



Honoring Tradition | Leading the Future
Celebrating a Century of Agriculture & the Family Farm





Janet McCabe

Cook County Farm Bureau President, 2018-Present

Board of Directors, 2011-Present

Congratulations to the Cook County Farm Bureau® on its centennial anniversary! The members, board members, and staff of the Cook County Farm Bureau should be extremely proud of such an accomplishment.

The "Roaring '20s" were characterized by jazz, flappers, newly found wealth as a nation, and for the first time, more people were living in cities than on farms. The irony of an urban Farm Bureau being established in Cook County in 1920 should not be lost on anyone.

The founders of this organization came together as a "grassroots" group and dedicated their time and effort to advance the value of agriculture and to share the necessity of agriculture and the agri-industry in this area. They also made it a priority to share the information and those values with the elected and appointed officials within Cook County. This vision holds true 100 years later. Although the landscape has changed, the importance and necessity of agriculture and agricultural advocacy has remained steadfast over these 100 years.

Cook County Farm Bureau has an impressive list of accomplishments over their 100 years including scholarships, agricultural education for youth and adults, farmer education programs, and member benefits. The close-knit group

of volunteers, board members, and Cook County Farm Bureau staff should be applauded for the hours of time and dedication to keeping this organization current and thriving.

Many things have changed since 1920, like bathing suits, cars, cameras, and tractors to name a few, but the one thing that has not changed is the need for a Cook County Farm Bureau. Their focuses may have altered over the years, but the core values of the Farm Bureau have not.

I am honored to serve as the current Cook County Farm Bureau President and I humbly tip my hat to all of the Presidents before me and all of those that will come after me.

Here is to our first 100 years and now on to our second 100 years!



In 2020, the Cook County Farm Bureau®, its leaders, and members are setting aside time to celebrate the 100-year birthday of Cook County Farm Bureau (CCFB) as an organization. This centennial recognition provides the rare opportunity to relive 100 years of organizational life, decisions, strategies, people, actions, influence, and friendships.

In preparation for the centennial, we have read and reviewed the organization's minutes, publications, historical videos, photos, memorabilia, books, and stories to help bring the pride and values of 100 years of CCFB to life in this book. We have learned more about the men and women that had a vision for farmers and agriculture. We saw them cooperate to improve farm conditions, productivity, and lifestyle. We saw farmers that gave their time, energy, creativity, and leadership skills to something bigger than themselves.

Do you think that any of these farmers thought that what they were doing would be historic? Do you think that they ever thought, while donating their time to the Cook County Farm Bureau, that a book would be written about their efforts? When a person is busy living, one normally does not think about the process when moments become "history". However, simply being a part of the process resulted in the creation of the Cook County Farm Bureau history.

By being a part of the Farm Bureau process, farmer leaders and Farm Bureau members enjoyed so many significant accomplishments and benefits through the years. An abbreviated list includes farm property tax assessment, zoning, lobbying elected officials to pass and prevent legislation, public relations events, Agriculture in the Classroom, tax protests, trade, member services, freedom to farm, marketing, environmental issues, and so much more. Many times, through their efforts, they found time to have fun and enjoy friendships. Every farmer and member that contributed to these efforts may not be found in this book but rest assured, we recognize the efforts of thousands of members to cooperate to make a true difference and impact for agriculture in Cook County.

Perhaps most exciting to see are generations of Farm Bureau leaders that have handed the torch over to the next generation



Bob Rohrer, CAE, FBCM

Cook County Farm Bureau Manager, 1999-Present

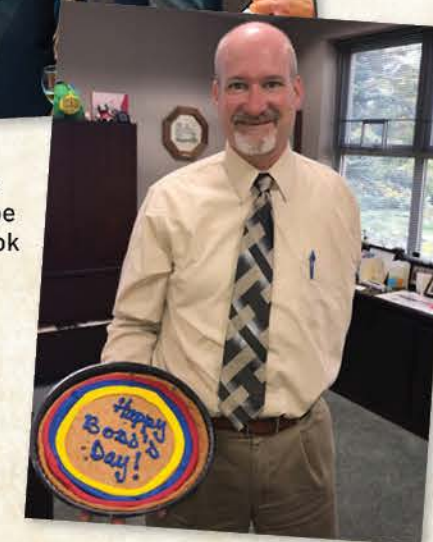
throughout the organization's history. The passion for farming and Farm Bureau runs so very deep. Today, in print, those collective efforts represent a storied history.

And yet, there are so many of today's CCFB leaders that may be first generation volunteers, beginning the tradition now. It will be fun to see their family's contributions for the next 100 years.

The lesson is this: Farm Bureau is family and the farm family that has been at the core of the last 100 years of Cook County Farm Bureau's success.

We dedicate this book to the farm families who built this organization that has flourished for 100 years. Your sacrifice and putting aside of self-interest for a better today and greater tomorrow for agriculture and your loved ones will not be forgotten.

The issues and culture of this world continue to grow in complexity, and agriculture has been a part of this change. It is comforting to know that Cook County Farm Bureau, which has consistently held to its roots through 100 years of success, will be a part of the agricultural landscape in Cook County in the future. Farmers and family are Farm Bureau's core values.



Dear Cook County Farm Bureau Members,

Congratulations on 100 years of working together and advocating for agriculture in your community! This milestone is a great celebration of our rich agricultural heritage and the ties we share across the Farm Bureau family.

At Farm Bureau, our grassroots members like you are the backbone of our great organization. For a century now, Cook County Farm Bureau has been the place for farmers in your community to come together, fellowship, share ideas and roll up your sleeves to tackle the tough issues facing local agriculture. I want to thank each of you for your service and dedication. I'm sure your organization and leaders have seen many changes over the years, including the population growth in Cook County. You are on the frontlines of our work to communicate with our urban and suburban neighbors, and we appreciate the important role that you play in Farm Bureau statewide and nationally.

At the American Farm Bureau Federation, we are excited for the next century across all of Farm Bureau, and we believe that U.S. agriculture has a bright future. But that starts with all of us coming together and speaking with one voice to protect our farms and our livelihoods. We count on hearing from each of you to know what is important for Illinois, Cook County, and your individual farms, so we can take your message to Capitol Hill, the White House and consumers nationwide.

Thanks to grassroots members like you, Cook County Farm Bureau has been a strong advocate for the last 100 years, and we are excited to see what the next 100 years will bring.

Sincerely,



Zippy Duvall
AFBF President



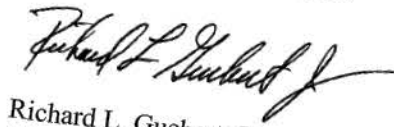
Congratulations to Cook County Farm Bureau® for achieving your 100-year anniversary as an organization. This is a significant milestone for any organization.

It is a testament to your Farm Bureau's ability to evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of your members while maintaining your core principles to serve Cook County farmers. You and your members should be commended for all you have accomplished during your history.

On behalf of the Illinois Farm Bureau®, I wish you continued success as you move towards another 100 years as an organization.

Sincerely,

ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU®



Richard L. Guebert, Jr.
Illinois Farm Bureau President





1920
H.A. Dooley



1921
Gus Termunde



1922-1924
Herman Schwake



1925
D.A. Nietfeldt



1926
Herman Schwake



1927-1933
D.A. Nietfeldt



1934-1942
Harvey Adair



1943-1946
Jacob Ouwenga



1947-1950
L.W. Pohman



1951-1956
Charles Erickson



1956-1973
Henry Eichholz



1974-1975
Leonard Schultz



1976-1978
Norman
Straussenburg



1979-1984
James Goebbert



1985-2000
Howard Paarlberg



2001-2003
Raymond Nykaza



2004-2006
Harold Stuenkel



2007-2010
James Brandau



2011-2017
James Gutzmer



2018-Present
Janet McCabe

The President serves as the elected leader of the Board of Directors and guides the board's efforts in the areas of strategic planning, strategy, organizational policy and direction, structure and delivery of services, and fiduciary responsibilities.



1934-1958
C.H. Mills
Organization
Director



1958-1960
G.W. Blanchard
Secretary of
Organization



1960-1965
Melvin Hayenga
Secretary of
Organization



1965-1968
Larry Miller
Secretary of
Organization



1968-1980
Gordon Fox
Executive Secretary



1980-1999
Alden P. Kilian
Manager



1999-Present
Robert A. Rohrer,
CAE, FBCM
Manager

Cook County Farm Bureau has employed the services of professional management to assist the Farmer Leadership in guiding the organization during the past 100 years. Initially, the Cook County Farm Bureau® and the University of Illinois Extension partnered to employ a local Farm Advisor. The Farm Advisor's primary responsibility was to provide quality advice in order to help them with successful farms. The Farm Advisor, in those early years, also helped with some of the organization's administrative needs.

In 1934, with the organization growing, the Board of Directors hired an Organization Director in conjunction with the Illinois Farm Bureau. This allowed

the local Farm Advisor the opportunity to focus completely on the task of helping Cook County farmers improve farming techniques and skills.

In 1954, the United States Department of Agriculture mandated the "separation of services" of the Farm Bureau and the Extension. However, the Farm Bureau and Extension continued to work closely together on programming to help farmers and members of Cook County.

Since 1934, the Farm Bureau Manager has held the titles of Organization Director, Secretary of Organization, Executive Secretary, and today's Manager.



James "Jim" Gutzmer

*Cook County Farm
Bureau President,
2010-2017*

*Board of Directors,
1999-Present*

As a non-full-time farmer, it was a tremendous surprise when I was asked to join the Cook County Farm Bureau® Board of Directors in the fall of 1999. I had married into a farming family and my farming experience and knowledge was very limited. Although my parents farmed, they had retired long before I came along. Learning from my father-in-law was an eye-opening experience, and thus my love for agriculture was born.

After listening to my fellow board members and meeting seasoned farmers at various meetings and conventions, it didn't take long for me to understand why people were so passionate about the future of agriculture and the Farm Bureau.

It has been my pleasure to work with long-time Cook County farmers who have instilled in me the importance of farmers and Farm Bureau members having a strong presence with the public, legislators, and our urban consumers.

It was an honor to serve as Cook County Farm Bureau President from 2010 until 2017. I am incredibly proud of our board members, staff, and volunteers who serve as members of the various teams. Our team structure combines the knowledge, advice, and commitment of farmer and associate members. During my tenure, our teams and

volunteers received both the Illinois Farm Bureau® President's Award and Liberty Bell, which recognize the highest success in Farm Bureau programming. I am extremely proud of our volunteers' accomplishments during my tenure as President.

As a past President and now a board member, I consider myself very privileged to be involved with a Farm Bureau that has done great things and is destined to do even greater things in the next 100 years.



I would like to express my sincerest homage to the Cook County Farm Bureau® for 100 years. I was blessed to have served as a board member with some outstanding and seasoned individuals who worked together as a team whether one was a board member, volunteer, manager of COUNTRY Financial® insurance, or Cook County Farm Bureau staff member. We all had the privilege to have served with one of the most exemplary County Farm Bureau managers in CCFB history, Bob Rohrer. I have learned so much from all of those professionals.

I served on the CCFB Board from 1999–2013, and President from 2007–2010. I am a fourth generation farmer from Tinley Park who has loved farming my whole life. My father taught me the business. I learned that working as a farmer wasn't just planting and harvesting the crop. My father was a Cook County Farm Bureau board member from 1980 thru 2000. I saw the pride, commitment, dedication, and friendships he had with all of the people involved in this organization. I knew that this was an organization with purpose: educating, contributing, enhancing, and building programs to help small family farms, farmers, and other families in our communities through their work.

The Illinois Farm Bureau® and all of the County Farm Bureaus in the state of Illinois sponsor a wide variety of programs that help anyone interested

in pursuing agriculture in one way or another. Each county sends their representatives from their board of directors to annual meetings and to the American Farm Bureau Federation® meeting. Here policy is worked on with other farmers. Farm Bureau offers opportunities to broaden its constituents' knowledge not only in agriculture but with leadership programs such as Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow. This program proved to be very helpful to me and is offered to others interested in pursuing leadership roles.

There were so many great memories but a highlight and most heartfelt program at the Cook County Farm Bureau was the Food Checkout Day benefitting the Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana. The participation and generosity of so many made it possible to have a food pantry dedicated to the Cook County Farm Bureau at the Ronald McDonald House near Comer Hospital in Chicago. Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens together can help others in need.

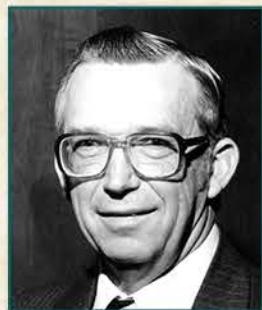
Over the past 100 years, we all have seen many changes in production agriculture. I hope that Farm Bureau continues supporting family values with their future members which have always been so important to the Farm Bureau's organization, foundation, and to our society. Congratulations and blessings for the Farm Bureaus of tomorrow.



James "Jim" Brandau

*Cook County Farm
Bureau President,
2007-2010*

*Board of Directors,
1999-2013*



**James "Jim"
Goebbert**

*Cook County Farm
Bureau President,
1980-1983*

*Board of Directors,
1975-2004*

It has been an honor to be involved in the 100th anniversary of the Cook County Farm Bureau®. It doesn't seem possible that I spent 30 years of my life as a member of the Board of Directors.

Those 30 years, as well as the two years I served in the United States Marine Corps before that, made me a much better leader.

The Cook County Farm Bureau was instrumental in many local and statewide projects during my tenure. One such project was a partnership with the Lincoln Park Zoo to launch the "Farm in the Zoo" program. Through this partnership, the "Farm in the Zoo" went from concept to fruition including the construction of buildings, fencing, and wayfinding signs.

Probably one of the best things the Board of Directors did for the farmers of Cook County was the farmland assessment agreement with the Cook County Assessor's Office. Due to political reasons, when the Illinois General Assembly approved the Farmland Assessment law it excluded Cook County. After its approval, Ray Nykaza, Howard Paarlberg, and I met with the Cook County Board to discuss using the Farmland Assessment law as a guideline for assessing farmland in Cook County.

Although the Farmland Assessment law excludes Cook County, through compromise and negotiation, Cook County farmland is now assessed at a similar rate as the rest of the state.

Another important program that was developed locally and throughout Illinois during my tenure as Farm Bureau President was the creation of the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Locally, this program was developed by Leonard Schultz, a Cook County Farm Bureau board member and farmer and later as an Illinois Agricultural Association® Director. Through his and other leaders' efforts, this program expanded from a county program to statewide.

Cook County Farm Bureau started with an office in Arlington Heights, which was shared by the Farm Bureau and Extension Service. Farm Bureau eventually outgrew the building and built a new building in Rolling Meadows. Farm Bureau also owned an office building in Tinley Park. After some years, the Board of Directors felt that it would be better to have the Farm Bureau headquarters in one location. At that time the Board opted to purchase land in Countryside and built the building that is the present location of the Cook County Farm Bureau office.

I was fortunate to be a leader of the Cook County Farm Bureau during a great membership growth period. When I first joined the Board of Directors, membership was at 16,000 and now it's over 40,000!

During the last year of my service on the Board of Directors, the Board restructured the volunteer committees into four (and now five) committees. Committee membership includes board members, associate members, and farmer members. The committees report directly to the Board of Directors. This system has worked well, and, in my opinion, the Cook County Farm Bureau Board of Directors is in capable hands.



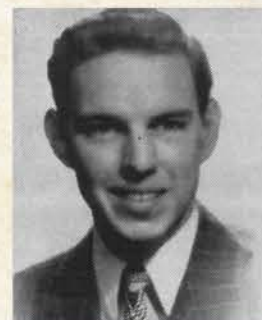
*1920-1930
C.E. Durst
1st Farm Advisor*



*1930-1937
O.G. Barrett*



*1937-1951
C.A. Hughes Farm
Advisor*

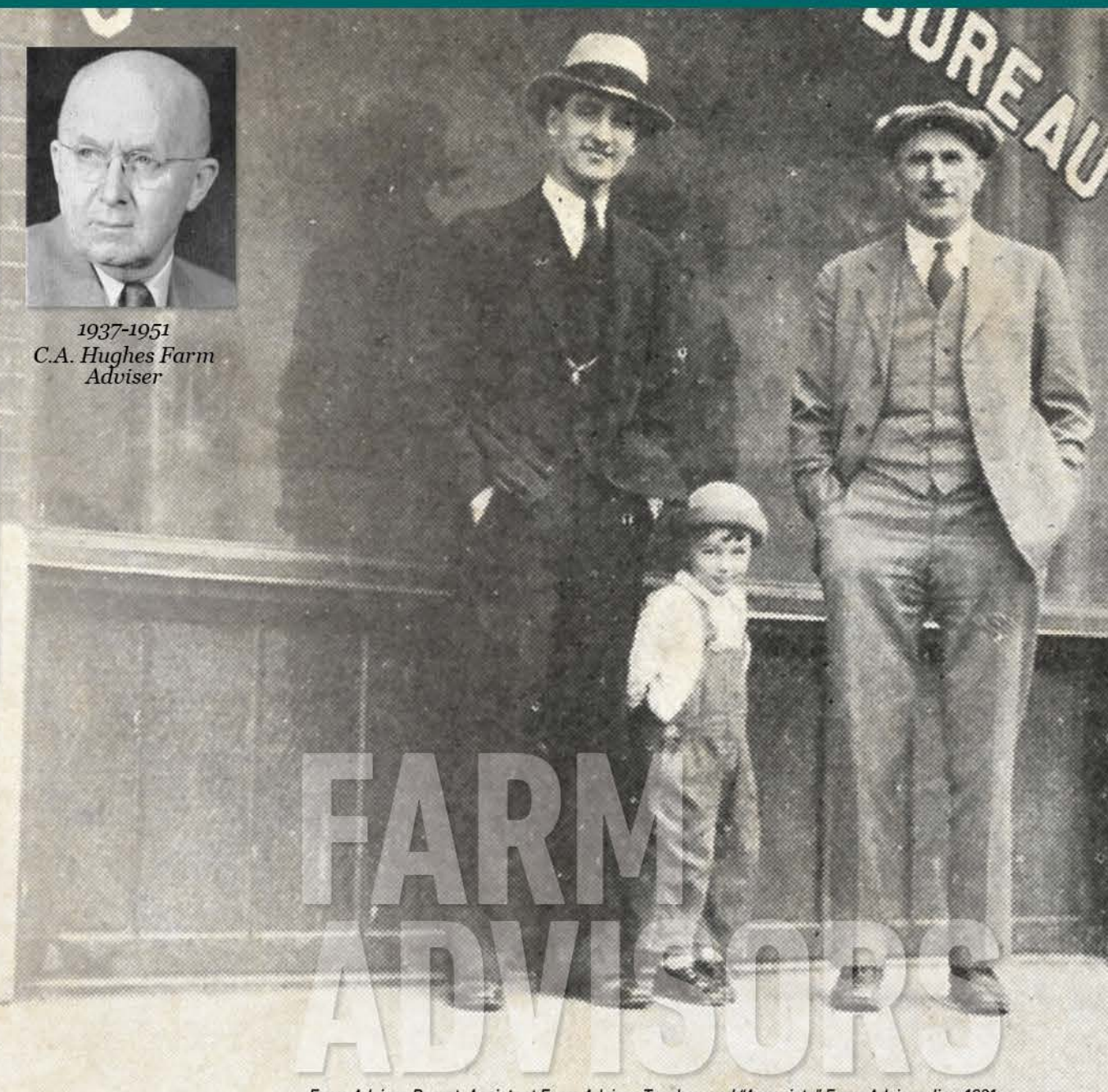


*1953
William "Bill"
Whiteside
Farm Advisor*



*1958
Carl Mees
Farm Advisor*

There are a number of Farm Advisors that helped play an important role in the effectiveness and success of the Cook County Farm Bureau. A number of Farm Advisors that followed (names like Jim Fizzell and Greg Stack) also worked closely with the CCFB and many U of I Extension educators continue to do so today!



Farm Advisor Barret, Assistant Farm Advisor Tascher, and "Associate" Farm Advisor Jim, 1931

COOK COUNTY FARM BUREAU HISTORY

A look through the decades

1912 to 1919

Local farmers sought the expertise and knowledge of the University of Illinois College of Agriculture. Counties began to organize soil and crop improvement associations to learn better methods of farming from the new "crop doctors" based upon research coming from land-grant universities such as the University of Illinois. The result was the first County Farm Bureaus being organized in Illinois and in other regions of the country.

Existing County Farm Bureaus organized the Illinois Agricultural Association® (Illinois Farm Bureau's legal name), a statewide general farm organization.

Leaders from state farm bureaus came together in Chicago to form the American Farm Bureau Federation® (AFBF) to represent farmers' interests nationally.



1920

The Cook County Farm Bureau® is organized. Two hundred and fifty farmers from throughout Cook County gathered at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago on March 15 to participate in the formation of the organization. H.A. Dooley was unanimously elected President. C.E. Durst was hired as the farm advisor for \$4,000 and the organization bought a Ford touring car to help him get out to meet with farmers.

Farm Bureau opened offices in Arlington Heights and Blue Island.

1921-1929

Cook County was home to just over 5,300 farms on over 303,000 acres. The top three crops were oats, corn, and wheat and the most common livestock was cattle and horses. Although orchards and some specialty crops were reported, most were not.

Cook County Farm Bureau endorsed the establishment of the Cook County Fair.

Farm Bureau published Farm Bureau News. The publication's name is later changed to the Countryside, the Cook County Farmer, and most recently the *Co-Operator*, as it's known by today.

Members met to discuss whether to continue the Farm Bureau; they opted to reorganize and continue the organization.

The Board of Directors spent time on truck garden issues including trucking conditions, railroad crossings, farm taxes and assessment, insect issues, cooperative produce marketing, and livestock.

Illinois Farm Bureau® created several insurance companies including the Illinois Agricultural Mutual Insurance Company (which would become Country Mutual Insurance Company) for auto insurance and Country Life Insurance Company to offer financial protection to Cook



County Farm Bureau members.

Organizational leaders came together to form a local farm cooperative, Lake-Cook Farm Supply, to provide petroleum products to local farms.

Membership topped 1,600 members.

Presidents this decade included Gus Termunde, Herman Schwake, and D.A. Nietfeldt.

1930-1939

Cook County was home to nearly 3,300 farms on nearly 215,000 acres. For the first time, the Census of Agriculture asked farmers to report their type of farming, including truck farms. Nearly 1,200 farms self-reported being a truck farm with an additional 17 farms raising vegetables for the purpose of sale.



The Farm Bureau created a new company, Gardener's Supply, to sell seeds and insecticides. The company was later merged with cooperative Lake-Cook Farm Supply Company.

Cook County Farm Bureau placed first in a national contest for the largest membership growth.

Board members approved the publication of a member newsletter, *Countryside*.

Board members created a tax committee to address farm property taxes in the county and opposed a proposal to eliminate the County Assessor's office.

Volunteers served on newly created committees to



accomplish the work of the organization.

The Farm Bureau purchased the Arlington Heights State Bank building for its offices for \$12,000.

Leadership explored creating an "Associate" member category.

Membership reached over 2,250 members.

Presidents this decade included D.A. Nietfeldt and H.W. Adair. C.H. Mills joined the organization as Organization Manager.

1940-1949

Cook County experienced an increase in both farms and farmland with nearly 4,000 and just under 232,400 acres. Row crops including oats, corn, and wheat continue to be the most common crops raised by farmers.

Bremen Township requested Farm Bureau's help after eminent domain was used by the Cook County Forest Preserve. Member concerns included wild animals, dogs, and weeds.

The Farm Bureau worked with officials to make improvements to the hours and delivery process of the Randolph Street produce market.

The Board of Directors passed a resolution which stated that "the Cook County Farm Bureau supports our government in its request for increased production of certain farm products for defense during this war emergency". In response to a call for more sugar, farmers in Cook County increased their sugar beet acreage by 40% which added nearly 9 million pounds of sugar, enough to fulfill the ration cards of 360,000 people per year for "food for victory".



1939 FARM PRICES

These are the August prices of farm commodities in 1939

Corn, per bu.	\$.38
Soybeans, bu.	.60
Oats, bu.	.24
Wheat, bu.	.57
Hogs, Cwt.	5.50
Beef cattle, cwt.	7.70
Milk, cwt.	1.50
Milk cows	60.00
Butter fat, lb.	.21
Chickens	.13
Turkeys	.12
Eggs, doz.	.13

With World War II happening, farm labor was a challenge, especially considering increased production demands, as the draft took key men from the farm. The Farm Bureau set up employment agencies to bring labor from the suburbs and cities to help on the farm, especially with vegetable production.

County farmers donated a 30-ton carload of flour and grain as well as over \$4,000 to give to the Abraham Lincoln Friendship Train that provided charity relief for the suffering of the poor people of Europe.

Cook County Farm Bureau was recognized by the American Farm Bureau Federation for the largest membership in the Midwest region.

Farm Bureau members led the efforts to create a Cook County Soil Conservation District.

Membership exceeded 2,100 members.

Presidents this decade included H.W. Adair, Jacob Ouwenga, and L.W. Pholman.

C.H. Mills continued to serve as Organization Director.

1950-1959

Cook County farmland dropped to just over 202,000 acres and more than 3,200 farms. As tractors increased in prevalence and were first reported, horses were no longer one of the most common livestock raised on Cook County

farms. Corn, oats, and wheat remained the most common crops grown; however, Cook County was home to over 17,000 acres of vegetables raised for the purpose of sale.

Farm Bureau opposed the extension of the Chicago Sanitary District.

The Cook County Farm Bureau opposed a federal directive which ultimately required separation of the Farm Bureau and the Extension Service.

The organization assisted members with livestock outlook meetings, workshops on wills/estates, property taxation, vegetable marketing, reclaiming federal gas taxes paid that were used on the farm, Dutch elm disease, improving the Randolph Street market, new trucking regulations, and Social Security.

The Cook County Farm Bureau opened the Tinley Park office because it was more rural and agricultural than the Blue Island location.

Cook County Farm Bureau dues increased to \$18.00 per year. Membership topped 6,100.

The Women's Committee was formed. Committee members later integrated into Farm Bureau committees.

The Young People's Committee was created and later disbanded before restarting again.

Members opposed the Cook County Forest Preserve District expanding its land holdings.

Cook County farmers voiced their concern after learning that Cook County Commissioners were considering eliminating "farmland" as a property tax classification.

Armour and Company announced it would discontinue slaughter of hogs in Chicago, the last national packer to operate a facility in the city.

Presidents this decade included L.W. Pohlman, Charles Erickson, and Henry Eichholz.

Managers this decade included G.W. Blanchard and Melvin Hayenga.

1960-1969

Both Cook County farmland and farms continued decline, although a small portion of the decline can be attributed to a revised definition of farms. Cook County was home to over 1,400 farms on nearly 131,000 acres. Top crops included corn, soybeans, and oats while livestock

numbers continued to decline. Also, on the decline was the number of farms growing vegetables for sale. Nearly 280 farms reported just over 7,700 acres of vegetables.

Cook County Farm Bureau farmers and staff met with area state legislators on farm-related issues and legislation. A legislative reception was held in Springfield, attended by 49 state representatives and senators, to help them get acquainted with Cook County farmers and farm issues.

The organization sponsored a meeting of 180 farmers and food processing/distributing company representatives to help individuals get acquainted and learn more about farming.

Farm Bureau examined a membership dues' increase. Dues were later increased to \$24.00 per year.

Members signed a petition opposing the County Zoning Board's proposal to eliminate vegetable and farmstands.

One hundred and twenty-seven members attended a Roadside Stand Marketing Conference put on by the CCFB Marketing Committee.

The Illinois Farm Bureau Sports Festival gained popularity with Cook County Farm Bureau members with many participating in bowling, softball, golf, and trapshooting.

Membership topped 7,200 members.

Henry Eichholz served as President.

Managers this decade included G.W. Blanchard, Melvin Hayenga, Larry Miller, and Gordon Fox.

1970-1979

Cook County farms and farmland declined further still to over 700 farms on nearly 93,000

acres growing predominately corn, sorghum, wheat, soybeans, and hay. For the first time, greenhouse products were reported.

The organization celebrated its 50th anniversary and featured a speech by Orion Samuelson; 864 members attended.

Cook County Farm Bureau participated in providing input and thoughts for the 1970 Illinois Constitutional Convention.

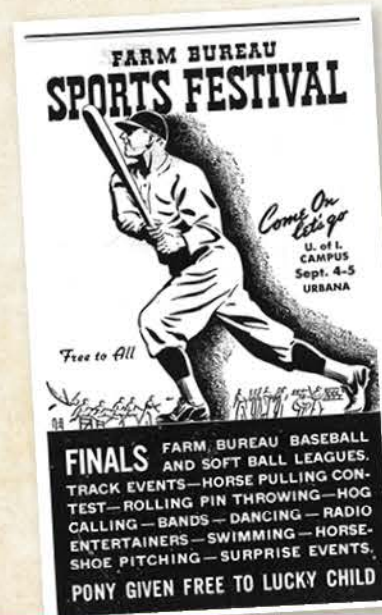
Members led the creation of a Consumer Information Committee, now the Food for Thought Committee. This Committee was tasked with communicating agricultural information to consumers. This group promoted agriculture at the Civic Center, Randhurst Shopping Center, and the Chicago Flower and Garden Show. The latter won Public Service and Popularity awards.

South Cook To Elect Soil Conservation Directors

The South Cook Soil Conservation District will elect its charter directors on Tuesday, May 19, 7 to 9 p.m. at the Farm Bureau building, Tinley Park, Ill.

All landowners are urged to come out and vote.

Directors nominated are: Donald Doctor, Orland Park; James Heatherwick, Orland Park; Cornelius Rietveld, Chicago Heights; William Stelter, Tinley Park.



Cook County Farm Bureau joined other County Farm Bureaus in promoting agriculture to the non-farm audience. The group purchased airtime on WGN Radio.

Cook County Farm Bureau placed first in Illinois for membership quota with membership over 16,500.

The Board of Directors held annual state legislative receptions for representatives and senators to talk about issues regarding farm legislation.

The Women's Committee began sponsoring high school "Meat and Dairy" grants to help promote early cooking skills and habits for students in the classroom.

Presidents this decade included Leonard Schultz, Norman Strassenburg, and James 'Jim' Goebbert.

Gordon Fox served as Manager.

1980-1989

Four hundred and fifty farms reported over 51,000 acres of farmland in Cook County. For the first time, soybean acres surpassed corn acres and over 80 farms reported growing over 2,680 acres of vegetables for sale.

Farm Bureau met with the Cook County Assessor's office to establish fair assessment levels for agricultural land in the county. Work on property assessments continued to be a priority for the Cook County Farm Bureau.

Board members participated in the Farm Bureau Leaders to Washington, D.C. program. Many volunteers have since participated.

The Board of Directors donated \$7,500 to the Northern Illinois Horticulture Research Center in St. Charles to support efforts for research to improve vegetable production in northern Illinois.

Farm Bureau contributed financially to Lincoln Park Zoo's "Farm in the Zoo".

Plans were developed for the Agriculture in the Classroom program for Cook County schools. The program soon presented to over 3,000 students in over 120 classrooms.

The Board of Directors approved a resolution supporting a proposal to create differential dues for Voting and Associate Members of the organization. The board also approved a resolution supporting the Illinois Farm Bureau statewide effort to change how Illinois education was financed.

Farm Bureau purchased land for a new office building in Countryside.

Marketing Committee members developed a roadside stand/U-pick directory and distributed it to the public to enhance consumer access to local farm products.

Membership topped 27,150 members.

James 'Jim' Goebbert served as President.

Alden Kilian served as Manager.

1990-1999

Cook County farms and farmland declined only slightly to just under 400 and just under 47,000 acres respectively with top crops of soybeans and corn. Also on the decline was farms growing vegetables and the acres dedicated to vegetables at 45 and just over 2,300 acres respectively. For the first time, farmers reported if they were receiving any government payments.



The Board of Directors constructed a centralized Farm Bureau headquarters in the Village of Countryside and sold its buildings in Rolling Meadows and Tinley Park.

Patrick Horcher became Cook County Farm Bureau's first Agriculture Leaders of Tomorrow (ALOT) program graduate. Nineteen Cook County Farm Bureau members and staff have since graduated.

Cook County Farm Bureau celebrated 75 years, with Orion Samuelson serving as Master of Ceremonies and speaker at a member dinner.

The Farm Bureau hosted a pig roast for legislators on an area farm.

Board members unveiled the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation® which was formed to raise funds to support agricultural literacy, careers, and leadership.

The Foundation held its first silent auction to raise funds to support agricultural literacy efforts and scholarships for students seeking agricultural degrees.

Members of the Cook County Farm Bureau Board and Women's Committee took two bus trips to Washington, D.C. for legislative action and education.

Farm Bureau kicked off its Member-to-Member Discount program.

The Board of Directors held its first strategic planning session to identify and prioritize goals of the organization, a practice that continues today.

A Viewpoint Committee was established to solicit farmer member opinions on pertinent issues. The first survey included questions related to eminent



domain, private property rights, campaign finance reform, food safety, biotechnology, and stormwater management. Farm Bureau submitted eight resolutions to Illinois Farm Bureau delegates. Farm Bureau later submitted six policy resolutions for Farm Bureau delegates' consideration.

Farm Bureau launched its Teachers' Agricultural Institute, now called Summer Agricultural Institute, where eight area teachers participate in a week-long experience to learn more about agriculture and farm-related

lesson planning. Almost 200 area teachers have participated in this program since its inception.

The Agriculture Adventures for Families page in the *Co-Operator*, a favorite of local families, is unveiled.

Farm Bureau membership topped 29,700 members.

Presidents this decade included James 'Jim' Goebbert and Howard Paarlberg.

Managers this decade included Alden Kilian and Robert 'Bob' Rohrer.

2000-2009

Cook County was home to over 230 farms and over 39,000 acres of farmland. Despite declines in livestock, farmers continued to raise soybeans, corn, and wheat. One hundred and thirteen farms raised vegetables, greenhouse, or nursery crops.

Farm Bureau created a Local Roadside Farm Market Directory promoting 15 member farm stands. Over 10,000 copies were



distributed. Member business promotions continued to be a priority of the Cook County Farm Bureau.

Food Checkout Day was launched. Farm Bureau members and COUNTRY Financial® representatives donated food, cash, and pop tabs to Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana.

A Landowners Group was created to assist members wishing to invest in farmland and utilize 1031 tax deferral exchanges. Additional topics discussed by the group included trespass concerns and recreational liability.

The *Co-Operator* gets a makeover and sports full color photos and graphics.

Farm Bureau first created, then upgraded an organizational website to enhance usability and public visibility.

The town of Wheeling declared March 21st National Agriculture Day.

Farm Bureau worked to reduce the cost of forest preserve equine licenses by 400%.

Farm Bureau leaders opted to develop an alternative committee structure consisting of four teams: Agriculture Literacy/Public

Relations, Commodities/Marketing, Member Relations, and Governmental Affairs. Teams later transitioned to separate Agriculture Literacy and Public Relations committees.

Agriculture in the Classroom celebrated 20 years of teaching kids and teachers about agriculture and food. During those 20 years, the program reached over 244,000 students from more than 10,100 classrooms.

The Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation celebrated its 10th year anniversary in 2007. In 10 short years, the Foundation awarded 42 agriculturally related scholarships, sponsored three internships, provided more than \$60,500 in financial support to the Agriculture in the Classroom program, and helped five Farm Bureau leaders advance their leadership development through the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Program and the Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow program.

Commodities and Marketing Team members created numerous brochures on a range of topics including organic crop production and farm ownership. Members also surveyed local consumers and horse owners to learn more about agricultural issues impacting them and what their needs were.

Debbie Jimenez from St. Albert the Great school in Burbank was named Teacher of the Year by the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom program. The following year, Sarah Fine-Koukol from St. Vincent Ferrer School in River Forest received the same honor.

Member Relations Team members sponsored a Benefit of the Month promotion, member seminars, and added new members-only discounts.

Countless Illinois state senators and state representatives received the Friend of Agriculture award presented by Farm Bureau leaders.

Agriculture in the Classroom launched Ag Days to celebrate National Ag Week. Area third graders spent time learning about dairy, pork, beef, corn, soybeans,

nutrition, agriculture, and the environment. Over 8,100 students and 330 teachers have since benefitted from this program.

In recognition of Cook County Farm Bureau's Food Checkout Day program, Ronald McDonald House Charities named a pantry at the House near the University of Chicago Comer Children's Hospital after the organization.

Farm Bureau hosted its first annual Farm Bureau night with the Chicago White Sox. Over 800 members participated.

The Cook County Farm Bureau Political Action Committee (Cook CFB PAC) was created to promote the economic and social well-being of farmers and agricultural-related interests in Cook County through political involvement. The PAC has since made 48 endorsements. The

committee also created the Friend of the Farm Bureau award to recognize Cook County Commissioners who are supportive of Farm Bureau's positions on legislative issues. The PAC has since presented 42 awards.

Farm Bureau held its first Cook County Lobby Day. Governmental Affairs Committee members and the Board of Directors met with

seven commissioners and staff members to discuss Farm Bureau policy and relevant county issues. The forest preserve district later approved a resolution preserving and expanding farming opportunities on conducive forest preserve acres.

Leaders traveled to Washington, D.C. to lobby influential agencies and policymakers.

The Member Relations Team launched its first Member Picnic at Goebbert's Farm in

South Barrington. It's been a sold-out success every year since its launch.

Farm Bureau launched the Agricultural Leadership Academy to provide high school students opportunities for career exploration. Over 400 urban high school students have since participated in the program.

Membership jumped from 27,100 to over 40,000.

Presidents this decade included Ray Nykaza, Harold 'Harry' Stuenkel, James 'Jim' Brandau, and James 'Jim' Gutzmer.

Bob Rohrer continued to serve as Manager.

2010-2019

Both Cook County farms and farmland continued to decline with just over 180 and near 24,000

acres, respectively. Corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay continued to be the county's top crops; however, vegetables, greenhouse, and nursery crops were on the rise.

Farm Bureau hosted its 12th annual Food Checkout Day, which grew to include a scavenger hunt between two local celebrities and was held at the world's (then) largest Ronald McDonald House. In recognition of

the healthy and nutritious food that local farmers grow and raise, the program has since donated over \$130,000 and over 96,000 pounds of food to benefit families staying at area Ronald McDonald Houses while their child is receiving treatment at nearby hospitals.

As part of Food Checkout Day, local schools donated more than 47,700 pounds of food to Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana. 88 schools have supported Food Checkout Day.



Cook County Farm Bureau's Agriculture in the Classroom expanded to a three-part program. The program has since educated over 172,000 students, averaging nearly 30,000 students annually.

Food for Thought, Farm Bureau's regional advertising committee, transitioned to in-person events, including activities at summer festivals and the Brookfield Zoo.

Farm Bureau launched a revised website to better communicate with consumers.

Carole Scannell from St. Germaine School in Oak Lawn is named Teacher of the Year by the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom program.

Cook County Farm Bureau received the Liberty Bell in recognition of outstanding programming in the area of Legislative and Political Affairs, Local Government, and Policy Development. The Liberty

Bell is awarded by the Illinois Farm Bureau and is the highest award a County Farm Bureau can receive in the area of governmental affairs.

Farm Bureau hosted its first Staff Exchange Program to explore the connections between local agriculture and Cook County government. The program is later named a County Activity of Excellence by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Farm Bureau received the President's Award for outstanding programming in Agricultural Literacy, Commodities and Marketing, Communications, Health and Safety, Legislative and Political Affairs, Local Affairs, Membership, Policy Development, and Quota.

Cook County Farm Bureau received the Summit Award for Food Checkout Day from the American

Society of Association Executives®. The Summit Award recognizes the contributions of non-profits working together.

Farm Bureau hosted its first Farm Camp. During this weeklong camp, campers experienced Cook County agriculture while learning about the important connections between farmers, the environment, and food. Two hundred campers experienced agriculture through this program. The program was named a County Activity of Excellence by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Farm Bureau partnered with Ted's Greenhouse and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana to develop a garden display for the Chicago Flower and Garden Show.

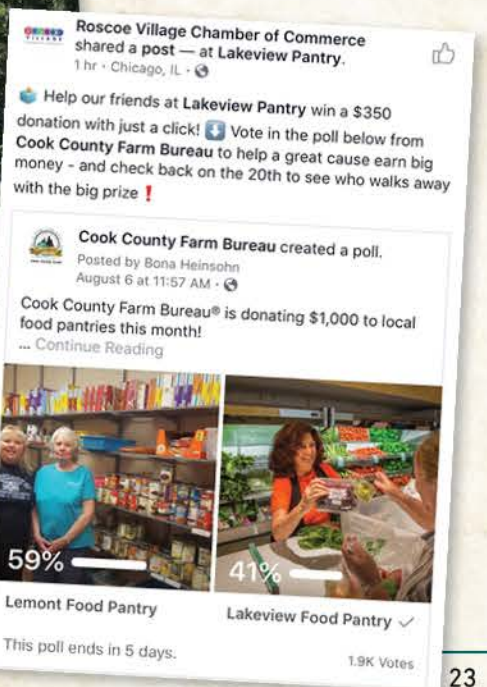
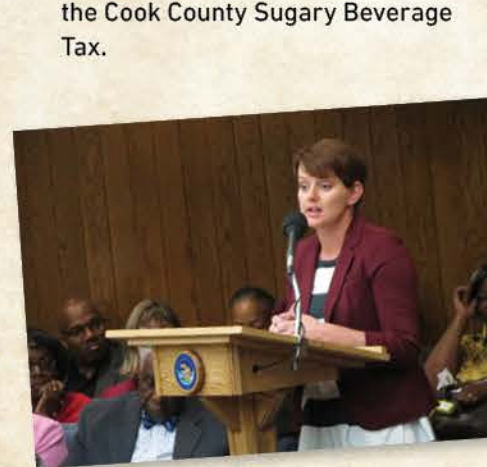
Farm Bureau initiated a popular member appreciation picnic, hosting the event at various locations including Brookfield

Zoo, Goebbert's Pumpkin Farm, the Children's Farm, and Odyssey Fun Farm.

Cook County Farm Bureau launched the Grocery Giveaway, a social media program to connect urban consumers with local farmers. Over 1.27 million people engaged with the program during its

tenure. The program later was named a County Activity of Excellence by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Farm Bureau's commitment to educating youth and urban consumers expanded to outreach activities at area libraries. Through family activities, education programs, and crafts, over 700 people have learned about agriculture.



AG LITERACY



The Cook County Farm Bureau® Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) program provides free educational programming and resources to educators in Cook County. For more than 30 years, the AITC program has been educating Cook County students about the everyday connections between their lives and agriculture.

AITC Background

In 1981, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture John Block hosted a meeting of people across the United States who were interested in reaching schools with the story of agriculture. That discussion led to the organization by the USDA of the program called Ag in the Classroom. Various farm organizations and commodity groups took the concept and applied it locally or on a statewide basis. In the mid-'80s, following discussions at the Cook County Farm Bureau Board of Directors level, a committee made up of the organization's Women's Committee members and Marketing Committee members looked at the concept and recommended to the Board of Directors to create an Ag in the Classroom program for Cook County. The program officially began in Cook County during the 1986-87 school year.

Initially, the members of the Women's Committee coordinated and volunteered to provide farm lessons in the classroom. However, the large demand led the Board of Directors to contract with Meryn and Helen Heyen to provide leadership and coordinate classroom efforts of agricultural education



storytellers. In 1989, Gail Petersdorff was hired first as a presenter in the classroom and then to serve as a full-time Ag in the Classroom Coordinator for the organization. Other coordinators have followed as the program grew including Katie Schmidbauer, Haley Loy-Siergiej, and Diane Merrion. Each of these coordinators have brought agricultural education creativity, innovation, and technology to the program.

Paramount to the success of AITC is the amazing teachers who have embraced incorporating agriculture into their curriculum. In 2010, Debbie Jimenez from St. Albert the Great in Burbank was named Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom Teacher of the Year. The following year, Sarah Fine-Koukol from St. Vincent Ferrer School in River Forest received the same honors. In 2015, Carole Scannell from St. Germaine School in Oak Lawn was also named an Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom Teacher of the Year. Most recently, Cathy Malloy from Westchester Middle School was named runner-up Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom Teacher of the Year.

Integral to Cook County Farm Bureau's Agriculture in the Classroom program are student presentations, programs outside the classroom, teacher education, and summer programming.



Student Presentations

Through the "Introduction to Agriculture in Illinois" program, fourth grade students discover how Illinois agriculture and processing meets the local and world demand for food, fiber, and energy. The hands-on presentation introduces basic farm information such as crops and livestock, agriculture's relationship with natural resources and the environment, and the use of 21st century technology in farming today. Using a farm-to-table model, students gain an understanding of Illinois agriculture and the importance of urban and rural farming.

A second program, "There's Ag on my Plate", is a follow-up to the "Introduction to Agriculture in Illinois" program designed to engage students in thoughtful discussion and activities connecting farmers and farm products to the U.S. Department of Agriculture MyPlate®. MyPlate is the latest nutrition guide from the USDA. Through this program, students learn the origins of food including tracing wheat from the farm to flour. Students also analyze food labels to determine nutritional information and ingredients to illustrate the importance of a making healthy nutritional choices. "There's Ag on my Plate" reached 3,230 students in its first year and tripled within five years.



Middle school students can learn more about agriculture through the "Agriculture Science and Careers" program which allows students to explore the phenomena of agriculture as it relates to physical sciences. Through this program, students connect everyday items with the scientists who have researched and developed them using agriculture commodities such as corn, soybeans, coconuts, feathers, cows, and more. To date, this program has reach over 4,000 students.

Programming

Agriculture in the Classroom type programming dates back to the Cook County Farm Bureau Women's Committee in the '50s and '60s and the Meat, Dairy, and Fresh Vegetable grant promotion which they started in the 1970s. This promotion provided grants to high school and junior high school classrooms to encourage and acquaint students with the use and preparation of fresh farm products.

Since 1986, the Agricultural in the Classroom program has been educating Cook County students about the everyday connections between their lives and agriculture. In the early 1990s, programming expanded to include FFA

Acquaintance Day. This program ultimately became Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation's Ag Leadership Academy. Ag Leadership Academy provides an opportunity



AG IN THE CLASSROOM



for high school students to explore agricultural career paths and explains the education and job skills needed for various agricultural careers.

To increase students' awareness of horticulture and farming and to create connections between agriculture and science, engineering, and math, Farm Bureau also hosts several Ag Days throughout the year. During this program, students learn more about livestock, crops, horticulture, and soil health. These concepts are further reinforced during Farm Bureau's in-school visits. Ag Days is hosted in conjunction with National Ag Day, which recognizes and celebrates the contribution of agriculture in individuals' everyday lives. Approximately 700 students attend Ag Days annually.

Teacher Education

In the early 1990s, Cook County Farm Bureau launched an extended program, the Teacher Agricultural Institute, to educate teachers about the importance of agriculture and to provide them with tools and example methods of integrating agriculture into existing curriculum. Through this experience, teachers receive either professional development hours or graduate credit. To date, over 400 teachers have experienced Farm Bureau's Summer Agriculture Institute.



Cook County Farm Bureau also hosts an Agricultural Careers Exploration designed to engage consumers, teachers, and counselors in conversations about agriculture and agricultural careers during a one-day tour of area agribusinesses. In addition to showcasing northern Illinois' connection to agriculture and agricultural food processing, the program encourages adult consumers to engage in conversations about modern farming practices and the agricultural economy, including the effects of on-going trade conversations.

Summer Programming

In the summer, "farmers" entering second through fifth grade join the Cook County Farm Bureau for Passport to the Farm Camp. Through hands-on activities, the "farmers" learn about the connection between agriculture and their daily lives. This program enables Farm Bureau to provide a

broad spectrum of agricultural information and learning opportunities and to reach parents through their youth to deliver farm facts and information. Students rotate from station to station each day completing hands-on projects and lessons.

Topics include plants/horticulture, corn, soybeans, livestock, hydroponics, soil, bees/pollination, agriculture careers, greenhouse plants, and more. In 2013, the American Farm Bureau Federation® recognized the Passport to the Farm Camp as a County Activities of Excellence.

A cornerstone of Farm Bureau's summer program is the Agricultural Literacy Reading Program partnership with area libraries. Through creative programming, activities, and agricultural-related reading, Farm Bureau connects youth with farming in their communities and state.

Since 2015, Farm Bureau has partnered with the Cook County Sheriff Department for the summer youth camp leadership program. Program participants discuss food, fuel, fiber, and its origination in addition to MyPlate, careers in agriculture and food science, and everyday connections between agriculture and their day-to-day lives.

COOK COUNTY FARM BUREAU AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM HISTORY

YEAR	number of presentations	number of students
1987-88	79	2,018
1988-89	168	3,527
1989-90	139	3,555
1990-91	221	5,650
1991-92	284	7,162
1992-93	250	6,298
1993-94	465	11,544
1994-95	441	11,063
1995-96	589	14,534
1996-97	587	14,350
1997-98	683	16,499
1998-99	662	15,780
1999-00	695	16,832
2000-01	688	16,110
2001-02	755	17,549
2002-03	863	20,381
2003-04	870	20,515
2004-05	839	19,879
2005-06	904	21,546
2006-07	913	21,809
2007-08	1,122	25,337
2008-09	995	24,835
2009-10	937	18,673
2010-11	884	21,534
2011-12	900	21,952
2012-13	870	21,524
2013-14	947	23,011
2014-15	968	23,328
2015-16	1,105	26,840
2016-17	1,180	29,779
2017-18	1,069	26,188
2018-19	1,227	29,904
Totals as of Feb. 2020	23,299	559,506



AG LIT BIT

By Diane Merrion, Director of Ag Literacy

"Students get interested in things they're exposed to."

- Dr. Temple Grandin, keynote speaker at the National Ag in the Classroom (AITC) Conference.

This quote really captures the essence of our Ag Literacy mission: "To expand students' awareness and appreciation for the importance of agriculture everywhere". It was the inspiration behind the creation of our Entrepreneurship Grant for high school students, the new AITC program combining consumers and educators in agriculture field experiences, the development of summer library programs throughout the county, and our regularly revised Ag in the Classroom school visits to name a few.

One of our most popular and impactful programs is our Summer Ag Institute (SAI) which helps us share our mission with teachers in our county. After attending SAI a few years back, one principal was so amazed by the career possibilities in agriculture that she asked us to provide a one-day field trip to spread the word in their district. The goal was to have school staff communicate the wealth that ag-related jobs could bring to their students. How could students understand these options if their counselors and teachers didn't know about them?

Our teacher comments after SAI continue to show that few understand the vast amount of jobs in agriculture. As teachers meet farm families and business owners, they learn about plant scientists, entomologists, mechanical engineers, ag software developers, animal nutritionists, food packaging designers, and many more professionals. There is always a sense of excitement about returning to their classrooms to share what they had learned about agriculture with their students.

All the years I have been in Farm Bureau have opened my eyes to the importance of farm bureau and ag literacy outreach. I wish my own children had received this exposure along their way. The more our literacy efforts can keep exposing our youth to the possibilities, the more we can get students interested. I am excited to see the interest here in Cook County schools continue to grow, and I encourage educators to stop by or call to learn about our teacher resources. We'd love to help you share our love of agriculture.

Diane Merrion has written a monthly column for the Co-Operator publication on topics related to Agriculture Literacy since 2011.



COMMODITIES/ MARKETING

Despite the county's notoriety for concrete, houses, and buildings, Cook County is home to greenhouse growers, vegetable farmers, agri-tourism sites, honey providers, hay and straw farmers, as well as corn and soybean farmers.

Agriculture in Cook County comes in so many sizes, shapes, styles, and flavors. The common element of this broad collection of farm-related activities under the agriculture umbrella is the need to reach and market to consumers.

With nearly five million consumers residing in the Cook County area, the farmers, greenhouse growers, agri-business professionals, forage providers, and agri-entertainment industry is poised to provide the freshest and finest products and services for local consumers, families, and neighbors within the Midwest.

Programs and Events

Cook County Farm Bureau® is dedicated to connecting consumers with farmers and local farm products. To that end, Farm Bureau launched a "Giant Pumpkin" contest. This festival-type event highlights local farmers, apiaries, and pumpkin desserts. Since its inception in 2000, nearly 2,000 consumers have participated in this annual fall event. Throughout the 2000s, the Commodities/Marketing Team sponsored a number of contests designed to encourage consumers to buy local at area farm stands and markets including the "Trim the Tree" contest (using fresh Christmas trees and the "Paint your Yard" contest using fresh flowers).

Building on Farm Bureau's commitment to develop new farmers, Farm Bureau offers members a low-cost option to test soil fertility. The soil testing package consists of services that assist gardeners and farm businesses with determining soil fertility and screening for metal contamination, as well as a soil enhancement recommendation service through

the Cook County Extension's Master Gardeners.

For consumers interested in sharing their love of cooking and fresh food, Farm Bureau developed a recipe collection. Originally a project of the Women's Committee in the 1970s, Cook County Farm Bureau has collected hundreds of recipes featuring locally grown vegetables available at area farm stands. Each year, the recipe collection is highlighted on the website, in the *Co-Operator*, and as a printed recipe brochure. Annually, nearly 10,000 brochures are distributed to consumers and through area farm stands and markets.

For gardening enthusiasts with limited space, Farm Bureau developed a workshop series in conjunction with area greenhouses. The program provides information on gardening principles, soil conservation, seed preparation, use of containers, and additional tips and techniques on growing food in urban small spaces. In addition to receiving valuable and useful information, participants also construct their own herb planter.

An additional program in the series enables consumers to create their own planters at different greenhouses in the county. Each greenhouse brings its own specialty to the program, whether it's spring flowers, fall plants, fairy gardens, herbs, succulents and cacti, pots, or baskets. Over 200 members participate in these programs annually.

To further consumers' knowledge of farming and awareness of local farms and farm stands, Farm Bureau hosts a "Farm Crawl". Annually, nearly 25 farms and farm businesses open their doors for



a day for nearly 600 members and consumers from throughout northeastern Illinois.

In 2018, seeing the growth and popularity of farm-to-table experiences, the organization assisted with and sponsored a Harvest Dinner at Fairway Farms of Cog Hill to gain "hands-on" knowledge on how to create dinners of this nature. The event featured seasonal cocktails, a local brewery collaboration, live music, passed hors d'oeuvres, farm tours, and a five-course meal featuring ingredients from the farm. Since that time, CCFB has provided helpful input, aid, and marketing to farmers seeking to create a farm-to-table activity.

Farmer Oriented Programming

To aid farmers interested in selling directly to area grocery stores and chefs, Farm Bureau joins with partners to host "Meet the Buyer" events to connect farmers with potential buyers. The event not only allowed buyers to provide an overview of their organizations and procurement needs, but they also provide farmers the opportunity to meet buyers one-on-one. This event is part of Farm Bureau's continued commitment to assist farmers in finding the right marketing channels for their products and to encourage local farmers to provide a broad range of locally grown fruits, vegetables, and other farm products to meet growing local demand.

Farm Bureau's commitment to encouraging local farmers to provide a broad range of products extends to assisting farmers to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to produce new products. To that extent, Farm Bureau launched a Beginning Beekeeping program, an Advanced Beekeeping program, and a shipment of bulk bee purchase and delivery program. Additional beekeeping education programs saw more than 350 people participate annually.

Programming and training that have been offered to new and established farmers include Growing Industrial Hemp; Marketing to Engage Today's Consumers; How to go Organic; Creating a Farm Enterprise; Farming Forum; Land Lease and Ag Outlook; Raising Backyard Chickens; Vineyard Planting for the Wine Enthusiast; Products of the Hive – Making & Selling; Navigating Farmers' Markets for Agricultural Producers, and more.





Cookfresh® Urban Garden Grant

As an avenue to connect community gardens and urban farms with area greenhouse farmers, Farm Bureau launched the Cookfresh Urban Garden Grant program. The grant program provides supplies, plants, seeds, materials for raised beds, construction materials, soil, compost, and fencing to community gardens and urban farms. Grant funds are redeemable at Cook County farmstands and garden centers. Since the grant's inception in 2012, over 40 community gardens and urban farms have received grants.

Farm Products Locator

In the late 1960s and into the 70s, the Board asked representatives to investigate successful farmers' markets in New Jersey and Michigan. The organization communicated this information through an annual roadside conference and contract marketing seminars for members. "Local Roadside Farm Market Directory" premiered in the late 1990s and provided over 10,000 copies to members and local farmstands. This tradition of member farmstand service was modernized when Cook County Farm Bureau launched "Local Farm Products", an online farm and farm products locator in 2009. This forum was upgraded in 2013 and fully integrated into Farm Bureau's website in 2018 when the overall website was upgraded. This "direct to the consumer" marketing promotes local farm products and area farmers.




GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Legislative outreach has been a fundamental component of Cook County Farm Bureau® programming since the organization's inception in 1920.

In 2005, Farm Bureau implemented a new team structure that streamlined volunteers and allowed them to specialize in areas that most interested them. Shortly after the implementation of the new team structure, Farm Bureau hired an additional staff member, Bona Heinsohn, who specializes in governmental affairs. In conjunction with the strategic plan at the time, Heinsohn focused on expanding the Farm Bureau's involvement in Cook County government.

In 2013, Cook County Farm Bureau received the Liberty Bell in recognition of outstanding programming in the area of Legislative and Political Affairs, Local Government, and Policy Development. The Liberty Bell is awarded by the Illinois Farm Bureau® and is the highest award a County Farm Bureau can receive in the area of governmental affairs. In that same year, Farm Bureau's "Staff Exchange" program was named a County Activity of

Excellence (CAE) by the American Farm Bureau Federation®. The CAE program recognizes cutting edge Farm Bureau programming.

Legislative Successes

In 1959, Cook County farmers were upset about an amendment to the Cook County zoning ordinance that would eliminate farm property as a zoning classification. To appease the farmers, the County approached the Farm Bureau to assist in an advisory role for agricultural zoning and farm building construction in the county.

To this day, Farm Bureau leaders have continued to advise the Assessor's office and the Department of Building and Zoning regarding agriculture and farms in the county. Recently, when Cook County updated the Zoning Code regarding the keeping of animals, the Farm Bureau was not only an active participant in the discussion, but also negotiated language favorable to the care and keeping of livestock, including horses.

For many decades, the Cook County Farm Bureau has assisted farm owners in filing property tax appeals and protests. The Illinois Farmland Assessment Act of 1977 specified that farmland is assessed based on soil productivity as opposed to fair market value in 101 Illinois counties. However, the Act excluded Cook



that Cook County agriculture continues to flourish and grow today.

Legislatively, Farm Bureau along with strategic partners, successfully advocated for the repeal of the Cook County Beverage Tax. Over the course of several months, Farm Bureau worked with partners to meet with legislators and to discuss the ramifications of increasing local taxes. After nearly six months of conversations, the coalition successfully advocated for the repeal of the tax.

Grassroots Policy Development

A cornerstone of the Governmental Affairs Team is grassroots policy generation. Through the Viewpoint Survey, team members solicit member insights and use the responses to generate local, state, and national Farm Bureau policy. The first Viewpoint Survey included questions on eminent domain, private property rights, campaign finance reform, food safety, biotechnology, and stormwater management.

Recent policy successes include the development of Community Support Agriculture (CSA) policy calling for farms operating CSAs to disclose to shareholders whether products originate from a single farm or multiple farms and, in the case of substitutions, the physical address of where that product originated from to assure traceability and transparency.

Cook County Farm Bureau members also led the charge for a state Farm Bureau

policy on organic agriculture. The policy calls for organic producers who sell at farmers' markets to display the United States Department of Agriculture organic seal to ensure that consumers who believe that they are purchasing organic produce are truly purchasing organic produce. Additional organic agriculture policy changes define the term "organic" as a production standard as opposed to a particular belief system.

Farm Bureau members recently worked to update and modernize state Farm Bureau policy on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (commonly known as SNAP) and similar government food assistance programs. Policy changes call for benefit allotments based on a fair value amount that accounts for the true cost of food, geographical food price variations, and time costs for food preparation.

Programming

Farm Bureau members have historically engaged in programming and events designed to enhance legislative relations and policy knowledge. Cook County members, along with neighboring Farm Bureau members, created the Northeast Legislative Reception to enhance relationships with urban legislators. This reception was quickly adopted by the Illinois Farm Bureau and is now hosted during the Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference. The now Statewide Legislative Reception is designed to enable County Farm Bureaus to enhance their relationships with their state legislators.

On the note of legislators, Cook County Farm Bureau developed a Washington, D.C.-based program to enhance members' relationships with U.S. Congressmen and women and to develop a deeper understanding of current policy issues. Throughout the years, members have met with Humane Watch, Animal Agriculture



Alliance, the Environmental Working Group, Farmers for Free Trade, Biotechnology Industry Organization, the Grocery Manufacturers Alliance, Tyson Foods, and NASA Earth Science Division.

Cook County Farm Bureau's nationally recognized Staff Exchange program has reached over 125 participants since 2012. Designed to bridge the gap between modern agriculture and urban legislators, the program connects legislators and their staff members with agribusinesses, food processors, and farmers throughout Cook County. Past sites include Ed Miniat, Koval Distillery, Windy City Winery, Tate and Lyle, Westside Bee Boyz, and Ted's Greenhouse in addition to numerous other sites.

Farm Bureau also launched a smaller program to engage newly elected or appointed officials and their staffs with agriculture. Through this program, small groups of legislations are able to engage with farmers in informal settings while exploring Cook County agriculture and agri-businesses.



Legislative Relations and Outreach

Farm Bureau leaders and volunteers strive to maintain solid relationships with Cook County legislators. Throughout the years, leaders meet with legislators and staff to discuss pertinent and timely issues. In 1998, the Board of Directors, through its first formal strategic planning process, identified a goal of working with the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) for a shared legislative staff member to work in the Chicagoland area. Following several members and numerous conversations, the IFB created the position of Northeast Legislative Coordinator to bring a stronger farm lobbying presence to the urban area.

The Adopt-a-Legislator® program was created as a key first step to connecting urban legislators with the state's agricultural significance. Since 2001, leaders have also engaged in various visits through the program. Over 70 urban legislators participate in the Adopt-a-Legislator program. Additionally, through the "Friend of Agriculture" recognition program, Farm Bureau leaders recognize outstanding legislative leaders in both the Illinois House of Representatives and Illinois Senate. Annually, Cook County Farm Bureau meets with approximately 40 legislators.

Through programs, legislative events, and award presentations, Farm Bureau strives to build lasting relationships with area lawmakers and to ensure that agriculture and the agricultural economy remains a top priority.



MEMBER RELATIONS



Membership is – and has been for 100 years – at the core of Cook County Farm Bureau®. Farmer, Professional, and Associate members join and remain members because they connect with and believe in the Farm Bureau's mission. Through membership with the Cook County Farm Bureau, members have access to premium benefits, including the *Co-Operator* newspaper, *FarmWeek* newspaper, *Partners* magazine, COUNTRY Financial® insurance and investment products, IAA Credit Union, and discounts on a variety of services and products including car rentals, hotels, travel, and vehicles.

Seminars and Programs

Farm Bureau members and their families are not only eligible for exclusive benefits, but they are also eligible to attend numerous seminars, workshops, and programs at little to no cost. Past workshop topics have included boating safety, defensive driving, babysitting, hunter safety, and concealed carry. These and other workshops provide both valuable information and an avenue to recruit new members.

Farm Bureau also offers a variety of seminars targeted at providing members valuable information. Past seminar topics include understanding wills and trusts, funding for college, and understanding and using essential oils. Members have even enjoyed decorative sign painting and holiday planter workshops.

Cook County Farm Bureau also provides health and safety services to members. Past programs include a health fair and stroke detection, flu shots, blood drives, and more. These programs focus on providing members with important and relevant health screening and protection tools.

Member Dinners

From the time the organization was created in 1920, the Cook County Farm Bureau held an Annual Membership Meeting that featured a banquet dinner. Throughout the years, members and their families enjoyed live entertainment and great food at the event. Hundreds of members attended each year.

In 1998, the Annual Meeting Planning Committee added a Silent Auction to raise funds to support the agricultural literacy efforts of the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation® (created in 1997). The first silent auction raised \$1,333 through member support.

In 2010, the Board of Directors, citing a "fall off" in Annual Meeting member attendance, decided to separate the Annual Meeting from the banquet, with the banquet focusing on member entertainment and fun. A "business-only" Annual Meeting is now held prior to the November board meeting.

In 2017, the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation, with substantial support from the Cook County Farm Bureau Board, staff, and members, transitioned the member dinner and silent auction to a fundraising gala to broaden the support Ag Literacy mission of the organization.

From its humble beginnings, the Silent Auction and recent Galas have raised over \$150,000 to support Agriculture in the Classroom programing,



leadership activities, and college scholarships for students pursuing agricultural degrees.

Sports Festival and Bowling

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Farm Bureau members across the state expressed a tremendous interest in participating in group sports activities and competitions such as bowling, golf, softball, and trap-shooting. Cook County Farm Bureau provided opportunities early on by supporting bowling leagues with teams made up of Farm Bureau members, hosting local golf tournaments for members, and sponsoring member softball teams. At one point, Cook County Farm Bureau had so much interest in bowling that an annual north-and south-side bowling tournaments for members was held.

These types of sports activities were the forerunner to the statewide sports festival hosted by the Illinois Farm Bureau®. Sports festival competitions included bowling, softball, golf, and trapshooting tournaments locally, regionally, and statewide. The Illinois Farm Bureau Sports Festival events diminished in popularity in the late '90s. However, the Cook County Farm Bureau continued to host a county bowling tournament and banquet through the mid-2000s for a group of dedicated members.



Member Communication

Originally, in the early days of the Cook County Farm Bureau, member news was published in the Arlington Gazette. From 1930 through 1937, CCFB created an eight-page publication, The Countryside, for organizational news. In 1938, CCFB revised its publication and changed the name to the *Co-Operator*, continuing with the eight page format.

In 2005, the Board took a big step by upgrading the publication, expanding to a 12-page publication with heavier, whiter paper stock and moving to a four-color printing process. Published monthly, the *Co-Operator* goes to all members of the organization. Publication topics include pertinent and timely agricultural issues; "Agricultural Adventures," a family-friendly page highlighting agriculture in an urban county; special features on farm-related businesses, organizations, and issues; policy education; agricultural literacy

information for teachers, parents, and kids; program promotion and member recruitment; and staff columns. Member favorites include a trivia contest with incentive prizes and a family-friendly word search. Previous publications are archived on the organization's website.

As some member reading preferences shifted, the Farm Bureau launched an electronic version of the *Co-Operator* named the *E Co-Operator*.

The first version of the organization's website went live in 2002 and several upgrades were made in ensuing years. To improve member information access and communications, Farm Bureau recently relaunched the website. The website includes details on member benefits, recruitment, and programs as well as member-to-member discounts. During its most recent release, the website was redesigned to ensure that members could easily access the content from their smart phones.



Member Picnic

In 2007, Farm Bureau launched its Annual Member Picnic. This event has rotated between north and south Cook County to serve more members and engage more families in annual fall farm activities. Since its inception, the Member Picnic has been held at Goebbert's, the Children's Farm, Brookfield Zoo, and Odyssey Fun Farm. Annually, over 250 people enjoy this family favorite fall event.

Membership Growth

Throughout the past 100 years, Cook County Farm Bureau membership has grown from 1,689 in 1920 to nearly 44,000 today.

The Illinois Farm Bureau, on an annual basis, establishes a membership quota to help by County Farm Bureau focus on continued membership growth. A County Farm Bureau that achieves quota is recognized as an organization that understands that membership is the lifeblood of the organization.

The early 2000s were years of tremendous membership growth, especially in associate members. Cook County Farm Bureau met total membership quota in 1999 through 2014 and was first in total percentage gain in the state of Illinois in 2002 (110.88%), 2008 (103.72%), and 2010 (106.75%). In 2004, Farm Bureau finished second in total percentage gain (114.62%).

In 2007, Farm Bureau's affiliated company, COUNTRY Financial entered into the insurance and financial services market of the City of Chicago for the first time in its history, providing a new audience for potential associate members.

Cook County Farm Bureau received voting member quota in 1980 through 1987, 2016, and 2018 in recognition of its efforts in the area of farmer membership.

In 2017, the Professional Member voting membership classification was approved and went into effect. The Professional Member allows individuals involved and employed in agricultural businesses and organizations to sign up as voting members and receive the same privileges as the Farmer membership. Cook County Farm Bureau member sign-up for the Professional Membership classification is on the rise.

Membership Growth					
1920	1,689	1960	6,184	2000	27,184
1930	844	1970	7,276	2010	47,236
1940	2,124	1980	16,599	2019	43,988
1950	4,754	1990	27,150		



PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Cook County Farm Bureau® Public Relations Team is charged with communicating with and expanding urban adults' awareness of modern agriculture. The Team was originally created in 2003 and later separated into an independent standing committee in 2012. The focus of the team has remained targeted at expanding urban consumers' knowledge of modern farming and the healthy and nutritious food grown and raised by local farmers.

Programs and Events

One of Farm Bureau's oldest outreach activities was consumer outreach at the Chicago Flower and Garden Show. The show is one of the largest horticultural and floriculture indoor expositions in the country. The 1976 display discussed food prices. More recent displays have illustrated the partnership between Farm Bureau and Chicagoland Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana and modern farming practices. Nearly 200,000 consumers attend the Flower and Garden Show annually.

Since 2004, Farm Bureau has partnered with Wagner Farm in Glenview to host a Dairy Breakfast. Event activities have ranged from exclusively children's activities to engaging consumers in conversations about food labels and modern agriculture. Recently, Wagner Farm added a Stock Show to the Dairy Breakfast. The Stock Show enables 4-H members from neighboring counties to show their dairy and beef cattle, sheep, and pigs. Historic Wagner Farm is situated on 18.6-acres and is one of the last working dairy farms in Cook County and is open to the public for recreation and learning.

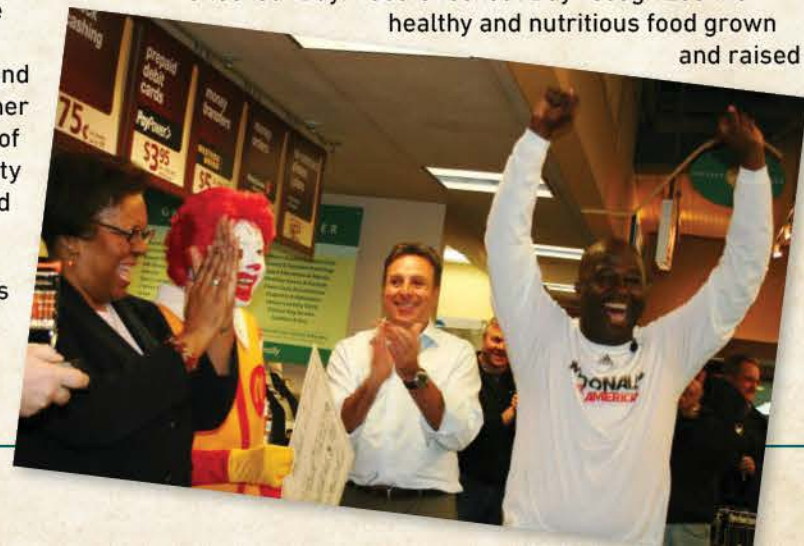
Many of the same youth who show animals at the Wagner Farm Stock Show also show and sell their animals at the Lake County Fair. In an effort to support both



people in need and Glenview Clovers 4-H members, Cook County Farm Bureau annually purchases animals during the 4-H auction and donates the meat to local food pantries and area Ronald McDonald Houses. Since 2013, Farm Bureau has donated over 1,400 pounds of fresh meat to local non-profits.

Food Checkout Day

For 19 years, Cook County Farm Bureau has partnered with Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana for Food Checkout Day. Food Checkout Day recognizes the healthy and nutritious food grown and raised



by local farmers. Since its inception, Farm Bureau, COUNTRY Financial® representatives, and sponsors have donated over \$130,000 and more than 100,000 pounds of food.

Past Food Checkout Day activities include shopping sprees, scavenger hunts, school food drives, fresh meat donations, and member food drives. Throughout the years, numerous local celebrities have participated in the shopping sprees and scavenger hunt including CBS television sportscaster Ryan Baker, Fox Chicago sportscaster Lou Canellis, ABC 7 sportscaster Mark Giangreco, and ABC 7 sportscaster Dionne Miller.

In 2013, Cook County Farm Bureau received the Summit Award from the American Society of Association Executives® for "Food Checkout Day" in recognition of the tremendous contributions non-profits can make when working together to accomplish a mutual goal.

Social Media Programs

In 2015, Cook County Farm Bureau launched the Grocery Giveaway program designed to connect Cook County farmers with urban consumers through social media. Through pro-farming messaging, Cook County consumers engaged in conversations about animal care, environmental issues, and modern farming practices. During the four-year tenure of the program, over 1.27 million consumers engaged with the Farm Bureau through the Grocery Giveaway program. The Grocery Giveaway program relied exclusively on paid Facebook advertising.

In 2016, the American Farm Bureau Federation® named the Grocery Giveaway a County Activity of Excellence award.

As a follow-up program to the Grocery Giveaway, Farm Bureau launched the Food Pantry Challenge to engage consumers and provide financial donations to local food pantries. This first-year program enabled Cook County Farm Bureau leaders to engage with over 118,000 urban consumers in conversations about modern farming and the healthy and nutritious food local farmers grow while partnering with and financially supporting 14 non-profit food pantries. Over four months and through seven Facebook polls, 14,000 consumers voted for their favorite food pantry. As a result, Farm Bureau donated \$3,500 to 14 local food pantries while expanding consumers' knowledge of agriculture and local food pantries. Unlike other social media programs, this program relied solely on organic Facebook activities as opposed to paid social media advertising.



Food for Thought

For over 40 years, Cook County Farm Bureau has participated in Food for Thought, a regional advertising committee that was the brainchild of former Cook County Farm Bureau President and Illinois Agricultural Association® District V Director, Leonard Schultz. Schultz promoted the concept of County Farm Bureaus joining together



with the Illinois Farm Bureau® to address consumers' need for accurate information on farmers and farming.

Early Food for Thought activities included purchasing

airtime on WGN Radio followed by advertising on other Chicago radio stations. Prior to transitioning to in-person and social media activities, the Committee purchased billboard advertising on I-294 southbound. More recent

activities include purchasing advertising during Radio Disney events in the 13 county Food for Thought Committee areas. In addition to the on-air advertising, moms met with families and discussed the healthy and nutritious food grown and raised by local farmers.

The Committee transitioned to in-person events in 2014 and formed an initial partnership with the Brookfield Zoo. Zoo events included the Lady Bug release, signage, and Summer Nights. During Summer Nights, County Farm Bureau members meet with urban families interested in learning more about modern farming. Nearly 225,000 people attend Summer Nights each summer.

Food for Thought then shifted from in-person activities to social media-based activities in 2018. These activities included gas station advertising; retargeting consumers on social media; Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat paid advertising; and targeted Facebook advertising.



YOUNG LEADERS

Through the decades of the Cook County Farm Bureau®, working with young members has been an important part of bringing fresh ideas and vitality to the organization.

The Young Farmer Committee has provided opportunities for younger members to learn more about the organization and participate in programs and activities to benefit themselves and other members.

In 2013, the Board of Directors approved an action plan to develop and activate a Young Leaders group with the goal of attracting younger, under age 35, agricultural and agriculture-related professionals to the Farm Bureau to involve these members in Farm Bureau activities, programs, teams, and leadership. The idea was to blend service to agriculture, leadership development, and fellowship and teambuilding fun activities into a group of agricultural professionals under the Farm Bureau umbrella.

Board member Gerry Kopping and his wife Linda hosted a cookout, games, and discussion at their Lemont farm in August of 2013 for young members interested in checking out the opportunities that a young leaders group could provide.

The result has been a group of young professionals involved in farming and agriculturally related careers that developed service projects, supported agriculture literacy efforts, hosted fun group activities, and honed leadership skills. In recent years, this group of young professionals has hosted activities for members and families including cookouts, recruitment events, and activities at area attractions. Past leadership activities include

"adopting" a third-grade classroom in Bedford Park, assisting with Ag Literacy Team activities, competing in the Illinois Farm Bureau Young Leaders Discussion Meets, promoting consumer outreach activities at Summer Nights at Brookfield Zoo, and supporting social media outreach activities. The group has also participated in numerous charitable activities including packing food at Feed My Starving Children and volunteering at the Greater Chicagoland Food Depository, as well as hosting a holiday teen toy drive to benefit Toybox Connection and hosting a holiday coat, hat, and gloves donation drive for Together We Cope.

Young leader committees and groups have been a wonderful incubator for the development of strong, lifetime friendships, organizational leadership skills, and service to agriculture. Consistently, young leader members have focused on building something of worth, value, and meaning for farming and Cook County Farm Bureau.



FOUNDATION HISTORY



The Cook County Farm Bureau® Foundation was formally and legally created in 1997 by the Farm Bureau Board of Directors. As a 501(c)3, the Foundation is able to seek donations from the public for the purpose of encouraging and funding agricultural related education and research; sponsoring and funding seminars regarding agricultural related subjects and leadership skills in the field of agriculture; and providing scholarships for individuals studying agriculture and related fields. The Foundation also provides funding for 4H, FFA, other youth related programs including events, camps, and conferences, and adult agricultural programs including Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow (ALOT) and Illinois Agricultural Leadership Program (IALP). The founding Board of Directors for the Foundation were Howard Paarlberg (President), Ray Nykaza (Vice President), Jim Goebbert (Secretary-Treasurer), Lloyd Brandau, and Ray Hinze.

Donors

As a non-profit entity, the Foundation can solicit tax deductible donations from individuals and businesses. In recognition of an individual's dedication to the mission of the Foundation, in 1999 the Foundation Board of Directors authorized the creation of a "Wall of Honor". The Wall of Honor recognizes individuals who donate to the Foundation. It was constructed by former Cook County Farm Bureau President and Foundation President, Jim Gutzmer, shortly after he was appointed to the Farm Bureau Board of Directors. In recent years, a virtual "Wall of Honor" was placed on the Foundation's website.

Throughout the Foundation's history, members have supported the mission of the Foundation through the Silent Auction, which was originally held in conjunction with the Member Appreciation Dinner. In 2017, the Foundation transitioned to a gala event to generate more funds to carry out the goals of the Foundation.

The first annual Farming for our Future Gala was held in 2017 with the goal to expand individual's awareness of and support for agricultural education and programming. The first gala raised over \$28,000 through sponsorships, a silent auction and raffle, a live auction, and ticket purchases.

Agricultural Scholarships

The Foundation Board of Directors approved initial criteria for a scholarship program in 1998, with funds first provided to students in 1999. In 2003, the Foundation approved the creation of the Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Agriculture Scholarship Award to honor the passing of the long-time leader, former President of the Cook County Farm Bureau, and the founding Foundation president. This award is granted to students with the highest rated scholarship application and includes a greater financial award.

In 2007, the Foundation Board of Directors approved a new scholarship program in conjunction with dedicated funding from Farm Bureau's affiliated



company, Conserv FS. The Conserv FS FFA Scholarship Award which was designed to assist graduating high school FFA students move to the college level with an agricultural focus.

As of 2019, the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation has provided over \$238,750 in scholarship funds to students pursuing agriculture or an agriculture-related degree.

Programs

The Foundation provides funding for numerous agricultural education and leadership programs, most notably the Cook County Farm Bureau

Agriculture in the Classroom program. In 2006, the Foundation approved the creation and funding of the FFA Leadership Academy Program, which provides high school-aged students with agricultural career and leadership experience.

The Foundation also supports Ag Day educational programs. Annually, Ag Day exposes nearly 1,000 students to agriculture and horticulture.

High school-aged agricultural students have benefited from the Supporting Entrepreneurship in Urban Agriculture Program, a joint program between the Foundation and 1st Farm Credit (now Compeer Financial). Starting in 2012 with 49

grants provided to students to develop a small business, the program provides students the opportunity to learn what it takes to establish a business. Many more grants were provided to students in following years. These students sold their items at their schools during an annual small business fair and exhibition, the Chicago Flower and Garden show, and other venues.



Teacher Education

In addition to funding student programs, the Foundation provides financial support for teacher and Agriculture in the Classroom presenter education programs, including Farm Bureau's Summer Agriculture Institute (SAI). SAI strives to educate teachers about the importance of agriculture and to provide them with tools and example methods of integrating agriculture into existing curriculum. Through this experience, teachers can receive professional development hours or graduate credit. To date, over 400 Chicago area teachers have experienced Farm Bureau's Summer Agriculture Institutes.

Internships

An integral role of the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation is to provide college-aged students seeking an agriculturally related degree an opportunity to intern for the Farm Bureau. Through the summer internship program, students work with the Agricultural Literacy Coordinator and Assistant to develop and provide summer programming, including summer reading programs at local libraries, Summer Agriculture Institute, and the Sheriff Camp programs.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

ALOT Graduates

Pat Horcher	1992
Mark Walsh	1996
Mark Yunker*	2003
Jim Brandau*	2003
Gerry Kopping*	2006
Mike Rauch*	2006
Katie Schmidbauer*	2006
Ruth Zeldenrust*	2010
Sarah Hileman*	2010
Tim Stuenkel*	2010
Bona Heinsohn*	2010
Janet McCabe*	2013
Jim Gutzmer*	2013
Heidi Yunker*	2013
Karen Biernacki*	2014
Jim Bloomstrand*	2014
Beth Christian*	2015
Diane Merrion*	2015
Rick Johnson*	2019

Illinois Agricultural Leadership Program Graduates

Darl Baumgardner
Dan Biernacki*
Bryan Blau
Edward Cooper
John Cottingham
Sheila Fowler
John Fowler
Bona Heinsohn*
Joanna Litchfield
Haley Loy-Siergiej*
Kim Morton
Mark Musial
Larry Paarlberg*
Todd Price
Michael Rauch
Tim Stuenkel*
Ruth Zeldenrust*

*Received Foundation Scholarship

Internship History

Kirsten Raver	2018
Brittany Nash	2017
Karina Barrios	2016
Reilly Neeson	2016
Nicole Zeien	2015
Kendall Herron	2014
Stephanie Raymond	2013
Brittany Pieper	2012
Kelly Stanley	2011
Kelly Stanley	2010
Loretta Stumpf	2009
Willie Akerson	2008
Candice Jones	2007
Candice Jones	2006
Claire FitzPatrick	2005
Erin Lanning	2003
Renee Stranski	2002

Thomas Poole
9753 South Hoyne Avenue
Chicago, IL 60643

Janet McCabe, President
Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation
6438 Joliet Road
Countryside, IL 60525

March 21, 2019

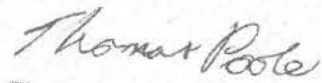
Dear Mrs. McCabe,

I am very grateful to the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation for recognizing my passion for agriculture by awarding me the Howard Paarlberg Excellence in Agriculture Scholarship. I will use the scholarship funds to pursue my Master of Business Administration degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This educational venture will provide me knowledge and leadership tools to advocate and improve modern farming systems.

Your financial and professional support has given me the confidence to pursue many opportunities ranging from working for a foreign startup to promoting food security in my local community. These experiences have motivated me to work toward improving the lives of others through food and agriculture.

I would also like to thank your organization for sponsoring me in our latest advocacy trip to Washington, D.C. It was a pleasure meeting with our legislators and representing the voice of agriculture. I look forward to a long relationship with the Cook County Farm Bureau and its dedicated staff and members!

Sincerely,



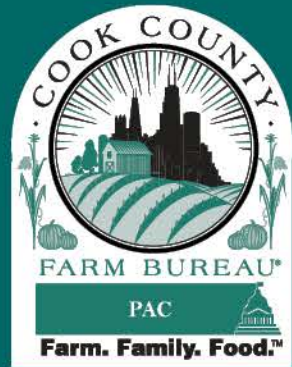
Thomas Poole



Scholarship History (Through 2019)

Abigail Roeters	Caitlin Bondarowicz	Devan Groves	Katie DeBoer	Matthew DeCeault	Renee Stranski
Aidan Walton	Candice Jones	Doug Yunker	Kayla Smits	Megan Petraitis	Robert Schabes
Aleksander Jura	Chris Boomsma	Emily Petrucci	Kelsey Macke	Melanie Demma	Sara Palkon
Alescia Roberto	Claire FitzPatrick	Erin Lanning	Kimberly Wisniewski	Milan Alexander	Sara Starzyk
Alyssa Volland	Colin Rogers	Jaclyn Krzesniak	Kristen Yunker	Myles Hasty	Stephanie Sindelar
Andrew Smits	Colleen Elzinga	Jennifer Czaja	Laura Purdue	Natalie Daniel	Steven Zary
Anthony DeSanto	Corey Brandau	Jessica Biernacki	Lauren Brown	Nicholas DeSanto	Thomas Poole
Brian Castro	Daniel Macina	Jessica Rauch	Liming Brotcke	Noelle Thompson	Tim Fisher
Bridget Bettenhausen	Daniel Vonau	Jessica Sloan	Madeline Poole	Olivia Lake	Tyler Easter
Brittany Wojcicki	Danielle Brown	Jonathon Poole	Mark Krystinak	Patricia Meehan	Willie Akerson
Cady Walsh	Danielle Glascott	Katherine Manika	Matthew Bauer	Patrick Dziura	Xavier Morgan

COOK COUNTY FARM BUREAU POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE



The Cook County Farm Bureau® Political Action Committee (Cook CFB PAC) is a political organization designed to support candidates who are supportive of the policies, priorities, and mission of the Farm Bureau while promoting the economic and social well-being of farmers and farm-related interests in Cook County through non-partisan political involvement.

The PAC was created in 2009 under the strict guidelines of the Illinois State Board of Elections.

Candidate Interviews and Endorsements

Since its inception, the PAC has made 48 endorsements. Not all incumbents. Not all challengers. Not all major party candidates. But candidates who the Governance Committee members felt would make the largest impact on their district and the county.

Members of the Governance Committee are charged with making endorsements and contributions.

Governance Committee members utilize a candidate scoring process that reflects a candidate's character, communication skills, demeanor, experience, intelligence, intangible attributes, philosophy, and record. Each member individually scores a candidate. The individual scores are averaged together for a final score. The final score, in addition to a candidate's questionnaires, support of Farm Bureau policies, and when applicable, voting record are considered by Governance Committee members when making endorsements.

The PAC Governance Committee is comprised of the Cook County Farm Bureau President, Chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee, the immediate past President, representatives from the Board of Directors, and Governmental Affairs Committee.

Candidate Voting Records

A founding role of Cook County Farm Bureau is involvement in county government. Early Farm Bureau volunteers worked with the Cook County Assessor to create the existing farmland assessment process after the Illinois Farmland Assessment law intentionally excluded Cook County. In that vein, Farm Bureau volunteers and staff continue to closely monitor county and forest preserve district issues and, when appropriate, communicate Farm Bureau positions and policy to county commissioners and their staff members.

Annually, Farm Bureau staff compiles a list of county ordinances and resolutions. The list is comprised of issues Farm Bureau has taken a position on or has policy on. Past issues include the Cook County beverage tax, wheel and sales tax, zoning regulations regarding animals, and resolutions recognizing Food Checkout Day and Farm Bureau's 100th Anniversary.

After approval of the issues and their value, Farm Bureau staff compiles each commissioner's voting record and final score. During even numbered years, a commissioner's scores are averaged together and form the basis for the Friend of Farm Bureau awards.

Friend of the Farm Bureau Awards

The Friend of the Farm Bureau award program recognizes Cook County Commissioners with outstanding voting records on issues of importance to the Farm Bureau. Additionally, this award program increases commissioners' awareness of the organization and its policies.

In even numbered years, Cook CFB PAC has the option to award Cook County Commissioners with a Friend of the Farm Bureau award.

To be considered for an award, incumbent Cook County Commissioners who are seeking reelection must have a combined minimum 60% voting record

for the proceeding two years. Governance Committee members can increase the minimum threshold required for a Friend of Farm Bureau award.

The PAC has awarded 42 "Friend of the Farm Bureau" awards since the program's inception in 2010.

Voter's Guide

In 2010, Cook County Farm Bureau launched its first Voter's Guide. The first installments of the Voter's Guide appeared as an eight-page insert in the *Co-Operator*. More recent versions of the Voter's Guide appear on the Farm Bureau's website. Survey questions for the guide are based on current issues and Farm Bureau policy.



POLITICAL
ACTION
COMMITTEE

Cook County Farm Bureau
Political Action Committee
Friend of the Farm Bureau



Cook County Farm Bureau® has a long history of identifying members' needs and creating programs or affiliate companies to fill that need. Arguably, the most successful affiliate is COUNTRY Financial®. The history of this company's evolution and genesis through the Farm Bureau remains key to its current and future success.

Early Illinois farmers struggled to find fire insurance for their farms. Despite creating local township casualty companies, the coverage was still inadequate or unavailable. Following an Illinois Farm Bureau® study group, the organization created a company to help local township companies spread their risk. The result was the formation of the Farmers Mutual Reinsurance Company in 1925. However, farmers soon needed more than that company could provide leading to the creation of the Illinois Agricultural Mutual Insurance Company in 1927.

Shortly after its creation, Farm Bureau developed a life insurance company called Country Life Insurance Company. Eventually, several Farm Bureau affiliated insurance companies combined to become Country Companies Insurance and Investment Group. Country Companies maintained its identity until 2000 when it became COUNTRY Insurance and Financial Services which was then shortened to COUNTRY Financial as it's known today.

In 2014, COUNTRY Financial and the Illinois Farm Bureau worked together to create a new concept known as "combined billing" for associate members with property casualty insurance to be billed membership dues on their premium invoice. The Cook County Farm Bureau worked with agency managers and staff to create the Certified Financial Rep designation for agency staff to provide increased knowledge and understanding about the Cook County Farm Bureau.

The Farm Bureau organization appreciates the outstanding work and service provided by our Cook County area COUNTRY Financial agencies, managers, financial reps, and staff to protect and provide for the families and financial needs of our members!



**Cook County Area
COUNTRY Financial Leadership**



Joe Gergely
Agency Vice President,
District 7



Mike Fisher
Agency Vice President,
Chicago



Jack Smith, Mgr.
Chicago Northwest



Cary Tate, Mgr.
Orland Park



Jeff Orman, Mgr.
South Holland



Victoria Nygre, Mgr.
Chicago North



Sharon Stemke, Mgr.
Chicago Northeast



Jeff Maxson, Mgr.
Chicago South





John Tuttle
General Manager

Lake County Supply Company and Will County Supply Company were created in 1928 to deliver needed fuel to farms within their respective counties, as well as to farms in Cook County. Later, Cook County would be added, and it would be renamed the Lake-Cook Supply Company. These companies had their roots within Cook, Lake, and Will County Farm Bureaus.

Cook County Farm Bureau® also started a cooperative called Gardener's Supply Company in 1930 to serve the needs of area truck farmers. Later in that decade, Gardener's Supply Company was merged into Lake-Cook Supply Company.

Through the years, Cook County Farm Bureau farmer members supported the FS affiliated company through their business and serving on the Board of Directors. They were rewarded for this loyalty by receiving modern farm support services as well as patronage based on purchases made. This farmer support led to the growth and expansion of the Lake-Cook FS supply cooperative.

Eventually, Lake-Cook FS merged with a southeastern Wisconsin FS cooperative and was renamed Conserv FS. In the late '90s, to gain efficiencies, Northern FS, serving the DeKalb, Kane, Boone, Winnebago, and McHenry counties, merged with Conserv FS. Through the years, Conserv FS has grown in terms of assets, territory, and resources as smaller area FS affiliated cooperatives merged.

Conserv FS is now a part of the GROWMARK regional cooperative system affiliated with Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin Farm Bureaus. Now, Conserv FS is an area cooperative that serves Cook County and 10 other area counties in Northeastern Illinois and Southeastern Wisconsin.

The cooperative provides area farmers and other customers with farm inputs, fuel, seeds for crops and turf, custom farming, marketing, and financing. Conserv FS also provides goods and services to landscapers, nurseries, municipalities, transportation, golf courses, and local sports organizations. Farm Bureau members that use the cooperative are eligible for patronage as determined by the Conserv Board of Directors.



The new golden anniversary flag depicting the 50th year of the FS System is presented by E.V. Stevenson, left, executive vice-president of FS Services, to Lake-Cook Farm Supply Company represented by Clarence Falfziger, center, board president, 2517 Kenosha Road, Zion, and Manager Walter Vogl. Lake-Cook Supply Company has been a member of the FS System since 1928. It was Illinois Farm Supply Company at that time.



WOMENS COMMITTEE

Throughout Cook County Farm Bureau's history, women have played an important leadership and volunteer role in the successful programming and member service efforts made by the organization.

In 1932, the Cook County Farm Bureau Board, seeking to formalize service to women within the organization, recommended that a program be formed to focus on foods, clothing, shelter, and child welfare. They called the concept the "Home Bureau". This group eventually became a part of the University of Illinois Extension Service program.

In 1957, following the official separation between the Farm Bureau organization and the Extension Service, a new group was formed called the Cook County Women of Farm Bureau Committee. There were 20 initial members of the group. The focus of the county's group was member programs, consumer outreach and public relations, agriculture literacy, farm safety, and leadership development.

Programs developed by the Women's Committee included: defensive driving, farm products promotions, Meat and Dairy grants, recipe collection, and consumer communications. In 1986, the Women's Committee and the Marketing Committee led organizational discussions that resulted in the creation of a new "Ag in the Classroom" program to teach kids about agriculture. The program began paying dividends immediately through an organized effort to deliver quality agriculturally based lesson plans in the classroom for kids and teachers in suburban schools. In 1998, Women's Committee member Bernadine Horcher received statewide recognition for her agricultural literacy teaching efforts by receiving the Illinois Farm Bureau Apple for the Teacher award.

Members of the group throughout its existence were important contributors to the annual meeting of members, support of fundraising efforts of the Foundation, and serving on other standing committees of the organization including Legislative, Marketing, Viewpoint, Ag in the Classroom, Membership, and Local Affairs.

In 2005, the Cook County Farm Bureau Board of Directors reorganized the committee structure by merging committees to form four teams, to involve more volunteers and revitalize the programming efforts of the organization. The areas of the Women's Committee focus were blended into these teams and committee members had the opportunity to select their favorite areas of interest to continue their volunteer service within the Cook County Farm Bureau organization.

As we look back on the past 100 years, we pay tribute to these organizational pioneers that played such an important role in the success of the Cook County Farm Bureau.



Women from Illinois carded in D.C. Sept. 18-20 when they went to Congress and Department of Agriculture. Pictured are Ellen Horcher, director of family activities, and Bernadine Horcher.



WOMENS COMMITTEE DEMONSTRATES USES OF COTTAGE CHEESE



The Cook County Farm Bureau Women's Committee put on a cottage cheese demonstration at various stores in Cook County. With each purchase of cottage cheese the ladies gave out cottage cheese recipe booklets. Approximately 600 boxes of cottage cheese were sold during the afternoon and evening operations. The ladies deserve credit for the fine job they did in these demonstrations.



COOK COUNTY FARM BUREAU LEADERSHIP AND STAFF PARTNERSHIP

For a century, Cook County Farm Bureau® volunteer presidents and board members have partnered with the manager and staff to complete the work for the Farm Bureau member.

Cook County Farm Bureau has been and continues to be blessed with great leaders, both volunteer and staff alike. The leadership at CCFB has led to 100 quality years for the organization. Working together, the results have been outstanding in the areas of

- Membership recruitment
- Finance and fundraising
- Membership programs and service
- Equipment and office systems
- Communications
- Policy development and lobbying
- Employment law and standards
- Maintaining the history of the organization
- Applied association law
- Facility construction and management
- Connections with affiliates
- Governance procedures
- Marketing and promotion
- Trends in association management
- Organizational bylaws and agreements
- Knowledge of financial markets and impact on organization
- Strategic direction
- Dashboard analytics
- Staff coordination and development
- Training of volunteers
- Leadership development

Providing quality information, historical perspective, insight on complicated decisions, and big picture ramifications are important traits in leadership. Embracing leadership within Cook County Farm Bureau and adopting this leadership responsibility with proper respect, fiduciary care, and decisiveness provides member confidence in the operations of the organization as well as the long-term security of the organization.



Front Row (left to right): Roger Freeman, Ruth Zeldenrust, Mark Yunker, Gerry Kopping, and Jim Bloomstrand
 Back Row (left to right): Tim Stuenkel, Dan Biernacki, Jim Gutzmer, Mike Rauch, Janet McCabe, Pat Horcher, Todd Price, and Bob Rohrer



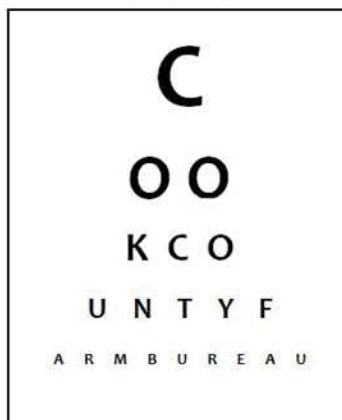
Front Row (left to right): Melanie Senne, Diane Merrion, and Bob Rohrer
 Back Row (left to right): Bob Heine, Debbie Voltz, Katie Smith, Juanita Ramos, Kelli Villarreal, Jill Dover, and Bona Heinsohn



DOWNWIND

By Bob Rohrer,
CAE, FBCM, Manager

20/20



"20/20 Vision"

I consider farmers to be visionary pragmatists with 20/20 foresight. They see what they want for the future and then use step-by-step practical applications in the real world of farming to achieve the vision.

Every year, farmers are visionary pragmatists. They plant the seed with a vision, but the farmer does not simply leave that seed's growth to chance.

The farmer...

- Preps the soil and creates a soil condition for optimal growth.
- Provides both labor and care in the planting of the seed.
- Selects seed that will successfully germinate with proper warmth and moisture in the land.
- Trusts the seed to grow strong as a result of a deep root system and a series of leaves that draw nourishment from the sun.
- Monitors the plant as it reaches for the sun, generating the strength to create a flower, fruit, vegetable, and grain.
- Protects the plant and helps it fight weather and pests along the way by monitoring, treating, encouraging, and supporting the plant's development.
- Finally enjoys the opportunity to reap rewards as the moment arrives for a bountiful harvest.

This 20/20 vision by the farmer allows him or her to feed family, friends, and the world.

It was with 20/20 vision that the farmers of Cook County came together in 1920 to plant the seed known as Cook County Farm Bureau. Throughout the decades, these forward-thinking farmers and their protégé cooperated to create and tend to a rich soil for Farm Bureau growth. These leaders managed and monitored the Farm Bureau development and the Farm Bureau's health. They would care for it, encourage it, monitor it, treat it, and support it.

While in the process, the Farm Bureau and its farm members endured ups and downs in both finance and membership, downturns in the economy, an energy crisis, droughts and floods, impacting legislation, pest invasions, wars, labor issues, and the continuing evolution of agriculture. Cooperating, farmers and the Farm Bureau organization persisted, existed, and excelled.

This 20/20 vision, in the year 2020, has resulted in a Cook County Farm Bureau organization that has grown and even thrived for a full century!

But alas, what is a cause for celebration is not to celebrate the end but to celebrate the next beginning. Celebrating the past century is also anticipation for celebration of the next 100 years. Because we know that agriculture will need an organization that is strong, inclusive, aware, creative, influential, insightful, and determined.

What will the next 100 years bring for farming and agriculture? The easy answer is "massive change". Is anyone wise enough to know what that change will entail? We can only imagine the challenges, hurdles, and attacks that are coming on the farming way of life. However, we are wise enough to know that there will be plenty, and it won't be easy. Like all unknowns, the future could be a scary place.

The public's expanded access to knowledge and information will influence agriculture and the Farm Bureau in many ways. Educational delivery systems and media interaction will remain crucial.

Big data, technology explosions, and artificial intelligence on the horizon will give rise to predictive analytics and data-based decision making. Automation through smarter machines and learning robots will transform work and affect workers in nearly every area of employment including agriculture. Technology will continue to influence changes in farming.

The aging of the world's society is reshaping political, financial, and social priorities which is shifting landscapes. Charitable giving will evolve based on the above influences with greater donor control.

The greater polarization of groups of people along with politics, economic status, education, social, consumer, media, and geography will lead to self-segregation of people. America's founding motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, "out of many, one", seems less and less of a reality in the future.

The world population is skyrocketing... Who will feed the world? The health of the world's people needs quality nutrition, clothing, fuel, and pharmaceuticals... Who will provide? The environment of our planet depends on care and treatment... How will farmers meet these important challenges?

When you see change clearly, you can build the future you want. Much like farmers, the Cook County Farm Bureau organization and leadership will use visionary pragmatism to serve members for the next 100 years.

Happy Centennial Birthday, Cook County Farm Bureau!

Footnote: Some futurist concepts from this column came from a 2020 foresight article - *Associations Now*, Jan/Feb 2018

Bob Rohrer has written Downwind, a monthly column for the Co-Operator and other County Farm Bureau publications, since 1988.



A HISTORY OF INFLUENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

By Bona Heinsohn, MA, CAE, Director of Governmental Affairs and Public Relations

A hundred years ago, area farmers gathered to create what is now the Cook County Farm Bureau®. Their foresight combined with a drive to seek the support and collective knowledge and influence of neighboring farmers led to the creation of the Farm Bureau.

Just as those farmers were the foundation on which Farm Bureau was built, local engagement continues to be a cornerstone of Cook County Farm Bureau. Early local engagement activities included work on trespass, property damage, property tax assistance, subdivision construction standards after World War II, and opposing new tax authorities and referendums.

Fundamental to Farm Bureau's engagement and influence in local government was leaders' efforts to develop a Cook County farmland assessment process after Illinois' farmland assessment statute was approved without specifying how Cook County farmland would be assessed. Farm Bureau leaders identified this oversight as a detriment to the continuation and future of Cook County agriculture. A group of Farm Bureau members successfully met with and lobbied the Cook County Assessor and Cook County President to create a comparable assessment for Cook County farmland. An outcome of these meetings and Farm Bureau leaders' initiative is the existing farmland affidavit process and tax rate. Farm Bureau continues to offer members assistance with the farmland affidavit and process today.

These leaders established Cook County Farm Bureau as a resource for Cook County government. This relationship proved to be invaluable when the county zoning department considered eliminating the designation of "roadside vegetable and farm stands" or "farming" from the zoning code. Through open dialogue and member influence, the proposal was rejected, and these types of farm operations continue to flourish in Cook County.

The basis for Cook County Farm Bureau's involvement in county government and the forest preserve district is Farm Bureau's local and state policy book. As a grassroots organization, all policy starts with Farm Bureau members. Throughout the years, Farm Bureau has solicited members' opinions on issues. The process was solidified with the creation of a Viewpoint Survey Committee. The committee's first survey included questions on eminent domain, private property rights, campaign finance reform, and stormwater management. The committee was later rolled into the now Governmental Affairs Committee, which ultimately drafted the state Farm Bureau's first organic agriculture, food labeling, and Community Supported Agriculture policies.

Farm Bureau policy also provides the basis for Farm Bureau's engagement in Cook County government. The 2005 strategic plan identified local involvement as a priority of the organization. Cook County Farm Bureau and allies have successfully lobbied against additional taxes, including the now infamous sugary beverage tax. Farm Bureau has also successfully lobbied for clearer zoning regulations related to livestock; animal enclosure regulations aligned with the Humane Care for Animals Act; and regulations ensuring that animal owners have the right to determine the appropriate enclosure based on the species of animal. Despite these successes, Farm Bureau continues to monitor county and forest preserve government to ensure that Farm Bureau remains relevant and influential.

Farm Bureau's influence combined with its policies also lay the foundation for the activities and engagement of the Cook County Farm Bureau Political Action Committee (Cook CFB PAC), a registered political action committee. The PAC was created by the Board of Directors to further Farm Bureau's influence in local government. Since its creation in 2009, Cook CFB PAC has awarded 42 "Friend of Farm Bureau" awards. These awards recognize incumbent Cook County Commissioners with voting records

supportive of Farm Bureau's legislative positions. The PAC has also endorsed 48 candidates since its creation.

Farm Bureau leaders today continue to build upon the tradition and relationships created by Farm Bureau members before them while leading the organization into the future. Through open communications, dialogue, and a willingness to serve as a resource, Cook County Farm Bureau continues to be an invaluable aspect of Cook County and local farmers.

Bona Heinsohn has written a monthly column on agricultural grassroots involvement, elections and public policy for the Co-Operator since 2007.



Cook County Farm Bureau
Farm. Family. Food.





Thank You

to the volunteers, board, and staff for their contributions to the celebration.

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