



# COOK COUNTY GO-OPERATOR

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

## Mark Your Calendar



### February

- 13/27<sup>th</sup> Zoom Book Club
- 16<sup>th</sup> Foundation Scholarship Application Deadline **PG 12**
- 28<sup>th</sup> IFB Rules of the Road Trucking Seminar **PG 12**
- 29<sup>th</sup> Urban Garden Grant Application Deadline **PG 4**

### March

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Food Checkout Day Donation Deadline **PG 1-2**
- 4<sup>th</sup> Advocacy and Fraud Protection for Seniors **PG 12**
- 9/10<sup>th</sup> Beginning Beekeeping **PG 10**
- 12/14<sup>th</sup> Monarch Gardening and Preservation Webinar **PG 12**
- 18<sup>th</sup> IL Small Farms Webinar Series Pt 4: Forming an LLC **PG 12**

### April

- 2<sup>nd</sup> DIY Soap Making Class **PG 12**

For participation details on these programs and activities, check out the related information in this publication, go to [www.cookcfb.org](http://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](http://www.cookcfb.org).

## Question of the Month



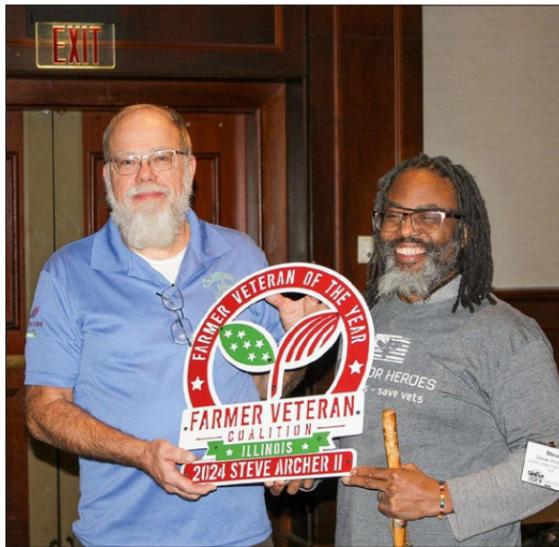
**How many chicken wings are Americans projected to eat during the Super Bowl?**

Call the Farm Bureau at **708-354-3276**, fax your answer to **708-579-6056**, or email to [fbcooperator@gmail.com](mailto:fbcooperator@gmail.com) to enter the drawing for a \$25 gas card. (Please include name, FB number, and phone number)

**January Winner: Mary Vancak**

**Question:** What CCFB member was presented as the Volunteer of the Year?

**Answer:** Rick Johnson



## Chicago Farmer, Veteran

Zaelon Rohwedder, left, a Navy veteran, presented the 2024 Farmer Veteran of the Year award to Steve Archer, Cook County Farm Bureau member, for his work teaching kids about food and farming, and for restoring the soil and his family's land in Chicago. (Photo by Phyllis Coulter) For more info go to **Page 4**.

## Apply for a Scholarship

# TODAY!

The CCFB Foundation offers college students who are pursuing an ag-related career the opportunity to start or continue their higher education with a scholarship. **The scholarship application deadline date is February 16th.**



Scan the QR code for scholarship information and to apply.

See page 12 for details



## CCFB to Support Cook County Families and Food Pantries as Part of Food Checkout Day 2024

Please Donate Today

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 on **Page 2** 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 Brentowne 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.

*Food Pantries continues on Page 2*

## 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](mailto: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!

# Food Pantries

Continued from Page 1

## 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.

# PERSONAL HYGIENE DRIVE

### RECOMMENDED ITEMS INCLUDE:

- DENTAL HYGIENE (TOOTHBRUSH, TOOTHPASTE, FLOSS)
- BODY WASH, SHAMPOO, SOAP BARS
- DEODORANT
- LOTION
- HAND SANITIZER
- TISSUE AND WIPES



## 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.

# HOW FARM BUREAU SERVED YOU IN JANUARY

- ▶ Provided Farm Bureau members with virtual gatherings, highlighting member programs, member benefits, and the website during Membership Monday.
- ▶ Informed the county’s ag community of the informative and timely Everything Local Specialty Growers Conference.
- ▶ Provided members with discount opportunities to attend the PBR Bull Riding Invitational, Chicago Blackhawks and Chicago Bulls games.
- ▶ Taught 76 students at Wheeling Park District’s preschool how agriculture helps keep them warm during the winter.



# 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...

- Member Ramona Ivashchenko for her donation of milkweed seeds for the Monarch Club.
- Wheeling Park District Preschool Program for inviting us to teach students how agriculture helps keep them warm during the winter.
- North Elementary School for their thoughtful – and colorful – thank you cards for AITC presenter Jim Bloomstrand.
- Member Juanita Lewen for her kind words about the 2024 Co-Operator.
- The many individuals who have offered memorials in Jim Gutzmer’s memory to the CCFB Foundation.

## Co-Operator

Published Monthly  
**Cook County Farm Bureau**  
 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525  
 (ph) 708-354-3276 (fax) 708-579-6056  
 (e-mail) ccfb@cookcfb.org (website) www.cookcfb.org



USPS No 132180 Periodical Postage Paid at LaGrange, IL 60525 & additional mailing office

**Editor** Bob Rohrer | **Copy Analyst** Ashley Christensen | **Copy Development** CCFB Office Staff

**Officers & Directors**  
 Janet McCabe, President  
 Gerry Kopping, Vice President  
 Ruth Zeldenrust, Secretary-Treasurer

Dan Biernacki Mark Yunker  
 Mike Rauch Roger Freeman  
 James Bloomstrand Todd Price  
 Patrick Horcher Greg Stack

**Farm Bureau Manager**  
 Bob Rohrer

**Office Staff**  
 Jill Drover Katrina Milton  
 Kelli Villarreal Linda Tobias  
 Bona Heinsohn Tim Rost  
 Melanie Senne Julie Hesperheide  
 Debbie Voltz

### Affiliated Companies

Victoria Nygren ..... Insurance Agency Manager, Chicago North  
 Kevin Gomes ..... Insurance Agency Manager, Chicago Northwest  
 Sharon Stemke ..... Insurance Agency Manager, Chicago South  
 Cary Tate ..... Insurance Agency Manager, Orland Park  
 David Swigart ..... General Manager, Conserv FS

### Postmaster – Mail Form 3579 to 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525

“Co-Operator” (USPS No 132180) is published monthly as a membership publication for \$2.50 per year to members as a part of their annual membership dues by Cook County Farm Bureau, 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525. Periodical postage paid at LaGrange, IL and additional mailing office. Postmaster: send address changes to the Co-Operator, 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525.

The Co-Operator, the monthly publication of the Cook County Farm Bureau®, is available to members through mail delivery, email, or by viewing online at www.cookcfb.org. Members that wish to receive the publication solely by email can let us know by sending an email to fbcooperator@gmail.com with the subject: E-Cooperator.



# Downwind

by **BOB ROHRER, CCFB MANAGER**

## “How about a slogan for 2024?”

Each and every January, my **least** favorite responsibility of the job is employee evaluation and reviews. It's certainly not because we have any major staff issues. In fact, I would put Cook County Farm Bureau staff up against any staff. They are outstanding!

The process requires “judgment”. Most people don't want to be judged. I get it. I don't like judging nor being judged (I know “Good looks and athletic body” were already taken).

And yet, evaluations and reviews are part of the job. And, on the positive side, together each employee and I create objectives, strengthen teamwork, focus on key elements, and reward success. I always want to provide guidance, encouragement, and advice with the intention of making the upcoming year **better** for our members.

During these reviews, I have to use some big, scary words...“competency” words that are used to create an evaluation baseline on each employee.

Those words include technical competence, planning and organization, problem-solving

and judgment, responsiveness to management, initiative, customer service, communication skills, reliability and adaptability, attendance, leadership, teamwork, member focus, proactivity, solution driven work, innovation.

Each competency is assigned a number rating from “outstanding” to “poor”.

Question: Who doesn't appreciate an “outstanding” rating?

Because, ultimately, it's you, the member that is judging us: the organization, communications, membership benefits, programming, delivery needs and resources, actions.

To wrap up the evaluation process, I like to provide each employee with some managerial deep thinking, cheerleading, wisdom, motivation. Many times, this comes in the form of a slogan.

My 6-word staff slogan for the year 2024...

**“Show up – Work hard – Have fun”**

I thought of other potential slogans to use. These slogans

did not make the cut:

2024 – Plant and Harvest

2024 – It's time to harvest

2024 – the GOAT

2024 – At least it's not 2023

2024 – Leave it in the hands of “AI”

2024 – Don't panic, the election will fix it

2024 – Don't get upset ... It's all about the stories

2024 – At least there's no cash bond

2024 – Enjoy the bonus day

All right readers... Please evaluate the organization on our “body of work” and not my slogans! The staff of CCFB looks forward to serving you in 2024.

\*\*\*\*\*

I want to switch gears to help memorialize a friend and leader of the Cook County Farm Bureau...Jim Gutzmer. President Gutzmer passed away suddenly on December 30. It is difficult to describe in

words the impact someone makes on others and upon an organization. I will try.

I first met Jim Gutzmer when his name was floated as a candidate for new director of the Cook County Farm Bureau in 1999. He was not born a farmer but married into the Hinze truck farming family. From his work on the farm, Jim certainly became a farmer at heart.

Over his 24 years of service on the Cook County Farm Bureau board, Jim served in nearly every capacity within the volunteer structure of the organization. This includes seven years as President in which the organization was recognized with 2 President's awards for most outstanding County Farm Bureau in Illinois and the Liberty Bell for

outstanding policy implementation and legislative action. Grunt work or leadership... It didn't matter to Mr. Gutzmer as long as he served members.

Jim spoke passionately with legislators and elected officials about Cook County agriculture. He advocated about quality, affordable food for the public. He enthusiastically promoted ag literacy in the classroom and youth involvement in agricultural careers. He loved Cook County Farm Bureau. He was proud of his Cook County Farm Bureau.

Thank you, Mr. Gutzmer for your leadership quest...now it is time to rest.

**Bob can be reached at [brohrer@cookcfb.org](mailto:brohrer@cookcfb.org)**

Our hearts go out to the Gutzmer family as well as the extended Farm Bureau family as we mourn the recent passing of Board Member and past president, Jim Gutzmer.

Jim was a current member of the CCFB Board of Directors, elected to the board in November 1999. He served as CCFB President and CCFB Foundation President from 2010-2017. Jim was a huge advocate of Ag Literacy and the CCFB Foundation. He also served on the Member Relations Team, Public Relations Team, the Political Action Committee, was an ACTIVATOR Trustee as well as several other leadership roles. He earned his County Farm Bureau Certified Director designation in 2022. We lost a great friend and leader, and he will be missed greatly.



### Fields Apart: Rooted Together Episode 1 Highlights Cook County Farm Bureau's Efforts in Urban Agriculture

This docuseries showcases the similar characteristics, goals, and challenges facing rural and urban farmers. The series will showcase how agriculture in Illinois can help heal communities, drive economic opportunities, and show just how much people in different geographical locations share.



Episode one speaks about the connection between urban and conventional farmers while also highlighting Cook County Farm Bureau's efforts in urban agriculture. Episode one is the first episode in a three-part series.

Scan the QR code or watch episode one at: [youtube.com/watch?v=U2aLWJfRX8s](https://youtube.com/watch?v=U2aLWJfRX8s)



## Recipe of the Month

### Spiced Honey Toddy

Cook DuPage Beekeepers Association, 2023

#### DIRECTIONS:

Before toasting spices, lightly crack with a mortar and pestle, or on a cutting board by tapping with the end of a rolling pin. Toast allspice, pink peppercorns and cinnamon bark in an ungreased pan/skillet on low heat until aromatic, about 2-3 minutes. Pour filtered water directly into pan over toasted spices and bring to a simmer over medium heat; simmer for 5 minutes. Add chamomile flowers or tea bag and steep for five minutes. Combine buckwheat honey and rum in mug, strain spiced chamomile tea and pour into mug containing buckwheat honey and rum; stir to combine. Garnish with a cinnamon stick, if desired. **YIELD: Makes 1 cocktail**

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 t allspice, whole
- 1/2 t pink peppercorns, whole
- 1/2 t cinnamon bark
- 1 1/2 c - filtered water
- 5 g chamomile flowers, or 1 chamomile tea bag
- 2 t buckwheat honey
- 1 1/2 oz - rum

### 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](mailto:membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org) or **Mail:** CCFB/Recipes, 6438 Joliet Rd, Countryside, IL 60525

**Deadline for consideration is March 22, 2024.**

# Cook County Farm Bureau Supports the Community

Throughout 2023, Cook County Farm Bureau® has remained engaged with and committed to partnering with and supporting local farmers, students, and non-profits. A complete copy of the year-end report will be available on [cookcfb.org](http://cookcfb.org).

## Support for farmers

Cook County Farm Bureau continues to support farmers through marketing enhancement programs like Live Local, Shop Local which offers farmers the opportunity to connect their farm business with local consumers while allowing consumers access to

diverse local food and agricultural businesses located in their backyard.

Another consumer facing tool is Farm Bureau's Local Farm Products website search function. Through this tool, farm businesses are able to register their business and provide information on the products they have available for purchase. Common products include vegetables, flowers, honey, hay, straw, and pumpkins.

Both resources are designed to connect farmers to consumers and consumers to local produce.

## Support for Local Food Pantries

Together with partners, Cook County Farm Bureau donated much needed food staples to four Cook County food pantries. Donations were raised in celebration of Food Checkout Day. Food Checkout Day celebrates the healthy and nutritious food local farmers grow and raise by providing food or cash donations to people in need.

In light of the tremendous pressure created by inflation, Cook County Farm Bureau matched members' monetary donations. Over \$10,000 was

donated to local Cook County pantries in celebration of Food Checkout Day this year and the healthy and nutritious food grown and raised by local farmers. The donations directly benefited the one in seven individuals in Cook County who are hungry.

Chicago North, Chicago South, Chicago Northwest, and Orland Park COUNTRY Financial® representatives selected the partner food pantries.

## Agricultural Scholarships

In 2023, the Cook County Farm Bureau® Foundation awarded \$11,000 to four students pursuing an agriculture-related degree. The scholarship program is designed to provide college students pursuing a degree in agriculture, agribusiness, or agriculture-related course of study. Scholarships are awarded on the basis of scholastic ability and financial need.

## Conservation and the Environment

Farm Bureau understands the importance of pollinators to our food system and ecosystem. Farm Bureau leaders designed a multi-faceted polli-

nator 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. This project included the creation of a community pollinator garden at the Farm Bureau building, community presentations, and a large-scale community education event hosted in conjunction with the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago.

This project impacted over 200 individuals while engaging 13 Farm Bureau and 18 community volunteers and eight community partners. Community partners included for-profit businesses, associations, local greenhouses, and a major zoological society.

In addition to community outreach, Farm Bureau offered a springtime pollinator seed sale for individuals interested in creating, preserving and restoring pollinator habitat. In collaboration with Illinois Farm Bureau® and Growmark, Cook County Farm Bureau was able to offer one-pound seed bags at a discounted price.

## Chicago Farmer, Veteran Honored for Inspiration

By **PHYLLIS COULTER**  
FarmWeek

A retired Marine, who turned a patch of contaminated Chicago dirt into a place to grow beautiful sunflowers, was named the 2024 Illinois Farmer Veteran of the Year.

Steve Archer was called inspirational at the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Illinois annual meeting at the Everything Local Conference in Springfield Jan. 17. The annual event was organized and sponsored by the Illinois Specialty Growers Association, Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Farmers Market Association.

The disabled veteran stood proudly with his walking stick in one hand and holding the metal sign that recognizes his achievements. He shared the honor with his father, Leslie Archer, an Army veteran who had served in Germany when the Berlin Wall was being built in 1961.

Last year, Steve lost his brother and a son, Sgt. Leslie Archer III, who served in Vietnam. He died of post-traumatic stress disorder, his brother said.

"The most important thing is, I need to find a purpose," Steve Archer explained in a written statement that was read at the ceremony. "We wrote a blank check to our country. We will go where you send us," he said. The challenge came of how to continue to serve when they returned home, he explained.

Steve Archer found his purpose in restoring family land and volunteer teaching at a Montessori school. He teaches children not to be afraid of bees. "You are not a flower," he tells them. And, that eggs come from chickens, not Whole Foods.

"That is my purpose," he said.

The first thing he grew, at age 11, was a pumpkin from seed in the harsh soil of his backyard in Chicago.

The father of four, including twins, continues to grow things at Archer Urban Farms and to raise honeybees. Building on the work ethic and morals he said his family taught him, he grows nutrient rich food to give away, and to teach children about food.

Archer, who holds a degree in English and has a heart for teaching, taught children in a nearby Montessori school about farming with chickens, a donkey and a horse. He volunteers when his health allowed it.

"I found my tribe," he said.

The eighth of an acre of Chicago land Archer farms was first farmed by his great uncle. Stories about his father's childhood memories inspired Steve.

At first, he couldn't grow anything on the contaminated Chicago soil.

He told FarmWeek, he is a believer that you don't "lose" from an experience when you didn't win – "you learn."

One option was to restore the soil slowly, building it up by adding organic matter over time. But through a grant, and the help of his sister, and others, he was able to remove the top eight inches of topsoil. It was next covered with Mirafi, a cloth engineered as a barrier to prevent chemicals from seeping water up and water to pass down through. Wood chips and topsoil, also donated, were layered on to make the urban land productive again.

"All things fell into place," he said. Even with the challenge of drought, he produced sunflowers, and grew sweet potatoes to give away.

Zaelon Rohwedder, a Navy veteran who made the award presentation, announced that in recognition of the loss of the horse at the Montessori school, he is donating two pasture pigs from his farm, Shortlegs & Eggs in Altamont. He will deliver the gift to

Archer and train him and the children how to care for the pigs.

At the event, other opportunities for veterans were highlighted including beginning farmer training, links to help connect farmers looking for land with landowners looking for them, farm incubators, mental health resources and AgrAbility to help farmers with injuries or illness do tasks easier.

Cook County Farm Bureau®

## COOKFRESH COMMUNITY URBAN GARDEN GRANT PROGRAM

Supplemental funding to community gardens to be used for plantings, seeds, garden supplies and materials, in Cook County.

Six (6) awards of \$350.00 each will be granted to community gardens in Cook County; grant funds must be used at a CCFB member business.

Grant application date deadline is February 29, 2024; Application at: <https://cookcfb.org/stay-updated-/events-and-programs/community-programs/profile/grants-1>



 This Community Urban Garden is funded in part by a grant from:  
**Cook County Farm Bureau®**  
Commodities & Product Marketing Team

Grant Assistance/Clarification: Contact Debbie Voltz at 708-354-3276 or [membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org](mailto:membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org)

# IAA Foundation Offers Scholarships to Support Agriculture, IFB Families

More than \$192,000 in scholarships are available for agriculture students through the IAA Foundation.



"We are once again pleased to offer a scholarship program that encourages students to explore degrees in agriculture related fields," said Jennifer Smith, IAA Foundation development manager. "It is imperative that the next generation of agriculture leaders receives the financial support they need to stay immersed in their education and build their career in agriculture."

Agriculture students and Illinois Farm Bureau® (IFB) members, spouses and children are eligible to apply for 110 college scholarships offered by the IAA Foundation, Illinois Farm Bureau's charitable arm. The scholarships, ranging from \$1,000 to \$7,500, will be awarded in total of \$192,001 for the 2024-25 school year.

Applications are open for a variety of financial awards including the newly created Promoting Careers in Agriculture Scholarship, Robert E. Koeller Scholarship and the Allen and Ellen M. Blessman Scholarship. Additionally, the IAA Foundation

offers scholarships on behalf of Prairie Farms Dairy and several family scholarships established to honor loved ones. Fellowships are also available to support students pursuing advanced degrees in fields that directly relate to agriculture.

Scholarships are awarded based on involvement in extra-curricular activities, community service, academic performance, leadership experiences and an essay. Previous winners of an IAA Foundation scholarship are eligible to apply again if the individual scholarship allows.

A full listing of available scholarships and eligibility guidelines is available at [www.iaafoundation.org](http://www.iaafoundation.org). Applications must be completed online by Feb. 15.

The mission of the IAA Foundation, Illinois Farm Bureau's charitable arm, is to fund education, research, and charitable activities that benefit Illinois farm families and agriculture.

## Former Women's Committee Member Passes

The Cook County Farm Bureau was saddened to learn of the passing of member and former Women's Committee member, Emily Stelter. Ms. Stelter, 103 of Country Club Hills, passed away January 13, 2024. She was the spouse of former Cook County Farm Bureau board member, Bill Stelter, and served as a volunteer of the organization for many years. She was active in the early days of the Ag in the Classroom program, promoted the marketing local farm products to the public and supported the public policy efforts of the organization by communicating to legislative leaders.



## President Duncan at Everything Local Conference

A number of Cook County urban farmers attended the From Food to Flowers: Everything Local Conference in Springfield on January 17-19. IFB President Duncan addresses attendees at the conference expanding their knowledge on specialty crops, markets and everything local.



**You're part of the family when you become a member at IAACU!**



309.557.2541  
[www.iaacu.org](http://www.iaacu.org)  
 808 IAA Drive  
 Bloomington, IL 61702-2901

Already a member of your County Farm Bureau? You're eligible to join IAACU! Contact us to learn more about how we can meet your financial needs.



## Speakers Bureau

**COOK COUNTY FARM BUREAU OFFERS SPEAKERS ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS**



Cook County Farm Bureau is excited to offer presentations on a variety of subjects to interested groups and gatherings in the Cook County region.

Past topics have included:

- the use of biotechnology
- farming in an urban area
- container gardening
- farming from a non-farmer perspective
- on-farm health and sanitation



To schedule a presentation, visit: <https://cookcfb.org/request-a-speaker>

Presentations are offered throughout the year and are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Presentations are offered at no charge.

# Planting Seeds

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



**Katrina J.E. Milton**

## SETTING New Goals

Each January, I try not to set a new year's resolution because of the high likelihood of failing.

According to Time Magazine, 80% of people fail to keep up their new year's resolutions by February. Rather than set a goal that will probably fail, I decided a new approach: do something new each month.

In January, I achieved that goal by purchasing an instrument I have always wanted to learn how to play: the banjo. My grandfather played the banjo and

harmonica, and I have always loved the twangy, happy sounds of the instrument. I bought a used banjo that came with a carrying case, how-to books, and finger picks, and I purchased an instrument stand, music stand, floral strap, and tuner online. In my spare time, I have been reading books and watching YouTube videos to learn how to play, and with a little more practice, I hope to have my living room sounding like a Cracker Barrel in no time!

In February, I plan on reading more, and I joined two book clubs: Cook County Farm Bureau's "A Taste of Generation YUM!" and Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom's "Sharing Books Talking Science". In addition

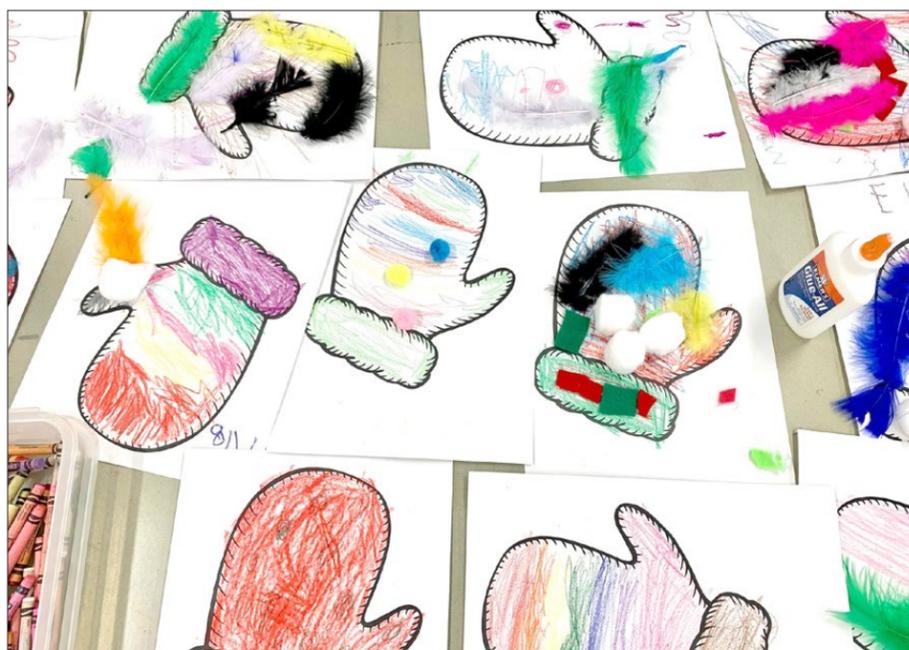
to learning new information that will help with work, I love learning new facts and trivia. I also hope to network and meet new people who share similar interests.

March will be all about green – microgreens that is. Our AITC program will host a virtual microgreens PDCH workshop for educators on March 21, and we will send early edition microgreens kits to the teachers that attend. The workshop's guest speaker will be microgreens expert and Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom Education Manager Chris Wyant. Cook County educators

will be able to request a free microgreens kit for their classrooms starting in April.

That's already 1/4 of the year! Setting small obtainable goals is something fun and adventurous we can all do, whether it's learning how to play a new instrument, reading new books, or growing something new. It's never too late to learn or try something new or to set new goals.

**Good luck with your new goals! Tell me all about them via email at [aitc@cookcfb.org](mailto:aitc@cookcfb.org).**



## Wheeling Park District Preschool Program

On Jan. 16 and 17, Director of Ag Literacy Katrina Milton taught 76 preschool students from Wheeling Park District Preschool how agriculture helps keep them warm in winter with sheep's wool and cotton. In addition to hands-on activities and story time, the students designed their own warm woolen mittens and colored an image of sheep.

## Microgreens & More

**Thursday, March 21, 2024**  
**4-6 p.m. Virtual**

Guest speaker will be microgreens expert and educator Chris Wyant.

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

Registration required, email Jill to reserve your spot - [aitc2@cookcfb.org](mailto:aitc2@cookcfb.org)

## Request Ag in the Classroom

Interested in bringing ag education to your school? Visit [bit.ly/AITCplease](https://bit.ly/AITCplease) to request an AITC program or email Katrina at [aitc@cookcfb.org](mailto:aitc@cookcfb.org) for more information.

## Spring Mini Grant

The Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation is offering agricultural science grants to supplement your lessons related to agriculture. The maximum grant amount is \$500. The grant is open to junior and high school educators of public, private, and homeschool classrooms located in Cook County, IL. Apply Feb. 1 – Feb. 29 online at [bit.ly/2024SpringMiniGrantApplication](https://bit.ly/2024SpringMiniGrantApplication).

## Ag Day 2024

Two Ag Day events will be held this year in Cook County. Ag Day South will be held April 3 at The Children's Farm in Palos Park. Ag Day North will be held April 17 at Historic Wagner Farm in Glenview. Teachers can register their classes for a morning session from 9:15 to 11:15 a.m. or an afternoon session from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Contact Jill for additional information by emailing [aitc2@cookcfb.org](mailto:aitc2@cookcfb.org) or by calling **708-354-3276**.

## Library Program

Members of the community can an upcoming library program about the agricultural uses of trees. "Terrific Trees: The Science and Many Uses of Trees" will be held 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7, at Glenview Public Library. Registration is required; **visit the library's website** to register to attend the free event.

# AGRICULTURE ADVENTURES FOR FAMILIES



## Snowy WORD SCRAMBLE

Can you unscramble these snow-related words?

1. NAMWNSO \_\_\_\_\_
2. TNSMITE \_\_\_\_\_
3. SISK \_\_\_\_\_
4. VLEHSO \_\_\_\_\_
5. KWEALNOSF \_\_\_\_\_
6. TMEL \_\_\_\_\_
7. ZDLIZBAR \_\_\_\_\_
8. TWIERN \_\_\_\_\_
9. OILGO \_\_\_\_\_
10. CDOL \_\_\_\_\_

ANSWERS: 1. snowman 2. mittens 3. skis 4. shovel 5. snowflake 6. melt 7. blizzard 8. winter 9. igloo 10. cold

### VOCAB

**Absorb:** to take in or soak up, as in a sponge  
**Beneficial:** producing good results or helpful effects  
**Fertilize:** make soil more productive by adding nutrients to it

**Snow water content:** the measurable amount of water in snow  
**Translucent:** clear or see-through  
**Camouflage:** a defense or tactic used to disguise your appearance, usually to blend in with your surroundings

## FUN FACTS ABOUT Snow

- Snow is **beneficial** to farmers: it provides moisture crops need to grow
- Snow contains trace amounts of nitrogen from the atmosphere, which helps **fertilize** the soil for the next crop planted
- Most snow falls at a speed of between 1-4 mph
- When light reflects off of it, snow appears white, but it is actually **translucent**
- Snow has more **water content** when ground temperatures are closer to 30 degrees Fahrenheit, producing "heart attack snow" that is wetter
- Without snow cover, the ground **absorbs** about four to six times more of the sun's energy, making snow a way to reflect sunlight and decrease global warming
- Some animals, including polar bears, arctic hares, and arctic foxes, **camouflage** themselves in snow
- The first person to photograph a snowflake was Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley, a farmer and meteorologist from Vermont, in 1885

## February Word Search

Last Month's Winner:  
Richard Mielcarz

|           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cold      | F | C | R | L | D | B | L | V | Y | I | R | Y | H | X | L |
| Crops     | Y | E | X | E | P | H | F | S | N | N | W | G | V | O | U |
| Degrees   | R | M | R | W | T | F | U | T | R | P | O | R | G | K | K |
| Energy    | A | H | C | T | H | A | W | H | L | H | R | E | A | L | R |
| Fall      | M | I | Q | I | I | L | W | U | T | E | W | N | N | V | D |
| Fertilize | U | O | R | E | F | L | E | C | T | X | M | E | D | U | Q |
| Light     | G | E | I | O | H | B | I | N | T | L | E | P | Q | F | Q |
| Melt      | G | E | R | S | Z | N | I | Z | O | E | S | I | C | J | I |
| Moisture  | D | L | O | C | T | W | Z | Z | E | K | E | U | Z | U | O |
| Reflect   | A | W | P | V | N | U | Q | U | L | M | E | H | D | P | C |
| Snow      | V | E | Z | U | D | W | R | I | F | W | R | D | X | O | R |
| Sun       | R | M | S | J | H | E | G | E | E | J | G | W | H | K | O |
| Water     | Q | M | Z | I | U | H | O | X | G | B | E | D | C | N | P |
| Wet       | G | G | T | R | T | A | S | N | O | W | D | A | K | G | S |
| White     | V | E | J | N | C | K | L | L | T | N | L | N | N | L | J |
| Winter    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

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: February 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!**

FEBRUARY 2024

# At The Farm Gate

by Joanie Stiers



## Farms Need Licensed Truckers

CDL? 10-4.

That three-letter acronym for Commercial Driver's License also stands for one of my biggest life achievements. Until two years ago, I had no idea how to drive a stick shift. Not even in a car. But our family farm needed more truck drivers, and I wanted to contribute. I stood determined to drive a 10-speed-transmission semi and learn to double clutch while mindful of a 42-foot-long trailer behind me.

Semis arrived on our farm about 30 years ago, a need driven by greater crop productivity, bigger farm equipment and the desire for efficiency. Today, we require people with this licensed skill in the spring to deliver seed and fertilizer to planters in the field, in the summer to get product to the sprayer, in the fall to move grain from field to storage, and another nine months of the year to haul grain to market.

Given my serious lack of experience, I must credit the patience of six men with licenses on the farm who encouraged and helped me earn a full-fledged CDL about 14 months ago. Poor Kent on the first day I attempted to learn straight-line backing, and poor Dale, who witnessed me crawl a hill in first gear from a standstill while fully loaded.

With the help of YouTube and excessive amounts of practice with

members of our farm team riding shotgun, I passed all the required tests: the three written exams, the detailed under-hood inspection, the skills course, and the drive. Per test requirements, I parallel-parked the semi and grain trailer, successfully putting all 18 wheels inside the lines from the driver's side. (Just in case I ever need to parallel park on a one-way street.) I aced offset backing with no pull-ups on my second skills course attempt, and afterward drove the city streets and interstate without missing a gear. Whew.

Most importantly, I gained empathy and respect for our team and other men and women who have mastered the skill. I now drive my minivan differently, understanding the risks that drivers of passenger vehicles can create in their sudden stops, haphazard lane changes and merges without consideration. All drivers should take a written CDL exam, if nothing more than to learn the length a semi needs to stop. To that, I would expect a loud and clear 10-4.

*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.*



## Environment

Farmers take care of their land because that is what provides them with their livelihood.

They use only what is necessary to eliminate pests and help their crops grow. The farm is not only their lifestyle and their heritage, it is how they earn their money. To that end, they only spend money when necessary on inputs such as fertilizer or chemicals.

Here are some ways that farmers take care of their farms:

### 1. Drainage

a. **Tiling** is a way of draining (or removing) water from the subsurface of the soil. Too much subsurface water may prevent root development and inhibit the growth of crops.

Tile drainage is usually made of plastic tubing.

b. A **grass waterway** is a natural or manmade drainage ditch that is carefully shaped and planted with strong rooted grass to carry water across a farm or down a slope during heavy rain.

Using drainage practices can:

- \* reduce soil erosion
- \* serve as an outlet for hillside ditches, diversions and terraces
- \* reduce and control flooding
- \* keep water clean.

Proper drainage is also important so farmers can access their land. If there is too much water, farm equipment can tear up the wet ground and may get stuck in the mud. Because tractors and implements are needed to prepare the soil, plant, apply fertilizer and chemicals, field access is important.

2. **Irrigation** is the practice of adding additional water when the soil is naturally too dry.



## 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](https://cookcfb.org/file/1386/23-1434%20Cook_Were%20Neighbors%20Booklet_Web.pdf).



## Family Farm and Food Bytes

### Americans Were Projected to Eat 1.45 Billion Chicken Wings During Super Bowl

The National Chicken Council (NCC) released its annual Chicken Wing Report, projecting Americans to consume a record-breaking 1.45 billion chicken wings during Super Bowl weekend. This figure represents an increase of two percent from last year's report, the equivalent of 84 million more wings.

So how do 1.45 billion chicken wings stack up? Picture this:

- 45 billion wings laid end to end would stretch from GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Mo. to Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia, Pa. about 62 times.
- Enough to give four wings each to every man, woman and child in the United States.
- Phoenix's State Farm Stadium (home of Super Bowl LVII) holds 73,000

people. If 1.45 billion chicken wings were distributed to the full stadium, each fan could enjoy 19,863 wings.

- Assuming Kansas City Chiefs' coach Andy Reid can eat three wings per minute, it would take him more than 900 years to eat 1.45 billion wings.

### Buffalo Chicken Wing History

Deep-fried chicken wings have long been a staple of Southern cooking. But the concept of cooking wings in peppery hot sauce was born in 1964 at the Anchor Bar in Buffalo, New York, when co-owner Teresa Bellissimo cooked leftover wings in hot sauce as a late-night snack for her son and his friends. The guys liked them so much that the Bellissimos put them on the menu the next day. Served with celery slices and bleu cheese sauce, "Buffalo Wings" were an instant hit.

Dick Winger, who sold hot sauce to the bar, went on the road with Dominic Bellissimo, the owners' son, to promote the item and sell hot sauce, and the item gradually caught on with restaurant operators around the country. The concept hit the big time in 1990, when McDonald's began selling Mighty Wings at some of its restaurants. KFC rolled out Hot Wings a year later, and Domino's Pizza introduced its own wings in 1994. They've remained hot ever since. McDonald's was back in the wing business in 2013, and its Mighty Wings were featured nationwide at most restaurants through the first quarter of 2014.

### Chicken wings and football – A love story

The rise of the chicken wing and its correlation to American football all had to do with timing.

Cooking the whole bird was trendy in the 1960s and 1970s, but in the 1980s,

U.S. consumers started preferring boneless-skinless breast meat, and wings became an inexpensive byproduct for chicken producers. Restaurants and bars realized they could charge low prices for the relatively inexpensive protein, and due to the spicy/salty nature of the sauce, they discovered that beer sales would go through the roof when customers ate wings.

*About Family Farm and Food Bytes: This is a collection of articles gathered from Illinois Farm Bureau 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

Last year I tried to set some goals. I wrote them down. I tracked one or two of them. And to my surprise I reached my goal of reading 24 books.

In a moment of frivolity, I shared my achievement with my younger cousins. They were less than impressed. And their year-end reading totals schooled my barely finished before the New Year's ball drop total of 24.

Now just a handful of days into 2024, I think it may be time to increase my reading goal. My non-overwhelming total includes professional, self-development, prospective book club reads, and personal reading. Here are some of the

titles I have on my to be read list just waiting for their time to shine.

In terms of professional reading, Transformational Governance by Beth Gazley and Katha Kissman has sat on my shelf for several years. It's a fairly intimidating read with chapters on influencing change within the board, getting the most from assessment and evaluation, and implementing change. But I'm tired of looking at it, so it's getting read this year.

Also on the list is Financial Management Handbook for Associations and Nonprofits by Craig Stevens, Dawn Brown, Carol Barnard, Kathy Cuddapah, Laila Mitchell, and Rob Eby. For a non-financial, non-math individual this read will be a stretch. I openly struggled through college calculus, was less than

impressed at statistics in both undergrad and graduate school, and loudly complained during Accounting I. But I finished and passed them all. Chapters include budgeting, financial reporting, and accounting systems. I may need a fresh batch of coffee with this read.

On my potential book club reading list is The Soil Will Save Us by Kristin Ohlson. I ran across Ohlson while watching the agriculture and food documentary "Kiss the Ground" several years ago. This book explores the relationship between plants, soil microorganisms, and carbon. My farmer is anxiously awaiting the cliff notes version of this one.

Lab Girl by Hope Jahren tells the story of a young Minnesota child who is fascinated by science and biology. This

New York Times Notable Book encourages readers to observe and protect the environment and for everyone to find the "scientist" in themselves. Perhaps Lab Girl will be next year's pick for Farm Bureau's Zoom book club.

Falling into the category of personal improvement is Level Up by Alyson Van Hooser. Van Hooser spoke at a Farm Bureau conference several years ago and her story was both captivating and energizing. I'm looking forward to leveling up and being accountable to the grind.

Unlike one of my younger cousins, I'm not that adventurous with my personal reading. I'm a thriller. Horror. And crime kinda of gal. But I'm trying to branch out with Spare by Prince Harry. I'm absolutely fascinated by the British monarchy and continue

to hear mixed reviews about it so it's time that I take a listen. This one is on my Audible reading list.

Rounding out my personal reading list is Room for Rent by Noelle Ihli. This will be my third Ihli book and if it's anything like the others it will be a quick and captivating read. I didn't even read the synopsis before ordering it; as I finished Ihli's Ask for Andrea, I realized that she had another book available, and I grabbed it.

My takeaway from this isn't only that I need to up my reading game. More that it's time for me to set and track goals. What's on your 2024 reading list?

Bona can be reached at [Bona@cookcfb.org](mailto:Bona@cookcfb.org).

# Farm Bureau Leaders set State Legislative Priorities

The Farm Bureau Board of Directors established the 2024 State Legislative Priorities at the December Board Meeting.

State Legislative Priorities for 2024 are as follows:

- **Estate Tax:** To keep family farms together, reform the Illinois Estate Tax to reflect modern farm estate values to ensure farm estates that produce a typical Illinois income are not subject to the estate tax.
- **Eminent Domain:** Advocate to repeal eminent domain authority allowed for CO2 pipelines under current law.
- **Agritourism Tax Credit:** Extend the agritourism tax credit against liability

insurance costs that sunsets after the 2023 tax year.

- **Navigable Water:** Advocate against legislation that grants public access to private waters, as this is a violation of private property rights.
- **Biofuels:** Engage in conversations to promote the use of biofuels as a mechanism to reduce the transportation sector's carbon footprint.
- **Private Property Protection:** Advocate for balancing the protection of private property rights with the appropriate development of projects impacting farmland, especially as demand for renewable energy and carbon capture projects increase.

Maintain eminent domain authority specifically for public utilities only. Eminent domain authority should not be expanded to private, for-profit wind, solar, and energy developers. These types of developers, by definition, do not have a public responsibility, but rather only a fiduciary responsibility to their ownership.

- **Agricultural Funding:** Work to maintain adequate State funding for key Illinois Department of Agriculture programs like meat/poultry/egg inspectors, environmental programs, warehouse oversight, and veterinarian programs. This includes advocating for a viable and independent Illinois Department of Agriculture.

• **Livestock Management Facilities Act:** Maintain 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.

• **Nuisance Deer Population Management:** Advocate to reform Illinois Department of Natural Resources' deer management policies to allow farmers the ability to better manage nuisance deer that cause damage to their operations.

Updates regarding priorities and legislation Farm Bureau is working on will be provided throughout the legislative session.

## MEMBERS ARE REMINDED TO

# VOTE

Because Your Vote Matters



★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## TUESDAY, MARCH 19TH

**COOK COUNTY CLERK**

- IRIS MARTINEZ

**COOK COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY**

- EILEEN O'NEILL BURKE

**MWRD 2 YEAR**

- PRECIOUS BRADY-DAVIS

**MWRD 6 YEAR (3 SEATS)**

- MARCELINO GARCIA
- KARI STEELE
- SHARON WALLER



Paid for by the Cook County Farm Bureau Political Action Committee (Cook CFB PAC). A copy of our report is or will be available at [www.elections.il.gov/](http://www.elections.il.gov/).

## Bill Would Require Artificial Sweetener Labeling

Members of Congress have introduced the TRUTH in Labeling Act – short for Transparency, Readability, Understandability, Truth, and Helpfulness – that would direct the Food and Drug Administration to develop new front-of-package labels for foods and beverages sold in the U.S.

Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) said the bill ensures foods have clear front-of-package labels that highlight high levels of nutrients of high concern such as salt, sugar, and saturated fat.

Sugar Association CEO Courtney Gaine called the legislation's requirement for monitoring of artificial sweeteners encouraging, since there are currently no such disclosure requirements.

Gaine told Agri-Pulse, "While evidence shows that front-of-

pack labeling has not improved health in countries like Chile where it has been implemented, the Sugar Association supports transparency for consumers with regard to calories and all ingredients, including sugar and artificial sweeteners."

The bill is backed by about 20 advocacy groups, including the Center for Science in the Public Interest and Consumer Federation of America. Separately, FDA has already solicited comments and begun consumer testing for different package designs.

Cook County Farm Bureau voting members will be asked their thoughts on food labeling as part of this year's Viewpoint Survey. The Governmental Affairs Committee will use the feedback from members to craft proposed policy changes.

# 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 Career 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**



### \*TROY VIDOVIC

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

1816. Troy has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since February 2010.

**Orland Park Agency, Carry Tate, Agency Manager**



### \*MATT HUONDER

has been named Career Financial Representative of the month for December 2023 by Kevin Gomes, Agency Manager. Matt's office is located at 3285 N Arlington Heights Rd, Arlington Heights, IL 60004. His phone number is 847-891-

6660. Matt has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since September 2021.

**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.*

## Beginning Beekeeping Class

2-Day Weekend Course Format



**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 60525

**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](mailto:membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org).

We'll share our understanding of how bees overcome challenges. You'll learn techniques that leverage their natural abilities to adapt and thrive. This program will guide you by season into keeping bees sustainably.

**Learn all about:**

- Honey Bee behavior, Biology and fascinating features
- Selecting the right hive: advantages and challenges with Langstroth, Top-Bar, Flow and more
- Tools and Equipment you will need and much to budget
- Practical ways to obtain high quality bees
- How the hive evolves from Day 1 in Spring thru Winter and into next season

- Leveraging Bees innate capacity for immunity, without antibiotic or chemical treatments
- Case studies on what you may find while inspecting your hive
- Best practices on how and when to harvest honey and other hive products

Classes are led by Kim Kulton, President of "Bee All About It". Kim operates a commercial beekeeping business producing honey, breeding Queens, and rescuing bees. She's joined by Pete Soltesz, President of Cook DuPage Beekeepers Association. Learn how to raise bees that thrive in a chemical-free environment, produce an abundance of great-tasting honey and survive the duration of our Chicago winters.

**Mayflower**  
CRUISES & TOURS

Where are you dreaming to be?

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](mailto:kayla@mayflowercruisesandtours.com)

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

## Looking for a fun way to celebrate Valentine's Day this year?

Use one of our exclusive member benefits for an outing to a local sports game or delicious homemade cookies from the Cookie Garden.

### CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS

**February Games**

- Feb 9 vs New York Rangers @ 7:30 pm
- Feb 13 vs. Vancouver Canucks @ 7:30 pm
- Feb 15 vs Pittsburgh Penguins @ 7:30 pm
- Feb 21 vs Philadelphia Flyers @ 6:30 pm
- Feb 23 vs Winnipeg Jets @ 7:30 pm
- Feb 29 vs. Colorado Avalanche @ 8:00 pm

**March Games**

- March 2 vs Columbus Blue Jackets @ 7:00 pm

### CHICAGO BULLS

**February Games**

- Feb 27 vs. Detroit Pistons @ 7:00 pm
- Feb 28 vs. Cleveland Cavaliers @ 7:00 pm



To purchase tickets to these Blackhawks or Bulls games, please scan the QR code above or visit:

<https://cookcfb.org/membership/become-a-member/member-benefits/profile/entertainment>

### THE COOKIE GARDEN

The Cookie Garden has been locally owned since 1987, baking and creating their freshest delicious cookies and cookie gifts for every occasion, celebration, and holiday!

CCFB member and owner of The Cookie Garden is offering an exclusive 25% CCFB member discount on all company products!

**25% off Promo Code: CCFB**

24 Hour Online Orders at: <https://www.cookiegarden.com/>  
Mon-Fri | 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
at Facility: 800-582-9191

## CLASSIFIED ADS

All ads that we receive for the Co-Operator are also listed on our website at [cookcfb.org/stay-updated/classified-ads](http://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](mailto: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 Darwin Furniture. Solid oak and fixed atop a handy set of casters. Brand new, still in box unopened. Darwin regular price - \$949.00, Darwin sale price - \$429. Asking for \$150. **Call Jim 708-361-8230. Pictures available online.**

18 position ladder, 16 ft, asking \$200. **Call 708-654-2010. Picture available online.**

Dining/kitchen table 61" long x 41" wide. Dark Oak. Comes with 2 leaves, 6 chairs, with 6 pads. \$100. **Call Chet 815-838-4764 Lockport.**

Dresser 52" wide, 19" deep, 76" high. Cream color with gold trim. Comes with 2 extra shelves above the dresser with 3 drawers and light. Comes with 2 optional mirrors 46" high x 19" wide with framing same as dresser, cream with gold trim. Comes with twin bed, box spring and matching headboard. \$100. **Call Chet 815-838-4764 Lockport.**

4ft. rounded nail table w/light. 4 slide drawers@4 shelves. Like new, black marbled formica. Asking 250.00, **call 708-654-2010. Picture available online.**

Entertainment Center 76" high x 8 ft wide x 18 1/2" deep. Medium Oak. Has storage space on each side with glass doors. Good condition. **Call Chet 815-838-4764 Lockport.**

### WANTED

Wanting to buy your H/O and N scale electric trains; and H/O scale slot cars and tracks. I buy large and small collections. Turn those unwanted items into cash. **Give me a call at 630-272-4433 Ron.**

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

## Virtual School & Community Garden Training Presented by IL Extension, Cook County

This three-part, free training series will help you gain the knowledge and confidence to start your own school or community garden! All three sessions will be conducted over Zoom. All audiences are welcome and encouraged to attend this program, but technical assistance is available only to garden sites in Cook County, IL. You may choose to attend one, two, or all three sessions:

- Thursday, February 15 from 6 to 8 p.m. – Introduction, Getting Started, and Volunteer Engagement
- Thursday, February 22 from 6 to 8 p.m. – Vegetable Gardening
- Thursday, February 29 from 6 to 8 p.m. – Ornamental Gardens and Curriculum (NEW, this year!)

Attendance at all three sessions is highly recommended for new gardens

that are requesting on-site assistance from Illinois Extension in Cook County. **Registration is free but required.**

Priority for scheduling on-site technical assistance will be given to garden teams who attend the full training series. We ask that at least three representatives (may include staff, volunteers, parents, teachers, garden coordinators, administrators) from your garden attend the training series to jump-start planning, recruit helpers, schedule garden installations, and develop programming.

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate, please contact Nancy Kreith at [kreith@illinois.edu](mailto:kreith@illinois.edu) or 217-300-5601. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

Registration and details at:

[go.illinois.edu/Garden2024](http://go.illinois.edu/Garden2024)

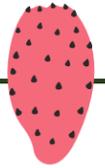


## ABC'S OF FOOD

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.

This month  
"X"

**XOCONOSTLE  
CACTUS FRUIT**



Xoconostle cactus fruit is native to Central Mexico, and has likely been used for thousands of years by the indigenous peoples of Mexico.

**Xoconostle (pronounced choko-nose-leh) cactus fruit is a sour prickly pear variety.**

The small fruit is 5 to 7 centimeters long and around 4 to 5 centimeters in diameter.



The flavor is described as complex with a sour tang and an acidic finish. It lends a sour flavor to sauces and salsas, as well as the traditional mole sauce.

The antioxidant properties of the Xoconostle seeds (where the red pigment is concentrated) are believed to be higher than that of raspberries, red plums and strawberries.



**XOCONOSTLE  
CACTUS FRUIT  
IS RICH IN  
FIBER,  
VITAMIN C  
AND CALCIUM.**

It has a pale green skin with a muddled hue and will attain a pale pink blush once ripe.



Next month... Yuzu

## 2024 Cook County Farm Bureau® Foundation "Gala" SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Join the Friends of the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation in support of the 2024 Gala 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 Gala on **Friday, July 19th**. See details on the event landing page at:

**[cookcfb.org/foundation](http://cookcfb.org/foundation).**



## 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](http://www.cookcfb.org). Scan our QR for our Events Calendar.



### 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](mailto:ccfb@cookcfb.org); For additional information, email Debbie at [membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org](mailto: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](mailto: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 CDDBA, \$100.00 for non-members

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

### Monarch Gardening & Preservation Lunch & Learn Series

Love bees and pollinators but have a small yard or balcony? Join this series to learn more about raising monarchs at home and pollinator gardening for small spaces. The program will include information on Illinois native plantings that can be incorporated into home landscaping.



**DATES:** March 12 (Raising Monarchs at Home and Pollinator Gardening for Small Spaces) and March 14 (Current Events in Monarch Conservation)

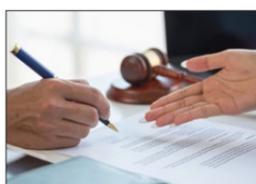
**TIME:** 11:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. each day **FEE:** Free!

**LOCATION:** Zoom, link will be provided to registered participants

**REGISTRATION:** Call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276. For additional information, email Bona at [bona@cookcfb.org](mailto:bona@cookcfb.org)

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

U of I Extension partners with Farm Commons to present a four-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. **FEE:** Free!

**LOCATION:** Online, link will be provided to registered participants

**REGISTRATION:** <http://go.illinois.edu/FormingAnLLC.com>

Questions or additional info, contact Local Foods Small Farms Program Coordinator, Sarah Batka at [sbatka@illinois.edu](mailto:sbatka@illinois.edu) or 217-300-8636



## 2024 Foundation Scholarship Applications

### Act Now- Deadline February 16th!

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**

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. The application is available on the CCFB Foundation website: [www.cookfb.org/foundation](http://www.cookfb.org/foundation).

**Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Ag Scholarship (\$3500) and General Scholarship (\$2000) –** 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](mailto:ccfb@cookcfb.org).

Visit [www.cookcfb.org/foundation](http://www.cookcfb.org/foundation) for more information on these scholarships and to apply.

## COMING SOON: Mark Your Calendar!

**April 2, 2024:** Natural Soap Making 101

**April 27 & 28, 2024:** Conceal and Carry Class

**April 29, 2024:** Membership Monday 7am & 4pm