



COOK COUNTY GO-OPERATOR

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

Mark Your Calendar



April

22nd-26th Member Appreciation Week **PG 12**

27/28th Conceal and Carry Class **PG 12**

29th Membership Monday **PG 12**

May

14th Workshop on Preparing Wills & Trusts **PG 12**

21st Workshop on the Credit System and Credit Report **PG 12**

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

Question of the Month



What is the Master Gardener Help Desk Hot Topic this upcoming season?

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

March Winner: Carmen Recupito

Question: What is the price for one pound of pollinator seeds for CCFB members?

Answer: \$20



Schaumburg Barn Food Donation

COUNTRY Financial® representatives and Cook County Farm Bureau® leaders donated fresh and non-perishable food items to the Schaumburg Barn as part of this year's Food Checkout Day. The Schaumburg Barn serves seniors and individuals with disabilities. The Schaumburg Barn was selected by Chicago Northwest COUNTRY Financial Representatives. Pictured left to right is Caitlin Wilson, Schaumburg Barn; Bryan Blau, Bona Heinsohn, Linda Bosy, Janet McCabe, Jim Bloomstrand, and Bob Rohrer, Cook County Farm Bureau; Diane Tom, Tino Ramirez, Matt Huonder, and Kevin Gomes Chicago Northwest COUNTRY Financial Agency. Speaking of Chicago Northwest COUNTRY Financial Agency, they are this year's 'Tipping the Scales' winner. A title they've claimed since 2022. For more info on Food Checkout Day, go to **Page 5**.

Membership Monday
Monday, April 29!

Member Appreciation Week

Join us in person at the CCFB office on **April 24th** for a sweet treat!

See **Page 12** for details.

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!



See **Page 4** for more details and scholarship recipients.



Fields Apart: Rooted Together

This three-part series by our award-winning video team highlights the diversity of agriculture in our state. Whether it's an entrepreneur bringing fresh produce to a local neighborhood or a large downstate row crop operation working to feed the world, Fields Apart: Rooted Together lends faces and inspirational stories to food in Illinois.

To view all 3 episodes, go to <https://www.ilfb.org/resources/learn-about-il-agriculture/fields-apart-rooted-together/>

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

Who We Are

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dear Members/ Co-Operator subscribers;

We have been receiving some reports that member's Co-Operator publications are being delayed in delivery, especially, it seems, in the southern portion of the county. We are working with the post office to identify any potential issues as we seek to remedy the delivery timing. We apologize for the delay and encourage members to let us know when you do have a Co-Operator delivery issue. We also encourage members to reach out to your local

post office to see if there's anything that can be remedied. We do provide the e- Co-Operator to members with an email address. The Co-Operator is also placed on the Cook County Farm Bureau website cookcfb.org for member access.

Thank you for your understanding.

Bob Rohrer,

Editor

Have you claimed your Liability Tax Credit?

Entities or individuals who operated agritourism businesses in Illinois during 2022 and 2023 can apply for a tax credit. It is equal to 100% of the liability insurance premiums paid by that individual or entity during the taxable year or \$1,000, whichever is less.

That's money back in your pocket as an Agritourism provider!

Let the Illinois legislators know that you are in favor of liability policy that supports agritourism producers in Illinois by claiming your tax credits today.

To apply, go to: <https://agr.illinois.gov/assistance/agritourismtaxcredit.html>



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...

- All of the Cook County Farm Bureau volunteers and COUNTRY Financial representatives who made this year's Food Checkout Day a tremendous success! And the members who made so many food and fund donations.
- Young Leaders Blake Lanphier, Becca Biernacki, Jennifer Miller, Gerardo Gonzales, Jessica Miller, Jonathan Poole, Justin Kopping, and Carmen Trotta, (with Doug Yunker, British Griffis, and Michael Bernhard coming in through videoconference) for joining the Board of Directors for dinner on March 13th.
- Ashley Christensen, Co-Operator Copy Editor and Proofreader, for helping make the publication more readable for seven years!
- 2024 Foundation Scholarship recipients who joined the Board of Directors March meeting in person and virtually including Carmen Trotta, Brigid Heller, Jennifer Miller, Elijah Floerke, Daniel Lyons, and John Dwyer to share their career aspirations and agriculturally related goals.
- The members supporting various programs including Intro to Beekeeping, Advocacy and Fraud Protection for Senior Seminar, Monarch gardening and preservation webinars, the book club, and more!
- The members that provided feedback regarding the March Downwind column (and your views on money) and other columns in the publication. We appreciate your engagement and membership.
- Thank you to the C/M Team subcommittee members, Rick Johnson, Karen Biernacki and Ellen Phillips, for volunteering their time and expertise to review 26 deserving garden grant applications and selecting 7 gardens to award a 2024 CCFB \$350 Grant to use for their community gardens.

HOW FARM BUREAU SERVED YOU IN MARCH

- ▶ **Engaging with and lobbying for Farm Bureau's priorities with over 20 Cook County State Representatives and Senators during an evening reception in Springfield.**
- ▶ **Provided much needed food donations to food insecure Cook County families as part of Food Checkout Day.**
- ▶ **Held a webinar with a representative from the Illinois Attorney General's office regarding fraud protection for seniors.**
- ▶ **Hosted a Beekeeping Workshop to train future beekeepers.**
- ▶ **Offered a webinar to our farming community on forming an LLC, wrapping up a four-part series on legal issues for small farms.**
- ▶ **Supported 7 county Community Gardens by providing \$350 grant via our Grant Program.**



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

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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

Mike Rauch

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Downwind

by **BOB ROHRER, CCFB MANAGER**

“Treats, Anyone?”

17 years ago...sure, I remember it well. Normally, a question about what happened 17 years ago would receive the “blank” look from me. Where was I seven minutes ago?

However, in recent weeks, I have noticed an uptick on articles related to the 17-year cicada including these headlines:

Will 2024 be the year of the cicada in Illinois? All signs point to yes – **Science News**

Why Illinois will be the cicada capital of the United States in 2024 – **Peoria Journal Star**

Two cicada broods will emerge in Illinois in historic event – **Chicago Tribune**

So, what is a cicada? Let me summarize...

- This big-winged insect with large eyes that crawls out of the ground and sheds its exoskeleton.

- The cicada hangs out in the yard for a few weeks, makes a lot of group noise, frolics in the sun, tries to mate, lays eggs. Dies.

- Eggs hatch, nymphs dig in the ground, suck on a tree root, and wait for the exit calendar.

- Repeat

There are cicadas that emerge from the ground annually. There are also different cicadas that are periodical, emerging in 13- and 17-year cycles. Several articles mentioned that once every 221 years, both cycles appear at the same time. Yep, coming soon to a place near us in 2024.

Outstanding...Bonus Bugs!

Proving that I do occasionally have some long-term memory, I went back into the Co-Operator publication files from 17 years ago and looked in the Downwind archives.

In June 2007, I wrote about the 17-year cicada. Part of the column centered around a conversation I had with Mr. Jim Schuster, a University of Illinois Extension horticulture educator working down the hallway in the Farm Bureau building at the time...

Here is a portion of what I wrote 17 years ago...

- *In northern Illinois, the 17-year periodical cicadas crawl from the ground 17 years after the egg was laid.*

- *May 22 is the scientifically predicted “mass emergence” day.*

- *Cooler weather could delay that emergence into the month of June.*

- *Emergence continues for a couple weeks and the cicadas then remain active for 6 to 8 weeks.*

- *Cicadas will not damage mature trees but new trees may receive some trunk damage.*

- *During the 1956 emergence, there were over 300 cicada holes per square yard found in some areas around Chicago.*

This translated to 1.5 million cicadas per acre.

Reading on, apparently the most important fact I picked up from my research 17 years ago was that “cicadas are good eating.”

I wrote:

Yes, the periodical cicadas are edible. Some say they taste like almonds. The North American Indians apparently use them in their diets. The Internet is packed with various helpful hints, cooking tips, and recipes which I’m sure you will want to download today. National Geographic’s site says cicadas make good eating deep fat fried (What’s not?), stir fried, on cicada pizza, and cicada candy. If you boil fresh cicadas (those just out of the ground) for a minute, they taste like asparagus or clam flavored potato.

And check out these attributes, cicadas are low-fat, high protein, no carbs and have a good set of vitamins. The University of Maryland Cicadamanics has an entire recipe book including cicada dumplings, tacos, cookies, and chili. I especially like the disclaimer which says, “The University of Maryland and the cicada maniacs do not advocate eating cicadas without first consulting your doctor.” They don’t specify which kind of doctor.

Good stuff. And now, 17 years later, I’m out to dinner with my daughter and two young grandsons. Recalling that my daughter was not a fan of the cicada in her youth and know-

ing I would probably write this column, I bravely asked my daughter if she remembered the cicadas from 17 years ago. I ducked.

She responded with a smile and a venomous undertone, “Of course I do - I DID NOT leave the house for three weeks!”

That, of course, provided me with a great lead-in with the grandsons to suggest various food recipes that they could (and should) try out using the cicada.

It was fun to hear some “ewws” and “yuck, Grandpa”. Then, it was equally fun to watch their imaginations come up with their own new cicada food treat ideas.

My daughter did not offer to prepare any of these enlightened new recipe options.

The Commodity/Marketing Team is working on its annual recipe brochure... seems like we may be able to offer some new options this year?

Certainly, the local wildlife will be fat, sassy, and happy this summer! I’m thinking a fishing dream! I have not seen any concerns about Cicadas damaging field crops or gardens. Young trees may be impacted. Those concerned about the inflation in the grocery store may say “manna from heaven”.

Bob can be reached at brohrer@cookcfb.org

Recipe of the Month



Honey Sparkler Cookies

Lynne Rine

INGREDIENTS:

- 2/3 c oil
- 1 c sugar
- 1/4 c honey
- 1 egg
- 1 t vanilla extract
- 2 c flour
- 2 t baking soda
- 1/2 t salt
- Turbinado sugar, for rolling

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a bowl add egg and vanilla and mix until combined. Mix in flour, baking soda, and salt. If dough is soft, refrigerate for 15-30 minutes. Shape dough into a ball and roll in the turbinado sugar. Cover the entire ball with the sugar. Bake 7-9 minutes or until the edges are light brown.



Horcher, Longtime Leader Passes

The Cook County Farm Bureau was saddened to learn of the passing of former Cook County Farm Bureau board member, Michael Horcher. He passed away on Saturday, March 16, 2024.

Mr. Horcher was a Cook County Farm Bureau board member for 28 years. He was elected to the Board of Directors in November 1987 and stepped down October 2015 due to health-related issues.

During his tenure, Mike served on the Ag Literacy Team, being a long-time advocate (with his wife Bernadine) of teaching kids

about agriculture’s importance in their lives. He served as chair of the audit Committee, viewpoint committee and attended many functions on behalf of the organization.

Mike was a dedicated and enthusiastic Cook County Farm Bureau supporter and leader, always willing to give his time and his energies to creating a stronger Agriculture and Farm Bureau.

Our hearts go out to Mike’s wife, Bernadine, Cook County Farm Bureau board member Patrick Horcher (Stacey), and the rest of the Horcher family.

Spring 2024 Recipe Collection is coming....!

To receive a copy of the 2024 Recipe Collection Booklet, email: membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org or call: 708-354-3276.

CCFB Foundation Scholarship Winners Announced

The Board of Directors of the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation has selected nine individuals as recipients of the 2024 Scholarship Program. Carmen Trotta of Evergreen Park was awarded the Howard Paarlberg Excellence in

Agriculture Scholarship and Brigid Heller of Chicago was awarded the Stuenkel Family Legacy Scholarship. Receiving general farm and food scholarships were Daniel Lyons of La Grange Highlands, Elijah Floerke of Orland

Park, Jennifer Miller of Justice, Matthew Smits of Chicago Heights, Leah Sheehan of Palatine, John Dwyer of Tinley Park, and Amelia Niedbalec of Mundelein. A total of \$19,500 of scholarship funds were distributed.

Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Agriculture Scholarship Recipient



Carmen Trotta

This scholarship is designed to honor Mr. Howard Paarlberg, the first President of the Foundation and President of the Farm Bureau for 16 years. The recipient of this scholarship carries the prestige of being the top-rated applicant and receives a greater financial reward.

Trotta attends the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is majoring in Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications with a minor in Agribusiness Management. He plans to become an Agricultural Educator and FFA Advisor at the high school level in Illinois and hopes to teach at a school in an urban area.

Stuenkel Family Legacy Scholarship Recipient

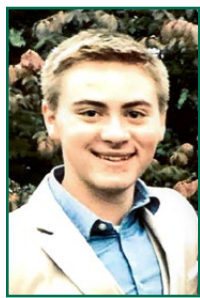


Brigid Heller

This scholarship was created to honor the many contributions made by the Stuenkel Family to the Cook County Farm Bureau, the Foundation, and the organization's agriculture education and literacy programming and has been designed for those who are pursuing higher education with a focus on an agriculture related career in the areas of technology, education, leadership development, and/or mental health.

Heller attends the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is majoring in Biological Systems/Agricultural Engineering-Machinery Systems. She hopes to build a career which will involve the development of greenhouse technology that will focus on smart systems to monitor and control resource inputs, waste reduction, and will have environmental impact.

General Agriculture Scholarship Recipients



Daniel Lyons

Lyons will attend Joliet Junior College and will be majoring in Agriculture Production Management and hopes to own and operate his own beef cattle farm one day. He's currently working at Wanda Farms as a farmhand and is already gaining the experience he'll need to run his own farm.



Elijah Floerke

Floerke attends Illinois State University and is working on his Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness. He hopes to learn about the most up-to-date technology that he'll be able to use in the field and within farm operations to help farmers with their crops. He's had experience working on his grandparents' family farm in southern Illinois.



Jennifer Miller

Miller attends Southern Illinois University's School of Dental Medicine and is working on her doctorate in Dental Medicine. Her goal is to provide dental services in a rural/underserved area in Cook County.



Leah Sheehan

Sheehan will be attending either the University of Minnesota or Iowa State University in the fall and will be majoring in Agricultural/Environmental Engineering. Her involvement in 4-H contributed to her passion for agriculture and with her degree, she hopes to develop systems and structures that can be useful in the farming industry.



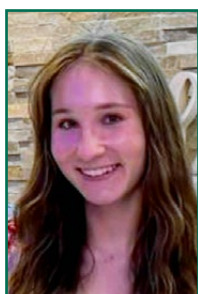
Matthew Smits

Smits attends Purdue University and is working towards a degree in Horticulture. After graduation, he hopes to return to his family farm and apply his education in Horticulture to successfully run a greenhouse business.



John Dwyer

Dwyer will be attending Loras College and will be majoring in Engineering. With his degree in Engineering, he'll be able to make many contributions to agriculture, agribusiness, and related fields.



Amelia Niedbalec

Niedbalec will be attending Illinois State University with a major in Exercise Science (Pre-Med) and hopes to work in a rural area where healthcare isn't easily accessible to farmers.

The Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation was established by the Cook County Farm Bureau to carry out charitable, literary, and educational work in Agriculture. The Foundation Board established the Agricultural Scholarship Program to provide financial assistance to students pursuing education for agricultural careers and to encourage the best and brightest young minds to return to Agriculture as their chosen career.

Applications Available for Veterinary Student Loans

Illinois Farm Bureau® (IFB) is accepting applications for its Illinois Veterinary Education and Training (IVET) loan program. Loans are available to second-year veterinary students attending any accredited college of veterinary medicine in the U.S. and who are focusing on Illinois food animal medicine.

The Illinois Veterinary Education Training (IVET) Program helps offset the high cost of veterinary education. The program loans up to \$40,000 to as many as three veterinary students each year. Loans are made over a period of two to three years. IVET awards recipients a \$1,500 stipend during their fourth year in school to help pay expenses associated with clinical rotations. Loans are repaid over five years, during which graduates must commit to working in a food animal practice that services Illinois livestock producers.

"Illinois Farm Bureau encourages veterinary students to pursue a career in caring for food animals," said Tasha Bunting, IFB associate director of commodities and livestock programs. "To succeed, farmers need the services of a food-animal veterinarian to help them care for their beef cattle, swine, sheep, and poultry. It's an incredibly rewarding career field that has seen an increase in demand in recent years."

Applications are due May 15 and can be found online at www.ilfb.org/IVET. The selection committee will interview eligible applicants in spring 2023. Successful applicants will be notified by mail. Loan disbursements begin in August.

IFB established IVET in 2005. Since then, the organization has awarded more than \$590,000 to 28 veterinary students who focus on caring for food animals in Illinois.

Continued from Page 1

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>



Cook County Farm Bureau® Celebrates its 24th Annual Food Checkout Day

Farm Bureau Shops for Local Food Pantries

Farm Bureau leaders Bryan Blau and Janet McCabe shop for food donations for the Common Pantry in Chicago as part of this year's Food Checkout Day. The Common Pantry is one of four partner food pantries selected by Cook County COUNTRY Financial representatives. The year 2024 marks the 24th anniversary of Food Checkout Day.



Together with various 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.

Over \$8,000 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.

In addition to traditional food donations, Cook County Farm Bureau's Young Leader Committee hosted their first hygiene product drive. Members and leaders donated personal care items including toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant, and lotion.

Partner food pantries, Common Pantry, Chicago; Schaumburg Barn, Schaumburg; Share Food Share Love, Brookfield; and Tinley Park Food Pantry, Tinley Park were selected by local representatives from COUNTRY Financial®.

Representatives were from the following COUNTRY Financial agencies: Chicago North, Chicago South, Chicago Northwest, and Orland Park respectively.

"Cook County and Illinois farmers are committed to growing safe and nutritious food for our families and for others," said Janet McCabe, President of Cook County Farm Bureau. "Food Checkout Day allows us to recognize the importance of healthy, nutritious food while supporting local families in need, especially during this time of elevated food prices."

For 20 years, Cook County Farm Bureau partnered with Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana. Through the generosity of partners for nearly two decades, Farm Bureau donated over \$145,000 and nearly 100,000 pounds of food.

In 2012, and again in 2021, Farm Bureau's food pantry efforts were named a Summit Award winner by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE). The Summit Award recognizes the positive impact that non-profit associations have on their community.

Chicago's Oldest Food Pantry Joins Farm Bureau for Food Checkout Day

In celebration of the healthy and nutritious food grown and raised by Cook County and Illinois farmers, Cook County Farm Bureau and COUNTRY Financial partnered with the Common Pantry in Chicago for Food Checkout Day. Pictured left to right is Bryan Blau, Blake Lanphier, Janet McCabe, Jim Bloomstrand, and Bob Rohrer, Cook County Farm Bureau; Margaret O'Keefe, Common Pantry; Roberto Martinez and Ciria Serrano, COUNTRY Financial; Linda Bosy, Cook County Farm Bureau; and Karina Alcala, COUNTRY Financial.

Thank you to the following individuals who donated cash:

Common Pantry

Emily Abarquez
Kathy Engert

Schaumburg Barn

Larry and Sharon Barr
Mary Ann Belmonte
Ray Massie

Share Food Share Love

Bob Rohrer
Joseph Sasso

Tinley Park Food Pantry

Jim Andresen
Linda Bosy
Laura Elkins
Dave Forrester
Tom Geraghty
Tim Hartnell
Kyle Hastings
Candance Jablonski
Karen Kavalas
Michael Kelty
Terry LaMastus
Donna Nykaza-Jones
Marion Palumbo
Jim Parthemore
Eileen Rodger
Cary Tate
Mike Thauer
Susan Schumer
Piero Setta
Mike Spadoni
Erica Storrs Gray
Samantha Zengri

Hygiene Products Drive

Biernacki Family
Jennifer Miller
Katrina Milton
Michael O'Brien
Jonathan Poole & Family
Bob Rohrer
Susan Schumer
Young Leaders Group

Thank you to all the members, supporters, and COUNTRY Financial representatives who donated non-perishable food items.

Food Checkout Day is possible only through the efforts of volunteers, including Farm Bureau leadership and committee members and Chicago North, Chicago South, Northwest, and Orland Park COUNTRY Financial representatives and staff members. Volunteers were integral to the success of the shopping spree portion of Food Checkout Day.

Volunteers

Karina Alcala, COUNTRY Financial Chicago North Agency

Yubana Alvarez, COUNTRY Financial Chicago South Agency

Jim Andresen, COUNTRY Financial Orland Park Agency

Dan Biernacki
Karen Biernacki
Rebecca Biernacki
Bryan Blau
Linda Bosy

Laura Elkins, COUNTRY Financial Orland Park Agency

Jamie Granholm, COUNTRY Financial Orland Park Agency

Bona Heinsohn

Matt Huonder, COUNTRY Financial Chicago Northwest Agency

Joanna Kapica, COUNTRY Financial Chicago South Agency

Gerry Kopping
Linda Kopping

Roberto Martinez, COUNTRY Financial Chicago North Agency

Janet McCabe

Liana Mierendorf, COUNTRY Financial Orland Park Agency

Alonzo Nevarez Jr., COUNTRY Financial Chicago South Agency

Tino Ramirez, COUNTRY Financial Chicago Northwest Agency

Bob Rohrer
Mike Rauch

Ciria Serrano, COUNTRY Financial Chicago North Agency

Sharon Stemke, COUNTRY Financial Northeast Agency

Linda Tobias

Diane Tom, COUNTRY Financial Chicago Northwest Agency

Lisa Zielinski, COUNTRY Financial Orland Park Agency

As the county's largest general farm organization, Cook County Farm Bureau® is dedicated to bridging the gap between farmers and urban consumers. Through education programs targeting youth and their parents and programs designed to connect farmers with potential consumers, Farm Bureau members are actively engaging in conversations about food and the shared values between farmers and consumers.



Food Checkout Day Non-perishable Food Donations Loaded

Leaders load non-perishable food donations bound for Tinley Park Food Pantry after shopping for donations using the pantry's "wish list" of most needed items. Pictured in blue is Farm Bureau Public Relations Team Chair Mike Rauch and pictured in black is COUNTRY Financial representative Jim Andresen. Both Rauch and Andresen have participated in numerous Food Checkout Days and have delivered several tons of food over the years.



COUNTRY Financial and Farm Bureau Deliver Food Donations to Area Pantry

Chicago South COUNTRY Financial representative and Cook County Farm Bureau leaders delivered much needed food donations to Share Food Share Love in Brookfield. Share Food Share Love 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. Pictured left to right is Sharon Stemke, Yubana Alvarez, and Alonzo Nevarez Jr., COUNTRY Financial; John Dumas, Share Food Share Love; Rebecca Biernacki, Cook County Farm Bureau Young Leader; Joanna Kapica, COUNTRY Financial; and Bob Rohrer, Cook County Farm Bureau.

Planting Seeds

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



Katrina J.E. Milton

Rainy days during my childhood were spent playing games indoors with my mom and cousin. My family is pretty competitive, and we lorded winning over each other for days afterwards, until the next game night.

My family always played games together: Parcheesi, Trivial Pursuit, Monopoly, Scrabble, Clue, Sorry!, Candy Land, Guess Who?, The Game of Life, Connect 4, Checkers, Chinese Checkers, Hi Ho! Cherry-O, and Pretty Pretty Princess. We had an entertainment system shelving unit full of games from top to bottom.

When we weren't playing board games, we played card games together. Our favorites were Rummy 500 and War. My mom and grandma always won at those, and they always won the \$1 on the line for winning.

On March 8, I participated in Kane County Farm Bureau's euchre tournament for the region's Young Leaders.

I decided to attend – even though I didn't know how to play euchre. A crash-course "Euchre 101" lesson was held before the tournament, and after the first few hands, I was getting the hang of the game. My partner was also not very experienced at playing euchre, but together, we had a great time and even won a few hands. We even won a trophy – although not a trophy for coming in first place.

We won the "Trophy of Dubious Distinction," which was awarded to the last place team. I brought back the trophy to the Cook County Farm Bureau, and I placed it outside the AITC bookshelf. Others might be embarrassed by the last place trophy, but I am choosing to display it with pride. I think the trophy shows that I attended the event, I did my best, I learned how to play euchre, and we were even able to score and hold our own while playing against more experienced players. By the end of the third and final round, I was ready for at least two more rounds because I was finally understanding all of the rules and strategies of the game. If only it were

a Go Fish, Old Maid, or Crazy Eights tournament, I would have done a little bit better – maybe!

I had a lot of fun at the event, even though my team came in last place. I met with other Young Leaders from the region, even one who lives in my hometown! It made me realize that it really is a small world, and that we have a lot in common, more in common with one another than we have differences. It was also nice being in a room full of peers who shared similar interests and a passion for agriculture.

Being around other young leaders reminded me the importance of being a member of the younger generation involved in agriculture. There was a small group of about 20 people gathered, but for the size of our region, there could have always been more youth in attendance! According to the USDA, in 2022, 22.1 million full- and part-time jobs were related to the agricultural and food sectors, which is 10.4% of

total U.S. employment. The USDA also reported that in 2022, the average age of all U.S. farm producers was 58.1 years. Youth are needed more than ever in agriculture! If they don't begin by learning about ag education at a young age, they may never learn where their food comes from, how corn is in car's ethanol and soybean in bus's biodiesel fuel, or that the cotton and wool clothing they wear are connected to farming.

I look forward to the next euchre tournament, where there will hopefully be more Young Leaders and youth involved and interested in agriculture in attendance. Although I am not a professional euchre player now, I look forward to practicing and getting better at the game. The only direction from here is up! If you have any tips and tricks, let me know!

Katrina can be reached at aitc@cookcfb.org.



Sow to Grow Seed Swap Event

Eight organizations, including the Cook County Farm Bureau, University of Illinois Master Gardeners, and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, attended the first-ever Sow to Grow Seed Swap event at Lake Katherine in Palos Heights on March 2.

Ag Literacy Team Chair Greg Stack and Director of Ag Literacy Katrina Milton oversaw the Cook County Farm Bureau table, which had information about the Farm Bureau and our programs, a throw-and-grow seed bomb activity, pollinator Ag Mags, annual flower seeds to swap, pollinator garden seeds to take, and information about the Monarch Club's upcoming events. Between 50 and 75 people attended the event.



Cook County Farm Bureau's Ag Literacy Team Chair Greg Stack helps a family make a throw-and-grow seed bomb during the Sow to Grow Seed Swap event on March 2 at Lake Katherine in Palos Heights.



Thank you to everyone who colored the shamrock on last month's Ag Adventure page and sent in your designs. We loved to see the creativity and artistic talent, and we hope you had a happy St. Patrick's Day!

Pictured are shamrocks colored by Chris and Charlotte.



Summer Ag INSTITUTE

Educators can earn up to 32 PDCH with Cook County Farm Bureau's 2024 Summer Ag Institute (SAI).

This year's SAI theme is "Full STEAM Ahead with Agriculture," focusing on the many ways to incorporate ag into your curriculum through a variety of topics.

SAI will be held over four days this summer: June 13, June 18, July 16, and July 24.

June 13 and July 24 will be held at the Cook County Farm Bureau. June 18 and July 16 will be held at destination locations. A full itinerary can be found on the CCFB website. To register to attend, visit: bit.ly/SAI2024Application.

Cost is \$30 per day/\$25 per day if a CCFB member or \$100 all days/\$80 all days if a CCFB member. Scholarships are available.

For more information about 2024 SAI, email Katrina at aitc@cookcfb.org.

AGRICULTURE ADVENTURES FOR FAMILIES



EARTH DAY: *Planet vs. Plastics*

What is plastic?

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, plastic is “a material that has the capability of being molded or shaped, usually by the application of heat and pressure.”

What is plastic made from?

Plastic can be made from renewable and nonrenewable resources. Plastic can be made from coal, natural gas, salt, and crude oil/petroleum. Bioplastic is plastic made from a renewable resource, such as vegetable fats and oils, corn starch, straw, tree products, such as woodchips and sawdust, and recycled food waste.

Ag-citing new plastics?

There are bioplastics made from Illinois' top two crops: corn and soybeans! Corn bioplastic is used to make food packaging and disposable cutlery and can even be formed into fibers for clothing. Soybean bioplastic is used in food packaging, medical devices and equipment, such as IV bags, and toys. Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company, created a car made from soy plastic in 1941.

Why bioplastics?

Plastics made from nonrenewable resources, such as petroleum, can take 20 to 500 years to decompose. Decomposing plastic becomes microplastics, or plastic less than 5 mm in diameter. Humans touch, breathe in, swallow, eat, and digest microplastics. According to an April 20, 2023 article published by National Institutes of Health, “The results of [...] experiments have shown that microplastics can affect various systems in the human body, including the digestive, respiratory, endocrine, reproductive, and immune systems.” Plastics also pollute waterways, including rivers and oceans, which endangers marine animals and plants. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a collection of mostly plastic debris in the North Pacific Ocean. It has an estimated surface area of 620,000 square miles, an area twice the size of Texas or three times the size of France.



10 WAYS TO *Go Green* THIS EARTH DAY

1. Recycle bottles, cans, paper, and cardboard
2. Use reusable shopping bags
3. Compost your food waste
4. Plant a tree or wildflowers
5. Conserve energy: turn off the light when you're not in the room
6. Conserve water: turn off the water faucet when you're brushing your teeth
7. Walk or bicycle instead of using a vehicle
8. Hang your laundry to dry
9. Drink tap water instead of using a plastic bottle

10. Visit www.earthday.org to learn more!

Earth Day is held every year on April 22.
The first Earth Day was held April 22, 1970.



April Word Search

Last Month's Winner:
Roy Olson

April	T	D	W	O	A	B	B	E	P	B	V	A	A	U	E
Bottle	S	K	X	A	L	O	C	E	A	N	H	Z	S	P	E
Compost	O	Q	R	H	S	R	J	C	N	T	R	M	P	A	Z
Conserve	P	S	E	E	U	T	O	X	N	A	A	I	R	V	F
Crops	M	Q	C	O	C	N	E	A	A	N	A	T	P	N	V
Earth	O	I	S	I	S	Y	L	H	R	R	H	K	O	X	L
Energy	C	E	U	E	T	P	C	S	T	E	N	A	L	P	I
Ocean	R	C	R	O	P	S	E	L	B	U	T	C	G	W	R
Plant	A	V	D	C	B	E	A	Y	E	S	B	A	P	Q	P
Planet	E	S	B	J	G	M	T	L	I	A	O	D	W	K	A
Plastics	V	B	R	F	H	F	F	B	P	B	T	Y	S	A	A
Recycle	X	Y	G	R	E	N	E	A	T	L	T	P	P	A	P
Resource	P	M	X	S	T	B	W	B	Q	E	L	V	O	L	X
Reusable	M	K	P	S	M	G	P	L	L	K	E	K	I	X	A
Waste	J	Z	X	F	B	Q	I	X	I	K	S	B	X	D	A
Water															

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: April 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!**

At The Farm Gate

by Joanie Stiers



Cool Beans: Soy Surrounds Us

From the cooking oil in the cupboard and the feed in the hen house to the souls of the shoes at the back door, soy surrounds me. Every morning, soy hits me in the face with my makeup and the gut with my protein shake. We fuel our tractors and diesel-engine trucks with renewable, American-made soy-based biodiesel. And for a few weeks this spring, I will see the bean more than my family, when I plant more than 350 million soybean seeds on our farm.

Measuring smaller than my pinky nail, the mighty, protein-rich bean's highly versatile characteristics accommodate global demands for food, feed and fuel. Illinois legislation currently attempts to identify the soybean as the Illinois state bean. After all, Illinois farmers grow more soybeans than anyone, with the reigning title of No. 1 soybean state in the nation.

Soybeans cover about one-fourth of Illinois' land mass and about 45% of my family's farmable land. We grow ultra-high-protein beans for niche markets that produce protein shakes and plant-based meats. We contract with companies to grow seed soybeans that farmers will buy and grow the following year. And we serve the traditional markets for Illinois soybeans: A domestic supply of high-protein animal feed and a significant export market thanks to our state's valuable river transportation system. In fact, 60% of Illinois soybeans are exported, credited to the Mississippi, Illinois and Ohio

rivers bordering or flowing through our state.

Beans from our small-town farm often head to China, the top soybean importer by a wide margin. The country buys four times the American soybeans of No. 2 Mexico for oil and animal feed. Meanwhile, animals represent our nation's top soybean consumer. Chickens, turkeys, pigs, cattle and farm-raised fish thrive on the protein content in soybean meal that makes up 80% of the bean.

In the kitchen, soymilk and margarine (plant butter) serve as dairy alternatives. People treat tofu, a soybean product, like meat. Newspapers print with soy ink, kids color with soy-filled crayons, and soy frequently makes food labels in the grocery aisles. Serving as an emulsifier for some foods, soy lecithin allows oil and water to mix in favorite snacks like granola bars and chocolates.

On the farm, soybeans collaborate well with conservation-minded practices of no-till and cover crops. They add benefits to the soil in a corn-soybean planting rotation and provide our farm a double-cropping option after July-harvested wheat within a single growing season. They are pretty cool beans.

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.

EQUIPMENT USED DURING PLANTING ARE:
Tractor Planter Sprayer
Seed bed tillage equipment... disc, field cultivator, soil finisher, etc.

SEED SELECTION
Farmers choose what kind of seed they want to plant; GMO or non-GMO. Just like your toothpaste or your shoes, there are hundreds of different seeds (and dozens of seed companies) from which to choose.
Seed selection is based on:

- soil type (soil types can vary many times across a single field)
- the number of days required for plants to mature
- drought tolerance
- insect and disease resistance
- herbicide tolerance
- COST! The more traits (drought tolerance, insect resistance, etc.) a seed has, the higher the cost.

THE GROWING SEASON

1. Preparing the soil
2. Planting
3. New growth begins to emerge within a few days
4. Spraying for weeds (which take nutrients from the soil) and insects (which eat plants)
5. Scouting fields for crop damage
6. Mowing ditches and waterways

Most farmers rotate crops, meaning one year they will plant corn in a field and the next year, soybeans. Experience and research shows that rotating is better for the soil and helps produce better yields.

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://bit.ly/4cmD8E6>.



Congratulations!

2024 CookFresh® Community Urban Garden Grant Recipients

- **Three Brothers Garden**, located in the Irving Park neighborhood of Chicago, is an organic food pantry garden with all crops raised being donated to the Irving Park Community Food Pantry serving the Irving Park and Albany Park communities. The garden provides opportunities and a place to learn to grow and gather in nature. Grant funds will be used for seeds, soil, and supplies for the garden.
- **Riverside Community Garden**, located in Riverside is an IL not-for-profit community donation garden and its mission is to provide fresh produce to food insecure individuals and families, while promoting food growing and composting thereby building community through partnerships and local groups. Grant funds will be used for vegetable seedlings, seeds, compost, and soil.
- **ATTCOM's Garden of Hope**, located in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago, is stewarded by an outreach organization to provide the community with access to fresh vegetables, herbs, and

- berries, via ATTCOM's food pantry; the garden also supports pollinators with their pollinating flowers and trees. Grant funds will be used for vegetable seedlings, pollinating plants and bulbs, plant trellis netting, and supplies for the garden.
- **Edna White Community Garden**, located in Chicago, looks to create new beds to double the fresh food production to be utilized by residents who cannot afford fresh produce at the Morgan Park Food Pantry and Burrito Brigade. The garden also provides training for adults and youth, with market nights that offers a safe and fun atmosphere where community members can sell their creations while enjoying music. Grant funds will be used for vegetable plantings, herbs, soil, garden tools, and supplies.
- **Oriole Park School Teaching Farm**, located in Chicago, is an outdoor, interactive classroom run by volunteers, parents, community members, and teachers, existing to inspire and engage young minds with hands-on experiences with growing food. Hands-

- on lessons include seed starting, seedling care, composting, plant life cycle, organic plant protection while using diversity and sustainable practices. Grant funds will be used for vegetable seedlings, seeds, soil, and cow manure.
- **Respond Now Community Garden**, located in Chicago Heights, looks to revitalize the garden that has been dormant since 2020. The garden provides community members in need with fresh and nutritious produce and is a place for people to gather to learn how to grow their own food. Grant funds will be used for vegetable plantings, seeds, compost, soil, and lumber.
- **Archer Urban Farm Initiative LLC**, located in Chicago, is committed to helping Veterans and community reconnect with nature and reminding people that farmers feed the world. The farm's commitment to community through service is the seed of hope to plant in the next generation. Grant funds will be used for vegetable plantings, bee nucs, garden tools, and supplies.

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

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.

Manifolds, Manolos, and Manure

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



Bona Heinsohn

Research conducted by the Pew Research Center indicates that a surprising number of Americans deny that humans are a major contributor to climate change. Those same individuals do not see climate change as an important issue for the country.

Regardless of your thoughts on climate change, February was arguably the warmest February on record. And while I quite enjoyed not looking like a marshmallow in my winter wear during chores, I do have my concerns about why it was so warm. I'm sure scientists will spend years debating whether the weather was due to climate change. El Nino. Or simply a fluke. Either way February of 2024 was a toasty one.

My point with this isn't to debate climate change. Or humans' role or non-role in a warming planet. Rather my point is to discuss avenues being considered by Illinois to mitigate climate change.

In 2022, California took a drastic step to limit vehicle emissions. Under their rules, all trucks, SUVs, and cars sold would have to be zero-emission by 2035. Vehicles would have to be new electric, or hydrogen powered.

Illinois lawmakers are considering following suit. House Bill 1634 would mandate California's emission standards in Illinois. However, unlike California's statute that allows a phase in period, House Bill 1634 would require the switch overnight. Essentially, lower efficiency vehicles including trucks manufactured before 2010 would no longer be considered 'street legal' in Illinois. This is of grave concern to the Farm Bureau because many farmers rely on older equipment and cannot afford to essentially repurchase their entire farm fleet of tractors, semi tractors, and larger trucks overnight.

Advocates of the change contend that mandating California's emission guidelines would reduce Illinois' emission by more than 75 percent. For farmers the question is at what cost. In 2024, farmers are looking at

commodity prices below breakeven prices and, if passed, House Bill 1634 would dramatically make the financial situation worse. Farmers do not set the price for their commodities, the Chicago Board of Trade does. Unlike other industries, farmers cannot pass price increases on to the consumer.

From a safety perspective, what happens when a farmer hauling animals during the summer has to stop and charge their vehicle for hours? Do those animals sit in the heat? What happens if that farmer can't find a charging station and the vehicle stops with animals still in tow?

On that note, rural Illinois residents drive far more miles with few or no electrical charging stations. Logically, before this bill could be implemented more charging stations would need to be built.

On the note of Illinois' abysmal lack of electric charging infrastructure, Senate Bill 3651 would create the Electric Vehicle Charging Tax Act to impose a tax on electric vehicle

charging stations. From January 1, 2025 through January 1, 2026, the rate of tax shall be \$0.06 per kilowatt hour of electric vehicle power. The rate of tax shall be increased on January 1 of each year by the percentage increase, if any, in the Consumer Price Index. The tax would be used to build and maintain charging infrastructure.

Back to House Bill 1634, perhaps the most alarming aspect is the fact that it would bind Illinois policy to unelected bureaucrats in California with no accountability to Illinois government or citizens. Which begs the question, why in the world would the Illinois General Assembly want to hand their authority. Their responsibility. Their job over to another state?

House Bill 1634 is currently assigned to the House Energy and Environment Committee after the sponsor opted not to call the bill in Committee due to Farm Bureau's vocal opposition.

Bona can be reached at Bona@cookcfc.org.



Senator Joyce visits with Farmers

Senator Patrick Joyce (pictured left) visited with Farm Bureau leader Cindy Gustafson in Springfield. Senator Joyce is a fourth-generation farmer from Reddick who now serves as Vice-Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Gustafson spoke with Sen. Joyce about the Family Farm Preservation Act, which makes changes for estates that are 'eligible' for the IRS Agricultural Special Use Valuation Rule.



Representative Michael Kelly visits with his "Adopted" and Home Farm Bureau

Representative Michael Kelly pictured leaning on the fire engine visited with leaders from Adams and Cook County Farm Bureau during a recent visit to Cook County by members of the Adams County Farm Bureau. Representative Kelly is "adopted" by the Adams County Farm Bureau.



State Representative Jimenez visits with President McCabe

State Representative Lilian Jimenez, Chicago, joined Cook County Farm Bureau members at the Statewide Legislative Reception after the Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference. Representative Jimenez was appointed in 2022 and previously served as Chief of Staff for former Cook County Commissioner Jesus 'Chuy' Garcia.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATES ELIGIBLE FOR YEAR END PRIZE

Every day, politicians and regulators in Washington, D.C., Springfield, or your local community make decisions that impact you and your family.

In today's world, your voice can be easily drowned out by other interest groups. We need you to speak out and advocate to protect your interests. That's where our grass-roots advocacy program, FB ACT, comes in to play. With the world at your fingertips, we make being an advocate for Cook County Farm Bureau®, the easiest thing you'll do all day.



As a thank you to active FB ACT members, we are giving away one Picnic Time® Gardener Seat and Tools as well as one Exky Classic Garden, which is the smallest and most efficient smart indoor garden that allows individuals to effortlessly grow herbs, greens and vegetables in your kitchen.

TIMEFRAME: APRIL 1 TO SEPTEMBER 1, 2024



- TO BE ELIGIBLE, INDIVIDUALS MUST:
1. BE A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING OF THE CCFB.
 2. BE AN FBACT MEMBER. TO JOIN TEXT 'FARM' TO 52886.
 3. RESPOND TO AT LEAST ONE LEGISLATIVE ACTION REQUEST.

YOU WILL RECEIVE AN ENTRY FOR EACH ACTION REQUEST YOU RESPOND TO.

THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE OCTOBER CO-OPERATOR! IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT BONA HEINSOHN AT [BONA@COOKCFC.ORG](mailto:bona@cookcfc.org)

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







Ready to Travel?

Take YOUR Illinois Farm Bureau membership with you as you make plans for your upcoming vacations. Save on hotels, car rentals and so much more!

Make **ADVANCE RESERVATIONS** at the following hotels using the following exclusive Illinois Farm Bureau codes.

Hotel DISCOUNTS






Travel Discounts Powered By
Travel Sherlock



Choice Hotel: 1-800-258-2847 IFB #00800614
 Wyndham Hotels & Resorts: 1-877-670-7088 IFB #8000002027
 Drury Hotel: 1-800-378-7946 Corporate ID #333189
 Travel Sherlock: ILFB.Travelsherlock.com Code: Member
 Great Wolf Lodge: 1-800-905-9653 Code: (ILLI617A)

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.



*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, Carry Tate, Agency Manager



*KATHY SPIEWAK

has been named Career Financial Representative of the month for March 2024 by Kevin Gomes, Agency Manager. Kathy's office is located at 11 W. Wise Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60193. Her phone number is 847-716-1010. Kathy has been a

Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since February 2007.

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.*

Cook County Farm Bureau Photo Contest

Join us as we kick off the Cook County Farm Bureau Photo Contest!

We are holding this contest to obtain usable and appropriate photos that accurately portray today's agriculture in Cook County. Get your camera and capture moments by showcasing your best photos depicting agriculture in spring, summer, and fall. Win a cash prize or Farm Fresh Funds*!

Send in your photos – selfies, pictures of others, landscape, etc. – for each season by the deadline date. Winning photos will be posted in the following Co-Operator. More info, including Spring deadline date will be in the May issue.



2024 Pollinator Seed Sale

- Order forms & Payment must be submitted by **Friday, April 12th**. 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

- 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 the end of April.

With support from ...



CLASSIFIED ADS

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

Email your ad (and photo if you have one) to fbcooperator@gmail.com. Please be sure to include your full name, Farm Bureau number, and phone number. Deadline for Classified ads is the 17th of each month. Any ads submitted after the 17th will appear in the following months Co-Operator. Members may run up to four non-commercial classified ads annually for free. Any ads submitted after the fourth, will be charged.

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

FOR SALE

Classic limited edition 2002 Jaguar XKR100 supercharged with every available option. Pristine condition. 17,000 original miles. Will send pictures by phone. **If interested contact Jim 773-581-4400.**

Erte Courvoisier Cognac Collection. Will send pictures by phone. **If interested call Jim 773-581-4400.**

Hobart Band Saw commercial unit 220V. \$600. **Call Rod 708-474-2727.**

Tractor and snowblower for sale. \$5,000. Picture on website. **Call Mike 708-856-2172.**

Maroon couch (72" length). Paisley yellow & grayish couch (88" length). Corner electric fireplace. Must sell, \$75 each or make offer. **Call Al 630-308-4567 Lemont area. Pictures 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.**

Voting Members Respond to February Viewpoint Survey

Earlier this year, Governmental Committee members provided Cook County Farm Bureau voting members with a tool to provide feedback and policy direction. Committee members will use members' responses to draft Farm Bureau policies. Any policy created will be thoroughly vetted by the committee and Cook County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

Generally speaking, responses provided that a majority of respondents believe that Farm Bureau policy should contact a clear and purposeful definition of the term regenerative agriculture. Regenerative agriculture typically refers to farmers maintaining the health of soil by rebuilding organic soil matter and restoring degraded soil biodiversity.

Another topic included on the Viewpoint Survey was food labeling. Nearly 100 percent of the members responding support food labels being standardized, clarified, and updated to help reduce food waste and to provide meaningful information to consumers. A 2016 Harvard study found that more than 80 percent of consumers throw away food that is at or near the date label at least some of the time.

The final topic on the survey involved units of local government with significant levels of debt incurring new debt for the purchase of land and or property. While the results weren't as decisive as with prior topics, it is evident from the responses that more education and discussion is needed on this topic.

Governmental Affairs Committee members will discuss these results and more during their April committee meetings. If any member has any insight they wish to share, please contact Bona Heinsohn at bona@cookcfb.org.

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
"Z"

ZUCCHINI



Even though zucchini is served as a vegetable, it's technically a fruit because it comes from a flower.

The word "zucchini" comes from the Italian word for squash, "zucca".

There is a yellow variety of zucchini that people often mistake for summer squash. It even stays yellow after cooking!

Zucchini flavor is at its best in late spring and summer seasons, but is usually available year round.

A ZUCCHINI HAS MORE POTASSIUM THAN A BANANA.



Zucchini is highly versatile and can be consumed both raw and cooked.

Zucchini is 95% water which makes them a super low-cal snack!

You can eat the zucchini blossoms. The most popular way to prepare them is fried or stuffed.



Zucchini is used by many in place of spaghetti and even lasagna noodles because of their mild flavor!



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 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 May, Purdue article: <https://rb.gy/oe0thv>

Source: <https://www.bushbea-chickpeas.com/produce/tips/4032.php>

Programs, Workshops and Webinars

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



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

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. *Must be a minimum of 10 participants.*

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 or call the Farm Bureau at **708-354-3276**. Zoom link will be emailed the week prior.

Workshop on Preparing Wills and Trusts and Transferring Non-Titled Property (Estate Planning and Trust Administration), Presented by Thomas J. Olofsson, J.D., Estate Planning Attorney



Do you need to update your will? Do you know what to do in preparing a will and a trust? Do you understand what probate court is? This program will provide the advantages and disadvantages of preparing a will and trust. The program will inform you what types of information you will need to gather and decisions you will need make before meeting with a lawyer to prepare a will or trust. Also, tips will be shared on what to look for in choosing a lawyer and where to locate a lawyer for this task.

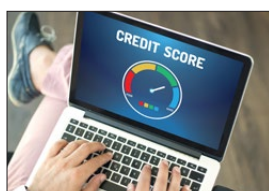
DATE: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 **TIME:** 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

FEE: No charge for Cook County Farm Bureau Members; \$10 for non-members

LOCATION: Zoom (link will be emailed to participants the evening before)

REGISTRATION: Call the CCFB at **708-354-3276**

Workshop on the Credit System and Improving the Accuracy of your Credit Report, Presented by Jim Droske, President of Illinois Credit Services



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

DATE: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 **TIME:** 6:30-7:30 p.m.

FEE: No charge for Cook County Farm Bureau Members; \$10 for non-members

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

REGISTRATION: Call the CCFB at **708-354-3276**

Member Appreciation Week 2024

Monday, April 22 – Friday, April 26

You, the member, are our most valuable asset at the Cook County Farm Bureau.

We truly appreciate our members and during our Member Appreciation Week, we want to provide some extra love to say thank you for your membership, your involvement, your interest, and your support. To show our appreciation and gratitude, members only, please enter for a chance to win great prizes, free memberships, and a daily gift full of fun for you!

Daily Gift Drawing (2 winners each day)

- Movie Monday (two AMC or Marcus movie tickets)
- Test Your Soil Tuesday (1 sample soil kit)
- Wednesday Swag Bag Day (CCFB/ COUNTRY materials, shirt, blanket, etc.)
- Treat Your Car Thursday (Delta Sonic Car Wash)
- Food Friday (Choice of Beggars Pizza or Culvers gift card)

Daily free paid membership for a year

Daily Grand Prize Drawing (1 winner each day)

- "Cyber Shopping On Us!": \$100 Amazon gift card
- "Grocery Giveaway": \$100 Grocery Store gift card
- "Discover Local": \$100 gift card to a local member Ag business
- "Catch Some Rays & Waves": 4 Raging Waves tickets & a gas card
- "Family Fun": Brookfield Zoo 1-Year Membership

Stop by the CCFB office on Wednesday, April 24th to come say hello and grab a sweet treat!

Office Address: 6438 Joliet Rd. in Countryside

Must be a member paid in good standing to enter.

Questions?

Please call us at **(708) 354-3276!**

We wish all our members a prosperous and healthy 2024. We look forward to serving you!

Member Appreciation Week Entry Form

Monday, April 22 – Friday, April 26, 2024

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____ Member Number _____

Entry form can be mailed to the office, faxed to 708-579-6056, emailed to fbcooperator@gmail.com or you can go to <https://bit.ly/4ajp8t0>. One entry per member; entries received will be submitted for a chance at all drawings and will automatically rollover to the following day's drawings, if not selected.



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.