



COOK COUNTY CO-OPERATOR

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

Mark Your Calendar



July

- 15 DIY Summer Barn Quilt Workshop **PG 12**
- 15 Photo Contest Deadline **PG 12**
- 27 Membership Monday **PG 12**
- 31 Member Event at Honey Bee Gardens Farm **PG 11**

August

- 11 BINGO **PG 12**
- 11 Knead to Know: How Agriculture Feeds Your Sourdough **PG 12**

September

- 15 Nutrient Stewardship Field Day at Smits Farm **PG 10**

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 contest has the American Farm Bureau Federation launched to celebrate the contributions of America's farmers in helping to grow America into the nation it is today to mark the nation's 250th anniversary?

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)

June Winner: Leah Walton

Question: Which US Highway that runs right by the Farm Bureau's front door is celebrating its 100-year anniversary this summer?

Answer: Route 66

Word of the Month



Because we enjoy talking with our members, we are changing things up a little bit. Somewhere in each edition of the *Co-Operator* there will be a Word of the Month. We promise it won't be too hard to find! Call in any **Tuesday** during the month of **July** with the Word of the Month and you will be entered to win that month's prize. We look forward to your call. Good luck!

June Winner: David Jerbi

June word was Strawberry found on Page 10.



Urban Students Show at Livestock Fair

About 750 people attended the Livestock Fair at Historic Wagner Farm in Glenview on June 13, where 4-H and FFA students showcased their hard work and dedication with livestock shows, including swine, sheep, beef, and dairy competitions. Cook County Farm Bureau's Agriculture in the Classroom Program helped with a booth at the event. **For more information, go to Page 6.**

From AITC: 2026 End of School Year Summary

During the 2025-2026 school year, Cook County Farm Bureau's Agriculture in the Classroom Program visited 1,148 classrooms, bringing ag education to 26,480 students in 214 schools. Our Ag in the Classroom presenters taught students about a variety of topics, including crops, livestock, the farm-to-table process, Illinois' soils, nutrition, specialty crops, agricultural careers, and what happens on a farm each season.

Feedback from teachers included:

- All of these kids are downtown Chicago city kids so learning about agriculture and farming is very new and exciting for them to learn about.
- This was beneficial to my students and my curriculum because it provided a way for students to be attentive and participate by asking and answering questions. Also, it was hands-on and the students loved the presentation very much.
- This is very beneficial because students have very little background when it comes to farming in Illinois and they are unaware of where their food comes from.



Cook County Farm Bureau's AITC presenters met June 8 to celebrate the end of the school year with a fiesta at Café Salsa in Countryside. At the luncheon, the presenters received certificates summarizing the number of presentations and students they visited this school year. Pictured, from left, back row: AITC presenters Betsy Yager, Wayne Kolweier, Mike Galassini, Kathy Lesser, Barbara Bhojraj, and Sarah Koukol; seated, front row: Director of Ag Literacy Katrina Milton and AITC Assistant Jill Drover.

- It correlated with our curriculum and helped bring it alive!
- Through the videos and images, students were able to relate what they have been studying about Illinois and understand the importance agriculture plays in our state. Sharing about the different jobs associated with agriculture really opened the students' thinking of how crucial it is to learn about the different careers tied to agriculture.
- Our city kids need to hear about agriculture; they think food just appears.
- There was an increase in student engagement and enjoyed learning more about agriculture. Given the demographic, learning about Illinois' agriculture through this program is the closest they'll get to experience life outside of their community.
- The kids loved learning about the many ways that agriculture is intertwined in our lives.
- It's great to have expert instructors come and visit! The presenters and content were both excellent. Engaging and well organized, prepared presentations, we enjoy the hands-on activities and videos. Great presenters!
- I really, really was impressed with this. I wasn't sure how it would go and I was impressed above and beyond! I will definitely be setting this up again as it matched our curriculum perfectly.

Who Says There Is No Agriculture Located in Cook County?



CHECK OUT THE DATA & INFO AT: <https://cookcfb.org/discover-local/resources/ag-resources/profile/growing-cook-county-where-agriculture-meets-innovation-and-impact>

And check out the great videos of agriculture in action in June.

Thank you presenters for their expertise and skillful presentations this school year! We look forward to bringing agricultural education to more schools, classrooms, and students next year.



FUN WITH Container Gardening in Chicago

Grow Where You Are: Container Gardening for Small and Inner-City Spaces, a CCFB partner event, was held on Saturday, May 30, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the church parking lot of Greater Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church in Chicago. The vegetable potting event was led by CCFB member Paulette Edwards of Green Thumb In A Box. More than 20 participants brought their own containers to encourage sustainability and reuse, while new containers were also available. Soil, planting materials, and educational resources were provided. Paulette’s instruction emphasized practical tips for success,



especially for apartment dwellers, condo residents, and households with small or shared outdoor spaces. A special shout-out goes to all event sponsors, including Soil Sponsor and member business Clarke’s Garden Center and Venue Sponsor Greater Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church. Special thanks to Pastor David Watkins III and his sons for hosting the event and lending their support throughout the morning.

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...

- Glenview Wagner Farm for inviting us to their annual stock show and allowing our Ag Literacy Team to work with so many area youth... what a terrific event!
- The libraries (Morton Grove, Richton Park, Calumet City, and others) that continue to invite our Agriculture in the Classroom Program to present to their patrons about ag topics.
- Young Leaders members Blake Lanphier, Jennifer Miller, and Carmen Trotta for their planning and efforts to develop the Young Leaders Ag Industry tour to Wisconsin in July.
- The managers and vendors at both the La Grange and Palos Heights Farmers Markets for welcoming the Farm Bureau and taking the time to speak with us.
- Lincoln Park Zoo for hosting the CCFB during Pollinator Week and the partners who also attended: U of I Extension Chicago Master Gardener Unit, Cook DuPage Beekeepers Association, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Chicago, North Cook County Soil & Water Conservation District, Zeldenrust Farms, Global Gardens, Cook County Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom and Cook County Farm Bureau.
- The farms that keep opening their door for us and the public to connect.
- The members who remain engaged and involved by participating in activities and contests.
- Members Barbara Spellman, Bob Ruffer, Samantha Browne and others for the kind notes and phone calls.

Welcome All Members!

You receive the *Co-Operator* because you are a Cook County Farm Bureau member. If you are a farm operator, owner, or urban producer, you benefit from a local, state, and national organization committed to agriculture and your way of life. If you work in the field of agriculture, your membership is helping to support the various areas of agriculture and agribusiness that start at the farm and end at the table.

If you do not have direct ties to farming, your membership helps promote local farms and farming, encourages wise use of our limited natural resources, and helps preserve farmland and our agricultural heritage. All members have access to 302,000 membership benefits, information, and helpful tools that enhance your membership value and experience.

Thank you for your membership!

HOW FARM BUREAU SERVED YOU IN JUNE

- ▶ **Provided members summer fun options using member discounts.**
- ▶ **Engaged with zoogoers during a pollinator program at Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago.**
- ▶ **Assisted homeowners with gardening questions via the Master Gardener Help Desk email at the Farm Bureau.**
- ▶ **Connected with area community gardens during grant program visits**
- ▶ **Provided educators with a field trip for continuing professional development hours as part of Summer Ag Institute.**
- ▶ **Helped at Historic Wagner Farm’s Livestock Fair, teaching the youth about cattle while doing arts and crafts.**
- ▶ **Gave a library program on agricultural technology to elementary school-aged students and their families at Richton Park Public Library.**



Co-Operator

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Downwind



by BOB ROHRER, CCFB MANAGER

“Put 1 Foot in Front of the Other”

This world provides a lot of transportation and locomotion options. Wheels. Wings. Water. Allowing us to move from place to place quickly. Convenient. Without much need to think, see, hear, smell, feel. Destination arrival without an awareness of the in-between.

On the Farm, we spent a lot of time with the original method of transportation...two feet. Old Faithful. Putting one foot in front of the other. Not fast. Plenty of time to think, see, hear, smell, feel

On two feet, we checked the cows in the pasture.

On two feet, we walked the fence line to find where those cows got out.

On two feet, we went to find the cows and herd them back home.

On two feet, we walked beans, weeding as we went.

On two feet, we checked corn fields for cutworms and root worms.

On two feet, we built fence, carried buckets of water, and lugged bedding out to the hog houses.

On two feet, we took a drink out to the Farmer in the fields.

And on two feet, we walked with Mom... just because.

In those moments, especially during walks with Mom, I learned to look around, see the world and take a breath.

Think, see, hear, smell and feel. Thanks Mom!

Those days, sometimes our Sunday entertainment was to check out local parks, wooded areas and nature centers. They offered trails for new walking exploration. My siblings and I were adventurers, finding out where those trails went through the woods, around the bend over the hill, down the ravine. Being first up the trail was always a competitive sport. In the process, we “discovered” new worlds through rock, dirt, groomed limestone or wood chip trails.

Today, I call those walks “hikes”.

There is something about a trail that makes me want to follow it. A trail through the woods. A bike trail. A trail along a mountain stream. I point back to those years on the farm... walking and exploring.

This has led me to a bit of a fascination for the Appalachian Trail (AT). This famous trail runs much of the length of the Appalachian mountains from Georgia to Maine covering 2200 miles and traversing 14 states. People all over the world seek to check it out.

A small, less bright part of me wants to try to through hike the AT. A few years ago, during a trip to Georgia, my wife and I went to the southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail.

We snapped a photo of the plate on the rock showing the start (or end).

A couple months later, while we were in Maine, we headed to the northern section of the AT where its northern terminus can be found at Mt Katahdin. We thought it would make a good story (Christmas Card material?) that we traveled the Appalachian Trail in a matter of only 3 months.

I recently ran across and read a AT book about Grandma Gatewood who in 1956, became the first woman to “through hike” the complete Appalachian Trail at age 67. Grandma Gatewood went on to accomplish the feat 2 more times. Makes me reflect upon my Mom. I can picture her doing the same.

I like what wilderness advocate John Muir said:

“Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt.”

John Muir could have been offering an analogy to taking a trail to glimpse the world of farming. Everyone could use a little “farm” in their life. Seeking a path that provides views of farm life is a treasure to hold.

If you have a chance to follow a path to a farm, do it. Walk there. On two feet. And for those I see on the way, don't worry, I'm not lost... I'm just exploring.

Recipe of the Month

Fresh TOMATO GALETTE

Jessi Heggan



DIRECTIONS

In the bowl of a food processor, combine the flour, butter and salt. Pulse until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Slowly add the water 1 tablespoon at a time, pulsing a few times between each addition, until dough forms a ball. Place the dough on a floured surface and shape into a disc. Cover with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. While dough chills, preheat oven to 400 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Set aside.

Slice the tomatoes and place them on a paper towel-lined plate. Sprinkle with salt and set aside until dough is done chilling. On a floured surface, roll dough out into a 10- to 12-inch circle about 1/8 inch thick. Transfer to prepared baking sheet.

Sprinkle goat cheese and Parmesan over the dough, leaving a 2-inch border around the edges. Pat the tomato slices with a paper towel to remove excess liquid and arrange tomatoes on top of the cheese in a circular pattern, overlapping as needed. Fold the edges of the dough over the sides of the galette and brush dough with whisked egg.

Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, or until crust is golden brown and crispy. Let cool for 10 to 15 minutes and garnish with fresh thyme before serving, if desired.

INGREDIENTS

CRUST:

- 1 1/4 c all-purpose flour
- 1/2 t salt
- 5-6 T cold water
- 1 egg, whisked
- 1/2 c (1 stick) cold unsalted butter, cut into tablespoons
- Fresh thyme, for garnish (optional)

FILLING:

- 1 lb tomatoes on the vine
- 4 oz goat cheese
- 1/2 t salt
- 1/2 c Parmesan cheese, shredded

To receive a copy of the **2026 Recipe Collection** booklet, please email your contact info to ccfb@cookcfb.org, call the CCFB at 708-354-3276, or visit a participating member farmstand or Ag business this spring, summer, or fall.



COUNTRY Lowering Auto Insurance Rates

COUNTRY Financial announced last month it is reducing auto insurance rates in Illinois by an average of 8%. With this change, total auto insurance filed rate decreases in the state now add up to 18% over the past year.

Insurance rates are influenced by how often accidents happen and how much they cost to repair. Recent data shows COUNTRY clients in Illinois are having fewer accidents, and the overall cost of claims has improved. Because of these positive trends, the company can pass savings on to Illinois drivers.

“We regularly review our claims experience to make sure our rates reflect real-world conditions,” said Kelvin Schill, COUNTRY senior vice president, property and casualty operations.

Actual savings will vary from person to person, depending on factors such as driving history, vehicle type, coverage choices and other adjustments.

The Cook County area has a number of local COUNTRY Financial offices to provide service to clients including Cook County Farm Bureau members. **For details, contact 1-866-COUNTRY.**

CUSTOM CULINARY

Pork BBQ Spice



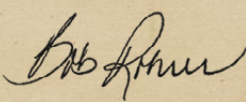
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FFA Students Travel to SPRINGFIELD



On June 9-11, 2026 two students representing the Gary Comer FFA Chapter traveled to Springfield Illinois to take part in the 2026 Illinois FFA State Convention with the generous support from the Cook County Farm Bureau. For the first time, the Gary Comer FFA members were awarded the state's highest honor for FFA students, highlighting the growth that is taking place with urban agriculture education in Cook County. Janay Bussell completed her FFA State Degree, spotlighting her work with hydroponic growing systems and Aniyah Smith accepted the Bronze Emblem Chapter Award for her chapter. In addition to the awards, the students also presented in the first ever Chapter Showcase during State Convention. In the showcase, 19 chapters from across the state shared what makes each of their programs unique, emphasizing how diverse the agricultural field in Illinois truly is. Every year Illinois FFA State Convention is an opportunity for students to network, attend leadership workshops, and celebrate their accomplishments and the Gary Comer FFA Chapter is so grateful for the continued support of the Cook County Farm Bureau for making this trip possible.

Master Gardener Help Desk to Continue Serving Area Members



The Cook County Farm Bureau® and the University of Illinois Extension continue to partner on a project that benefits local Farm Bureau members and the general public. The Master Gardener help desk opened this Spring and is operating at full capacity. Master Gardeners are available to answer questions from members and the general public related to gardening and horticulture.

Master Gardeners are available through the Cook County Farm Bureau by emailing mastergardener@cookcfb.org or calling the Cook County Farm Bureau at **708-354-3276**.

General topic areas that can be addressed include soil test recommendations (supporting the Farm Bureau's soil testing program), 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.

APPLICATIONS OPEN for Ag Leadership Program

Applications are open for the next class of the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Program (IALP), an advanced leadership development experience designed to cultivate leaders who shape the future of Illinois agriculture.

Led by the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Foundation (IALF), the IALP brings together professionals from across production agriculture, agribusiness, education, policy and rural community development. The program is designed for individuals who demonstrate leadership potential, a commitment to service and a desire to expand their personal and professional impact within Illinois agriculture.

The immersive program blends leadership development, communication, civic engagement, global awareness and systems thinking to prepare participants to address complex challenges facing agriculture. Through seminars, experiential learning and facilitated dialogue, fellows build skills aligned with the IALF Competency Model, including strategic and systems thinking, communication and influence, relationship building and collaboration, civic and global engagement and food systems sustainability.

Participants attend approximately 42 seminar days, typically meeting every four to six weeks for two to three days per session.

Sessions are held across Illinois and include travel to Washington, D.C., as well as an international capstone seminar exploring global agricultural systems, policy and trade.

The IALP is open to individuals ages 25-55 who are actively engaged in agriculture or a related field and who live in Illinois or an adjoining county.

More information and application materials are available at agleadership.org/application. Applications must be completed by July 20. Interviews will be scheduled in August. The next cohort will formally begin in November 2026.

Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation has financially supported a number of Cook County Farm Bureau members in participating in this leadership training program.



► MOVING AG FORWARD ► VOCATIONAL AG CAREER TRAINING SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE



The CCFB Foundation is offering 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, technology, welding, or diesel mechanics, with a focus on an agriculturally connected career.

APPLICATION WINDOW IS NOW OPEN!
DEADLINE FOR CONSIDERATION IS JULY 31, 2026
APPLY TODAY: WWW.COOKCFB.ORG/FOUNDATION-



5 Easy Ways to Strengthen Your Savings Habit



Jennifer Killian

Let's be honest, saving money isn't always easy. We're all wired to enjoy the moment. Whether it's ordering takeout after a long day, scrolling one more time through social media, or making a quick purchase that wasn't in the plan, those small decisions can quickly add up. And beyond everyday temptations, life has a way of throwing unexpected expenses our way with car repairs, home maintenance, or weather-related emergencies.

With rising costs and continued economic uncertainty, building a strong savings habit isn't just a good idea, it's essential. The good news? With the right tools and a few simple strategies, you can take control of your finances and start building financial confidence.

Here are five practical tips to help you get started:

1. Start with a Simple Budget

Think of a budget as your financial roadmap.

It helps you:

- Know exactly where your money is going
- Identify opportunities to save
- Stay on track toward your goals

A helpful framework to follow is the 50/30/20 rule:

- 50% for needs (housing, bills, essentials)
- 30% for wants
- 20% for savings and debt repayment

The key isn't creating a perfect budget, it's keeping it updated and realistic.

With online and mobile banking, our members can easily monitor spending, track balances, and move money into savings accounts in real-time—making budgeting easier and more actionable.

2. Set SMART Savings Goals

Saving without a goal can feel overwhelming. That's why SMART goals are so effective.

Make your savings:

- Specific (what are you saving for?)
- Measurable (how much do you need?)

- Achievable (what can you realistically set aside?)
- Relevant (does it align with your priorities?)
- Time-bound (when do you want to achieve it?)

For example:

Save \$1,000 in a year by setting aside \$20 each week.

Breaking goals into smaller steps builds momentum and keeps you motivated.

Accounts like Premier Savings allow you to grow your money faster with competitive rates while still maintaining access to your funds, helping you stay on track toward both short- and long-term goals.

3. Take Control of High-Interest Debt

One of the biggest barriers to saving? High-interest debt.

When credit card balances grow:

- More of your payment goes toward interest
- Less is available to save

A smart strategy is the debt avalanche method:

1. Focus on paying down your highest-interest balance first
2. Once it's paid off, move to the next highest

A balance transfer can simplify payments and may help lower interest costs, freeing up more room in your budget to save. IAA Credit Union is currently offering a balance transfer promotion: **5.99% APR for 12 months with no fees.**

4. Build (and Protect) Your Emergency Fund

Unexpected expenses aren't a matter of *if* — they're a matter of *when*.

That's why an emergency fund is one of the most important pieces of your financial plan.

A good goal:

- Save 3–6 months of living expenses.

Start small if needed even a few hundred dollars can make a difference.

High-yield savings options like Premier Savings or flexible Money Market Accounts can help your emergency fund grow while still giving you access when you need it.

5. Automate Your Savings ("Set It and Forget It")

The easiest way to save? Make it automatic.

Set up recurring transfers from checking to savings so you're consistently building your balance without thinking about it.

Even small amounts add up over time:

- \$10/week = \$520/year
- \$20/week = \$1,040/year

With easy transfers through online and mobile banking, you can automate deposits into:

- Savings accounts
- Club accounts (like Vacation or Christmas Clubs)
- Certificates for longer-term goals

Bringing It All Together

Saving money isn't about perfection, it's about consistency. By following a simple budget, setting clear goals, managing debt, preparing for emergencies, and automating your savings, you can build lasting habits that strengthen your financial future.

Start Your Savings Journey Today

At IAA Credit Union, we're here to support every step of your financial journey with:

- Competitive savings options
- Flexible account choices for every goal
- Digital tools that make managing your money easier
- Personalized service focused on your success

Whether you're just getting started or looking to grow your savings faster, we're here to help you make the most of your membership.

Take the next step: Open a savings account, set your first goal, and start building a stronger financial future today.



Originally published by: GreenPath Financial Wellness adapted by IAACU

Summer Ag Institute (SAI) Held June 11 and July 14

Day 1 of our Summer Ag Institute (SAI) was held June 11, providing teachers with an up-close look at this year's theme, "Ag Innovation and Technology." Through hands-on experiences and stops at ag locations in Chicago, participants learned how innovation is helping shape the future of agriculture during this all-day field trip.

During SAI, educators visited Green Era Campus, where they learned about anaerobic digestion and how food waste can be turned into clean energy; Gary Comer Youth Center, where they toured the urban farm, hydroponics lab, and rooftop garden; and the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry to explore the Farm Tech, Powering the Future, and Numbers in Nature exhibits.

Don't worry if you missed Day 1! Day 2 of Summer Ag Institute will be held at the Cook County Farm Bureau on July 14. Learn about ag technology from guest speakers from Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom, Stihl, and University of Illinois College of ACES. Enjoy fast-paced lessons, STEAM activities, and lots of giveaways to take back to your classroom. Register today at bit.ly/saiplease. For more information, email aitc@cookcfb.org.



The seven teachers that attended Day 1 of SAI 2026 posed for a group photo in the Farm Tech exhibit at the Griffin Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. This year's SAI theme is "Ag Innovation and Technology."



Sanaa Ragsdale, right, an Urban Agriculture Program Instructor at Gary Comer Youth Center in Chicago, takes educators on a tour of the urban farm and teaches them about the many ways food is grown at the facility, including in raised beds and greenhouses.

DISCOVER LOCAL

Join Cook County Farm Bureau® in supporting our local agricultural member businesses. Our online member listing is a great resource – easily accessible and updated with the most accurate information.

Discover local at <https://cookcfb.org/discover-local/discover-local> or scan the QR Code.

For a paper Discover Local listing, contact the CCFB at 708-354-3276 or email: ccfb@cookcfb.org.



Planting Seeds "Agriculture is Life Changing"



Libby Heenan

Hi everyone! My name is Libby Heenan, and I'm excited to be back as Cook County's Ag in the Classroom Intern. I was born and raised in Chicago with no background in agriculture. Being from the city, it was easy to overlook agriculture, something that isn't really celebrated like it is in rural communities. I had the opportunity to attend The Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences (CHSAS), and it showed me the importance of agriculture everywhere, not just in those communities where farming is more visible.

I was able to get very involved with their FFA chapter and animal science program, even getting my own Jersey Heifer, Biscuit, who still lives at the school. I am currently a senior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln studying agricultural education. The Spring 2026 semester was my last in-person semester in Nebraska, and this upcoming Fall 2026 semester, I will be

back in Cook County, student teaching at Rich Township High School.

I think the irony of all of this is that I did not want to go to that high school at all. I grew up a couple of blocks from the school, and all the neighborhood kids called it the "dirty farm school." To be fair, at the time I was a 13-year-old city girl who just wanted to go to one of the schools my friends were attending. My parents couldn't afford to send me to private school, and I did not test into any of CPS's select enrollment schools, so off to the farm school I went.

To say it changed my life is truly an understatement. I got to experience so many different opportunities, from conferences and conventions to competing in agriculturally related events. I also learned so much about agriculture and its impact on our everyday lives. Agriculture is the reason our society is the way it is. Without it, we would still probably be hunters and gatherers. That experience showed me that agriculture is much more than farming, it's a part of every

community and every person's daily life, whether they realize it or not.

Agriculture is all around us, no matter where you're from. It has an impact on all of our lives. From the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the cars we drive, agriculture has an everlasting influence on how we live our lives. There are so many ways to get involved and learn more about agriculture, even in a very urban area. If you're looking to learn, volunteer, or just have a good time in agriculture this summer, the Farm Bureau has so many different events and programs that they put on, and they also have a lot of other farms and ag-related businesses that they work with to continue promoting agriculture. If you come out this summer, you might even get to meet me! I'm incredibly grateful that agriculture gave me a place to grow, and I hope this summer I can help others discover the same opportunities and connections that changed my life.



Katrina J.E. Milton

During the summer months, Ag in the Classroom Summer Intern Libby Heenan will be taking over my Planting Seeds column. We are excited to welcome Libby back, and we look forward to having her help with all of our summer events and back-to-school preparations. I hope you get to know Libby better through her articles these next few months and learn about ag with her!

Enjoy your summer!

Katrina Milton
Director of Ag Literacy



Summer Reading for All Ages JULY THEME: BEEF

Complete this month's Summer Reading Challenge for a chance to win a \$10 gift card!

Link: bit.ly/JulySummerReadingChallenge



Book Recommendations for July:

YOUNG READERS

Thunder Rose written by Jerdine Nolen and illustrated by Kadir Nelson

A baby girl named Rose is born during a storm and grows up to be a strong, independent woman who overcomes challenges like outlaws and tornadoes with her trusty steer, Tater, at her side.

YOUNG ADULT READERS

The Beef Princess of Practical County by Michelle Houts

Twelve-year-old Libby, the daughter of an Indiana cattle farmer, raises two calves in hopes of winning the annual steer competition at the county fair.

ADULT READERS

Beef: The Untold Story of How Milk, Meat, and Muscle Shaped the World – A Natural History of Cattle from Ancient Worship to Modern Food by Andrew Rimas and Evan D.G. Fraser

The history of the cow is both surprising and fascinating, and Beef offers a unique overview of cattle yesterday, today, and tomorrow—from adoration to breeding to braising; from ancient Mediterranean bullfight rings to African villages to American stockyards—complete with amazing facts and trivia, wonderful recipes, and the future of beef production.



AITC Gets Creative at Livestock Fair

At the AITC booth, Director of Ag Literacy Katrina Milton and Summer Intern Libby Heenan taught about cattle while doing arts and crafts.



Become an Ag in the Classroom Presenter

Cook County Farm Bureau is seeking independent contractors for its AITC Program.

Individuals will provide in-person ag literacy programs throughout Cook County during the school year based on demand.

Teaching experience and knowledge of agriculture/horticulture is recommended.

For more information, email aitc@cookcfb.org

AGRICULTURE ADVENTURES

FOR FAMILIES



Get Your Kicks With These Fun Facts About *Route 66*

- Nicknamed the “Mother Road” and the “Main Street of America”
- During the **Dust Bowl** of the 1930s, it was the primary route for the migration of farm workers from the Midwest to California.
- Due to the efforts of the U.S. Highway 66 Association, Route 66 became the first highway to be completely paved in **1938**.
- The Illinois Beef Association has a “Route 66 Beef Trail” showcasing different beef related tourist attractions along the route.
- About **85% of the original road** still exists today in some drivable form, even if it’s not always under the same name.
- Route 66 wasn’t just one road. It was stitched together from existing local roads and highways, which is why it **zigzags** instead of running perfectly straight.
- Some towns along Route 66 relocated closer to the highway just to catch passing travelers and business.

2026 is the 100th anniversary of Route 66! The road was officially commissioned on November 11, 1926.

Did you know that Route 66 includes eight states and 2,448 miles? Approximately 301 of those miles are in Illinois. Route 66 starts in Chicago and ends in Santa Monica, California. A nonstop journey driving the entirety of Route 66 takes roughly 40 hours.



Cook County Stops Along Route 66

- **Cook County Farm Bureau:** Visit the farm bureau, located on old Route 66 at 6438 Joliet Rd. in Countryside.
- **"Historic Route 66 Begins Here" Sign:** See the official sign at the intersection of East Adams Street and South Michigan Avenue, in front of the Art Institute of Chicago. A new ceremonial sign was placed at the South Dock of Navy Pier (600 E. Grand Ave.), right outside of Harry Caray’s Tavern.
- **Lou Mitchell’s:** Grab a famous breakfast at this iconic 1923 diner located at 565 W. Jackson Boulevard in Chicago.
- **Henry’s Drive-In:** Stop at 6031 W. Ogden Avenue in Cicero for Polish hot dogs and classic neon signage.
- **Berwyn Route 66 Museum / Landmark:** Snap photos of the “A Road Well Travelled” marker located at 6407 W. 34th Street in Berwyn.
- **McCook Welcome Sign:** Take a picture by the “Welcome to Fabulous McCook, Illinois” sign situated on Joliet Road.
- **Dell Rhea’s Chicken Basket:** Enjoy a fried chicken dinner at this historic restaurant at 645 Joliet Road in Willowbrook.

BEFORE YOU GO ~~~~~
DON'T FORGET TO FUEL UP WITH *Ethanol*



Did you know that CORN is in your gasoline?

In Illinois, up to 10% of unleaded gasoline can be made from ethanol. Ethanol, also called ethyl alcohol or grain alcohol, is a clear, colorless liquid made from corn that is mixed with gasoline to make biofuels including E10 and E85. Ethanol helps reduce harmful tailpipe emissions from cars, can improve engine performance, and has a higher octane rating than regular gasoline.

Ethanol is also used in many products around the world, including perfumes, lotions, creams, hairspray, alcoholic drinks, food coloring, vanilla extracts, cough syrups, and hand sanitizers. Ethanol is also a good solvent, which means it can dissolve many chemicals.

Visit www.enjoyillinois.com/things-to-do/route-66-in-illinois/ for more information about Route 66 in Illinois.

July Word Search

June Winner: Janice Konow

Anniversary	P	L	Q	W	A	I	T	S	V	U	G	T	Y	I	Y
Drive	S	B	U	E	W	S	L	T	Z	F	R	K	L	R	T
Ethanol	A	H	Z	E	E	O	W	A	F	C	Q	L	A	J	O
Fuel	L	C	K	W	N	F	R	T	P	K	I	S	P	Y	U
Highway	D	X	D	A	D	E	E	Y	N	R	E	S	F	R	
Illinois	S	I	H	K	K	R	U	S	O	E	I	L	I	E	I
Journey	M	T	S	E	L	I	M	I	V	T	N	Q	E	M	S
Midwest	E	N	R	W	F	C	S	I	W	U	S	R	E	U	T
Miles	W	L	H	E	C	O	N	F	T	O	J	A	U	B	F
Road	R	O	A	D	E	N	T	S	Y	R	Q	J	H	O	D
Route	T	I	E	F	A	T	H	I	G	H	W	A	Y	R	J
Sign	O	R	J	H	R	Y	K	F	N	G	I	S	I	I	E
States	L	L	A	S	I	Y	G	T	U	V	U	V	X	L	B
Street	R	S	Q	I	K	A	X	V	A	X	E	W	X	Y	D
Trail	H	C	Y	M	L	B	X	K	L	H	V	R	D	C	Q
Tourist															

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 (Two 10-min Interior Cleaning ONLY, NO WASH) 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 2026 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!**



Raised on Flags, Fields & Freedom

The patriotic-wrapped tractor combined two of our son’s favorite things: The Magnum-model CaseIH tractor and the U.S. flag.

America’s 250th anniversary gave me one of those Mom moments where delight comes from anticipating your child’s joy. I snapped photos and videos of our son solo and with Grandpa by the showstopper at the 2026 National Farm Machinery Show in Kentucky. Afterword, I worked obsessively from my phone to order the replica flag-wrapped toy, which had sold out the previous day.

Our son’s admiration for the American flag first became evident when he picked out t-shirts with the symbol as a child. Then, it was hats with flags. Patriotic swim trunks. American flag decorations for his room, and a flag image on his first credit card. For a 4-H project, he made wooden U.S. flags out of 13, 1-by-2-inch strips of wood, a butane torch and red- and blue-colored wood stain.

The flag stood as something bigger than the cloth (and wood) itself even if he didn’t yet fully understand the feeling of home, pride, identity, safety, belonging and history. I can only credit rural patriotism, as rural Americans proudly display flags on front porches, fire stations, county fairgrounds and farm bins. We associate the feeling it delivers with church potlucks, sweet corn stands, small-town Friday night football and a slice of pie filled with homegrown cherries.

I gifted my husband a flagpole in the front landscaping for his 40th birthday. Our daughter was “stationed by the flag” as the FFA state reporter, so we put her jacket in a shadow box with a flag retired from the state capitol and folded by local veterans. As much as we love the flag, we also know loving America means acknowledging we haven’t got everything right. In the end, America is something we steward, like farmland itself and our freedom to improve it.

At the farm, we own a roll of patriotic net wrap for making flag-wrapped round hay bales for decoration at our community ag festival. The bales, flipped on end with flag poles in them, emulate the festival’s feeling of Americana – home, tradition, pride and simple joys like homemade pie, tractors, apple peeling and free family fun.

As a birthday surprise six weeks after the farm show, our son received a three-pack of flag-wrapped toy tractors – a second of which also appeared at the show: a 1976 Case 1570 from America’s 200th anniversary. I hope he can tell his grandkids he witnessed a full century of history when the 300th anniversary edition makes its debut.

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

Visit The Rising Garden in Cook County!



Meet **The RISING GARDEN**, a 2026 CCFB Community Garden Grant Recipient. The Rising Garden is located in Cook County’s Park Forest, and is directed by garden coordinator, Chanel Kennedy-Bertrand. This learning garden grows and distributes fresh fruit, vegetables, and herbs, while providing hands-on learning in the areas of gardening, nutrition, leadership, and environmental stewardship. Grant funds were used to purchase soil, root vegetables, herb



Farm Bureau CMM Team volunteers Rick & Cathy Johnson toured the garden with sign presentation to Chanel Kennedy-Bertrand, garden coordinator.

seed, mulch, vegetable seedling plants, and garden supplies from Clarke’s Garden Center and VanDerGriends Farm Market.

Family Farm, and Food Bytes

U.S. Meat Consumption Increases Despite Rising Prices (AFBF Staff)

America’s demand for meat continues to grow, even as the cost of beef, pork and chicken rises. Unofficial grilling season kicked off on Memorial Day weekend and in the latest Market Intel, American Farm Bureau Federation economists analyzed what prices shoppers may find at the grocery store.

Industry analysis shows meat sales hit \$112 billion in 2025, with more than 98% of American households purchasing meat for daily meals. USDA is forecasting consumption of beef, pork and chicken to rise in 2026.

USDA reports the average retail price for beef set a record in April at \$9.64 per pound, up about 13% from the previous year. Beef prices remain elevated by strong demand and the smallest U.S. cattle herd in 75 years. This is a result of years of drought, reduced income following the pandemic and elevated operating costs that have led farmers to liquidate their herds.

The average price of pork increased 2.3% from April 2025 to April 2026. Pork chops are the most popular cut. The average retail price for pork chops in U.S. cities was \$4.33 per pound in April 2026, up 9 cents per pound from the same time last year. Prices reflect a balanced supply of hogs and growing consumer demand.

For chicken, USDA estimates about 42.2 billion pounds of chicken will be purchased in 2026, up 46 million pounds from 2025. The overall price of chicken fell in April by 0.7% compared to April 2025. Boneless chicken breasts in U.S. cities cost an average of \$4.17 per pound in April, down a penny from the same time last year. Poultry flocks continue to recover from avian influenza, which has helped to control price increases.

Declining egg prices squeeze poultry farmers

Egg supplies strengthened in recent months as U.S. poultry flocks recover from outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The influx of supply combined with softening demand caused the egg market to crack this spring, which has been good news for price-weary shoppers but quite a challenge for poultry farmers.

USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service reported the average price paid to Midwestern egg producers for white shell eggs the first week of May was just 25 cents per dozen, down \$3.19 per dozen (93%), from the same week in 2025.

However, data from the Egg Industry Center at Iowa State University showed the monthly cost

to produce conventional eggs in April was about 79 cents per dozen, or 44 cents per dozen below the cost of production in April.

New World Screwworm Cases Confirmed in Texas, New Mexico (Tammie Sloup, FarmWeek)

The number of confirmed New World screwworm (NWS) detections in Texas grew to four in early June with a fifth case reported in a dog in New Mexico.

The Texas detections, the first reported June 3, were found in three calves and a goat. The New Mexico detection is considered an isolated case, and it is believed the owner previously had the dog in Mexico, according to USDA.

NWS is a serious pest that threatens livestock, pets, wildlife, and, in rare cases, people. The larvae burrow into the living tissue of animals, causing severe wounds, animal suffering and significant economic losses if not treated early. The risk to humans is low.

The U.S. food supply remains safe. NWS does not infest meat, fruits, vegetables or other food products. Any affected animal would be identified during USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service inspection, and no contaminated product would enter commerce.

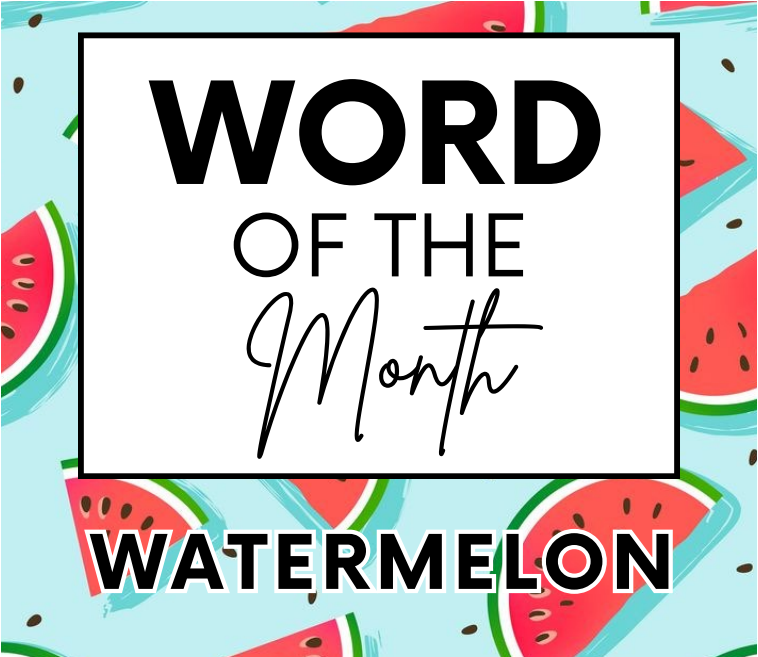
EPA Region 2 Ag News Update (as of 6/18/26)

EPA is working closely with USDA. We have issued an emergency section 18 exemption allowing the use of specific treatments for NWS. The most up to date information can be found on <https://www.screwworm.gov> , a website developed by APHIS that includes new cases in Mexico and the U.S., along with resources for the many sectors impacted. There have been 12 cases in Texas and New Mexico so far, all along the border.

Small Food Assistance Nonprofits Eligible for New State Grant Program (Jenna Schweikert, CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS)

Small volunteer groups that provide food assistance to Illinoisans in need could be eligible for a new round of grant money under a program announced last week.

The Charitable Trust Hunger Relief Grant program will provide grants of up to \$5,000 to 10 nonprofit organizations that don’t have full-time employees to purchase food for those in need. Applications opened June 1 and will remain open through July 31, Illinois Treasurer Michael Frerichs announced.



About Family, Farm, and Food Bytes: This is a collection of articles gathered from Illinois Farm Bureau FarmWeek, FarmWeekNow, and other trusted media sources and is designed to keep you informed as a member and leader within the Cook County Farm Bureau® organization. We thank the FarmWeek staff for their reporting skills and talents. The articles summarized above are not intended to represent Cook County Farm Bureau policy or positions, but rather to provide members an idea of what is being reported regionally, nationally, and globally.

Agricultural Legislative Happenings

FEDERAL

Congressional – Determining Friends of Agriculture. Cook County Farm Bureau ACTIVATOR Trustees and Governmental Affairs Team completed Effort and Accessibility evaluations for the Illinois Farm Bureau for Congressman Jackson, District 1; Congressman Casten, District 6; Congressman Scheider, District 10; and Congressman Foster, District 11. Additional points are accumulated using IFB Voting records to determine an incumbent legislator’s eligibility for Illinois Farm Bureau ACTIVATOR®’s Friend of Agriculture title. Eligibility does not equal endorsement. The Trustee’s Committee must have a discussion and vote with two-thirds in support for endorsement. Congressional “Friends” will be determined based on the above and announced later this summer.

Votes are just one part of a member of Congress’ contribution to help advance Farm Bureau’s agenda. There are many other actions they can take to help implement Farm Bureau policy positions. One of the actions is to simply meet and listen to Farm Bureau members. They also provide value by sponsoring legislation, signing Dear Colleague letters, talking to their colleagues and leaders, serving on critical committees, and looking for opportunities to call attention to our issues in D.C. and back in the district.

Illinois Farm Bureau tracks how area members of Congress have done behind the scenes to assist farmers and the organization over the past two years.

House advances ag budget

The U.S. Senate will take up the fiscal year 2027 appropriations bill funding USDA after the House narrowly advanced legislation with modest cuts.

House members passed the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2027 in June by a vote of 213-210.

The bill provides a total discretionary allocation of \$26.27 billion, which is approximately \$380 million or 1.4% below the fiscal year 2026 enacted level. According to House appropriators, the measure prioritizes funding for agricultural research, rural development programs, animal and plant health initiatives, food safety oversight, and nutrition assistance programs. It also includes increases in funding and policy provisions intended to strengthen agricultural production and support rural communities.

House Republican leaders touted the bill’s boosts to farmer-facing programs including crop insurance and animal disease prevention efforts.

The House also agreed by voice vote to add an amendment to the bill that would transfer \$2 million to fund port-of-entry inspections for New World Screwworm (NWS). After nearly 60 years without a confirmed domestic case, USDA confirmed the first U.S. detection of NWS in South Texas on June 3, 2026. Since then, additional detections have been confirmed in Texas as well as New Mexico.

NWS is a parasitic pest that infests the living tissue of warm-blooded animals, including livestock, pets, wildlife, and, less commonly, birds and people. The pest reemerged in Chiapas, Mexico, in November 2024 and has since spread northward through Mexico.

While the recent U.S. cases have heightened concern among animal health officials and livestock producers,

it is important to emphasize that NWS does not threaten the safety of the U.S. food supply. The United States maintains one of the safest food supplies in the world, supported by multiple layers of animal health, food safety, and disease surveillance protections.

Senate farm bill

The Senate Agriculture Committee is expected to consider a farm bill in July or August, committee chair John Boozman recently told reporters.

Boozman, R-Ark., said text of the bill will likely be released in June with consideration taking place during the work period between July 4th and August recesses. Boozman previously planned to hold a markup of a farm bill by the end of June.

Boozman believes E15 should be handled in a standalone bill.

Trade

Following the Trump-Xi meetings in Beijing, the White House announced a new series of trade commitments aimed at expanding bilateral commerce, including several provisions directly affecting U.S. agriculture. For farmers and ranchers facing prolonged tight margins, the announcement offers potential export opportunities in a market that remains critical for a range of U.S. commodities.

According to the White House, China committed to purchasing at least \$17 billion annually in additional U.S. agricultural products in 2026 (prorated), 2027, and 2028, separate from soybean purchase commitments announced in late 2025. The agreement also includes the restoration of market access for certain U.S. livestock products and reciprocal tariff reductions intended to facilitate agricultural trade.

As with previous U.S.-China agricultural agreements, the commitments are significant, but the long-term impact

for U.S. agriculture will depend on how the agreement is implemented and enforced.

STATE

General Assembly

The Senate adjourned first at approximately 3:39 a.m. with a 37-21 vote, followed by the House’s 76-39 vote just after 4 a.m. of May 31/June 1 after approving a nearly \$58 billion budget. *See adjacent article summary.*

LOCAL

The Governmental Affairs Team drafted a Policy Resolution that was approved by the Cook County Farm Bureau Board of Directors on June 10 for IFB Resolutions Committee review. *See adjacent article on the proposed policy on Permanent Illinois Guaranteed Basic Income Program.*

Annual Pollinator Event at Lincoln Park Zoo, Tuesday, June 23, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Niles Township Pollinator Garden Grand Opening, Saturday, June 27, 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. at the township property located at 5255 Lincoln Avenue in Skokie.

Global Gardens: Cook County Farm Bureau staff have worked with the Illinois Farm Bureau and Global Gardens Chicago to develop permanent signage related to the pollinator gardens and plants found at their farm site at 4815 N. Sacramento Ave in Chicago.

Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy: In partnership with the Illinois Farm Bureau, Cook County Farm Bureau has set up a field day at Smits Farm in Chicago Heights. The event will be held on Tuesday, September 15, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Farmers and non-farmers alike are invited to learn about struvite research, fertilizer strategies for 2026/27, mulch/compost application guidelines, and a related field tour.

Board of Directors Forward Draft Policy Resolution for IFB Resolutions Committee Consideration

The Governmental Affairs Team has spent the past year discussing the concept of Guaranteed Basic Income programs. A Guaranteed Basic Income program (Sometimes called Universal Basic Income) is reoccurring, unconditional cash payments to participants meeting certain eligibility criteria, often income based from a local, state or federal government. There are a growing number of pilot or permanent programs scattered across the country in 35 states. A pilot program has been reintroduced in Congress.

The Cook County Board transitioned the Cook County Promise Guaranteed Income Program into a permanent status after initially launched in 2022 using federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The program provides unconditional \$500/month payments to about 3,250 low-to-moderate income households. No longer funded by ARPA funds, has \$7.5 million budgeted to be extended in the current budget year by the County Board.

There are several advocacy groups and partners are seeking to expand this concept into a statewide permanent program modeled on the Cook County program for 100,000 eligible residents to help struggling families.

Locally, Evanston Guaranteed Income Program pilot program offered \$500/month to 150 low income families

for one year, in partnership with Northwestern University. Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot program from Chicago provided \$500 per month to thousands of residents to support economic stability.

Data on the success of various programs is incomplete regarding improved individual/family financial stability, income volatility, employment rates, mental health and stress, community economic stability and neighborhood resilience.

The policy draft, as approved by the Cook County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, is to amend Illinois Farm Bureau policy 123. State and Local Finance by adding the following...

We oppose:

A permanent Illinois Guaranteed Basic Income Program unless and until there is sufficient data demonstrating the program results in impactful tangible improvements of life conditions for both the individual/family and the surrounding community and efficient stewardship of available tax resources.

The draft will be considered by the Illinois Farm Bureau Resolutions Committee to potentially present to the delegates at the next Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting for development of organizational policy in 2027.

Legislative Session Adjourns Following Budget Approval

The 104th Illinois General Assembly, late in the final hours of Sunday, May 31, passed the \$55.9 billion state budget and adjourned the Spring Legislative Session. This budget was an increase over last year’s \$55.2 billion budget.

Described as a “significant win” for farmers, Illinois Farm Bureau-supported changes to the Farmland Assessment Law were included in the state’s \$55.9 billion fiscal year 2027 budget.

The changes, if approved by Gov. JB Pritzker, would extend the current property tax treatment for vegetative filter strips through Dec. 31, 2031, adjust the formula used to calculate farmland values, and make minor technical updates. Overall, the updates are meant to make the formula more

consistent and predictable for both landowners and taxing bodies.



Chris Davis

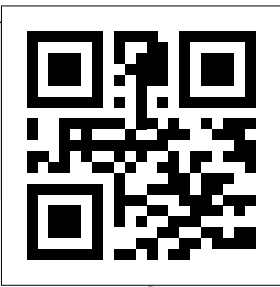
“Unfortunately, the Family Farm Preservation Act failed to make it into any final budget package this year, despite extensive efforts of Farm Bureau members,

county Farm Bureaus, IFB leadership, and governmental affairs staff,” said Chris Davis, Illinois Farm Bureau director of state legislation. “We’ll take some time to reassess our efforts this year and we’ll move forward to continue the effort to try to get an estate tax reform in the state of Illinois.”

Continue Reading “Budget” on Page 10

ILLINOIS AGRICULTURE LINE ITEMS			
Line Item	FY 2025 Actual Expenditure	FY 2026 Enacted Appropriation	FY 2027 Proposed Budget
Cover Crops	\$950,000	\$960,000	\$960,000
4-H Extension	\$786,400	\$817,900	\$850,700
Soil & Water Conservation District Operations	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000
County Fair Rehabilitation	\$1,298,400	\$1,366,900	\$1,421,600
FFA Dues and Grants	\$550,000	\$650,000	\$650,000
Agricultural Education	\$7,771,900	\$7,850,000	\$7,850,000
Source: Illinois General Assembly			

2026 Master Member Club 2.0



Cook County Farm Bureau is pleased to announce the expansion of the Master Member Club open to all members, affiliates, and partners of the Cook County Farm Bureau. Check out the Master Member Club 2.0 to see how you can join and get a coveted jacket.

What it is: A recognition club for active Farm Bureau members and leaders who support membership growth through recruitment and retention of Ag and non-Ag members.

Eligibility

- Active Cook County Farm Bureau members in good standing
- Exclusions: CCFB, IFB, and other CFB staff

How to Join

Earn 10 points by recruiting new members

- Voting Members (MM or PM – farming/Ag): 5 points each (2 required)
- Associate Members (A – non-Ag): 3 points each (4 required)

How to Stay in the Club

- Earn 5 points annually
- Recruiting period: September 1 – August 31, 2026
- Program deadline: August 31, 2026

Awards & Recognition

First-Time Inductees

- CCFB logo apparel – a coveted jacket
- Gate sign or \$50 item
- \$100 gift card (Amazon, Bass Pro, Target, Kohl's, Jewel-Osco, TJ Maxx, restaurants, etc.)

Easy Ways to Sign Up Members & Pay Dues

- Phone: 708-354-3276 (credit card or ACH), M-F 8-4:30 pm
- Online: www.myifb.org or scan the QR code above (list yourself in "Recommended By" field)
- In Person: Cook County Farm Bureau, 6438 Joliet Rd, Ste 101, Countryside, IL 60525



Questions: Contact us at 708-354-3276 or ccfb@cookcfb.org



MEMBERS SAVE ON SUMMER FUN



WHEREVER SUMMER TAKES YOU, RELAX WITH YOUR SAVINGS ON RENTAL CARS, HOTELS, & THEME PARKS



EXPLORE  **BenefitHub™ TODAY!**
www.myifb.org



NEED ASSISTANCE? CONTACT STEPHANIE AT SKNITTEL@ILFB.ORG



Join us! CCFB Member Event at Honey Bee Gardens Farms

CCFB member business, Honey Bee Garden Farms has warmly invited members of the Cook County Farm Bureau to visit the farm, offering free member entrances for two on Friday, July 31, 2026, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Honey Bee Gardens Farm, 8405 Kearney Rd, Downers Grove (630-269-4345)

Member Entry: two free member entrance fees per membership– must show CCFB Farm Bureau card. Need your card, call CCFB at 708-354-3276.

Honey Bee Gardens Farm is a family-friendly destination offering hands-on farm experiences, seasonal events, and outdoor activities for children and adults. Visitors can meet friendly farm animals, explore flower and vegetable gardens, attend educational programs, and enjoy special events throughout the year. Whether you're looking for things to do with kids, a weekend family outing, or a peaceful day outdoors, Honey Bee Gardens Farm is a place to slow down and reconnect with nature. Grab your kids or grandparents and head over for a fun day featuring CCFB staff on hand to say hello and enjoy the gardens, grounds, and activities.



2026 NUTRIENT STEWARDSHIP FIELD DAY



SEPT 15

11:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

RAIN OR SHINE | FREE LUNCH PROVIDED

SMITS FARM

3437 EAST SAUK TRAIL | CHICAGO HEIGHTS, IL

RSVP BY:
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11
Call 708-354-3276 to the Cook County Farm Bureau

POTENTIAL TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Presentation on updated struvite research (Dr. Andrew Margenot – University of Illinois)
- Fall/Spring fertilizer and fertility considerations for organic and conventional farm production (in today's volatile pricing concerns)

PANEL DISCUSSION

- Mulch/compost guidelines for vegetable production
- Field tour

Budget

Continued from Page 9

Meanwhile, IFB successfully opposed the Wetlands Protection Act (SB 2401 and HB 3596) from advancing, which sought to broadly define wetlands as any area exceeding one-tenth of an acre capable of supporting vegetation. The organization also successfully halted legislation that would have allowed all broadband providers receiving state or federal grants to access road rights-of-way on private property simply by providing notice to the landowner. Farm Bureau expects these issues to return next session.

The state's appropriations bill, approved by the Illinois General Assembly on June 1, also includes no cuts to the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Fall Covers for Spring Savings cover crop program, or agricultural education, Davis said.

The state's appropriations bill, approved

by the Illinois General Assembly on June 1, also includes no cuts to the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Fall Covers for Spring Savings cover crop program, or agricultural education, Davis said. Funding also remained level at \$4.5 million for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). The SWCDs advocated for \$10 million for the districts, but it was ultimately not included in the budget.

Meanwhile, 4-H Extension will see a slight budget increase of \$32,800, while the county fair rehabilitation budget will increase by \$54,700.

The entire spending plan, which now heads to the governor's desk for his signature, is slightly smaller than the nearly \$56 billion budget he first proposed in February and includes \$800 million to \$900 million in new revenues.

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 "T"	TUMERIC 
Turmeric is a member of the Zingiberaceae family, alongside ginger, and shares many similarities with its sibling.	<i>Turmeric is known by numerous names all over the world, but in Latin it is called Curcuma Longa.</i>
Turmeric grows to approximately one meter in height, and is gathered for the rhizomes.	It has been used in the Himalayas in Ayurvedic medicine for over 5,000 years.
	IT PROTECTS AGAINST THE DAMAGING EFFECTS OF FREE RADICALS AND HAS A HIGH ANTIOXIDANT CONTENT.
Used in Haldi ceremonies – part of Hindu and South Asian Muslim wedding celebrations – to perfect the skin before weddings.	<i>Curcumin is the main active ingredient inside turmeric</i> 
USE TURMERIC TOPICALLY TO CLEANSE, TREAT, AND HEAL SKIN CONCERNS. 	Turmeric boasts digestive properties and supports digestion. It is also an anti-inflammatory.

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**.

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**.

Dockers jacket black, size XL. Great condition. \$5. Picture available online. Call Bob **708-424-9572**.

Professional osteoarthritic knee braces prescribed by orthopedic doctor. Used twice. List price \$150 each, selling for \$40 each. Pictures available online. Call Bob **708-424-9752**.

Electric pressure washer \$10 | #12 THHN electrical wire .20 per foot or best offer | #14 THHN electrical wire .15 per foot or best offer | Electrical boxes, Miscellaneous 1900 box, Gem boxes, Handy boxes \$1.00 each | Miscellaneous electrical fittings, couplings, connectors, etc .20 each | 15 & 20 AMP circuit breakers \$3 each | 30 egg incubator – electric \$20 g | Call Allen **708-518-8980**

FOR SALE

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

I RIDE electric scooter new. Asking \$650, paid \$1,300. Weight 32 lbs. (base), length 38", width 19.25". Call **708-654-2010**. Pictures available online.

WANTED

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

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OFFERS Farm 250 Photo Contest

The American Farm Bureau Federation has launched a photo contest to celebrate the contributions of America's farmers in helping to grow America into the nation it is today. The contest is part of Farm Bureau's FARM 250 initiative, marking the nation's 250th anniversary. The winner of the contest will receive a trip to the 2027 American Farm Bureau Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, courtesy of AFBF, and an iPhone 17, provided by T-Mobile.

The photo contest runs through September 9, 2026. The winner must be a Farm Bureau member.

Submit Your Photo online through the website www.fb.org/initiative/farm250
By entering, entrant agrees to be bound by the official rules which can be found on the website.



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Stock up and save up to 5% on groceries



Costco Wholesale

Get a \$20 or \$40 digital Costco Shop Card with a new membership



Thrive Market

Get 30% off your first purchase + a free \$60 gift

SCAN QR CODE OR VISIT www.ticketsatwork.com and use company code: CCFB TO ENROLL FREE!



Area Ag Roundup

Tiny Pests, Small Spaces

July 21, 6- 8 p.m.

Windy City Harvest's Legends Incubator Farm, 4431 S Federal Street, Chicago

Dr. Kacie Athey, Illinois Extension Pest Management Specialist, will share the latest research on swede midge and how to detect and manage these tiny brassica pests as well as discuss other common pests and IPM strategies.



All growers welcome to attend this free field day with pre-registration: <https://registration.extension.illinois.edu/start/summer-small-farm-field-days>

2026 Annual Recognition Dinner

Join the Will-South Cook Soil & Water Conservation District Office as they present the 2026 scholarship winners and recognize 2026 Conservation Farm Family of the Year: The Tammen Family on Thursday, July 23, 2026 at 5:00 pm. Ticket details and location information at: <https://www.will-scookswcd.org/>.

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**

DIY Summer Barn Quilt Painting Workshop

Learn about the history of barn quilts and paint your own SUMMER design during this three-hour make-and-take workshop. A barn quilt is a piece of wood, painted in simple geometric patterns to resemble a quilting block that is hung on the exterior of a building. During this beginner-level class, you will paint a 12x12 barn quilt design on wood to hang indoors.



DATE: Wednesday, July 15, 2026
TIME: 5:30-8:30 p.m.

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

FEE: \$20 for CCFB members, \$25 for non-members (includes materials: board, stencil, paint, etc.)

REGISTRATION REQUIRED: Call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276 or at the Member Center. For additional information, email Kelli at **membershipkelli@cookcfb.org**.

Membership Monday 2026

Topic: Credit Union & Member Contests

Join us to hear from CCFB staff who will highlight current member programs, member benefits, with Q & A. Each Month with feature a different benefit and program available to members.



DATE: Monday, July 27, 2026
TIME: 4:00-4:30 p.m. with Q & A

LOCATION: Zoom; link will be emailed the Friday prior

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

Honey Bee Gardens Farm – CCFB Member Event

CCFB member business, Honey Bee Garden Farms has warmly invited members of the Cook County Farm Bureau to visit the farm. Honey Bee Gardens Farm is a family-friendly destination offering hands-on farm experiences, seasonal events, and outdoor activities for children and adults. **See more details on Page 10.**



DATE: Friday, July 31, 2026
TIME: Anytime, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

LOCATION: Honey Bee Gardens Farm, 8405 Kearney Rd, Downers Grove, IL 630.269.4345

MEMBER ENTRY: 2 free member entrance fees per membership only – must show CCFB Farm Bureau card or on phone. Need your card, call CCFB at 708-354-3276.

BINGO!!!

Join us for some fun while supporting agriculture and community. We will play 15 BINGO games (receiving 2 bingo cards per game) and will have prizes and refreshments. Open to members, families, and friends.



DATE: Tuesday, August 11, 2026
TIME: 10:00 a.m.

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

FEE: \$10 for CCFB members, \$15.00 for non-members (Bring a friend)
REGISTRATION: Call 708-354-3276 to register. Registration encouraged, walk ins accepted.

Knead to Know: How Agriculture Feeds Your Sourdough

Join us for an immersive sourdough prep experience where flour, fermentation, and farming come together. Learn how to build and care for a sourdough starter, taste a range of beautifully baked sourdough breads, and take home recipes you'll actually want to bake again. Along the way, we'll dig into what makes great sourdough great—from the wheat in the field to the flour in your bowl – and how agricultural choices influence flavor, texture, and aroma in every loaf.



DATE: Tuesday, August 11, 2026
TIME: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

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

FEE: \$25 for CCFB members, \$30 for non-members
REGISTRATION: Call the FB office at 708-354-3276 or online in the Member Center. Limited number of participants.

Fall Fun – 26th Giant Pumpkin, Dessert, Carving, Local Honey Contests Save the Date – Saturday, October 3, 2026

Cook CFB Photo Contest

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

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

Example Categories:
Planting Vegetables, Planting Flowers, Farmers' Markets, Horseback Riding, and More!

Prizes: *There will be three winners.*

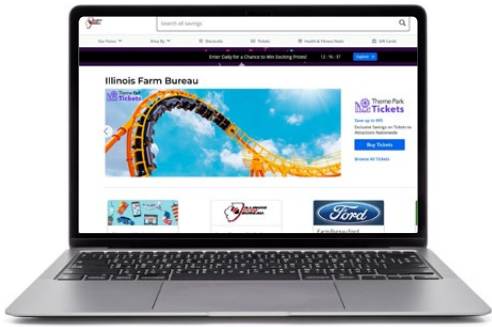
1st place: \$100 cash
2nd place: \$40 Farm Fresh Funds*
3rd place: \$25 Farm Fresh Funds*

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/4etwEqw** to submit entries.
(Members may want to also submit your photo to the American Farm Bureau Federation for their Farm 250 contest)

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

DESKTOP



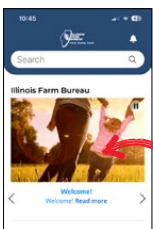
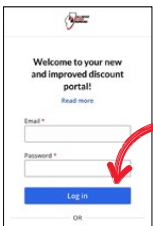
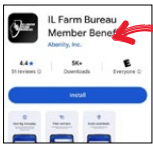
1. Go to **https://ilfb.benefithub.com**.
2. Sign in with your existing username and password or register as a new user by selecting "Don't have an account? Sign up. You will need your membership number to complete sign up."
3. Find the best deals and start saving!

MOBILE APP



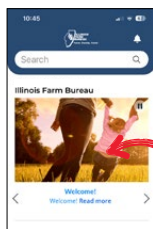
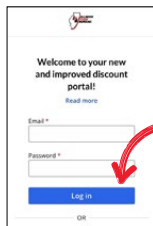
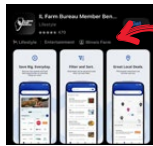
LOOK FOR THIS ICON ON APPLE AND ANDROID!

ANDROID



1. Go to Google Play and search for **Illinois Farm Bureau Member Benefits** and install the app.
2. Once installed, you will see a log in button. Click it and sign in with your existing Benefithub account or register to create one. You will need your membership number which can be found on the front of your membership card.
3. Once logged in, you will see a welcome page, spotlight offers and a search bar to explore all the savings offered on the platform. Click on the menu button (gear icon at the bottom of the screen) to see all categories.

iPHONE



1. Go to the App Store and search for **Illinois Farm Bureau Member Benefits** and install the app.
2. Once installed, you will see a log in button. Click it and sign in with your existing Benefithub account or register to create one. You will need your membership number which can be found on the front of your membership card.
3. Once logged in, you will see a welcome page, spotlight offers and a search bar to explore all the savings offered on the platform. Click on the menu button (gear icon at the bottom of the screen) to see all categories.

