

MULTI-GENERATIONAL GREENHOUSE EXPERTISE

As a third-generation family farmer, Dan Biernacki's commitment to farming and the greenhouse business started at the age of four when he would wash out plant pots for his mom and dad. He returned to the greenhouse full-time after finishing college.

Biernacki's father, Ted, took over the then 16-acre farm in 1948 at the age of 18 before volunteering for the Marines. After returning home, he sold the farm and purchased 11 acres of unincorporated and sparsely populated land in Tinley Park. More than 60 years later, Ted's Greenhouse, a family-owned and managed greenhouse remains on that land.

Although Ted retired many years ago, he's often at the greenhouse helping customers and offering advice. Biernacki along with his wife, Karen operate the greenhouse, oversee employees, and make planting and purchasing decisions. Together they offer customers a wide selection of annuals, perennials, tropical plants, herbs, vegetables, woody shrubs, and seasonal materials. Collectively, the Biernacki family have over 100 years-experience in the greenhouse business.

Ted's Greenhouse is a multi-generational family business, which can be difficult at times. But being a multi-generational business enables younger people to learn from and grow with older generations.

Biernacki, like many other farmers, didn't really consider not farming. For him, being able to nurture a seed and grow it into a beautiful piece of nature is incredibly rewarding akin to raising children, only millions of them.

In May, Biernacki along with his family and employees work nearly around the clock to fill commercial orders, restock the sales floor, care for plants, and prepare for the next growing year. In addition to worrying about the current season, they've already ordering plants for the next growing cycle. With over 100,000 square feet under glass, the winter months aren't much better. Even a three degree drop in temperature can be dangerous for tender growing plants.

Many of the plants grown by Biernacki are exclusive to the greenhouse because of the amount of expertise and dedication required. To that end, Biernacki blends his own soil and creates different mixtures for different types of plants. This diversity is one of the many reasons other greenhouse professionals and growers seek Biernacki's advice.

Biernacki and his wife, Karen have two adult children. The entire family are active members of the Cook County Farm Bureau and Grace United Methodist Church. Biernacki is also a graduate of the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Program, an executive leadership program for agricultural professionals.

Pictured left to right is Karen Bierancki, Dan Bierancki, and Ted Biernacki.



Cook County Farm Bureau® will turn 100 in 2020! As part of the celebration, we will be "counting down" the final 100 days until our celebratory Open House on Saturday, March 28, 2020 (a formal invitation to follow).

Please join the celebration by sending us a video of you wishing us a happy anniversary. Videos will be used on Farm Bureau's Facebook page (facebook.com/Cook.County.Farm.Bureau.IL) prior to the Open House. In addition to the videos, we're also posting historical facts about the Farm Bureau and Cook County agriculture.

As the county's largest general farm organization, Cook County Farm Bureau® is dedicated to bridging the gap between farmers and urban consumers. Through education programs targeting youth and their parents and programs designed to connect farmers with potential consumers, Farm Bureau members are actively engaging in conversations about food and the shared values between farmers and consumers. If you have any questions regarding this issue or would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (708) 354-3276 or via email at bona@cookcfb.org.



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IN AND AROUND COOK COUNTY AGRICULTURE

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LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO JOIN FARM BUREAU'S "FOOD PANTRY CHALLENGE"

Cook County Farm Bureau® will be donating \$1,750 to Cook County food pantries. We'd like to help food pantries provide healthy food for the families in their community.

This summer Cook County Farm Bureau will be hosting a "Food Pantry Challenge" on Facebook. Throughout the summer, families will vote on Facebook for their favorite food pantry. The Facebook polls (five in all) will be boosted to families in the pantries' service areas. After 10 days, the pantry that receives the most votes will receive a donation for \$350. The second-place pantry will receive a donation for \$150.

Be sure to follow Farm Bureau's Facebook page and vote for your favorite food pantry!



Ruth Zeldenrust (pictured left) discusses tomato transplanting with Lori Probasco and Tara Meyer, members of Cook County Commissioner Bridget Degnen's office and Commissioner Degnen (pictured left to right) during a late May 'New Commissioner Tour.' The 'New Commissioner Tour' is an informal program designed to connect small groups of newer commissioners and staff with Cook County farmers and farming. Zeldenrust Farm Market is a third-generation family farm in Chicago Heights. Zeldenrust Farm Market offers bedding plants, seasonal fresh vegetables, and honey at their location in Chicago Heights and farmers markets throughout Cook County.

FARM BUREAU PUSHING POLICY TO ENSURE HEALTHCARE QUALITY

Cook County Farm Bureau® submitted the following policy to the Farm Bureau Resolutions Committee:

Nurse practice is regulated by the State of Illinois through powers granted to it by the U.S. Constitution. Related to that authority, Illinois (along with all 49 of its colleagues) have enacted a Nurse Practice Act (NPA) to provide guidance for the nursing profession and operates with a board of nursing that has the legal authority to develop rules to implement the NPA. Although the specificity of NPAs varies among states, NPAs generally include education, scope of practice and licensure.

Additionally, the “critical access hospital” (CAH) designation is designed to reduce the financial vulnerability of rural hospitals and improve access to healthcare by keeping essential services in rural communities. To accomplish this goal, CAHs receive certain benefits, such as cost-based reimbursement for Medicare services.

Hospitals must meet the following conditions to obtain CAH designation: 25 or fewer acute care inpatient beds; located more than 35 miles from another hospital (exceptions may apply);

maintain an annual average length of stay of 96 hours or less for acute care patients; and 24/7 emergency care services.

Health Care Quality

We support:

1. A clear and concise Nurse Practice Act (NPA).
2. Clear and concise language in the NPA regarding what work can and cannot be safely delegated to unlicensed non-nurse personnel not requiring nursing knowledge.
3. Licensed nurses overseeing medication administration and nursing process (assessment, diagnosis, outcomes/planning implementation, evaluation and patient teaching).
4. Patient access to skilled nursing services.
5. Nurse and hospital staff ratios being based off of patient acuity.
6. Patient access to critical access hospitals in rural and underserved areas.

The policy resolution will be considered by the Farm Bureau Resolution Committee in July before being forwarded to delegates in December.

Cook County farmer Gerry Kopping discusses horse care and boarding with ‘New Commissioner Tour’ participants during a May visit to Kopping Farms in Lemont. Tour participants explored the farm and discussed horse care and feeding. Kopping Farms is situated on 60-acres and home to over 100 horses. Kopping Farms is owned and managed by Gerry and Linda Kopping who also farm 600-acres of corn, soybeans, wheat, and alfalfa in Cook and Will Counties.



Dan Biernacki (pictured center) discusses the transplanting process with Cook County Board of Commissioners staff members Chris Provenzano from Commissioner Sean Morrison’s office; Jessica Beezhold from Commissioner Kevin Morrison’s office; and Justin Koziatck from Commissioner Kevin Morrison’s office and Karen Biernacki during an early May ‘New Commissioner Tour.’

The New Commissioner Tour’ is an informal program designed to connect small groups of newer commissioners and staff with Cook County farmers and farming. Tour participants visited Ted’s Greenhouse in Tinley Park. The greenhouse offers a variety of annuals, perennials, biennials, herbs, vegetables, and specialty stock. Ted’s Greenhouse is owned and operated by Dan and Karen Biernacki as well as Ted Biernacki. Collectively, they have over 100-years of experience in the greenhouse business.



Cook County farmer, Jeff Heinsohn illustrates the impact of the weather on area soybean fields during the 2019 Cook County Staff Exchange Program. Pictured left to right is: Jeff Heinsohn, farmer; Alfred Saucedo, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District; Nick Heath, Board of (Tax) Review; Ginny Hotaling, Senator Morrison’s office; Joyce Bai, Senator Morrison’s office; and State Representative Michelle Mussman. The Staff Exchange Program is designed to illustrate the connection between Cook County government and agriculture while enabling Farm Bureau to further its relationships with legislators and legislative staff members. Since its inception in 2012, over 125 participation have attended this program.



Carl Smits, owner of Smits Farms (pictured right) discusses greenhouse and vegetable growing operations with representatives from the Japan Agricultural Cooperative. Smits Farm, which opened in 1990 is a family owned and operated farm in Chicago Heights. Smits and his wife, Deb, grew the business from a single greenhouse to 15 greenhouses. Smits Farm offers bedding plants, perennials, and a variety of fresh herbs, vegetables and greens.

COOK COUNTY FARM BUREAU® EXISTS TO SERVE ALL MEMBERS OF THE COOK COUNTY FARM BUREAU® WITH MEANINGFUL AND BENEFICIAL PROGRAMS THAT REFLECT OUR AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE.™

