



COOK COUNTY GO-OPERATOR

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

Mark Your Calendar



January

- 16/30th Zoom Book Club **PG 12**
- 17-19th From Food to Flowers: Everything Local Conference **PG 3**
- 29th Membership Monday **PG 12**

February

- 13/27th Zoom Book Club **PG 12**
- 16th Foundation Scholarship Application Deadline **PG 1/2**
- 28th IFB Rules of the Road Trucking Seminar **PG 12**
- 29th Urban Garden Grant Application Deadline **PG 11**

March

- 2nd Food Checkout Day Donation Deadline **PG 12**
- 4th Advocacy and Fraud Protection for Seniors **PG 12**
- 18th IL Small Farms Webinar Series Pt 4: Forming an LLC **PG 11**

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



What CCFB member was recognized as the Volunteer of the Year?
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)

November Winner: Evelyn Nelson

Question: Which AITC Presenter announced their retirement in November?

Answer: Linda Schaeffer



Food Pantry Celebrates Grand Opening

Hattie B. Williams Food Pantry, a ministry of Valley Kingdom Ministries International and a partner with Cook County Farm Bureau® and the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD), has served residents of South Suburban Cook County for over 30 years. This winter Hattie B. Williams celebrated the long-awaited grand opening of their new location in Oak Forest and CCFB was there for the ribbon cutting. Groundbreaking for the site was held in April of 2021 with construction beginning in March of 2022 and finally opening in November of 2023. See **Page 12** for this year's Food Checkout Day pantry beneficiaries.

2024 Foundation Scholarship Applications

NOW BEING ACCEPTED

Careers in Agriculture include more than farming! According to the USDA's Economic Research Service, a total of 19.7 million jobs, or 10.3% of U.S. employment, were related to agriculture in 2020. Farming only made up 13.5% of agricultural employment, food service made up 53.4%, and food and beverage stores made up 16.5%. There are more than one million agriculture-related jobs in Illinois alone.

The Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation has several opportunities for those who are pursuing careers in the following fields: plant science, animal science, agricultural business, agricultural mechanics, food science, diesel mechanics, ag-related education, technology, mental health, farming, horticulture, nutrition and more!

2024 General College Scholarship Program – Deadline to apply: February 16, 2024

\$3500 Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Ag Scholarship

\$2000 Howard Paarlberg General Scholarships (6)

\$3000 Stuenkel Family Scholarship

The CCFB Foundation scholarship application window is now open for the 26th Annual "Farm and Food" Agricultural Scholarship and the Stuenkel Family Scholarship Program. The Foundation offers these scholarships to college students who are pursuing an ag-related career with the opportunity to start or continue their higher education.

Scholarships continues on Page 2

Membership Mondays

STARTING January 29, 2024!

See page 12 for details

Farm Bureau Upgrades Website

In a continuation of Cook County Farm Bureau's efforts to better serve members, an upgrade to the website, www.cookcfb.org has been launched. In addition to an updated search function, extensive sitemap changes were made. While the website will continue to serve as the virtual "face" of the organization, it's our hope that the location of common items is now more intuitive and user-friendly.

The website will help members and the public :

- Access membership benefit information
- Find locally grown food and farm-related products
- Register for member programs and activities
- Sign up for Ag in the Classroom programming
- Join the Cook County Farm Bureau organization as a member
- Access publications and information
- Support the efforts of the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation
- Get involved as a volunteer and supporter of the efforts of the organization

Members are encouraged to visit the website at www.cookcfb.org.

HOLD THE DATE

for the Foundation Fundraiser "Gala 5" to benefit Ag Literacy on July 19th at 6pm in Orland Park.

If you prefer to receive this publication exclusively in our electronic format, the e-Co-Operator, simply send us a request by contacting us by phone at 708-354-3276 or email us at fbcooperator@gmail.com.

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!

Scholarships

Continued from Page 1

The application is available on the CCFB Foundation website: www.cookfb.org/Foundation.

Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Ag Scholarship (\$3500) and General Scholarships (\$2000 (6))

Scholarships for individuals and Cook County Farm Bureau members that are focused on agriculturally related careers for those interested in farming, greenhouse, agronomy, horticulture, aquaculture, agribusiness/management, rural healthcare, veterinarian medicine, nutrition/food science, agriculture education, forestry or a number of other agriculturally related pursuits.

The Board will name the top applicant as the Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Agriculture Scholarship recipient. In addition, up to 6 general scholarships may be granted.

Stuenkel Family Scholarship (\$3000)

This scholarship has been designed for individuals and CCFB members who are pursuing higher education with a focus on an agriculturally related career in the areas of technology, education, leadership development and/or mental health.

In addition to the "Farm and Food" Agriculture Scholarship and the Stuenkel Family Scholarship, there are other scholarship opportunities available throughout the year which include:

"Moving Ag Forward" Vocational Ag Career Training (Available in Three Cycles In

2023/2024) – These scholarships have been designed for individuals and Cook County Farm Bureau members pursuing training in agriculturally related skills including tractor/truck diesel mechanics, CDL for crop, food and livestock hauling, welding, agricultural technology, etc.

Adult Scholarships (Availability Based on Training Sessions and Acceptance)

Scholarships for Cook County Farm Bureau members include tuition assistance for

- Master Urban Farmer training and certification
- Master Gardener training and certification
- Illinois Ag Leadership Program (IALP) training program
- Ag Leaders of Tomorrow (ALOT) training program

Mental Health Training Expense Reimbursement

– Mental Health Professionals or Cook County Farm Bureau members seeking to assist the farmers and rural community who attend and participate in mental health/suicide prevention training seminars, conferences, or educational sessions may be eligible for support and reimbursement. Contact the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation at 708-354-3276 or email ccfb@cookcfb.org.

Visit www.cookcfb.org/foundation for more information on these scholarships and to apply.

HOW FARM BUREAU SERVED YOU IN DECEMBER

- ▶ Engaged with county and state elected officials to promote an enhanced knowledge of Cook County Farm Bureau and its members.
- ▶ Provided members with discounts and savings events and benefits for holiday gift giving.
- ▶ Communicated timely programming available for Ag members to participate in.
- ▶ Hosted an hour-long program for Girl Scouts Troop 56095 of LaGrange. The program was attended by 14 girls and four adults.
- ▶ Organized an Ag Leadership Academy, "From Cornfields to Career Fields,". A total of 22 FFA students attended from Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, Lyons Township High School, and Rich Township High School.



The board and staff of the Cook County Farm Bureau were saddened with the passing of **Anthony "Tony" Palumbo**, long-time and recently retired COUNTRY® Financial Agent.

Thoughts and prayers go out to the Palumbo family.

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...

- Delegates Dan Biernacki, Janet McCabe, and Todd Price for serving as delegates at this year's Illinois Agricultural Annual Meeting.
- CCFB members, Robert Weiss and Dorothy Kuzelka, for their kind words regarding our publication and columns. We truly appreciate your support!
- Board, team, and volunteer members who participated in action requests throughout the year!
- Those that entered our second-annual Disguise a Turkey Art Contest. We had 36 submissions. Congratulations to 7-year-old Yasbel Salamanca of Bedford Park for her winning design!



- Members Greg Stack, Amy Hansmann, Vicki Renick and Bona Heinsohn for joining and representing Cook County Farm Bureau on the Taste of Illinois and for visiting three urban farms during the tour.

Greg Stack inspects mushroom "starts" during a recent visit to Windy City Mushroom in the Ford City neighborhood of Chicago. Since 2020, Windy City Mushroom has prided itself on growing the finest premium gourmet mushrooms Chicago has to offer at an affordable price.

Co-Operator

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Downwind

by **BOB ROHRER, CCFB MANAGER**

“The plan, and born in a barn”

As we enter 2024, I thought I would share some details regarding our plan for the Co-Operator publication throughout the year. It remains our goal to continue providing the publication in two different formats: hard copy sent to you through the United States Postal Service and electronic version sent to you to your electronic mailbox using the wonders of the internet. The electronic version should land near the first of the month. The hardcopy should land in your mailbox around the first week of the month if all the various pieces come together and the USPS cooperates.

There are a lot of moving parts!

I want to compliment our Cook County Farm Bureau staff members who all contribute in some way to the monthly Co-Operator publication that all members receive. Kelli serves as the key office coordinator and administrator, pulling all the details together every month and making sure we stay on schedule, communicating to the various production entities and coordinating the many moving pieces. Bona, Katrina, Debbie, Kelli, Linda, Julie, Melanie, and Jill submit materials and copy each

month including programming, foundation information, ag literacy, membership, classified ads, and much more.

We have individuals that provide great columns for members of the organization, and I have pleaded for their return in 2024...

Bona Heinsohn (Manifolds, Manolos, and Manure) who provides tremendous insight through her writing including government as it relates to agriculture, policy that the organization is working on, farm related issues, and a glimpse of life on her farm.

Katrina Milton (Planting Seeds) who connects daily life with the wonders of agriculture and how it fits into many educational opportunities for young people and adults alike.

Joanie Stiers (At the Farm Gate) who writes about farming and life from farm plains of central Illinois. I marvel at Joanie’s amazing abilities, in a few short words, to take life experiences on the farm and relate them to things that we all appreciate and care about. Always a good read!

Each of these individuals enhance your Co-Operator reading experience on a monthly basis and provide you with something to look forward to in your mailbox.

From personal experience, I know that coming up with an interesting, readable topic each month is not always easy. Bona, Katrina, and Joanie do it every month and they do it well!

Speaking of columns, I will try to scratch out Downwind each month in 2024. My 37 year “habit” of writing the column each month is hard to break. Life kindly provides topics for me to write about when I least expect them (see segment below). Publicly telling stories on myself keeps me humble.

The Co-Operator 2024 will continue to include “Ag Adventures for Families” (going on our 25th year of this feature), foodie news, the latest on conventional and urban agriculture, the ABCs of food and spices, and great activities for kids and adults alike. Another fan favorite, we also plan on producing the May “buy local” pull out shopping guide.

I thank Ashley who serves as our content editor and proofreader. Years ago, I received from a member (a former English teacher), a copy of the Co-Operator that was red marked and “graded”. Based on what I received, we rated high for content but very poorly on accuracy, spelling, and grammar. That’s when we went out and found Ashley. Ashley has raised our presentation and quality, and she turns around the proofreading review quickly in amazing fashion!

The Illinois Farm Bureau Marketing Department lends to us their amazing talent in set up and graphic art creation. They take our pile of information and turn it into a readable and attractive publication piece! We love how intuitive they are as they understand what we are trying to accomplish more than we do!

About 1.5 years ago, we began using P & P Press out of Peoria to provide the printing service for the hardcopy Co-Operator and have found their print product to be clean, crisp, and timely.

Of course, for hard copy delivery, we depend upon the

post office to put it into your mailbox. We know that the post office gets a bad rap at times, but we thank all the postal delivery folks who happen to be reading this for placing the Co-Operator in mailboxes throughout the county. Special request – if you can do anything about the ever-increasing postal rates, I’d appreciate it.

It is our mission to serve members. The Co-Operator publication helps us meet that mission. We hope the Co-Operator provides you with smiles and entertainment, agricultural information and knowledge, farm memories and nostalgia, and enthusiasm about food and those that produce it.

* * *

Since I have a little space left for this month’s column, let me tell an “I’m an idiot story” of myself. Last month, the Illinois Farm Bureau held its annual Friday – Monday statewide convention in Chicago. I always attend to provide our Farm Bureau leadership delegation support. My wife attends for the weekend portion of the event to provide me support!

However, because my wife still teaches school, she leaves the meeting early on Monday, taking the train from Chicago. Therefore, we always need to park her car near the train station in the vicinity of her school.

On Friday evening, I packed up my vehicle with clothes and supplies and left the house to pick up my wife at the train station where she left her car. Three days later, when my wife came home following her Monday day at school, she called to let me know that the garage door was open. That’s a garage door that is a part of the house. That’s a garage door that allows access to the house. The garage door had been open since I left three days previously.

Apparently, I wanted to tell the entire neighborhood to “Come on in! Whatever is ours is also yours!”

The average temperature last month was in the 30s. Winter in northern Illinois.

The garage has a heater fueled by natural gas. The heater is controlled by a thermostat in the garage. The thermostat is set for 60°. Did I mention it was winter and the door was open? For three days, that garage heater attempted to warm the garage (or heat the entire outdoors around the house) to a temperate 60°. I’m pretty sure the heater ran nonstop. Wonder if there is a maximum billing limit program offered by Nicor?

I can hear my father’s words, “Were you born in a barn?” echoing in my head. Yes, I believe I was.

Bob can be reached at brohrer@cookcfb.org

FROM FOOD TO FLOWERS

REGISTER TODAY
JAN 17-19, 2024
SPRINGFIELD, IL

EVERYTHING LOCAL
 THE ILLINOIS FOOD, FARMERS MARKET & SPECIALTY CROP CONFERENCE

FEATURING:
Chef Rick Bayless
 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

[SPECIALTYGROWERS.ORG/EVERYTHING-LOCAL-2024.HTML](https://specialtygrowers.org/everything-local-2024.html)



Recipe of the Month

Pizzettes

Mike O'Brien, Summit

INGREDIENTS:

- English muffins – regular, whole grain, or sourdough
- Cheese (your choice)
- Marinara sauce
- Vegetables of choice (peppers, onions, mushrooms)
- Extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
- Meat of choice (sausage, ham, salami, chicken)

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 375°. Split muffins (as many as you want) and place on baking sheet. Brush with EVOO. Bake for 6-7 minutes. Remove from oven and set oven to 400°. Top muffin halves with 2 tablespoons of sauce, 2 tablespoons of cheese, 2 tablespoons of meat and veggie choices, and top with 1 more tablespoon of cheese. Bake in oven 8-10 minutes, until crispy. Great way to use leftovers and great fun with kids/grandkids.

New Year – New Recipes Needed for the Spring 2024 Recipe Collection!

Do you have a favorite recipe using fresh, local ingredients to share? Please submit to be a part of the 2024 collection and be entered into a random drawing for Farm Fund\$ to use at member farm stands. Submissions can be sent by: **Email:** membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org or **Mail:** CCFB/Recipes, 6438 Joliet Rd, Countryside, IL 60525

Deadline for consideration is March 22, 2024.

Cook County Farm Bureau 2023 Year in Review

The year 2023 featured plenty of “moments and headlines” for members and the organization. The Cook County Farm Bureau is proud to have provided another year full of service in 2023 to members. Here’s a brief recap of some the best highlights...

JANUARY

- We delivered an agricultural themed basket reward to Farm Bureau member Roselyn King of Des Plaines for winning the drawing for being one of the members completing all 12 months of the Ag Adventures word find puzzle in 2023.
- The Cook County Farm Bureau was recognized nationally for a County Activity of Excellence for the Party for the Pollinators program that impacted 5,500 individuals and included 17 community partners.

FEBRUARY

- Farm Bureau sponsored a Zoom Book Club in 2023 with participants seeing agriculture through the eyes of a Montana rancher, a Kansas farmer, a Mississippi riverman, a Louisiana shrimper, and a Gulf fisherman in the book and documentary *Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman*. On March 14, a documentary screening and farmer panel was held for individuals in the Glenview area.



- Past Cook County Farm Bureau president Jim Gutzmer joined Cook County Farm Bureau lobbyist, Bona Heinsohn, in Springfield to meet with legislators, discussing Farm Bureau efforts in local government advocacy. (Pictured above- Gutzmer with Representative Hurley)

MARCH

- The Ag Literacy Team sponsored two Ag Days programs for third-grade students at the Children’s Farm at the Center in Palos Park and at Wagner Farm in Glenview. (Pictured below)



- The Public Relations Team sponsored our annual Food Checkout Day events to help replenish four Cook County food pantries with needed food and cash thanks to partnerships with the Farm Bureau PR team, board members, COUNTRY Financial agencies, and a host of supporting members.
- The Cook County Farm Bureau shepherded a Pro-Agriculture Resolution through the Cook County Board of commissioners.

APRIL

- The Board of Directors, in celebration and recognition of the outstanding volunteers and supporting members, approved a donation of \$1,450 to the Greater Chicago Food Depository as a part of Volunteer Appreciation Week.
- The Member Relations Team sponsored Member Appreciation Week April 17 – 21st with many great prize drawings, complementary memberships, and gifts.

MAY



- A contingent of leaders from the Cook County Farm Bureau presented to the Cook County Board of Commissioners an “Allies in Agriculture” plaque recognizing the passage of the pro-agriculture resolution to support and promote agriculture in the county. (Pictured above)
- A special Discover Local four-page insert was provided to all members through the Co-Operator publication to help discover greenhouses, garden centers, farm stands, and area landscapers.
- The Cook County Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom program wrapped up a year of successful in-person and virtual presentations in Chicago and suburban classrooms reaching 22,389 students in 989 classrooms in 208 schools.

JUNE



- The Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation “Raffle or Ag Education” drawing occurred with Tino Ramirez receiving the top prize. (Pictured above- Foundation President Janet McCabe was assisted by Cary Tate, agency manager for Orland Park COUNTRY Financial (presenting sponsor), and Eva Manzke, Illinois Ag in the Classroom Teacher of the Year.)



- The Member Relations Team kicked off its annual photo contest with members submitting summer photos. First place went to “Grandson smelling the Flowers” by Mary Kosiek.
- The Cook County Farm Bureau Governmental Affairs Team worked with Cook County Commissioners and their staff, legislators, and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District on a tour of Green Era in Chicago and the Use Community Garden of Evergreen Park.

JULY

- The Cook County Farm Bureau promoted the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy by helping to sponsor struvite (phosphorus source) research on specialty crop fields in Cook County.
- Farm Bureau “Partied with the Pollinators” in a program at Lincoln Park Zoo through an educational, family-friendly member program providing information on pollinator gardens, Monarch butterflies, bees, and flowering plants.

AUGUST



Member Rick Johnson (back) with volunteers with TriVillage Garden

- Members of the Commodities/Marketing Team visited various Community Gardens that received support grants from the Team.

- The Cook County Farm Bureau Governmental Affairs Team helped sponsor and host a Farm Exploration program at Wagner Farm in Glenview for members of the Cook County Commissioners and their families as a way for them to gain insight about agriculture.

SEPTEMBER

- Cook County Farm Bureau members and staff met with a number of different legislators as a part of the only Farm Bureau Adopt-A-Legislator program, providing legislators with important Illinois and Cook County farm production knowledge.
- The Commodity/Marketing Team sponsored its 23rd annual Giant Pumpkin contest, honey contest, pumpkin dessert contest, and carving contest for members.

OCTOBER

- The Young Leaders had a virtual meet up with Wake County Farm Bureau Young Farmers to discuss the documentary *Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman* and to discuss agricultural practices in North Carolina and Illinois.
- The Member Relations Team announced its fall photo contest winner. (Pictured below- *Fall Flowers and Pumpkins* by Stephanie Oehmen)



NOVEMBER

- The Ag Literacy Team, sponsored by the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation, hosted students with an interest in agriculture from several Cook County schools as a part of the Ag Leadership Academy program.
- The Member Relations Team hosted a Virtual Wills/Trust Seminar with 35 members attending and participating.

DECEMBER

- The Cook County Farm Bureau was recognized at the Illinois Farm Bureau annual meeting with many awards including the Pinnacle Award for top County Farm Bureaus and the Liberty Bell for County Farm Bureaus with top-notch policy development and advocacy programming. (Pictured below - Cook County Farm Bureau manager Bob Rohrer, Cook County Farm Bureau president Janet McCabe, and Illinois Farm Bureau president Brian Duncan)



OTHER

- The Shop Local Directory (available through the Cook County Farm Bureau website) expanded for better information and to allow local agricultural businesses to conduct e-commerce through it.
- The Master Gardner Resource Center and help desk served members from April through November by providing advice regarding soil test results, soil amendments, growing plants guidance, and researching related issues.

CCFB impacts 2023 Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

Cook County Farm Bureau is coming off of a very successful year that culminated in the Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting held December 2-4 in Chicago. During the meeting, Cook County Farm Bureau leaders were involved in many ways and received several awards and recognitions.

- Cook County Farm Bureau submitted a substantial Policy Resolution on “food waste and resource recovery” that was adopted by the IFB delegates and will be used across the state to strengthen rural-urban partnerships with individuals and groups.
- Cook County Farm Bureau volunteers met with Cook County legislators.
- Cook County Farm Bureau leaders helped elect a new Illinois Farm Bureau President, Vice President, and District 5 IFB Director.
- The Cook County Farm Bureau received two Activity of Excellence awards for Farm Exploration in the Local Affairs category and Membership Value Drip Marketing Campaign under the Membership Value category.
- Cook County Farm Bureau received the Liberty Bell award which goes to the County Farm Bureau with the most outstanding all-around policy development, information, and implementation programming. Our focus was bridging the gap between rural, suburban, and urban communities regarding to local agriculture.
- Cook County Farm Bureau received the Pinnacle Award for the large County Farm Bureau group for the third consecutive year. The Pinnacle award is

the highest County Farm Bureau award recognizing complete and well-rounded organizational excellence including goals/objectives, planning, implementation, and results.

Ogle County livestock and grain farmer Brian Duncan was elected the 16th president of Illinois Farm Bureau.

Duncan’s ascension to president came after a majority of the 327 delegates gathered for IFB’s 2023 Annual Meeting in Chicago selected him for the position. Delegates also elected Evan Hultine, a sixth-generation grain farmer from Bureau County, as vice president.

A self-described “product of this organization,” Duncan’s path to the presidency largely started in the 1990s, when Duncan served four years on the IFB Young Leaders Committee (1990-94) and was named the IFB Discussion Meet winner (1990) and the Young Leader Achievement Award winner (1999).

Duncan served 13 years as president of the Ogle County Farm Bureau (2004-17) and has held positions on the American Farm Bureau Federation’s Swine Advisory Committee, National Pork Producers Council Price Discovery Task Force, and Ogle County Pork Producers board of directors.

Duncan said he intends to represent all parts of the ag industry and all parts of Illinois.

“I look forward to serving the entire state and its great diversity,” Duncan said.

Illinois Farm Bureau delegates Monday elected Evan Hultine of Bureau County as Illinois Farm Bureau’s vice president.



Janet McCabe, Cook County Farm Bureau President, with Illinois Farm Bureau President Brian Duncan as he presented Cook County Farm Bureau with the Pinnacle Award for outstanding achievement of goals and objectives.



Illinois Farm Bureau elected Brian Duncan, former vice president, to serve as the 16th president of the organization. (Photo by Catrina Rawson)



Newly elected Illinois Farm Bureau President Brian Duncan helped lead a recognition for Richard Guebert, Jr. who served 10 years as President of the Illinois Farm Bureau.



Dan Biernacki, Todd Price, and Janet McCabe served as the Cook County Farm Bureau delegates at the Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Chicago in December.



Zippy Duval, President of the American Farm Bureau Federation, addressed the Illinois Farm Bureau convention attendees as a part of the General Session.



Evan Hultine spoke to delegates after being elected Illinois Farm Bureau vice president. (Photo by Catrina Rawson)



Cook County Master Member Club 2023

Karen Biernacki, Gerry Kopping, Dan Biernacki, and Janet McCabe were re-inducted into the Cook County Farm Bureau Master Member Club for 2023. Biernacki achieved top point status by signing up four voting members.

Membership into the Club is accomplished by earning points by recruiting and reinstating voting and associate members during the year. Each received a gift card, and their names will be added to a wall display in the Cook County Farm Bureau boardroom.



Volunteer of the Year

Rick Johnson was presented the Volunteer of the Year by President Janet McCabe as a result of his participation and leadership provided through the Commodities and Marketing Team. Specifically mentioned in the nominator’s application were efforts Rick made with the Community Garden Grant selection committee and garden visits, Giant Pumpkin Contest, and his participation and coming up with ideas for new programs that are consistent with the Team’s strategic objectives, and ways to reach new members.

The nominator indicated that the entire membership organization has benefitted from Rick’s programming ideas, involvement, and support. Rick has interacted with thousands of Pumpkin Contest supporters over the years, dozens of community garden coordinators, and hundreds who have attended past Farm Crawls.

Planting Seeds

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



Katrina J.E. Milton

WINTER Wonderland

As a child, I loved winter. I loved making snowmen and snow angels, sledding, having snow days off from school, drinking hot chocolate, and wearing the crocheted scarves my grandma made for me. I loved running around in the snow with my St. Bernard, complaining when my mom called us inside from playing for too long out in the cold.

As an adult, winter has a lot of negatives: snow and ice make driving hazardous, the price of natural gas to heat your home is expensive, snowstorms are a cause of worry and stress instead of something positive, and you have to worry about frostbite.

Although this winter has so far been mild, I'm always worried about the next blizzard and polar vortex. I wish I could go back to the days of praying for a large snowfall overnight and eagerly listening to the radio for school closure announcements, cheering when my school's name was listed.

Education during the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of virtual learning have changed how schools handle snow days. Most schools have done away with snow days entirely, choosing remote learning days instead. Students have Chromebooks that allow learning to be done from home, and teachers use virtual classrooms and file sharing to make learning accessible from anywhere.

However, that takes away from the magic of snow days! Having a full day off with no schoolwork, no homework, and the

potential for another day off the next day was a highlight of my youth. I loved having extra time at home to rest, relax, and enjoy being a kid.

A sad fact of adulthood: adults don't have snow days. We have work regardless of the weather. Snow is no longer seen as a reason to celebrate, but as an unpleasant hindrance as we go about "adulting" our daily lives.

This winter season, I plan on enjoying a little bit of the magic of the winter of my childhood. I'll take a walk in the snow, go ice skating, maybe even make a snowman. Although snow will undoubtedly be in the forecast, I'm looking forward to this year's winter wonderland. After all, to quote Elsa from Disney's "Frozen," "The cold never bothered me anyway."



Schedule Your Free, In-School Field Trip Today

IN-SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS RULE!



Bring the wonder of agriculture to your classroom



Free to attend **Ag Day 2024** **Free to attend**

Bring Your 3rd Grade Students to the Farm

April 3, South
April 17, North
9:15-11:15AM session or
11:30-1:30PM 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





2024 SPRING MINI GRANT

For Junior and High School Educators

The Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation is offering grants to supplement your classroom's curriculum. We are leaving the topic to you to design a lesson related to agriculture and agricultural science. Examples of topics include soil cultivation, crop cultivation and harvesting, animal production, and food production.

The grant is open to junior and high school educators, including all public, private, and homeschool classrooms located in Cook County, IL. Maximum grant amount is \$500.

Applications accepted Feb. 1 – Feb. 29, 2024. Apply online at bit.ly/2024SpringMiniGrantApplication



Spring Teacher Virtual Workshop

Microgreens and More

4-6 p.m. Thursday, March 21, 2024
Earn 2 Free PDCH

Guest speaker will be microgreens expert and educator Chris Wyant.

Attendees receive advanced access to our new microgreens kit. Follow-along materials shipped before the virtual event.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED:

📞 708-354-3276
✉ aitc2@cookcfb.org

AGRICULTURE ADVENTURES FOR FAMILIES



MAKE YOUR OWN *Hot Cocoa*



INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups milk (whole or 2%)
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped chocolate bar, standard 1.55 oz size
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 pinch of salt

INSTRUCTIONS

- Step 1.** Add milk, cocoa powder, and sugar to a small saucepan.
- Step 2.** Heat over medium heat, whisking frequently, until warm but not boiling.
- Step 3.** Add a pinch of salt, vanilla extract, and chopped chocolate bar into the saucepan. Stir until the chocolate completely melts.
- Step 4.** Pour immediately into a mug and top with marshmallows and/or whipped cream.



FUN FACTS ABOUT *Marshmallows*

- The company with the patent for the process to make marshmallows, Doumak, Inc., is located in Cook County.
- Alex Doumak invented the process of putting marshmallow ingredients into tubes to cut the finished product into equal pieces, called extrusion. He patented the extrusion process to make marshmallows faster in 1948. Today, there is a robotic system that speeds the packaging of bags into cartons.
- Originally located in California, Doumak, Inc. moved to Illinois in 1961. In 2003, the company acquired the Campfire brand and opened its second manufacturing facility. The company is headquartered in Elk Grove Village and has a second location in Bensenville.
- Marshmallows are made from gelatin, a protein made from the collagen of pigs and cows. Collagen makes up cartilage, bone, and skin. Kosher marshmallows are made from fish gelatin, and there are also halal and vegetarian marshmallow varieties.
- Marshmallows are also made from corn! Doumak, Inc.'s recipe and process of making marshmallows includes corn syrup and corn starch.



www.doumak.com

January Word Search

Last Month's Winner:
Thomas Nordbrock

Campfire	Y M S B I H Y G B I S M N V S
Cocoa	C A H Y Y I W N T Y A W I Q T
Collagen	P O O J U M T L T R R Y E L N
Corn	T M C P O R A I S N H X T U E
Doumak	N S C O R N L H E N S Y O D I
Facility	X I S D A I M G L Y B V R S D
Gelatin	I X T L C A A S Q K F F P T E
Ingredients	G H F A L L K A M U O D H A R
Marshmallow	N D F L L S E R O M S O Q R G
Process	E T O O C E S E F X L B R C N
Protein	L W C B L A G E J Z S A Z H I
Sap	C A M P F I R E C Y C Y R G U
Smores	G N I P P O T O I O K V R C B
Starch	F W L V T R Q U E A R B C U J
Syrup	F T P N Q R B V T H J P D E P
Topping	

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
 Delta Sonic Car Wash (Choose one option only)

Located on front of paper

Choose Your Prize: January Word Search

Choices include a \$25 Beggar's Pizza Gift Card, Delta Sonic Car Wash (Super Kiss Wash and *10-min Interior Cleaning) OR **3 AMC Movie Tickets

*Additional charge will apply when using Interior cleaning for Full-sized Vehicles

**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 2024 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!**

JANUARY 2024

At The Farm Gate

by Joanie Stiers



Farms prep for next busy season

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

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

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

balance sheets, tax planning, land leases and employee meetings quickly fill the days between conferences and meetings about farm policy, grain marketing, agronomic research and other ways to better the farm.

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

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

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



Technology

While we all enjoy our technology, farmers have also found uses for them:

1. Tablets connect to the planter, collecting data to help make good agronomic decisions in the raising of this and future years' crops.
2. GPS radio-steering devices allow the tractor to precisely go through the field pretty much on its own. The farmer watches over the controls, noting weeds, drainage issues, and other problems. The physical and mental fatigue with long hours in the field is greatly reduced thanks to GPS.
3. Small propeller drones fly high-definition cameras over crops and are the farmer's eyes to help spot potential problems in the field; disease, wind damage, wild life damage, water damage, downed fences, livestock issues, etc. You can imagine what a time-saving device this is...like using a security camera at home.



WE'RE NEIGHBORS

Cook County Farm Bureau is happy to be located right here in Cook County. Our farmers are excited to be your neighbors! Learn more about Cook County agriculture and how farmers care for their animals and land in this multipart series. If you don't want to wait, see the full publication at https://cookcfb.org/file/1386/23-1434%20Cook_Were%20Neighbors%20Booklet_Web.pdf.



Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP)



Producers who incurred ELAP-eligible losses in 2023, will need to submit a notice of loss by January 30, 2024.

ELAP provides recovery assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish losses due to an eligible adverse weather or loss condition, including blizzards, disease, water shortages, and wildfires. ELAP covers grazing and feed losses, transportation of water and feed to livestock and hauling livestock to grazing acres. It also covers certain mortality losses for livestock including **honeybees** and farm-raised fish as well as honeybee hive losses. ELAP is designed to address losses not covered by other FSA disaster assistance programs.

For 2023, FSA is waiving the regulatory requirement for producers who are eligible for ELAP to file a notice of loss with FSA within 30 calendar days from when the loss first became apparent for livestock and farm-raised fish and 15 calendar days for honeybees. Under this waiver, notices of loss are to be completed by the eligible producer and submitted to FSA no later than the annual program application deadline of January 30 following the program year in which the loss occurred. Therefore, producers who incurred ELAP-eligible losses in 2023, will need to submit a notice of loss by January 30, 2024.

Manifolds, Manolos, and Manure

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



Bona Heinsohn

I scoff at making resolutions and have shared that sentiment numerous times. Perhaps it's even a well-known fact about me. In January of 2023, this column stated I didn't make resolutions this New Year. I didn't follow through with them in 2022. And in January of 2022 it was even more blunt. Anyone who knows me will tell you that I don't make New Year's resolutions. I scoff at the idea of making champagne laden promises of exercise. Budgeting. Dieting. Or personal improvement. Instead, I opt for sarcasm.

This year, I've opted for a different approach. For my farmer. Not me. I will continue with my love of Dr. Pepper. WBBM News Radio 780. Sweet tart ropes. And podcasts. I will not increase my water consumption. And I will not attempt to like the radio stations and songs that my kids think I should. Side note, my blue-eyed girl spent 7,246 minutes listening to Spotify. That's

over five days! Her top artists include Morgan Wallen, Priscilla Block, Lainey Wilson, Chase McDaniel, and Shania Twain. When I open the Spotify app, the message I get is, "We don't have your Wrapped this year." Perhaps because I joined Spotify in November. Of 2023. After my blue-eyed girl made me a playlist complete with Demi Lovato, Cody Johnson, Chris LeDoux, Lee Greenwood, and Nickelback. I made some additions: Fall Out Boy, Kansas, Juvenile, Brantley Gilbert, and John Pardi.

Instead, for this year I'll assist my farmer with creating his 2024 New Year resolutions.

My farmer and I have been together for over 20 years. In high school he was the lead in "Grease" the musical. Hiawatha FFA President. And at one point a basketball cheerleader. Not a basketball player. As a 40-something-year-old adult he has retired his singing voice and thankfully his pom-poms. He remains active in FFA through our blue-eyed girl. Like his grandfather and father before him, he farms. Raises livestock. And cares for the land.

As a caretaker of the land my farmer spends countless hours researching land management practices. Investigating new techniques. And applying different and innovative avenues to improve soil quality and health. For 2024, my farmer will further his efforts to maintain soil health. Improve water retention. And improve topsoil regeneration.

Since his early teen years, my farmer has worn contacts. Without them or his glasses he can only see shadows. No lines. No details. As I got older, I was prescribed contacts to help with the sharpness. I can see but not always the street sign at the next stop light. When my farmer fails to order his contacts, I offer him mine. It would take 15 of mine to equal one of his eyes and 30 of another. Needless to say, he rarely takes me up on my offer. For 2024, my farmer vows to remember to order his contacts. Especially, since his glasses may also date back to his cheerleading days.

A tool he uses to reduce nutrient and soil loss is cover crops. Cover crops are planted to help the soil while

holding it in place. Most cover crops are planted without the intention of ever being harvested. In the spring, cover crops may be tilled into the ground. Terminated. Planted directly into – and in some cases chopped into – animal feed. Cover crops are a tool that help farmers to reduce nutrient and soil loss. Like any other tool, how an individual should use it depends on the situation. What works on my farmer's fields may not work for a downstate farmer. Or even a neighbor.

This Thanksgiving my farmer suffered a crafting injury. More specifically a hot glue gun injury. To his nose. Complete with a blister. In 2024, my farmer will use more care when crafting to ensure that when gluing finger puppets, he does not glue himself.

Fortunately for my farmer these are not champagne laden promises. Instead, they are goals for the new year.

Bona can be reached at
Bona@cookcfb.org.

Representative Canty Visits Annual Meeting

State Representative Mary Beth Canty (pictured left) visits with Cook County Farm Bureau President Janet McCabe during a break at Annual Meeting in Chicago. Representative Canty is "adopted" by the Bureau County Farm Bureau through Farm Bureau's Adopt-a-Legislator program. Representative Canty has visited with Farm Bureau members during several recent visits.



Farm Bureau Resolution Addressing Food Waste and Resource Recovery Approved by State Association Delegates

The Cook County Farm Bureau Board approved a resolution addressing the tremendous amount of food that is landfilled. In Illinois, twenty percent of the nineteen million tons of general landfilled waste is comprised of food.

Forty percent of all food in the United States gets wasted. One in seven Americans is food insecure. In Illinois, more than one million people struggle with hunger and food insecurity. While rescuing and redistributing surplus food is not a cure for hunger, it is an important stopgap in meeting immediate anti-hunger efforts.

In brief, the new policy provides the following:

We support:

- Implementing state-based liability protections for food donors and rescue organizations that expand and strengthen those provided by the federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act. Food rescue includes donation or recovery of surplus food used for feeding hungry people.
- The USDA and the Food and Drug Administration clarifying food safety

donation regulations for pre-cooked and pre-packaged food items.

- Updating USDA's definition of compost so that a greater number of potential buyers, including farms, golf courses, or other operations near waterways, are encouraged to purchase compost. Compost refers to a mixture of various decaying organic waste substances, such as food scraps, dead leaves, or manure, used as soil fertilizer.
- Streamlining and simplifying the permitting process for compost facilities, including those that accept landscape waste and food scraps. Food scraps include pre-consumer food scraps, which includes waste generated during the manufacturing and production of food prior to the item being sold and processed food scraps.
- A separate permitting pathway for anaerobic digestion of source-separated food waste that includes requirements similar to those imposed on composting source-separated food waste.

The policy was approved by delegates from throughout Illinois during the Illinois Agricultural Association Annual Meeting in Chicago in December.

Representative Harper Recognizes President Guebert's 10 Years of Service

Illinois House Agriculture Committee Chair Sonya Haper presents Illinois Farm Bureau® President Rich Guebert with a resolution recognizing his 10 years of service as Farm Bureau President. Pictured with Representative Harper and former President Guebert are Cook County Farm Bureau delegates Dan Biernacki, Janet McCabe, and Todd Price as well as Farm Bureau Manager Bob Rohrer. Representative Harper is "adopted" by the Christian County Farm Bureau who are also pictured.



Gill Farm Visit

State Representative Mary Gill visited with Chad Bremmer during a recent farm visit to Stephenson County. Rep. Gill, a Cook County legislator, is "adopted" by the Stephenson County Farm Bureau® through Farm Bureau's Adopt-a-Legislator® program. Rep. Gill's predecessor Fran Hurley was also "adopted" by Stephenson County Farm Bureau.

COOK COUNTY Financial Representative 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.



*MICHAEL BASILE

has been named Financial Representative of the month for November 2023 by Vicki Nygren, Agency Manager. Michael's office is located at 5757 N Lincoln Ave #27, Chicago, IL 60659. His phone number is 773-728-2957. Michael

has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since 2007.

Chicago North Agency, Vicki Nygren, Agency Manager



*NICK BURKE

has been named Financial Representative of the month for November 2023 by Cary Tate, Agency Manager. Nick's office is located at 12130 S Harlem Ave Unit A, Palos Heights, IL 60463. His phone number is 708-425-

1816. Nick has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since December 2005.

Orland Park Agency, Carry Tate, Agency Manager



*ALEX SWISTUN

has been named Financial Representative of the month for November 2023 by Kevin Gomes, Agency Manager. Alex's office is located at 225 N Arlington Heights Rd, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007. His phone number is 847-427-

8280. Alex has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since March 2002.

Chicago Northwest Agency, Kevin Gomes, 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.*



Mayflower Cruises & Tours offers an exclusive discount to Cook County Farm Bureau members. Start your travel planning for 2024 and 2025 with Mayflower!

To begin your "Life Enriching Experience" and learn more about Mayflower Tours call Kayla Grajeda and state you're a Cook County Farm Bureau member to receive added savings:

Discount Code: ccfb16

Kayla: 800-728-0724 or 800-323-7604

Email: kayla@mayflowercruisesandtours.com

Mayflower Cruises & Tours, LLC, is a division of the Scenic Group, located in Lisle, IL.

We welcome New Voting Members!

The Cook County Farm Bureau Board of Directors welcomes the following Cook County Farm Bureau members who joined the organization or reclassified their membership recently to Regular* or Professional Status**:

Philip Stafefel

Brad Blakeman

Joey Byrdak

Maeve Hayes

Erin Sheehan

David Wilkes

Suleman Bangash

Ena Jones

Arlene Tarpey

FLAC, LLC

Anton Seals Jr.

Regular and Professional member status is important in the support of the Cook County Farm Bureau's efforts at advocacy, education and public relations. These members also receive FarmWeek, the largest

weekly agricultural newspaper in the state of Illinois, that provides great up-to-date information about agriculture issues, production and news. Voting rights and leadership opportunities come as a part of the membership.

We also thank the many new Associate members that joined the organization to access our membership benefits and services over the past few months. We look forward to serving you as well!

*A Cook County Farm Bureau regular voting membership is required of all who join our association that have a vested interest in and receive income from the production of farm products as an owner or operator of a farm business.

**Professional voting membership status is available to all those employed in agriculture related occupations, even with no farm income. If you are interested in this Level membership and the benefits it carries, please contact see CCFB at 708-354-3276 or go to www.cookcfb.org.

Start the New Year Off Safe & Healthy with a Little Help from Your Member Benefits!

Peace of Mind –

Farm Bureau members can now rest a little easier knowing their loved ones are protected in their own homes, with just the push of a button. Medical alarms work with all phone lines and monitors 24/7, 365 days a year. Members receive one month FREE of monitoring and there is no initial fee. Call 855-872-8404 to order.

Lifeline (Stroke Screening)

Early Detection for Stroke & Cardiovascular Disease Risk. Members receive a \$24 savings off regular price. Call 844-591-7109 to schedule a screening and use code ILFB001.



Prescription Drug Program

Members can save with the use of three prescription drug programs: Agelity, Scriptsave, & new this year, SingleCare. With Agelity, you can save on average 20% on brand name and 75% on generic drugs. To obtain an Agelity card (valid for the entire family), visit our website at www.cookcfb.org and click on Member Benefits. To contact Agelity's customer service call 866-292-7822. With Scriptsave you can save up to 75%. To print an e-card visit: www.scriptsave.com and use Group #162W. To contact Scriptsave's customer service call 800-700-3957. SingleCare is similar to the ScriptSave program, but with a savings of up to 80%. For more information on this new prescription drug program, visit: <https://www1.singlecare.com/ilfb>.

Qualsight Lasik

Laser eye surgery at a savings of up to 45% off the national average cost. Call Qualsight at 866-977-3012 with questions or to schedule an appointment.



CLASSIFIED ADS

All ads that we receive for the Co-Operator are also listed on our website at cookcfb.org/stay-updated/classified-ads. 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

Transitional Rectangular Cocktail Table, Denman Collection by Drew and Jonathan from Darvin Furniture. Solid oak and fixed atop a handy set of casters. Brand new, still in box unopened. Darvin regular price - \$949.00, Darvin sale price - \$429. Asking for \$200. **Call Jim 708-361-8230.** Pictures available online.

WANTED

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

Our partners at the Cook County Extension are offering a:

Native Landscape Design Virtual Workshop

Join us for a free two-part virtual workshop series on native landscape design. You will receive an introduction to landscape design with a focus on incorporating native plants and then receive individualized coaching on your own landscape from Extension Staff, Master Gardeners, and Master Naturalists. This program is brought to you in partnership with Forest Preserves of Cook County and Cook County Conservation@Home program.

Homework submission is required to participate in the coaching session and homework deadline must be met.

Zoom Session Dates:

Part 1: Introduction and Basics: January 24, 2023, 6-8pm

Part 2: CHOOSE ONE Individual Landscape Design Coaching: February 7, 2023, 6-8pm OR February 21, 2023, 6-8pm.

This workshop is free, but space is limited. Registration is required and closes on January 18, 2023.

Registration Information at: <https://extension.illinois.edu/events/2023-01-24-native-landscape-design-part-1>

Part 4 Legal Training for IL Small Farms Webinar Series: Forming an LLC

U of I Extension partners with Farm Commons to present a 4-part series on legal issues for farms. Part four focuses on how to form an LLC, best practices, and obligations to keep the LLC in top legal shape.

DATE: Monday March 18, 2024

TIME: 7 p.m. **LOCATION:** Webinar Link – must register to receive

FEE: Free **REGISTRATION:** <http://go.illinois.edu/FormingAnLLC.com>, Questions or additional info contact Local Foods Small Farms Program Coordinator, Sarah Batka at sbatka@illinois.edu or **217-300-8636**

2024 Urban Garden Grant Program

Our 2024 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 January 9th through February 29, 2024. Application is available now, so why wait?

- **Online:** <https://cookcfb.org/stay-updated-/events-and-programs/community-programs/profile/grants-1>
- **Email Deb:** membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org

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

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
"W"

WATER CHESTNUT



Water chestnuts are the small, flattened, round corms or bulbs of a reed-like plant.

In the United States, they are most often associated with Asian cuisine.



Water chestnuts have a bright white flesh with the texture of an Asian pear or apple. They offer a sweet, nutty flavor with a slight tartness.

Water chestnuts are rich in potassium, manganese, copper, vitamin B6, dietary fiber and riboflavin.

They were named for where they are grown and for their resemblance to the classic winter nut.

WATER CHESTNUTS CAN BE EATEN RAW OR COOKED.

Water chestnuts are not nuts nor are they legumes as their name may suggest, they are aquatic tubers or roots, botanically classified as Eleocharis dulcis.



They take 6 to 7 months to develop and are harvested when the leaf stalks begin to die, and the corms have developed a dark brown outer layer.

Next month...Xoconostle Cactus Fruit

2024 Farmland Questionnaire/Affidavit

NOW AVAILABLE

The 2024 Farmland Questionnaire/Affidavit for Cook County can be submitted online at <https://www.cookcountyassessor.com/farms>

The filing deadline date is January 31, 2024 Be sure to retain a copy for future reference.

The application is only available online. This is the process of the Cook County Assessor's Office, and the Cook County Farm Bureau helps provide information and resources to our members.

Be sure to retain a copy for future reference.

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.

“A Taste of Generation YUM” Zoom Book Club

The book club will be reading: How the Millennial Generation’s Love for Organic Fare, Celebrity Chefs and Microbrews Will Make or Break the FUTURE of FOOD. There are roughly 80 million Millennials in America. Never before has a young generation paid this much attention to food. Starting back in 2012, Millennial author Eve Turow set out on a journey to understand why.



DATE: January 16, January 30, February 13, and February 27

TIME: 6:00 p.m. each night

LOCATION: Live via Zoom

FEE: No charge for CCFB Members; \$10 for non-members

REGISTRATION: Register by January 10 at <https://cookcofarmbureau.wufoo.com/forms/w1s6vkmi1cvncp3/>



SCAN TO REGISTER

NEW SERIES: Membership Mondays

Membership Mondays are virtual gatherings, held on the last Monday of the month, for members and prospective members interested in learning more about the benefits and programs a CCFB membership provides. During these virtual gatherings, CCFB staff will highlight member programs, member benefits, and the website, as well as provide demonstrations to access membership benefit discounts via our Abenity App so members can take full advantage. An open Q&A session will follow short staff presentations.



DURATION: 30 minutes including Q & A **COST:** Free

WHEN: Last Monday in January, April, July, and October; 7:00 a.m. (CT) and 4:00 p.m. (CT)

REGISTRATION: Registration is required by emailing ccfb@cookcfb.org or call the Farm Bureau at **708-354-3276**. Zoom link will be emailed the week prior.

IFB Rules of the Road Trucking Seminar

Illinois Farm Bureau will host a 2-hour program for members focusing on transportation laws and regulations as they pertain to the agricultural industry. CCFB members are welcome to attend this free program held at our neighboring Will County Farm Bureau auditorium. A light meal is at 5:30 pm followed by the program at 6 pm. Registration deadline by Feb 23, 2024.



DATE: Wednesday, February 28, 2023

TIME: 5:30 pm light dinner served; 6-8 pm meeting

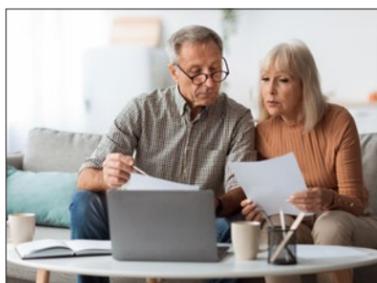
LOCATION: Will County Farm Bureau 100 Manhattan Rd #1, Joliet IL 60433

FEE: FREE for CCFB members, advanced registration required

REGISTRATION: Required by February 23, 2024 - call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276 or email ccfb@cookcfb.org; For additional information, email Debbie at membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org.

Advocacy and Fraud Protection for Seniors

Concerned about Identity Theft Scams? Worried about Health Care Fraud and protecting Seniors? Join us for this workshop with a representative from the Illinois Attorney Generals Office who will give tips and answer those questions and many more!



DATE: Monday, March 4, 2023

TIME: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Cook County Farm Bureau – 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL or via zoom (this workshop is offered both in-person and/or virtual)

FEE: Free **REGISTRATION:** Call the Farm Bureau at **708-354-3276**. For additional information, email Kelli at membershipkelli@cookcfb.org.

Beginning Beekeeping Course

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 9 & 10, 2024

TIME: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm each day

LOCATION: Cook County Farm Bureau, 6438 Joliet Rd, Countryside

FEE: \$75.00 for members of CCFB or CDBA, \$100.00 for non-members

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



CCFB to Support Cook County Families and Food Pantries as Part of

Food Checkout Day 2024

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 2024 marks the 24th anniversary of Food Checkout Day and Cook County Farm Bureau’s latest effort to support local families in need. Rather than supporting a single charity, Farm Bureau will partner with four local Cook County pantries.

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 which of the partner food pantries that their donation is for.

All four partner food pantries were selected by our partners at COUNTRY Financial.

Common Pantry on the north side of Chicago serves nearly 600 households per month. For the past 55 years, the Common Pantry has met the emergency needs of the local community by providing healthy food, kinship, and support to help overcome poverty-related challenges. The Common Pantry strives to provide balanced, nutritious food to the families they serve. Common Pantry was selected by Chicago North COUNTRY Financial Representatives.

Tinley Park Food Pantry in Tinley Park serves residents of the Tinley Park and Orland Hills communities. Since 1982, the Tinley Park Food Pantry has been providing a weekly food distribution to families in need, as well as a monthly delivery to the Brentmentowne Manor, a senior retirement community. Tinley Park Food Pantry was selected by Orland Park COUNTRY Financial representatives.

Schaumburg Barn in Schaumburg serves as a second home for many of the area’s seniors and individuals with

disabilities. Committed to good nutrition, the Barn offers nutritious and affordable meals. The Barn partners with the Community Nutrition Network to provide daily hot lunches and an older adult market. Schaumburg Barn was selected by Chicago Northwest COUNTRY Financial Representatives.

Share Food Share Love in Brookfield provides food assistance to residents of 15 villages in western Cook County. Like many other pantries, Share Food Share Love experienced exponential growth in need during the COVID-19 pandemic and that need continues to linger, especially as the pantry’s service area continues to expand. Share Food Share Love was selected by Chicago South COUNTRY Financial representatives.

New in 2024, Young Leaders Host a Hygiene Product Drive as Part of Food Checkout Day

New this year, Cook County Farm Bureau Young Leaders Committee are asking members to “buy one extra” when they’re shopping for personal care items this year.

Common personal care items of need include soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, razors, shaving cream, and dental floss. These items can be dropped off at three locations in Cook County:

- Farm Bureau office at 6438 Joliet Road in Countryside
- Wagner Farm at 1510 Wagner Road in Glenview
- Ted’s Greenhouse at 16930 84th Avenue in Tinley Park

If you’d prefer to donate cash, please indicate if the cash is for food or hygiene items. 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 2, 2024.

Food Checkout Day 2024 Food Pantry Donation

Food Pantry Name _____

Your Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Y N **Please indicate if you’d like your donation to be designated to the Young Leader Hygiene Product Drive**

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. Donations will be accepted until March 3, 2024.