



COOK COUNTY GO-OPERATOR

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

Mark Your Calendar



February

- 14 Scholarship Application Deadline **PG 11**
- 18 Wills & Trusts Workshop **PG 12**
- 19 Solar: Exploring Solar for Ag Operations Webinar **PG 12**
- 24 Membership Monday **PG 12**
- 25 Grow a Giant Pumpkin 101 **PG 12**
- 28 Community Urban Garden Grant Application Deadline **PG 12**

March

- 1 & 2 Beginning Beekeeping **PG 12**
- 4 Food Checkout Day **PG 1**
- 6 Rules for the Road **PG 8**
- 13 Cheese 101 **PG 12**
- 14 & 15 Farm Bureau Advantage Conference **PG 12**

April

- 15 DIY Soapmaking **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 year was the IAA Credit Union formed by the Illinois Farm Bureau?

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

January Winner: Allen Krueger

Question: What award did Cook County Farm Bureau receive at the IFB Annual Meeting for the most outstanding innovative program for the Board of Director's Future Forward Initiative?

Answer: New Horizon Award



IAA CREDIT UNION AWARDED FOR 2024



This month, the Cook County Farm Bureau is spotlighting the IAA Credit Union as one of our best value propositions for membership. Check out the details on how to access the Credit Union and all of the services offered in this publication and throughout the year.

COOK COUNTY FARM BUREAU® TO SUPPORT COOK COUNTY FAMILIES AND FOOD PANTRIES as Part of Food Checkout Day 2025

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

The year 2025 marks the 25th anniversary of Food Checkout Day and Cook County Farm Bureau's latest effort to support local families in need.

Farm Bureau members who wish to provide a cash donation to a local food pantry are asked to complete the form below. Members are welcome to designate which of the partner food pantries their donation is for.

Partner food pantries are:

- **VKMI Hattie B. Williams Food Pantry in Oak Forest** serves south suburban Cook County. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and its lasting effects on food insecurity the pantry served between 50 and 60 families per

week; however, that number continues to increase. From January through June of 2024, the Greater Chicago Food Depository's network of food pantries and grocery programs averaged more than 200,000 household visits each month, an increase of more than 24% compared to the same period in 2023.

- **Maine Township Food Pantry in Park Ridge** serves the residents of Maine Township, which includes families residing in Des Plaines, Glenview, Nilens, Morton Grove, Park Ridge, and Rosemont. Maine Township Food Pantry has been serving residents since 1981.

Young Leaders to Host a Hygiene Product Drive as Part of Food Checkout Day

Cook County Farm Bureau Young Leaders Committee are asking members to "buy one extra" when

they're shopping for personal care items this year.

Common personal care items of need include soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, razors, shaving cream, dental floss, and baby care items.

These items can be dropped off at three locations in Cook County:

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

If you'd prefer to donate cash, please indicate if the cash is for food or hygiene items. Donations can be made by credit card by calling the Farm Bureau office at 708-354-3276 or by mailing in the form below with a check. Donations will be accepted until **March 4, 2025**.

FOOD CHECKOUT DAY 2025 | FOOD PANTRY DONATION

Food Pantry Name: _____
 Your Name: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____
 State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Phone: _____
 Email Address: _____

Please indicate if you'd like your donation to be designated to the Young Leader Hygiene Product Drive

Please make checks payable to Cook County Farm Bureau. Checks should be mailed to Cook County Farm Bureau, 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525.

All proceeds will be donated to Cook County food pantries. Donations will be accepted until March 4, 2025.



PREFER TO DONATE ONLINE?
Scan the QR Code!

Why Retain Your Associate Membership?

Last month, Cook County Farm Bureau manager Bob Rohrer wrote his Downwind column about the value proposition for Associate Members following the announcement that COUNTRY Financial no longer requires a membership to access certain insurance policies.

In essence, his message was, "Your Farm Bureau membership provides you and your family..."

- Access to local farm and food producers
- The opportunity to support Illinois farm families and food security
- Information about farming and your food
- Programs, education, events, and more
- Agriculture in the Classroom for local students, teachers, and parents
- 300,000+ discounts by using our Member Benefits Platform app/Abenity, website
- And so much more!



If you are interested in renewing today: call 708-354-FARM (3276); use the QR code; or online at: <https://www.myifb.org> to pay using your FB member number (found on front page by your address). If you recently renewed in 2025, we sincerely thank you for your support!

If you missed the last issue of Downwind, check it out at <https://cookcfb.org/stay-updated-ccfb-news/article/2025/01/downwind-2>

Proudly serving the Illinois Farm Bureau since 1951.

- Auto
- Mortgage
- Personal
- Commercial
- Credit Cards
- Checking Accounts
- Youth Accounts
- And More!

Become a member today!

SCAN ME

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 Mary Paulton who called us with concerns about the COUNTRY Financial letter she received indicating that a membership is no longer necessary to maintain the insurance coverage. Thank you for renewing your membership and the kind words you shared about the importance of belonging to Cook County Farm Bureau.
- The many members who have voluntarily renewed your memberships following notification from COUNTRY Financial that a membership is no longer necessary to maintain insurance coverage. Thank you for understanding our member value proposition!
- The Cook County Farm Bureau Board of Directors for spending seven hours in a strategic planning session discussing and creating a roadmap for the organization's future.
- Scott Halpin, Illinois State Director of Farm Service Agency, for two-plus years working as a political appointee through the USDA supporting specialty growers across the state and especially in Cook County.
- Livestock farmers who don't call off work in the snow nor freezing temps.
- Farming members who attended the "Everything Local" Specialty Growers Conference in Springfield, seeking to improve business and ability to deliver quality local farm products to consumers.
- The generous members who have already started donating supplies and money for this year's Food Checkout Day support efforts.
- Thank you to the many members who send personalized notes along with their Ag Adventures entries. This month Cam Frigo shared a lovely note stating that her parents grew corn and that popcorn has always been her favorite snack!

HOW FARM BUREAU SERVED YOU IN JANUARY

- ▶ **Connected with Cook County Commissioners to express the organization's appreciation of them supporting pertinent and priority Farm Bureau ordinances and resolutions.**
- ▶ **Provided members with discount opportunities to attend the PBR Bull Riding Invitational.**
- ▶ **Informed the county's ag community of the informative and timely Everything Local Specialty Growers Conference.**
- ▶ **Educated many students how agriculture helps keep them warm during the winter.**



Co-Operator

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

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

Editor Bob Rohrer	Copy Analyst Ashley Christensen	Copy Development CCFB Office Staff
-----------------------------	---	--

Officers & Directors Janet McCabe, President Gerry Kopping, Vice President Ruth Zeldenrust, Secretary-Treasurer	Farm Bureau Manager Bob Rohrer
---	--

Dan Biernacki	Roger Freeman	Jill Drover	Katrina Milton
Mike Rauch	Todd Price	Kelli Villarreal	Linda Tobias
James Bloomstrand	Greg Stack	Bona Heinsohn	Tim Rost
Patrick Horcher	Blake Lanphier	Melanie Senne	Julie Hespeneide
Mark Yunker		Debbie Voltz	

Affiliated Companies

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

Postmaster - Mail Form 3579 to 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525
 "Co-Operator" (USPS No 132180) is published monthly as a membership publication for \$2.50 per year to members as a part of their annual membership dues by Cook County Farm Bureau, 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525. Periodical postage paid at LaGrange, IL and additional mailing office. Postmaster: send address changes to the Co-Operator, 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525.

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



Downwind

by **BOB ROHRER, CCFB MANAGER**

Something About Banks and the IAA Credit Union

Last month, I wrote a column about the change to the membership requirement that COUNTRY Financial made at the start of this year.

The message:

Continue supporting your Cook County Farm Bureau by renewing your membership when the dues notice arrives in the mail.

And

Continue supporting COUNTRY Financial with your insurance needs.

Throughout this year, I plan on writing about the amazing "value proposition" your Cook County Farm Bureau membership offers for only pennies each day.

Speaking of pennies, when I was a kid, I really appreciated the pleasant sound emitted when rattling my piggy bank. Coins collected and stored represented a glorious promise of dreams to come true (mainly dreams of candy).

That promise grew when I was the advanced age of eight and I became a 4-H member. One of my 4-H projects was raising pigs. Selling those 4-H



A photo of my grandson's piggy bank he made at Home Depot last month. I really should have given him a few pennies to help him fill it.

hogs moved me from piggy bank status to a passbook savings account (remember those?) status. That little blue covered passbook account journal had real money written in it, dollars... more than just those rattling pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters (now I dreamed of bags of candy).

I would study the passbook, reviewing my deposits and earned interest. As I saw those numbers charted in the passbook saving account, growing with each hog sold, I determined I must be a

financial genius; selling those hogs at a wide profit margin and accumulating wealth. I was a big deal.

Later, as I added years to my brain, truth and reality set in. I was humbled to realize that Dad, the Farmer, gave me the piglets for free, supplied me feed and the bedding for the hogs, shared fencing and shelter for their health, provided farm equipment and trucking for their care, and offered to me free wisdom for the taking. My job was simply to remember to feed the hogs, keep the bedding clean, cool the hogs in the heat of July, fill out my 4-H records, listen, and try to learn something. At this, I was very "marginal" at best. It is a little late now but thanks Dad for your kindness and generosity. Those 4-H hogs provided me a "stronger than I deserved" financial start.

I was a teenager when that money started to burn a hole in my pocket. Yes, I learned the money was not really in my pocket nor in the passbook saving booklet but actually in the bank (in the small town of Little York, Illinois).

Off to the bank I went to access my life savings and, in the process, I got to know my bank. I can remember seeking assistance from the bank tellers on how to write out a check to receive cash. Those checks were like magic... Pieces of paper that became cash! I used that bank to turn checks into a fancy ten speed bicycle, a fancy cassette tape jam box, and eventually my first set of wheels. The bank was small, the bank employees knew my name, bowls of candy suckers (with the safety loop handle) were on the counter for the grabbing, and service was personal. Comfortable.

Since that time, society has seen many

rural and urban banks merge and/or consolidate. While some small, rural banks remain, they have become more difficult to find. Banks feel less personal and comfortable. Corporate.

However, I have found an outlier to Corporate. The IAA Credit Union (Illinois Farm Bureau Credit Union) reminds me of those rural banking days of my youth. The employees know my name. The personal service and offerings help me with finances (I bet they would even help me fill out a check). In fact, they would even offer me a candy sucker if they could deliver it through the website. Working with them is so comfortable.

Nostalgia is fine and dandy, but it does not pay the bills. The IAA Credit Union offers amazing interest rates when it comes to loans. My wife and I have had four mortgages and four auto loans through IAACU over the past 15 years. Each time we have "shopped" other places, the great rates, limited fees, and convenience offered by the IAA Credit Union brings us back.

There are also feelings involved. Back in 2020, when interest rates were so low that everyone was refinancing their mortgages, I remember calling Pam at the Credit Union to ask about refinancing. Pam adjusted our interest rate lower over the phone with a promise and a simple agreement letter...no reams of paper! Not your typical "Corporate" approach, I am guessing.

And best of all, access to the IAA Credit Union is available to anyone reading this column today as a Cook County Farm Bureau member.

What a value proposition by being a Cook County Farm Bureau member! And I can still pretend that I am a financial genius.

Recipe of the Month



Tomato Soup with Grilled Cheese Croutons

The Superfood Swap Cookbook

INGREDIENTS:

Tomato Soup:

- 1 T extra virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 c baby spinach leaves
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 t crushed red pepper flakes
- 4 tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 - 28 oz can no-salt added crushed tomatoes
- 1/2 c chopped fresh basil
- 4 c low-sodium vegetable broth

Grilled Cheese Croutons:

- 4 slices whole grain bread, toasted
- 4 slices cheddar cheese
- 2 T balsamic vinegar, for serving

DIRECTIONS:

To make the soup, use a large pot, heat the oil over medium heat, add onion, spinach, garlic, and crushed red pepper and cook 3 minutes. Add the fresh tomatoes, canned tomatoes, and basil (save a few leaves for garnish) and cook 5 minutes more. Add the broth and bring to a boil. Cover, turn the heat down to maintain a simmer, and cook for about 15 minutes. Use an immersion blender to puree the soup to a semismooth consistency, being careful not to splash yourself with hot soup.

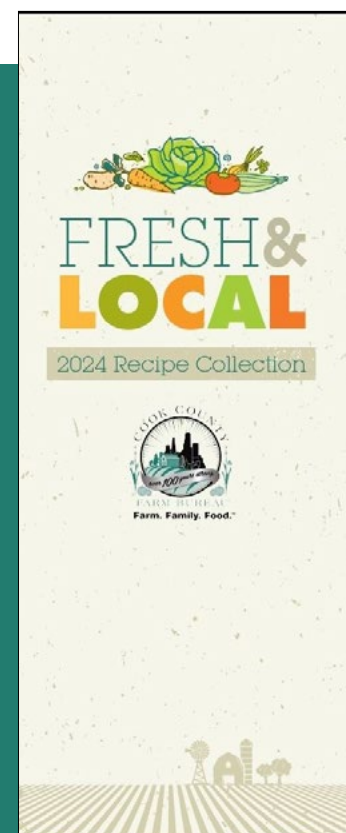
To make the croutons, preheat the broiler. Top each slice of toast with cheese and place them on a baking sheet. Broil for 4 minutes, or until the cheese is bubbling. Cut the toast into crouton-size pieces. Drizzle the soup with vinegar and top with the croutons and remaining basil. Makes 4 servings.

For more fresh recipes from our collections, go to:
<https://cookcfb.org/discover-local/community/recipes>

2024 Recipe Collection is Still Available!

To receive a copy of the 2024 Recipe Collection Booklet,

- Email: membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org
- Call 708-354-3276 or
- Register from the MyIFB member center account.



2025 RECIPE COLLECTION

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

Email: membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org
or
Mail: CCFB Recipes
6438 Joliet Rd, Ste 101, Countryside, IL 60525



Throughout 2024, Cook County Farm Bureau® engaged with and partnered with local farmers, students, and non-profits.

Support For Farmers

Promoted local farm businesses directly to consumers through a four-page insert in the Co-Operator as well as seasonal and year-round opportunities through the Cook County Farm Bureau website, Discover Local, and Market Maker.

Advocated on behalf of agriculture and Cook County Farm Bureau members during municipal and county board meetings while also building relationships with elected leaders and their staff. These relationships enabled Farm Bureau to expand farming opportunities on Metropolitan Water Reclamation District-owned property and reducing the acreage requirement for properties to be considered a "farm" by the Cook County Assessor's Office.

Provided **\$2,450 in grant funds** to support the purchase of plants, seeds, and garden materials for community gardens and farms in Cook County.

Support For Students

Connected over **28,000 local students** to food and farming through our Agricultural Literacy/Ag in the Classroom program. In addition to in-school programming, Farm Bureau offered numerous educational opportunities for teachers, administrators, and parents.

Provided college-aged students pursuing an agricultural or mental health-related degree with financial support through the Cook County Farm Bureau® Foundation. Over **\$19,500 was provided to Cook County students**. Members and supporters generously supported the Foundation during a summer gala. Funds were also used to support continuing education opportunities for healthcare providers and agricultural leaders.

Offered vocational agricultural training scholarships for students enrolled in a vocational training program or at an Illinois Community College for truck driving training, diesel mechanics, welding, or technology with a focus on an agriculturally connected career.

Support For Families

Together with Farm Bureau members and partners, Cook County Farm Bureau donated much needed food staples to four local food pantries, including Common Pantry, Chicago; Share Food Share Love, Brookfield; The Barn, Schaumburg; and Tinley Park Food Pantry, Tinley Park. In addition to non-perishable food donations, Farm Bureau members **donated over \$7,000** to the partner pantries.

Supported Cook County families in need through a hygiene product drive.

Environmental Stewardship

Farm Bureau preserved, protected, and expanded pollinator habitats in the county through several initiatives including providing low-cost pollinator seeds to Farm Bureau members; educational and promotional events in partnership with the Lincoln Park and Brookfield Zoos; and outreach to build consumers' awareness of farmers' efforts to preserve and protect pollinators and pollinator habitat. Since 2022, Farm Bureau has **invested over \$14,000 in pollinator projects in Cook County**.

Farm Bureau forged relationships with local wastewater treatment facilities and supported nutrient reuse research in Cook County. Research focuses on the viability of struvite as a slowrelease, phosphorus source for specialty crops, such as tomatoes and peppers. Farm Bureau has **invested over \$45,000 in nutrient reduction education and research projects in Cook County since 2021**.

Support For Area Non-Profits

Financially supported local non-profits, including the Chicago Farmers Organization, Cook DuPage Beekeepers Association, Friends of Wagner Farm, Greater Chicago Food Depository, Illinois Specialty Growers Association, Ronald McDonald House® of Chicago and Northwest Indiana, and several others.

As the county's largest 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.

Nutrient Stewardship Grants and Pollinator Conservation Grants Announced

In December, the Illinois Farm Bureau's Environmental Policy Team announced the 2025 county Farm Bureau recipients of Nutrient Stewardship Grants and Pollinator Conservation Grants. Cook County Farm Bureau was among the recipients.

Nutrient Stewardship Grant recipient project:

Cook County Farm Bureau will continue their research partnership focused on struvite (magnesium ammonium phosphate) applications on Cook County farms looking at struvite as a slow-release fertilizer that could be used in place of other fertilizers to minimize nutrient loss. They will also host urban field days focused on urban and specialty growers featuring specialty crop struvite research.

Pollinator Conservation Grant recipient project:

Cook County Farm Bureau will enhance an existing pollinator garden and expand a partnership with Lincoln Park Zoo and expand the partnership to include Brookfield Zoo. The county Farm Bureau will also distribute pollinator seeds to farmer members to expand pollinator habitat in the county.

These projects are a part of the Cook County Farm Bureau's Governmental Affairs Team and Public Relations Team efforts to serve members and improve Cook County. Questions regarding the projects may be addressed to Bona Heinsohn, Director of Governmental Affairs/Public Relations at 708-354-3276 or bona@cookcfb.org.

IFB Organizational Membership Strategy Implementation to Begin

By TAMMIE SLOUP FarmWeek

Illinois Farm Bureau's Organizational Membership Strategy is now moving into the implementation phase. The Organizational Membership Strategy Advisory Committee is made up of Illinois Farm Bureau members from throughout the state. Cook County Farm Bureau president, Janet McCabe, served for the past two years on the advisory committee to represent northeastern county Farm Bureaus.

The IFB Board of Directors voted to approve 23 recommendations and two other efforts — this year's inaugural Advantage Conference and in-state Ag Tours — are already in the works.

The 2025-27 OMS roadmap will focus on three strategic initiatives:

- **Representation:** With a declining number of farmers and changes in the ag industry, IFB will ensure that we serve every member at every level of agriculture.
- **Engagement:** Member needs change alongside the advances in agriculture, and IFB's programming will reflect that, providing value to all members.
- **Organizational strength:** The foundation of IFB's strength as an organization is in its county Farm Bureaus. Efficient, streamlined, and modernized processes

will increase retention, develop county leaders, and provide additional support to members.

The three OMS subcommittees — Membership, Programming, and Engagement and County Farm Bureau — developed guidance, recommendations, and proposals for the OMS Advisory Committee, which submitted its final recommendations to the IFB Board. A total of 45 IFB members from all regions of the state serve on the subcommittees and advisory committee.

Among the recommendations are several that would require bylaw changes, which must be voted on by delegates at Annual Meeting in 2025 at the earliest. The topics include new voting member definitions, removal of spousal membership class, monthly membership class, and dues processing.

Other recommendations would entail pilot projects to help gauge feasibility. These include:

- Study centralized bookkeeping solutions to build a pilot for CFBs
- Multi-county staffing model
- Advocacy staff in regions
- Ag tours
- Support ag business series to connect farmers and ag professionals
- Office-less Farm Bureaus



Meet a “Face” of the Cook County Farm Bureau

Helping members understand that CCFB is made up of a group of local individuals that could be their neighbors!

WHAT DO YOU “SPECIALIZE” IN?

Here at Deer Creek Farm we specialize in Goat Yoga and farm activities, petting zoo, farm tours, and archery range. We also sell eggs from our free-range chickens and ducks, and raw honey from our bees on site. In 2025 will be selling cut flowers as well.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO FARMING?

We got into farming when the opportunity arose to purchase the property and Wally brought home some goats. People kept sending me posts on Facebook about goats and goat yoga, so we tried it and people seem to really enjoy coming out to the farm and getting away from it all.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FARM RELATED MEMORY?

My favorite farm memories as a kid growing up and going to a family friends farm in Grant Park, IL and playing in the hayloft seemed so gigantic to me then.

WHAT IS YOUR DAY LIKE ON THE FARM?

When on the farm usually working feeding and tending the animals, weeding, planting, picking, always much to do. I love to meet all the visitors and educating about raising animals and basic farm life.

WHAT IS THE MOST UNUSUAL QUESTION OR REQUEST YOU HAVE RECEIVED?

One of the most unusual request was for one of my baby goats to be rented for a high school senior graduation party and she spent the night at the family’s home.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FOOD?

Honey of course-is that food...lol



DEER CREEK FARM

Jo Ann and Wally Shults
CCFB members since 2012

360 Glenwood Dyer Rd
Glenwood, IL 60425

(708) 441-7751

Facebook: www.facebook.com/deercreekfarm.farm/

Website: www.deercreekgoyoga.com

WHO DO YOU LOOK UP TO OR CONSIDER A MENTOR?

Raising goats was a huge learning curve. I joined Facebook groups regarding raising goats and learned much from them. I am very lucky to have some great large animal vets in this area who help, also the Cook County Farm Bureau has great resources, have taken some of their classes on raising bees and some other opportunities to make revenue off the farm and of course the Farm Crawl was fun.

WHAT BRINGS JOY TO YOU?

I am blessed to be able to live here and have the country life so close to an urban area.

BANKING WITH PURPOSE: IAA Credit Union’s Commitment to Illinois Farm Bureau!

By Jennifer Killian, IAA Credit Union Marketing Manager

Founded in 1951, IAA Credit Union (IAACU) was established to serve the Illinois Farm Bureau and its affiliated organizations, including GROWMARK and COUNTRY Financial. While our roots lie in supporting employees and their immediate families, IAACU has grown to welcome all Illinois Farm Bureau County Members into our membership, reflecting our dedication to the agricultural community across the state.



Jennifer Killian

As a not-for-profit, member-owned financial cooperative, IAACU is proud to operate with the mission of delivering exceptional value to our members. Headquartered in Bloomington, IL, we serve members nationwide, with a strong focus on supporting Illinois Farm Bureau members wherever they reside.

Our unique structure and efficient operational model allow us to provide market-leading rates, low fees, and personalized service. We offer a comprehensive suite of financial products and services, including auto loans, mortgages, checking and savings accounts, youth accounts, credit and debit cards, business loans, online and mobile banking, and much more. IAACU is also part of a Co-Op ATM network, granting our members access to over 30,000 surcharge-free ATMs nationwide.

At IAACU, we go beyond banking by equipping our members with financial education resources and money management tools, ensuring they have the knowledge and support needed to achieve their financial goals.

We are proud to consistently rank in the top 3% of credit unions nationwide for value returned to members, as assessed by Callahan & Associates’ “Return of Member (ROM)” metric. This ranking reflects our commitment to providing competitive rates, low fees, and unparalleled member benefits.

Security and stability are cornerstones of our commitment. IAACU members’ accounts are insured for up to \$250,000 by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), with an additional \$250,000 in coverage provided by Excess Share Insurance (ESI). Members can feel confident knowing their funds are safeguarded.

IAA Credit Union’s nearly 75-year partnership with the Illinois Farm Bureau is built on a shared legacy of trust, community, and mutual support. Together, we have cultivated a lasting relationship that prioritizes the needs of our members.

We invite you to explore the many benefits of IAACU membership and discover how we can serve as your trusted financial partner. **Scan the QR code or visit us at www.iaacu.org today!**



Cook County Farm Bureau®

COOKFRESH COMMUNITY URBAN GARDEN GRANT PROGRAM

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

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

Grant application date deadline is February 28, 2025;

Editable application:
<https://cookcfb.org/file/2088/Editable%202025%20CCFB%20Community%20Garden%20Grant%20App.pdf> - or email: ccfb@cookcfb.org.



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



ILLINOIS FARM FAMILIES® SPONSORS CHICAGO WOLVES

The Heinsohn family, a northern Illinois farm family and CCFB Leaders, joined representatives from Illinois Farm Families® at an early January home hockey game. As part of the activation, volunteers engaged with consumers about the shared values between consumers and farmers. While 96% of farms are family-owned, farmers are 100% committed to growing a safe and healthy food product. Illinois Farm Family volunteers will be at future home games this spring.

Grant Assistance/Clarification: Contact Debbie Voltz at 708-354-3276 or membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org

Planting Seeds *Keeping Busy in February*

February may seem like one of the dreariest, most miserable months. It's usually cold and snowy, you get a little stir crazy from being inside all of the time, and you daydream of summer's warm weather and sunny days.



Katrina J.E. Milton

However, there are many reasons to love February. February holidays include Groundhog Day on Feb. 2, Super Bowl Sunday on Feb. 9, Valentine's Day on Feb. 14, and President's Day on Feb. 17. Often, Lunar New Year and Mardis Gras also fall in February (this year, they are Jan. 29 and March 4, respectively). Leap years occur in February every four years, with the next occurring Feb. 29, 2028.

February is a good month to get out and about. Outdoors, you can go ice skating, snow shoeing, hiking, or birdwatching. Indoors, you can visit Chicago Botanic Garden's orchid show, visit a museum, or watch a movie (Farm Bureau members can call our office at 708-354-3276 to purchase discount AMC, Marcus Theater, and Regal movie tickets).

Cook County Farm Bureau is also hosting numerous events in February,

including a workshop on preparing wills and trusts on Feb. 18, a webinar about solar farm and ag-related applications on Feb. 19, a PDCH workshop for educators about soil science and vermicomposting on Feb. 20, and a presentation about growing giant pumpkins on Feb. 25.

February is also a great time to set and accomplish goals. 2025 has just begun, and it's not too late to start a resolution! My goal for this year is to read 52 books. At least two of those books will be ag-related: I joined CCFB's book club, which is reading "Barons: Money, Power, and the Corruption of America's Food Industry" by Austin Frerick, and Illinois Ag in the Classroom's book club, which is reading "The Labors of Hercules Beal" by Gary D. Schmidt.

However, if you're not a book reader, I'd recommend reading something shorter and bite-sized, such as Illinois Ag in the Classroom's Farm Bites. These one-page, two-sided flyers have lots of great information about ag topics, are fun and easy to read, and have colorful photos of agriculture in Illinois. There are currently 22 topics, including honey,

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

microgreens, lavender, popcorn, strawberries, rice, turf grass, and pecans. The mushroom Farm Bite features Windy City Mushroom in Chicago, and the hay Farm Bite features my neighbors, the Wackerlin family of Leland. Visit bit.ly/IAITCFarmBites to read all of the topics.

As you can tell, February is a busy month! Our Ag in the Classroom Program is visiting Cook County classrooms (teachers can request a presentation by visiting bit.ly/AITCplease), we are accepting Spring Mini Grant applications until Feb. 28, we have an upcoming PDCH workshop, Ag Day North and South field trip events are scheduled for third grade classrooms, and planning is underway for summer programming.

Although February is quite busy, I have to remind myself to stop and smell the roses – or in this case, the flowers at the orchid show! Keep warm and enjoy your February!

Katrina can be reached at aitc@cookcfb.org.



APPLY TO BECOME OUR 2025 SUMMER AG INTERN!

The Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation is offering a paid internship to assist with our Ag in the Classroom program.

The intern will assist with summer ag programs, including giving presentations and conducting activities at community, library, and school summer events, as well as helping plan and organize our Summer Ag Institute.

Applicants must be enrolled at an accredited college or university and pursuing a degree in agriculture education, agriculture communications, or a related field.

This is a paid internship, available to currently-enrolled college students. Some area travel is required. The position is selected through an interview process and application, as well as a resume, academic transcripts, and references.

For more information or to apply, contact Katrina Milton at 708-354-3276 or aitc@cookcfb.org.

EDUCATORS

SAVE THE DATE

FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS

Free Virtual Soil & Vermicomposting PDCH Workshop

4 - 6 p.m. April 20

With Guest Speaker
Soil Scientist Ellen Phillips



Spring Mini Grant

Up to \$350
for 6-12th Grade Teachers

Incorporate ag education into your curriculum

Apply online at
bit.ly/421JTJ2
by February 28

Summer Ag Institute

"Cook County's Ag Connections to Historic Route 66 and Transportation"

- **June 17** Cruisin' Chicago: Route 66 Trolley & Waterway Adventure
- **July 9** Roads, Rivers, & Rails with Illinois AITC



Earn PDCH

Email aitc@cookcfb.org or call 708-354-3276 for more information or to RSVP

COOK COUNTY FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION'S / OUTSTANDING IN THEIR FIELD

Ag Student of the Month

FEBRUARY

DAMIAN GIL-LARA



Grade: 12

School: Rolling Meadows High School

Involvement in Agricultural Groups: Member of the Rolling Meadows FFA Chapter and also helps run educational programs, where his excitement is often contagious throughout the learning groups.

Involvement in Ag: Damian is an active participant in both the community and the high school with his horticultural knowledge. He currently serves on the Arlington Heights Mayoral Board to help improve sustainability practices in Arlington Heights. Damian has also interned twice with the Rolling Meadows' agriculture program to help

maintain a multitude of plant systems at the school. This includes running the high tunnel, raised beds, greenhouse, aquaponics systems, and several hydroponics systems in the building.

Words from the Nominator: "Damian has a very strong passion for agriculture and spends quite a bit of his free time working on different research projects related to hydroponics, aquaponics, and overall horticultural practices. His work never disappoints, as he cares deeply about the success of the agricultural program."

~ Kirsten Eubanks, Agriculture Teacher/FFA Advisor/Boss

Plans for the Future: Damian will be attending the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign for agricultural business.

AGRICULTURE ADVENTURES FOR FAMILIES

FEBRUARY AG ADVENTURE: PRESIDENTS President's Day is February 17, 2025

President's Day originally celebrated U.S. President **George Washington's birthday** and was made the first national holiday by Congress in 1880. In 1968, Congress combined the celebration of Abraham Lincoln's birthday on February 12 with George Washington's birthday on February 17 to make one federal holiday, President's Day, held annually on the third Monday in February.

DID YOU KNOW? 17 Presidents were also FARMERS!

- George Washington – 1st U.S. President
- John Adams – 2nd U.S. President
- Thomas Jefferson – 3rd U.S. President
- James Monroe – 4th U.S. President
- John Quincy Adams – 6th U.S. President
- William H. Harrison – 9th U.S. President
- James C. Tyler – 10th U.S. President
- James C. Polk – 11th President
- Abraham Lincoln – 16th President
- Ulysses S. Grant – 18th President
- Theodore Roosevelt – 26th President
- Harry Truman – 34th U.S. President
- Lyndon B. Johnson – 36th U.S. President
- Jimmy Carter – 39th U.S. President
- Ronald Reagan – 40th President
- Bill Clinton – 42nd President
- George W. Bush – 43rd President

Ulysses S. Grant

18th U.S. President

Between military campaigns, Grant was a farmer in Grantwood Village, Missouri. The historic property is now owned by the Busch family, who previously owned Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company. The farm has been an animal reserve since 1954 and is home to buffalo, emus, camels, macaws, donkeys, goats, peacocks, and the Budweiser Clydesdale horses.



Theodore Roosevelt

26th U.S. President

Roosevelt was a cattle rancher whose deep attachment to the land spurred his later commitment to work in conservation and national parks. As president, Roosevelt signed legislation establishing five new national parks.



Jimmy Carter

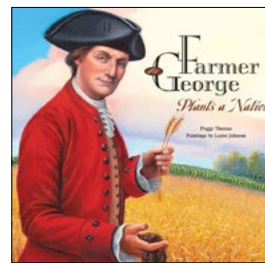
39th U.S. President

Generations of Carters have been cotton farmers in Georgia. Jimmy Carter was a member of FFA and credited the organization with his life-long love of woodworking. Growing up, Carter grew, packaged, and sold peanuts on his parents' peanut farm.



the READING Corner

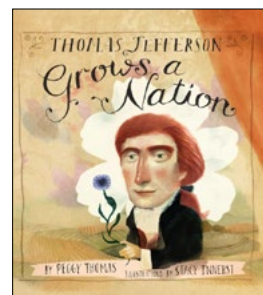
Interested in reading more about presidential ties to agriculture? Read these three books by Peggy Thomas! Descriptions are from the books' listings on Amazon.com.



Farmer George Plants a Nation

by Peggy Thomas, Illustrated by Layne Johnson

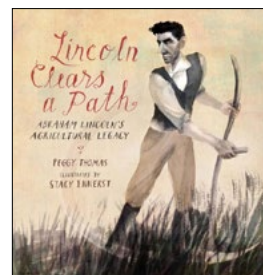
Besides being a general and the first president of the United States, did you know that George Washington was also a farmer? Here's a look at America's first President as he's rarely seen.



Thomas Jefferson Grows a Nation

by Peggy Thomas, Illustrated by Stacy Innerst

Thomas Jefferson was more than a president and patriot. He was also a planter and gardener who loved to watch things grow – everything from plants and crops to even his brand-new nation.



Lincoln Clears a Path: Abraham Lincoln's Agricultural Legacy

by Peggy Thomas, Illustrated by Stacy Innerst

Throughout his life, Abraham Lincoln tried to make life easier for others. Then during the darkest days of the Civil War, when everyone needed hope, President Lincoln cleared a path for all Americans to a better future.

February Word Search

Last Month's Winner:
Mary Kosiek

Acre	S	T	I	K	X	O	V	Y	R	P	Z	E	I	A	P
Adams	E	L	A	P	I	X	K	O	S	K	L	R	U	D	R
Birthday	E	O	B	D	H	R	O	W	B	B	Y	O	P	A	E
Crops	R	A	P	F	U	S	L	I	A	N	A	X	W	M	S
Farm	T	N	U	Z	E	H	R	T	O	R	D	C	P	S	I
Holiday	Q	Q	N	V	Y	T	E	S	B	W	I	B	T	Q	D
Jefferson	R	J	E	D	H	G	R	D	L	Y	L	D	Z	O	E
Lincoln	A	L	U	D	E	E	L	I	N	C	O	L	N	N	N
Plow	T	C	A	V	F	Q	N	M	F	F	H	Q	I	M	T
President	L	Y	R	F	J	E	E	F	R	P	F	A	R	O	Y
Roosevelt	I	N	E	E	S	P	O	R	C	A	K	Z	F	Y	S
Rotation	O	J	N	O	I	T	A	T	O	R	F	M	A	Q	F
Soil	W	A	S	H	I	N	G	T	O	N	X	A	T	T	U
Trees	G	V	P	V	E	E	Q	O	O	C	J	A	B	R	Y
Vegetable	T	K	P	P	Q	F	T	X	P	H	P	I	O	V	K
Washington															

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: 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 2025 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



Snowy Scenes Liven Landscapes

A light snow arrived after New Year's Day, and my soul cued up the song "Snow" from Irving Berlin's musical, White Christmas. The white stuff compelled me to plug our exterior Christmas lights back in after previously retiring them for the season. I wanted photos of our lit, snow-capped roof line and the warm white lights glowing through the snowy bushes.

Yes, snow sometimes deserves the four-letter word status, but forget about the wet boots at the back door, the treacherous road conditions or the livestock and barnyards that need scooped out. Disregard the people who escape to Florida because of it or the life-altering chaos of breaking both arms while sledding with your kids in a cattle pasture (yeah, that happened to someone).

Enjoyed in the moment, snow brings peace. It delivers calmness. The precipitation generates a serene feeling unmatched in any other season. It makes us crave beef roast and chicken pot pie, a fire in the fireplace, a blanket and a book. The snowy landscape glistens, producing reflections at sunrise that rival bodies of water. The white stuff magically turns barrenness to beauty, and the glow of a barnyard light on a fresh batch defines silent night – calm and bright.

During my country travels, I appreciate the high contrast

as the snow accents every leafless branch of a tree. It adds elegance to everything brown and provides evidence of presence by humans, wildlife, tractors, sleds and snowmobiles.

While our chickens hesitate to step out of the coop when they see a carpet of white, our cows stand majestically beautiful and undeterred with snow on their backs.

Freshly fallen snow likens a new jar of peanut butter, highly tempting to disturb. The kids eagerly oblige. Snow spawns some of our fondest family memories of snowmen, sledding, hot cocoa and days off school. In fact, my transplanted Illinois family that lives in southern California escapes to the mountains to find snow and play in it.

Mom said our region experienced the blizzard of a lifetime one week after my birth. More than two feet of snow and high-wind conditions made Dad crawl down the roadside to work, following the tops of the fence posts that peaked from the snow. Roads were impassable or allowed a single lane for traffic only because road crews recruited the support of end loaders to make a path. We don't need too much of a good thing.

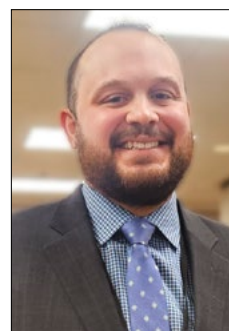
About the author: Joanie Stiers farms with her family in West Central Illinois, where they raise corn, soybeans, hay, beef cattle, backyard chickens and farmkids.

YOUNG LEADER SPOTLIGHT

BLAKE LANPHIER

BACKGROUND

Lanphier became a member of the Cook County Farm Bureau® Board of Directors in April 2024 and has served the past three years as chair of the Young Leaders Committee. Lanphier is a 2020 graduate of the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Program, a two-year executive leadership program.



Blake Lanphier

Lanphier grew up in southeast Iowa on a livestock, row crop, and vegetable farm. He has a Bachelor of Science in Animal Sciences from Iowa State University. Lanphier serves as the Farm Operations Manager of Wagner Farm in Glenview where he has worked for the past eight years. He provides support and program assistance for the Glenview 4-H club, which is one of the largest in Cook County.

Lanphier and his wife Shannon have a daughter, Emmalyne.

What is your favorite tractor?

International 1066

Favorite farm or food memory

For me, it was working on the farm with my brothers when I was younger. No matter what it was we always found a way to make it fun.

What would you say to someone considering joining the Young Leader Committee?

Cook CFB Young Leaders is made up of a diverse group of farmers and ag professionals. The connections made in the group can be very valuable! If you are curious, please reach out to bona@cookcfb.org and connect with us.

How did your involvement in Farm Bureau and Young Leaders begin?

I learned about Young Leaders Committee five years ago from a friend in my Ag Leadership class. After the connection was made, I joined and have been involved with Young Leaders and Cook CFB since.

FARM SUCCESSION VIRTUAL SERIES

Planning for the farm's future and yours



Join us online for a discussion designed to assist farmers and farm families with developing a succession plan for their future generations.

Thursday, February 13

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

PLANTING THE SEEDS:

The Process of Farm Succession Planning
Basic steps for creating a plan and what to consider along the way

Thursday, February 20

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

CULTIVATING COMMUNICATIONS:

The Farm Meetings
Types, purpose, who is involved and navigating differences

Thursday, February 27

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

CHANGING ROLES:

Who is Driving the Tractor?
Gaining experience to mentoring future generations

PRESENTERS

Wesley Tucker,
Farm and Ranch Transition Specialist,
University of Missouri Extension

Monica McConkey,
Agricultural Mental Health Counselor,
Minnesota

REGISTRATION

To register for one or multiple sessions:
call 618.443.7692 or email mblock95@siumed.edu

No cost to attend.
Space is limited, please register early.

Visit siumed.org/farm to learn more about this event and the Farm Family Resource Initiative.



There is no charge to participate thanks to the generous financial support provided by the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Division of Mental Health.



Learn more about CDL & TRUCKING REGULATIONS to help you stay legal and safe when you hit the road.

MARCH

6TH DINNER AT 5:30 PM
PROGRAM AT 6:00 PM

Hosted by: Kendall-Grundy CFB

KENDALL-GRUNDY CFB
4000 N DIVISION ST / MORRIS, IL
VIRTUAL AT 6 PM

Attendance is open to all Illinois Farm Bureau Members.

Contact the Cook County Farm Bureau at (708) 354-3276 to register.



Manifolds, Manolos, and Manure

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



Bona Heinsohn

Prior to the New Year, Chicago's mayor managed to quarterback his budget to approval. The process took four attempts and passed by a slim 27-23 margin.

This year's budget exposed a glaring weakness in Chicago's charter. But wait. What is a charter? A municipal charter is a legal document defining a city's structure, powers, boundaries, and procedures. A charter is inferior to state laws but superior to city ordinances. Charters convey power to cities, which is necessary because the U.S. Constitution only lays out two levels of government: federal and state.

Chicago's first charters were conferred in 1833 and 1835. Both were reflective of Chicago's then small population and size. In 1837, Chicago received a charter that divided it into six wards and allowed for a mayor to be elected to a one-year term. Changes to the charter or a new charter were approved in 1847, 1851, 1853, 1857, 1861, and 1863. The most notable outcome of these changes was that the mayor had control over appointments and offices that were not elected.

Following the 1870 Illinois Constitution, charters were no longer granted; instead Chicago was subject to the Cities and Villages Act (65 ILCS 20). The Act is general and grants certain governing powers to units of local government. Numerous suburban municipalities used this Act to incorporate. For the next 100 years, Chicagoans and the state legislature would disagree about what

a new charter should include for the city and the powers it should grant.

In 1970, Illinois drafted a new Constitution and with it, Chicago gained new home rule powers. Chicago today remains a special charter municipality. But it still retains much of the governing structure it had prior to 1870.

Chicago's charter today grants authority and control to the mayor with far less to the city council. The mayor has the authority to introduce and shape the budget and Aldermen have the ability to approve or not approve the budget. Under the charter Aldermen don't have the authority to change the budget.

Alderman Gilbert "Gil" Villegas has reached out to the Illinois Legislature to change the charter to grant more power to the city council.

In another move to express the council's growing independence, Aldermen approved the responsible budgeting ordinance, which contained some budget improvements including an earlier budget deadline to increase transparency, more power to the Council Office of Financial Analysis, and enhancing the information available to the public.

Although Chicago's budget does not include a property tax hike despite the mayor proposing a \$300 million, \$150 million, and \$68.5 million increase – all of which were rejected. Do remember that just nine years ago former Mayor Rahm Emanuel ushered through a \$588 million increase, the largest in Chicago's history. However, the current mayor failed to get his tax approved.

To cover the \$17.1 billion spending plan without increasing property taxes, cutting jobs, or reducing services, the city is skipping a \$40 million loan

payment. Businesses will pay more for software licenses, cloud services, and digital goods. Residents who enjoy streaming services will pay more, to the tune of \$12.9 million annually. Those individuals parking in parking garages or restricted parking areas will pay more. Continuing the pain, those residents who rely on ride-hailing services will pay a new surcharge assuming they start or end their ride in the Central Business District between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. on the weekend. The weekday surcharge will also increase. Surcharges are expected to add \$8.1 million. It will also cost more to shop. Shoppers using those pesky single-use paper or plastic bags will now pay 10 cents for each bag.

Budgets aren't usually created in a vacuum, but it appears that Chicago's budget was. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, Governor Pritzker told Politico that the Chicago Mayor Johnson never called about the city's budget negotiations. Though the mayor was very insistent that the state should help out the city. Perhaps it's time for a phone call rather than very public shots from the podium.

On an equally as interesting note, in fundraising circles the fourth quarter is generally not considered to be a period for big-money donations but don't tell that to Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias. He raised nearly \$1 million. Perhaps he's joining the already long list of Democratic officials and insiders considering a run for mayor in 2027.

While the Chicago budget and the 2027 municipal election aren't farming, they do impact Farm Bureau members and Chicago residents. All of which are of interest and important to the Farm Bureau.

'Friend of Farm Bureau' Award Recipients



Cook County Commissioner **MAGGIE TREVOR** was named a 2024 'Friend of Farm Bureau' by the Cook County Farm Bureau® Political Action Committee. The award celebrates Cook County Commissioners' outstanding voting records on priority issues considered by the county board. Pictured with Commissioner Trevor is Farm Bureau staff Bona Heinsohn. This year's award is succulents in a cement planter. The succulents were raised, selected, and planted by Ted's Greenhouse in Tinley Park.



Cook County Commissioner **TARA STAMPS** was named a 2024 'Friend of Farm Bureau' by Cook County Farm Bureau®.



Cook County Commissioner **FRANK AGULIAR** was named a 2024 'Friend of Farm Bureau' by Cook County Farm Bureau®.



Cook County Commissioner **KEVIN MORRISON** was again named a 'Friend of the Farm Bureau' by the Cook County Farm Bureau® Political Action Committee. This year, the award was only given to Commissioners with a 100 percent voting record on priority Farm Bureau issues. Pictured with Commissioner Morrison is Farm Bureau staff Bona Heinsohn.

This designation is awarded to county commissioners with the highest voting record on priority Farm Bureau issues.



THE CO-OPERATOR

The Co-Operator publication has been a Cook County Farm Bureau member staple in the mailboxes of members since the 1930s. We plan on continuing to produce this high-quality publication for members moving forward.

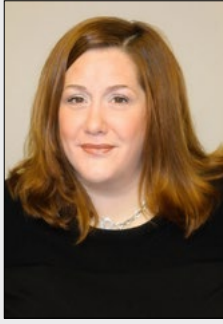
However, as our members know, postage rates continue to increase with delivery issues popping up frequently. Therefore, members interested in receiving the newsletter electronically each month are invited to provide us with a quality email address.

Contact the Cook County Farm Bureau with your email address today!! **Phone: 708-354-3276 • Email: ccfb@cookcfb.org**

COOK COUNTY

Agents of the Month

The Agent 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 Agent of the Month designation.



*ERICA STORRS-GRAY

has been named Agent of the Month for December 2024. Erica's office is located at 12130 S Harlem Ave, Unit A, Palos Heights, IL. Her phone number is 708-671-1465. Erica has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since February 2006.

Orland Park Agency, Cary Tate, Agency Manager



*ALEX SWISTUN

has been named Career Financial Agent of the month for December, 2024 by Kevin Gomes, Agency Manager. Alex's office is located at 4200 W Euclid Ave, Ste C, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008. His phone number is 847-427-8280. Alex has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since March 2002.

Chicago Northwest Agency, Kevin Gomes, Agency Manager

**Indicates that this COUNTRY® Agent is a CCFB Certified Agent. The Cook County Farm Bureau Certified Agent Program is designed to strengthen the partnership and relationship shared by COUNTRY® Financial.*

Another Exclusive Cook County Farm Bureau Member Benefit!!!

ticketsatwork

Scan this QR code to visit ticketsatwork.com to find more offers



New Year, New Deals!

Make your New Year's resolutions more affordable with amazing discounts on everything from hotels and flights to health and wellness!

To Register visit ticketsatwork.com and use Company Code CCFB



Scan QR code or click the link to visit website



Choose the best deals and offers



Find amazing exclusive offers & deals



More savings, more of what makes you happy

Featured Offers

Explore these and hundreds of other offers at ticketsatwork.com Use Company Code CCFB



Discount Hotel Reservations

Enjoy exclusive savings up to 60% off hotel rates



Discount Flight Reservations

Save up to 20% on flights



Cruises

Up to \$1,500 Onboard Credit on Cruises



Garmin

Save up to 20% on select Garmin products



HelloFresh

Get 55% off your 1st box with free shipping + 15% off for 51 weeks



Gold's Gym by HUSK

Get started for \$0

© 2025 TicketsatWork, an EBG Platform. All rights reserved.

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

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



UPCOMING GAMES

February 7th vs. Predators

March 3rd vs. Kings

March 5th vs. Senators

To purchase tickets, please visit: www.cookcfb.org (under Member Benefits – Entertainment)

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



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

25% off Promo Code: CCFB

24 Hour Online Orders at: <https://www.cookiegarden.com/>

Mon-Fri | 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Facility in Wood Dale: 800-582-9191



Mayflower Cruises & Tours

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

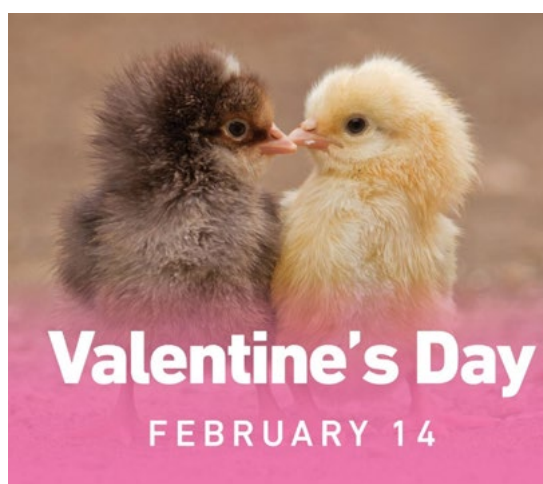
To begin your "Life Enriching Experience" and learn more about Mayflower Tours call Kayla Grajeda and state you're a Cook County Farm Bureau member to receive added savings:

Discount Code: ccfb16

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

Email: kayla@mayflowercruisesandtours.com

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



Happy Valentine's Day from your

Cook County Farm Bureau Friends!



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 month's 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

4ft. rounded nail table with light. 4 slide drawers and 4 shelves. Like new, black marbled formica. Asking \$200.00. Call 708-654-2010. Picture available online.

18 position ladder, 16 ft, asking \$100. Call 708-654-2010. Picture available online.

I RIDE electric scooter new. Paid \$1,300 asking \$950. Weight 32 lbs. (base), length 38", width 19.25". Call 708-654-2010. Pictures available online.

MDT snow blower, purchased in 2010, 24" 2 stage, 3 forward gears and 2 reverse. Asking \$250 obo. Buyer must pick up. Call John 847-828-8655 after 1.

Harley Davidson Motorcycle. 2017 excellent condition and extras. Well kept red. All extended warranties included. TriGlide Ultra 1750 engine. Must see. Call 847-297-6807 Mary - no texts.

Tools - many tools for every job. Excellent condition. *Power* *Electrical* *Plumbing*. Willing to sell at one price. Call for details. 847-297-6807. No texts. Ask for Mary.

Commercial New Hone Tru knife sharpener. Price negotiable. Please call for details. 847-297-6807. No texts. Ask for Mary.

2006 Ford F250 4X2 work truck. 135,000 miles. 8' bed with single cab and new tailgate. \$4,500 Firm. Ask for Michael 847-272-0448

FOR RENT

Horse farm: Modern, nicely remodeled farmhouse perfect for a single person or a couple. Tree shaded lot, barn with three stalls, loft, electric and water. Large grassy fenced pasture, on good road, near Frankfort. Call 708-670-2118.

WANTED

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

Wanted 6 ft blow mold Santa, with or without light. Call 708-439-9770.

ABC'S OF SPICES

We already gave you the ABC's of Food but the Cook County Farm Bureau also loves spices... All types of spices with all types of flavors. In this feature, we will be highlighting different types of spices, from A to Z. If you'd like a full list of the ABC's of Food, contact the CCFB office.



This month
"I"

ITALIAN SEASONING

Originated in the Mediterranean region where ancient Greek and Romans experimented with different herbs

Italian seasoning is a mix of dried herbs with an earthy, piney flavor that's subtly sweet and peppery.



Italian seasoning is a pre-blended mixture of dried herbs like basil, marjoram, oregano, thyme, rosemary, sage, and coriander.

Today, fresh herbs are a staple in Italian cuisine, so the dried herb mixture is more popular in American or Italian-American home kitchens.

It is rich in vitamin K, vitamin B6, vitamin C, antioxidants, fiber, iron, calcium, manganese, and magnesium.

ITALIAN SEASONING IS EASY TO FIND IN YOUR FAVORITE GROCERY STORES AND ONLINE SHOPS.

Italian seasoning can be used to flavor just about anything, but some of our favorite uses are in classic Italian-American dishes and it adds extra interest to olive oil for dipping bread or vinaigrette for salads.



Dried herbs are quite subtle, but for a fresher, more vibrant taste, you can also always use a mixture of chopped fresh herbs in place of Italian seasoning.

Next month...Juniper Berries

THIS MONTH in Cook County Agriculture...

WILL-SOUTH COOK SWCD CONSERVATION EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

In the spring of 2025, the Will-South Cook Soil and Water Conservation District will be awarding three \$2,000 scholarships to Will or South Cook County students who plan to major in an agriculture or natural resource-related field at an accredited college or school of higher learning. The purpose of these scholarships is to further the cause of soil, water, and natural resource conservation by helping deserving students pursue the subject at an advanced level. Applications are available at www.will-scookswcd.org or at the SWCD district office. To be considered for the scholarship, all materials must be received by the office by February 28, 2025.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL & COMMUNITY GARDEN TRAINING

This free three-part training series will help you gain the knowledge and confidence to start your school or community garden! Join Illinois Extension in Cook County for the 2025 training series. Attendance at all three sessions is highly recommended for new gardens requesting on-site assistance from Illinois Extension in Cook County. To register, go to: <http://bit.ly/3PE8X0D>

Tuesday, February 25, 2025, from 6 to 8 PM - Introduction, Getting Started, and Volunteer Engagement

Tuesday, March 4, 2025, from 6 to 8 PM - Vegetable Gardening

Tuesday, March 11, 2025, from 6 to 8 PM - Ornamental Gardens and Curriculum

SWCD HOSTING POND WORKSHOP MARCH 3RD

The Will South-Cook Soil and Water Conservation District will host a Pond Workshop on Monday, March 3rd at 6 pm. The meeting will be held at the District office, located at 1201 S. Gougar Road in New Lenox.

Seth Love, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Biologist, will discuss several topics including fish management, vegetation management, and common pond problems. There will also be time available for questions after his presentation. Light refreshments will be available during the meeting.

If you are interested in attending this workshop, please RSVP to the SWCD Office at (815)462-3106 ext. 3 or info@will-scookswcd.org by Wednesday, February 26th.

To promote your activity, email ccfb@cookcfb.org or call 708-354-3276 by the 15th of the month. Please include your name, the event date/time, a one-sentence description of the event, and how a reader can obtain further information in the email. We will edit submissions based on space allowances in the publication.

Apply for a Scholarship Today!

FOOD SCIENCES

ANIMAL SCIENCES

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Sample of a few Agricultural Careers

The CCFB Foundation offers college students who are pursuing an ag-related career the opportunity to start or continue their higher education with a scholarship.

The scholarship application deadline date is February 14th.

Scan the QR code for scholarship information and to apply.



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**

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.

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

DATE: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 **TIME:** 6:30-8:00 pm

PRICE: No charge for Cook County Farm Bureau Members. \$10 for non-members.

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

Solar: Exploring Solar for Ag Operations - Lunch & Learn Webinar with Q & A

Webinar presented by Craig Pals, P.E., CEM-Vice President | Tick Tock Energy, Inc.



Learn about solar for farm and ag-related applications, understand available federal and state incentives & grants, energy cost savings, and financing options.

LOCATION: Presented via Zoom – link to be sent the week prior

DATE: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 **TIME:** 12:00-12:45 pm

REGISTRATION: Registration is required for Zoom Link: call 708-354-3276 | email: ccfb@cookcfb.org | online using member account at: www.myifb.org

Grow a Giant Pumpkin 101

Mark Mourlas, 2024 Giant Pumpkin Contest Winner, member of the IL Giant Pumpkin Growers Association (IGPGA) and executive committee member for the international governance organization, the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth (GPC) and a Giant Pumpkin aficionado will deliver a presentation followed by Q & A, to help begin your Giant Pumpkin journey with success. In Person attendees will receive free giant pumpkin seeds, courtesy of Mark Mourlas.



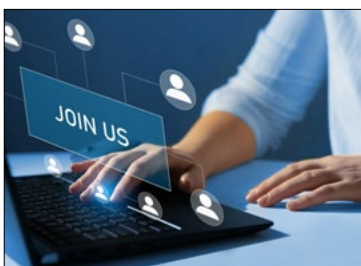
LOCATION: Cook County Farm Bureau | 6438 Joliet Rd, Countryside – Lower-Level Meeting Room

DATE: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 **TIME:** 6:00-7:00 pm

REGISTRATION: Registration is required: call 708-354-3276 | email: ccfb@cookcfb.org | online using member account at: www.myifb.org

Membership Mondays 2025

Are you a member or prospective member interested in learning more about the benefits and programs a CCFB membership provides? Then join us to hear from CCFB staff who will highlight member programs, member benefits, and the website. Staff will provide demonstrations to access membership benefit discounts so members can take full advantage. An open Q&A session will follow the short staff presentation.



LOCATION: Zoom; link will be emailed prior

DATE: Monday, February 24, 2025 **TIME:** 4:00-4:30 pm 30 minutes with Q & A

REGISTRATION: Registration is required by emailing ccfb@cookcfb.org or call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276.

Beginning Beekeeping in Person 2025

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



LOCATION: Cook County Farm Bureau | 6438 Joliet Rd, Countryside – Lower-Level Meeting Room

DATE: Saturday & Sunday, March 1-2, 2025 **TIME:** 9:30 am-3:30 pm

COST: \$125.00 for members of CCFB or CDDBA. \$150.00 for non-members; ask how to join!

REGISTRATION & PAYMENT: Registration and payment is required in advance by credit card at 708-354-3276.

Cheese 101

Presented by Meredith Meder, ACS CCP

We will talk, eat and discuss different milk types, cheese styles and how to buy, cut and store cheeses. This class is ideal for a novice or if you just love cheese!



LOCATION: Cook County Farm Bureau
6438 Joliet Rd. Countryside – Lower Level Conference Room

DATE: Thursday, March 13, 2025 **TIME:** 7:00-8:30 pm

COST: \$17.00 for CCFB members, \$20 for non-members

REGISTRATION: Registration is required in advance by calling the FB at 708-354-3276.

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.



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

DATE: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 **TIME:** 6:00-8:00 pm

COST: \$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.

Farm Bureau Advantage Conference

Embassy Suites by Hilton East Peoria
Riverfront Hotel & Conference Center
100 Conference Center Drive
East Peoria, IL 61611

MARCH 14, 2025 – MARCH 15, 2025

Join us for the **Farm Bureau Advantage Conference**. This new conference will empower Farm Bureau members with knowledge and insight into emerging issues in agriculture.

Friday, March 14th 6:30 PM - Member Engagement and Fun Pianos! Dueling Piano Show

Saturday, March 15 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM - Conference

Program highlights include:

- Peter Zeihan, geopolitical strategist, breaking down the complex interactions of global politics, economics, and energy.
- Seismic Shifts in Predictive Science: The Future of Weather with Eric Snodgrass
- Embracing AI before it Embraces Us - University of Illinois Center for Digital Agriculture.
- Farming for the future: Maximizing profitability with

Voluntary Conservation Practices – Illinois Commodity Group Staff

- Josh Sundquist, a bestselling author, motivational speaker, and Paralympic ski racer

Friday evening's social event will feature a dueling pianos show with Fun Pianos! and an opportunity to support the IAA Foundation.

Registration fee is \$100.00 per person.

Deadline for booking room is February 21, 2025.

Register By February 28, 2025, 4:00 PM

Scan QR code for registration and hotel info.

