



COOK COUNTY GO-OPERATOR

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

Mark Your Calendar



April

- 14-18 Member Appreciation Week PG 1
- 14 DIY Soapmaking PG 12
- 15 Container Gardening 101 PG 12
- 16 IAA Credit Union Help Desk PG 1
- 18 Coffee with Downwind Author, Bob Rohrer PG 1
- 18 Photos with the Easter Bunny PG 1
- 30 Pollinator Seed Sale Deadline PG 12

May

- 1 Make a Spring Planter Workshop PG 12
- 3 Shred Day PG 12
- 3 & 4 Conceal/Carry Class PG 12

June

- 17 Summer Ag Institute Day 1 PG 6

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



The Cook County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution in March recognizing “what day” in Cook County related to agriculture?

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: Roselyn King

Question: How many Areas of Focus did the CCFB Board of Directors approve from the January board strategic planning day?

Answer: 5



Hattie B. Williams 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 Hattie B. Williams Food Pantry in Oak Forest for Food Checkout Day. Pictured left to right are Dan Biernacki; Karen Biernacki; Jim Andresen, COUNTRY Financial; Mike Rauch; Amanda McManus, COUNTRY Financial; Annie Hill, Hattie B. Williams Food Pantry; Sharon Stemke, COUNTRY Financial; Bobby Dantzler, Hattie B. Williams Food Pantry; Bob Rohrer; Janet McCabe; Jamie Granholm, COUNTRY Financial; Michelle Peterson, COUNTRY Financial; Doug Yunker, Cook CFB Young Leaders Committee; Laura Elkins, COUNTRY Financial; Mark Yunker; and Lisa Zielinski, COUNTRY Financial. For more info on Food Checkout Day, go to **Page 4**.

Member Appreciation Week 2025

Monday, April 14 – Friday, April 18

YOU, THE MEMBER, ARE OUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET of 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 can enter for a chance to win great prizes, free memberships, and a daily gift full of fun for you!

WE EVEN ANSWER THE PHONE HERE AT CCFB!!!

Daily Phone Challenge – Call the CCFB office each day with the code word for your chance to be entered in a daily prize drawing.

- Monday Code Word is POPCORN - 2 AMC or Marcus Movie Tickets
- Tuesday Code Word is BACON - 1 Sample Soil Kit
- Wednesday Code Word is WATERMELON - (CCFB/COUNTRY materials, shirt, blanket, etc.)
- Thursday Code Word is SQUIRREL - Delta Sonic Car Wash
- Friday Code Word is MILKSHAKE - Choice of Beggars Pizza or Culvers Gift Card

Daily Free Membership

Drawing (from entry form): We will select random members and pay for next year’s membership (2025-2026 year) for 1 A and 1 MM/PM each day

Daily Grand Prize Drawing – (1 Winner Each Day from Entry Form)

- “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 this week for Member Events!

- Monday – DIY Soap Making 101 from 6-7:30pm (registration info on page 12)
- Tuesday – Container Gardening 101 | Soil Health | Master Gardener Q & A from 10am-12pm (registration info on page 12)
- Wednesday – Q & A with IAA Credit Union 10am – 2pm
- Friday – Coffee with Bob and Photos with the Easter Bunny 10am – 2pm

FRIDAY, APRIL 18, come have coffee and conversation with Bob Rohrer, Manager of Cook County Farm Bureau and author of the monthly Downwind column.

Please bring your compliments, comments, complaints with you... Bob is truly looking forward to talking with all the members who are able to attend. You and your feedback are very welcome!!!

We will have coffee, soft drinks, and doughnuts for all and a small gift for each member who comes to visit! We hope to see you here!

RENEW NOW

Scan below to renew your ccfb membership



www.cookcfb.org

Entry Form on Page 10

See page 8 for Why I Volunteer for the Cook County Farm Bureau....



Cook County Farm Bureau® Young Leaders Enhance their Public Speaking Skills

During a public speaking training workshop, Jonny Poole delivers his speech on promoting the Young Leaders Committee to potential members interested in joining the committee. Poole is a member of the Young Leaders Committee and most recently a member of the planning committee for the Young Leaders' successful hygiene drive. The training was hosted by the Farm Bureau with the assistance of the Illinois Farm Bureau® Training Department. Individuals interested in joining the committee are encouraged to reach out to Bona Heinsohn at bona@cookcfb.org.

Leadership Pipeline Dinner Held March 12

Jennifer Miller, (right) Young Leader and Scholarship recipient, participated and contributed to the leadership pipeline dinner and meeting with the Cook County Farm Bureau Board.



Danial Lyons (L) and Graham Breaker (R) prepare to speak to the board of Directors following a joint dinner with CCFB Foundation Scholarship recipients, Young Leaders and the Board of Directors.



Mike Rauch (L), Carmen Trotta (C) and Elijah Floerke (R) participate in the joint dinner and leadership pipeline discussion with CCFB Foundation Scholarship recipients, Young Leaders and the Board of Directors.

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...

- The many volunteers and partners who made this year's Food Checkout Day a tremendous success.
 - Young Leaders Committee members who planned, hosted, and delivered an outstanding Hygiene Drive as part of this year's Food Checkout Day. This year's Hygiene Drive donations tripled 2024 totals.
 - Young Leaders Committee members who enhanced their public speaking skills during a recent training hosted by the Cook County Farm Bureau.
 - The 15 young agriculturalists who applied for a scholarship from the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation.
 - The CCFB Foundation scholarship review committee for spending considerable time and care reviewing, scoring, and determining the 2025 scholarship recipients and for those 10 award winners for meeting with the board and expressing appreciation.
 - 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!
- Individual Cook County Farm Bureau Young Leaders:**
- Jessica Biernacki and Angelica Carmen – attending and graduating from the Illinois Agricultural Leadership program
 - British Griffis, Kayla Biegel, and Katrina Milton – attending and graduating from the Illinois Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow program
 - Blake Lanphier, Jessica Biernacki, Carmen Trotta, Jonathan Poole, Rebecca Biernacki, Daniel Lyons, Elijah Floerke, Graham Breaker, and Jennifer Miller – attending and contributing to the Board of Directors leadership pipeline dinner

HOW FARM BUREAU SERVED YOU IN MARCH

- ▶ Provided much needed food and personal care items to local families in need through this year's Food Checkout Day and Young Leader Hygiene Drive.
- ▶ Connected Cook County Commissioners with local agriculture and the impact of agriculture on the local economy through a resolution celebrating National Agriculture Day and Cook County agriculture.
- ▶ Provided comments and feedback on the Food Access section of the 2025 Draft Environmental Justice Policy under consideration by the Offices under the President of Cook County.
- ▶ Engaged with numerous Cook County Senators and Representatives during the 2025 Statewide Legislative Reception in Springfield.
- ▶ Provided valuable leadership and public speaking skills to young Farm Bureau leaders.
- ▶ Held a Cheese 101 workshop where participants learned about different cheese types and how to buy, cut, and store cheese.
- ▶ Provided Beginning Beekeeping training for future beekeepers.
- ▶ Hosted a "How to Grow a Giant Pumpkin 101" workshop and distributed seeds to all who attended.



Co-Operator

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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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 Bob Rohrer | Ashley Christensen | CCFB Office Staff

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Downwind

by **BOB ROHRER, CCFB MANAGER**

“Radical and Extreme Ideas”

During a recent staff meeting, I said it “half” as a joke. We were spit-balling ideas about why members find value with Cook County Farm Bureau that we could market and promote. We are in full blown “retain and recruit” members mode.

The questions posed to the staff:

- What makes us different?
- What makes us unique?

I said it flippantly... “We “even” answer the phone.” Then, that simple statement sat out there on the table, each staff member contemplated what it meant. I used the word “EVEN” to emphasize something radical and extreme. Do we really believe answering the phone is that rare and unusual? Apparently, we as a society, are starting to believe so.

In today’s business world, how often do we call “customer

service” and the phone rings and rings. Or the call is immediately placed on-hold and you begin to hear the background elevator music. The music is occasionally interrupted, and our hearts beat a little faster, picking up hope. Nope - false alarm. The moment dashed by an announcement that phone calls will be answered in order received and your wait time is three days, three minutes.

We “even” answer the phone.

Thus, we decided to add ‘We “even” answer the phone” to our membership value proposition message this month! Is someone answering the phone “too good to be true”?

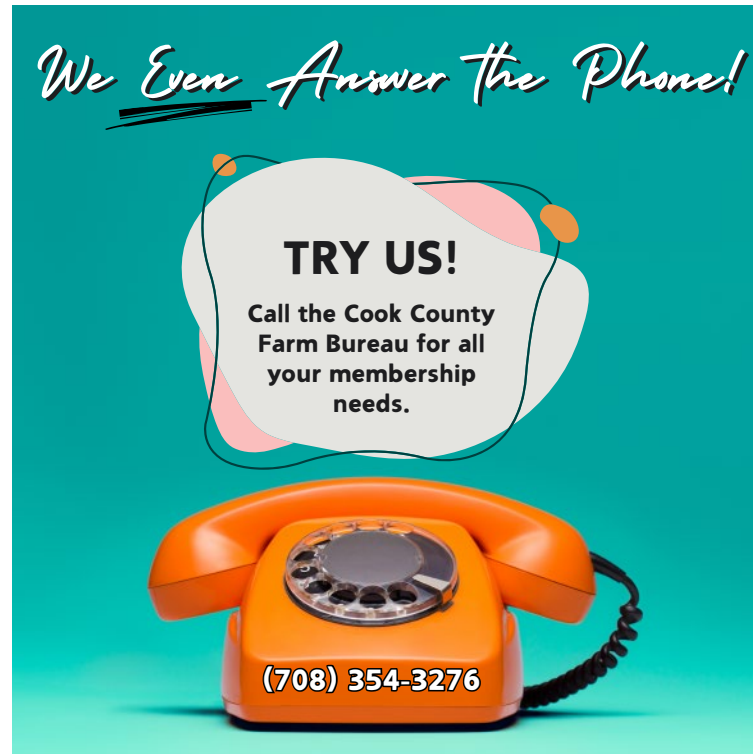
We want members to **TEST** us by calling 708-354-3276 between 8 AM to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday during our regular business hours. We promise to answer.

Further, let me throw out another radical and extreme promise...the voice greeting you will be friendly and helpful! (If you end up with me, I hope not to disappoint regarding the helpful part)

But wait, there’s more!

We have started a tradition in the last few years of celebrating members with Member Appreciation Week in April (we always appreciate our members throughout the year, but this is the week we lay it on thick). This year, Member Appreciation Week is Monday, April 14 – Friday, April 18. Throughout the week, we will have drawings, workshops, special features, give-a-ways, and treats for you, the member.

A treat for me is consuming vast amounts of coffee. Another treat is getting to know members. I want to combine these treats this year



by adding a new feature to Member Appreciation Week...

“I will “even” drink coffee with you!”

Chatting with members over a cup of hot coffee. Trust me... not a hardship!

Coffee was established as an important part of farm life in my youth. Dad, the farmer, started early every morning with coffee and he called a “break” at some point for a follow-up cup. I became a big fan of coffee breaks. It was inevitable for me to take up the habit (I think I was in junior high), and I’ve only ramped up my consumption since.

Soooooooooooo – Here is your Member Challenge for April...

1. Call us at 708-354-FARM (3276) to verify we “even” answer the phone (call April 14-18 to be eligible for prizes)
 2. Drop by the office (6438 Joliet Road, Countryside) on Friday, April 18 from 8:00-10:00 a.m. and chat with me over a free cup of coffee (Don’t make me drink alone!). We may “even” find you a donut!
- Thank you for your membership! (saying “Thank you” – Another radical and extreme idea?)

Recipes of the Month

Bees Knees Cocktail

Donna Nykaza-Jones, Steger

This is the final recipe from our 2024 Collection

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 T simple syrup recipe
- 2 oz gin
- 3/4 oz fresh lemon juice
- Honey Simple Syrup: 2 c honey to 1 c water, in pan and simmer until honey dissolves

DIRECTIONS:

Fill cocktail shaker with ice. Add gin and lemon juice, then shake like silly. Add simple syrup and shake again. Use cocktail strainer to strain into glass over ice. Garnish with fresh lemon slice and enjoy!



2025 Recipe Collection

Rhubarb Pie

Kathy Lesser, Chicago

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 10-inch pie crusts, unbaked
- 1 1/2 c sugar
- 2 1/2 T cornstarch
- 1 egg beaten
- 3 1/2 c fresh rhubarb (you can use equal parts rhubarb and strawberries if desired)

DIRECTIONS:

Slice rhubarb into 1-inch pieces and mix with cornstarch. Add egg and sugar and mix well. Line pie plate with one pastry crust. Add filling. Cover with the second pie crust. Seal the edges and slit a few openings in the top. Bake 30 minutes at 425° and then 15 to 20 minutes at 325°. Cool on wire rack before slicing. Enjoy!lemon slice and enjoy!

For more fresh recipes from our collections, go to:

<https://cookcfb.org/discover-local/community/recipes>

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.

Farm Bureau Soil Test Kit discounted member pricing:

- 1 sample Soil Test Kit: \$30 | 2 sample kit: \$40 | 3 sample kit: \$61
- 1 sample Soil plus Lead Test Kit: \$57
- 1 sample Lead Only Test Kit: \$46

Pricing subject to change **Non-member pricing available * Additional kit pricing available online at <https://cookcfb.org/stay-updated/-events-and-programs/programs-and-events/profile/soil-testing>.*

Complete kit includes:

- Step by step instructions on how to sample soil
- Sample bag and form
- Convenient pre-paid shipping box and label via USPS
- U of I Extension Master Gardener Info Form and pre-paid envelope

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 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



Cook County Farm Bureau® Celebrates 25th Annual Food Checkout Day

Cook CFB® and Partners Raise Cash, Food, and Hygiene Product Donations for Local Food Pantries

Together with various partners, Cook County Farm Bureau® donated much needed food staples to two 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. Nearly \$5,000 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 hygiene product drive. Members and leaders donated personal care items including toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant, and lotion.

Partner food pantries, Hattie B. Williams Food Pantry of Oak Forest and Maine Township Food Pantry of Park Ridge received non-perishable food items and personal hygiene products as part of Food Checkout Day 2025.

"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 fam-

ilies 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.

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 COUNTRY Financial representatives and staff members. Volunteers were integral to the success of the shopping spree portion of Food Checkout Day.

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.

VOLUNTEERS

- Jim Andresen, COUNTRY Financial Orland Park Agency
- Dan Biernacki
- Karen Biernacki
- Bryan Blau
- Laura Elkins, COUNTRY Financial Orland Park Agency
- Sherry Grande
- Jamie Granholm, COUNTRY Financial Orland Park Agency
- Bona Heinsohn
- Blake Lanphier
- Janet McCabe
- Amanda McManus, COUNTRY Financial Orland Park Agency
- Michelle Peterson, COUNTRY Financial Orland Park Agency
- Tino Ramirez, COUNTRY Financial Chicago Northwest Agency
- Bob Rohrer
- Mike Rauch
- Sharon Stemke, COUNTRY Financial Chicago South Agency
- Diane Tom, COUNTRY Financial Chicago Northwest Agency
- Doug Yunker
- Mark Yunker
- Lisa Zielinski, COUNTRY Financial Orland Park Agency

Thank you to the following individuals who donated cash:

Hattie B. Williams Food Pantry

- Jim Andresen
- Linda Bosy
- Laura Elkins
- Kevin Gomes
- Bona Heinsohn
- Joyce Kelly
- Liana Mierendorf
- Susan and Michael Schumer

Maine Township Food Pantry

- Kevin Gomes
- Laura Honig
- Malgorzata Jura
- Bob Rohrer
- Diane Tom

Young Leader Hygiene Products Drive

- Laura Elkins
- Kevin Gomes
- Bona Heinsohn
- Kieth and Karen Kouba
- Angela McCrum
- Jennifer Miller
- Mary Kay Nielsen
- Bob Rohrer
- Robin Scheldberg
- Shur Way Movers
- Pete Soltesz and Kim Kulton
- Carmen Trotta
- Doug Yunker

PHOTOS FROM FOOD CHECKOUT DAY 2025



Young Leader Parents Shop for Hygiene Drive

Karen and Dan Biernacki, Farm Bureau leaders and parents of two Young Leader Committee members, shopped for items for the Young Leader Hygiene Drive. With the support of donors and partners, the hygiene drive raised \$925 for two local food pantries and donated local bee items provided by the Cook DuPage Beekeepers Association.



Farm Bureau Shops for Local Food Pantries

Farm Bureau leader Blake Lanphier shops for food donations for the Niles Township in Park Ridge as part of this year's Food Checkout Day. Niles Township Food Pantry is one the partner food pantries for this year's Food Checkout Day.



Public Relations Team Leader Shops for Maine Township Food Pantry

Longtime Public Relations Team member, Bryan Blau, shops for non-perishable food items for the Maine Township Food Pantry as part of this year's Food Checkout Day. Maine Township Food Pantry in Park Ridge serves the residents of Maine Township, which includes families residing in Des Plaines, Glenview, Niles, Morton Grove, Park Ridge, and Rosemont. Maine Township Food Pantry has been serving residents since 1981.



Orland Park COUNTRY Financial Representatives Support Local Food Pantry

Orland Park COUNTRY Financial Representatives deliver food to Hattie B. Williams Food Pantry as part of this year's Food Checkout Day. 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. Pictured left to right is Jim Andresen, COUNTRY Financial; Lisa Zielinski, COUNTRY Financial; Laura Elkins, COUNTRY Financial. Also pictured is cardboard flat Liana Mierendorf, longtime Food Checkout Day supporter and volunteer.



CCFB and COUNTRY Financial Support Area Food Pantry

COUNTRY Financial® representatives and Cook County Farm Bureau® leaders donated fresh and non-perishable food items to Maine Township Food Pantry as part of this year's Food Checkout Day. Pictured are Maine Township Food Pantry volunteers, Cook County Farm Bureau leaders and volunteers, and COUNTRY Financial staff. Food Checkout Day recognizes the healthy and nutritious food grown and raised by Cook County and Illinois farmers.

CCFB Foundation Scholar Winners Announced

The Board of Directors of the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation has selected ten individuals as recipients of the 2025 Scholarship Program. A total of \$25,000 of scholarship funds were distributed.

Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Agriculture Scholarship

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.



Elijah Floerke, Orland Park: Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Agriculture

Floerke attends Illinois State University and is working on his Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness. He's helped his grandparents throughout the years on their farm in Southern Illinois. Once he graduates, he wants to make a difference in the world through agriculture.

Stuenkel Family Legacy Scholarship

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.



Brigid Heller, Chicago: Stuenkel Family Legacy Scholarship

Heller attends the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is majoring in Biological Systems/Agricultural Engineering-Machinery Systems. She hopes to build a career in greenhouse technology that will focus on smart systems that will optimize resource use, reduce waste, and improve sustainability in agriculture.

General Agriculture Scholarships



Daniel Lyons, La Grange Highlands: General Agriculture Scholarship

Lyons attends Joliet Junior College and is majoring in Agriculture Production Management. He hopes to own and operate his own beef cattle farm one day and also hopes to inspire aspiring farmers and encourage them to start their own farms as well.



Jennifer Miller, Justice: General Agriculture Scholarship

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.



Matthew Smits, Chicago Heights: General Agriculture Scholarship

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.



Leah Sheehan, Palatine: General Agriculture Scholarship

Sheehan attends the University of Minnesota and is majoring in Industrial/Systems Engineering. Her involvement in 4-H contributed to her passion for agriculture and with her degree, she hopes to create smarter systems that can solve, or limit, the challenges that many farmers and ag workers face today.



Meghan Czerwinski, Wilmette: General Agriculture Scholarship

Czerwinski will attend North Carolina State University in the fall and will major in Animal Science with a minor in Nutrition. She hopes to provide modern, quality veterinary care and promote sustainable agriculture practices specifically to dairy cattle.



Sophia Roy, Chicago: General Agriculture Scholarship

Roy will attend William Woods University and will double major in Equine Business Administration and Equestrian Science. After college she plans to build a career in the equestrian industry working at a large-scale boarding, breeding, and training facility and hopes to eventually own a multipurpose farm.



Lilliana Bernabei, Ottawa: General Agriculture Scholarship

Bernabei will attend Iowa State University in the fall and will major in Agricultural Business. She plans to pursue a career in agriculture real estate, with the ultimate goal of opening her own brokerage. She hopes to support the growth of the ag community and help farmers and landowners navigate the complexities of real estate.



Graham Breaker, Wilmette: General Agriculture Scholarship

Breaker will attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison and will major in Dairy and Food Animal Management. He realizes that there is a need for young people who are passionate about agriculture to be more involved. He hopes to create positive changes in the ag community and improve the lives of 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.

Money Talks: Helping Kids Build Financial Confidence

By Jennifer Killian, IAA Credit Union Marketing Manager

How many of you have talked to your children about finances? If you haven't yet, you're not alone. A surprising 41% of parents admit they've never discussed money with their kids. April is National Credit Union Youth Month, making it the perfect time to start the conversation. According to a Greenlight survey, this communication gap contributes to the fact that 3 out of 4 teens lack confidence in their financial knowledge.



Jennifer Killian

What is Financial Literacy?

Financial literacy is understanding and using financial skills and concepts effectively. It encompasses critical skills such as:

- Opening a bank account
- Using debit and credit cards responsibly
- Basic budgeting
- Managing and paying off debt

Why Financial Literacy Matters.

Financial literacy equips

individuals with the tools to make informed decisions and achieve financial wellness. Here are some key benefits:

- Fosters a better understanding of real-world financial decisions.
- Helps manage money effectively and establish healthy spending and budgeting habits.
- Reduces vulnerability to financial fraud.
- Supports life goals like saving for education, using debt responsibly, and planning for retirement.

Despite its importance, only seven U.S. states currently mandate at least one semester of financial education in schools. That's why financial institutions like IAA Credit Union step in to bridge the gap through initiatives like Money Smart Week, National Credit Union Youth Month, and American Saves.

How IAA Credit Union Supports Financial Literacy.

Since 1951, IAA Credit Union has served the Illinois Farm Bureau Family of Companies and their employees. Beyond traditional banking services, we're committed to financial

education, offering youth-focused programs tailored to every stage of development:

Kids Club (Ages 0-12)

The Kids Club is designed as an introductory savings account, helping children learn the basics of saving for short- and long-term goals. Benefits include:

- Earning "Penny Bucks" to exchange for toys in our lobby.
- Access to the Greenlight app, a trusted family money management tool.
- Invitation to attend FREE local Kids Club Events throughout the year.

Dollars & Sense Club (Ages 13-17)

The Dollars & Sense Club builds on the foundation of the Kids Club, offering

- Savings rollovers from Kids Club accounts.
- First checking accounts with no minimum balance or monthly fees.
- Remote deposit capabilities and online banking.
- Access to over 35,000 ATMs with your debit card.
- Youth CDs with as little as \$500 to start.
- Continued access to

the Greenlight app, fostering independence with parental supervision.

Elite Club (Ages 18-23)

The Elite Club prepares young adults to manage their finances independently while still offering support:

- Savings and checking account rollovers from Dollars & Sense Club.
- Access to remote deposits, online banking, and no-fee checking.
- Exclusive perks such as getting the lowest possible rate on first loans and access to a secured Visa credit card.
- GreenPath resources for free financial education, including budgeting assistance, credit reviews, and debt management plans.

What is Greenlight?

Greenlight is the loved and trusted financial education app and debit card for kids and teens that allows parents to instantly send their kids money, set up chores and allowances, create savings goals, and more. As an IAA Credit Union member, you get the Select Plan for free (a \$70 value) when you register via our unique link and add your IAA Credit Union checking account as a funding

source. Parents can add up to 5 kids, each getting their own debit card. Once registration is complete, debit cards will be shipped for each child, ready for use upon activation.

Practical Tips for Teaching Kids About Money

- **Lead by Example:** Share your budget and financial decisions in age-appropriate ways.
- **Encourage Open Conversations:** Talk about money regularly and celebrate milestones.
- **Reinforce Good Habits:** Help kids practice saving and spending wisely.
- **Embrace Mistakes:** Allow children to learn from small financial missteps now to avoid larger mistakes later.

Ready to Join?

IAA Credit Union's Youth Program sets your child on the path to financial success from ages 0-23, culminating in a Platinum-Level Membership. Let's empower the next generation with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive financially.



Become a member today! Together, we can build a future of financially confident and capable young adults. Scan the QR code to learn more!

Planting Seeds *Ag Day is the Best Day of the Year*

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



Katrina J.E. Milton

My favorite day of the year is Ag Day. Luckily for us in Cook County, we have two Ag Days!

Ag Day North, held at Historic Wagner Farm in Glenview, and Ag Day South, held at The Children's Farm in Palos Park, are two-hour field trips for Cook County third grade students.

What do I love most about the day? Everything! I love

the excitement of the students as they run off their yellow bus, happy to be on a field trip away from their school. I love the joy on their faces as they get to pet a horse, hold a chicken, or stand next to a tractor for the first time. I love the questions they ask, eager to learn more about a new subject. I love the teachers' and chaperones' big eyes and looks of astonishment as they learn something new about agriculture as adults. I love how the students groan and complain as they have to file back onto their school bus because they don't want to leave.

However, what I love most of all about Ag Day is receiving the evaluation forms back in the mail from the schools, with each student listing two things they learned and a drawing of their experience.

Last year, feedback from teachers included:

- The ag field trip is so wonderful – an amazing experience for **all** who attend. For the majority of our students, this was their 1st time at a farm.
- My students always find this field trip to be amazing because of the live animals and hands-on instruction – it is unbelievable how excited they are when they leave!!!
- It was so nice to get our students interested in IL agriculture. Our students learned a lot!
- This field trip touches on topics not all curricula do. It is an **excellent** real-world application of knowledge!
- As city children, learning about farm animals and how to care for them, and about the resources we get from them was invaluable to their education.

Feedback from students included:

- Best field trip ever!!!!
- I had so much fun!
- I'm going to tell my family that agriculture is a lot of hard work.
- Agriculture is not just about animals.
- The cow went number 1 and number 2!

My favorite feedback was a student's answer to the question, "What did you like best?" The answer: "The people."

Ag Day is a reminder to me that we often take agricultural knowledge and experiences for granted. On Ag Day, students are able to do and see things that some adults may never have the chance to do: visit a working farm, ask a farmer questions, see farm animals, and yes – see a cow go number 1 and number 2.

Ag Day is everything I love about agriculture: education, real-life applications and perspectives, career opportunities, and fun on the farm. It's always a lot of planning and organizing before the event, but when it's over and my feet are tired and sore, I couldn't be happier. I can sit back and relax knowing that students (and their adults!) learned about agriculture, they had fun, and they made memories that will last a lifetime. For me, that is what makes Ag Day the best day of the year.

Katrina can be reached at aitc@cookcfb.org.



Teacher Institute Day On February 28, Cook County Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom Program presented to 60 teachers of District 104 in Summit/Bedford Park as part of the school district's institute day. The teachers learned about our AITC program and how to bring soil science and Earth Day topics to their classrooms.

Pictured: Teachers learn how water causes soil erosion with a hands-on activity during School District 104's Teacher Institute Day.

Learn About Tulips with Illinois Ag in the Classroom!

Learn more about tulips and spring planting with Chris Wyant, Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom's Education Manager, as part of his YouTube series "Minute with a Guy Who Thinks Everyone Needs a Garden."

Wyant and his family own Finding Eminence Farm in McLean County.

In the series, he will show you what is happening with his garden throughout the year. He'll talk about how gardening and farming are both similar and different, and highlight some gardening projects you can add to your own garden or bring into your classroom.



Watch on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/wcUMX-Qjupo>



Educators: Earn 8 CPDUs/PDCH with Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation's Summer Ag Institute!

Route 66 starts in Chicago – and so does our SAI! This year's theme is "Cook County's Ag Connections to Historic Route 66 and Transportation."

Learn more about Route 66 before the highway's 100th anniversary in 2026, as well as other forms of transportation, including waterways and railways. Scheduled itinerary subject to change.

Cost is \$50 each day or \$75 for both days for Illinois Farm Bureau members.

For more information, email Katrina at aitc@cookcfb.org or call 708-354-3276. **To register for SAI, visit bit.ly/SAI2025RSVP.**

Day 1: Cruisin' Chicago: Route 66 Trolley and Waterway Adventure

8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. | Tuesday, June 17, 2025 | Held in Chicago
Meet in downtown Chicago for a full-day, all-inclusive adventure including an historic Route 66 trolley tour, Wendella lake and river architecture tour, and a guided tour of the McCormick Bridgehouse Museum. Lunch and all tours included. Parking NOT included.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 8:30 a.m. Meet at Harris Theater | 1:00 p.m. Wendella Lake & River Architecture Tour |
| 9:00 a.m. Historic Route 66 Trolley Tour | 3:30 p.m. McCormick Bridgehouse Museum |
| Noon Lunch at the Billy Goat Tavern | 5:00 p.m. End, Return to Parking |

Day 2: Roads, Rivers, and Rails with Illinois AITC

8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. | Wednesday, July 9, 2025 | Held at the Cook CFB, 6438 Joliet Rd., Countryside, IL 60525

Learn more about Illinois' agricultural connections to transportation. Guest speakers will present about biofuels, including ethanol and biodiesel. Hands-on activities will teach engineering and map-reading skills. Lunch included. Held at the CCFB in Countryside.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 8:30 a.m. Welcome | 12:45 – 1:45 p.m. Guest Speaker |
| 9 – 12 p.m. IAITC Presentation | 2 – 2:45 p.m. Guest Speaker |
| Noon Lunch | 3 – 4:30 p.m. CCFB Lessons and Connections |
| | 4:30 – 5 p.m. Summary/Forms |



AGRICULTURE ADVENTURES FOR FAMILIES



April 4 is International Carrot Day!

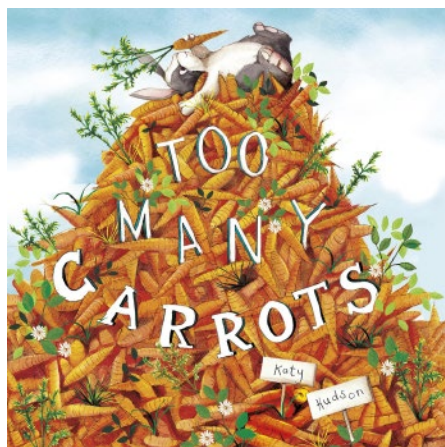
Dilly Carrots Recipe: Submitted by Charles Walker of Lemont

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 lb baby carrots
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups cider vinegar
- 3 cloves garlic peeled
- 1 tablespoon dried red pepper
- 1 tablespoon dill seeds
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 4 sprigs fresh dill cut in 1 inch lengths with stems

INSTRUCTIONS:

Scrub or pare carrots and trim ends if dark. Heat the water, vinegar, garlic, pepper flakes, dill seeds, and salt in large saucepan to rolling boil. Add carrots and heat to simmering. Reduce heat and simmer covered for 10 minutes. Using tongs, arrange carrots in hot sterilized pint jars. Ladle hot vinegar mixture into jars, covering carrots and distributing spices evenly. Tuck fresh dill between carrots. Cover jars tightly with new lids; let cool. Store in refrigerator 2-3 days. Flavor improves with storage.



Ag-Accurate Book Recommendation

"Too Many Carrots" by Katy Hudson

Amazon Book Summary:

Carrot-obsessed Rabbit enjoys collecting his favorite vegetable to the point that his den is so crowded with carrots that there isn't enough room for him. Rabbit sets out to solve his problem with the help of his friends.

CRAZY ABOUT Carrots?

- Carrots are 88% water.
- Baby carrots are regular carrots cut and shaped to a smaller size.
- China, Uzbekistan, Russia, and the United States are the top four countries that produce carrots.
- California produces more than 85% of all the carrots grown in the United States.
- About 2,000 carrot seeds can fit in a teaspoon.
- On average, a person will consume 10,866 carrots in their lifetime.

Carrots are colorful due to carotenoids, which are natural pigments found in plants, algae, and some bacteria. Here are where the colors come from:

- **ORANGE** – beta-carotene, also found in sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and apricots
- **RED** – lycopene, also found in tomatoes, pomegranates, and red peppers
- **PURPLE** – anthocyanins, also found in berries, grapes, plums, and cabbage
- **YELLOW** – lutein, a type of xanthophyll also found in corn and egg yolks
- WHITE** – no color pigments

April Word Search

Last Month's Winner:
William Bilotta

Baby	F K D G Q K O Q B P S V Y N N
Carotenoids	G E Y H X R V K X D O E B A T
Carrot	R R Y O A Q G Z I N X G A T H
Grow	N U O N M Y B O K Z F E B U S
Natural	I K G W U X N B D F I T M R Q
Orange	O E L I U E B V M I Q A F A T
Pigments	B S H O T R I J O P D B V L W
Plants	D R H O E T I H W L B L S E P
Purple	C V R A M T S S U E X E T E U
Red	X A S W P D E E V L L G M B Z
Seeds	C X G T O E E F S P O T H X W
Shape	R Z I L N L C A R R O T N A L
Vegetable	N K Z R X A L R A U H L T A R
Water	K F X N N G L E A P S E E D S
White	S T N E M G I P Y L R C Z W I
Yellow	

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!**

FACE OF FARM BUREAU

Chicago Tomato Man

Business Name: Chicago Tomato Man
Owner: Bob Zeni | **Address:** 425 North Park Rd., LaGrange Park
Phone: 708-466-4700 | **Website:** www.ChicagoTomatoMan.com
Facebook: None | **CCFB Member since** 2022

BRIEF HISTORY OF BUSINESS

Chicago Tomato Man began as a hobby around 25 years ago when my disgust for those tasteless travesties that supermarkets claim are “tomatoes” prompted me to start growing a few heirloom seedlings in my basement. The first several years I made nearly every mistake you possibly can in seed starting. Eventually I learned productive techniques. I had extras so I gave them away to family, friends and neighbors. They soon asked for more. My first sale of 50 plants eleven years ago spiraled up to 10,000 plants sold in 2024. I also donated more than 1,500 heirloom plants to more than a dozen charities in 2024.



What is your favorite farm related memory?

I grew up downstate in Decatur. Intown so I wasn't raised on a farm. Once, however, my father and I helped a friend of his harvest corn. As the combine sprayed the corn into the bed of the truck moving alongside, my job was pushing the corn to the sides of the bed to prevent the pile from getting too high, spilling the corn out of the bed. We did it all day. By end of day, I was exhausted. But it was so fun!

What do you “specialize” in?

Heirloom tomato plants. Many common varieties such as Cherokee Purple and Box Car Willie, but also many new, rare and exotic varieties such as Copper River, Marmo, Mar Azul, Pork Chop and Wolverine.

If you were not doing this, what would you be doing?

Writing short stories.

What is your favorite season?

Spring.

What is your favorite plant?

Special name? Well an heirloom tomato!

What is the most unusual question or request you have received? “Can you grow a tomato without watering it?”

What is your most valuable piece of equipment? Probably my computer. We sell all of our plants through our website. And track all inventory through specialized software. Without all that tracking, we'd be out of business.

What is your favorite food?

A hand-picked, homegrown, heirloom tomato fresh off the vine. Nothing tastes better!

What brings joy to you?

Hanging around with my wife and grown children, savoring our time together.

Why Volunteer?

National Volunteer Appreciation Week is scheduled for April 20 – 26th. Cook County Farm Bureau has a great group of members that provide their energy, enthusiasm, time, expertise and passion for agriculture to strengthen the serve to members, programs and activities of the organization throughout the year. So...why do they do it? We asked a few and here are some of the responses!



Farm Bureau volunteer, Cindy Gustafson (right), presents Senator Suzy Glowiak Hilton with the 2024 Friend of Agriculture Award as part of her volunteerism with the Governmental Affairs Committee.

“I enjoy volunteering with the Governmental Affairs Committee because it's a way for me to stay up to date on legislative issues that impact our members. And I think meeting with state and local officials helps them to understand the unintended consequences of some of the proposed policies. At both the state and local levels, Farm

Bureau staff is very active and knowledgeable and is a pleasure to work with.”

– *Cindy Gustafson, Governmental Affairs Committee*



Bryan Blau, Public Relations Team volunteer, shops for food donations during last year's Food Checkout Day shopping spree.

“I volunteer at CCFB as it is my way of giving back to the community and help support, promote and educate agriculture to the urban communities of Cook County.”

– *Bryan Blau, Public Relations Team*



Rebecca Biernacki, Young Leaders Team, represented

Hear from some of our members!

CCFB as part of Leaders to Washington DC last year.

“I love to volunteer because I am passionate about supporting local agriculture, connecting with the community and advocating for a successful future for the agriculture industry. It's rewarding to contribute to initiatives that educate members of the community in a way that encourages everyone to get involved in agriculture.”

– *Rebecca Biernacki, Young Leaders Team*



CCFB Ag Literacy Team Member Terry Landschoot (left) helps with a seed growing activity at the Farm Bureau's Party for the Pollinators in 2022.

“Since retiring, I've been fortunate to volunteer at CCFB in a variety of ways outside of the classroom. Kids' faces really do light up when working with seeds and learning about butterflies (pollinator workshops at CCFB and Brookfield Zoo). Parents were also amazed at agricultural ‘fun facts’ that they never had

At The Farm Gate

by Joanie Stiers



Repair, Maintenance Keep the Farm Running

Dad lifts the side panel of the combine to expose the gears, bearings, pulleys, chains and belts. And every single time, I'm in awe of its complexity and how anyone can understand how to engineer the machine or repair and maintain it. I'm thankful for the genius minds who designed a combine that “combined” the functions previously accomplished by multiple pieces of equipment, horses and open-station tractors. I'm especially grateful to the mechanically inclined brains on our farm who can fix and maintain it.

Socially accepted advice tells us to spend time on what's important, and our farm commits a significant amount of time on repair and maintenance. In fact, my son has an FFA recordbook project with 1,000 hours focused on the subject area.

Repairs generally reduce costs compared to replacement. Maintenance intends to prevent repairs and costly “machine down” situations in the busy seasons. That strategy works most of the time to provide risk mitigation, a fancy way of saying we want to minimize the risk of breakdowns, accidents, delayed field operations, extra man hours and mental stress.

Equipment cycles through the shop about 60 days before its intended use in the field. This winter, our shop crew disassembled and replaced wear parts

on every row unit on the planters, changed oils and filters in the tractors that pull them, and checked over the sprayers by early March. On each item, they look for small problems that could morph into big ones. That shop time soon will extend to each combine. Each head attachment. The grain carts. The tractors again. Semi trucks and grain trailers. By winter, the cycle resets.

In all, our farm keeps repair and maintenance records for about 100 items, from lots of little equipment like leaf blowers and chainsaws to 500-horsepower tractors – anything that has an engine, tires, grease points or wearable parts. We DIY as much as possible and call in a technician when the repair exceeds our abilities.

My dad and experienced employees teach the next generation shop skills as their interests and time allow. My son starts a typical weekday leaving home at 6:45 a.m. to train at a college welding class to improve his repair skills. Then, he goes to high school and afterward focuses on repair and maintenance in the farm shop when we're not in the field. He plans to be among the next mechanically minded who keep the farm running.

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.

the opportunity to learn.”

– *Terry Landschoot, Ag Literacy Team*



Jack Smith served as Agency Manager of the Country Financial Schaumburg Agency for

33 years, working with CCFB members to help protect their most valuable possessions.

“I have been volunteering with the Cook County Farm Bureau for over 33 years. It is an outstanding organization that gives back to not only

its members, but to the communities of Cook County. Too many ways to list. I highly recommend looking into Cook County Farm Bureau.”

– *Jack Smith, Member Relations Team*

In recognition of the significant contributions of our members (186 contributing volunteers in 2024), the board will be donating \$1,600 to Hattie B. Williams Food Pantry and Maine Township Food Pantry, our beneficiaries of Food Checkout Day 2025.

We thank all our volunteers and look forward to another great year with your leadership!

Manifolds, Manolos, and Manure

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



Bona Heinsohn

National Agriculture Day celebrates the contributions of farmers and the farm products they grow and raise. In celebration of farmers, Cook County Commissioner Scott Britton of Glenview introduced Resolution 25-1792, which recognizes and celebrates National Agriculture Day.

Resolution Commissioners Frank Aguliar, Alma Anaya, John Daley, Bridget Degnen, Bridget Gainer, Bill Lowry, Dr. Kisha McCaskill, Donna Miller, Stanley Moore, Josina Morita, Kevin Morrison, Sean Morrison, Anthony Quezada, Michael Scott Jr., Tara Stamps, and Maggie Trevor are co-sponsors of the resolution.

In addition to celebrating the abundance of Cook County agriculture, the resolution highlights agriculture's impact on the local community, including that agriculture and agriculture related industries support over 110,000 jobs and generate over \$15.4 billion in value-added.

The resolution provides:

WHEREAS, Illinois is home to more than 72,000 farms, 94 percent of which are family-owned; and

WHEREAS, Agriculture includes the growing,

raising, and harvesting of crops for both human and animal consumption as well as the raising of livestock; and

WHEREAS, Cook County agriculture and related industries support over 110,000 jobs and generate over \$15.4 billion in value-added; and

WHEREAS, Cook County is home to nearly 11,000 acres of farmland according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture; and

WHEREAS, Cook County agriculture includes vegetable, floriculture, honey production, grain, nursery, and row crop production as well as livestock; and

WHEREAS, Cook County's agricultural landscape includes horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys; and

WHEREAS, Cook County is ranked first in the state for equine production with a sales volume of over \$2.2 million; and

WHEREAS, Cook County also leads the state in honey sales; and

WHEREAS, Cook County ranks twelfth in the state for nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod production; and

WHEREAS, Cook County is home to numerous

examples of urban agriculture including the raising, cultivation, processing, marketing, and distribution of food in urban and suburban settings; and

WHEREAS, Urban agriculture generally involves outdoor and indoor vertical production, indoor warehouse farms, greenhouses, rooftop farms, hydroponic and aquaponic facilities; and

WHEREAS, 97 Cook County farms are certified organic by the United States Department of Agriculture; and

WHEREAS, many Cook County farmers sell directly to consumers at farmstands, roadside markets, farmers markets, and through community support agriculture; and

WHEREAS, Cook and Illinois farmers grow healthy and nutritious food; and

WHEREAS, Farmland is a finite resource that is vital to agriculture, food production, and the economic well-being of Cook County; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners recognize March 18, 2025 as National Agriculture Day.

A tremendous thank you to Commissioner Britton and his staff for shepherding the resolution through the approval process and for recognizing the amazing contributions of Cook County agriculture!

Cook County Leaders Visit Illinois Capitol

Cook County Farm Bureau leaders (bottom to top) Theresa Johnston, Ruth Zeldenrust, Janet McCabe, and Cindy Gustafson visited the Illinois State Capitol the morning of Governor Pritzker's seventh budget address. Farm Bureau leaders met with Cook County legislators to discuss priority Farm Bureau issues including the estate tax, nuisance deer, and wetlands.



Farm Bureau Leaders Visit with Downstate Senator

Cook County Farm Bureau leaders Cindy Gustafson (left) and Janet McCabe (right) visited with Illinois Senator Terry Bryant from downstate Murphysboro during a recent visit to the Illinois Capitol. Senator Bryant provided an overview of the legislative and budget process. Senator Bryant serves as Assistant Republican Leader.



Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias Visits with Cook County Farm Bureau® Leaders

Farm Bureau leaders Janet McCabe (pictured left), Cindy Gustafson (middle), and British Griffis (pictured right) meet with Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias during this year's Statewide Legislative Reception in Springfield.

First-Time Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference Attendees Visit with Representative



Farm Bureau leaders Theresa Johnston and British Griffis visited with State Representative Theresa Mah from Chicago. Representative Mah was the first Asian American elected to the Illinois General Assembly. She now serves as Majority Conference Chairperson. Pictured with Mah are Johnston and Griffis who attended the Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference for the first time in February.

Representative Smith Visits with Farm Bureau Leaders



During the 2025 Statewide Legislative Reception, Majority Office and Sergeant at Arms Nick Smith met with Cook County Farm Bureau leaders (left to right) Cindy Gustafson, Ruth Zeldenrust, and Janet McCabe. Representative Smith has served in the Illinois House since 2018 and Gustafson and Zeldenrust are both constituents of Smith's.

Take a Priority Role in Monitoring Local Zoning Regulations

Originally printed in LINK, February 2025

Understanding county and municipal government regulation of agriculture through land-use planning and zoning is one of Farm Bureau's 2025 Local Government Priorities. Zoning is truly a local issue. While state statute has set some parameters, it leaves much of the application up to those county and municipal governments that have adopted it. To complicate matters, in counties or municipalities where zoning has been adopted, the regulation of agriculture is inconsistent- either through local application or statutory authority.

County Regulation

In Illinois, only about half of our 102 counties are zoned. Apart from counties around St. Louis, most are in the northern half of the state. In counties that have adopted zoning, state law limits their ability to regulate agriculture by stating:

..."The powers in this section of statute shall not be exercised...so as to impose regulations or require permits with respect to land used or to be used for agricultural purposes...or with respect to ...buildings or structures used or to be used for agricultural purposes upon such land except that such buildings or structures...may be required to conform to building or set back lines..."

In other words, counties may not use zoning to regulate land and buildings used for agricultural purposes including limitations on size, location, and design. The only exception to this is setback restrictions on agricultural buildings.

Municipal Regulation

Municipalities also have the authority to adopt zoning. However, as is the case with counties, not all of Illinois' nearly 1,300 municipalities have done so. Unlike counties, state law does not place the same limitations on municipal zoning authority, thereby granting them much more control over agriculture, agritourism, and farming operations. This is often done through ordinances that define agriculture or agritourism as a permitted use or restrict it as a non-conforming use.

If a county is not zoned, a municipality may extend its zoning beyond its boundaries for up to 1.5 miles. This extension is allowed under extraterritorial jurisdiction authority. Through this reach, a municipality can control the use of property outside its boundaries, including farms. With this authority, even those county Farm Bureaus in counties that have not adopted zoning should consider monitoring the regulation of agriculture near municipalities.

Our Priorities

This type of diversity across the state creates inconsistencies, overreach, and, on the flip side, omissions when regulating agricultural and agritourism development. We will work with county Farm Bureaus to address those concerns by providing tools to identify and limit county government overreach when regulating agriculture and encourage counties and municipalities that have zoning to adopt ag-friendly language and code administration that supports current agriculture and agritourism practices.

MEMBER APPRECIATION WEEK 2025

Monday, April 14 – Friday, April 18 *Continued from Page 1*

Must be a member paid in good standing to enter. Scan the QR Code on Page 1 to Renew Now!

Entry form can be mailed to the office, faxed to 708-579-6056, emailed to fbcooperator@gmail.com, or at <https://bit.ly/4iAkviJ>. 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.

Questions?? Please call us at 708-354-3276! We wish all our members a prosperous and healthy 2025. We look forward to serving you!

Member Appreciation Week Entry Form
Monday, April 14 – Friday, April 18, 2025

Name _____

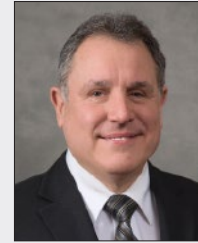
Email _____

Phone # _____

Member # _____

COOK COUNTY Agents of the Month

The Agent of the Month program is designed by COUNTRY® Financial District Leaders 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 District Leaders with the Agent of the Month designation.



THOMAS GERAGHTY

has been named Agent of the Month February 2025 by Cary Tate, District Leader. Tom's office is located at 5003 W. 95th St, Oak Lawn, IL. His phone number is 708-425-9700. Tom has been an Agent with COUNTRY® Financial since December 1982.

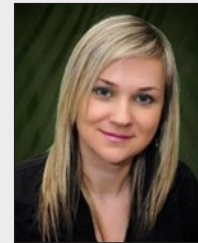
Orland Park Agency, Cary Tate, District Leader



ANGEL BELTRAN

has been named Agent of the month for February 2025 by Vicki Nygren, District Leader. Angel's office is located at 8101 Polo Club Dr, Ste 2, MERRILLVILLE, IN. His phone number is 219-472-1828.

Chicago North Agency, Vicki Nygren, District Leader



KATHY SPIEWAK

We would like to highlight Kathy Spiewak for the month of February 2025. Kathy's office is located at 830 E. Higgins Rd, Ste 111A, Schaumburg, IL. Her phone number is 847-716-1010. Kathy has been an Agent with COUNTRY® Financial since February 2007.

Chicago Northwest Agency, Kevin Gomes, District Leader

**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.*

Take a look at the recent events offered to CCFB members!

For upcoming events and workshops, see page 12.



BEGINNING BEEKEEPING March 2025, Illinois Bee Rescue trainers, Pete and Kim, did an amazing job of educating and training seven future beekeepers. Since 2012, beekeeping training has been an important program hosted at the Cook County Farm Bureau.



CHEESE 101 The CCFB hosted a Cheese 101 workshop this March. Thanks to Meredith Meder from Full Circle Cheese for teaching our members about different milk types and cheese styles as well as how to eat, buy, and store cheeses.



HOW TO GROW A GIANT PUMPKIN 101 Member and Giant Pumpkin Aficionado, Mark Moulas, presented the Grow a Giant Pumpkin 101 Workshop on Feb 25 at CCFB. Mark shared his tips and tricks and seeds from his winning 2024 Giant Pumpkin!

DISCOVER LOCAL

CO-OPERATOR PULL-OUT SECTION 2024

Greenhouses, Garden Centers, Farm Stands, Agritourism, Landscaping, Pumpkins, Flowers, U-pick, Herbs...

It has become an annual marketing tradition...the Discover Local special pullout section in the Co-Operator featuring the best of Cook area agriculture! The 2025 version will be available next month when it lands in your mailbox!



Mayflower Cruises & Tours

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

To begin your "Life Enriching Experience" with North American Group travel, River Cruising & Small Ship Adventures, European Holidays, Railway Adventures, and so much more.

Contact Tina Patel at Mayflower and state you're a Cook County Farm Bureau member to receive added savings:

Discount Code: Cook County Farm Bureau member

Call Tina Patel at 630-435-8259 or

email tinap@mayflowercruisesandtours.com

Digital brochures at:

<https://www.mayflowercruisesandtours.com/>

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

Northern IL Farm Bureaus Set Sail to Hawaii – Trip Opportunity

Come out and travel with fellow Farm Bureau members!

Set winter aside and plan to cruise the Hawaiian islands this September with Northern Illinois Farm Bureaus and Mayflower Cruises & Tours.

This Hawaiian cruise departs September 17th and returns the 28th, 2025, weaving between Honolulu, Oahu, and visiting Maui, Hawaii and Kauai. Tour cosmopolitan Honolulu, Waikiki beaches and the Iolani Palace. Visit Maui's Haleakala National Park to view volcanoes and Lahaina for boutiques and cafes.

Please call for more information: 630-584-8660 OR go to <https://cookcfb.org/membership/member-resources/member-benefits/profile/travel>

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

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

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

4 Tiger Paw all season tires. Size 255-45x20". Tires like new, less than 800 miles. \$250. Call Don 847-358-1718.

Cover for F150 P/U 6 1/2' bed, blue. \$200. Call 708-579-5439

Coleman Powermate generator. 5000 running watts 6250 maximum watts. \$300. Call 708-579-5439

MDT snow blower 2 stage, 6 forward, 2 reverse 28". 277 CC OHC \$300. Call 708-579-5439.

Vintage Nelsonville Ohio Circle Cube brick pavers (early 1900's) - 10.5" x 2.5". 300 pavers available, worth up to \$6,000 if sold individually. Will sell whole lot for \$4,000. Call Dave 708-264-4901. Picture available online.

Classic limited edition 2002 Jaguar XKR100 super charged 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.

2010 Volkswagen Jetta, 186,000 miles, model 2.5 engine. Runs great, very clean interior. \$1,900 firm. Needs minor body touch up. Call Louie 847-361-9292, Pictures available online.

2001 Ford Crown Vic runs and drives like new. Cold AC, no rust or dents, interior close to new. Southern car. New brakes, shocks, front suspension and overall. Engine has minor noise, which could be major. Sell for \$1,650. Call 847-358-0972 ask for Don.

Solo brick building zoned commercial B2 with full basement. Ideal location one mile to expressway and 2 1/2 blocks to Arlington Park train station. Contact Rita Joan for more info 815-600-4828.

All items are brand new, in box, never used (shower duplicates), prices listed or best offer. Call Paul 708-826-0000:

- George Foreman 60 square inch Super Champ Family Grill \$54
- Toastmaster 4-slice toaster oven/broiler \$50
- Proctor Silex Durable Toaster Oven/ Broiler, 4 slice capacity \$54
- Mr. Coffee 12 cup switch on/off indicator light \$24
- Rachel Ray 3-piece BBQ tool set \$24
- Hamilton Beach 6 Quart Slow Cooker, oval (fits 6 lb chicken or 4 lb roast) \$60
- Proctor Silex space saving blender \$33
- Parini Quesadilla Maker \$49
- Elite Cuisine non-stick sandwich maker \$19
- Vicks warm steam vaporizer \$17

FOR RENT

Arlington Heights 4 bedroom, 2 bath house with two car garage. 8 rooms, 3 levels, new kitchen and finished basement. Near train and expressway. 312 N Reuter St, Arlington Heights. Must have good credit. No dogs. \$3,200 per month. Call Louis 847-361-9292

WANTED

Wanted 5 ft blow mold Santa, with or without light. Call 708-439-9770.

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

I buy vintage sports cards and non-sports items. Call or text John 773-213-4024

Wanted 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 Ron a call at 630-273-4433

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
"K"

**KANSAS CITY
BBQ RUB**



Kansas City-style BBQ originated in 1908 with pitmaster Henry Perry, who got his start selling smoked meats in the city's garment district.



A typical Kansas City rub includes ingredients like brown sugar, salt, spices (including celery seed), onion, garlic, molasses, and prepared yellow mustard.

Kansas City BBQ Rub is warm, earthy, herbaceous, and peppery.

KC BBQ dry rib rub is ideal for grilling or smoking pork, ribs and brisket on the barbecue but is also used with chicken, turkey, and with a lighter hand over seafood.



For Sides

Kansas BBQ Rub is a great condiment to sprinkle directly on Honey Mustard Potato Salad, your favorite potato salad, or over deviled eggs.

STORE IT IN AN AIRTIGHT CONTAINER IN A COOL, DARK PLACE FOR 6-12 MONTHS.



Kansas City BBQ Rub is an MSG-free barbecue rub that is also referred to as bulk BBQ rub, bulk BBQ seasoning, Kansas City rib rub, and Kansas City style BBQ rub.

Next month...Lavender

Source: <https://spicesinc.com/seasoning-blends/kansas-city-bbq-rub>

Congratulations! 2025 CookFresh® Community Urban Garden Grant Recipients

- **Green Thumb In A Box, Michigan Terrace Garden**, located in Chicago's Washington Park neighborhood is a living demonstration garden designed to inspire and educate residents on how to grow food in small spaces in unique ways. The garden's initiative serves to empower the community with hands-on learning with sustainable growing practices with residents receiving the harvest yields. Grant funds will be used for plantings, seed, soil, and supplies for the garden.
- **Riverside Community Garden**, located in Riverside is an Illinois 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 plants, compost, and soil.

- **Berwyn Roots: Serenity Park Comm Garden/Proska Park Children's Gaarden/Ebenezer Neighborhood Garden**: these three gardens all reside in the town of Berwyn serving every age of resident. They are home to free and low-cost events that encourage growing food, fruit, and pollinators. The garden's yield of produce, fruits, herbs, and seeds are used to support community fridges, free plant distribution, seed swaps, and more. Grant funds will be used for vegetable and herb plants, perennials, compost, and supplies for the garden.
- **Community Roots Garden NFP**, located in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood is a not-for-profit garden started in 2024 serving the south side to produce organic produce and herbs in raised garden beds. A pollinator garden featuring native plants was also created to attract bees and butterflies to benefit their

- crops and eco-system. The garden hopes to increase the residents access to fresh organic produce/ herbs and cultivate a community, offering growing classes, education, and access. Grant funds will be used for herb plantings, fruit bushes, and strawberry plants.
- **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 and tomato plants, compost, soil, pollinator seeds, and supplies for the garden.
- **South Holland Kids Community Garden** is a new, first-time community garden is located in South Holland,

- serving several school districts within the Village. The garden will allow kids a place to plant, grow, learn, and play, to improve social, emotional, and confidence skills while consuming fresh local grown produce and fruit. A Kids Farmers Market will also allow opportunities to increase skills and learning. Grant funds will be used for vegetable plantings, seeds, compost, soil, and lumber.
- **Respond Now Community Garden**, located in Chicago Heights, looks to revitalize the garden that was relaunched in 2024. The garden provides community members in need with fresh and nutritious produce for the local food pantry, and a place to gather to learn how to grow their own food. Grant funds will be used for vegetable plantings and starts, compost, fertilizer, and supplies.

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**

Member Appreciation Week

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 can enter for a chance to win great prizes, free memberships, and a daily gift full of fun for you! See page 1 for more info!

DATE: April 14-18, 2025

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

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: Monday, April 14, 2025 **TIME:** 6:00-7:30 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.

Container Gardening 101 | Soil Health | Master Gardener Q & A

(As part of celebrating Member Appreciation Week)

Whether you live in an apartment, condo, townhome, or single-family home, you probably have the space for the color and interest of container gardens, one of the hottest trends in gardening. The course covers container selection, plant selection, simple design considerations, the proper planting, and maintenance to help ensure success. Also hear about soil health and the soil test program available. There will also be an opportunity for Q & A with an Illinois Master Gardener. Maximum class size 40. Program presented by Illinois Extension South Suburban Master Gardener, Cook County Farm Bureau volunteer, and staff.



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

DATE: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 **TIME:** 10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

COST: FREE

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

Make a Spring Planter Workshop with Zeldenrust Farm Market

Zeldenrust Farm Market staff will lead us in creating our own Spring Flower planter filled with flowering annuals that will create a beautiful visual interest for any yard, patio, or porch. Join us for this must attend spring event by registering early. Class size is limited to 18. Spring inspired refreshments provided.



LOCATION: Zeldenrust Farm Market, 117 231st St, Steger, IL (Former Ray's Quality Greenhouse location)

DATE: Thursday, May 1, 2025 **TIME:** 6:00 p.m.

COST: \$45.00 for members and guests: includes pot, soil, and all planting materials

REGISTRATION: Call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276 or online for members accessing member account at: www.myifb.org.

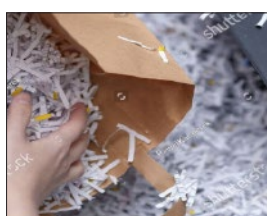
Shred Day Bring any old documents (up to three bankers' boxes) that you would like to have shredded.

DATE: Saturday, May 3, 2025 | **TIME:** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

PRICE: No Charge

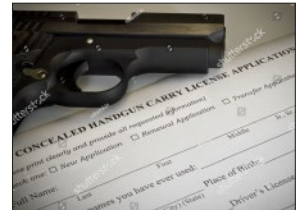
LOCATION: CCFB Parking Lot, 6438 Joliet Rd., Countryside

REGISTRATION: Call the CCFB at 708-354-3276 to make a reservation.



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 7 hours 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 8 hours consists of eight hours of classroom covering Illinois laws pertaining to the "Concealed Carry Act" and the legal use of deadly force with a firearm.



DATES/TIME: Saturday, May 3, 2025 from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Sunday, May 4, 2025 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.

Master Gardener Help Desk Re-Opens

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.

POLLINATOR SEED SALE

- Order forms & Payment must be submitted by **Friday, April 30th**. Order form is available at: bit.ly/2025SeedSale
- Orders can be paid for via credit card by calling the CCFB office at 708-354-3276.

PRICING: \$20/lb* for Members \$30/lb for Non-Members
*Recommended seeding rate- 1 pound of seed per 1/5 acre (400 x 400 foot area)

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

