



# COOK COUNTY GO-OPERATOR

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

## Mark Your Calendar



### June

- 15 Spring Photo Contest Deadline PG 1
- 17 Summer Ag Institute Day 1 PG 6
- 18 Lincoln Park Zoo Pollinator Program
- 27 Young Leaders "Fun" Event PG 8
- 30 YL Ag Industry Tour PG 8

### July

- 9 Summer Ag Institute Day 2 PG 6
- 15 YL Advocacy Training PG 8
- 29 YL District Discussion Meet PG 8

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

## Question of the Month



**What is the Cook County Farm Bureau Google review rating?**

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

**May Winner: Joseph Baldyga**

**Question:** Pages 5-8 of this publication contain what special "pullout" section for member's use and enjoyment?

**Answer: Discover Local**

## Word of the Day

During **Member Appreciation Week** we introduced a "Word of the Day" feature. We enjoyed the opportunity to talk with our members, and we believed those who called enjoyed it as well!

Beginning this month, we will have a specific day of each month where you can call in with the "Word of the Day". You will have to continue to read the *Co-Operator* carefully each month to find the word and the date to call in as it will be in a different spot each month.

We look forward to continuing these calls. It was a lot of fun! Good luck to you!



## Master Gardener Workshop Features DIY Spring Planters

Cook County Farm Bureau members and farmers really enjoy when spring flows into the Chicagoland area!

Zeldenrust Farm Market, located at 117 231st Street in Steger, hosted a "Make a Spring Planter" workshop for some flower loving

members on May 6. Members had the opportunity to have fun together making beautiful planters for their homes.

Farmers, farmstands, and greenhouses throughout the county are providing vegetables and flowers for the public to purchase and enjoy. For farmer member listings and more information, check out the Discover Local information on page 11 or go to [Cookcfb.org](http://Cookcfb.org)



## The Answer: Yes – Yes, You can!

**The Question:** Can I retain my membership even though COUNTRY Financial says I do not need a membership to access insurance?

Members are a part of the **Farm Bureau family**. Farmers are strong, resilient, faithful, generous, and hardworking. Continue to be a part of this wonderful family and community.

We have been pleasantly surprised by how many people ask us that question and we want to assure current members (even implore current members) that

- We love our members and renewals
- We love serving your membership needs through humor, great information, programming, membership discounts, local farmer support, and so much more.
- We **even** answer the phone!

*We Even Answer the Phone!*



## Cook County Farm Bureau PHOTO CONTEST SPRING PHOTOS

Get your camera and capture moments by showcasing your best photos depicting the theme of Agriculture in the Spring. Send in your photos – selfies, pictures of others, landscape, etc.

The deadline for Spring photos is June 15. The winning photos will be posted in the July *Co-Operator*.

### Example Categories for Spring:

Planting Vegetables, Planting Flowers, Farmers' Markets

### Prizes:

Each season will have three winners.

**1st place:** \$100 cash

**2nd place:** \$40 Farm Fresh Funds\*

**3rd place:** \$25 Farm Fresh Funds\*

All participating photos will be featured on our website and social media.

The contest is open to all members in good standing. Go to <https://bit.ly/4jyhUWV> to submit entries.

\*Farm Bureau Farm Fresh Funds are funds that can be redeemed at local farmstands, greenhouses, and garden centers just as you would use cash.



## Young Leaders Spotlight: Jennifer Miller

Driving through the southwest Chicago suburbs to Midway Airport, what do you expect to see: rows of houses, rows of cars, rows of sweet corn?! That's right, I was raised in the only family in my subdivision that grows rows of sweet corn along with okra, potatoes, cucumbers, giant pumpkins, and whatever else comes to mind each season! Agriculture has been part of my life for as long as I can remember and so has my involvement with the Farm Bureau.

I was invited to join the Young Leaders program around five years ago when I was studying Molecular and Cellular Biology at the University of Michigan. When I was invited to join, I knew absolutely nothing about the group, but when you are a college student and are offered a free meal, you show up!

Currently, I am a second-year graduate student working towards earning my Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry degree at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and yes, I am still heavily involved in the Young Leaders Program!

The Young Leaders group is perfect for anyone who likes to spend their time hanging out with a fun group and doing good for their community. Also, you don't need to hold a record for the largest giant pumpkin grown to join us! If you are under 35, have a permanent residence in Cook County, and love free food and fun activities, you are invited to join us any time!

## 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 more than 100 students that participated in the 2025 Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation's Bookmark contest.
- Member Mari Kay Benes for paying it forward and donating her Member Appreciation Week (MAW) Grocery Gift Card prize to a local food pantry.
- Ruth Zeldenrust and the Zeldenrust Farm Market staff for opening their doors to members at the spring planter event.
- U of I Extension Horticulture Master Gardener Unit Coordinator, Margaret Burns-Westmeyer, and Master Gardeners Ed and Kathy for delivering an outstanding "Container Gardening" program to our members during Member Appreciation Week.
- Sharon Stemke, Country Financial South Cook District Leader, for donating many beautiful and useful items for the MAW activities and raffles.
- The many thank yous we received from members this past month.

## HOW FARM BUREAU SERVED YOU IN MAY

- ▶ Provided pollinator seeds to Cook County Farm Bureau members wishing to expand their pollinator habitats. Smaller pollinator seed packets will be available for members renewing their membership.
- ▶ Created a Discover Local guide featuring local greenhouses, garden centers, farms, etc. for members to find all of their outdoor needs this spring and summer.
- ▶ Assisted members to access member benefits using the Akenity App platform.
- ▶ Connected urban consumers with pollinator information and resources at the Brookfield Zoo.
- ▶ Connected members with a member ag business by hosting a Spring Planter Workshop at a local greenhouse.
- ▶ Assisted homeowners with gardening questions via the Master Gardener Help Desk email at the Farm Bureau.



## Co-Operator

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# Downwind

by **BOB ROHRER, CCFB MANAGER**

## “Google Us”

I admit it. Google has become a part of my daily life. How did this happen? I don't even marvel about it anymore. I've come to realize there is no longer a reason not to know the answer to a question. Just Google it. It is not a stretch to say I now know “less” because I no longer have to remember facts and details ... just look it up.

I have watched Google become a verb (an action to search), a noun (the formal name of the company), and even an adjective (a compound adjective such as google-generated). Confession - I even asked Google if it is “okay” that I write about Him? Her? It? They?

Google's response. “Generally”. (I should Google its pronoun, I guess).

I searched for a few words about change (other than I hate it):

“The only constant in life is change”, said the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus according to “The Google”. What would Heraclitus have said about “The Google”?

“If you don't change direction, you may end up where you are heading”, said ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu.

“To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often” said a less ancient philosopher Winston Churchill.

“To make powerful change statements packed with deep meaning, one must be ancient, grasshopper”, said an “almost ancient” Bob Rohrer, philosopher in training, while writing this column.

The world and us have been swept up in an incredible wave of change. At an incredible rate of speed. Impossible to keep up. And yet, we must try. Google helps in various ways.

Cook County Farm Bureau is smack-dab in the middle of major change. (I should Google the origin of “smack-dab”) as we focus heavily on membership retention and recruitment.

Google reviews were never something I paid much attention to until recently. My decision-making processes are changing and I find myself reading Google reviews as I make consumer decisions. This change in my habits caused me to take a look at Cook County Farm Bureau Google reviews.

4.5 out of 5 rating. Not bad but the perfectionist in me is not satisfied. Diving deeper, the negatives only relate to past affiliated company guidelines; not on Cook County Farm Bureau work, benefits, delivery, or service. And,

## Recipes of the Month

### Parsley Red Potatoes & Creamed Fresh Peas

Joyce Holste, Midlothian



#### POTATOES

##### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 lbs red potatoes
- 1-1.5 t salt
- 1/3 c butter, cubed
- 2 T minced fresh parsley

##### DIRECTIONS:

Cut eyes out of potatoes, no need to peel, and cut in quarters. Place in large saucepan; cover with water, add salt, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and cook until tender approximately 15 minutes. Drain. Add butter and parsley; toss until butter is melted.

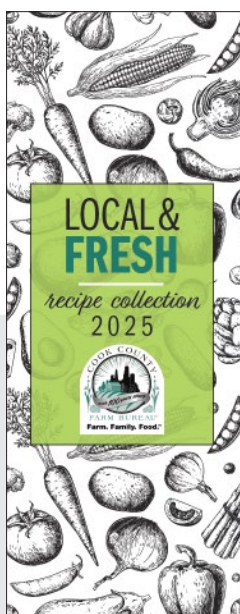
#### CREAMED FRESH PEAS

##### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 c peas, farm or garden-fresh
- 2 T flour
- 1 T butter
- Milk
- Salt
- Pepper
- Sugar, pinch to taste
- Water

##### DIRECTIONS:

Cook peas in enough water to cook, until slightly tender. Do not drain; add butter and stir. In small bowl, whisk together 2 T of flour and enough milk to remove all the lumps, making a creamy gravy consistency. Add salt and pepper to taste, and a little sugar if desired. Add mixture into peas and cook over medium high heat until thick and bubbly, stirring tenderly, about 5 minutes or less.



### 2025 Recipe Collection is Available!

To receive a copy of the 2025 Recipe Collection Booklet, call 708-354-3276, email: [ccfb@cookcfb.org](mailto:ccfb@cookcfb.org), or register from the MyIFB member center account.

## Cook County Farm Bureau Google Reviews ★★★★★

Google reviews have become increasingly important for businesses and can influence customer decisions in both positive and negative ways. For Cook County Farm Bureau, Google reviews are important to our organization as members consider renewing their membership or joining for the first time.

Members that wish to leave a review are encouraged to do so. In order to leave a review, simply Google “Cook County Farm Bureau” and leave a review on the Cook County Farm Bureau Google page. If you have received quality membership service, information, benefits, or support, please let the world know. If you have been disappointed in any of the forementioned, you can also let the world know.

**Our goal is to earn a 5-star rating from as many members as possible. Let us know how we are doing.**

remember, we **even** answer the phone!

Google reviews will gain more importance to our organization as members consider renewing or joining the Cook County Farm Bureau. We, of course, want glowing and sparkling reviews to booster ratings in our quest for mythical perfect score of five. We will continue working hard to earn it from you and other members.

I Googled “how do you improve your Google score” and page after page of advice came rolling in. One piece of advice stated, “even mediocre reviews are better than no reviews at all”. Huh? Really? Let's not plan on heading that direction.

Go ahead...Google us and rate us (especially if you are in a good mood)!

\*\*\*

I must say a few words about my wonderful wife. She deserves a Huge Shout Out! At the conclusion of this school year, she retired from a teaching career that began in 1987, right out of our alma mater, Illinois State University. She has been so impactful in the lives of so many junior high kids throughout the years. Education. Life skills. Responsibility. Support. Communications. Encouragement. Leadership.

I have been witness to the many hours put forth in planning and preparation before school, evenings, and weekends to consistently deliver the best. I know, when Fall “back to school” time draws near, her heart will feel a big tug towards her students. She is a rock and rockstar, not only for our family, but for her school family. Job well done!

## CCFB recognizes first-ever Ag in the Classroom Teacher of the Year

This year's award recipient is **Laura Prisby**, a fourth grade teacher in School District 135 in Tinley Park. She has scheduled Ag in the Classroom for Meadow Ridge Elementary School for more than 10 years and brought AITC with her to High Point Elementary School when she started working there this school year. She also utilized our microgreens kit in her classroom and used 170 pumpkin Ag Mags for a fall lesson.



#### AITC Assistant Jill Drover nominated Mrs. Prisby:

*“Laura was essential in helping us quickly create virtual presentations during the pandemic. While she was facing the many challenges of e-learning herself, she worked tirelessly to help us create content that was successful in continuing our mission to ‘To expand students’ awareness and appreciation for the importance of agriculture everywhere.’ She helped us navigate the difficulties of school IT security, including what worked and what wouldn't. We could not have done it without her.*

*Laura schedules for many classrooms, usually 7, which takes a lot of time, patience, and coordination. Laura is an excellent communicator, which I appreciate while scheduling, and she shares confirmation information with co-teachers, so students are always excited and prepared for our visits.*

*Laura's passion and commitment to AITC makes her the perfect nominee for Teacher of the Year.”*

Mrs. Prisby was recognized during a school staff meeting on May 19. As the AITC Teacher of the Year, she received a gift basket, gift card, and free membership to the Cook County Farm Bureau for a year.

# Farm Bureau Celebrates Members During Member Appreciation Week

Thank you for participating in Member Appreciation Week! Below is a list of our lucky winners. We truly appreciate our members and want to say thank you for your membership, your involvement, your interest, and your support. Thank you to those that stopped by the FB office for Coffee with Bob, photos with the Easter Bunny, and giveaways! We always love meeting our members!!

## MONDAY

**"Cyber Shopping On Us!"**

John & Kathleen Biety

**Word of the Day**  
Tamara Hill

**1 Year Free Membership**  
Celena Santiago  
Samantha Betz

## WEDNESDAY

**"Discover Local"**

Angela (Angie) Richardson

**Word of the Day**  
Alice Carney

**1 Year Free Membership**  
James Platt  
Wally & Joann Schults

## FRIDAY

**"Family Fun"**

Chris & Alexia Koliatsis

**Word of the Day**  
Theresa Doorneweerd

**1 Year Free Membership**  
Mary Ann Yep  
Glenn VanMilligan

## TUESDAY

**"Grocery Giveaway"**

Mary Kay Benes

**Word of the Day**  
John Stromski

**1 Year Free Membership**  
Kathleen Down  
Kristen Flanders

## THURSDAY

**"Catch Some Rays & Waves"**

Leah Walton

**Word of the Day**  
Robert Konow

**1 Year Free Membership**  
Carmen Recupito  
Gary Rauch



Board Director, Dan Biernacki chats with member Leann Pettis who stopped in for coffee and conversation at the Farm Bureau.



U of I Extension Hort Coordinator, Margaret Burns Westmeyer presented an excellent Container Gardening 101 workshop for members at the CCFB as part of the Membership Appreciation Week (MAW) events.



IAA Credit Union Reps McKenna Ficek & Mandi Hammer stopped by the Cook County Farm Bureau for Member Appreciation Week. They met with CCFB members to answer any questions and helped some members sign up for new IAACU accounts.



Board President, Janet McCabe (standing) and Manager, Bob Rohrer (left) and members enjoying good conversation, coffee, and refreshments, as part of the week's events.



Maverick S gets a sweet treat from the Easter Bunny when he visits the CCFB.



Soapy Roads of Lombard helped CCFB members craft their own natural soap and taught about the history of soap and soapmaking.



Master Gardener, Kathy (right) presents raffle winner Bobbi Dantzler (left) with a tomato plant, donated by member Chicago Tomato Man, Bob Zeni.

# Best Wishes to Long Time CCFB Operational Finance Manager

After years of dedicated service to Cook County Farm Bureau, we bid a fond farewell to Melanie Senne who will be moving on to an exciting new opportunity. While we are sad to see Melanie leave, we are also proud to see her take the next step in her career.

Melanie joined our office in 2008, bringing with her a strong work ethic, a keen eye for detail, and a deep commitment to serving our members with professionalism and care. Over the years, she has played a vital role in ensuring the financial operations of our Farm Bureau ran smoothly, efficiently, and with integrity. Behind the scenes, she supported our building and office operations for efficient and effective service of member needs.

On behalf of the Farm Bureau family, we thank Melanie for her outstanding service and wish her success in this next chapter.



Melanie Senne

**Congratulations and best wishes!**

# Food For Thought Committee Gears Up for Summer Local Food Promotion

The Food for Thought Regional Ad Group, which promotes a consistent message to consumers regarding agriculture in the Chicagoland area, recently put together summer plans to connect with those that enjoy food, fiber, fuel, and farms.

This summer, June through September, members will be able to check out promotion on YouTube, Tik-Tok, Meta, and Instagram featuring local social media influencers "Cooking with Daryl" and "This Farm Girl Cooks" for local food connections and fresh recipes. More details to come!

Representing Cook County Farm Bureau in the creative discussions for programming development were Karen Biernacki and Linda

Bosey from the PR team as well as staff members Bona Heinsohn and Bob Rohrer. Mark Tuttle, Illinois Farm Bureau Director Region 1 from DeKalb County, serves as chair of the consortium.

Active members of the group include the County Farm Bureaus from Cook, Bureau, DeKalb, Ford-Iroquois, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle, McHenry, Will, and Winnebago-Boone. The coalition of County Farm Bureaus pools funds and partners with the Illinois Farm Bureau for additional resources and media/marketing expertise.

Cook County Farm Bureau has been a member of the group since the group's creation in 1983.

# Hildner Named to Lead Orland Park Country Financial Agency

Country Financial has announced the hiring of Mr. Nate Hilder as District Leader to lead the Orland Park agency. He takes over the roll after Cary Tate, long time Agency Manager/District Leader and member of the Country Financial Hall of Fame retired in April.



Nate Hildner with wife Catherine and children Beau, Ava James and Nathaniel.

**Hildner's professional background includes:**

- Insurance industry the last 22 years with Farmers Insurance.
- Entire career worked in Sales and Distribution directly with agents
- Led individual states and territories in Nevada and Arizona to grow top and bottom line results
- Worked in Home Office in Los Angeles and was Head of Sales Incentives and Compensation
- Worked in Seattle to become the face of the Life Insurance Company as the Head of Life Distribution.

Hildner said, "My goal is to bring new perspectives and ideas from the outside that the Orland Park Team can implement to help grow their Agencies and Revenue. I know I have some big shoes to fill with Hall of Famer Cary Tate's retirement but I will do everything I can to focus on my team to help them grow BIGGER STRONGER Agencies and be a thought partner and consultant in helping them do so!"

"I am looking forward to doing GREAT things TOGETHER at Country!"

Check out Chicago business in the PARTNERS Summer edition. Full article can be found at: <https://ilfbpartners.com/magazine>

## Chicago's Wild Blossom Meadery Introduces New Generation to Ancient Elixir

Wild Blossom Meadery & Winery works to bring back the ancient elixir to the matches, testing out new and unique flavors all while paying ode to the bees that make this buzzworthy beverage possible.

# Home Ownership with IAA Credit Union Mortgage Team

By Jennifer Killian, IAA Credit Union Marketing Manager



Jennifer Killian

June is National Homeownership Month, a time to celebrate the journey of owning a home—one of the most significant financial decisions you can make. With so much at stake, having a dedicated team to guide you every step of the way is essential.

At IAACU, our Mortgage Team is committed to ensuring an outstanding home-buying experience. Honored as The Best Mortgage Company in 2023 and 2024, as well as the Best Financial Institution in 2024 by The Pantagraph Readers' Choice Awards, here's what sets us apart:

- **Personalized Service:** Tailored solutions to meet your unique needs.
- **Fast Response:** Prompt and efficient handling of your inquiries.
- **Competitive Fees:** Enjoy below-average fees, saving you money.
- **Transparency:** Always know your loan status and have direct access to our team.

**Buying vs. Renting: What's Right for you?**

When you buy a home, you can choose a fixed interest rate, ensuring your principal and interest payments remain stable throughout the loan term. Plus, homeownership allows you to build equity over time. This predictability, coupled with the ability to build equity over time, makes homeownership a valuable investment.

On the other hand, renting often comes with annual rent increases and offers fewer financial benefits. While it eliminates the responsibility of property taxes and maintenance costs, it doesn't provide the long-term investment potential that comes with owning a home.

**Credit: The Key to Your Mortgage**

Your credit score plays a crucial role in determining your loan-to-value ratio, interest rate, and monthly payments, making it essential to maintain a strong credit profile. At IAA Credit Union, we offer a free credit monitoring tool called My Credit Score. This service helps you track your spending, savings, and overall credit health, ensuring you're fully prepared for the mortgage process.

**Down Payment: Exploring Your Options**

Start saving early for your down payment. While 20% is often recommended, we can help you avoid PMI and check if you qualify for the Downpayment Plus (DPP®) program by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago. You may be eligible for up to \$10,000 in home-buying assistance. Last year, IAACU provided \$50,000 in down payment aid to eligible buyers.

**Choosing a Lender: Bigger Isn't Always Better**

Finding the right lender can feel overwhelming, but recommendations from trusted friends and family can guide you to a lender committed to your needs. At IAACU, we proudly service all our loans in-house, ensuring you always have direct access to our dedicated team. Additionally, IAACU offers mortgage loans across all 50 states, making us a versatile choice for your homeownership journey. It's worth noting that IAACU was honored as the winner of the Pantagraph Readers' Choice awards in both 2023 and 2024, solidifying our reputation for excellence and customer satisfaction.

**Applying for a Mortgage: What You Need**

You can easily complete your mortgage application online with IAACU. Once submitted, your loan officer will request proof of income, including pay stubs, tax returns, and recent bank statements.

**Closing: The Final Step of Homeownership**

Typically, closing occurs about 45 days after your application. If you're in the Bloomington-Normal area, we'll handle the closing at IAACU. Otherwise, it will be managed at a local title company office. After signing the contracts, you'll receive the keys to your new home.

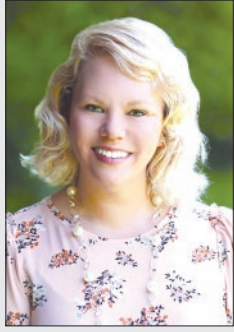
At IAA Credit Union, we know that home loans can be overwhelming. That's why we're here to help every step of the way. Check out our competitive mortgage rates today and take the first step toward owning your dream home!

**Apply today to begin your homeownership journey!**

Visit [www.iaacu.org/mortgages](http://www.iaacu.org/mortgages)

# Planting Seeds *Enjoy Summer!*

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



**Katrina J.E. Milton**

Growing up, the start of summer was a celebration. I couldn't wait to run out of school on the last day of class to a summer full of possibilities and fun.

I spent most of my summer vacation swimming in our backyard pool, playing on my swing set, reading at least 100 books, and playing video games with my cousin. I used to love

drawing in chalk on the concrete sidewalk in front of my house knowing that the next rainstorm would create a new blank canvas. I also loved riding my bicycle up and down our gravel road, playing baseball and basketball, and helping my mom in our garden.

Summer doesn't have to be big vacations, expensive trips, or wild adventures. You can have a lot of fun by staying close to home.

*A few ideas for a fun summer day with agricultural ties:*

- **Have a Picnic** – You can go to a park or lay a blanket in your backyard to enjoy the nice summer weather and homemade food. I'd recommend trying out a recipe from CCFB's 2025 Local & Fresh Recipe Collection or a Recipe of the Month.
- **Visit a Farmer's Market** – Shop local and buy fresh produce at a Cook County farmer's market. For a listing of markets, visit the Ag Resources/Farmer's Market page under the Discover Local tab of our website, [www.cookcfb.org](http://www.cookcfb.org).
- **Watch Something Grow** – Whether you plant something yourself or visit a garden, don't forget to take time to touch grass and enjoy nature. Try growing from food leftovers, such as green onions, tomato seed sprouts, and planting celery's base.

- **Sidewalk Art** – Make your own colorful chalk by mixing equal parts cornstarch and water, adding food coloring, and then either using the mixture directly with a paintbrush or letting it harden in molds to create solid chalk sticks. You can use silicone molds or cupcake baking tray or toilet paper rolls.
- **Take a Road Trip** – Look for ideas on places to travel for a Cook County road trip in this month's Ag Adventure.
- **Discount Tickets** – Cook County Farm Bureau members receive a discount on movie theater, Santa's Village, and Raging Waves Waterpark tickets. Call our office at 708-354-3276 for more information.

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



## Thank You to All 160 Participants in This Year's Bookmark Contest!

*We look forward to seeing your colorful and creative designs next year.*

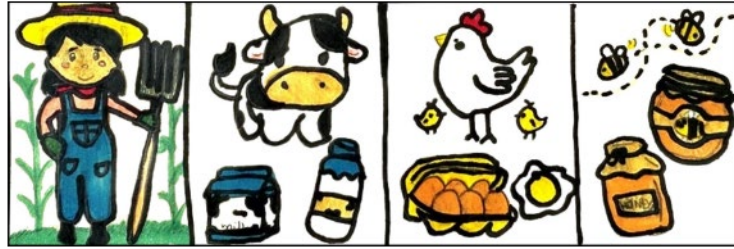
**2025 Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation Bookmark Contest Winning Designs Theme: "Farming is Food"**



Scan here to watch a video with all 160 bookmark designs!



**First Place:** Hailey from Mark Sheridan Elementary, Chicago



**Runner Up:** Riannejoy from Palmer Elementary, Chicago



**Runner Up:** Aibike from Chappell Elementary, Chicago



**Runner Up:** Aeris from Walker Elementary, Bedford Park

**The 2026 bookmark contest theme is "The Route from Farm to Table."**

Every meal we eat takes a journey, starting with farmers who grow and harvest our food using tractors and combines, and continuing with trucks, trains, airplanes, barges, and other forms of transportation that deliver it to stores, restaurants, schools, and homes. This theme invites students to explore and illustrate the path food takes from the fields where it's grown to the fork on their plate. Through their creative bookmark designs, students will demonstrate their knowledge of agriculture, the importance of transportation in the food supply chain, and the many people and careers involved in bringing farm-fresh food to our tables.

## INFO ABOUT SAI

### 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. For more information, email Katrina at [aitc@cookcfb.org](mailto:aitc@cookcfb.org) or call 708-354-3276. To register for SAI, visit [bit.ly/SAI2025RSVP](http://bit.ly/SAI2025RSVP).

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

**Wednesday, July 9, 2025**  
8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

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.

**Itinerary**

8:30 a.m. Welcome

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. IAITC Presentation

Noon Lunch

12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Guest Speaker

- **Corn** – Lydia, Summer Intern at IL Corn Association

2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Guest Speaker

- **Soy** – David Kubik, Biofuel and Transportation Policy Manger at IL Soybean Association

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. CCFB Lessons and Connections

4:30 – 5 p.m. Summary/Forms

# AGRICULTURE ADVENTURES FOR FAMILIES



## June: A Great Time for Road Trips

### FUN FACT:

According to the USDA, in recent years, 30% of all ton-miles moved on the U.S. transportation system, including highways, waterways, and railroads, was agricultural.

Source: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/transportation-analysis/research>

Interested in getting out and about this summer? Agriculture plays a big role in traveling. Learn more about how ag makes our modes of transportation possible.

### CORN

- Up to **10% of unleaded gasoline** in Illinois is made from ethanol, which is made from corn.
- Approximately **30% of corn** grown in Illinois is used to make ethanol.
- Ford uses a bioplastic made from corn starch to make cars' carpeting, upholstery, and interior trim pieces.
- Don't forget your road trip snacks! **Popcorn** is the state snack of Illinois.

- Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company makes **rubber tire made from soybean oil**. Goodyear has a goal to fully replace petroleum-derived oils in its tires by 2040.

### OTHER CROPS

- Ford Motor Company and Heinz worked together to create a bioplastic using dried **tomato skins**. The bioplastic can be used to make car wiring brackets and storage bins.
- **Coconut fibers**, also known as coir, are being used to make car floor mats and seats.



### SOYBEANS

- **Soy biodiesel** is a clean-burning fuel produced from soybean oil that can be used in diesel engines. It can be used in most diesel vehicles, including trucks and buses.
- **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)** is a soybean-based biodiesel that can be used to power airplanes. Several airlines, including British Airways, Lufthansa, and United Airlines, are already using SAF on their flights.

## Cook County ROAD TRIP DESTINATIONS

### Historic Wagner Farm in Glenview

This 18.5-acre farm is a living history museum and dairy farm that provides a unique opportunity for families to learn about life on the farm during early 20th century.

### Griffin Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago

Don't miss the Farm Tech exhibit, which displays today's ag technology, including automation, chemistry, genetics, and engineering.

### Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe

The garden has 385 acres, perfect for strolling, taking photos, and enjoying the beauty of nature with family and friends. Don't miss visiting the fruit and vegetable garden, where more than 2,500 pounds of fruit and vegetables are harvested by students from the Green Youth Farm program. The produce is sold at farmers' markets citywide.

### Packintown Museum in Chicago

Learn about the industrial history and cultural heritage of Chicago's Union Stock Yard and surrounding neighborhoods.

## June Word Search

Last Month's Winner:  
**Beverly Fortney**

Acre	S	L	A	N	D	E	L	S	F	D	V	L	L	E	N
Corn	H	L	G	I	B	R	N	T	O	D	I	O	P	O	U
Crops	S	E	R	I	T	C	F	U	V	Y	N	E	M	N	L
Diesel	V	F	H	S	V	A	Q	D	Q	A	B	U	S	I	K
Ethanol	P	O	P	C	O	R	N	T	H	H	V	E	G	E	G
Farm	D	S	T	B	Y	O	U	T	N	R	K	X	A	F	L
Fuel	L	K	P	U	A	O	E	H	X	Y	F	V	A	N	L
Land	J	E	Q	O	M	E	F	P	F	U	N	O	Y	I	S
Oil	R	Q	V	T	R	E	M	M	U	S	R	S	R	J	C
Popcorn	O	F	R	A	D	C	C	V	E	F	O	M	J	K	F
Road	Y	I	N	M	R	L	F	E	L	Y	C	P	T	L	M
Soybeans	P	R	P	Q	C	T	B	R	E	F	C	X	Z	R	H
Summer	J	R	L	M	P	K	Y	O	S	U	X	R	A	L	O
Tires	Q	Q	L	L	K	W	A	A	W	H	R	F	P	I	P
Travel	B	C	T	K	S	S	R	D	F	Q	X	S	L	A	B
Trip															

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



## Dairy Defines Days, Life Moments

My day starts with Greek yogurt, fresh berries and a dash of Cheerios on top. It sometimes ends with the same or the richness of milk-based oatmeal. Cottage cheese mixed with firm, sweet red grapes made my tractor lunch box almost daily this spring. And my fridge always holds fresh-shredded cheese, sour cream, and a variety of milks from skim to whole (plus the occasional chocolate) to satisfy the household extremes and my husband in between.

June represents the month to raise an ice-cold glass of milk in salute to dairy farmers as we celebrate National Dairy Month and dairy as a long-time staple of the American diet. Less than a 0.5% of the American population today raises the dairy cows that produce milk to feed the 99.5% of us Americans who don't own them.

More than 96% of those dairy farms are family owned and represent some of the most-committed farm families who rely on technology or hired help to get a break. Dairy cows need milked two to three times a day regardless of holidays, weekends and vacation schedules. Thankfully, advancements in technology provide labor flexibility on some dairy farms where robots milk cows and automated systems deliver feed. Families also have enhanced cow comfort over the years from better bedding for joint

health to barn-mounted brushes that give backrubs. Some farmers even use collars similar to a human Fitbit or Apple Watch to track individual cow activity on their phones.

Yogurt may kick off my day, but dairy does for coffee shop drinkers, too. Around 90% of coffee-based café beverages are prepared with dairy products, according to the Perfect Daily Grind. This June throughout Illinois, watch for Farm Bureau presence at coffee shops as the organization brings awareness to the dairy that dominates lattes, cappuccinos, mochas and more.

While coffee is not my thing, I empathize with the craving. I'll watch flavor schedules for local ice cream shops and travel 15 to 30 minutes one way for the treat on a pleasant summer evening. Dairy defines some of life's most-cherished memories: The summer-night ice cream runs. The cheese ball we make only at Christmas time. The homemade ice cream at family birthday parties. Fresh whipped cream for pumpkin pie at Thanksgiving. And I can taste and feel the milk-logged Oreos I'd soak in a cup of milk as a snack after school as a kid.

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

# Soil Testing Kits Available This Spring From CCFB

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

### 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

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

1 sample Soil Test Kit: \$32 | 2 sample kit: \$42  
3 sample kit: \$65

1 sample Soil plus Lead Test Kit: \$60  
1 sample Lead Only Test Kit: \$49

\*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>.

**Soil Test includes soil pH, Potassium, Phosphorous, Calcium, Magnesium, Organic Matter, and Cat Ion Exchange Capacity.**

Members will receive emailed test results and basic recommendations typically within two weeks, with more extensive test interpretation provided by the partnering volunteer Master Gardener Unit with the University of IL Extension South Suburban Horticulture Team.



Call the Office on June 17th with the Word of the Day, "POLLINATOR"

SAVE THE DATE

## YOUNG LEADERS UPCOMING EVENTS

- **June 27 (evening):** Young Leaders "Fun" Event @ 6PM
  - Main Event, 28248 Diehl Rd, Warrenville
  - Cost: \$20 per person
  - RSVP by June 20<sup>th</sup> to: Bona at [bona@cookcfb.org](mailto:bona@cookcfb.org)
  - Will include bowling, all you can play activities, food, and drinks.
- **June 30-July 1:** Ag Industry Tour (Southwest IL)
- **July 15 (6PM):** YL Advocacy Training, virtual
- **July 29 (evening):** District Discussion Meet, Mazon
- **Sept. 24- 26:** Leaders to Washington

The Ag Industry Tour will depart from Countryside at 8 AM on June 30 and travel to Southwest and Central Illinois before returning to Countryside the evening of July 1st. Tentative tour stops include a Red Angus beef cattle farm, a horseradish packing facility, an orchard, an equipment dealer, a specialty grower, and a dairy farm.

**Cook County's Young Leaders Committee is open to individuals ages 18-35 with an interest in agriculture.**

**For additional details or to sign up for any of these programs please contact Bona Heinsohn at [bona@cookcfb.org](mailto:bona@cookcfb.org).**

BUILT FORD TOUGH

Ford Super Duty

ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU MEMBERS RECEIVE

## \$500 EXCLUSIVE CASH REWARD

on an Eligible New Ford Truck<sup>1</sup> or Ford Blue Advantage™ Certified Used Vehicle<sup>2</sup>.

Visit [FordRecognizesU.com/FarmBureau](http://FordRecognizesU.com/FarmBureau) today for complete offer details!

# Manifolds, Manolos, and Manure

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



## From Fruits and Crops to the Legislative Branch

**Bona Heinsohn**

As I entered my final semester of undergrad, a professor of mine made a few calls and landed me an internship. After class several times a week, I assisted with constituent services for Illinois State Senator John Maitland. I vividly remember working on arrangements for an eighth-grade field trip to Springfield.

Maitland, a native of Normal, served in the Illinois Senate from 1979 until 2002. Immediately prior to his tenure in the Senate, Maitland served as the president of the McLean County Farm Bureau. Maitland is among a select class of legislators, those who are also farmers.

A seatmate of his, Senator Todd Sieben of Geneseo, served in the Senate from 1993 until 2008. Like Maitland, Sieben was also a farmer. In addition to serving as Senator, he was co-owner and vice-president of Sieben Hybrids, a family seed business.

Today, Senator Patrick Joyce of Kankakee is a fourth-generation farmer and a 19-year member of the Kankakee County Farm Bureau Board of Directors. Joining him in the select

class of legislators who are also farmers are Representatives Jason Bunting, Brad Fritts, Brad Halbrook, Norine Hammond, Charles Meier, Chris Miller, Wayne Rosenthal, Dan Swanson, and Blaine Wilhour.

Illinois defines *agricultural production* as the commercial production of crops, livestock, and aquatic products (505 ILCS 5/3.01). The statute further defines crops, livestock, and aquatic products to include hay, grain, fruit, vegetables, floriculture, horticulture, orchards, greenhouses, and the raising and care of poultry, dairy cattle, swine, sheep, beef cattle, pony and horse production, etc. (505 ILCS 5.3.02).

Stepping away from the technical jargon, agriculture is the growing, raising, and harvesting of crops and animals. Crops can include anything from corn and soybeans to blueberries, tomatoes, and peppers.

According to the 2024 Decision Innovation Solutions (DIS) Economic Contribution Study, conducted by Decision Innovation Solutions for the Institute for Feed Education and Research, Cook County is second among all counties in Illinois in jobs derived from crops, first in jobs derived from livestock and poultry, and first in jobs derived from other agriculture. Overall, Cook County has the highest total jobs derived from agriculture in Illinois at over 110,000, up 3 percent from prior studies.

Agriculture is alive and well in Cook County and is

being recognized by Cook County leaders, including County Commissioner Scott Britton and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Cam Davis.

Earlier this year, downstate farm native Britton introduced and carried a resolution recognizing National Agriculture Day and celebrating the contributions of farmers and the farm products they grow and raise. The resolution also highlighted agriculture's impact on the local community.

Last fall, MWRD Commissioner and local farmer, Cam Davis, introduced Resolution 24-0817 to support urban agriculture and to call for other local units of government to apply for district programs to expand and support urban agriculture opportunities. Urban agriculture has the potential to connect families with fresh, culturally relevant local produce. By encouraging urban agriculture on suitable district property, the district is helping to move local families down the path to food security. Given Farm Bureau's Urban Agriculture policy, Cook County Farm Bureau actively supported and provided public testimony in support of Resolution 24-0817.

For an association committed to promoting agriculture and expanding agricultural opportunities, there is nothing more exciting than farmers serving in elected positions. There are no others more acutely aware of the issues and topics facing food, farming, and families.

# A History of Cities, Villages, and Towns— Illinois' Three Types of Municipal Government

Originally published in LINK April 2025

What comes to mind when you hear the word "village?" What about the word "city?"

While many people think of cities as large metropolitan areas, and villages conjure thoughts of quaint and small communities, the terms "city," "village," and "town" are distinct types of municipal governments that have separate legal meanings per Illinois state law.

Functionally, there is little difference between the three, and, while the names might suggest otherwise, whether a municipality incorporates as a city or village, is not dependent on population. For example, the Village of Arlington Heights in Cook and Lake Counties has a population of 77,676, while the City of Nason in Jefferson County has a population of 199.

The primary distinction between Illinois' 1,294 cities, villages, and towns is the historical state statute under which they incorporated. This determines their organizational structure, the titles of their officials, and how they are elected.

Illinois' first constitution had no explicit instructions on the creation and powers of municipal governments. Instead, these governments were created by the legislature under special acts called charters. These detailed the size, scope of authority, and taxing powers of a particular

governmental unit. The state constitution of 1848 continued this practice.

However, the state constitution of 1870 prohibited the passage of special legislation, which eliminated the legislative ability to charter additional town governments. Alternatively, the legislature passed a general law, the 1872 Cities and Villages Act, concerning the creation, organization, financing, and powers of municipalities. Today, what remains of this Act is enrolled in a larger set of laws governing the operation of municipal governments known as the Illinois Municipal Code.

While a handful of municipalities operating under their pre-1870 charters as incorporated towns have kept their town designation, the passage of the 1872 Act meant that any new municipality created after 1870 would either be a city or a village. Municipalities across the state.

The structure a community incorporated under, whether as a city or as a village, determines its form of government – whether it operates with alderpersons elected by ward and a mayor elected at large or with trustees and a village president.

At the time of this writing, of the 1,294 cities, villages, and towns in Illinois, 14 are towns,

980 are villages, and 300 are cities.

Whether you live in or near a city, village, or town, the form of municipal government your community incorporated under tells a unique tale of its creation and the state statute that guides its governing authority.



## MOSQUITO ABATEMENT DISTRICTS:

# A Thing of the Past or a Tool for Today

Mosquito Abatement Districts use integrated pest management strategies to control mosquito populations and prevent diseases. Cook County is home to four such districts—Northshore, Desplaines Valley, Northwest, and South Cook County. These districts are funded by a dedicated property tax levy, personal property replacement tax revenue, investment income, and sales of capital assets. The levies alone totaled \$9.1 million in fiscal year 2022.

The Cook County Office of the Inspector General releases quarterly reports regarding its investigations. The April report included an update following the office's investigation into the Board of Trustees of the South Cook County Mosquito Abatement District. In December of 2021, the office issued a summary report in which the office found the trustees had breached their fiduciary duty by paying themselves, to the tune of \$34,100 since 2017, for attending board meetings in violation of state law and district policy. The Office of the Inspector General recommended that the trustees resign and reimburse the district for the monies wrongfully paid to themselves. Trustees also failed in their

statutory duty to cooperate with the Illinois Department of Public Health and had donated district vehicles to neighboring municipalities in violation of the statute. As of April 2025, trustees had not reimbursed the district.

A recent Civic Federation report recommended that Cook County's four Mosquito Abatement Districts should be dissolved and their functions and taxing authority incorporated into Cook County government. In addition, the report recommended that all Illinois special districts should be required by state statute or county ordinance to make information about their finances, operations, and activities publicly available on a website. Offices of the Inspector General should also have the authority to investigate special district governments.

Farm Bureau policy is silent regarding Mosquito Abatement Districts but provides support for the absorption, consolidation, disconnection, and dissolution of units of government by front door referendum. Farm Bureau members are encouraged to contact Bona Heinsohn via [bona@cookcfb.org](mailto:bona@cookcfb.org) to express their thoughts.

# Family, Farm, and Food Bytes

## Feeding Minds Press Delivers "I LOVE Blueberries!"

(AFBF News)

The newest title from Feeding Minds Press, "I LOVE Blueberries!" is bursting with farm fresh facts, bringing the joy of farming to readers of all ages. "I LOVE Blueberries!" written by Shannon Anderson and illustrated by Jaclyn Sinnett, is the long-awaited sequel to the award-winning "I LOVE Strawberries!"

The story follows Jolie and her new friend Margot as they work together with their classmates and their community to set up a hydroponics growing station in their classroom to grow their own blueberries.

Through Jolie's comical scrapbook-style journal entries and Margot's creative sketchbook, readers will learn



Photo Credit: AFBF

about the joys and challenges of growing blueberries with hydroponics, as well as nutritional facts about this healthy snack. This story is a perfect introduction to how food is grown to spark curiosity in future farmers, gardeners, and consumers.

"I LOVE Blueberries!" is the 11th title from Feeding Minds

Press and the sequel to "I LOVE Strawberries!" winner of seven awards, including the Good Housekeeping 2022 Best Kids' Book Award. Other recent titles include "The Soil in Jackie's Garden" and "Potatoes for Pirate Pearl". All books are available for purchase directly from Feeding Minds Press.

## ISU's New Vertical Farm Makes Most of Small Space

Phyllis Coulter, FarmWeek

When it comes to making the most of small spaces, owners of tiny homes would be impressed with what Illinois State University (ISU) can do with its modified shipping container farm. In its new 320-square-foot vertical farm, ISU will be able to produce as many herbs annually as it could in 2 to 4 acres in an outdoor field.

When visitors arrived at the vertical farm to celebrate its ribbon-cutting on May 1, there weren't any plants yet. But in June, students will plant basil, cilantro, and parsley seeds in trays, transplant them in staggered intervals to the growing towers in July, and the herbs will be ready to serve in a constant flow to students by ISU Dining Services starting in late August.

One of the early hurdles for the project was getting funding with estimates of \$70,000 to \$120,000 to buy a shipping container farm.

Eliminating that cost, Central Illinois Produce in Urbana donated a used unit to ISU. Further, ISU's Student Sustainability Fund, which funded other projects like paperless tickets for the Center for the Performing Arts and an outdoor classroom at the Horticulture Center, pledged \$50,000.

The ISU team was able to make modifications to the farm's installation costs, initially estimated as high as \$700,000, to bring it in at less than one-third at \$200,000. Other groups pitched in, including Illinois Farm Bureau, which contributed to start-up costs.

The new vertical farm, colorfully decorated with facts about what's inside, is next to ISU's Sustainability Office at 305 N. School St. in Normal. Inside, along the main part of the trailer are two rows of white, vertical tubes where the plants will grow, fed with water and fertilizer through a hydroponic system that uses no natural soil. The seven-foot-tall tubes face LED (light-emitting diode) lighting strips. The light, temperature, humidity and CO2 levels in the farm will be maintained at optimal levels for plants.

See more farm news clips at [www.cookcfb.org](http://www.cookcfb.org)

## FARMFRESH FUNDS



Want a \$20 Farm Fresh Funds voucher redeemable to one of our area greenhouses, garden centers, farm stands or other farm businesses?

Encourage your family, friends, and neighbors to join the Cook County Farm Bureau as an associate, farmer, or professional member. If they join, you will receive \$20 in fresh funds! Call our office at 708-354-3276 to let us know that you referred a member.



Individuals can join the Cook County Farm Bureau by going to [www.cookcfb.org](http://www.cookcfb.org) and clicking on MEMBER CENTER.

## Cook CFB Leaders Forward Resolutions on to State Resolutions Committee

Members of the Cook County Farm Bureau® Governmental Affairs Committee forwarded the following resolutions to the state Farm Bureau Resolutions Committee.

### Disposal of Waste

At this time, there are no federal standards that define or regulate bioplastics, biodegradable, or compostable products. U.S. manufacturers can choose to follow voluntary industry standards developed by the American Standards Testing Materials (ASTM) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), but not all do. In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has developed a voluntary standard certifying the content of biobased products called BioPreferred. Still, manufacturers are not required to verify or disclose the amount of plant-based materials contained in their products.

The lack of federal standards for defining and regulating bioplastics not only encourages greenwashing but also creates significant waste management challenges.

Cook CFB's resolution provides that Farm Bureau supports research into and the development of federal

standards for bioplastics, biodegradable, and compostable materials.

### Involvement of Members in Farm Bureau

Younger volunteers and members are critical to the success of Farm Bureau going forward. In 2024, Cook CFB approved "Future Forward" a plan designed to engage younger agricultural enthusiasts like Foundation scholarship recipients, Young Leaders, and new members in volunteer and leadership opportunities within the Farm Bureau. In an effort to encourage other county farm bureaus to create similar paths for engagement, Cook CFB submitted a resolution supporting young member engagement.

The resolution supports county farm bureaus creating a pathway to engage younger members in county activities, volunteer opportunities, and leadership.

Members are encouraged to contact Bona Heinsohn at [bona@cookcfb.org](mailto:bona@cookcfb.org) with any questions or comments regarding the resolutions. Governmental Affairs Committee members will meet over the summer to discuss additional resolutions.

## COOK COUNTY Agents of the Month

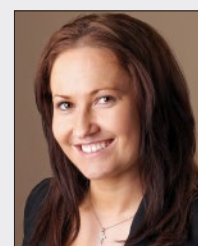
The Agent of the Month program is designed by COUNTRY® Financial District Leaders of Cook County to recognize overall Insurance Leaders in Life, Disability, Auto, Home, and Health production during the month. The agent earns the award through efforts to provide quality service to existing and new clients. Listed below are the various agents honored by their District Leaders with the Agent of the Month designation.



### DAVE FORRESTER

has been named Agent of the Month April 2025 by Cary Tate, District Leader. Dave's office is located at 17605 Oak Park Ave Suite C, Tinley Park, IL. His phone number is 708-361-4330. Dave has been an Agent with COUNTRY® Financial since 2022.

Orland Park Agency, Cary Tate, District Leader



### MAGGIE LYCZKO

has been named Agent of the Month for April 2025 by Vicki Nygren, District Leader. Maggie's office is located at 9211 Waukegan Rd Unit A, Morton Grove, IL. Her phone number is 773-427-2964. Maggie has been an agent with COUNTRY® Financial since February 2011.

Chicago North Agency, Vicki Nygren, District Leader



### MATT HUONDER

We would like to highlight Matt Huonder for the month of April 2025, by Kevin Gomes, District Leader. Matt's office is located at 3285 N Arlington Heights Rd #203, Arlington Heights, IL. His phone number is 847-891-6660. Matt has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since September 2021.

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.

# CLASSIFIED ADS

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

Email your ad (and photo if you have one) to [fbcooperator@gmail.com](mailto:fbcooperator@gmail.com). Please be sure to include your full name, Farm Bureau number, and phone number. Deadline for Classified ads is the 17th of each month. Any ads submitted after the 17th will appear in the following 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.

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.

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.

Snapper rear engine riding lawn mower. Series 17, Model M280917B. 28" cutting width, 9.0 HP Briggs & Stratton engine. Pull start manual recoil. It has 5 speed on-the-go shifting that allows you to shift smoothly through 5 forward speeds without clutching or stopping. For your safety, when your feet leave the automatic break step pedal, the blade stops while the engine keeps running. Pivoting front frame allows all 4 wheels to remain on the ground while the deck conforms to the contours of your lawn. It has stand-on-edge for storage, nice, dependable and well taken care of rider. This 82-year-old senior decided to go with a lawn service. Looks and runs very good. Price is \$500. Call 708-361-8230.

Hayrite 16 ft bale elevator, 3/4 HP, used a half dozen times, works great. Stored indoors. \$1200 obo. Call Todd 815-575-2036

Home for sale by owner in Des Plaines. Great location, cul-de-sac of semi-custom homes. Two story plan, partial basement, 4

bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, 2 car garage. Many many upgrades. Fenced yard with deck and above ground pool. Asking \$650,000. Call 847-297-6807 (no texts)

Miller Econotig CC AC/DC Welder, Model 903367 (VERY LOW HOURS) \$1500. GTAW output: 150A, 15V AC/DC at 20% duty cycle. SMAW output: 130A, 25V dc or 150A, 25V at 20% duty cycle. Uses single phase input power and built in arc start for GTAW. Includes foot pedal, two helmets, and assorted rods/clamps. Ask for Michael 847-272-0448

Toyota LP 3000 forklift \$7,500 (delivery additional). Model #42-5FG15, 1005 hours, very good condition. 48" extended forks, 185" three stage lift, 48" backrest, 63.5" free lift. Solid pneumatic tires, front headlights, side-shifter, 6 degree tilt. Ask for Michael 847-272-0448.

## FOR RENT

For Rent - Modern brick ranch in Worth. Three bedrooms, two baths with den and attached two car garage. All appliances included with central air. Call 708-670-2118.

## 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 630-272-4433

## 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  
"L"

## LAVENDER

**Lavender is an aromatic herb belonging to the greater mint family.**

Lavender is most commonly used for sweet applications.



Lavender is traditionally grown in rows and harvested during the summer

Flower stalks are cut, bundled, and hung to dry before the buds are removed by hand.

Both the leaves and flower buds can be used in the kitchen.

Lavender pairs well with any of its mint family cousins, such as basil, mint, oregano, marjoram, rosemary, savory, thyme, and sage.



Its sweet and bright flavor is a welcomed accent for pastries, cookies, cakes, ice creams, homemade fruit jams, and custards.

Source: <https://www.thespicehouse.com/blogs/news/spotlight-lavender>

## This Month in Cook County Agriculture

### Nature Encounters This Summer at Salt Creek Butterfly Farm and Apiaries

Lori Harris of Salt Creek Butterfly Farm and Apiaries is offering three nature clubs this summer! The experiences that she provides are always so special and tend to sell out early, so you'll definitely want to check these out: Family Beekeeping Club, Native Illinois Butterfly Rearing Club, and Luna Love Club. These clubs are low commitment and super high reward. Full details and info, go to <https://www.saltcreekbutterflyfarm.org/services-6-1> or call Lori Harris at 708 601-1080.



### Goebbert's Makers Market in South Barrington: Where Community Meets Creativity

Join us at Goebbert's Farm in South Barrington for our second annual local small business fair where artisans, entrepreneurs, and community members come together to celebrate creativity, craftsmanship, and connection. Event highlights include: 50+ local vendors of handmade goods, artisanal foods, and unique creations; food trucks & fresh produce; and candy cannon launch.



**Dates:** Saturday, June 21 and Sunday, June 22, 2025 at Goebbert's Farm Market & Garden Center, 40 W. Higgins Rd, South Barrington, IL

#### FREE Raffle Entry

For more information go to <https://goebbertspumpkinfarm.com/farm-market-summer/local-small-business-fair-makers-market/>

To promote your activity, email [ccfb@cookcfb.org](mailto: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.

## DISCOVER LOCAL



CO-OPERATOR PULL-OUT SECTION 2025

Join Cook County Farm Bureau® in supporting agricultural and member Ag businesses:



Visit Cook County Farm Bureau® member greenhouses, garden centers, and farms for all your outdoor needs this spring! Their vegetable and flower plantings, trees, shrubs, lawn, landscape materials, grills, and garden décor await you!

Farm Stands are also open for the freshest in season produce and herbs ...get out and discover local! To assist, we have a listing of participating member businesses and producers in the Cook County area, waiting to serve you.

**Discover Local at: <http://bit.ly/4jRhKKE>.**

Member businesses offering additional discounts to CCFB members include Goebbert's Farm and Garden Center in South Barrington, Ted's Greenhouse in Tinley Park, Teegan Compost, Grainger, John Deere, Harvard Products, and more. Check our website for details and restrictions at:

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



## 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**

### 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 the Friday prior

**DATE:** Monday, June 23, 2024 **TIME:** 4:00-4:30 p.m. with Q & A

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

### Farm Crawl Bingo *COMING SOON!*

The Cook County Farm Bureau is sponsoring its 8th member FARM CRAWL of participating member Ag locations later this summer. Our Bingo inspired self-guided tour will offer plenty of time to visit locations, filling our BINGO location card for our Raffle Entry of cash and prizes, along the way. **Details coming in July.**

### Intro to Organic Candle Making

Join Soapy Roads of Lombard for a 'Clean Candle' Workshop and Candle Makery Bar where you will craft your own custom candle. Soapy Roads will provide the clean ingredients which include: phthalate-free fragrance oils blended with essential oils, organically grown soy wax base, lead-free wicks, and an 8oz fill glass vessel. Learn why cheap candles can be dangerous and techniques for getting the best life and safe burning out of your candle.



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

**DATE:** Tuesday, September 16, 2025 **TIME:** 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**FEE:** \$22 for Members, \$25 Non-Members

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

### 25th Giant Pumpkin, Dessert, Carving, Local Honey Contest – Save the Date

**LOCATION:** Puckerville Farms, 13332 Bell Rd, Lemont

**DATE:** Saturday, October 4, 2025

**TIME:** 9:00-11:00 a.m.



# DISCOUNTED TAILGATES AND TALLBOYS TICKETS FOR ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU MEMBERS!



**TAILGATES AND TALLBOYS**  
JUNE 12-15 | INTERSTATE CENTER, BLOOMINGTON, IL

Illinois Farm Bureau members are eligible for discounted tickets all 4 nights of Tailgates N' Tallboys in Bloomington, IL! 20% discount on General Admission tickets for Thursday, Friday and Saturday and 50% off of VIP tickets for Supporting Agriculture night on Sunday

Purchase your tickets at <https://on.ilfb.org/TNTickets>

## Why Retain Your Associate Membership or Voting Membership?

The Cook County Farm Bureau is an amazing value. At just \$20 annually for Associate Members and only \$45 for Voting Members, is it really a difficult decision?

During 2025, in his light-hearted approach, Cook County Farm Bureau manager Bob Rohrer is writing Downwind, his monthly column, about the value proposition for Members following the announcement that COUNTRY® Financial no longer requires membership to access certain insurance policies.

**April Downwind message:**

"We Even Answer the Phone" Bonus, call the office and "we actually answer the phone." Yes, we are real people! Go ahead – try us!

**March Downwind message:** There is an App for that (saving members big bucks)...the Farm Bureau Membership Benefit Platform Abenity App.

**February Downwind message:** Check out the IAA Credit Union for great services, great service, and great member benefits. Like a small-town bank but better and your mobile phone is a branch office!

**January Downwind message:** "Your Farm Bureau membership provides you and your family..."

**Need more reasons WHY to renew your membership?**

- Where else will you hear/read about the latest in food and farm news?
- Where else will you receive access to the great experiences and events that have made us famous?
- Ag Literacy for you and your family...we bring it every day!
- ILFB Partners magazine – a great benefit on farming, facts, and travel across the state
- But wait, there's more!  
Check out [www.cookcfb.org](http://www.cookcfb.org).

**RENEW NOW**

Scan below to renew your ccfb membership



[www.cookcfb.org](http://www.cookcfb.org)

The value proposition remains huge! **We like to say that the membership is dirt cheap, the value is not.**

If you missed these past issues of Downwind, check them out at:

<https://cookcfb.org/membership/become-a-member/why-become-a-member>

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!

# Summer Fun

## Raging Waves Tickets

\$29.00

Water Slides  
 Wave Pool

Lazy River  
 Giant Sandbox

**Savings of \$34.00**

To purchase tickets, call the Farm Bureau at (708) 354-3276.