Kathy has been a Financial Representative since February 2007.

Chicago Northwest, Kevin Gomes, Agency Manager



***NICK ZEGAR** has been named Financial Rep of the month for December 2022. His office is located at 16614 W. 159TH St., Ste.303, in Lockport, IL. His phone number is 708-352-5560. Nick has been a Financial Representative since July 1998.

Chicago South Agency, Sharon Stemke, Agency Manager



***JIM PARTHMORE** has been named Financial Rep of the Month for December 2022. His office is located at 9432 W. 143rd. St., in Orland Park, IL. His phone number is 708-745-5151. Jim has been a Financial Representative since April 2000.

Orland Park Agency, Cary Tate, Agency Manager

**Indicates that this Financial Representative is a CCFB Financial Certified Representative. The Cook County Farm Bureau Certified Financial Representative Program is designed to strengthen the partnership and relationship shared by Financial Representatives from Country Financial with the Cook County Farm Bureau organization.*

ABC'S OF FOOD

At Cook County Farm Bureau, we love food... All types of foods in all types of shapes and all types of flavors. In this feature, we will be highlighting different types of food, primarily fruits and vegetables, from A to Z (we are not sure what to do with X yet!).

This month
"M"

MANGO



Mangoes first appeared in India over 5,000 years ago.

They are a great source of Vitamin C, Vitamin A, and fiber.

Their trees can grow up to 100 feet with a canopy of over 35 feet.

Mangoes are related to cashews and pistachios.



IT TAKES ABOUT 4 MONTHS FOR THE FRUIT TO MATURE AND EACH ONE IS HARVESTED BY HAND.

In India, a mango is a symbol of love. A basket of mangoes is a gesture of friendship in the country.

Their flowers are pollinated by insects.



ONLY FLORIDA, CALIFORNIA, HAWAII, AND PUERTO RICO CAN GROW MANGOS IN THE UNITED STATES.

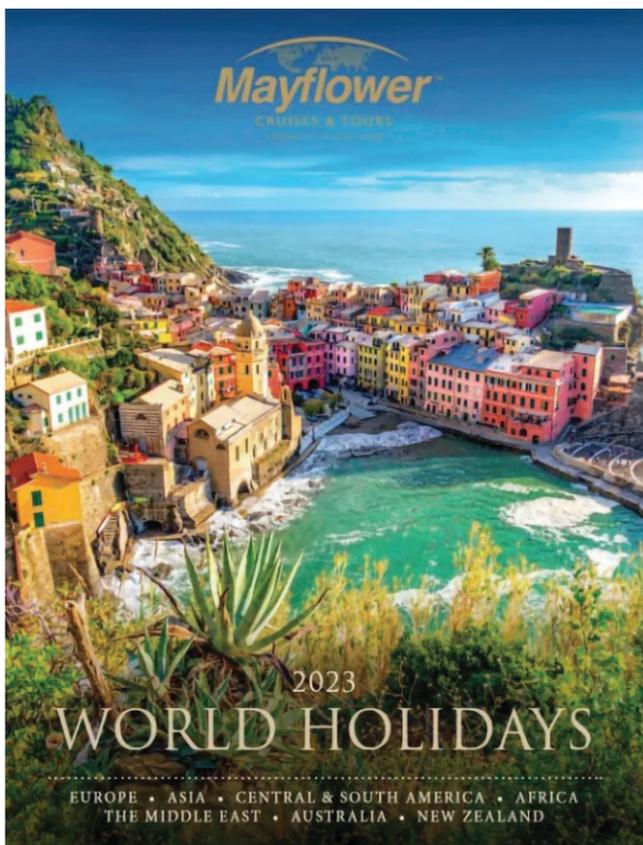


The fruit is not judged on ripeness by color, but by squeezing. A ripe mango should have a little give.

Next month... Nectarines

PLAN YOUR NEXT VACATION TODAY!

February is a **GREAT** time to start planning for your Spring Break Getaways or Summer Family Vacations!



Whether you're planning to travel locally, nationally, or anywhere around the world, you're sure to find savings with your CCFB membership. Receive exclusive member savings by booking a trip with Mayflower Tours, using the TicketsAtWork platform or the Abenity app!

Upcoming Mayflower Tours Cruises & Trips include: North American Travel Packages, River Cruising in cities across the world and World Holiday traveling to Italy, Greece, Scandinavia and more! Previews are available online at: www.cookcfb.org/membership/member-benefits/profile/travel.

With TicketsAtWork, you have access to 20- 70% off on hotels & amusement park tickets like Disney World, Disneyland, Universal Studios Orlando, SeaWorld & more! You can also save on tickets to shows, concerts, sporting events, and more! To register for discounts through this platform, visit: www.ticketsatwork.com and click on "Become a Member", use Company Code: CCFB.

The Abenity app offers members exclusive access to more than 302,000 discounts on everything from theme parks, restaurants, zoos, and much more! Visit www.ilfb.abenity.com and click "Register". You'll need your Farm Bureau Contract number, that is listed on your member card, to sign up.

For questions or more information, please contact us at 708-354-3276.

Other “Stuff” from the World of Agriculture

Agriculture Leadership Training Program:

The Illinois Agricultural Leadership Foundation, an agricultural leadership program based in Bloomington Illinois, is accepting applications for its class of 2025. The application deadline is February 28.

The 19 month program takes a holistic and immersive approach to addressing food security and sustainability issues through a series of seminars that feature leading practitioners in business, education and government. The seminars will require about 55 days mandatory attendance, with breaks in April and May and in September and October for planting and harvesting. Participants will also take part in a weeklong national government seminar in Washington DC and a two week international seminar.

Applications and frequently asked questions may be found online at agleadership.org or email Todd Lowery at Todd@agleadership.org

The Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation has supported participants in the past by assisting in their tuition. Contact Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation at 708-354-3276 or go to cookcfb.org/foundation.

Spring Tree and Fish Sale:

The Will – South Cook Soil and Water Conservation District is currently taking orders for the spring tree and fish sale. Plants, shrubs, and trees are available this spring in various starter sizes. Tree orders must be placed by April 12 (prepaid only). Tree order pickup is on April 20–21 during office hours and Saturday, April 22 from 11am–3pm.

Fish varieties include channel catfish, largemouth bass, triploid grass carp, rainbow trout, bluegill, and minnows. Fish orders must be placed by Wednesday, March 29 for Grass Carp and April 7 for other fish species. All orders are prepaid only. Fish pickup is Saturday, April 22 from 11am–3pm.

All pickups will be at the Will – South Cook SWCD building located at 1201 S. Gouger Rd. in New Lenox. Order forms are available on the District Facebook page, website, or from the office. Contact 815-462-3106 x3

- info@willscookswcd.org
- www.facebook.com/willsouthcookSoilandWater/
- www.will-scookswcd.org

Agricultural Job Opportunity:

The Will – South Cook Soil and Water Conservation District has created a new job position in which they are seeking applicants. The job is for an Education Coordinator/ Technician. The primary duties include:

- Responsibility for educational outreach and for development and delivery of District curriculum for both school-aged and adult education, workshops, and special events.
- Public Relations point of contact and ambassador while working with partner agencies and clients to promote agricultural conservation to underserved communities and individuals within the boundaries
- help perform as crest waterways, terraces, vegetative filter strips, wildlife habitat, etc.

For details on wages and benefits, contact the Will – South Cook SWCD at 815 – 263 – 8868.

Soil and Water Conservation District Scholarships:

the Will – South Cook SWCD is awarding several scholarships this spring. One scholarship deadline is February 15 with the other due by February 28, 2023. Applications are available on the SWCD website www.will-scookswcd.org

Information and an application can also be mailed out by calling **815-462-3106 ext.3**

Agri-tourism Tax Credit Available for '22 Tax Year

Members who have a business that fits into the definition of agri-tourism may qualify for a tax credit for the taxable year beginning on or after January 1, 2022 and ending on or before December 31, 2022.

Agritourism operation an individual or entity that carries out agricultural activities on agricultural property and allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy those activities.

Agri-tourism activities include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Harvest your own or you pick operations
- Agricultural crop mazes
- Animal exhibitions or petting zoos
- Guided or self-guided tours including school tours
- Horseback or pony rides
- Hayrides are sleigh rides
- Storied, cultural and on-site educational programs

Agritourism activities DO NOT include the following activities:

- Hunting
- Fishing
- Amusement rides
- Rodeos
- Off-road biking or motorized off-highway or all-terrain vehicle activities
- Boating, swimming, canoeing, hiking, camping, skiing, bounce houses, or similar activities
- Entertainment venues such as weddings or concerts

Deadline to apply for 2022 Tax Year is February 28, 2023. Information and the application can be found at:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Assistance/Pages/Agritourism-Tax-Credit-Place.aspx>

Please email any questions to AGR.AgritourismTax@illinois.gov.

2023 Farmland Questionnaire / Affidavit

2023 Farmland Questionnaire / Affidavit for farmland status in Cook County are being sent out by the Cook County Assessor and

those forms must be notarized. Cook County Farm Bureau does have 2 staff members who are notaries and will notarize documents free of charge (please call in prior to stopping in the office to verify their presence).

Copies of the 2023 Farmland Questionnaire/Affidavit can be obtained at www.cookcountyassessor.com/farms and sent to:

Cook County Assessor's Office
Incentive Department
Farmland Questionnaire/
Affidavit
118 N Clark Street Room 301
Chicago, IL 60602



CLASSIFIED ADS

All ads that we receive for The Co-Operator are also listed on our website at cookcfb.org/membership/classifieds. If you have a photo of the item(s) that you are selling you can email it to us to include it on our 'Classifieds' page on our website only along with your ad.

Email your ad (and photo if you have one) to fbcooperator@gmail.com. Please be sure to include your full name, Farm Bureau number, and phone number. Deadline for Classified ads is the 17th of each month. Any ads submitted after the 17th will appear in the following months.

Co-Operator. Members may run up to four non-commercial classified ads annually for free. Any ads submitted after the fourth, will be charged.

If mailing your ad, please mail to: Cook County Farm Bureau, Attention: Classified Ads, 6438 Joliet Rd, Countryside, IL 60525. You can also fax your ad to **708-579-6056**.

FOR SALE

10- Glass flower vases .50 cent each. 10- Clock timers for lamps \$10 each. Brass 3 piece set for fireplace \$1. 4 beer steins .50 cent each. Set of six Bradford bone China flower design plates \$2 each. Con Air pro hair dryer \$6. Oak toilet seat .50cent. Craftsman half inch electric drill \$5. Black & Decker 3/8 electric drill \$5.
Call Al 708-518-8980.

For sale Queen cushion firm pillow top, in case coil mattress, and 9inch back sense platinum box, wellington luxury firm PT collection by Therapedic, brand new still wrapped in factory plastic, \$700. **Call 708-361-8230.**

For Sale Biesemeyer cut off saw top, T-square, \$100. Wood clamps and other wood making tools price to sell. **Ask for Mary 847-297-6807.**

Small landscaping business for sale- 84 grass cutting customers, 35 fertilizer customers, 15 residential snow contracts, 12 commercial snow contracts, other additional revenue sources as well. **Call 708-346-0200 or email bomatlm@hotmail.com**

New truck running boards off 2023 Ford F 150 Super cab. \$165. **Call 331-625-9231. Or email honestchuck111@aol.com**

FOR RENT

Vacation Villas at Fantasy World II Resort in Kissimmee, Florida. Seven (7) nights in one bedroom suite, full kitchen, outdoor swimming pool, sleeps four (4). \$650 for seven (7) nights. No presentation is required. **Call Ms. Day at (708) 347-9369 for availability.**

WANTED

Wanting to buy your HO scale or N scale electric train engines, cars, buildings, or anything train related. Do you have electric trains in your closet, basement, crawl space, attic or garage that you're not using? I buy train items from just a few pieces to hundreds of pieces at a time. Why sell them bit by bit, I'll offer you a price on all you have! I'm retired and just enjoy trains. I realized that some may need work from sitting for a long time, but I have the time to fix them! **TURN THOSE UNWANTED TRAIN ITEMS INTO CASH** and give me a call! I also buy slot cars. **Call 630-272-4433 ask for Ron.** Thanks!

Wanted 1972 older cars, Truck/Parts unfinished projects, and 1967/69 Camaros. **Call 708-439-9770.**

Wanted LP Rocks & Roll Albums records. **Call John 708-860-9562.** Pre 1971 Baseball cards. **Call Gary 708-363-4559 or email bbnut123@msn.com.**

Wanted Converter from 8 tack to CD. **Call Matt 847-729-0004.**

Wanted: Part Time worker to provide periodic maintenance for 20,000 sq. feet, office building and grounds. Diverse skills in areas in HVAC systems, carpentry, plants and grounds, basic electrical and comfortable with hands-on labor. Hourly 8-12 hours per week. **Send cover letter and resume to Cook County Farm Bureau, 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525.**

Programs, Workshops and Webinars

For Members, Farmers, Teachers, Landowners, Foodies, Business Owners, and those that want new experiences and to have a great time!



REGISTER TODAY for the following great programs by calling the office at **708-354-3276** or at www.cookcfb.org. Scan our QR for our Events Calendar.

Risk Management of Commodities for Farmers Webinar



Please join us to hear from Steve Stasys from CME Group on how futures and options help manage price risk for producers and end users. This seminar will cover the mechanics of how futures and options market operate and the benefits of hedging.

DATE: Thursday, February 23, 2023

TIME: 1:00 pm **FEE:** Free to Join!

LOCATION: Zoom Webinar – link to be emailed the day before

REGISTRATION REQUIRED: Call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276 or online at the Member Center; For additional information, email Debbie at membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org.

Beginning Beekeeping Course In Person at the CCFB

Beekeeping for those interested and never kept bees and beekeepers looking to learn and overcome challenges of bee loss and keeping bees sustainably.



DATE: Saturday & Sunday, March 11-12, 2023

TIME: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

LOCATION: Cook County Farm Bureau
6438 Joliet Rd Countryside 60525

FEE: \$75.00 for members of CCFB or CDDBA. \$100.00 for non-members; ask how to join!

REGISTRATION & PAYMENT: Call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276; For additional information, email Debbie at membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org.

Workshop on the Credit System and Improving the Accuracy of Your Credit Report



(Presented by Jim Droske, President of Illinois Credit Services)

What is a credit score? Is it important and how can I improve it? This program will help understand the credit system and improve the health and accuracy of your credit reports. Credit expert witness, Jim Droske, will take you through the process of understanding of credit reporting, credit scores, the credit disputing process, and how to get help!

DATE: Wednesday, March 15, 2023 **TIME:** 6:30-7:30 pm

LOCATION: Zoom Webinar - link to be emailed the day before

FEE: Free for CCFB Members! \$10 for Non-Members

REGISTRATION: Call the CCFB at 708-354-3276

Make a Spring Planter Workshop – Save the Date...Details coming!

DATE: Saturday, April 29, 2023 **LOCATION:** Van Kalker Farms

Cookfresh Community Urban Garden Grant Program

Our 2023 Community Urban Garden Grant Program is looking to award six gardens a \$350 grant!

All community-based urban gardens in Cook County are encouraged to apply. Grant details and applications are available from January 9 through February 28, 2023. Application available now...why wait!

- **Online:** <https://cookcfb.org/discover-local/community-programs/profile/grants-1>
- **Email Debbie:** membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org

If you have questions or need additional information, contact Deb at the Cook County Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276.

2023 Foundation Scholarships

BEING ACCEPTED: APPLY ONLINE NOW

The Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation has opened the 25th Annual "Farm and Food" Agricultural Scholarship Program. The Foundation offers college students who are pursuing an ag-related career the opportunity to start or continue their higher education with a scholarship. Last year, the Foundation provided six scholarships ranging from \$2,000 to \$4,000 each.

The Board will name the top applicant as the Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Agriculture Scholarship recipient.

The Foundation Board has set the following criteria for the scholarship program:

- Applications must be completed and submitted to the CCFB Foundation by February 15, 2023. Late applications will not be considered. Applications can be submitted electronically.
- All applicants (Applying for the "Farm and Food" Ag Scholarship program only) must be members or dependents of members in good standing with the Cook County Farm Bureau for at least one year.
- All applicants must be high school graduates accepted for enrollment by, or currently enrolled at, an accredited college, university, or community college.
- All applicants must be pursuing a field of study in agriculture, agri-business, or an agricultural related major with a focus on an ag-related career (food, fuel, or fiber).
- Scholarships will be awarded following application evaluation for exceptional academic ability, financial need, demonstrated interest in agriculture, evidence of self-help, and character.

In addition to the "Farm and Food" Foundation Scholarship, there are two other scholarship opportunities:

CONSERV FS Scholarship: This scholarship does not require a CCFB membership, however the applicant must be an FFA member in a Cook County high school FFA program or be attending a Cook County high school that offers ag-related classes and the applicant must be taking classes within the curriculum. Value: \$1,000

Stuenkel Family Scholarship: A CCFB membership is required, however, there is no waiting period. Applicants can be a previous recipient of a CCFB Foundation scholarship. Applicants must be a high school graduate or be graduating in 2023. This scholarship has been designed for members pursuing higher education with a focus on an ag-related career in the areas of technology, education, leadership development, and/or mental health. Value: TBD



PLANT SCIENCES



ANIMAL SCIENCES



AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS

What is an Agricultural Career?

Farming, of course, but there is so much more! Jobs in agriculture include plant sciences, animal sciences, agricultural mechanics, agricultural business, environmental services, food science, and natural resources.



For more information or to complete an application online, please visit www.cookcfb.org/foundation or contact the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation by phone at **708-354-3276**.

APPLY TODAY! Scan the QR code to complete an application. Applications are due February 15th.



RANCHER, FARMER, FISHERMAN

Documentary Screening and Panel

March 14 at 6:00 PM

Historic Wagner Farm, 1510 Wagner Rd., Glenview

RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY!

RANCHER FARMER FISHERMAN

Unfolding as a journey down the Mississippi River, *Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman* tells the stories of five representatives of the stewardship movement: a Montana rancher, a Kansas farmer, Mississippi riverman, Louisiana shrimper, and Gulf fisherman. In exploring their work, family histories and essential geographies they protect, *Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman* challenges pervasive and powerful myths about American and environmental values.

A brief panel discussion will follow the screening.