



COOK COUNTY GO-OPERATOR

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

Mark Your Calendar



November

- 10 Membership Monday **PG 12**
- 13 Small Business Owner Webinar **PG 12**
- 18 Holiday Wreath & Bow Making **PG 12**

December

- 15 Membership Monday **PG 12**

January

- 13 & 27 Zoom Book Club **PG 12**

February

- 10 & 24 Zoom Book Club **PG 12**

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

Question of the Month ?

What is the official state snack of IL?

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)

October Winner: Evelyn Nelson

Question: On page 6, Katrina talks about a fall favorite, mums! What is the official name for a mum? ***We just want to see how many of you can say it correctly. (You were great!)*

Answer: Chrysanthemum

Word of the Week

We always enjoy the

opportunity to talk with our members, and we believe those who called enjoy it as well! Read the Co-Operator carefully to find the word and day 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!

October Winner: Roberta Vondrak

October word was Pumpkin found on P6. Start your search for the November word today!

CONGRATULATIONS 25th Giant Pumpkin Contest Winners!



Dave Wilkes takes 1st in giant pumpkin with 385 lbs.



Pete Soltesz, President of the Cook-DuPage Beekeepers Association, awards Kate Swain the 1st place honey. The Cook-DuPage Beekeepers Association sponsored the contests in 2025.



Cynthia Brasic celebrates her 2nd place honey contest win.

To Our Amazing Voting and Associate Members,

We would like to personally thank you on behalf of the board and staff for your membership with the Cook County Farm Bureau®. We commend you on your continued resilience, determination, and energy. We value your commitment as we partner for a strong agriculture present and future. It has been our true pleasure serving you and your membership needs during this past year.

As your partner, your Cook County Farm Bureau offers a great membership advantage – advocacy, resources, information, and programs for necessary and essential support for you and our other members, farmers and farm owners, workers, small businesses, parents and youth, affiliated companies and those that love food. We love being your strong partner!

We continue to see firsthand the important role farming and agriculture plays every day in the Chicagoland area and in our country. We continue supporting area food, fiber, and fuel producers to help provide high-quality, farm fresh products to local consumers. We view this as important work.

Best wishes and thank you!

Janet McCabe,
Certified Director, President

Cook County and Illinois family farmers seek to provide you, your family, and families across our great country and beyond with safe, wholesome, sustainable food supply.

Your Farm Bureau membership provides you and your family:

- Access to local farm and food producers
- The opportunity to support Illinois farm families and food security
- Information about farming and your food
- Programs, education, events and more
- Agriculture in the Classroom for local students, teachers and parents
- 300,000+ discounts (abenity link or member center)
- The opportunity to be a part of a agriculturally related communities
- The Co-Operator monthly publication and quarterly IFB Partners magazine

Check out www.cookcfb.org for more!

Renew today by calling 708-354-FARM (3276) or using the QR code (our members service renewal link). We thank you for your membership and we look forward to serving you in the year to come!

Bob Rohrer,
CAE, FBCM, Manager

November, 2025 | (708) 354-3276 | 6438 Joliet Rd Ste.101 | Countryside, IL 60525

SCAN HERE

Scan below to renew your CCFB membership
Just as easy as using the "EASY" button!



www.cookcfb.org

"Contest" Continues on Page 4



USDA recently predicted the 2025 national average composite wholesale price for a frozen whole hen turkey will be \$1.32 per pound, up 38 cents per pound, or 40%, from the 2024 average price of 94 cents. (File photo)

Economy, Disease Pressure Push Turkey Prices Upward

Rhiannon Branch, FarmWeek

American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) economist Bernt Nelson pointed to economic challenges and increased disease pressure as the leading causes in a recent Market Intel analysis. "Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has had a major impact on the turkey industry, affecting about 18.7 million turkeys and accounting for 10% of all birds affected by the virus since 2022. This includes 2.2 million turkeys affected so far in 2025," he noted Oct. 1. "It's important to remember prices are still 32% lower than just three years ago," Nelson said. "These production challenges shouldn't have any impact on consumers' ability to get turkey, but they may translate to higher retail prices this holiday season."

For the full article, go to <https://cookcfb.org/stay-updated-/ccfb-news>

HOW FARM BUREAU SERVED YOU IN OCTOBER

- ▶ Engaged with Washington, D.C. policy and taught leaders about pertinent issues in agriculture and how the federal government intersects and impacts those issues.
- ▶ Provided timely and relevant guidance to Cook County Farm Bureau farmer members as well as the Department of Building and Zoning regarding agricultural exemptions.
- ▶ Assisted members in renewing their membership dues, answering questions, and providing guidance on member issues.
- ▶ Highlighted local pumpkins and engaged with local growers, honey producers, members, and the community at local Ag member businesses.
- ▶ Hosted a Fall Barn Quilt make-and-take workshop teaching about the history of barn quilts and helping participants get creative and into fall mode by painting their own design.



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...

- Janet McCabe, Blake Lanphier, Cindy Gustafson, Ed Elfmann, and British Griffis for representing Cook County Farm Bureau policies and priorities during a recent lobby visit to Washington, D.C.
- Puckerville Farms owners, Rick and Joy Homering, for hosting the location of the 25th Giant Pumpkin Contest.
- CDBA President and Beekeepers Pete Soltesz, Margie Kosinski, and Patricia Kennedy for judging the local Honey Contest that also took place during the 25th Giant Pumpkin Contest on October 4.
- Gerry Kopping, Dan Biernacki, Roger Freeman, Ruth Zeldenrust, Alex Wocjichowski, Angelica Carmen, Karen Biernacki, Ellen Phillips, and Jayne Quetsch-Rohrer for always being the hardest working volunteers during the Giant Pumpkin Contest.
- Young Leaders from Cook County Farm Bureau and Wake County, North Carolina Farm Bureau for connecting and exploring agricultural issues in their counties and in the documentary "Common Ground".
- The members that participated in our spring, summer, and fall member photo contests... very nice work!
- The Voting members who were kind enough to return a proxy as a part of the Cook County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. Thank you for exercising your vote!
- The many Voting and Associate members who have renewed their memberships for 2026!

Co-Operator

Published Monthly

Cook County Farm Bureau

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Downwind

by **BOB ROHRER, CCFB MANAGER**

“A Couple Servings of Thanks”

Thanksgiving is right around the corner. As I reflect on the year 2025 and life in general, a few thankful thoughts float through my gray matter. Rather than let those thoughts remain stuck all alone up there in my brain, I must share...need that memory space to create a Christmas gift list.

I am thankful for septic companies (and indoor plumbing). ...

At Cook County Farm Bureau,

we talk a lot about member service and seek to go beyond member expectations (remember: “We even answer the phone!”). However, my wife and I recently experienced a pinnacle level, all-time high example of customer service.

We were at our place out west over the Labor Day weekend. It was a Sunday afternoon, the day before Labor Day. Our cabin toilet, a wonderful luxury, was acting up. Flushing slowly and gurgling. After a

series of efforts to clear the issue at the source, I checked the septic tank and learned it was completely chock-full of “honey”. (I tend to call the brown slurry of semi-liquid substance “honey” after years of operating the honey wagon on our family hog farm).

That Sunday evening (did I mention it was the day before Labor Day) my ever-calm wife, wearing her superhero cape, called the number of a local septic company. I was thinking no way anyone would answer.

The septic company owner, Lyle, **answered the phone!**

My wife explained our extremely dire situation. Lyle indicated his schedule for the next week was completely booked. I thought, of course.

Lyle’s next words were, **“Can I come out to help you now?”**

We were stunned... Would someone really do that for a couple strangers on a Sunday night, the day before Labor Day?

Two hours later, Lyle pulled up with his tank truck and pumped 2,000 gallons of “honey” from our tank.

That Sunday evening (the day before Labor Day), our toilet was back in business meaning the Rohrsers could go about (do) their “business”. My wife told him that she planned on naming our next child after him. “Lyle”... we like that name.

Lyle’s “amazing service” means we will be customers for life. That’s how we want you to feel about the Cook County Farm Bureau! (Though, it’s debatable if I will answer the phone on the Sunday evening before Labor Day to help with honey issues).

I am thankful I know right and wrong (finally...)

Recently, with friends, we enjoyed a conversation about things we’ve done in our lives that we are not very proud of. I am not proud that I have such a long list. Here are a couple thoughts that popped into my cranium immediately that I had to confess to...

In 1974, in Victoria, Illinois, while grocery shopping in Floyd’s Grocery Store with my mother and siblings, I snuck a grape from the produce counter for a taste without paying for it. I have felt guilt ever since. It was wrong and I’m not proud of it.

In the summer of 1977, I was employed to mow a farmer neighbor’s lawn. The farmer told me to help myself to a soda from his pop machine in his barn if I felt overheated. I helped myself to six Mountain

Dew bottles that afternoon. I was not that overheated. It was wrong and I’m not proud of it. I do wish he had offered me use of his bathroom.

It is such a relief to get those long-standing issues off my chest. My soul feels cleaner!

I am thankful for our wonderful members (always).

We have had so many members register faith in us by joining the organization and by renewing their membership this past year. Your membership is appreciated more than you know! I have had so many great connections, conversations, and opportunities to work on behalf of and with so many of you. I salute the work that you do every day to provide for your families, communities, and for the world.

I am thankful there’s always something (innocuous) to write about.

Next month, I believe I’ll write a few more thankful thoughts including...

“Restaurants’ menus featuring a breaded pork tenderloin sandwich bigger than my head!”

(It will be a classic Christmas column)

In the meantime, I wish all Cook County Farm Bureau members a great Thanksgiving packed with amazing food (compliments of the greatest farmers in the world), meaningful time spent with family and friends, and the opportunity to share “thanks” to all within earshot.



Lyle and his truck to the rescue

Recipe of the Month

Jackie P, Master Gardener Extraordinaire, Riverside

TURKEY MEATLOAF



INGREDIENTS

- 2 slices fresh or stale bread of choice
- 1/2 c milk
- 1 med onion, chopped
- 1 small bunch parsley or substitute 1 pkg chopped spinach, thawed and well-drained
- 2 lbs ground turkey
- 2 large eggs, slightly beaten
- 1-2 t mild Hungarian paprika
- 1/2 t black pepper

DIRECTIONS

Soak 2 pieces of bread in milk for 5-10 minutes. Chop onion and parsley. Combine ground turkey, bread, drained and torn into pieces, onion, parsley or spinach, eggs, Hungarian paprika, and black pepper. Mix well by hand (or use a KitchenAid mixer) until mixture is well blended. Shape into a rounded 12”x4” loaf that is about 3” high on a parchment paper covered rimmed baking sheet. Smooth top and bake at 350° F for 20-30 minutes and then increase temperature to 450° F and bake another 10 minutes until juices run clear and internal temperature is 165°F. Baking time varies on how thick the meatloaf is.



Farm Crawl BINGO Connects Local Farms with People

The game BINGO inspired the 2025 Farm Crawl with local consumers heading to local farms for fresh products and experiences in their neighborhoods. The event, that ran through August to September 13, had members and the public playing along by visiting some of area operations found on our 25 member Ag location inspired BINGO card. Those individuals who achieved BINGO had a chance at our Commodities/Marketing Team’s cash raffle rewards.

The lucky member winners were Karen Chesniak of Palos Park and Don Cliff of Chicago Heights.

Our participating Farm Business raffle winners were Smits Farms in Sauk Village and Just Picked Farm Stand in Tinley Park.

The many local farmstands, greenhouses, and specialty growers in the Cook County area appreciate the many local farm supporters that stopped in to enjoy the locally produced products and quality offerings that make our members so valuable to the community.



2025 Recipe Collection is Available!

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

WINNERS CIRCLE

25th Giant Pumpkin, Dessert, Carving, Decorating, and Local Honey Contests

Giant Pumpkin Contest Adult	1st	\$250.00	Dave Wilkes 385 lbs
Giant Pumpkin Contest Adult	2nd	\$150.00	Rick Homerding 363 lbs
Giant Pumpkin Contest Adult	3rd	\$75.00	Roger Freeman 251 lbs
Giant Pumpkin Contest Adult	4th	—	Mary Schoenheider 84 lbs
Giant Pumpkin Contest Youth	1st	\$100.00	Valerie Doorneweerd 105 lbs
Giant Pumpkin Contest Youth	2nd	\$75.00	Landon Milella 89 lbs
Giant Pumpkin Contest Youth	3rd	\$50.00	Livia Milella 22 lbs
Honey Contest	1st	\$100.00	Kate Swain
Honey Contest	2nd	\$50.00	Cynthia Brasic
Honey Contest	3rd	\$25.00	Rick Homerding
Carving Contest	1st	\$100.00	Cassandra Rivera
Carving Contest	2nd	\$50.00	Carolina Rivera
Carving Contest	3rd	\$25.00	Donny Carlson
Pumpkin Dessert Contest	1st	\$100.00	Cassandra Rivera Pumpkin Caramel Pie
Pumpkin Dessert Contest	2nd	\$50.00	Theresa Doorneweerd Pumpkin Harvest Spice Cake
Pumpkin Dessert Contest	3rd	\$25.00	Masry Schoenheider Pumpkin Bundt Cake
Youth Guess the Weight 0-14 yrs	1st	Pumpkin: 40 lbs	Landon Milella's Guess: 35 lbs
Adult Guess the Weight 15+ yrs	1st	Pumpkin: 36.5 lbs	Lynne Rine's Guess: 37 lbs



Valerie Doorneweerd takes her second consecutive 1st place win in the Youth Giant Pumpkin Contest with a 105 lb pumpkin.



Talented Cassandra Rivera wins 1st place in Dessert and Carving



Homerding wins 2nd place in Pumpkin and 3rd place in Honey contests.

See More Photos Online at: <https://cookcfb.org/stay-updated-/events-and-programs/programs-and-events/profile/giant-pumpkin-contest>



Special thanks to **Puckerville Farms in Lemont** for hosting the event and **Cook-DuPage Beekeepers Association** for sponsoring and judging the honey contest, as well as the many volunteers, contestants, and spectators that supported all the activities!!

Farmers Request Policy Changes Amid Crisis

Farmers across the country, with both large and small farms, are feeling severe economic pressures from following crop prices, skyrocketing expenses, and trade disputes. The American Farm Bureau has sent letters to President Trump and congressional leaders communicating that farmers are at a breaking point and recommending policy steps to help ease the burden both short-term and long-term.

The correspondence included:

A call for congressional leaders to authorize some type of bridge payments for farmers to address sector wide gaps as trade strategies, price stabilization, and key market relationships are recalibrated.

Further policy requests included a call for:

- Fair and enforceable trade agreements
- Policy on biofuels, including year-round sales of E-15

- Restoration of whole milk in schools
- Protecting interstate commerce
- Investigating prices for major agricultural supplies (inputs)
- Enforcing laws and regulations that protect competition, fairness, and transparency
- Prioritizing American grown fruits and vegetables in federal and institutional purchasing programs.

In Cook County, specialty growers are seeing mounting cost pressures with limited risk protection. As a cornerstone of area agriculture, supplying fresh and nutritious food and products to families, rising production costs, trade uncertainty, and a limited safety net continue to erode margins. Cook County Farm Bureau continues to seek limited regulations, competitive marketing for local food and farm product support, and a modern farm bill for risk management options.

Master Gardener Resource Center Wrapping Up Horticulture Assistance for the Year

Throughout the 2025 growing season, the Cook County Farm Bureau® and the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners have partnered on a project that benefits local Farm Bureau members and the general public. Since April 15, the master gardeners have been working virtually to answer questions from members and the general public related to gardening and horticulture. This dedicated group will continue to respond to questions regarding soil tests and production through mid-November of 2025.

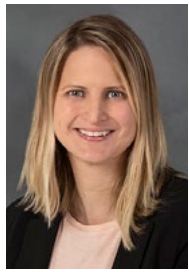
We have confirmed that during the winter, the master gardeners will continue to be accessible by emailing mastergardener@cookcfb.org or by contacting the Cook County Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276.

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.



Smart Holiday Spending: How to Plan, Budget, and Borrow Wisely This Season

Originally Published by: Discover Modern Money, Adapted by IAACU



Jennifer Killian

As the holiday season approaches, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by increased spending, which often leads to the familiar New Year's resolution to cut back spending and save more money. But what if you could get ahead

of that cycle this year? By following three practical financial tips, you can take control of your holiday budget, avoid overspending, and start the new year with confidence and a healthier financial outlook.

1 Create a Purchasing Plan

Holiday spending can quickly spiral without a thoughtful plan in place. Having a clear purchasing plan can make all the difference. Before you start shopping, take time to outline who you're buying for and what you'd like to give them. This helps you stay focused, stick to your budget, and avoid those tempting impulse purchases.

To help alleviate financial stress, consider beginning your shopping earlier in the year. Spreading out purchases over several months allows you to manage costs more comfortably and reduces last-minute stress.

2 Set and Stick to a Budget

Overspending during the holidays is easy to do without a clear budget in place. Start by deciding how much you can realistically spend, then break that total down by person, event, or category. This gives you a roadmap for your purchases and helps you stay in control.

To prepare for future seasons, consider opening a dedicated savings account, like a Christmas Club account, that allows

you to set a savings goal and automate contributions throughout the year while earning interest. That way, when the holidays roll around, you're financially ready.

Remember, budgeting isn't about restriction, it's about intention. Use price comparison tools and shopping apps to find the best deals, especially during seasonal promotions. With a solid plan and smart tools, you can stretch your budget further.

3 Evaluate Holiday Loan Options

Even with careful planning, unexpected holiday expenses can pop up. If you need extra funds, a personal loan with competitive rates and flexible repayment terms might offer a practical solution. Many lenders offer fast approval processes, giving you quick access to cash when you need it most. But before applying, take a close look at your budget, calculate what you can realistically afford to repay, and choose a loan term that fits your financial situation. A holiday loan should support your goals, not add stress. With the right financial tools and a clear repayment plan, you can navigate seasonal spending with confidence and enjoy the festivities without feeling financially overwhelmed.

By planning ahead and making intentional financial choices, you can enjoy the holiday season without the stress of overspending. These simple strategies not only help you stay within budget, but they also set you up for a more confident and financially secure start to the new year.

IAACU CONTACT INFO:

www.iaacu.org | 800.676.2541
servicecenter@iaacu.org

CCFB members can use the IAACU as part of your membership benefits package.

Choosing Your Why



By: Jayden Mussatto, IFB Manager Associate

As humans, we are faced with making choices throughout our lives, some small, and some life changing. For me, one of those choices was bringing a dog into my life. The loyal bond we create with this living being may become the most important part of our lives. Some of us may not have this choice in the beginning, so let me tell you a bit about my first dog.

My love for dogs started at a very young

age. When my mom brought home a baby (me), my dad brought home a puppy. While this was my first dog, we must remember there was a "why" behind her. Abby wasn't just a dog in our family; she was chosen with a purpose.

Abby was not only a family dog, she was also a hunting dog. I'd like to think she was the best waterfowl dog in the area, but that's just me being biased. So why did we grow this bond? Abby had two jobs in her lifetime and that was simply hunting and loving. Her "why" wasn't just companionship, it was also a job.

Some may say that agriculture can often work in the same way. For instance, every seed planted, every calf born, every implement bought has a "why" behind it. Just like ordinary people, farmers make intentional choices based on the roles each part of their farm plays. Abby's purpose was hunting and loving; a farmer's purpose may be to grow crops to feed a community or raise livestock to sustain a family legacy.

As Abby and I grew up together, our bond became stronger. If I had a snack, Abby would have a snack. If Abby had a bacon strip, I would steal a bacon strip.

When Abby passed away around our 16th birthday, it left me broken.

Later, living alone in my college apartment, I remembered something my mom used to say, "When you live

on your own, you can have as many dogs as you want." I began my search for a companion, but I had a long list of choices I needed to make to fit my lifestyle.

- Did I want a dog that I could carry in a purse?
- Did I want a lazy dog that would rot away in bed with me on a lazy day?
- Did I want a dog that would keep me active?

Three weeks later, I brought home Stetson Blu. Stetson was a 2½-year-old Toy Australian Shepherd. I like to believe I'm his best friend just as much as he's mine. When I get up, he gets up. When he wants to go on a walk, I suddenly want to go on a walk too.

But as Stetson grew, his instincts began to show. Herding, nipping, watching, moving. His "why" was rooted in generations of working dogs on farms and ranches, he was bred to help manage livestock and keep operations moving.

I could tell Stetson was missing something: the farm.

- Australian Shepherd – Livestock herder
- Great Pyrenees – Livestock or farmyard guardian
- Labrador Retriever – Companion, hunting, utility

These different breeds hold many different genetics and come with an abundance of "whys". Why is it that a farm may need some of these certain breeds, or why is it that we as people make such different decisions on dogs?

Beyond all the "whys", dogs play many different roles: some get pampered, some work, some guard, some offer emotional support. Each individual breed has its own strengths and quirks. Just like Abby had a purpose, so does Stetson and all other dogs. Stetson's purpose was just hidden by his rooted instincts. His instincts to herd, work, and stay close no longer became a problem or a question, they became results of his genetics.

Stetson's herding instincts were able to tell me that agriculture isn't just a job or an industry, it's a way of life, passed down through generations, even shaping the animals we share in our lives today.

Looking back, when we talk about choosing our "why," it's not just about the big decisions in life, it's about the everyday choices that connect us back to something bigger. For me, that "why" will always tie back to agriculture and the loyal companions who remind me where it all began.

Jayden worked at Cook County Farm Bureau in October.

Area High School Agriculture Programs in the News

Did you happen to see the special interview feature in FarmWeek on the Crete-Monee High School FFA program? Our own Cook County Farm Bureau Young Leader member, Rebecca Biernacki, is the ag teacher and FFA advisor responsible for building the program! Check it out at:

https://www.farmweeknow.com/youth_in_ag/urban-ffa-chapter-grows-community-impact/article_d5340f5d-953f-4528-9532-7855a55df146.html



Members of the Crete-Monee FFA chapter, including Malachi Cliff, right, run community food and popcorn research plots that are redefining what agriculture looks like in urban settings. (Photo courtesy of Jim Taylor)

Did you read the article on the Chicago Vocational High School FFA program in the FFA News? The Cook County Farm Bureau Ag Literacy Department works frequently with this high school program to help bring agricultural connections and careers within reach!

<https://www.ffa.org/the-feed/chicago-youth-harvest-potential-on-student-run-farm/>



Students gather fresh greens grown on their two-acre farm. Photo courtesy of Amanda Anderson, urban agriculture program manager and FFA advisor for the Gary Comer Youth Center.

Planting Seeds



Katrina J.E. Milton

Are you celebrating Thanksgiving this year? According to the 2025 Butterball Togetherness Report, 89% of Americans plan on celebrating the holiday this year, with 84% of celebrants eating turkey. Hosts expect an average of nine attendees.

Turkey remains a staple in American diets: the United States Department of Agriculture projects that for the whole 2025 year, 4.45 billion pounds of turkey will be eaten this year, or an average of 13 pounds per person.

Thanksgiving wouldn't be possible without farmers. More than 200 million turkeys are raised on farms across the U.S. The average weight of a Thanksgiving turkey is 15 pounds, which takes approximately 15-17 weeks for a growing bird to reach that weight. Farmers also produce all of the other fixings on the Thanksgiving table: corn, wheat, vegetables, cranberries, even soybeans and peanuts for oil.

Growing up, Thanksgiving was one of my favorite holidays. My mom always went all out on the meal: a giant turkey, a mountain of mashed potatoes with brown gravy, Stovetop stuffing, canned cranberries, green bean casserole, sweet corn, my mom's secret family recipe for Polish cucumber salad mizeria, my cousins' favorite Pillsbury dinner rolls, and candied yams with campfire-size marshmallows with syrup on top. We always had apple cider to drink and pumpkin pie for dessert.

Thanksgiving is always a difficult time of the year for my family, ever since my mom passed

"Traditional Thanksgiving Chocolate Chip Cookies"

away in 2016. Instead of celebrating the traditional way with turkey and all of the fixings, my cousins and I gather together over pizza, Chinese food, or barbecue.

This Thanksgiving, my cousins and I haven't decided if we'll be gathering together to celebrate at someone's house or at a restaurant, but I am looking forward to seeing them. Regardless of where we'll eat, I'll be sure to bring along a giant Tupperware container full of chocolate chip cookies, which are my cousins' favorite homemade dessert.

I remember making a batch of chocolate chip cookies as a snack when my cousins and I went to a baseball game. The girls sat in the front row, and the boys sat in the row behind. My male cousins asked to try the cookies I brought along, and I reached behind me to hand them the Tupperware. About 10 minutes later, I turned around and asked them for the container back, because I felt like having a snack. They replied, "What cookies...?" and showed an empty container, without any crumbs left.

Since then, I've always made a double batch of my soft chocolate chip cookies for any family gathering. They're a huge hit! Once, I tried bringing along another type of dessert, and it was quickly devoured. However, my cousins still asked me all night long about my chocolate chip cookies and why I didn't bring any.

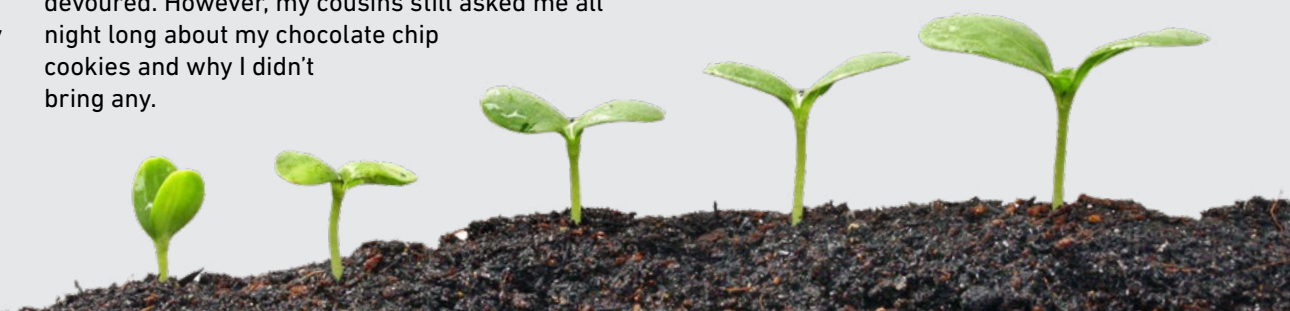


Katrina's soft chocolate chip cookies, which are a family favorite at any gathering.

A few years ago, I entered my cookies into the local county fair, and they won third place out of more than 30 entries. I can proudly say with official bragging rights that I have the third-best chocolate chip cookies in the county, as well as the best herb biscuits (my biscuits won a blue ribbon).

Happy Thanksgiving! I hope that your celebration is full of your favorite foods. I know that mine will be full of chocolate chip cookies!

Katrina Milton, Director of Ag Literacy Katrina can be reached at aitc@cookcfb.org.



CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to District 59 Educator Laura Meehan!

Mrs. Meehan, a fourth-grade teacher at Robert Frost Elementary School in Mount Prospect, booked Ag in the Classroom early, and it paid off! Mrs. Meehan was randomly chosen from 41 teachers to receive a \$50 Amazon gift card, in addition to our outstanding free program that brings agricultural education to students throughout Cook County. If you are an



educator that is interested in scheduling Cook County Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom Program, visit bit.ly/AITCplease and fill out the Google Form.

NOVEMBER DAVID LUNA

COOK COUNTY FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION'S / OUTSTANDING IN THEIR FIELD Ag Student of the Month

Grade: 8

School: Academy for Global Citizenship

Involvement in Agricultural Groups: David has been participating in his school's "Chef's Apprentice" internship program, where he has been instrumental in the prepping, leading, and modifying of cooking activities for younger students. David has participated in countless Health & Wellness program lessons throughout the years and is now proving himself to be an exceptional intern.



Involvement in Ag: David has been involved in agriculture for many years. Starting in kindergarten, he learned about seed germination and the plant life cycle and started participating in simple cooking activities. Throughout the years, he has proven himself to be a steward of the land, and he demonstrates enthusiasm when talking to younger students about these topics.

Words from the Nominator: "Approximately one week of each month, David chooses to give up part of his recess to help me prep ingredients and workstations for my cooking classes, and he sticks around to help guide the early part of the lesson. He is quick to identify and praise students

that are setting a great example and he does a great job redirecting friends who might not be as engaged in the activity as they could be. He has truly made a difference in my classes, and it gives me tremendous joy to see the way my first graders get inspired looking at him knowing that one day they might be interns, too!"

~ Bryan Soto, K-5 Grade Health & Wellness Teacher

Plans for the Future: David hopes to one day play soccer professionally and to take over his parents' business. He is passionate about working in the kitchen and would one day like to open up his own restaurant.

AGRICULTURE ADVENTURES FOR FAMILIES



WATERCOLOR CRAFT: Coffee Filter Turkeys!

MATERIALS:

- Coffee filter
- Scissors
- Paper plate
- Markers
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Construction paper – brown, orange, and red
- Googly eyes (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Put a coffee filter on a paper plate. The paper plate will help contain the marker and water mess.
2. Use markers to color in a coffee filter. The more colorful, the better!
3. Spray water onto the coffee filter, dampening the filter until the marker colors bleed together.
4. Remove the coffee filter from the paper plate and place or hang it in an area to dry.
5. Trace a large circle and slightly smaller circle onto brown construction paper using different sized jars or glasses.
6. Glue the larger circle onto the coffee filter first for the turkey's body. Add the smaller circle to the top of it to create the head.
7. Add a beak, gobbler, and eyes. You can also add feet or other decorations to personalize your turkey.



FUN TURKEY FACTS

A male turkey is called a "tom," and a female turkey is called a "hen." Baby turkeys are called "poults." A group of turkeys is called a "flock" or a "rafter."

An adult turkey has 5,000 to 6,000 feathers!



Craft from *Typically Simple*: <https://typicallysimple.com/watercolor-coffee-filter-turkeys/>

THANKSGIVING Reading Corner

BOOK RECOMMENDATION:



Two-List Thanksgiving

Written by Christine Whan, Illustrated by Sienna Youngsun Kim

This newly-published book tells the story of a Korean-American girl and how she celebrates Thanksgiving with both of her heritages' cultures and foods.

Book description from Amazon: "Thanksgiving Day is full of food and family, football and conversation, and of course, giving thanks. By the end of the meal, she has a newfound love for her family's two distinct cultures. Two-List Thanksgiving celebrates the beauty of blending traditions of all family backgrounds to create a truly multicultural holiday celebration."

November Word Search

Last Month's Winner:
Bernadette Paul

Bird	E O R T W Y K B S Z Y U E L K
Eat	H A D U E N C I L E D K K Q U
Farm	Q S T K N J O R S L G H N E H
Fast	A Z R F V S L D I V B L L I R
Feathers	I U P L R X F W F A S T L L S
Fly	T S P Y U S P O S I E F P R M
Flock	Y Z J K H C T M I N S J A R Q
Grains	A L A D K Q Q L Z R G E A H Y
Hen	A D K T H S P K U V E F L Z J
Poults	S N O N Q V P D U O A T V L U
Rafter	N M F E A T H E R S P A F H I
Run	I G N I V I G S K N A H T A W
Thanksgiving	A K S H P D E B E L N D B L R
Tom	R G I V W Y H G E R A V R T L
Turkey	G Z W J F Y D R E K J Z Z U T
Wild	

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!**

Popcorn, the State Snack of Illinois

Illinois produces around 93,288,000 pounds of popcorn seeds each year, and is ranked third in the nation for popcorn production. We love it so much that it's even the state snack! It's fun to know that the next time you reach for this

versatile snack you are also supporting Illinois agriculture. Be sure to keep an eye out around your hometown for locally grown popcorn, too! Check out these fun facts about popcorn to share at the next movie night.

POPCORN SEASONING

Directions

Step 1

In a small bowl, combine the spices for one batch of popcorn.

Step 2

Pop 2-3 cups of popcorn using any method. Unseasoned kernels or lightly buttered microwave popcorn work best.

Step 3

Coat the popped popcorn lightly with melted butter or cooking oil (coconut or avocado), then add the seasonings and shake. A medium sized bowl with a lid is perfect for coating the popcorn in the seasoning.

Leftover popcorn can be stored in an airtight container for up to 10 days.



Sweet & Savory
 ½ tsp. Sea Salt
 1 tsp. Nutritional Yeast*
 1 tsp. Granulated Sugar



Cinnamon Sugar
 1 tsp. Cinnamon
 1 Tbsp. Brown Sugar



Savory Blend
 ½ tsp. Nutritional Yeast*
 1 tsp. Onion Power
 1 tsp. Sea Salt



Spicy
 ¼ tsp. Paprika
 ½ tsp. Cumin
 ½ tsp. Red Pepper Flakes



Cheesy
 1 tsp. Sea Salt
 1 Tbsp. Cheese Powder or Nutritional Yeast*



Herb Blend
 ½ tsp. Dried Basil
 ½ tsp. Dried Oregano
 ¼ tsp. Dried Rosemary
 ¼ tsp. Dried Thyme

*Nutritional Yeast is a savory cheese powder alternative high in vitamins and minerals. It is commonly found in the health food or spice aisles.

1. Popcorn is a specific variety of corn grown for its shape, size, starch type, and moisture content. When grown in a field, the plant looks very similar to dent corn, regular flint corn, and sweet corn.
2. Not all corn will pop; popcorn has unique traits like a thick outer shell and a strict moisture content, that allow it to do so.
3. Once kernels pop, they form two different shapes: mushroom and butterfly. Mushroom shaped popcorn is used to make kettle corn and other flavored popcorn. Butterfly is the type you get in a microwave bag or movie theater.
4. Popcorn is said to have been around since 3000 B.C. In the early 20th century popcorn was eaten as a breakfast food!

Source: *Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom - Popcorn Farm Bite.*

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE POP!

- 1. Heating Up**
 As the kernel is heated, the moisture turns into steam and pressure begins to build. The temperature needs to reach 356° F for the popping process to begin.
- 2. Pressure Cooker Effect**
 The hard shell traps the steam, turning the inside into a mini pressure cooker. The starch gelatinizes and becomes soft.
- 3. The Pop**
 When the kernel reaches 135 psi the shell bursts open.

POPCORN SHAPES!

Butterfly-shaped popcorn is used for movie theater popcorn.

Mushroom-shaped popcorn is normally used for flavored popcorn like caramel and kettle corn!

At The Farm Gate

by Joanie Stiers



Popcorn Powerhouse IL Top Producer of the State Snack

I've never told the giver of the stovetop popcorn popper at our wedding how much use and abuse the whirligig has seen over the past 24 years. We never registered for the gadget, but what an unexpected delight for making kettle corn and movie-theater-caliber popcorn. We loved it so much, I have replaced it twice.

Popcorn turns everyday moments into memories – passing a bucket in the theater, grabbing a bag at a ball game or gathering around a fresh bowl for Fourth of July fireworks. More than 300 Illinois farms keep those memories popping and make Illinois a popcorn power. Our state ranks No. 3 in the production of popcorn, one of three primary types of corn grown in the United States along with sweet corn and field corn, the latter for which Illinois ranks No. 2.

More than 20 years ago, Joliet second and third graders successfully lobbied to make popcorn Illinois' official state snack, a fitting choice. I often grab a bag of popcorn at gas stations during road trips, where the airy crunch helps me stay alert on long drives on the road or in the tractor while planting soybeans. At home, the whole grain is my go-to for curbing nightly cravings: light on calories if you skip the butter and caramel, yet versatile in its forms. Our snack cabinet holds oversized pre-popped bags from the wholesale club, a stash of microwave packets, raw kernels from a local farm and pre-measured pouches for the Whirley Pop.

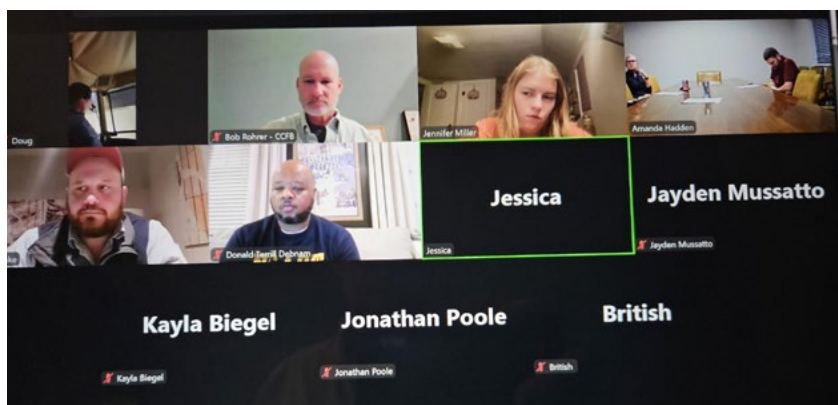
My mom, the lead curator of memories in our family, intentionally crafts moments that stick in memory banks. In that spirit, she bought a legit popcorn machine you find in concession stands. The popper lives most of the time in our farm's scalehouse at our grain storage facility, where it serves the harvest crew. Truck drivers haul in field corn and scale out with popcorn for themselves and for transport to cart drivers and combine operators.

Occasionally, we transport the popcorn machine to the farm office, where we make popcorn for events. Twice a year, it travels to my house for the overnight parties following prom and homecoming for our kids and their friends. They enjoy fresh-popped corn with a glass-bottled soda that I hope pop up moments worth remembering.

About the author: Joanie Stiers farms with her brother and parents in West-Central Illinois, where they grow corn, soybeans and hay, raise beef cattle and operate side businesses related to the family operation.

CCFB Young Leaders Meet with Young Leaders from Wake CFB, North Carolina

In their annual meet-up, Cook County Farm Bureau Young Leaders met via videoconference with the Young Farmers from Wake County Farm Bureau in North Carolina to discuss common agricultural issues from each area of the country. Led by the respective chairs of each group, Blake Lanphier (Cook County Farm Bureau) and Donald Terrill Debnam (Wake County Farm Bureau), the group explored the documentary "Common Ground," which focuses on regenerative agriculture. While there were elements that members indicated had value, members also had questions and observations



about scalability, the value of university funding research, understanding the entire agricultural production picture, farm diversification, land access, nutrition education, local food infrastructure, and more. The two Young Leader groups have met for an annual discussion since 2021.

Listen to all podcasts TODAY!

Follow the link below

FarmWeekNow.com/podcasts



TAKING STALK

WITH ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU

Manifolds, Manolos, and Manure

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



From Farm Fields to the Hill

In September, Cook County Farm Bureau leaders traveled to the nation's capital.

Not to sight-see. Not for a vacation. Not for a couple of days away with friends. But to broaden leaders' understanding of agricultural issues and how the federal government intersects with those issues. Leaders spent their time advocating for issues impacting Cook County Farm Bureau members and their farms.

Farm Bureau leaders met with representatives from the International Fresh Produce Association and the International Dairy Foods Association. An aspect of both of these conversations was the first and second reports issued by the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission. The first report was

deeply troubling and sowed seeds of doubt and fear about the food system and farming practices. Farm Bureau leaders conveyed the importance of access to tools that protect crops, promote sustainability, are science-backed, and help farmers produce crops. A takeaway from the visit is that access to fresh produce was cool even before MAHA.

Leaders visited the American Bankers' Association and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. These conversations centered around overlapping issues, including the need for a farm bill. Speaking of a farm bill, 246 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and 21 members of the U.S. Senate have never voted on a Farm Bill despite being in Congress for less than 6 years.

During the fly-in, leaders met with the Animal Agriculture Alliance. The Alliance safeguards the future of animal agriculture and its value to society by bridging the

communication gap between the farm and food communities. The visit was timely for Cook CFB leaders as they continue to advocate for the expansion of Wagner Farm's dairy operations.

Leaders visited AmericanHort to discuss labor and the need for a farm bill. Research is often key to resolving challenges that have regulatory or other implications, and support for ample research funding is an integral component of our advocacy efforts. Beyond the Horticultural Research Institute's own direct research funding, AmericanHort supports funding for federal research programs and activities, including those included in the farm bill. The horticultural industry accounts for 2.32 million full and part-time jobs while also generating \$426 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenues.

In addition to policy visits, Farm Bureau leaders met with Congressional staff from Congressman Jonathan Jackson,

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, Congressman Sean Casten, and Congressman Brad Schneider's offices. While these leaders are not among the 72 new members of the 119th US Congress, they are integral to the future of Illinois and Cook County agriculture. As constituents, Farm Bureau leaders advocated for access to farm loans and young and new farmer support through the farm bill. Earlier in September, Congressman Brad Schneider hosted his Agriculture Working Group and heard a similar message. Members of the working group expressed concerns about the farm economy and the need for long-term solutions that benefit all regions and sectors of agriculture.

The fly-in broadened participants' understanding of the federal government while also expanding their knowledge of issues in agriculture and how the federal government intersects and impacts those issues.



Exciting news...Registration is open for the 2026 From Food to Flowers: Everything Local Conference!

Conference Dates: January 28-30, 2026
Location: Bank of Springfield Center, Springfield, IL
Register NOW for early bird pricing!

Event Item Name	Pricing
Members (IFB, ISGA, ILFMA) - pre-Registration	\$100.00
Non-Member - Pre-Registration	\$225.00

Whether you're a specialty crop grower, local food or farm; farmers market manager, nonprofit, or a local food supporter, this is your chance to connect with your community and build the Illinois Food System together.

With over 100 breakout sessions, an interactive exhibit hall, and three dynamic keynote sessions, you'll walk away with practical tools and fresh perspectives to strengthen your business.

To register, go to: https://members.specialtygrowers.org/site_event_detail.cfm?pk_association_event=34336



SCAN TO REGISTER NOW!



Cook CFB Leaders Visit IFPA in D.C.

Cook County Farm Bureau leaders traveled to the nation's capital to expand their understanding of different issues in agriculture and how the federal government intersects and impacts those issues. As part of the visit, leaders engaged with leaders from the International Fresh Produce Association. IFPA is the largest and most diverse international association serving the entire fresh produce and floral supply chain. Pictured left to right is Janet McCabe, British Griffis, Blake Lanphier, and Cindy Gustafson.



Leaders Visit the Nation's Capital

Cook CFB leaders gained an appreciation of the historical and cultural significance of Washington, D.C. during this year's Leaders to Washington program. In addition to policy and lobbying visits, leaders toured historical sites including the U.S. Capitol, White House, and numerous monuments. Pictured left to right is Blake Lanphier, Bona Heinsohn, Cindy Gustafson, Janet McCabe, and Ed Elfmann.



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.



PIERO SETTA

has been named Agent of the Month November 2025 by Sharon Stemke, District Leader. Piero's office is located at 14500 John Humphrey Dr, Orland Park, IL. His phone number is 708-226-0431. Piero has been an Agent with COUNTRY® Financial since January 1995. **Orland Park Agency, Sharon Stemke, District Leader**



STEVE PHILLIPS

has been named Agent of the Month of November 2025 by Alonzo Navarez, District Leader. Steve's office is located at 5060 S. Archer Ave, Chicago, IL. His phone number is 312-583-1475. Steve has been a Financial Representative with COUNTRY® Financial since November 2014. **Chicago South Agency, Alonzo Navarez, 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.*

Cook County Farm Bureau Photo Contest FALL PHOTOS: WINNERS!

Thank you to all those that participated in the 2025 Photo Contest!! Your photos captured all the exciting and beautiful images that showcased Agriculture in the spring, summer, and fall.

All participating photos are featured on our website at <https://cookcfb.org/membership/ccfb-photo-contest>. We thank you and look forward to seeing your photos in 2026!



FIRST PLACE:

"Visit to the largest corn maze" by **Stephanie Oehmen**



SECOND PLACE:

"Beans" by **Jessica McCabe**



THIRD PLACE:

"Grandson harvesting his pumpkins and gourds that he grew this summer" by **Karen Krooswyk**

HERE COME THE BULLS
IT'S BULL TIME
MODO CASINO
PBR CHICAGO
DECEMBER 19-20
UNITED CENTER
GET YOUR TICKETS AT PBR.COM AND TICKETMASTER.COM

Special Ticket Pricing for CCFB Members

Experience the electrifying adrenaline rush of PBR! This is your chance to witness world-class athletes going head-to-head with powerful bucking bulls in the heart of the Windy City! Visit our website for ticketing link and passcode for special ticket pricing.

NEW! Local Deals Now Available on TicketsatWork

Good news! Members can now save on **restaurants, groceries, events, and nearby attractions** — giving you more ways to enjoy life close to home or work, without straining your wallet. Explore local deals and dining offers — from quick bites to date nights, and everything in between. There's something for everyone!



GET STARTED FREE:

1. Visit www.ticketsatwork.com
2. Use Company Code: **CCFB**

Start saving today — your neighborhood adventures await!

WHAT'S IN YOUR ABENITY APP?

Abenity offers thousand of discounts to Farm Bureau members. Want to save on travel? Take a look at just some of savings offered through your Abenity app...



Save up to 13% on Go City Explorer passes to multiple cities across the country.



Offering cruises and tours which include: River cruises, Safari adventures, Rail Tours and more in countries like: Switzerland, Peru, Egypt and more! CCFB members receive discounted pricing on tours!



Receive exclusive savings, plus always receive 4% Vacation Rewards on completed cruise bookings



Receive exclusive savings, plus always receive 4% Vacation Rewards on completed cruise bookings



Save 15% off best available rate



Up to 20% off best available rate

PLUS SO MANY MORE TRAVEL SAVINGS!

What are you waiting for? Download the app today!

Scan QR code to download



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.

Solid wood entertainment center, honey oak stain, 56" tall, 52 1/2" wide, 16 1/2" deep. Cash only, you pick up. It is heavy, you will need pick up truck and a couple of strong guys. Price \$40. **Please call 708-426-9065.** See photos online

For Sale: 4 UniRoyal Tiger Paw tires. 255x45x20. Less than 800 miles wear. All 4 for \$475. **Call 847-358-0972.**

WANTED

Looking for someone to farm property – I have 19.26 acres on Old McHenry Rd in Hawthorne Woods, IL. There are no buildings on the property, but hay/alfalfa has been grown the last three years. The current farmer does not wish to harvest because some rocks have surfaced making it hard for a non-adjustable height cutter to work. **Please call Marilyn at 847-722-7173 to discuss the opportunity to farm.**

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.**

Wanted to buy BB guns, toy guns, rifles and pistols. BB, pellet and Co2. Also cap guns. **Call 312-438-8628.**

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**

Wanted FOLD UP TABLES. **Call James 708-361-8230.**

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
"Q"

QUATRE
ÉPICES



"Quatre épices" is French for "four spices".

The classic blend includes white pepper, ginger, nutmeg, and cloves.



It's commonly used in charcuterie (like pâté and terrines), soups, stews, and as a rub for meats like pork and poultry.

The blend has historical roots in France and was influenced by the spice trade with North Africa.

It can be an exotic addition to desserts, including spice cakes, gingerbread, and fruit crumbles.

STORE THE BLEND IN AN AIRTIGHT CONTAINER IN A COOL, DARK PLACE FOR UP TO SIX MONTHS

A great cold weather spice, and is typically used in hearty dishes made around the winter season.



In French cuisine, quatre-épices is typically used in soup, ragout and rich meat dishes like venison stew or beef braised in red wine.

Call the office on any Tuesday in November with the word of the week: "TURKEY"

Source: <https://www.seasonedpioneers.com/quatre-epices-uncovered>

MEMBER BUSINESS

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Clarke's Garden Center | Chicago Hts. Wreaths, garland, greens, poinsettias, decor |
| Gorman Tree Farm | Monee Trees, wreaths, garland |
| Horcher's Farm | Wheeling Trees, handmade wreaths, greens, flowers |
| Kolze's Corner Garden | Woodstock Trees, wreaths, garland, poinsettias, decor |
| Melka's Garden Center | Mokena Trees, wreaths, garland, greens, poinsettias, decor |
| Puckerville Farms | Lemont Trees, wreaths, garland, decor |
| Smits Farms | Sauk Village Trees, wreaths, greens |
| Ted's Greenhouse | Tinley Park Poinsettias, greens, handmade bows |
| The Children's Farm | Palos Park Wreaths |
| Historic Wagner Farm | Glenview Trees, wreaths, roping, garland, greens |
| West End Garden Ctr | Evanston Trees, wreaths, greens, flowers, plants, decor |

2026 Scholarship Applications Available!

The 2026 Foundation Scholarship application is available online at <https://cookcfb.org/foundation-/scholarships>. The Deadline for these Applications is February 17, 2026.

The latest version of Farm and Food Facts can be found on the Cook County Farm Bureau website <https://cookcfb.org/discover-local/resources/ag-resources/profile/farm-and-food-facts-2025>. This publication is packed full of Farm and food data, facts, statistics and informational value in a readable format.

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, with Q&A.



LOCATION: Zoom; link will be emailed the Friday prior

TIME: 3:00-3:30 p.m. with Q & A **DATES:** Monday, November 10th 2025

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

Small Business Owner Webinar featuring the IAA Credit Union – 2 times available!

Cook Co. members are eligible for IAACU Membership. Every day, the IAACU strive to find the best financial solutions for each of their members. IAACU experts will discuss a range of products and services to support small and medium-sized business owners, including - COUNTRY agents – Landscapers - Construction and excavating contractors - Tradespeople (e.g., plumbers, electricians, HVAC specialists)- Auto service providers (body work, repair, maintenance, tires) - Professional offices and services (attorneys, accountants, chiropractors, MDs, dentists) - Owner-occupied commercial real estate (occupying more than 50% of the space) and commercial farmers.



LOCATION: Webinar Zoom link will be emailed the day prior

DATE: Thursday, November 13, 2025

TIMES: 12:00-12:30 p.m. lunch & learn OR 5:00-5:30 pm webinar

REGISTRATION: Call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276, online at the Member Center at www.cookcfb.org

Holiday Wreath & Bow Making at CCFB Register Now!

Join us at the CCFB and create a real holiday wreath and bow for your home this coming season. Patrick Horcher, owner of Horchers Flower Shop & Garden Center, will lead us in creating your own creation for home. Refreshments and merriment included!



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

DATE: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 **TIME:** 6:00-7:30 p.m.

REGISTRATION: Call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276, online at the Member Center at www.cookcfb.org.

FEE: \$25 for CCFB members, \$30 for non-members

“Grocery: The Buying and Selling of Food in America” Zoom Book Club

A fascinating look at the history, culture, and business of the modern supermarket. Through behind-the-scenes insights and personal stories, author Michael Ruhlman reveals how grocery stores shape what we eat, how we live, and even how we see ourselves as consumers.



LOCATION: Live via Zoom **DATES:** January 13 and 27, February 10 and 24 **TIME:** 6 p.m.

REGISTRATION: Register by January 2 by emailing bona@cookcfb.org

FEE: No charge for CCFB members, \$10 for non-members

Beginning Beekeeping Course at the CCFB

In person course coming in early 2026...exact details coming soon.



Charitable Giving

through Individual Retirement Accounts

If you are over 70 ½, the Federal government may permit you to roll over up to \$100,000 from your IRA to charity without increasing your taxable income or paying any additional tax. These tax-free rollover gifts could be \$1,000, \$10,000 or any amount up to \$100,000 this year. If you are 72 or over, the gift may satisfy your required minimum distribution for this year. Simply contact your custodian and request that an amount up to \$100,000 be transferred to the charity of your choice.



The Cook County Farm Bureau® Foundation

(708) 354-3276
ccfb@cookcfb.org
www.cookcfb.org

6438 Joliet Rd. Countryside, IL 60525

This information is not intended as tax, legal or financial advice. Gift results may vary. Consult your personal financial advisor for information specific to your situation.



“Moving Ag Forward” VOCATIONAL AG CAREER TRAINING SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE

Vocational Ag Careers can include:

Truck drivers hauling agricultural commodities, food products, inputs and equipment preparing to study and test for their CDL.

The Agriculture and farming industry needs skilled workers and the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation wants to support the those looking to advance their careers in the ag & farming industry!

The CCFB Foundation is offering four vocational ag career training scholarships up to \$1,250 to students who are enrolled in a vocational training program or at an Illinois Community College for Truck Driver

Training, diesel mechanics, welding, or technology with a focus on an agriculturally connected career.



APPLICATION WINDOW IS NOW OPEN!

DEADLINE FOR CONSIDERATION IS FEBRUARY 27, 2026 FOR PROGRAM ENROLLMENT MAY – AUGUST 2026

To Apply:

Go to www.cookcfb.org/foundation-

- Must be an Illinois resident.
- Farm Bureau membership not required.
- Must be enrolled in or planning to enroll in a vocational training program or a commercial driving training program at an Illinois Community College during the corresponding timeframe.
- Proof of enrollment must be provided when a recipient enrolls to receive the award.
- An endorsement signed by a Cook County farmer, Cook County Farm Bureau leader, area agribusiness, or area food processing business.
- Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation directors and employees of Cook County Farm Bureau or their immediate family members are not eligible to apply.

Aspiring diesel mechanics looking to advance their studies or achieve a certification.



Welders looking to advance their careers.



www.cookcfb.org/foundation- | 6438 Joliet Rd, Countryside, IL 60525 | 708-354-3276

END OF YEAR Foundation Contributions

Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation® is very fortunate that we have members seeking to contribute charitable donations to our agricultural literacy cause as we close out the year. Members seeking to contribute to the Foundation can do so using the form.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DONATION!

Donor Name/Organization: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____
 Enclosed is my gift: \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 Other: _____
 Credit Card: Visa Master Card Discover
 Card #: _____ Exp: _____ Signature: _____

Donations to the CCFB Foundation can be made by:

Mailing a check to
6438 Joliet Rd., Ste 101
Countryside, IL 60525

Visiting our website at
www.cookcfb.org/foundation

Calling the office at
708-354-3276