



# COOK COUNTY GO-OPERATOR

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

## Mark Your Calendar



### March

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

### April

- 2<sup>nd</sup> DIY Soap Making Class **PG 12**
- 26<sup>th</sup> Member Appreciation Week **PG 12**
- 27/28<sup>th</sup> Conceal and Carry Class **PG 12**
- 29<sup>th</sup> Membership Monday **PG 12**

### May

- 14<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Preparing Wills & Trusts
- 21<sup>st</sup> Workshop on the Credit System and Credit Report

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



We are having a Pollinator Seed sale this month. What is the price for 1 pound of seed for CCFB Members?

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)

### February Winner: Larry Tierney

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

**Answer:** 1.45 Billion



## Ag in the Classroom Visits PHS

AITC Presenter Wayne Kolweier teaches Prospect High School freshmen that food does not come from a grocery store, and that farms are the originating source. For more about the presentation, go to **Page 6**.

## New Census Shows Loss of Family Farms

New agriculture census data released by USDA is cause for concern as the number of farms operating in the United States and the number of farm acres have both fallen significantly. The 2022 Census of Agriculture reports 141,733 fewer farms in 2022 than in 2017. The number of farm acres fell to 880,100,848, a loss of more than 20 million acres from just five years earlier.

*Census continues on Page 2*

## HOLD THE DATE

The Foundation's "An Evening for Ag Education" Gala to benefit Ag Literacy on July 19th at 6pm in Orland Park. **See Page 5 for details.**



## Master Gardener Help Desk and Soil Kits are now available.

See page 12 for details.



## AFBF Delegates Approve Cook County's Policy Submittal on Food Waste

**Additional news from the National Conference can be found on Page 4**

All of Illinois Farm Bureau's (IFB) policy submittals, including Cook County Farm Bureau's food waste policy submittal, was approved at the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) delegate session – a testament to the time and effort put into the proposals at the county and state levels.

About a dozen resolutions were brought forth by IFB, which was represented by 19 voting delegates, at the AFBF Annual Convention in Salt Lake City. Several proposals fell under the umbrella of food access, safety and waste, supporting ways

to turn non-consumed food into a resource through composting and reducing the regulatory constraints for on-farm materials, urban food scraps, and processing facilities. This includes support of on-farm composting, streamlining, and simplifying the permitting process for compost facilities and 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.

Included in the approved food waste policy language is support for strengthening liability protection for food donors and rescue organiza-

tions and incentivizing farmers to donate surplus crops and offsetting the costs associated with the donation. The food waste and resource recovery submittal was researched, drafted, and submitted by Cook County Farm Bureau.

"I think the fact that most of our issues weren't hardly discussed or debated shows the quality of those submittals at the very base of that process," said IFB Vice President Evan Hultine. "A lot of work and time and effort and thought went into those at the county level, and it makes for a stronger process, and then an easy lift to get them to the national level."

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!

# Census

Continued from Page 1

"The latest census numbers put in black and white the warnings our members have been expressing for years," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "Increased regulations, rising supply costs, lack of available labor, and weather disasters have all squeezed farmers to the point that many of them find it impossible to remain economically sustainable.

"Family farms not only help drive the economy, they allow the rest of the nation the freedom to pursue their dreams without worrying about whether there will be enough food in their pantries. We urge Congress to heed the warning signs of these latest numbers. Passing a new farm bill that addresses these challenges is the best way to help create an environment that attracts new farmers and enables families to pass their farms to the next generation."

While it's encouraging that the number of beginning farmers increased, the latest census numbers show the number of farmers over the age of 65 is outpacing younger farmers. Almost 1.3 million farmers are now at or beyond retirement age, while just 300,000 farmers are under the age of 35. AFBF has long-established policies supporting beginning farmers, including through farm bill programs focused on new and beginning farmers.

The USDA also released general county data. More specific data by

county will be released later in the year. Cook County Farm Bureau staff reviewed the general information and identified the following related to Cook County agriculture from 2017 survey to the new data of 2022 survey:

- The number of farms reporting, 154, decreased from the previous census.
- Acres farm in Cook County dropped from 11,903 farm acres to 10,281 farm acres in five years.
- Market value of agricultural products sold increased to \$22,399,000 with most sales coming from crops and green-houses.
- The average size farm in Cook County increased from 65 acres to 67 acres
- The largest segment of farms in Cook County are 1-9 acres
- The average income by farm was \$54,979
- Types of farms were primarily split between corn/soybeans, hay/forage production, vegetable/plant production, and orchards with some also having livestock.

Read the full 2022 Census of Agriculture: [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Ag-Census/2022/index.php#full\\_report](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Ag-Census/2022/index.php#full_report)



## 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 Joseph Rubinas for allowing manager Bob Rohrer to stop in and present a gift basket to him and his wife for completing every Ag Adventures word search during the year 2023. (Thank you to the other 28 members who also completed the word search every time in 2023 as well!)
- President Janet McCabe, Governmental Affairs Team member Cindy Gustafson and staff member Bona Heinsohn for representing the Cook County Farm Bureau at the recent Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference and Legislative Reception in Springfield.
- The great group of volunteers that attended virtually the Valentines Day (February 14) Team meetings for Ag Literacy, Commodity/Marketing, Governmental Affairs, Member Relations, Public Relations, and Young Leaders! Your thoughts, input, suggestions and creative ideas enhance the Cook County Farm Bureau.
- Longtime member Michael O'Brien for sharing pollinator seeds and for coming into the office once a month to respond to the questions of the month.
- The Country Financial Agents that achieved the top 10 membership recruiters for 2023. See the complete list on Page 10. Thank you for your efforts to connect so many members with the services offered by the organization.
- The donors that have supported the Food Check Day food pantries this year and so many years in the past.
- The Cook County Farm Bureau members that participated in the 3-part Illinois Farm Bureau documentary "Fields Apart – Rooted Together". Quality work!

# HOW FARM BUREAU SERVED YOU IN FEBRUARY

- ▶ **Engaged with numerous Cook County state legislators in Springfield. Key issues discussed included the agritourism state tax credit and the estate tax.**
- ▶ **Provided a Rules of the Road Trucking Seminar focusing on transportation laws and regulations as they pertain to the agricultural industry.**
- ▶ **Taught members of the community about agricultural uses of trees during a "Terrific Trees" event held at the Glenview Public Library.**
- ▶ **Hosted a book club reading A Taste of Generation YUM: How the Millennial Generation's Love for Organic Fare, Celebrity Chefs and Microbrews Will Make or Break the FUTURE of FOOD.**



## Co-Operator

Published Monthly

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6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525

(ph) 708-354-3276 (fax) 708-579-6056

(e-mail) [ccfb@cookcfb.org](mailto:ccfb@cookcfb.org) (website) [www.cookcfb.org](http://www.cookcfb.org)

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#### Editor

Bob Rohrer

#### Copy Analyst

Ashley Christensen

#### Copy Development

CCFB Office Staff

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Ruth Zeldenrust, Secretary-Treasurer

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# Downwind

by **BOB ROHRER, CCFB MANAGER**

## “What is Money?”

When I was growing up on the farm, money seemed to be scarce. Okay – it was scarce. Mom and Dad confirmed that fact with me just the other day. We did not farm money trees. Yet, somehow, Mom and Dad still clothed five kids, kept shoes on our feet (sure I used duct tape to keep the sole on the boot occasionally), and we were well fed from the milk cow, garden, and livestock.

The farm somehow provided the essentials despite periodic cashflow difficulties. We weren't alone but neighbors bartered, shared resources, and helped one another.

As kids, we learned that having money, cash, and coins, was not always the norm. In those days, I thought of cash and coins as the definition of “money”.

So, what is the definition of money today?

- Gold and silver?
- Washingtons, Hamiltons, Jacksons, Grants, and Benjamins?
- A checkbook?
- Visa, American Express, Discover?
- Venmo, PayPal, Zelle, Chime?
- Cryptocurrency?

The definition may reflect various generations and age demographics.

I'm not quite old enough to remember use of doubloons, the Mint Act, the gold standard, nor the Federal Reserve Act of 1913. My “good ole” days were when cash and coins were money. Dollar bills were wonderful at the Ben Franklin dime store. Coins were handy to make a phone call, buy a candy bar, or park the car. Banks issued those newfangled checking books and taught depositors how to fill out the check properly. (My son told me the other day that he doesn't even remember how to write a check. Gasp!)

Today, inflation is killing the value of money. Washingtons and Hamiltons are so yesterday. 50s are the new 20s. I discovered a new problem. The concept of getting a business to accept a \$50 bill is an issue I never dreamed would happen.

During the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting and National Convention in Salt Lake City in January, I was shocked to learn that possessing cash to pay for services can present a challenge. Usually on trips, I use a credit card to pay for

most items and services. However, I needed tip money because much of the service world accepts and expects tips (cash is still acceptable for this purpose, apparently).

Since I'm not quite generous enough to tip the counter guy with the \$50 bill for pushing a button on a credit card machine/register, I wanted to break the \$50 into smaller units a bit more tip worthy.

The counter guy didn't accept cash payments so I couldn't break the \$50 bill there. I amused myself the rest of the day by stopping at various locations in downtown Salt Lake City to ask, “Can you break a 50?”

- The coffee shop – nope
- The gift shop – nope
- The store at the Utah capital – nope
- The bartender at the reception event that evening – nope (The bartender did accept Venmo tips, whatever that is... How nice and convenient.)

So, what about pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters?

- Am I the only one who still has a change jar on my dresser? It's so lonely... There's hardly anything in my two-gallon glass jar.
- Can you believe the banks won't count change anymore? No one wants to fill a two-gallon glass jar with

## Membership Value

Sometimes the value of a Farm Bureau membership can be measured by the lack of having a membership...

I recently saw an ABC WLS channel 7 update news story on a Palatine family who tragically lost their family flower and greenhouse business as a result of a huge (and apparently incorrect) property tax assessment. The family business had been in place since 1938.

I remember reading a news article about this particular business assessment issue for the family's flower and greenhouse property back in 2021. I checked our membership database to see if the individuals were/are members of the Cook County Farm Bureau. In this case, they were not. In reading further, the family business was shuttered as a result of an incorrect assessment and resulting tax burden. Too late for us to try to assist.

This story saddened me. I'm not sure that we could've helped change the outcome with the Assessor's office. However, through the years, our office has demonstrated the ability to communicate and work with various governmental entities, taxing bodies, regulators and others in an effort to help members. Our organization's 100-year-plus reputation of working on behalf of members to solve issues may have been able to make a difference. Unfortunately, we will never know.

coins and then count it yourself!

- Piggy bank manufacturers must be going out of business. My grandchildren will not grow up with the joy of receiving a quarter in their birthday card (and appreciate it). They won't be able to shake the ceramic pig and wonder why it won't make more noise. They won't “break the bank” by figuring out how to remove that stopper in the belly of the pig.
- And what will happen when the grandkids reach “pitching pennies” age? How will they pitch their Zelle?

Reluctantly, I am trying to understand this new world of money (with the exception of cryptocurrency). While I'm not ready to return to growing



Today's Tip Jar

up poor days on the farm, my soul will always yearn for the return of those days when you could physically touch, count and use coins and dollar bills.

*P.S. I still pick up a penny when I see one on the ground. Feel free to keep throwing your loose change in the parking lot.*

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



## Young Leaders Attend Conference

Several Cook County Farm Bureau Young Leaders joined other young leaders from throughout Illinois for this year's Young Leader Conference in Springfield. In addition to numerous breakout sessions and speakers, Young Leaders had a moment of fun during '90s Trivia Night! Pictured left to right is Blake Lanphier, Joey Byrdak, and Rebecca Biernacki. The District 5 trivia table was sponsored by IAA Board Member Lu Ann Matejcek.

### 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.**



## Recipe of the Month

### Creamy Zucchini & Spinach Rigatoni

Joyce Holste, Midlothian

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 3 c (1/2 of 16 oz pkg) rigatoni pasta, uncooked
- 1 t oil
- 1 zucchini, sliced--if small, use 2
- 1/2 lb sliced fresh mushrooms
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 T flour
- 1/4 t each dried basil leaves, dried oregano leaves & crushed red pepper (optional)
- 1 c fat free reduced sodium chicken broth
- 4 oz (1/2 pkg of 8 oz pkg) Philadelphia Neufchatel Cheese, cubed
- 1 pkg (6 oz) baby spinach leaves
- 1/4 c grated parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 c shredded mozzarella cheese

#### DIRECTIONS:

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Cook pasta as directed on pkg, omitting salt. Meanwhile, heat oil in very large skillet on medium heat. Add zucchini, mushrooms & garlic; cook 3-4 mins. or until zucchini is crisp-tender, stirring frequently. Add flour and seasonings; cook and stir 1 min. or until thickened, stirring frequently. Add Neufchatel cheese; cook and stir 2-3 mins or until melted. Drain pasta. Add to zucchini mixture along with the spinach, parmesan cheese and 1/2 cup mozzarella, mix lightly. Spoon into 2 qt. casserole sprayed with cooking spray, top with remaining mozzarella. Bake 10 mins or until mozzarella is melted.

# American Farm Bureau Federation® Annual Meeting

## Local Farm Bureau Leaders Attend National Meeting

Cook County Farm Bureau® Directors joined Farm Bureau members from throughout the country at this year's American Farm Bureau Federation® Annual Meeting held in Salt Lake City, Utah in January. Board members represented the organization by attending keynote presentations, workshops, and seminars. They connected and interacted with Farm Bureau leaders across the country, as well as celebrated the heritage of Farm Bureau and grassroots engagement during the Celebration of Grassroots Reception.

Members heard from Zippy Duvall, President of the American Farm Bureau Federation; Tom Vilsack, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture; Jack Uldrich, Global Futurist and author; and Greg Harden, Associate Athletic Director of Student Counseling at the University of Michigan.

Cook County leaders participating included Pres. Janet McCabe, VP Gerry Kopping, Dan Biernacki, Jim Bloomstrand, Todd Price, Mike Rauch, Greg Stack, Mark Yunker, Joe McCabe, Linda Kopping, Karen Biernacki, Laura McMahon, Bob Rohrer, and Jayne Rohrer.

## Alliance Launches Support Platform for Farm Families

By **TAMMIE SLOUP**  
FarmWeek

It's OK to not be OK. But it's not OK to not reach out when you're hurting.

American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall reiterated this message as AFBF announced the launch of free, anonymous online mental health and well-being services to provide a nationwide safety net of confidential and on-demand support to farmers, ranchers and farm families.

Unveiled at the American Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Convention, Farm Family Wellness Alliance's Togetherall is a safe, clinically moderated peer-to-peer community, where members around the world are there to listen, support, and give members' mental wellbeing a boost. Through an anonymous profile, users can access a global network of peers, backed by the safeguarding of licensed clinicians overseeing the community around-the-



**Todd Price, Vice President - Innovation and Education Campus for Farm Foundation and Cook County Farm Bureau Board member, spoke during the tradeshow about the new cooperative effort by the Farm Family Wellness Alliance on mental health and wellness services.**

clock. Access to the platform is available to members of a farm family aged 16 and older.

In addition to Togetherall's global community, farmers and their families will have access to an agricultural sector sub-group to share or read others' experiences in a safe, judgement-free zone.

The Farm Family Wellness Alliance is made possible through

a coalition of organizations, including Farm Foundation, AFBF, Farm Credit, CoBank, Iowa Farm Bureau, CHS, Land O'Lakes, National Farmers Union, 4-H, FFA, Agriculture Future of America, Togetherall, and Personal Assistance Services.

Togetherall also offers a range of wellbeing tools, such as self-assessments and access to additional support services through a partnership with Personal Assistance Services. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, financial health, improving sleep, and more.

To learn more about the Farm Family Wellness Alliance and the services available through the Togetherall platform, go to [farmfoundation.org/farm-family-wellness-alliance/](http://farmfoundation.org/farm-family-wellness-alliance/).

## IFB Receives National Awards of Excellence

Illinois Farm Bureau was recognized for outstanding programs and membership achievement during American Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Convention.

The organization received Awards of Excellence for outstanding achievements in all four program areas: advocacy, coalitions and partnerships, engagement and outreach, and leadership and business development.

IFB also received the Scholar Award, given to the six state Farm Bureaus with the highest total donations to the Foundation within their membership groups.

## Duvall: AFBF Reaching New Frontiers

In his address to members of the organization, American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall said, "We reach new frontiers together, one step at a time." "These are places where communities come together in new and creative ways, and innovation helps provide a brighter future. And to reach new frontiers, it takes leadership, perseverance, and teamwork".

During his speech, President Duvall highlighted the following:

- AFBF continues to be members' leading voice in Washington, with its advocacy and ultimate success on the "waters of the U.S." (WOTUS) rule. However, AFBF's work isn't over. EPA's new rule still doesn't provide the clarity members are calling for.
- Through the farm bill for America's Families campaign, the organization reached millions of people in its advocacy for passage of the farm bill, and 2,300 grassroots Farm Bureau leaders and members visited Washington, D.C., in 2023.
- Farmers also are at the forefront of the climate discussion, and leaders and lawmakers are inviting farmers to help create solutions. Tractors drive themselves, drones can spot crop disease, and robots are harvesting fruits and vegetables. And bold steps are yet to be taken in agriculture, like in the new frontier of carbon markets.
- Not all new frontiers are promising though, he said, alluding to the implementation of Proposition 12 and its impact on pork producers and the potential disruption to interstate commerce.
- Another example of teamwork is AFBF's call for the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to ensure farmers are not caught up in the new climate reporting rule. Members sent more than 6,000 messages to Congress about the rule, urging them to require the SEC to exclude Scope 3 emissions, or at a minimum include a strong agriculture exemption.



## 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://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2aLWJfRX8s)

## Foundation for Agriculture Announces 17th Book of the Year

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture presented its 17th "Book of the Year award" to author Roxanne Troup for "My Grandpa, My Tree, and Me" during the American Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Convention.

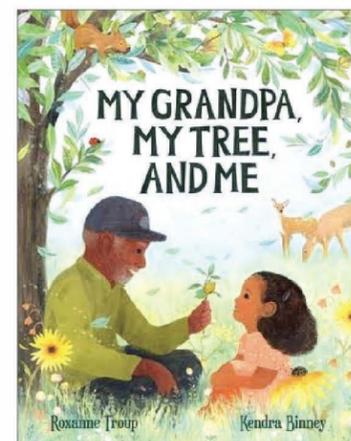
"My Grandpa, My Tree, and Me" follows Grandpa as he tenderly cares for each tree in his orchard, including his favorite – a pecan tree, planted for his granddaughter on the day she was born.

Roxanne Troup grew up along the waterways and soybean fields of Missouri, where everyone had a pecan tree, but few grew pecans commercially. Today, she lives

in the mountains of Colorado and writes kid's books that celebrate wonder and family.

The Book of the Year award springs from the Foundation's effort to identify "Accurate Ag Books," a collection of nearly 500 books for children, teenagers, and adults that accurately cover agricultural topics. Book of the Year selections are educational, help to create positive public perceptions about agriculture, inspire readers to learn more, and touch their readers' lives as well as tell the farmer's story. The Accurate Ag Books database is available at [agfoundation.org/recommended-pubs](http://agfoundation.org/recommended-pubs).

To accompany "My Grandpa,



My Tree and Me," the Foundation has created an educator's guide for the book and an Ag Mag Mini on tree nuts. They are available here: <https://www.dmsfulfillment.com/FarmBureau/>



## Ag Adventures Year-Long Contest Grand Prize Winner Announced

We conducted the member drawing for those members that entered all 12 word searches during 2023 from the Ag Adventures page in the CoOperator. Bob Rohrer, CCFB manager, presented a Cook County Farm Bureau agricultural basket of goodies to the winner. This year's winner was Joseph (& Bridget) Rubinas, Lansing. The Rubinas have been Associate members for 22 years.

There were 28 members eligible for the drawing. Over the years, we have had the opportunity to meet a lot of new members with great commitment to the organization by completing this recognition.

**SAVE THE DATE FOR**

# Member Appreciation Week!

Watch the April edition of the Co-Operator for more details. As a teaser, each day, we will offer a grand prize gift for a lucky member with other opportunities for prizes and gifts throughout the week.

## Farm Bureau's Regional Advertising Committee to Begin 2024 Campaign

Farm Bureau's regional advertising group, Food for Thought is scheduled to embark on its 2024 advertising campaign. In an effort to build awareness of farmers and urban farmers, the advertising committee is advertising with Edible Chicago, a magazine designed to uplift the markers, producers, and innovators building a more resilient and sustainable food system in Chicago and the surrounding area. The average reader spends 59.4 minutes with each edition.

In addition to print advertising the campaign will include Tik Tok advertising including promoting Illinois farm families and their efforts to grow healthy, nutritious food. Several smaller efforts will also occur during spring and summer of 2024 including promotions at the Green City Market and outreach efforts around Six Flags Great America.

Advertising committee members will meet again later in the year to evaluate results and determine next steps.

Cook County Farm Bureau® Foundation

# An Evening for Ag Education

## GALA

Friday July 19, 2024

6:00 pm - 11:30 pm

**Silver Lake Country Club**

14700 S. 82nd Ave  
Orland Park, IL 60462



**\$125** pp (early bird pricing)  
**\$150** pp (after June 15, 2024)

Ticket includes complimentary parking, plated dinner, four-hour open bar, live entertainment by The Hat Guys

*Please join us and support the CCFB Foundation with an evening of dining, drinks, fellowship, and fun!*

Foundation Gala Dinner and Split the Pot Raffle tickets for the 2024 Gala can be purchased by:

- 1. Check, money order or cash**
  - Make checks or money orders out to Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation
  - Mail to: CCFB, 6438 Joliet Rd, Countryside, IL 60525 (or stop by the office)
- 2. Online or over the phone by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or debit card)**
  - To purchase tickets online, visit: <https://cookcfb.org/foundation-/an-evening-for-ag-education>
  - Call CCFB at 708-354-3276 Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. to pay over the phone. If after hours, leave voicemail with name/phone and we will contact you back the next business day.

Advanced Split the Pot Raffle Ticket Pricing

\$10 each | 6 for \$50 | 15 for \$100 – winner need not be present (we must have raffle ticket stub for inclusion in the drawing)

*The Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation is a 501c (3) not-for-profit. Your gala ticket donation is partially deductible for federal income tax purposes equal to the total ticket price minus \$50 value for meal, beverage and entertainment.*

**Gala Sponsorship Opportunities**

For sponsorship opportunities and price levels, please scan the QR Code or visit: <https://cookcfb.org/foundation-/an-evening-for-ag-education>



## 2024 Pollinator Seed Sale

- Order forms & Payment must be submitted by Friday, March 29th. Order form is available at: <https://bit.ly/2024seed>
- Orders can be paid for by mailing a check to the Cook CFB office or via credit card by calling 708-354-3276.

**PRICING: \$20/lb for Members \* \$30/lb for Non-Members**

\*Recommended seeding rate- 1 pound of seed per 1/5 acre (400 x 400 foot area)

- Individual orders will not be delivered and must be picked up from the Cook County Farm Bureau Office in Countryside, IL.
- Shipping is also available at the customer's expense.
- Orders are expected to be ready by mid-April.

With support from ...



# Planting Seeds

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



**Katrina J.E. Milton**

I've always loved spring: warmer weather after months of freezing temperatures, flowers blooming, Easter celebrations with my family, bunnies, and the end of the school year. My favorite flowers are snapdragons, daffodils, and tulips, and I love cherry blossom trees after attending undergrad in Washington, D.C.

Spring is a busy time for our Ag in the Classroom Program. We have two Ag Days coming up, one April 3 at The Children's Farm in Palos Park, and one April 17 at Historic Wagner Farm in Glenview. During our Ag Day

events, third grade students have the opportunity to take a field trip to a working farm, rotating through stations to learn about crops and livestock. It's also the perfect time of the year to see newborn baby farm animals, including piglets and chicks. It will make for cute photos! If you are interested in volunteering to help with our Ag Day events, please email me at [aitc@cookcfb.org](mailto:aitc@cookcfb.org).

Our AITC program will also host library programs about bees and honey at Morton Grove Public Library on April 24 and at Glenview Public Library on April 30. The programs are free and open to the public, but registration is required on the libraries' websites in advance.

I am looking forward to the topics of our

upcoming programs and events. It feels nice to be thinking about things growing, seeds germinating, and insects pollinating flowers.

This spring, I will complete my volunteer hours to become a University of Illinois Master Gardener for Cook County South. I completed my coursework last year, and I have been earning volunteer programs by helping at a local garden and teaching about worm composting at libraries. I have also been participating in a three-part Zoom workshop about community and school gardens. My hope is that once I am a Master Gardener, I can help at these gardens while teaching about

agriculture, soil science, and sustainability at the same time.

I am also looking forward to doing more planting and gardening at home. I have always loved nature and gardens, and I plan on rolling up my sleeves and getting my hands a little dirty this spring. It might be a little early to start planting outside, but I plan on starting seeds inside at the end of March. If I don't plant seeds now, I won't have flowers and produce later! Happy spring – and happy start of the growing season!

**Katrina can be reached at [aitc@cookcfb.org](mailto:aitc@cookcfb.org).**



## Agriculture and Tree Science Library Programs Held

Cook County community members learned about the agricultural uses of trees during recent library programs. CCFB Director of Ag Literacy Katrina Milton led the program "Terrific Trees: The Science and Many Agricultural Uses of Trees" at Morton Grove Public Library Jan. 31 and at Glenview Public Library Feb. 7. The program was attended by 13 children and six adults in Morton Grove and 12 children in Glenview.

During the program, attendees learned about tree seeds and leaves, why some trees lose their leaves and others don't, tree farms, and the multiple uses of trees. The program ended with an arts and crafts activity with painting the leaves on trees for each season.

A program about pollinators and honey production will be held at Morton Grove Public Library April 24 and at Glenview Public Library April 30. All library programs are free to attend, but advance registration on the libraries' websites is required.



**Families work together to paint the leaves on trees for each season at Morton Grove Public Library on Jan. 31**



**Tree books were displayed for library patrons to check out at Glenview Public Library on Feb. 7.**

## AITC brought to Prospect High School Freshmen Classes

CCFB Director of Ag Literacy Katrina Milton and AITC Presenter Wayne Kolweier returned to Prospect High School in Mount Prospect for the second year to teach about ag careers, technology, GMOs, and modern agriculture/current events to the 325 freshmen enrolled in the school's Human Geography course.

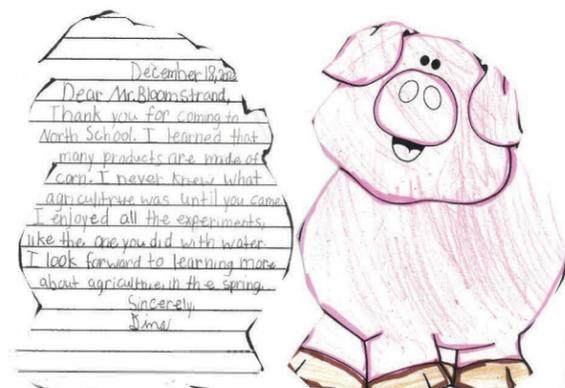
The presentation included hands-on activities such as a "Then and Now" historic ag implement matching game and an activity about how much a farmer earns on average from goods that are sold. According to the National Farmers Union ([www.nfu.org/farmers-share/](http://www.nfu.org/farmers-share/)) farmers earn \$2.93 from 1 lb. of top sirloin steak that retails for \$9.99; \$1.20 from 1 dozen eggs that retail for \$2.99; \$0.58 from a 5-lb. bag of whole wheat flour that retails for \$6.89; and \$0.09 from a 2-liter bottle of soda that retails for \$2.11.



**Freshmen Human Geography students at Prospect High School complete an activity together called "The Farmer's Share," where they learn how much a farmer earns from goods that are sold.**

## Thank You Notes

Ag in the Classroom Presenter Jim Bloomstrand received thank you notes from the fourth grade students at North Elementary School in Franklin Park, including a thank you note from Dina, pictured. On Dec. 7, 2023, Bloomstrand visited North School and taught the students about agricultural technology and careers, what crops grow and what livestock are raised in Illinois, and the food supply chain from farm to table during the program "Intro to Illinois Ag." Thank you for the thank you notes!



## Become an Ag in the Classroom Presenter

Cook County Farm Bureau is seeking independent contractors for its AITC Program. Individuals will provide virtual and in-person ag literacy programs during the school year based on demand and contractor availability.

Teaching experience and knowledge of agriculture/horticulture is recommended. **For more information, email [aitc@cookcfb.org](mailto:aitc@cookcfb.org).**



# AGRICULTURE ADVENTURES — FOR FAMILIES —

## COLOR A Shamrock



Have fun coloring this shamrock – get creative! Take a photo and email your designs to [aitc@cookcfb.org](mailto:aitc@cookcfb.org).

A few of our favorite designs will appear in next month's issue of the Co-Operator.

## FUN FACTS ABOUT St. Patrick's

### Dyeing the Chicago River Green

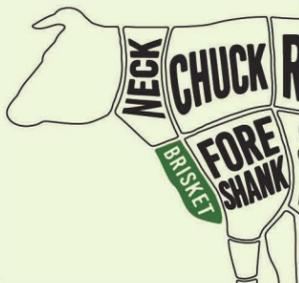
According to a 2019 CNN article, members of the Chicago Journeymen Plumbers Local Union dumped 100 pounds of dye into the Chicago River to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in 1962, which dyed the river green for a week. The plumbers dyed the river with a bright green dye that is used to identify leaks in pipes. Today, the dye is vegetable-based and does not harm the river's ecosystem. The dye's recipe is a safely guarded secret. The dye starts as an orange powder and turns green when added to water. It only takes two boats to dye the river: one boat dumps the powder and uses flour sifters to spread the dye, and the other mixes the dye. It takes about 45 minutes for the dye to mix evenly in the river, and the dye lasts approximately 5 hours.

*CCFB affiliated company, COUNTRY Financial, has been a sponsor of the St. Patrick's Day Parade since 2016. They are proud to support the Chicago Plumbers Local 130 in this sponsorship, as they put on this great event in the city of Chicago.*



### CORNERED BEEF

Corned beef is beef brisket that has been salt-cured. Beef brisket is a cut of meat from the breast or lower chest of a cow. The term "corned" comes from the treatment of the meat with large-grained rock salt, also called "corns" of salt. Before refrigeration, meat was salted and cured to be preserved. Corned beef is not a traditional Irish dish; corned beef was used as a substitute for bacon by Irish immigrants in the 1800s.



## March Word Search

Last Month's Winner:  
**Sarah White**

Bacon	Y	Q	U	L	Z	Y	X	C	D	B	X	P	G	M	C
Brisket	X	L	D	O	F	X	P	H	K	R	Y	J	F	A	Y
Cabbage	Y	Z	Q	S	S	H	J	I	V	P	R	Z	R	G	N
Carrots	B	R	I	S	K	E	T	C	W	N	O	R	G	E	P
Chicago	C	C	O	C	N	V	R	A	N	G	O	R	E	L	O
Clover	Y	T	O	O	A	A	F	G	B	T	U	R	C	B	T
Crop	Q	U	C	H	R	B	C	O	S	W	G	K	S	A	A
Dye	I	A	D	C	P	U	B	R	I	R	I	S	H	T	T
Green	B	P	L	S	J	H	P	A	R	H	E	H	P	E	O
Irish	V	P	R	D	Z	G	I	L	G	I	Y	R	Y	G	E
Plant	K	C	O	R	M	A	H	S	A	E	D	R	L	E	S
Potatoes	J	U	T	R	E	V	O	L	C	N	I	U	T	V	F
River	U	E	S	H	I	J	N	S	L	V	T	L	S	O	B
Salt	H	Y	V	H	B	P	C	B	E	K	A	Y	H	S	E
Shamrock	R	A	P	S	U	X	A	R	R	S	B	T	X	E	C
Vegetable															

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: March 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](mailto: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!**

MARCH 2024

# At The Farm Gate

by Joanie Stiers



## Families Dominate Ownership of Illinois Farms

I work every day with the people who raised me. Four desks in the farm office provide space for mom, dad, brother, and sister. It's the same crew I sat with at the dinner table in the 1980s. The ones I made memories with on family vacations at theme parks with the fastest roller coasters. The quartet that spent weekend afternoons cleaning field edges and dining on pizza at sundown on Sunday nights.

Relatively speaking, we're among the mainstream. An overwhelming 96% of Illinois farms are owned and operated by families like ours, a statistic worth recognizing in this season that honors National Ag Day on March 19, 2024. Contrary to popular belief, parents, grandparents, spouses, siblings, children, cousins, aunts, uncles and even in-laws make most decisions about how food, feed and fuel are grown. Not faceless corporations.

That's a pleasant surprise to most citizens of the state, according to surveys that show consumers trust family-owned farms but largely believe corporations own them. Motivated to debunk the ownership myth, the Illinois Farm Bureau partnered with the state's commodity groups. Together, they launched the "We Are The 96" campaign a year ago with a big-time commercial during Super Bowl 2023.

Afterward, advertisements hit regional TV stations. Social media messaging exceeded 6 million views on Facebook and Instagram. Pizza boxes from more than 500 Illinois Casey's stores promoted the family farm message during National Pizza Month. The family ownership of farms even made appearances in Chicago movie theaters and transit stations, helping initiate the more than

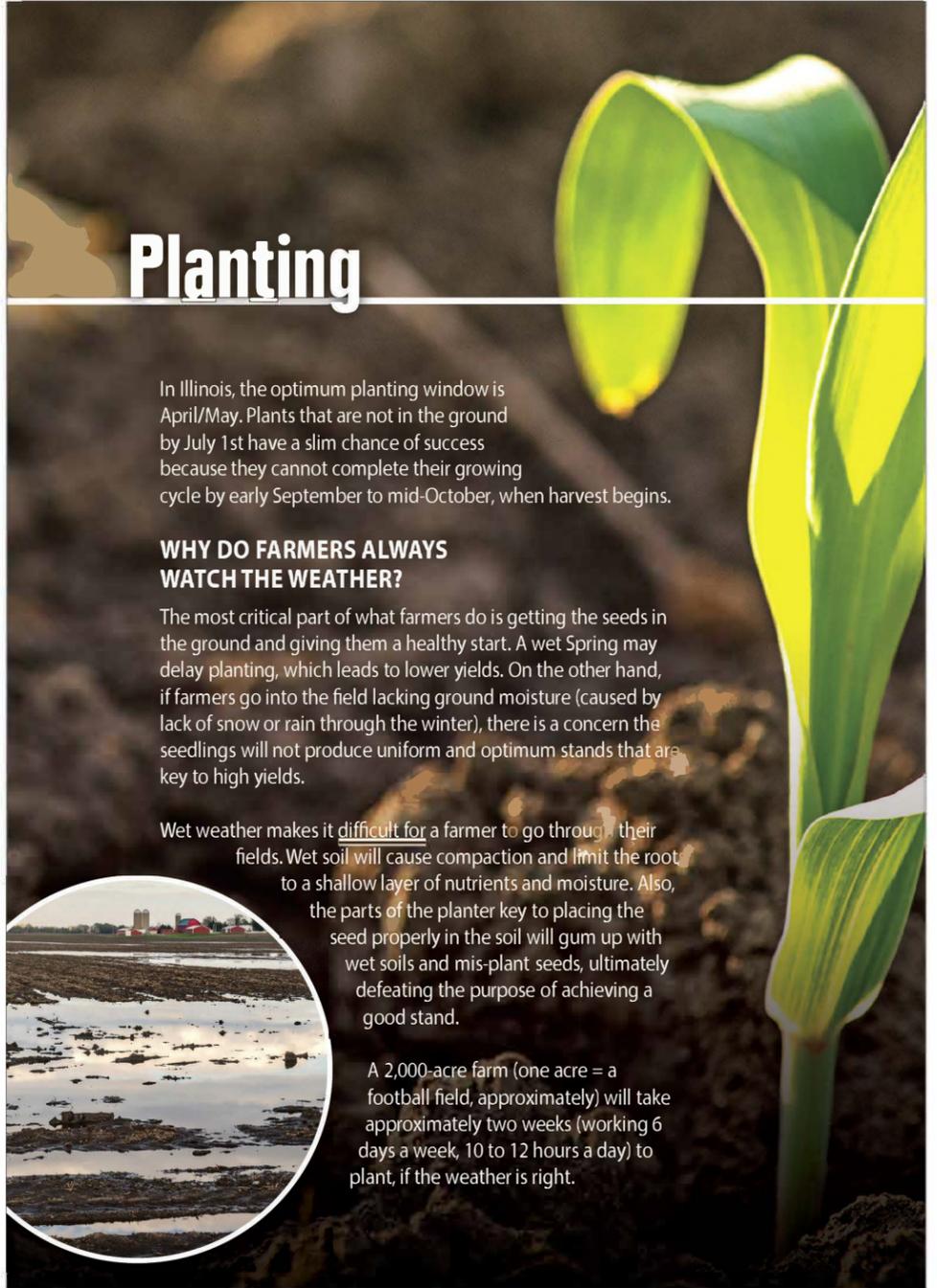


30 million impressions logged with Illinois consumer audiences.

The campaign with beautiful images and videos of farm families lured looks from farmers who related to the message and non-farmers who desired to know the decisionmakers behind their food choices. On 96% of Illinois farms, family owners select the seed, plant the crops, feed the cows, protect the land, serve their communities, teach the next generation, and hire local talent to help them get it done.

As the most-watched TV event of the year, nothing comes close to the Super Bowl. That's a striking similarity to families owning 96% of Illinois farms. Super Bowl 2024 delivered another campaign commercial touting the family ownership of farms. Keeping with tradition, three generations of our farm family gathered around the TV to watch.

*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.*



## Planting

In Illinois, the optimum planting window is April/May. Plants that are not in the ground by July 1st have a slim chance of success because they cannot complete their growing cycle by early September to mid-October, when harvest begins.

### WHY DO FARMERS ALWAYS WATCH THE WEATHER?

The most critical part of what farmers do is getting the seeds in the ground and giving them a healthy start. A wet Spring may delay planting, which leads to lower yields. On the other hand, if farmers go into the field lacking ground moisture (caused by lack of snow or rain through the winter), there is a concern the seedlings will not produce uniform and optimum stands that are key to high yields.

Wet weather makes it difficult for a farmer to go through their fields. Wet soil will cause compaction and limit the root to a shallow layer of nutrients and moisture. Also, the parts of the planter key to placing the seed properly in the soil will gum up with wet soils and mis-plant seeds, ultimately defeating the purpose of achieving a good stand.

A 2,000-acre farm (one acre = a football field, approximately) will take approximately two weeks (working 6 days a week, 10 to 12 hours a day) to plant, if the weather is right.



## 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).



## SPECIAL CHRISTMAS CLUB OFFER!

With the help of a Christmas Club account, you can save a little each paycheck and earn interest throughout the year to start saving for Christmas 2024! Open a Christmas Club **before March 31, 2024**, and be entered to win a cash prize!

**NOW at 5.00% APY!\***

For more info visit: <https://www.iaacu.org/personal/savings/short-term-savings/christmas-club>

Enjoy the holidays without the financial stress.

## Local Food and Infrastructure Grants Now Available

**Spark Awards** – For Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana schools to improve school food systems with capacity building, planning, and product testing projects. Award range: \$10,000-\$75,000. Apply by April 30.

Learn more: <https://innovateschoolfood.org/grants/>

**Innovation Collaborative Awards** – For Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana schools to promote system-level change of school food system through scaling up programs, regional partnerships, or new program/product development. Award: \$250,000. Apply by April 30.

Learn more: <https://innovateschoolfood.org/grants/>

**RFSI** – For expanding the capacity of the Illinois food system to aggregate, process, store, and distribute local foods. Infrastructure award range: \$100,000-\$3 million; Equipment Only award range: \$10,000- \$100,000. Application closes March 15.

Learn more: <https://agr.illinois.gov/assistance/illinoisfarmprograms/resilient-food-systems-infrastructure-program.html>

**CRFSF** – For building food system resilience up to 200 miles from Chicago. Round three funding goals: move

from charity to community solidarity, boost BIPOC leadership, and help the emergency food system response to climate change. Maximum award: \$150,000. Application closes March 11.

Learn more: <https://www.chicagoregionfoodfund.org>

**Farm to Food Bank** – For Illinois food banks to buy excess products from local farmers. Strong interest in proteins and emphasis on sourcing from socially disadvantaged growers/producers. Ongoing enrollment.

Learn more: <https://feedingillinois.org/farmers/>

**Value-Added Producer Grants** – to help agricultural producers maximize the value of their products and venture into new and better markets. The grants help farmers and ranchers generate new products, create marketing opportunities and increase their incomes through value-added activities. USDA may award up to \$75,000 for planning activities or up to \$250,000 for working capital expenses related to producing and marketing a value-added agricultural product. Electronic applications will be accepted via Grants.gov until April 11.

Learn more: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/value-added-producer-grants>

# Manifolds, Manolos, and Manure

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



**Bona Heinsohn**

The Cook County Farm Bureau Political Action Committee officially came to be in 2009 with the first election

in 2010. Since the 2010 election, the PAC has endorsed over 60 candidates. Some Democrats. Some Republicans. Some independents. Not all were incumbents.

The purpose of the PAC is:

- To promote the economic and social well-being of farmers and agricultural related interests in Cook County through political involvement.
- To promote the personal and financial involvement of Farm Bureau members in the electoral process, without regard to party affiliation.
- To encourage Farm Bureau members to understand the nature and actions of their government, with regards to important political issues as well as the records of officeholders and candidates for elective office.

- To support candidates in primary and general elections for state and local elective office who are supportive of the policies, priorities and mission of the Cook County Farm Bureau.

For the 2024 Primary Election, members of the PAC Governance Committee interviewed candidates for State's Attorney, Clerk of the Circuit Court, and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District. Interview length, setting, and questions were kept consistent between candidates. After nine hours of interviews and several hours of discussion, Governance Committee members made endorsements and determined contributions. They'll repeat the process again in the fall before the general election.

This spring, Governance Committee members interviewed candidates for Metropolitan Water Reclamation District six-year term and the unexpired term of now State Representative Kimberly duBuclet.

For the six-year terms Governance Committee members again went with

MWRD President Kari Steele. Steele's knowledge and experience with the District makes her an unparalleled candidate.

Six years ago, the PAC opted not to endorse Marcelino Garcia. This spring Governance Committee members were impressed with Garcia's tenure as Finance Chair, knowledge of the financial side of the District and his familiarity with the procurement process.

Sharon Waller ran unsuccessfully for MWRD in 2022. In 2022, the Governance Committee endorsed Waller. Waller is a water engineer, a licensed professional environmental engineer, and a small business owner with over 30 years of experience. Her knowledge would be an asset for the District.

In 2022, Governance Committee members opted to endorse Chakena Perry over Daniel Pogorzelski citing her experience with the District and passion for waste water management. Members were disappointed when she didn't win but have built a relationship with Pogorzelski.

For Cook County Farm Bureau Political Action Committee its **Kari Steele, Marcelino Garcia and Sharon Waller.**

Two years ago, Governance Committee members interviewed Precious Brady-Davis for MWRD. They were impressed with her poise, candor, and reasons for seeking office. Although she was unsuccessful in her race, Brady-Davis was later appointed to fill the remaining term of now-State Representative DuBuclet. Since her appointment, she has been an advocate for the District and has immersed herself in learning her new role. For the unexpired MWRD term it's **Precious Brady-Davis.**

Four years ago, Governance Committee members spent four hours interviewing candidates for Clerk of the Circuit Court. At that time, members opted for attorney Jacob Meister who had ran unsuccessfully against Dorothy Brown the prior election. This round, Clerk Iris Martinez has earned additional time to clean up an office that was left in a state of disarray by her

predecessor. For Cook County Farm Bureau PAC its **Iris Martinez.**

Perhaps the most contentious race of this season is the race to replace State's Attorney Kim Foxx who has opted not to seek re-election after a tumultuous two terms. Governance Committee members were impressed with both Clayton Harris III and Eileen O'Neill Burke. Both candidates recognized that the relationship between police officers and the State's Attorney's office had suffered during the prior administration and that steps were needed to rebuild trust and a working relationship. Candidates differ with their approach to retail theft – an on-going concern of business owners. For Cook County Farm Bureau Political Action Committee its **Eileen O'Neill.**

Governance Committee members spent over nine hours digging into candidates. Voting takes far less time. On March 19 remember to cast your ballot.

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



## Lt. Governor Stratton Addresses Everything Local Conference Attendees

Lt. Governor Julianna Stratton addressed a group of women growers during the 2024 From Food to Flowers: Everything Local Conference in Springfield. The conference focused on bringing together individuals from across Illinois' local food, specialty crop, and farmers market supply chains. Lt. Governor Stratton focused her remarks on her office's efforts in the local food space and avenues to assist women in agriculture.

## Consistent Egg Labels Act to Reduce Misleading Marketing

A U.S. new bill, referred to as the Consistent Egg Labels Act, could soon prevent the practice of mislabeling imitation or plant-based egg products using the term "egg."

The bill states that food can only be labeled as an egg or egg product if the food is, contains as a primary ingredient, or is derived from the reproductive output of avian poultry species, including an albumen or yolk, that was enclosed in a calcium-based shell.

If implemented, the rule would require egg companies to stop marketing egg alternative products with the word "egg" and require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to issue draft guidance to enforce the rule within 90 days in the U.S.

The act would also require the FDA to report to Congress within two years of implementing the rule concerning the status, warnings issued, and penalties given. Additionally, the legislation would nullify any guidance with respect to eggs or egg products that is not consistent with its standards. Congresswomen Elise Stefanik and Susan Wild presented the act to Congress in January.

Cook County Farm Bureau continues to investigate food labeling and efforts to standardize label language in an effort to reduce food waste. Members with comments or ideas are encouraged to reach out to Bona Heinsohn at [bona@cookcfb.org](mailto:bona@cookcfb.org).



## Farm Bureau Establishes 2024 National Priorities

**Farm Bill:** Focus on gaining the passage of a five-year Farm Bill before the current temporary Farm Bill expires in September 2024. A concerted effort will be to seek its passage in the first quarter of the year. This effort will include:

- A bill that maintains current crop insurance programming.
- A bill that is WTO compliant, provides price and revenue protection for farmers, and links nutrition and commodity programs.
- A bill that maintains current agricultural commodity check-off programs.
- A bill that maintains both SNAP and TEFAP in their current forms.

**Inter-State Trade Suppression:** Strongly advocate and support legislation to remove the ability of states to disrupt our food distribution systems caused by the U.S. Supreme Court in National Pork Producers Council v. Ross ruling in response to California Proposition 12.

**Migrant Employees:** Strongly advocate and support legislation and/or regulatory reform to support a three-year H-2A wage rate at 2023 levels and reverse the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) adopted in March of 2023 while continuing efforts on fundamental ag labor reforms.

**US Trade:** Strongly call for a more determined approach to seeking additional free-trade agreements.

**Biofuel Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF):** We will support incentivization of SAF and carbon intensity scoring based on the GREET (Greenhouse Gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy Use in Transportation) models for ag biofuel and feed stocks.

**Lock and Dam:** Maintain momentum on keeping the improvement of locks and dam construction on the Upper Mississippi River System a priority.

**Farm Conservation/Management Education:** Continue to work with members of the Illinois Congressional delegation to gain firsthand knowledge of efforts on farm conservation, Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, Conservation Reserve programs, and other best farm management practices. This will include a focus on continuing to have members of the Illinois Congressional delegation visit working farms during key agricultural practices.

Anyone with any questions or concerns are encouraged to contact Bona Heinsohn at [bona@cookcfb.org](mailto:bona@cookcfb.org).

# Cook County Farm Bureau Recognizes Local Country Financial “Excellence” for 2023

The Cook County Farm Bureau partners frequently with COUNTRY Financial agents in membership recruitment and membership service efforts. The Cook County Farm Bureau Board of Directors recognized the top membership recruiters for 2023.

## Top 10 Membership Recruiters in Cook County

1. Kirk Gregory, Jr., Chicago South Agency – 303 new members
2. Malgorzata (Margaret Jura), Chicago North Agency – 151 new members
3. Ilir Numani, Chicago North Agency – 137 new members
4. Joanna Kapica, Chicago South Agency – 119 new members
5. Arturo Salto, Chicago South Agency – 102 new members
6. Audelio (Leo) Maldonado, Chicago South Agency – 99 new members
7. Martha Dominguez, Chicago South Agency – 98 new members
8. Altaf Lakhani, Chicago North Agency – 81 new members
9. Robert (Cody) Barron, Chicago North Agency – 80 new members
9. Mike Spadoni, Orland Park Agency – 80 new members

The top membership recruiting Agency of the Year in Cook County for 2023 was Chicago South. The agency averaged 39.27 new members per COUNTRY Financial Agent within the Agency. Cook County Farm Bureau recognized Sharon Stemke for leading the agency to this top honor.



**Kirk Gregory, Jr. (center) was recognized for being the number one recruiter of membership in Cook County and for earning All-American status by Farm Bureau manager Bob Rohrer (L) and Chicago South Agency Manager Sharon Stemke (R).**



**Malgorzata (Margaret) Jura (center) was recognized for being the number two recruiter of membership in Cook County and for earning All-American status by Farm Bureau manager Bob Rohrer (R) and Chicago North Agency Manager Vicki Nygren (L).**



**Ilir Numani (center) was recognized for being the number three recruiter of membership in Cook County and for earning All-American status by Farm Bureau manager Bob Rohrer (L) and Chicago North Agency Manager Vicki Nygren (R).**

Cook County Farm Bureau Board of Directors also congratulates the following COUNTRY Financial All-American qualifiers from Cook County area agencies:

Malgorzata (Margaret) Jura

Ilir Numani

Robert (Cody) Barron

Tim Perchinski

Arturo Salto

Kirk Gregory, Jr.

Randall Cox

Nadia Abueid

Jim Andresen

Matthew Huonder

Brett Riekema

## Not Travelling This Spring Break?

You can still have fun by planning a “Stay-cation” full of fun and entertainment!

As a CCFB member, you can save on the following:

### AMC, Marcus Theater, and Regal Movie Tickets

Discount movie tickets are available for purchase by calling the Farm Bureau office at (708) 354-3276. Tickets will be mailed out to you at no additional cost. Restrictions apply, see below.



**AMC Yellow Tickets \$9.50**  
Valid for any movie, any time.



**Regal Tickets \$9.50**  
Valid for any movie, any time.



**Marcus Platinum Tickets \$8.00**  
Valid for any movie, anytime at all Marcus Theatres locations! NOT valid for VIP Seating, 3D, or SuperScreen DLX. Extra charge will apply if going to see a movie in 3D or SuperScreen DLX.

**Marcus Silver Tickets \$7.00**  
Void on films listed as an Extra Special Attraction (marked with an 'X' - the first 14 days of select features)\*. Not valid for VIP Seating, when valid, 3D and D-Box surcharges apply. \*Discontinued; limited supply available.

### Medieval Times



**Save 35% on adult admissions and 20% on child admission.**

In addition to ticket price savings, there is also a reduced processing fee of \$2 for each ticket purchased (the standard processing fee is \$5).

To purchase tickets online, visit our website for special purchase link: <https://cookcfb.org/membership/become-a-member/member-benefits/profile/entertainment>



### Great Wolf Lodge

**Gurnee, IL**

For advance reservations, call (800) 905-WOLF (9653) or book online at [www.greatwolf.com/illinois](http://www.greatwolf.com/illinois).

Use Discount Code: **ILLI617A**

You can also save up to 30% at other locations throughout the United States!



## 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.

*\*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.*



### \*ILIR NUMANI

has been named Career Financial Representative of the month for January 2023 by Vicki Nygren, Agency Manager. Ilir's office is located at 6650 N Northwest Highway Ste 200, Chicago, IL 60631-0000. His phone number is 773-631-2909. Ilir has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since April 2005.

**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, Cary Tate, Agency Manager**



### \*NADIA ABUEID

has been named Career Financial Representative of the month for January 2024 by Cary Tate, Agency Manager. Nadia's office is located at 12130 S Harlem Ave Unit A, Palos Heights, IL 60463. Her phone number is 708-995-0233. Nadia has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since December 2019.

**Orland Park Agency, Cary Tate, Agency Manager**



### \*ERIN COON

has been named Career Financial Representative of the month for January 2024 by Kevin Gomez, Agency Manager. Erin's office is located at 23042 N Main St, Prairie View, IL 60069. Her phone number is 847-415-2666. Erin has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since March, 2019.

**Chicago Northwest Agency, Kevin Gomez, Agency Manager**

# 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.**

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.**

4ft. rounded nail table w/light. 4 slide drawers@4 shelves. Like new, black marbled formica. Asking \$250, **call 708-654-2010. Picture available online.**

## 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.**

## ShopLocal this Spring

Prep & Planting is happening! Visit Cook County Farm Bureau® member Greenhouses, Garden Centers, and Farms for all your outdoor needs this spring! Their vegetable and flower plantings, trees, shrubs, lawn, landscape materials, grills, and garden décor await you!

For a complete listing of member businesses and producers in the Cook County area, please visit:

<https://cookcfb.org/discover-local/shop-local/online-directory>

Member businesses offering additional discounts to CCFB members include Goebbert's Farm and Garden Center in South Barrington, Ted's Greenhouse in Tinley Park, and Zeldenrust Farm Market & Greenhouse in Chicago Heights. Check our website for details and restrictions at:

<https://cookcfb.org/membership/member-benefits/profile/home-business-and-agriculture>.



LOCAL MEMBER BUSINESSES



CCFB MEMBER BENEFITS



# 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.

## YUZU



**Yuzu (citrus junos) is a hybrid citrus fruit also known as yuja.**

It originated in China over 1,000 years ago and now grows in Japan, Korea, and other parts of the world.



It has a relatively thick yellow skin and is more aromatic and much sourer than other citrus fruits.

Yuzu can be used as a substitute for lemon or lime in many dishes, and it's particularly suitable for sauces, marmalades, jellies, drinks, and sweets.

The fruit is small, with a diameter of 2-3 inches (5.5-7.5 cm).

Curiously, this fruit may provide several benefits, including reducing inflammation and promoting heart health.



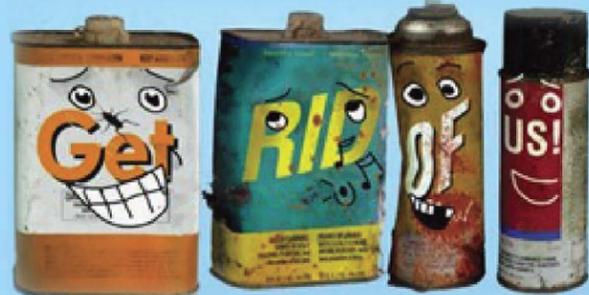
**Inhaling yuzu's aroma may reduce your heart rate and help relieve stress, anxiety, and other tensions.**

**COMPOUNDS LIKE LIMONENE AND LINALOOL ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YUZU OIL'S DISTINCT AROMA, WHICH CARRIES NOTES OF GRAPEFRUIT, MANDARIN, BERGAMOT, AND LIME.**

## VITAMINS

Yuzu is low in calories and particularly rich in vitamins A and C.

Next month... Zucchini



## Permanent Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Dispose of your household chemicals responsibly and recycle your old computers by dropping them off at the City of Chicago's permanent Household Chemicals & Computer Recycling Facility.

Household chemicals and computers often contain hazardous substances, such as lead, mercury, and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) which can contaminate our air, soil and water. Through proper disposal methods or recycling, these hazardous substances are reprocessed and reused in an environmentally responsible manner.

For more info, visit <https://rb.gy/9ouzb8>.

Source: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/yuzu-fruit>

## 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.



### 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](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

### Natural Soap Making 101

Soapy Roads of Lombard will provide a beginner/ introduction to natural soap-making program which includes a 'make your own melt & pour soap bar' and an educational soap presentation. Each participant will be provided with equipment and ingredients to craft their own natural soap with natural botanicals (clays and plants) for color and essential oils for fragrance.



**DATE:** April 2, 2024 **TIME:** 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

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

**FEE:** \$15.00 for one soap or \$23.00 for two soaps

**REGISTRATION:** Call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276 or go online to the Member Center at [www.cookcfb.org](http://www.cookcfb.org).

### Conceal and Carry Class

The Illinois concealed carry permit certification consists of a minimum of 16 hours of training and range time. This class is a two-day class, broken into two 8-hour segments. The first eight hours consists of seven hours in the classroom covering gun safety, basic firearm knowledge, and the basics of marksmanship, followed by two or more hours of actual live fire on the shooting range. The second eight hours consists of time in the classroom covering Illinois laws pertaining to the "Concealed Carry Act" and the legal use of deadly force with a firearm.



**DATES/TIMES:** Saturday, April 27, 2024 from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Sunday, April 28, 2024 from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

**FEE:** \$150 Members/\$200 Non-Members/\$125 for vets or active military (includes instructors, classroom, range fees, the use of .22 caliber firearms, and eye & hearing protection, ammunition, targets, printed material, refreshments/lunch)

**LOCATION:** Pelcher's Shooters Supply Classroom, 18200 Chicago Ave., Lansing, IL

**REGISTRATION:** Call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276 or online at the Member Center at [www.cookcfb.org](http://www.cookcfb.org). *Must be a minimum of 10 participants.*



### Soil Testing Kits Available this Spring

Cook County Farm Bureau offers both members and non-members an opportunity to test their garden or lawn soil by purchasing a soil testing kit. Soil, in its natural state, is rarely fertile enough for the best growth of plants. Usually, it is necessary to supplement the earth's store of plant nutrients before we can obtain the most vigorous lawn, the most abundant and brilliant flowers, the most aesthetically satisfying trees/shrubs, and the greatest yield of tasty and nutritious vegetables or crops. Test your soil pH, potassium, phosphorous, and other key elements to begin the soil improvement process.

Complete kit guidelines and instructions, as well as mailing information, included in the test kit. Members will receive emailed test results and basic recommendations typically within two weeks,

with more extensive test interpretation provided by the partnering volunteer Master Gardener Unit with the University of IL Extension South Suburban Horticulture Team.

**Farm Bureau Soil Test Kit discounted member pricing:**

**1 sample Soil Test Kit: \$28** | 2 sample kit: \$36 | **3 sample kit: \$55** | 1 sample Soil & Lead Test Kit: \$55 | **1 sample Lead Only Test Kit: \$46**

*\*pricing subject to change*

Non-member pricing also available and pricing subject to change. Soil Kits are available for purchase at the Cook County Farm Bureau by calling 708-354-3276, using a Visa, MasterCard, or Discover at no additional charge, or stop by the office to purchase, Mon-Fri 8:00 am - 4:30 pm.

### Master Gardener Help Desk Re-Opens with a Hot Topic

#### Cicadas - Timed to perfection: Cicada's biological clock determines emergence

The Cook County Farm Bureau® and the University of Illinois Extension continue to partner on a project that benefits local Farm Bureau members and the general public. Master Gardeners are available to answer questions from members and the general public related to gardening and horticulture.

Master Gardeners are available through the Cook County Farm Bureau by emailing [mastergardener@cookcfb.org](mailto:mastergardener@cookcfb.org) or calling the Cook County Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276.

General topic areas that can be addressed include soil test recommendations, plant disease issues and treatments, horticulture related questions, pest identification and treatment, and more. Commercial related questions will be forwarded to the University of Illinois Extension professional staff.

- University of IL Extension Horticulture Unit Info: <https://extension.illinois.edu/insects/cicadas>
- Plan ahead to protect young fruit trees from 17-year periodical cicadas emerging in Ma, Purdue article: <https://rb.gy/oe0thv>

### Membership Monday

Members and prospective members interested in learning more about the benefits and programs a CCFB membership provides? Then join us virtually to hear from CCFB staff to highlight member programs, member benefits, website, and 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.

**DATE/TIME:** Monday, April 29, 2024; choose between two times: 7:00-7:30 a.m. and 4:00-4:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Zoom Webinar (link to be emailed the week before)

**COST:** Free

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



## COMING SOON: Mark Your Calendar!

**May 14, 2024:**

Workshop on Preparing Wills and Trusts

**May 21, 2024:**

Workshop on the credit system and improving the accuracy of your Credit